

DATE OF MEETING: August 6, 2026

TO: Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee

FROM: Narissa Chadwick, Island Planner
Local Planning Services

COPY: Stephen Baugh, Acting Regional Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Review and Update of Draft OCP

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request staff prepare the draft Official Community Plan for First Reading incorporating changes discussed at the August 6, 2026 Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee special meeting.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a revised draft of the Gabriola OCP. This draft includes changes recommended by the LTC at their July 16, 2026 LTC meeting as well as technical amendments identified by community members and staff. Substantive issues that have been brought up in feedback from the community and issues identified by staff and Trustees are identified for discussion and decision.

BACKGROUND

Gabriola Island Official Community Plan Review Timeline



The Gabriola OCP and LUB review project began in 2023. It has moved through three phases involving many public engagement activities.

- **Phase 1** focussed on community visioning through in person engagement and surveys.
- **Phase 2** focussed on public engagement around key policy areas and included a number of focus groups as well as broader public engagement.
- **Phase 3** focussed on bylaw writing.

The results of these phases can be found on the Gabriola OCP project webpage.

<https://islandstrust.bc.ca/island-planning/gabriola/projects/>.

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Phase 4 of the Gabriola OCP and LUB review project, the current phase, focuses on the review of the draft OCP bylaws, the creation of a DAI bylaw and updates to the LUB for consistency with the new OCP policies.

At the July 16, 2026 LTC meeting:

It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee endorse the changes to the Draft Gabriola Official Community Plan prior to 1st reading, as discussed at the July 16, 2026 Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee meeting.

The draft OCP (Attachment 1) incorporates all the changes discussed at the June 16, 2026 meeting. These changes are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Changes Made to Draft OCP Since June 16, 2026

SFN - Snuneymuxw First Nation

LTC – Local Trust Committee

LTC -M – Local Trust Committee Member

CM – Community Member(s)

Tech – Technical change

Change Area	Requested by	Staff Comment/Rational
Table of Contents update	Tech	Note that numbering is likely to change prior to September and the table of contents will be updated accordingly.
1.2 Indigenous Context/ Settlement Timeline	SFN	Under review by SFN
1.2 Housing Need	LTC	Updated to provide clarity regarding discrepancy in numbers
1.2 Groundwater Resource	CM	Additional note regarding groundwater vulnerability
1.2 Transportation and Connectivity	CM	Updated based on feedback
1.2 Growth Management	LTC	Provides rational for balanced approach to OCP review
1.4 Community Vision	LTC	Compilation of community submissions provided by Trustee Yates
2.2.3 Additional Objective added	LTC	Acknowledging stewardship of natural resources used by FNs
2.2.4 Community Resilience and Climate Readiness	CM	Clarity updates
2.2.5 Diversity and Community Wellbeing	LTC -M	Re-organized objectives
2.3.1 Climate Mitigation Targets	Tech	“Policy” changed to “target” corrects mistake
2.4 Land and Marine Policies	Tech	Referencing both “land” and “marine” in policy and map designation reference
2.4.1.1 Residential Density Policy	CM	Providing clarity re: strata conversion by defaulting to previous OCP language
2.4.1.2 Residential Density Policy	Staff	To address concerns related to the lack of limits on flexible housing staff are recommending that max floor area and units be identified in the OCP.

2.4.1.4 Residential Density Policy	Staff	To address concerns that the opportunity to zone for flexible housing will result in a large number of new units, staff are recommending a maximum number be identified. The number proposed for discussion is 25. Based on Mayne Island's experience (where there have been no applications since introduced 2 year ago) and the stringent criteria for rezoning it will take many years before this is number is realized.
2.4.2.4 Max size of dwelling units	LTC	Policy indicates that there should be a max size for secondary dwelling units.
2.4.6.1 Agricultural policy	Staff	Permission for "agriculture" replaced by permission for "horticulture" to recognize that animal husbandry may not be supported on smaller lots.
2.4.9. 1 Freshwater Sustainability	LTC/Staff	Staff provided options related to water capture and storage for all new residential, commercial and institutional development
2.4.9.4 Freshwater Sustainability	LTC/Staff	Policy added to support community water supply + community water supply definition added
2.4.10.4 Protection of Arch Sites	Tech	Identifying Archaeological branch as first step when arch material is found
2.4.12 Dark Skies	LTC	Additional dark skies policies added
2.4.14/2.7.1 Subdivision	Staff	Updates based on legal advice.
2.5.6.2 Rural Residential	Staff	Clarification re: location of permitted lots in freshwater hazard area
2.5.6.3. Rural Residential	Tech	Updated for clarity
2.5.4.3 Agriculture	CM/Tech	Specification re: housing for farming purposes
2.5.14 Aggregate Deposit	Staff/LTC	Policies reworded so that within LTC jurisdiction
2.5.15.6 Marine	LTC	Policy re: large-scale water supply infrastructure not to be considered added
2.6.2 Amendments re: preservation + protection of environment	LTC	Dark skies policy added
2.6.3 Responsible Resource Stewardship	CM	Freshwater management plan definition added to definitions
2.6.3.4 Responsible Stewardship	Staff	Added exception for conservation purposes.
2.7.1 Rezoning for Subdivision	Staff/LTC	Updated based on legal review and community amenities for clearly defined
2.7.2.2 Multi-unit housing	LTC	Policy limiting number of units per hectare has been removed/
2.7.2.5 Multi-unit housing	Tech	Clarification that multi-unit housing includes clustered detached housing
Appendix 2	CM/LTC	Parks and protected areas map updated
Policy to prohibit heavy industry	LTC	Staff reviewed existing policy and determined that as currently written heavy industry is not permitted.
Dwelling Definitions updated	CM/Staff	Definitions related to dwelling units have been updated to provide more clarity. These definitions are consistent with definitions being encouraged across the Islands Trust area.
Flex Option	Staff/LTC	Added to Ag and Forestry

Throughout	ALL	Numbering update (max 4 places).. still needs review
Throughout	CM/LTC	“preserve” added to “protect” to reflect connection to Islands Trust mandate
Throughout	Tech	“moderate” replaces “medium” and “middle” in reference to income
Throughout	Tech	
Throughout	Tech	All instances of “regulation” “land use bylaws” replaced by “land use regulations” for consistency where appropriate.
Throughout	Tech	Redundancy removed
Schedule Maps	Tech	Staff have included higher resolution maps, and maps will be refined prior to September to have consistent formatting and incorporate other updates as necessary.

Additional Feedback Received:

A number of comments have been submitted by the community since the LTC’s July meeting. In addition, Gabriola Talks held an engagement session on water. This feedback has been reviewed by staff. Where comments were technical in nature, changes have been made to the OCP. In a number of cases feedback was outside the jurisdiction of the LTC or the scope of the project and in other cases the feedback was more substantive and requires LTC discussion and decision. A brief summary of feedback is provided below. Questions emerging from feedback, unresolved questions and additional staff questions are presented following the summary of feedback. Staff note that feedback received after July 30th has not been considered in this report given the report deadline of July 30th. However, staff will identify any additional feedback at the August 6th meeting to provide the opportunity for it to be considered by the LTC prior to 1st reading.

General Community Feedback:

Since the July meeting individual comments on the OCP have encouraged further technical edits as well as interest in addressing concerns regarding proposed density provisions, home occupation policies, and short-term vacation rentals. Some respondents expressed concern that potential increases in density could result in significant impacts on Gabriola Island’s freshwater resources, transportation systems, healthcare, emergency services, and other community services. It has been suggested that growth should be limited to what can be supported by the island’s ecological and servicing capacity. There were also concerns related to regulating short-term vacation rentals as well as the need for more stringent policies related to the preservation and protection of trees.

Gabriola Talks Water Engagement:

Feedback received through the Gabriola Talks Water engagement session highlighted strong community interest in ensuring that future land use decisions are guided by freshwater availability, ecosystem capacity, and climate resilience. Participants recommended that the OCP recognize that water demand is primarily influenced by population and occupancy rather than dwelling size alone, and that additional housing density or flexible housing options should be considered in relation to demonstrated freshwater supply, wastewater capacity, habitat impacts, and groundwater vulnerability. Participants also identified the importance of protecting groundwater recharge areas, forests, wetlands, and other ecosystems that contribute to long-term freshwater sustainability.

Participants expressed broad support for increased use of rainwater capture and freshwater storage systems for new development, particularly in areas experiencing water stress, while recognizing the need to address affordability, system design, and education. Improved freshwater monitoring and data collection were also identified as priorities, including better understanding of groundwater withdrawals, water imports, and overall freshwater demand. Overall, the engagement emphasized the need for strong freshwater-focused policies, informed by reliable data and climate change considerations, to balance housing needs, community resilience, and protection of Gabriola Island’s natural systems.

Staff feel that much of the interests shared are supported by the OCP draft where possible. Things like limiting occupancy are not easy to regulate within Islands Trust jurisdiction.

Questions for LTC:

Below are some of the questions that have emerged since the July meeting. The LTC is invited to add more questions to the list for discussion. The LTC will need to provide direction to staff regarding each question discussed in order to support the drafting of the bylaw for first reading.

Table 2:

Question	Why is this a Question
Should park designations permit a caretaker’s dwelling?	Caretakers dwelling is not currently permitted. It was pointed out that one exists in Descanso Bay Regional Park. Should they be permitted in other parks?
Does the LTC want to keep policy 2.6.1.2 related to cultural heritage protection?	Staff initially introduced this policy. May be difficult to demonstrate compliance and “Indigenous heritage values” may be difficult to define.
Does the LTC support the fragmentation of agricultural land through subdivision if the land being subdivided is being donated for environmental conservation purposes?	Staff have added an exception to policy 2.6.3.4 for discussion.
Does the LTC want to support there being no detached secondary dwelling unit in agriculture designation within freshwater hazard (FWHA)?	OCP draft is currently written to restrict the secondary dwelling unit to an attached unit within the FWHA. This is the only place where density that currently existing (one secondary suite and one detached unit) is being taken away (removal of detached secondary unit permission in FWHA)
Does the LTC support the options to cisterns for new builds as identified in 2.4.9.2?	In July the LTC asked if staff could consider how options to cisterns for freshwater catchment and storage could be integrated.
Does the LTC want to limit number of B&B occupants?	This was a question brought up by a community member.
Does the LTC support the flexible housing policies with details related to potential number of units and max floor area being contained in the oCP? Does LTC also support a max number of flexible housing dwellings? What number?	The ability to rezone for additional units is a concern that has been raised by a number of community members.
Does the LTC want a description of the use of “should”, “may”, “must” and other similar words defined in the OCP?	These words has been questioned throughout the community review of the OCP draft.

Rationale for Recommendation

This project has involved extensive community consultation. The LTC has worked with staff to address interests and concerns to the extent possible within the boundaries of the LTC jurisdiction while considering a balanced approach to addressing housing need while preserving and protecting the environment. The September LTC meeting is the last opportunity for the LTC to provide First Reading prior to the election of a new LTC. First Reading will demonstrate the LTC's endorsement of the draft OCP and provide a starting point for the legislative process required for the OCP to be approved.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Direct staff to make additional changes to the draft OCP.

The LTC can direct staff to make additional changes to the OCP. Staff will incorporate the suggested changes into the OCP draft for First Reading.

2. Delay first reading of the OCP and replace with additional discussion of option in September

If the LTC is not feeling confident that they can move to first reading without further discussion, they could choose to delay First Reading. In this case, the September LTC meeting would be used to continue the discussion on amendments to the draft OCP. The LTC should keep in mind that First Reading is an opportunity to fully endorse the draft before the election of a new LTC. There will still be opportunity for changes to be made prior to public hearing which is not anticipated to happen until spring 2027.

