



whidbeywill.com

Whidbey Island Living Legacy (WILL) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to creating pathways to affordable homeownership. Our mission is to secure land—through purchase or donation—and hold it in trust for the development of permanently affordable housing.

In 2024, Richard Queen and Sara Stevenson generously donated a lot at 702 Camano Avenue in Langley, adjacent to the THINC property. This land is now held in trust, allowing qualified individuals to purchase their own cottage within a supportive cottage community. While the land remains in the trust to ensure long-term affordability, each homeowner owns their home.

In 2025, plans were underway for the site, the location of the homes, and the house design. The project became known as “Grace Landing,” a cottage-style community designed to provide stable, attainable homeownership opportunities for those who need them most.



islandcountyhabitat.org/grace-landing-cottages

In February 2026, Habitat for Humanity of Island County (HHIC) partnered with Whidbey Island Living Legacy (WILL) to expand access to affordable and workforce housing in South Whidbey. With WILL’s vision and HHIC’s history of creating and working with residents of affordable housing, the two organizations are launching Grace Landing.

HHIC will work with prospective buyers in the application process and with the homeowners throughout their residency.

This partnership reflects a shared commitment to addressing the region’s growing affordable housing shortage. By pooling resources, experience, and community support, HHIC and WILL are creating a sustainable model that promotes financial stability, thoughtful design, and a strong sense of neighborhood connection.

THE LAND. THE HOMES.

Construction is the affordable part of homebuilding—land is the expensive part. Since many of us purchased our first homes, the cost of homeownership has risen 1,608%, far outpacing inflation at 644%.

WILL cottages are thoughtfully designed at 600 square feet. The main floor includes 400 square feet of living space, with an additional 200-square-foot loft. The layout accommodates a living room, kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom on the main floor, with a loft bedroom and half bath above.

These are permanent homes—not mobile units. WILL’s Building Committee will oversee design standards, exterior colors, and construction to ensure compliance with City of Langley requirements and to maintain architectural integrity.

We are fortunate to have a highly qualified builder/project manager and an architect actively developing this project alongside us. Their expertise ensures that each home will meet high standards of quality, sustainability, and thoughtful design.

WHY ALL THIS MATTERS

Since 2000, South Whidbey’s student population has declined by 50%, even as the overall population has grown by 17%. Currently, 97 children in the South Whidbey School District are inadequately housed.

The shortage of affordable housing affects more than families. Local retail and service businesses struggle to recruit and retain employees due to housing costs. Affordable housing is essential not only for community stability, but for maintaining a healthy local economy.

Several South Whidbey organizations are actively developing properties to meet specific housing needs. WILL is proud to be part of this collaborative, community-wide effort.

MARKETING STRATEGY

Using THINC as a successful model, funds will be raised through:

- Newspaper articles
- Social media outreach
- Community grants
- Local civic clubs
- Partner organizations and businesses
- Grass roots efforts within the Whidbey Island community

SMALL HOMES: TRENDS & AFFORDABILITY

The era of the “McMansion” is fading. Across the country, small homes and cottage-style communities are emerging in a range of sizes and models, proving to be a viable solution to housing instability.

A stable, affordable housing plan allows workers to remain in their jobs and helps employers reduce turnover.

At a time when personal debt is high and savings are low, living in a smaller footprint offers the opportunity for a more intentional and financially sustainable lifestyle, particularly for those burdened by today’s housing market.

Market analysts project steady expansion in the small home sector, with an estimated compound annual growth rate of 4.88% between 2022 and 2027. North America is expected to account for 57% of this growth, with strong

expansion opportunities in the United States and Canada.

Additional trends include:

- 56% of Americans find small living arrangements appealing.
- 68% of small homeowners have no mortgage (compared to 29.3% of all U.S. homeowners).
- 55% of small homeowners report having more savings than the average American.
- 32% have more than \$10,000 in retirement savings.
- Over 80% carry less debt than the average U.S. citizen.
- Approximately 40% are over 50.
- 55% are women, many of whom are single parents.
- Millennials increasingly embrace small homes to avoid burdensome housing costs.

There are now more than 10,000 small houses in the United States, and the number continues to rise.

SPECIFICATIONS

To qualify as a small house, the main floor and hallways must have a minimum ceiling height of 6 feet 8 inches, ensuring comfortable movement throughout the space.

WILL homes will include:

- 400 square feet on the main floor
- 200-square-foot loft
- Approximately one-sixth the size of the average U.S. home

Much like a well-designed boat, the limited footprint encourages built-in efficiency while maintaining comfort and livability.

Small homes also produce fewer annual CO₂ emissions than average-sized homes, making them an environmentally responsible choice.

COST ADVANTAGE

The average small house costs approximately 87% less than a typical U.S. home. This significant difference makes homeownership attainable without the burden of excessive mortgage debt.

Lower housing costs allow homeowners to allocate more income toward savings, retirement, and long-term stability, transforming not only their housing situation, but their financial future.

We look forward to your questions.

CONTACT: whidbeywill24@gmail.com or resource@islandcountyhabitat.com

Join us in creating something magical!