

From: Ewout van Dishoeck <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 9:03 PM
To: northinfo
Cc: Tobi Lee Dawn Elliott; Susan Yates
Subject: Re. Gabriola Island Comprehensive Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Review Update (for consideration at November 20, 2025 LTC Regular Meeting)

Trustees Elliot, Patrick and Yates

I am writing to express concern regarding the current direction of the Gabriola Official Community Plan (OCP) review, specifically the suggestion that Development Permit Areas (DPAs) be advanced to bylaw drafting without first articulating their objectives and broad regulatory context.

The community has already voiced strong support for DPAs addressing aquifer recharge, steep slopes, shorelines, endangered species habitat, riparian zones, fire resilience, sensitive ecosystems, forested areas, wetlands, and habitat corridors. These are not peripheral matters—they are central to Gabriola's long-term health and resilience.

Why Objectives Are Essential

- Context and coherence: Objectives provide the rationale that ties regulations to community values. Without them, bylaws risk appearing fragmented or technocratic.
- Legal and policy defensibility: Clear objectives strengthen the legitimacy of regulations and help ensure they withstand scrutiny.
- Public trust: Residents expect that their expressed priorities will be reflected not only in rules but in the guiding principles that shape those rules.

The Necessary Compromise

Gabriola faces interrelated challenges:

- Ecosystem preservation is essential to maintain biodiversity, cultural heritage, and climate resilience.
- Groundwater sustainability is a non-negotiable foundation for public health and community viability.
- Population growth is inevitable, and must be accommodated in ways that respect ecological limits.

These three forces cannot be addressed in isolation. A comprehensive OCP must acknowledge the compromises required to balance them. DPAs, with clearly stated objectives, are the mechanism through which this balance can be expressed and operationalized.

Request

I urge the Trustees to ensure that the OCP process includes the articulation of objectives and broad regulatory guidelines for each DPA before advancing to bylaw drafting. Even concise objectives would provide the necessary scaffolding for regulations, ensuring coherence, defensibility, and alignment with community values.

Gabriola deserves an OCP that is not only expedient but principled—one that recognizes the compromises required between ecological stewardship, water security, and growth, and provides a clear rationale for the regulations that will shape our island's future.

Respectfully,

Ewout van Dishoeck
Gabriola

Sent with [REDACTED] secure email.