NEXT STEPS

If the LTC supports staff recommendation:

- Staff will update the OCP and prepare the bylaw for First Reading
- OCP bylaw will be read for the first time.
- Staff will format the bylaw and address numbering issues following first reading
- Bylaws will be sent out for 90 day referral
- There will be opportunity for the community to provide comments on the draft bylaw up until second public hearing
- Second Reading
- Public hearing
- Third Reading
- Approval by EC
- Approval by Province
- Final approval of LTC

Submitted By:	Narissa Chadwick RPP, Island Planner	July 29, 2026
Concurrence:	Stephen Baugh, Acting Regional Planning Manager	July 29, 2026

ATTACHMENTS

Draft OCP



Islands Trust

DRAFT

**Gabriola Island
Official Community
Plan
2026**

Table of Contents

SCHEDULE A	6
1 PART ONE.....	6
1.1 Purpose, Structure and Application	6
Purpose of an Official Community Plan	6
Plan Structure	6
Legislative Authority	7
Amendment Procedure.....	7
Interpretation	7
1.2 Community Context	8
Location.....	8
Indigenous Context and Settlement History.....	9
Population and Demographics.....	11
Housing and Services Needs.....	12
Groundwater Resources.....	12
Natural Environment and Biodiversity.....	13
Local Economy and Income Levels	14
Transportation and Connectivity	15
Community Spaces	15
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space	15
1.3 Land Use Planning Context.....	17
Policy Layers	17
1.3.2 Legislative Framework	17
1.3.3 The Islands Trust.....	18
1.3.4 The Development of the Plan	20
1.4 Guiding Vision, Values and Goals.....	22
Community Vision	22
Community Values	2323

PART TWO	24
2.1 Using This Plan	24
2.1.1 Policy Structure	24
2.2 Goals and Objectives	25
2.2.1 Integrating First Nations Interests	25
2.2.2 Preservation and Protection of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity.....	26
2.2.3 Responsible Resource Stewardship.....	26
2.2.4 Community Resilience and Climate Readiness	27
2.2.5 Diversity and Community Wellbeing	28
2.2.6 Collaboration, Transparency, and Shared Responsibility.....	29
2.3Climate Action	30
2.3.1 Climate Mitigation Targets (Reducing GHG Emissions):	30
2.3.2 Climate Adaptation Targets (Increasing Climate Resilience) :	31
2.4 Land and Marine General Policies	32
2.4.2 Home Occupation Use Policies	33
2.4.3 Boarding Homes and Supportive Home Care	3434
2.4.4 Trails and Parks.....	34
2.4.5 Marine Access	34
2.4.6 Commercial and Industrial.....	3534
2.4.6 Agricultural Use	3535
2.4.7 Aggregate Extraction	35
2.4.8 Cemeteries and Green Burial.....	35
2.4.9 Freshwater Sustainability	35
2.4.10 Protection of Archaeological Sites	3636
2.4.11 Fire Safety.....	36
2.4.12 Dark Skies.....	3736
2.4.13 General Siting and Use	3737
2.4.14 Subdivision	37
2.5 Land Use Designations.....	39
2.5.1 Park (P)	39
2.5.2 Conservation (C)	40
2.5.3 Small Island Stewardship (SI)	40
2.5.4 Agriculture (A)	40
2.5. Forest Protection (FP)	41

2.5.6 Rural Residential (RR).....	42
2.5.7 Multi-Unit Residential (MUR)	42
2.5.8 General Commercial Policies	43
2.5.9 Village Commercial (VC)	43
2.5.10 Secondary Commercial (SC).....	44
2.5.11 Tourist Commercial (TC).....	44
2.5.12 Institutional (IN)	4545
2.5.13 Industrial (I)	45
2.5.14 Aggregate Deposit (AD).....	46
2.5.15 Marine	46
2.5.16 Ferry Terminal (FT).....	4848
2.6 General Policies Related to Amendments to the Plan and Land Use Bylaw.....	49
2.6.1. Integrating First Nations Interests	49
2.6.2 Preservation and Protection of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity	50
2.6.3 Responsible Resource Stewardship.....	5150
2.6.4 Community Resilience and Climate Readiness	51
2.6.5 Community Diversity and Wellbeing	52
2.7 Change in Use and Density Bylaw Amendments Types.....	53
2.7.1 Rezoning for Subdivision	53
2.7.2 Residential	54
2.7.3 Commercial and Tourism	5655
2.7.4 Agriculture	56
2.7.5 Forest Land.....	56
2.8.1 General Policies.....	5758
2.8 Development Variance Permits.....	58
2.9 Crown Lease Referrals	5858
2.10 Temporary Use Permit Applications	5859
2.11 Development Permit Areas.....	5959

PART THREE.....	60
3.1 Using Development Approval Information	60
3.2 Implementing the Freshwater Footprint	61
3.3 Implementing New Development Permit Areas and Heritage Conservation Areas	61
3.3.1 Priority Development Permit Areas	61
3.3.2 Heritage Conservation Areas	63
3.4 Advocacy	64
3.4.1 Integrating First Nations Interests	64
3.4.2 Preservation and Protection of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity	66
3.4.3 Responsible Resource Stewardship.....	68
3.4.4.5 Community Resilience and Climate Readiness	70
3.4.5 Diversity and Community Wellbeing	74
3.4.6 Collaboration, Transparency, and Shared Responsibility	77
4.5 Implementation Plan	78
ADDITIONAL SCHEDULES	79
Schedule B – Land Use Designation Map.....	79
Schedule C – Development Permit Areas	80
Schedule D – Freshwater Hazard Map.....	82
Schedule E – Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas	83
APPENDICES	84
Appendix 1- Definitions	84
Appendix 2– Parks and Protected Areas	87
Appendix 3- Land Status.....	88

SCHEDULE A – OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

1 . PART ONE

Planning Context, Community Profile, Vision and Values

1.1 Purpose, Structure and Application

Purpose of an Official Community Plan

An Official Community Plan's legal purpose is to provide a statement of objectives and policies that guide decisions related to land use planning. In the Gabriola Planning Area, this Plan fulfills that purpose for the defined area and is an expression of the community's vision. It supports land and water stewardship through place-based planning that reflects the Islands Trust mandate, the community's values, and recognizes the responsibilities of Indigenous Peoples to their territories. This Plan is the result of an Official Community Plan (OCP) review process that took place 2024-2026.

Plan Structure

This plan is divided into four main parts:

PART 1 – Provides the planning context, the community profile, community vision and values.

PART 2 – Includes goals and objectives, climate targets, land use designations, OCP and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) amendment evaluation policies and criteria.

PART 3 – Includes an identification of tools for supporting the implementation of Plan goals and objectives as well as advocacy directions.

ADDITIONAL SCHEDULES – Maps

APPENDIX – Includes definitions relevant to OCP as well as reference maps

Legislative Authority

Once adopted by bylaw, this Plan becomes an OCP which thereafter restricts the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee (Gabriola LTC) to enact only those bylaws and undertake only that work which is consistent with the OCP.

Amendment Procedure

This Bylaw may be amended by the Trust Committee at its initiative or in response to an application. Individuals seeking amendment shall submit applications in the form provided for in the bylaws of the Trust Committee that addresses fees and procedures. All amendments to this Plan shall be in keeping with the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Interpretation

The final interpretation as to the precise location of boundaries of any designation or symbol contained in the map schedules, shall be legally defined by the appropriate LUBs enacted over time by the Trust Committee or by site survey, as required.

The exact location and extent of environmental symbols and boundaries in this Plan will be determined through more detailed studies, policy decisions or LUB amendments. The precise boundaries of the land use designations are shown on Schedule B and the precise boundaries of DPA designations are shown on Schedule C.

Appendix A to this Plan provides a set of definitions which apply to the interpretation of this Plan.

1.2 Community Context

Gabriola Island’s planning context is defined by its rural island setting, ecological sensitivity, cultural significance, and strong community identity. These characteristics, combined with infrastructure constraints and evolving demographic and economic conditions, shape land use planning and underscore the importance of balancing growth with environmental stewardship and community well-being.

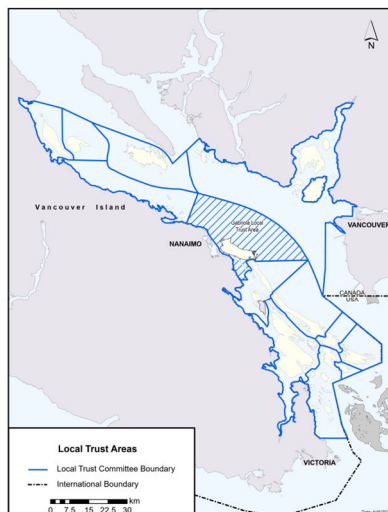
Location

This Plan applies to the Gabriola Island Planning Area (Plan Area) (Map 1). The Plan Area, covers Gabriola, Breakwater and Entrance Island, and the group of nine smaller islets known as the Flat Top Islands (see highlighted areas on Map 2) and is a part of the Islands Trust Planning Area (see Map 1).

Gabriola Island, and related islands in the Plan Area, is a rural island community located in the Salish Sea between Vancouver Island and the British Columbia mainland. One of the northernmost Southern Gulf Islands.

Gabriola encompasses approximately 5,256 hectares and is situated within Electoral Area B of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). The island is connected to the City of Nanaimo by a 20-minute ferry crossing, which shapes daily travel patterns, access to services, employment opportunities, and economic relationships. Governance and service provision on Gabriola Island involve multiple jurisdictions, including Islands Trust, the Snuneymuxw First Nation, RDN, the Province of British Columbia, Island Health, and School District 68.

Map 1: Gabriola Local Trust Area



Map 2: Gabriola Planning Area



Indigenous Context (UNDER REVIEW)

The lands and waters of Gabriola Island Local Trust Area and other islands within the Islands Trust Area have been home to Coast Salish Peoples since time immemorial. This region is rich with history, place names, historical village locations, ancestral resting places, and other culturally significant sites. The Indigenous cultural history of the Islands Trust Area is preserved in Indigenous languages, traditions, oral history, and landscapes.

The Gabriola Island Local Trust Area acknowledges the territorial and treaty rights of the First Nations on whose lands Gabriola Island sits, including the Sarléquun Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854. First Nations have a vital, long-standing, and forward-thinking interest in preserving their history and protecting the environment of their traditional territories and treaty lands for future generations. Strengthening relationships with the First Nations in the area to ensure meaningful engagement in land use decisions is also a key priority.

Today, the Snuneymuxw First Nation remains present on Gabriola Island, with their Tribal Headquarters located in Nanaimo and Reserve lands spread across the island and surrounding area. The ongoing connection between the Snuneymuxw and the land underscores the importance of collaboration and mutual respect in land stewardship and governance. The Gabriola Local Trust Committee is committed to supporting these efforts.

Throughout Snuneymuxw Territory, including Gabriola Island, numerous archaeological sites demonstrate the Nation's deep-rooted and enduring presence. Villages such as Tle:ltx'w, along with shell middens, petroglyphs, culturally modified trees, and other features, illustrates Snuneymuxw's dynamic relationships with its territory since time immemorial.

Cultural shell deposits, for example, are often found near ancient coastal or riverine settlements and provide valuable insights into the diet, lifestyle, and environment of past human communities. Cultural shell deposits can indicate long-term habitation as they reflect repeated shellfish harvesting and consumption over time. They also often include artifacts and eco-facts that help to understand the cultural and subsistence practices of the people who created them.

The broader history of Gabriola Island includes waves of change from its original Indigenous nation to European exploration and ongoing settlement. Snuneymuxw resource management practices such as culturally modified trees, shellfish gardens and forest gardens were strategically placed for sustainable and plentiful resource cultivation indicate Snuneymuxw's impact on the island, in the modern and colonial context, the island's landscape was significantly changed by developments such as farming, population growth, advancements in transportation (such as increased ferry services and road development) and influences of land use regulations and global trends.

With the expansion of settlement on Gabriola Island, impacts on Snuneymuxw cultural heritage and occupation became increasingly significant. The absence of adequate

recognition of Snuneymuxw title and limited cultural protection during residential expansion led to the disturbance - and in some cases, the desecration and destruction of important archaeological and cultural sites, including the displacement of ancestral remains. These impacts highlight the critical importance of proactive heritage protection, culturally informed planning processes, co-decision making, and respectful engagement with Snuneymuxw First Nation and other Nations with connections to Gabriola Island.

This Plan acknowledges a historical disregard for and lack of protection of the collective heritage of the area for Indigenous Peoples. All archaeological sites are protected by the Provincial Government through the *Heritage Conservation Act*. This protection applies to all lands and means that any person wishing to undertake land-altering activities must have a provincial heritage permit to alter or develop an archaeological site.

Settlement Timeline:

Time Immemorial - First Nations inhabited what we now call Gabriola Island with permanent and seasonal village settlements, the largest of which was at Tle:ltx'w, with archeological records and evidence dating as far back as ~3,000 BCE.

1791 - Spanish explorers sight Gabriola Island and begin occupying the land the following year, they would call the island Gaviola, later changed to Gabriola

1854 - The Sarlequun Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854 between the Snuneymuxw and the Crown recognized the Snuneymuxw way of life and established Aboriginal Title

Early 20th Century - 1901 Census reports: 20 married farmers (most with children); 5 widows or widowers with children; 6 single male farmers

1940 - Across North America post WWII migration contributed to an increase urban to rural migration. 1940 Census reports: 275 total population on Gabriola Island

1962 - The Government of British Columbia's Toll Highways and Bridges Authority purchased the Gabriola Ferry Company which allowed the Island more reliable and regular ferry services to Nanaimo. Census reports the approximate population on Gabriola Island in 1971 at 380

1965 - The Sarlequun Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854 was upheld in the BC Supreme Court of Appeal Regina V. White & Bob case, reaffirming that Snuneymuxw right were never surrendered

1974 - The Islands Trust Act was passed by the Provincial Government with the Object of Islands Trust to preserve and protect the Islands Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment

1981 – Census reports island population to be at 1,000

1998 – Snuneymuxw First Nation issues statement regarding protection of lands and sacred sites on Gabriola Island and urges the provincial government and citizens of Gabriola to respect Snuneymuxw burial sites

2010s – Approximate census population: 4,076, census 2011. Gabriola Island experienced a 15% increase in real estate values

2017 - BC Ferries introduced a new ferry service which improved the frequency and reliability of ferry services between Gabriola Island and Nanaimo

2019 - Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) came into effect as law of British Columbia. The purpose of this Act is to affirm the application of UNDRIP to the laws of British Columbia and to contribute to the implementation of UNDRIP

2019 - Snuneymuxw -Government of Canada: Letter of Understanding Snuneymuxw and the Government of Canada signed a Letter of Understanding, which commits both parties “to move forward together to renew and strengthen the historic treaty relationship and take the next step on meaningful reconciliation of governance and rights of the Snuneymuxw peoples”, which represents an important step towards reconciliation in a manner consistent with UNDRIP

2020 - The rise in remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic allowed more individuals to relocate to rural areas

Population and Demographics

Gabriola Island’s population has grown steadily since the mid-20th century, influenced by improved ferry service, broader societal shifts, and more recently, increased remote work opportunities. According to the 2021 Census, the year-round population was approximately 4,522, representing an increase of 11.6 percent since 2016, with additional seasonal residents not fully captured in census data. The population is significantly older than regional and provincial averages, with a median age of 63 and more than half of residents between the ages of 55 and 74. These demographic trends have important implications for housing diversity, accessibility, health and social services, transportation, and long-term community resilience.

Population projections anticipate continued growth over the coming decades. Population projections to 2030 and 2045 were prepared using multiple methods. Linear, logarithmic, and regional step-down approaches all project modest growth, estimating a population of approximately 4,800 by 2030 (about 6% growth from 2021) and 5,000 – 5,200 by 2045 (11%-15% growth from 2021), equivalent to an annual growth rate of roughly ~0.4 – 0.6%.

While projections are estimates are subject to challenge based on methodology and can change overtime, growth is trending upward. Planning for future growth must therefore balance

accommodating change with the island’s environmental limits, infrastructure capacity, and community values.

Housing and Services Needs

The BC Provincial Government requires all local governments in BC to consider its most recent Housing Needs Report and housing information when amending OCPs. Based on the Islands Trust Housing Needs Assessment prepared in 2025, the projected housing need in the next five years is 367 additional housing units and 1,196 additional housing units in the next twenty years. ~~This assessment was calculated based on a portion of growth projects of the Nanaimo Region that does not consider the unique nature of the Islands. It has limited value to planning for housing Gabriola Island. The population projections identified above provide a more realistic estimation of housing need. In addition,~~ Given the freshwater limitations and interests in preserving and protecting the environment on the island the provision of housing should be limited, and focussed on the type of housing that is needed most – non-market housing accessible to attainable by low and moderate middle income residents.

Gabriola Island currently has approximately 589 vacant residentially zoned lots, however this does not suggest that true housing needs will be adequately addressed. A limited rental supply, rising property costs, and a growing proportion of residents on fixed or lower incomes has contributed to housing insecurity. The portion of households that experience core housing need ¹ (270 units as indicated in 2021 Census), and projected population growth, combined with demographic aging, points to increasing demand for more diverse, accessible, and affordable housing options. Market conditions and affordability challenges limit the ability of existing housing supply to meet community needs.

Essential services further shape land use planning decisions. Land within the Plan Area, including Gabriola Island, relies primarily on groundwater for water supply, which is sensitive to seasonal variation and drought conditions. Many residents supplement their water supply during dry periods. Wastewater services are provided primarily through private septic systems, water and waste service limitation impose practical limits on development intensity and location.

Groundwater Resources

Groundwater is an essential freshwater resource in the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area and an integrated component of the island’s natural ecosystems. Gabriola is underlain by fractured sedimentary bedrock aquifers within the Nanaimo Group. Aquifers store and transmit groundwater through fractures and related pathways and contribute to springs, wetlands, streams, and coastal

¹ When a private household’s housing falls below at least one of the indicator thresholds for housing adequacy, affordability or suitability, and it spends 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (i.e., attains all three housing indicator thresholds).

discharge zones. Groundwater supports human use, watershed function, and groundwater-dependent freshwater ecosystems.

Groundwater is the primary source of freshwater for most properties in the Plan Area, including Gabriola Island. Provincial well records indicate a high level of groundwater development, with over 2500 registered wells on the island, most constructed in sedimentary bedrock and are privately owned and managed. Groundwater supplies most domestic demand and is relied upon by agriculture, businesses, institutions, industry, and small water systems. Groundwater is a critical community amenity that supports rural settlement, local livelihood, and use of the land, while placing practical limits on the density and intensity of development.

Groundwater has a central role in the freshwater assessment work completed for Gabriola Island. The Freshwater Footprint project, prepared for the Gabriola LTC, included an updated conceptual and hydrostratigraphic model, a water balance assessment, and a freshwater hazard assessment. The Freshwater Footprint considered groundwater use relative to recharge, key water quality indicators such as chloride and total dissolved solids, and freshwater hazards including saltwater intrusion. The results confirm that freshwater conditions on Gabriola must be understood in terms of both groundwater quantity and groundwater quality and that these conditions vary across the island.

Climate change is expected to increase stress on groundwater resources in the Local Trust Area. Changes in precipitation patterns, warmer temperatures, longer summer dry periods, and more frequent drought conditions are expected to affect recharge, seasonal water availability, and freshwater demand. Sea level rise and coastal processes may further increase saltwater intrusion risk in vulnerable shoreline areas. In this context, protection of aquifers, recharge areas, groundwater quality, and groundwater-dependent ecosystems is important to long-term freshwater security, ecological resilience, and land use planning for the Plan Area.

Currently the availability of groundwater can, in certain areas be variable in especially dry seasons; wells can and do fail, resulting in situations where freshwater must come from alternate sources. Rainwater harvesting over water delivery is encouraged.

Natural Environment and Biodiversity

The natural environment of the Plan Area is a defining feature of community identity and land use planning. The island is underlain primarily by sedimentary rock formations of the Nanaimo Group, influencing groundwater movement, erosion patterns, and freshwater availability. The Trust Area is located within the Coastal Douglas-fir moist maritime Bio geoclimatic Zone, which is found nowhere else in Canada and is one of the an ecologically sensitive area.

Approximately 12 percent of the island's land base is protected through parks, conserved lands, and conservation covenants, reflecting only a small fraction of the ecological sensitivity of island ecosystems and the importance of long-term stewardship. Data presented in the Islands Trust Conservancy Regional Conservation Plan for 2018-2027 indicated that the amount of land conversion in the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area was approaching the threshold for increased species loss within ecosystem types. In total there are 16.3 hectares of land protected by

conservation covenant. The Islands Trust Conservancy protects the 65-hectare Elder Cedar (S'ulhween X'pey) Nature Reserve, a site of significant ecological and cultural value.

The Plan Area supports diverse terrestrial and marine species, including marine mammals, fish, invertebrates, and kelp forests, contributing to ecosystem resilience within the Salish Sea. Multiple species and ecosystems at risk and culturally significant species are found on land as well, with habitat requirements ranging from old growth forests to Garry oak ecosystems to wet meadows and seepage areas. Federally and provincially protected species include plants (bog bird's foot trefoil, Macoun's meadow-foam), birds (marbled murrelet, western screech-owl, great blue heron, peregrine falcon, double-crested cormorant) and butterflies (Moss' elfin, Propertius duskywing). Endangered ecosystems include Douglas-fir/dull Oregon grape, grand fir/dull Oregon grape, and trembling aspen/Pacific crab-apple/slough sedge.

Habitat loss and degradation through land conversion and development is a common threat for all these species, along with competition from invasive species, pollution and other contaminants, and climate change. Large scale industrial logging and gravel sandstone extraction had huge impacts on the biodiversity, and clear cutting of forests during the early 1900s for homesteading and agriculture altered much of the landscape and natural water flows.

Local Economy and Income Levels

Land use on Gabriola Island reflects a mix of residential, agricultural, forestry, commercial, industrial, and protected lands. Agricultural land represents a significant portion of the island's land base and supports food production, local livelihoods, and food security, although this system is increasingly vulnerable to climate change and biodiversity loss. Forestry and mining remain economic drivers. A big driver of the economy is new residential construction and renovation.

The island's economy also includes small-scale, locally oriented businesses, including tourism, arts and culture, agriculture, retail, and service industries. Home-based businesses are common and play an important role in economic vitality. Limited industrial activity includes light manufacturing, renewable energy, and specialty production. Housing affordability has emerged as a significant constraint on economic sustainability, with local businesses reporting challenges in attracting and retaining employees due to limited housing options.

In the 2021 census, the median income on Gabriola Island was \$34,400 for individuals and \$78,000 for households with two or more people. Approximately 15% of the island's population was considered low income in 2020, compared to an estimated 11% average for British Columbia. Of those classified as low income, 28.7% were aged 18 to 64. In 2022, 21% of Gabriola Island residents relied on government transfers for income, compared to the RDN (16%) and British Columbia as a whole (11%).

Transportation and Connectivity

With over 150 kilometres of roads and minimal active transportation infrastructure, Gabriola Island is considered a highly car-dependent community, with walkability largely concentrated in key areas such as the village commercial area. The majority of the roads on the Island are built and maintained by the Province.

Public transportation is available on Gabriola Island. The GERTIE bus, operated by the Gabriola Community Bus Foundation, provides regular reliable service in all areas of the island. Most residents rely on private vehicles to get around the island. – BC Ferries is the most common means for drivers and foot passengers to travel beyond Gabriola.

The island is home to one federal government dock and two private marinas offering highly valued anchorage in the Salish Sea. Float plane service to and from Gabriola to Vancouver is regularly scheduled.

—Community Spaces

Community spaces and recreational amenities play an important role in supporting health, social connection, and quality of life. Many parks, trails, and recreation facilities are supported by community organizations, these amenities are widely used and contribute to high levels of community engagement. Spaces such as the Gabriola Branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library, Gabriola Arts and Heritage Centre, the Community Hall, the Agricultural Hall, Gabriola Museum, Rollo Centre, and the Gabriola Commons serve as important gathering places, offering accessible venues for social, educational, and cultural activities across age groups.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Parks and outdoor recreation areas are an essential extension of Gabriola Island’s community spaces, supporting health, social connection, and quality of life. Given limited transportation options and the island’s reliance on outdoor amenities, access to parks, trails, and waterfront areas is particularly important. Parks and protected areas currently comprise approximately 12% of Gabriola’s land base, a level considered insufficient to meet current and future community and ecological needs.

Parkland on Gabriola Island is provided primarily by BC Parks and the RDN (RDN). Three Class “A” Provincial Parks -Drumbeg, Gabriola Sands, and Sandwell - support coastal and nature-based recreation, while community and regional parks provide locally and regionally significant open space. Community parks are funded locally, while regional parks are funded across the RDN.

Outdoor recreation opportunities extend beyond formal park boundaries and include courts, playing fields, school sites used for recreation, a privately operated golf course, public road ends, Crown foreshore access, and an extensive trail network. While the Islands Trust does not manage

park operations, this Plan recognizes the importance of parks and open space and includes objectives and policies to guide their future protection and enhancement.

Growth Management

Gabriola Island is expected to continue experiencing modest population growth over the coming decades. Population growth on the island presents unique challenges where freshwater resources, ecosystem integrity, transportation, wastewater servicing, and emergency response capacity place practical limits on development. Unlike municipalities that may accommodate growth through major infrastructure expansion, Gabriola's capacity for growth is largely determined by the carrying capacity of its natural systems and the availability of essential services.

The Islands Trust Act establishes the preservation and protection of the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment as the primary objective for land use planning. Land use planning on Gabriola Island can not focus on maximizing development potential, but must carefully manage the location, form, and pace of development so that it remains within the ecological limits of the island, to the largest extent possible, while supporting community well-being.

Population growth and housing demand are influenced by factors that extend beyond local government control. People continue to relocate to Gabriola Island because of its natural beauty, rural character, and quality of life. Where appropriate housing options are unavailable, some residents have resorted to living in unauthorized or informal forms of accommodation that may not meet health, safety, or building standards. Limiting new housing opportunities has not prevented population growth or housing demand; instead, it has contributed to affordability challenges and a shortage of suitable housing for many residents.

A balanced approach to growth management recognizes both the environmental limits of the island and the need to respond to changing community needs. Growth needs to be directed toward better aligning the existing housing supply with identified community needs. Priority should be placed on attainable, non-market, and workforce housing that enables the people who provide essential services, -including health care workers, teachers, tradespeople, service workers, land use planners, emergency responders, and others - to live on the island and not have to commute. Supporting these housing needs contributes to the long-term resilience and sustainability of the community while respecting the island's finite freshwater resources and sensitive ecosystems.

Environmental capacity remains the foundation for land use planning in the Trust Area. Future growth should make efficient use of existing developed areas, protect groundwater resources, sensitive ecosystems, agricultural lands, and the island's rural character, and carefully consider cumulative impacts on infrastructure and the natural environment. In this way, growth management seeks to balance environmental stewardship with the social and economic needs of a healthy, resilient island community.

1.3 Land Use Planning Context

Policy Layers

This Plan works alongside the LUB to shape community informed decisions about how land and marine areas are protected, restored, used and/or developed.

“Land use planning” is a commonly used legal and professional term, though it originates in colonial approaches to land control and ownership that have been harmful to Indigenous Peoples and the natural environment. The term is used in this document to describe the statutory planning framework set out in the *Local Government Act* and the *Islands Trust Act*, and Gabriola Island’s inclusion in the Islands Trust governance structure.

As such, this plan is aligned with Islands Trust object and the Islands Trust Policy Statement, is consistent with the requirements set out in the *Local Government Act*, as well as being grounded in a set of community values. These priorities and values support community resilience in a changing climate through the protection of biodiversity, responsible resource stewardship, and a commitment to reconciliation.

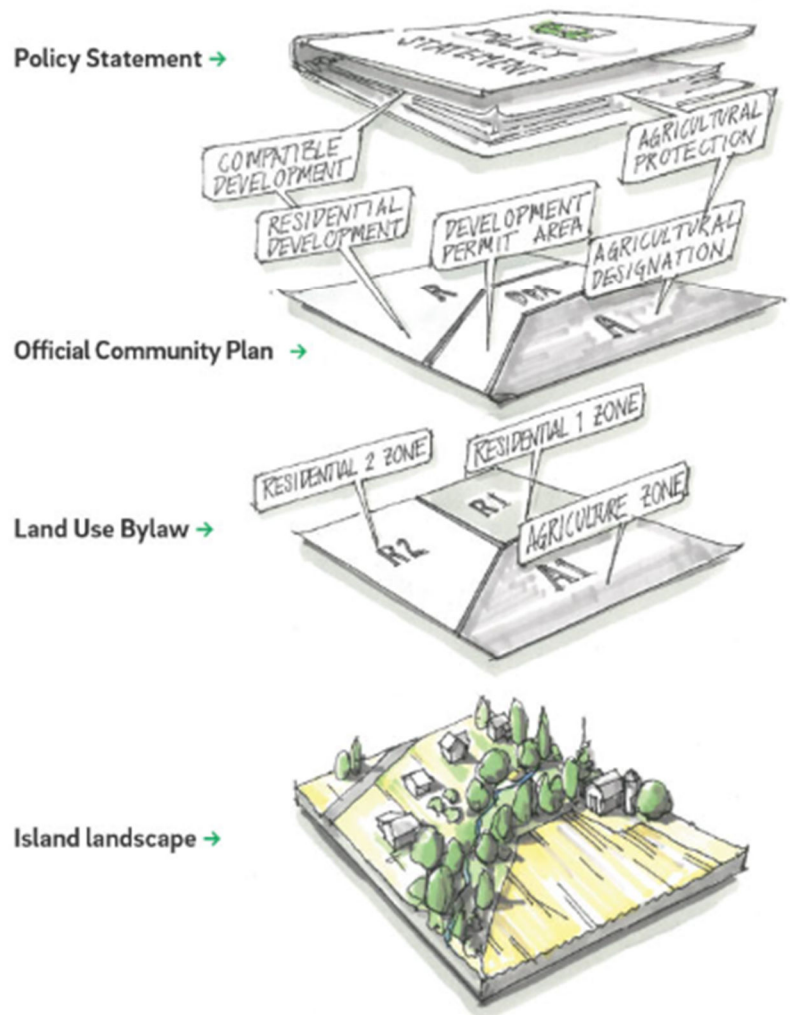


Figure1: Policy Layers

1.3.2 Legislative Framework

The *Local Government Act* (LGA) governs the process whereby a local government can prepare and adopt an OCP. The LGA outlines policy statements and requirements that the OCP must include, as well as policies that the Gabriola LTC may choose to include in the OCP.

Once an OCP has been adopted, all decisions related to planning, subdivision, development, and land use matters must conform to the OCP. In accordance with the LGA, the OCP should be

reviewed and updated every five years, incorporating public engagement to ensure that it continues to represent community objectives and addresses important and emerging issues and trends as they evolve over time.

The LGA outlines the required OCP content applicable to the Islands Trust Area is as follows:

- **Land Use:** Statements and map designations identifying the approximate location, amount, type, and density of residential development to meet anticipated housing needs over at least a 20-year period, and the approximate location, amount, and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational, and public utility land uses.
- **Natural Resources, Environment, and Hazard Lands:** Identification of the approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits suitable for future extraction where such deposits exist, and policies and restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or is environmentally sensitive to development.
- **Infrastructure and Public Facilities:** Identification of the approximate location of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks, and disposal sites.
- **Housing:** Policies respecting affordable housing, rental housing, and special needs housing, consideration of the most recent Housing Needs Report when developing or amending the OCP.
- **Climate Change:** Targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions within the plan area, and policies and actions proposed to achieve those targets.
- **Provincial Policy Context:** Consideration of applicable provincial policy guidelines.

1.3.3 The Islands Trust

In 1974, the Government of British Columbia established the *Islands Trust Act* to preserve and protect the Islands Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment against unrestrained growth and development. Islands Trust is a federated body responsible for the Trust Area, comprised of 13 major islands, more than 450 smaller islands, and the surrounding waters in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound. Islands Trust regulates local land use, works with other levels of government, and ~~through~~ the Islands Trust Conservancy ~~to preserve and~~; protects places of natural or cultural significance. This unique governmental mandate is defined in Section 3 of the *Islands Trust Act* and is commonly referred to as the “Islands Trust Object.”

The object of the Islands Trust, established by British Columbia law, is to “*preserve and protect the Trust Area (islands and waters) and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of residents of the Trust Area and British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, First Nations, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.*”

Islands Trust Priorities

The “Islands Trust Object” is expressed through the Islands Trust Policy Statement. The themes of environmental protection, reconciliation with Indigenous People, addressing climate change and housing affordability are also key priorities across the Islands Trust and are described through three declarations of Islands Trust Council.

Environmental Protection This legislated mandate of the Islands Trust Council recognizes the ecological sensitivity of island environments and the importance of long-term stewardship. Land use planning plays a central role in achieving this objective by guiding growth and development in ways that preserve and protect ecosystems, freshwater resources, coastal processes, biodiversity, and the natural features that support community well-being and island character.

Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples – In 2019, the Islands Trust Council adopted the *Islands Trust Reconciliation Declaration*, affirming a commitment to advancing reconciliation within its mandate and decision-making processes. For the purposes of this plan, reconciliation means planning and managing land in ways that respect First Nations’ enduring relationships to their territories, acknowledging the past and ongoing impacts of colonial land use systems, and supporting respectful, collaborative approaches to decision-making. This includes early and meaningful engagement, recognition of Indigenous rights and interests, and the integration of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into planning processes to help ensure that land use decisions support cultural continuity, stewardship responsibilities, and community well-being.

Climate Change – The *Local Government Act* requires all OCPs to contain GHG reduction targets, policies and actions. In 2019 the Islands Trust Council declared a climate change emergency. Gabriola residents are experiencing the impacts of climate change with increased drought periods and shifts in biodiversity such as the increasing loss of Western Red Cedar trees. Average global temperatures are now more than 1.4 °C warmer than pre-industrial levels, with the past decade being the warmest on record and recent years among the hottest ever documented; this warming is linked to rising sea levels, more intense weather events, and shifting environmental conditions

Housing Affordability – In 2023, the Islands Trust Council declared that a housing equity and workforce shortage crisis exists within the Islands Trust Area, identifying a severe lack of housing options that are accessible and affordable for residents and local workers. This declaration reflects long-standing concerns that the limited supply of diverse housing types, combined with rising property values and rental costs, has made it increasingly difficult for people of many income levels to live and remain in island communities. Multiple housing needs assessments have documented shortages in secure, appropriate, and affordable housing for low-to-moderate income earners, impacting community well-being and economic sustainability across the Trust Area.

Island's Trust Policy Statement

Section 15 of the Islands Trust Act states that Trust Council must adopt, by bylaw, a Trust Policy Statement that applies to the Islands Trust Area as a whole. The Islands Trust Act specifies that the Policy Statement must be a general statement of the policies of Trust Council to carry out the Islands Trust Object, that it may establish different policies for different parts of the Islands Trust Area. The Policy Statement represents Trust Council's vision for the preservation and protection of the draft Islands Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment.

This Plan is required to be consistent with the Islands Trust Policy Statement in effect at the time of adoption.

1.3.4 The Development of the Plan

The Plan Area's social, environmental, economic, and infrastructure conditions establish the context within which this Plan is developed and implemented. The development of this Plan reflects this information and public input, and guides land use decisions that balance environmental protection, housing needs, infrastructure capacity, economic vitality, and community well-being, consistent with the Islands Trust mandate, reconciliation commitments, and community values identified through the engagement process for this Plan.

The development of the Plan involved a number opportunities for public involvement through 3 Phases of the Plan development.

Phase 1 – Gabriola Vision 2050 Launched in 2023, focused on the identification of community values, vision and related principles through the Gabriola Visioning 2050 Process. This process included:

- Online survey (363 respondents)
- Group led engagement events (200 community members engaged)
- Community meeting (40+ community members attended)
- Engagement with Snuneymuxw First Nation initiated

Phase 2 - Launched in July 2024 phase 2 involved two parts:

- **Part 1** - Reviewing the key principles emerging from the Gabriola Visioning 2050 engagement
 - Survey (163 Survey respondents)
 - Summer engagement at markets and events
- **Part 2** - Engaging the community in topic-focussed discussion.
 - Survey (590 respondents)
 - Focus groups on the following themes: connectivity, economy, environment, housing, resources stewardship, water. Focus group reviewed draft policies.

- Methodology and data collection for the water balance project.
- Engagement with Snuneymuxw First Nation continued

Phase 3 – Launched in Summer 2025, supported the OCP drafting and review involving:

- Reimagining Growth workshop (September 2025)
- Freshwater Footprint project work
- Survey on Reimagining Growth (156 respondents)
- Draft Plan writing (including values, vision/guiding directions)
- Draft Plan review by public and referral agencies
- Deeper engagement with Snuneymuxw First Nation

1.4 Guiding Vision, Values and Goals

The community vision, values, and resulting goals form an integrated foundation for this Plan. They guide the development, interpretation, and implementation of policies and actions that advance reconciliation, environmental protection, climate resilience, community diversity and well-being and sustainable livelihoods while fostering collaboration, inclusion, and a strong sense of belonging across Gabriola Island.

Community Vision

The Community Vision, shaped through extensive engagement with residents, First Nations, and other partners, expresses Gabriola Island's shared long-term aspirations for an active, resilient, and diverse rural community. It describes a unifying direction for growth, change, and stewardship.

By 2050, Gabriola Island is an active, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable rural community that respects Indigenous and local cultural heritage, protects the natural environment and biodiversity supports diverse housing and livelihoods, and works collaboratively to balance human needs within the Island's ecological limits. The community fosters a strong sense of belonging and care, supporting diverse and affordable housing, accessible services, active and low-impact transportation, vibrant arts and culture, resilient local food systems and livelihoods, and collaborative action among residents, First Nations, and all levels of government.

Gabriola Island is an active, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable rural community that respects Indigenous and local cultural heritage, preserves and protects the natural environment and biodiversity, supports diverse housing and livelihoods, and works collaboratively to balance human needs and the island's ecological limits.

The community fosters a strong sense of belonging by supporting diverse and affordable housing, accessible services, active and low-impact transportation, vibrant arts and culture, resilient local food systems and livelihoods, and cooperation among residents, First Nations, and all levels of government.

Achieving Gabriola's vision for 2050 depends on strong collaboration among Indigenous Governing Bodies, community organizations, regional and provincial partners, and residents. Many of the Island's defining strengths -its arts and culture, local food systems, environmental stewardship, and social connections- are sustained through community-driven initiatives that play a central role in advancing priorities such as housing, community diversity, active transportation, emergency preparedness, and environmental preservation and protection.

Regional districts and provincial agencies provide essential infrastructure, services, and regulatory oversight that support local efforts and ensure alignment with broader public interests. Meaningful and ongoing collaboration with Indigenous Governing Bodies is fundamental, bringing Indigenous

knowledge, values, and stewardship practices into planning and decision-making. Together, these partnerships create the conditions for a socially equitable, culturally vibrant, environmentally sustainable, and resilient Gabriola for generations to come.

Community Values

The following Community Values articulate the core considerations that guide the Gabriola LTC's decision-making within its jurisdiction and provide a foundation for implementing the Gabriola 2050 vision through planning and regulatory actions. Each value is supported by a corresponding goal identified in Part 2 of this plan:

Integrating First Nations Interests - Honouring and protecting Indigenous cultural heritage, and meaningfully integrating the knowledge, perspectives, priorities, and stewardship practices of First Nations.

Preservation and Protection of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity - Prioritizing the protection, preservation, enhancement, and restoration of environmentally sensitive areas, ecosystems at risk, and biodiversity to maintain healthy natural systems.

Responsible Resource Stewardship - Balancing ecological, social, cultural, and economic considerations to support long-term sustainability, freshwater integrity, local food security, and resilient livelihoods.

Community Resilience and Climate Readiness - Reducing risk and strengthen the Island's ability to anticipate, adapt to, and thrive amid climate change by safeguarding critical systems and embedding climate resilience in decision-making.

Community Diversity, Well-Being, and Sustainability - Supporting diverse housing options, access to essential services, safe and active mobility, recreation, arts and culture, and local economic opportunities, while respecting community character and long-term sustainability

Collaboration, Transparency, and Shared Responsibility - Coordinated governance that builds and maintains strong, respectful partnerships with Indigenous Governing Bodies, residents, local organizations, and other government agencies.



PART TWO

Plan Goals, Objectives, Designations and Policies

2.1 Using This Plan

2.1.1 Policy Structure

The format of this Plan is intended to be easy to understand by residents, property owners, community groups, First Nations, other levels of government and the Gabriola LTC. It supports consistent and effective policy implementation when considering land use planning proposals and assists the Gabriola LTC in making informed land use decisions.

This Part of the Plan includes:

- Goals and objectives across all themes;
- Land use designations;
- Policies that guide decision making related to change in use and density; and
- Policies that guide decision making related to development applications and referrals.

2.2 Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives are applicable to the designation of land use, development application review (as identified in this part of the Plan) and advocacy policies (identified in part 4 of the Plan) of the Gabriola LTC.

2.2.1 Integrating First Nations Interests

GOAL: *Ensure land use and development decisions respect First Nations interests in **preserving and protecting** the environment and cultural heritage, and are guided by meaningful collaboration with Indigenous Governing Bodies, including the integration of Indigenous knowledge and stewardship practices.*

Objective 2.2.1.1: Collaborate with First Nations to identify, protect, and steward areas, species, and landscapes of cultural significance.

Objective 2.2.1.2: Integrate Indigenous knowledge, values, and perspectives into land use planning, policy development, and decision-making processes.

Objective 2.2.1.3: Ensure early, ongoing, and respectful engagement with Indigenous Governing Bodies on development applications and amendments to the Plan and LUB.

Objective 2.2.1.4: Minimize ground disturbance in areas of known or potential archaeological significance.

Objective 2.2.1.5: Protect archaeological sites and culturally significant areas through, Heritage Conservation Areas, covenants, and other regulatory tools.

Objective 2.2.1.6: Use Indigenous cultural knowledge alongside ecological, climate, freshwater data and community insights to guide planning decisions.

Objective 2.2.1.7: Promote community awareness and understanding of First Nations history, rights, and cultural values.

2.2.2 Preservation and Protection of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

GOAL: Preserve, ~~Protect~~, restore, and enhance natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and environmentally sensitive areas to maintain healthy, functioning ecological systems for present and future generations.

Objective 2.2.2.1: Ensure that land use planning prioritizes ecosystem preservation and protection and decisions are guided by comprehensive ecological, climate change, and freshwater vulnerability data as well as Indigenous cultural knowledge.

Objective 2.2.2.2: Preserve, protect, restore, and enhance and revitalize ecosystem integrity, biodiversity, and habitat connectivity by identifying, safeguarding, and connecting sensitive terrestrial ecosystems and habitats, including those important to species at risk.

Objective 2.2.2.3: Preserve and protect marine ecosystems and shoreline ecosystems from degradation and incompatible development.

Objective 2.2.2.4: Adopt land use policies and regulations to increase climate change mitigation through ecosystem-based solutions and address ecosystem threats such as wildfire and other climate change-related threats to ecosystem integrity.

Objective 2.2.2.5: Preserve and protect aquifer recharge areas, watersheds, aquifers, wetlands, and freshwater ecosystems to support long-term groundwater sustainability.

Objective 2.2.2.6: Preserve and protect large, contiguous forested areas for biodiversity conservation, wildlife habitat, and low-impact recreation.

2.2.3 Responsible Resource Stewardship

GOAL: Manage land and resources in a way that sustains ecological health, supports local economies and food systems, protects freshwater resources, and promotes long-term social and cultural well-being.

Objective 2.2.3.1: Preserve and protect the quality and quantity of Gabriola Island's freshwater resources and ensure that neither the density nor the intensity of land uses is increased where the quality and quantity of the supply of freshwater is likely to be inadequate or increase the vulnerability of freshwater supply.

Objective 2.2.3.2: Preserve agricultural land and strengthen local food systems by supporting environmentally sustainable, economically viable farming and related activities while avoiding fragmentation and conflicts with non-farm uses.

Objective 2.2.3.3: ~~Preserve~~Maintain large, contiguous areas of forested land to protect and preserve biodiversity, ecosystem services, wildlife habitat, and natural landscapes, while supporting compatible low-impact recreation and education.

Objective 2.2.3.4: ~~M~~Work with the Province to minimize the environmental and community impacts of mineral and aggregate extraction and processing by limiting such uses and ensuring responsible site management and restoration.

Objective 2.2.3.5: Support the continued stewardship and sustainable use of land, water, and natural resources by First Nations by recognizing and supporting– Indigenous cultural knowledge, cultural values, and traditional resource use in land use planning and decision-making.

2.2.4 Community Resilience and Climate Readiness

GOAL: *Reduce climate-related risks and strengthen the Island’s capacity to adapt to climate change by protecting critical systems, supporting resilient infrastructure, and integrating climate considerations into all land use and development decisions.*

Objective 2.2.4.1: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing development close to amenities and protecting/restoring natural systems and increasing carbon sequestering opportunities.

Objective 2.2.4.2: Direct development away from areas vulnerable to natural hazards and climate-related risks, including wildfire, flooding, and saltwater intrusion.

Objective 2.2.4.3: Ensure housing and development locations-designation and zoning consider freshwater availability, climate hazards, and land use practices that enhance community resilience.

Objective 2.2.4.4: Protect, restore, enhance and revitalize and manage forests, wetlands, and other natural features that contribute to climate mitigation, adaptation, and ecological and community resilience.

Objective 2.2.4.5: Support walking, cycling and taking the bus to reduce reliance on private automobiles while maintaining Gabriola’s rural island character~~Support transportation systems that reduce reliance on private automobiles while maintaining Gabriola’s rural island character.~~

2.2.5 Diversity and Community Wellbeing

GOAL: *Foster inclusive, healthy, and vibrant community by supporting diverse housing options, access to services, active transportation, recreation, arts and culture, and sustainable local economic opportunities.*

Objective 2.2.5.1: Support a mix of land uses that strengthens community self-reliance and wellbeing.

Objective 2.2.5.21: Provide a range of housing options that meet the diverse needs of Gabriola residents, with attention to housing accessible to low and ~~moderate~~ medium income residents and families.

Objective 2.2.5.32: Encourage housing forms and settlement patterns that compliment rural character and protect natural environments, Indigenous and archaeological heritage, biodiversity, and agricultural lands.

Objective 2.2.5.43: Support housing near commercial areas and community services where environmental impacts can be minimized and freshwater resources are sufficient.

Objective 2.2.5.54: Enable multi-unit non-market housing forms where compatible with community character, infrastructure capacity, and environmental protection.

~~**Objective 2.2.5.5:** Support a mix of land uses that allows residents to meet daily needs locally and strengthens community self-reliance.~~

Objective 2.2.5.6: Maintain and expand parkland and public access to natural areas through planning processes and collaboration with government and community partners.

Objective 2.2.5.7: Support home occupations that contribute to local employment and economic resilience while remaining compatible with residential areas and environmental protection.

Objective 2.2.5.8: Provide for commercial and light industrial development appropriately scaled to serve local needs and compatible with the natural environment.

Objective 2.2.5.9: Recognize the Village Commercial area as the primary commercial centre, while supporting small-scale secondary commercial uses serving local neighbourhoods.

Objective 2.2.5.10: Support and encourage opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with local arts, culture, and creative expression, fostering community identity, cultural heritage, and economic resilience.

Objectives 2.2.5.11 Support ~~health, wellbeing and community connection and encourage opportunities with opportunities~~ for residents of all ages to participate in physical activity, sports, recreation, and active transportation, supporting health, well-being, and community connection.

2.2.6 Collaboration, Transparency, and Shared Responsibility

GOAL: *Promote and engage in coordinated and transparent decision-making through strong partnerships with First Nations, Indigenous Governing Bodies, residents, community organizations, and other levels of government, facilitating shared responsibility for land stewardship.*

Objective 2.2.6.1: Support coordinated and respectful governance relationships among First Nations, Indigenous Governing Bodies the Islands Trust, residents, local organizations, and other government agencies involved in land use planning and stewardship within the Plan Area.

Objective 2.2.6.2: Ensure early and ongoing coordination with Indigenous Governing Bodies and relevant agencies in the development and amendment of land use plans, policies, and regulations.

Objective 2.2.6.3: Promote shared understanding of roles and responsibilities in land use planning and decision-making across jurisdictions and among planning partners.

Objective 2.2.6.4: Align land use planning with related plans and initiatives of Indigenous Governing Bodies, regional partners, and other levels of government to advance shared environmental, cultural heritage protection, and housing ~~that meets community needs, and community objectives.~~

Objective 2.2.6.5: Foster transparent, inclusive, and accessible planning processes that build trust, support informed participation, and strengthen accountability in land use decision-making.

2.3 Climate Action

British Columbia has established legislated greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets under the *Climate Change Accountability Act*, including a 40% reduction below 2007 levels by 2030, 60% by 2040, and net-zero emissions by 2050. Through the *Local Government Act*, local governments are required to include GHG reduction targets, policies, and actions in OCPs. While many sources of emission, such as energy supply standards, building codes, and vehicle regulations, are set by senior levels of government, land use planning plays an important role in shaping long-term emissions outcomes.

Climate change is influencing local conditions, with rising temperatures, increasing rainfall variability, and more frequent extreme weather events expected to affect freshwater recharge, coastal processes, ecosystems, and community infrastructure over time. In the Plan Area, the most effective tools available to the Gabriola LTC for reducing GHG emissions are those related to how land is used and protected. This includes guiding where and how development occurs, supporting compact and complete settlement patterns, protecting forests, wetlands, and other natural areas that store carbon, and encouraging walking, cycling, and shared transportation where feasible.

Through land use policies, this Plan establishes a local framework for climate action that reflects Gabriola's rural character, environmental values, and the Islands Trust mandate to preserve and protect the Island for present and future generations.

Land use planning plays a key role in reducing GHG emissions and building resilience. The following are a set of climate action target policies to guide policy development and land use planning decisions. Detailed policies to address these targets are included in the related sections of this Plan and specific regulations to address these targets are included in the Gabriola Island LUB.

2.3.1 Climate Mitigation Targets (Reducing GHG Emissions):

From 2026 levels:

TARGETPOLICY 2.3.1.1: Increase the concentration of new residential and commercial development in the village commercial area and create secondary commercial nodes close to existing residential, service and amenity areas and on public transit routes to encourage walking, cycling and transit use.

TARGETPOLICY 2.3.1.2: Increase protection of forests, wetlands, soils, and other ecosystems that store carbon.

TARGETPOLICY 2.3.1.3: Increase trail development with minimal ecological disturbance.

POLICY 2.3.1.4: Increase the percentage of new development close to the public transit to encourage walking, cycling and transit use.

TARGETPOLICY 2.3.1.5: Increase amount of protected farmland to support access to local food.

2.3.2 Climate Adaptation Targets (Increasing Climate Resilience) :

TARGETPOLICY 2.3.2.1: Increase protection and preservation of natural areas that reduce climate-related risks such as wildfire, flooding, and erosion.

TARGETPOLICY 2.3.2.2: All new buildings and infrastructure be built with consideration of local hazards and long-term resilience.

TARGETPOLICY 2.3.2.3: Increase the number of rainwater catchment systems on the Island.

TARGETPOLICY 2.3.2.4: Increase protection and preservation of watersheds, aquifers, and riparian zones to ensure long-term water supply and quality.

TARGETPOLICY 2.3.2.5: Increase the integration of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives related to ecosystem health.

TARGETPOLICY 2.3.2.6: Increase community understanding of climate change by including climate change considerations in land use decision making.

2.4 Land and Marine General Policies

Purpose

Land and marine designations provide a framework for how land within the Plan Area is intended to be used and managed over the long term. Designations translate the community's vision, values, and goals into a spatial plan that guides future development, conservation, and infrastructure decisions.

Land ~~and marine use~~ designations inform zoning, policy decisions, and regulatory tools to ensure land use changes occur in a coordinated, transparent, and sustainable way. The Gabriola LTC has chosen to designate all land and marine areas in this Plan to provide clear land use direction.

All land and marine designations are identified on the Map in Schedule B.

The following policies apply to all applicable use designations. Designation specific policies are outlined in Section 2.54.3.

2.4.1 Residential Density Policies

POLICY 2.4.1.1: ~~This plan does not support strata conversions of buildings. A secondary dwelling unit may not be subdivided from the principal dwelling unit~~ under the *Land Title Act* or the *Strata Property Act*.

POLICY 2.4.1.2: ~~This Plan supports flexible housing options by considering allowing, through site-specific rezoning applications, two or more small dwellings within a maximum combined floor area on a lot as an alternative to one large dwelling as follows:~~

- ~~On lots having an area of less than 2 hectares, one additional dwelling is permitted if the total combined floor area of all dwellings does not exceed 232 square metres.~~
- ~~On lots having an area of 2 hectares or greater, and not exceeding 4 hectares, three dwellings are permitted if the total combined floor area of all dwellings does not exceed 325 square metres.~~
- ~~On lots having an area of 4 hectares or greater four dwelling are permitted if the total combined floor area of all dwellings does not exceed 436 square metres.~~

~~This Plan supports flexible housing options by permitting two or more small dwellings within a maximum combined floor area on a lot as an alternative to one single large dwelling.~~

~~The land use regulations should may regulate areas of the island within which flexible housing may be permitted on a lot based on analysis of available data; and~~

~~Land use regulations should may establish overall floor area limits and the number of additional dwellings based on lot area.~~

POLICY 2.4.1.3: ~~Properties~~ ~~Areas designated and~~ zoned for Flexible Housing should exclude ~~areas~~ ~~lots~~:

- Abutting any portion of the natural boundary of the sea, a lake or wetland;
- Containing any portion of recorded archaeological and cultural heritage sites;
- Containing sensitive ecosystems including sensitive ecosystems;
- Containing conditions considered hazardous to development;
- Within areas of freshwater hazard as identified in Schedule D;

~~**POLICY 2.4.1.4:** Flexible housing and other approaches to increasing the number of dwelling units close to the village commercial area and outside freshwater hazard areas, including permitting secondary suites on lots equal to or smaller than 2 hectares and permitting a secondary suite and a detached secondary units on lots larger than 2 hectares, are encouraged where consistent with the exclusions in **POLICY 2.4.1.3.**~~

~~**POLICY 2.4.1.4:** The total number of units created through flexible housing rezoning my not exceed 25. Once this number has been reached, the LTC should re-evaluate policies related to flexible housing. **POLICY 2.4.1.4:** The land use bylaw should identify maximum size for attached and detached secondary dwelling units.~~

POLICY 2.4.1.5: Land use regulations should identify where detached secondary dwelling units must be located in relationship to the principal dwelling unit thereby defining residential footprint. Locating detached secondary dwelling units in close proximity to the principal dwelling unit is encouraged to reduce impact to the lot and facilitate sharing of well and septic system where feasible.

2.4.2 Home Occupation Use Policies

POLICY 2.4.2.1: A home occupation use should be permitted as an accessory use in all land use designations where a residential use is permitted. Land use regulations should establish conditions of use for home occupations, such as:

- Specifying the range of uses permitted as a home occupation;
- Restricting the floor area used by a home occupation;
- Requiring the use to be conducted by a resident of the lot;
- Specifying a limit on the number of non-resident persons who may be employed, based on the size of the lot;
- Prohibiting or limiting the exterior storage of material or equipment;
- Requiring screening form adjacent properties and the roadway;
- Requiring adequate off-street parking;
- Considering different home occupation regulations for different zones;
- Compatibility with the surrounding neighbourhood and environment; and
- Considering impacts to archeological sites.

POLICY 2.4.2.2: Bed and Breakfast tourist accommodation use may be permitted as a home occupation on a lot where the home occupation operator resides in the legal dwelling where the bed and breakfast occurs.

POLICY 2.4.2.3: Short term vacation rental of a dwelling in its entirety should not be permitted as a home occupation and may be permitted through a temporary use permit (TUP).

2.4.3 Boarding Homes and Supportive Home Care

POLICY 2.4.3.1 Boarding homes, hospice care, community care facilities, transition homes and similar small-scale supportive residential uses as forms of residential accommodation and support- that contribute to a diverse range of housing options and needs- should may be permitted aoccupation.

2.4.43 Trails and Parks

POLICY 2.4.43.1: Public parks, trails, ecological reserves, and public utilities should be permitted in all land use designations.

POLICY 2.4.43.2: Where feasible, new trail proposals should connect public parks, waterfront access points, and existing trail systems.

POLICY 2.4.43.3: Trails may be secured through subdivision and rezoning applications, or voluntary measures, and should be legally registered on title by a right-of-way, easement, or other appropriate means.

POLICY 2.4.43.4: Parks and trail development and acquisition should be consistent with the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Parks and Trails Master Plan for Area B, where feasible.

POLICY 2.4.43.5: Trails and parks should incorporate wildfire risk reduction measures, including defensible space along trail corridors and fire-resistant landscaping in parklands adjacent to residential areas.

2.4.54 Marine Access

POLICY 2.4.54.1: Public boat launch facilities may be permitted in any land use designation providing waterfront access, subject to adequate parking and consideration of First Nations' interests.

2.4.65 Commercial and Light Industrial

POLICY 2.4.65.1: ~~Heavy industrial uses such as~~ industrial production that generates significant noise, vibration, odour, emissions, or heavy truck traffic and/or uses a significant amount of water ~~should are not be~~ permitted.

POLICY 2.4.65.2: The use of lands, buildings, or structures for the manufacturing or research of genetically engineered seeds, plants, or animals should not be permitted.

POLICY 2.4.5.3: Timeshare developments should not be permitted.

POLICY 2.4.5.4: Land-based airports ~~and heliports~~, other than an emergency helicopter landing area, are not permitted.

2.4.6 Agricultural Use

POLICY 2.4.6.1: ~~Agricultural Horticulture~~ uses should be permitted in all designations except for areas designated Parks and Protected Areas.

POLICY 2.4.6.2: Establish ~~land use~~ regulations to prohibit the removal of soil from or the deposition of soil where it would reduce the agricultural viability of the lot.

2.4.7 Aggregate Extraction

POLICY 2.4.7.1 Processing of mineral and aggregate resources is not permitted unless the product will be exclusively for local use.

POLICY 2.4.7.2: Bylaw amendment applications for new aggregate extraction facilities should not be supported.

2.4.8 Cemeteries and Green Burial

POLICY 2.4.8.1: Cemetery use, including green burial, should only be permitted in Institutional, Forest ~~Protection~~ and Park designations subject to an analysis of groundwater impacts.

2.4.9 Freshwater Sustainability

~~**POLICY 2.4.9.1:** Bylaw amendments for increases in density or intensity of use should demonstrate no adverse impacts to groundwater quality or quantity.~~

POLICY 2.4.92.21: The commercial sale of groundwater for use outside of the Plan Area should not be permitted.

~~**POLICY 2.4.2.3:** Land use regulations should require all new residential, commercial, and institutional development to incorporate cisterns for freshwater storage, sized to support water needs during prolonged drought conditions.~~

~~**POLICY 2.4.9.32:** Land use regulations should require all new residential, commercial, and institutional development to incorporate freshwater capture and storage infrastructure, such as cisterns and holding ponds, or other appropriate systems, designed to retain rainfreshwater from natural on island sources and other suitable non-potable water sources to that would be available to offset the use of groundwater and serve as backup during prolonged drought conditions may also be considered in place of, or in addition to, cisterns and holding ponds.~~

POLICY 2.4.92.43: Land use regulations should require potable rainwater catchment systems consistent with installation and maintenance requirements of Island Health for all secondary and accessory dwelling units located in freshwater hazard areas (see Schedule D);

~~**.4 POLICY 2.4.9.4:** Land use regulations should support community water supply as a permitted use in appropriate areas.~~

2.4.10 Protection of Archaeological Sites

POLICY 2.4.10.1 Ground disturbance activities in areas of known or potential archaeological significance are subject to the requirements of the provincial *Heritage Conservation Act* and may require a provincial heritage alteration permit prior to site alteration or disturbance.

POLICY 2.4.10.2: Property owners undertaking ground disturbance must implement a chance find protocol, including the immediate cessation of work and notification of the Province and affected First Nations if archaeological materials are encountered.

POLICY 2.4.10.3: Early notification and engagement with the Snuneymuxw First Nation is encouraged when development or land alteration is proposed in areas of known or potential archaeological significance.

POLICY 2.4.10.4: Notification and engagement with ~~the Snuneymuxw First Nation and~~ the Province is required as a first step when archaeological ~~materials remains~~ are found on a property.

2.4.11 Fire Safety

POLICY 2.4.11.1: Fire safety measures must be considered with all new development, including:

- Defensible space around structures
- Safe and accessible evacuation routes
- Integration with emergency response planning

2.4.12 Dark Skies

POLICY 2.4.12.1: Development in all zones should be designed and located to adhere to dark skies best practices. The Local Trust Committee may use zoning regulations, Development Permit Areas, and development approval processes to manage the siting, orientation, and intensity of outdoor lighting associated with land use, rezoning, subdivision, and variance applications.

POLICY 2.4.12.2: The Local Trust Committee will work with other levels of government and agencies to encourage outdoor lighting on public lands, roads, parks, and facilities to be appropriately scaled and designed to adhere to dark skies best practices.

2.4.13 General Siting and Use

POLICY 2.4.13.1: Land use regulations, including use, density, lot size, setbacks, and ~~site~~-lot coverage, should consider addressing the following:

- Ecosystem functions within sensitive ecosystems and in transitional areas between ecosystems to avoid adverse impacts to ecological functions;
- Rural character, the environment, and areas of archaeological and cultural heritage significance;
- Culturally significant sites and landscapes;
- Appropriate buffer areas to preserve and-protect wetlands, watercourses, and areas with high wildfire hazard, ensuring adequate defensible space between structures and flammable vegetation; and
- Setbacks to the natural boundary of the sea to prevent erosion, avoid disturbance to sensitive shoreline ecology and archaeological sites, protect development from hazardous conditions such as erosion, storm surge and sea level rise, and avoid the need for shoreline protection measures.

POLICY 2.4.13.2: Shoreline modifications such as shoreline armouring should only be permitted when there is a threat to human health and wellbeing, and when managed retreat or nature-based approaches (e.g. green shores) are not possible.

POLICY 2.4.13.3: Establish setbacks for septic drainfields from the natural boundary of the sea and watercourses to prevent negative impacts to the environment, and slope instability along the shoreline.

POLICY 2.4.13.4: Freshwater cisterns should not be included in the calculation of lot coverage.

2.4.14 Subdivision

POLICY 2.4.14.1 ~~The minimum lot size for subdivision resulting in additional lots should be 35 hectares, with the exception of subdivision solely for one, or a combination of, the following uses which may have a smaller minimum lot size: The minimum lot size for subdivision (not including lot line adjustments and lot consolidations see policy XXX) or subdivisions that in the opinion of the Local Trust Committee provide significant community benefit, should generally be 35 hectares other than subdivisions for one or more of the following uses:~~

- Park;
- Conservation;
- Community ~~service use~~Use;
- Heritage conservation, including Indigenous cultural or historical heritage protection;
- Utilities;
- Public infrastructure; and
- Non-market housing

POLICY 2.4.14.2 ~~The Local Trust Committee may rezone properties to allow subdivision with a minimum lot area smaller than 35 hectares when it considers the applications provide significant community benefit.~~

POLICY 2.4.14.2-3 ~~The minimum lot size established for single unit non-market housing subdivisions should generally be at least 1 hectare, and for multi-unit non-market housing subdivisions at least 2 hectares. single unit non-market housing must be a minimum of 1 hectare.~~

POLICY 2.4.14.45-2.1.3: ~~Consider exempting lot Lot consolidation, or and boundary adjustments subdivisions which do not increase the number of lots or increase subdivision potential; should be exempt from minimum lot size regulations.~~

POLICY 2.4.14.3 ~~Despite 2.4.14.1 minimum lot size established for multi-unit non-market housing must be a minimum of 2 hectares.~~

2.5 Land Use Designations

The following designation categories include specific sub-designations and specific policies:

Parks and Protected Areas

Park (P)
Conservation (C)

Small Island Stewardship (SI)

Sustainable Resource

Agriculture (A)
Forest Protection (FP)

Residential

Rural Residential (RR)
Multi-Unit Residential (MUR)

Commercial

Village Commercial (VC)
Secondary Commercial (SC)
Tourist Commercial (TC)

Institutional (IN)

Industrial (I)

Aggregate Deposit (AD)

Marine

Marine (M)
Ferry Terminal (FT)

Parks and Protected Area

2.5.1 Park (P)

The Park (P) designation applies to parkland that supports outdoor recreation, or conserves ecologically significant areas. Given the mix of jurisdiction overseeing parkland, cooperative stewardship with provincial agencies, RDN, and the community is critical to ensure parks are responsibly managed, minimally developed, and responsive to local needs ~~is critical~~.

POLICY 2.5.1.1 In the Park designation, land use regulations:

- Should establish different zones for active recreation parks (which provide a range of recreation opportunities) and passive recreation parks (which focus on passive recreation, preservation and restoration of the environment);
- Should not permit residential use;
- May permit campground use; and
- ~~Regulate~~ Should regulate accessory uses, buildings and structures to ensure they are in suitable locations.

2.5.2 Conservation (C)

The Conservation (C) designation applies to areas that focus on the preservation of ecological function.

POLICY 2.5.2.1: In the Conservation designation, land use regulations should only permit wilderness recreation, ecological reserves, cultural heritage protection, environmental protection, and environmental restoration.

Small Island Stewardship Designation

2.5.3 Small Island Stewardship (SI)

The Small Island (SI) designation applies to the small islands and islets in the Plan area. This designation recognizes the sensitivity of small islands and islets where cultural sites and fragile ecosystems are vulnerable to destruction, erosion, sea level rise, and saltwater intrusion.

POLICY 2.5.3.1: In the Small Island Stewardship designation, land use regulations should:

- Permit conservation as a principal use;
- Permit residential use as an accessory use; and
- Regulate accessory uses to ensure they have minimal impact to the natural environment.

POLICY 2.5.3.2: All lands designated Small Island/Islet should be designated part of a DPA for the purposes of protection of the natural environment and biodiversity.

Sustainable Resource Designations

Purpose: to permit uses connected to the direct use of the land that contribute to the local economy and food security. This includes agricultural and forestry uses.

2.5.4 Agriculture (A)

All lands within the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve should be designated 'Agriculture' (A). The (A) designation is established to preserve agricultural and food-producing lands by designating areas intended primarily for farming and related activities, minimizing land fragmentation, and supporting activities that compliment sustainable agricultural use.

POLICY 2.5.4.1: In the Agriculture designation, land use regulations should permit:

- Agriculture and residential use as principal uses;

- One principal dwelling and one secondary suite on lots 2 hectares or larger;
- In addition to one principal dwelling and one secondary suite, one detached secondary dwelling unit may be permitted on lots 2 hectares or larger outside the freshwater hazard area; and
- Passive recreation park use.

POLICY 2.5.4.2: Small scale, low impact, uses related to agriculture (such as selling of farm goods and agri-tourism) should be permitted where it is demonstrated that such uses:

- Are directly related to and supportive of on-site agricultural activity;
- Remain secondary to farm use in scale and intensity; and
- Do not generate traffic, servicing, or environmental impacts that would compromise agricultural operations, surrounding farm uses and the [residential surrounding](#) neighbourhood.

POLICY 2.5.4.3: Additional dwellings on farms for seasonal workers actively employed in the farm operation, where permitted by the Agricultural Land Commission, ~~and~~ consistent with this Plan ~~and required for farming purposes,~~ may be permitted.

POLICY 2.5.4.4: Generally, land in the Agricultural Land Reserve is designated Agriculture (A).

POLICY 2.5.4.5 Land use ~~regulations bylaws may~~ establish flexible housing areas, outside freshwater hazard areas, to allow up to two or more dwellings per lot within a maximum combined floor area, provided total combined floor area does not exceed a maximum prescribed in the land use regulations. ~~in area designated agriculture that are outside the ALR.~~

Forestry Protection Designation

2.5.5 Forest Protection (FP)

Purpose: The Forest Protection (FP) Designation applies to large lots to preserve large contiguous areas of forested land and encourage the use of forested land for recreation, wildlife habitat and maintaining biological diversity.

POLICY 2.5.5.1: In the Forest Protection designation, land use regulations should permit:

- Small scale sustainable forestry and residential use as principal uses;
- One principal dwelling and one secondary dwelling unit per lot; and
- Passive recreation park.

POLICY 2.5.5.2: All land within the Private Managed Forest Land should be included in this designation.

POLICY 2.5.6.3 Land use ~~regulations bylaws may~~ establish flexible housing areas, outside freshwater hazard areas, to allow up to two or more dwellings per lot within a maximum combined

floor area. ~~provided total combined floor area does not exceed a maximum prescribed in the land use regulations~~

Residential Designations

Purpose: Support housing diversity and community well-being by designating residential areas that can accommodate a range of housing forms at densities appropriate to local conditions, while protecting environmental values, cultural heritage, and natural landscapes.

2.5.6 Rural Residential (RR)

The rural residential designation applies to residential lots on Gabriola Island including smaller lots, approved prior to the inception of the Islands Trust in 1975, and larger lots which provide low density rural settlement options and may be suitable for agricultural, and conservation uses.

POLICY 2.5.6.1 Consolidation of small lots is encouraged.

POLICY 2.5.6.2: In the Rural Residential designation, land use regulations should:

- Permit one principal dwelling per lot;
- One principal dwelling and one secondary suite on lots 2 hectares or larger;
- In addition to one principal dwelling and one secondary suite, one detached secondary dwelling unit may be permitted on lots 2 hectares or larger on land located outside the freshwater hazard area;
- Permit horticulture;
- Permit agriculture on lots 2 hectares or larger; and
- Permit accessory uses consistent with rural residential character.

POLICY 2.5.6.3 Land use regulations bylaws may establish flexible housing areas, outside freshwater hazard areas, to allow up to two or more dwellings per lot within a maximum combined floor area. ~~provided total combined floor area does not exceed a maximum prescribed in the land use regulations.~~

2.5.7 Multi-Unit Residential (MUR)

Purpose: The Multi-Unit Residential (MUR) Designation applies to lots supporting housing for low to moderate income earners, seniors and those with special needs.

POLICY 2.5.7.1: In the Multi-Unit Residential designation, land use regulations should permit:

- Residential use as a principal use;
- Multiple dwelling units per lot/parcel; and
- Accessory uses consistent with residential character.

POLICY 2.5.7.2: All new multi-unit housing requires a housing agreement which restricts use to one or more of the following:

- Special needs residents living with physical or mental disabilities; and/or
- Seniors 60 years of age or older; and/or
- Low to moderate income individuals and families.

POLICY 2.5.7.3: Any lands designated for multi-unit housing should be included in DPA 9 (Multi-Unit Affordable Housing) for the purposes of addressing form and character.

POLICY 2.5.7.4: Establish Multi-Unit Residential DPA guidelines that protect dark skies.

Commercial Designations

2.5.8 General Commercial Policies

The following policies apply to all commercial designations in order to strengthen local economic resilience by identifying appropriate areas for commercial uses that serve local needs, support employment, and are compatible with surrounding land uses and the natural environment.

POLICY 2.5.8.1: In commercial designations, land use regulations:

- Should specify an appropriate range of commercial uses to be permitted in each commercial zone;
- May permit ~~accessory~~ secondary dwelling units to a maximum of half the total floor area of all commercial buildings; and
- May permit campgrounds, subject to the provision of adequate water, appropriate sewage treatment, and consideration of environmental impacts and effects to the surrounding area.

POLICY 2.5.8.2: All commercial designated lots should be designated within a DPA to regulate the form and character of development.

POLICY 2.5.8.3: ~~Unshielded~~ Bright lights at night are discouraged and DPA guidelines for commercial areas should be established to protect dark skies.

2.5.9 Village Commercial (VC)

The Village Commercial (VC) designation applies to locations for commercial activity on Gabriola Island that are concentrated in the Village Centre close to residential, public recreation and institutional uses.

POLICY 2.5.9.1: The Village Commercial area should be recognized as the main

location for commercial activity in the Plan Area providing for a range of uses including commercial, institutional and residential.

POLICY 2.5.9.2: Land in the Village Commercial designation and any future additions to the Village Commercial designation should be placed in the DPA 8 Village Commercial so as to ensure that the form and character of development:

- Contains small scale building design;
- Includes pedestrian oriented development with amenities such as public open spaces and walkways; and
- Prioritizes water conservation.

POLICY 2.5.9.3: Land should only be added to the Village Commercial designation if it is contiguous with other land in the designation.

2.5.10 Secondary Commercial (SC)

The Secondary Commercial (SC) designation applies to areas outside of the Village Commercial area that support the needs of the immediate neighbourhood and the island as a whole.

POLICY 2.5.10.1: In the Secondary Commercial designation, zoning regulations should:

- Only permit a limited range of commercial uses that are compatible with the surrounding area; and
- Consider screening regulations where appropriate.

POLICY 2.5.10.2: Expansion of the SC designation in the Twin Beaches area is not supported by this Plan.

2.5.11 Tourist Commercial (TC)

The Tourist Commercial (TC) designation applies to areas that support tourist activities that include but are not limited to marina, restaurant, licensed lounge, tourist accommodation, tackle shop and marine outfitters shop, laundromat, campground, and retail and office use accessory to tourist commercial use.

POLICY 2.5.11.1: In the Tourist Commercial designation, land use regulations should not permit more than 13 tourist accommodation units per hectare and 30 tourist accommodation units per lot.

POLICY 2.5.11.2: Land use regulations should support a campsite zone subject to analysis of freshwater impact.

Institutional Designation

2.5.12 Institutional (IN)

The Institutional (IN) designation applies to a broad range of institutional uses, such as health and wellness facilities, providing services to the Gabriola Island community and a focal point for community life. Institutional uses include facilities, services and uses which are operated by government or non-profit organizations and include medical clinics open for community ~~use~~ service.

POLICY 2.5.12.1: In the ~~in~~stitutional designation, land use regulations should:

- Permit institutional as a principal use;

POLICY 2.5.12.2: In the institutional designation, land use regulations may:

- Permit commercial uses, provided they are small in scale and support the principal use; and
- ~~Where appropriate, p~~Permit secondary dwelling units to a maximum of half the total floor area of all institutional buildings ~~where appropriate.~~

Industrial Designation

2.5.13 Industrial (I)

The Industrial (I) designation applies to areas that support small scale non-polluting light industrial activities, encourage small scale value-added industrial activities and any light industry that would permit the Gabriola community to become more self-sufficient.

POLICY 2.5.13.1: In the Industrial designation, land use regulations:

- Should ~~permit~~allow light industrial uses ~~as principal uses~~;
- May permit one dwelling unit that is limited in floor area.
- Should not permit any industrial uses ~~s~~ that are:
 - Likely to generate significant off-site impacts;
 - Incompatible with Gabriola Island's rural character, environmental sensitivity, and limited servicing capacity;
 - Located within an area where residential lots under 2 ~~ha~~hectares are clustered;
 - Likely to result in significant industrial traffic through small lot residential areas; or
 - Likely to threaten the sustainability of groundwater.

- Should address the need for screening, fencing, buffering and landscaping to separate the proposed use from adjoining properties.

POLICY 2.5.13.2: All Industrial designated sites should be designated as a DPA to establish objectives for the form and character of development and, energy and water conservation.

POLICY 2.5.13.3: The Land Use Bylaw may include, where appropriate, zoning ~~for Sustainable Enterprise Zone~~ to support local small scale manufacturing.

Aggregate Deposit Designation

2.5.14 Aggregate Deposit (AD)

The Aggregate Deposits (AD) designation applies to approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits as required by the *Local Government Act*.

~~**POLICY 2.5.14.1:** Publicly owned sand and gravel deposits are designated AD on Schedule B.~~

~~**POLICY 2.5.14.2:** In the Aggregate Deposit designation, land use regulations should not permit residential use.~~

POLICY 2.5.14.1: The processing of mineral and aggregate resources should be directed to locations where potential impacts on surrounding land uses, community character, environmental values, and infrastructure capacity can be appropriately considered and managed through applicable land use planning processes.

POLICY 2.5.14.2: The establishment of new aggregate extraction facilities should be carefully considered in relation to potential impacts on environmental values, neighbouring properties, community character, and infrastructure capacity. The Local Trust Committee encourages provincial agencies to consider these values in decisions related to aggregate resource development.

Marine Designations

2.5.15 Marine

The Marine (M) Designation applies to marine and foreshore areas to restrict uses and structures that could compromise ecological integrity, cultural heritage values, anchorage and navigation. The designation supports essential ferry infrastructure and low-impact public marine access, and the regulation of shoreline development to address environmental protection, climate resilience, and public safety considerations.

POLICY 2.5.15.1: Marshes, bluffs and beaches along the coast shall be protected from the impacts of development by ensuring foreshore zoning protects against disruption of the natural systems and pollution.

POLICY 2.5.15.2: Ensure that setbacks from the natural boundary of the sea consider:

- Protecting development from sea level rise;
- Preventing the need for shoreline armouring;
- Saltwater intrusion;
- Impact to cultural heritage areas; and
- Impact to shoreline and marine environment and processes.

POLICY 2.5.15.3: In the Marine designation, zoning regulations should:

- Only permit private floats, docks or wharves for owners of land adjacent to the shoreline of the water area subject to the zone;
- Ensure adequate separation between potentially conflicting uses;
- Not permit buildings;
- Not permit residential use;
- Establish a marine protection zone ~~should be~~ for the protection of significant marine and foreshore areas;
- Permit public access trailer boat launch ramps, canoe/kayak hand launch beach sites, and dinghy docks are permitted, subject to adequate parking;
- Permit one public dock or wharf that provides a water connection ~~from between~~ Gabriola Island ~~to and~~ Mudge Island; and
- Not permit structures or uses which would impede the ability for boats to anchor temporarily in bays suitable for temporary anchorage.

POLICY 2.5.15.4: Land use regulations for commercial use of the foreshore and coastal areas should:

- Require public access to the foreshore;
- Protect coastal areas by balancing waterfront development with natural areas;
- Not result in disruption of traditional swimming beaches or areas used for marine navigation; and
- Not result in pollution into the marine area.

POLICY 2.5.15.5: No offshore reef or islet shall be developed or used for commercial activities.

POLICY 2.5.15.6: Large-scale water supply infrastructure, including a pipeline connection to Vancouver Island, should not be considered unless it can be demonstrated that local water conservation, stewardship, and supply management approaches are insufficient and that significant impacts can be avoided or mitigated.

POLICY 2.5.15.7: Ferry service from Gabriola Island to the mainland is not supported.

POLICY 2.5.15.8: When necessary, shoreline erosion control should be achieved using an approach that preserves, protects and restores natural shoreline processes, and hard shoreline armouring (including seawalls, bulkheads, and riprap) should be prohibited, except where a

qualified professional confirms that no feasible nature-based alternative exists and the works are necessary to address an immediate threat to public safety or critical infrastructure.

2.5.16 Ferry Terminal (FT)

POLICY 2.5.16.1: Land use regulations should permit the existing Descanso Bay ferry terminal site on Gabriola Island.

POLICY 2.5.16.2: The following uses are permitted:

- Ferry terminal; and
- Uses accessory to ferry terminal use.

POLICY 2.5.16.3: Residential use is not permitted.

POLICY 2.5.16.4: Land ~~u~~Use-Bylaw regulations should ~~include~~ require parking for vehicle and other modes of transportation.

2.6 General Policies Related to Amendments to the Plan and Land Use Bylaw

General Bylaw Amendment Evaluation Considerations

When reviewing applications or Gabriola LTC directed initiatives intended to amend the Plan (OCP) or the Land Use Bylaw (LUB), the Gabriola LTC will consider the following policies which are organized according to the community values they support.

2.6.1. Integrating First Nations Interests

POLICY 2.6.1.1: When considering amendments to the Plan or LUB, the Gabriola LTC should consider:

- Indigenous Knowledge, when available and shared, alongside ecological, climate, and technical information in land use and development decision making;
- Impacts of land use and development on interests of Indigenous Governing Bodies, including cultural practices, cultural heritage, impact to groundwater and ecosystem relationships;
- Cultural heritage and archaeological information, including non-tangible cultural heritage identified by First Nations, to inform the review and consideration of development applications;
- Long-term cumulative impacts on Indigenous access to resources including, traditional harvesting areas and freshwater for future use.

POLICY 2.6.1.2: Bylaw amendments should not increase density or intensity of development within 200m of known or potential archaeological or cultural heritage sites, unless it can be demonstrated that such development will not adversely affect Indigenous heritage values.

POLICY 2.6.1.3: The Snuneymuxw First Nation and other relevant First Nations should be informed at early stages for bylaw amendments within:

- 200m from the natural boundary of the sea, and
- 200 m of known archaeological sites or areas of high archaeological potential.

POLICY 2.6.1.4: Where a petroglyph or other fragile archeological sites are located on a property subject of a bylaw amendment application that would result in development orf alteration of land,

these features should be protected through a covenant or other appropriate means ~~from use which may alter or destroy the significance of the site.~~

2.6.2 Preservation and Protection of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

POLICY 2.6.2.1: When considering amendments to the LUB, the Gabriola LTC should consider the following information related to ecosystem preservation, protection and integrity:

- Potential land use and development impacts, at appropriate ecological scales, on terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems, with particular attention to cumulative effects on ecosystem integrity, ecosystem connectivity, and projected climate change impacts; and
- The interests and expertise of the Islands Trust Conservancy and local land conservancies in land use decision-making, including opportunities for collaboration on land protection, stewardship, and the use of conservation covenants.
- Development standards that minimize light pollution, reduce light trespass and glare, and protect dark skies, nocturnal wildlife, ecosystem function, and the rural nighttime character of Gabriola Island.
- —

POLICY 2.6.2.2: Bylaw amendments should not result in development that is anticipated to:

- significantly harm terrestrial, freshwater, or marine ecosystems
- disrupt habitat connectivity, or
- undermine ecosystem resilience.

POLICY 2.6.2.3: When a bylaw amendment increases the density or intensity of use; protections and, where feasible, restoration of ecologically significant ecosystems (including wetlands, forests, riparian areas, shorelines, and nearshore marine environments) should take place through the use of land use regulations, DPAs, covenants, or other regulatory mechanisms.

POLICY 2.6.2.4: When considering bylaw amendment applications, the Gabriola LTC should require the retention or establishment of native vegetation buffers around sensitive ecosystems, watercourses, and shorelines, including the retention of natural tree cover along shorelines, through the use of DPAs or a covenant.

2.6.3 Responsible Resource Stewardship

POLICY 2.6.3.1: When considering amendments to the Plan and LUB, the Gabriola LTC should consider the following related to responsible resource stewardship:

- Critical aquifer recharge mapping (Schedule E) and freshwater hazard mapping (Schedule D) to assess the impacts of increased density and intensity on the sustainability of groundwater regions;
- Requiring a Freshwater Management Plan for applications that significantly increase water use;
- The potential impacts on adjacent agricultural uses on adjacent ALR land;
- When adjacent to land in the Agriculture designation:
 - Potential impacts on adjacent agricultural uses;
 - Demonstration that sufficient water supply will be available to support agricultural activities; and
 - Buffering, siting and design measures to reduce conflicts between farm and non-farm uses.

POLICY 2.6.3.2: Proposed bylaw amendments should demonstrate approaches that protect watersheds and freshwater resources, such as clustering, covenants, parkland dedication, and other suitable approaches.

POLICY 2.6.3.3: Bylaw amendments should not result in increases in density or intensity of development where it would result in adverse effects on watersheds and aquifers.

POLICY 2.6.3.4: Bylaw amendments for land in the Agriculture designation should not result in increased subdivision potential or risk for agricultural land to be fragmented. Exceptions may be considered when land is being subdivided for environmental conservation purposes.

2.6.4 Community Resilience and Climate Readiness

POLICY 2.6.4.1: When considering amendments to the Plan and LUB, the Gabriola LTC should consider the following related to community resilience and climate readiness:

- Climate change projections, including freshwater availability, wildfire risk, flooding, risk of salt water intrusion to aquifers, and sea-level rise;
- Whether proposed increases in residential density can be supported by community services, emergency response, and transportation networks without degrading service levels;

- Whether proposed increases in residential density enables access to parks, trails, or public open space without creating increased pressure that is likely to result in damage to sensitive ecosystems; and
- The establishment and protection of climate-resilient water conservation areas.

POLICY 2.6.4.2: Bylaw amendments should not result in higher density residential and mixed-use development in locations where emergency response, evacuation capacity, and firefighting services cannot be efficiently and safely provided.

POLICY 2.6.4.3: Bylaw amendments should not result in higher density or intensity of use along shorelines that are subject to erosion, flooding, or sea-level rise.

POLICY 2.6.4.4: When considering bylaw amendment applications, the Gabriola LTC should require sewage disposal systems to be designed and sited to avoid adverse effects on groundwater, surface water, and marine ecosystems.

POLICY 2.6.4.5: When considering bylaw amendment applications, the Gabriola LTC should require evidence of sufficient quantity and quality of freshwater to support the proposed use without adverse effects to existing water users, neighbouring properties and future use by First Nations.

POLICY 2.6.4.6: When considering bylaw amendment applications, the Gabriola LTC should require the integration of wildfire resilience by:

- Avoiding increases in density in high wildfire-risk areas;
- Requiring adequate setbacks from forested or vegetated areas;
- Supporting defensible space, fire-resistant landscaping, and fire-smart building design;
- Ensuring emergency vehicle access and evacuation routes are feasible; and
- Maintaining forested and natural areas as buffers to reduce wildfire risk while maintaining ecosystem integrity.

2.6.5 Community Diversity and Wellbeing

POLICY 2.6.5.1: When considering amendments to the Plan and LUB, the Gabriola LTC should consider the following related to community diversity and wellbeing:

- Whether the application supports additional housing types that address housing needs;
- The cumulative impacts of increases in housing density on community service; and
- Whether the location and site design support access to public transit and active transportation networks.

POLICY 2.6.5.2: When considering bylaw amendment applications for commercial or multi-unit residential uses, the Gabriola LTC should require provisions for bicycle parking and connections to

existing or planned trail networks in commercial, institutional, and multi-unit residential developments.

POLICY 2.6.5.3: When considering bylaw amendment applications for commercial or multi-unit residential uses, the Gabriola LTC should identify opportunities to secure trail connections or public access through covenants, easements, statutory rights-of-way, or other legal mechanisms.

POLICY 2.6.5.4: Bylaw amendments should, where possible, enhance public access to waterfronts and parks, provided that environmental preservation and protection, cultural heritage, and fire safety considerations are not compromised.

POLICY 2.6.5.6: Bylaw amendments should, where possible, – Ssupport low-impact recreational uses

POLICY 2.6.5.7: Bylaw amendments should, where possible, encourage ~~Support~~ the establishment of ecological reserves to ~~expand parkland and public access while protecting~~ protect environmental values.

POLICY 2.6.5.8: Bylaw amendments should, where possible, – Eencourage community parks within residential neighbourhoods to support local recreation needs, including, playgrounds, greenbelts, and pocket parks and the development of additional field space in close proximity to the Village Centre or existing playing fields.

2.7 Bylaw Amendments for Change in Use and Density ~~Bylaw Amendments Types~~

2.7.1 Rezoning for Subdivision

POLICY 2.7.1.1: ~~Bylaw amendments to facilitate the creation of additional lots that are not for uses identified in POLICY 2.4.2.13.1 is not encouraged.~~ When received, applications to facilitate the creation of additional lots for this purpose should provide community benefits such as: ~~park dedication, conservation, affordable housing, and heritage conservation.~~

- the provision of land for:
 - for preservation of natural environments and ecologically sensitive areas;
 - to preservation of groundwater regions;
 - the provision of land to protect protection of archeological sites and other cultural heritage interests;
 - the provision of land for community park or public open space;
 - the provision of land for community sewage treatment facilities or community water systems; or
 - the provision of land for community facility or use;
- the provision of:

- community wells for domestic water supply;
- fire protection infrastructure, including storage reservoirs;
- a community facility or service;
- easements or rights of way for utilities or publicly accessible trails;
- ~~the provision of community facility or service in a commercial building;~~
- ~~the provision of non-market housing;~~
- the transfer of land to a First Nation or Indigenous governing body, where feasible and mutually agreed, for housing, cultural, conservation, or community purposes; and/or
- the provision of any other amenity which is similar in nature to the foregoing and/or is consistent with the objectives and policies of the OCP.

POLICY 2.7.1.2: Land transferred to support the uses in 2.5.2.1.13.1 2.4.14.1 must be secured through a covenant, restrictive covenant, housing agreement, or other legal instrument registered against the parent lot prior to final subdivision approval, ensuring that upon creation the lot will be used only for the intended purposes.

POLICY 2.7.1.3: Where the subdivided lot is intended for residential use or community use involving development and/or the use of groundwater the applicant should demonstrate land suitability, including but not limited to:

- Potable water availability;
- Wastewater disposal capability;
- Impacts to sensitive ecosystems;
- Impacts to species at risk;
- Impacts to critical habitat;
- Impacts to groundwater recharge;
- Hazard lands and geotechnical suitability; and
- Buildings and structures setback a minimum of 200m from the natural boundary of the sea except where it has been identified that the development will not impact archeological sites, or be impacted by sea level rise, coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion.

POLICY 2.7.1.4: All subdivisions for the purposes of supporting ~~non-market~~ housing should ensure that water supply is provided for through designs that are supported by a freshwater footprint informed water management plan demonstrating long-term aquifer sustainability under expected changes to climate conditions.

POLICY 2.7.14.57: In areas where individual septic systems are adversely affecting the environment or the quality of water, ~~subdivision regulations should require~~ a sewer system for new development should be required.

2.7.2 Residential

In keeping with goal and objectives for housing, the policies in this section primarily address criteria related to bylaw amendments to permit additional density or new uses to support non-market housing intended for moderate and low-income persons. The policies in this section are applicable to lands in any Land Use designation except Small Island Stewardship, Park, and Conservation except where otherwise stated.

~~**POLICY 2.7.2.1:** Additional dwellings on lots larger than 8 hectares may only be considered through a bylaw amendment application where a portion of the land is proposed to be permanently protected under a conservation covenant.~~

Multi-Unit Housing

POLICY 2.7.2.1: Consideration of multi-unit housing may only be given to applications intending to provide non-market housing for special needs residents living with physical and cognitive disabilities, seniors 60 years of age or older or moderate and low-income persons to be secured through a housing agreement.

~~**POLICY 2.7.2.2:** Multi-unit housing developments are limited to 12 units per hectare and 24 units per development.~~

POLICY 2.7.2.32: Multi-unit housing should be located within proximity to roadways and include screening to minimize environmental impacts and visual impacts on surrounding properties.

POLICY 2.7.2.43: The siting and height of the proposal should be sensitive to the surrounding land uses and should not negatively impact adjacent properties.

POLICY 2.7.2.54: Multi-unit housing should be included in DPA 9 – Multi-Unit [Residential](#).

~~**POLICY 2.7.2.65:** Multi-unit housing may consist of clustered detached units such as tiny homes, including tiny homes on wheels or manufactured homes in addition to traditional forms of housing.~~

POLICY 2.7.2.6: For bylaw amendment applications to permit detached multi-unit housing, the following considerations should be addressed:

- ~~Units can consist of tiny homes, including tiny homes on wheels or manufactured homes;~~
- Units will be constructed to the BC Building Code, or CSA standards for manufactured homes, or equivalent and receive a Building Permit from the RDN;
- Units must be connected to a source of potable water, and connected to an approved wastewater system;
- Communal facilities ~~may~~ can be provided, such as laundry or common rooms.

2.7.3 Commercial and Tourism

POLICY 2.7.3.1: Bylaw amendment applications for commercial or tourist accommodation uses should assess cumulative impacts on housing availability, freshwater demand, parking, and transportation infrastructure.

POLICY 2.7.3.2: Where an application for commercial or tourist accommodation development requiring a bylaw amendment are proposed to generate significant employment, on-site or nearby employee housing may be required, with priority given to locations accessible by active transportation or transit.

POLICY 2.7.3.3: Bylaw amendment applications for commercial uses should take into account access to other commercial uses as well as residential areas through active transportation routes.

POLICY 2.7.3.4: Applications to allow for commercial ~~or industrial~~ uses ~~must~~should provide a conditional provincial water license for the proposed use.

2.7.4 Agriculture

POLICY 2.7.4.1: Bylaw amendment proposals affecting lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve, or lands designated Agriculture, should not be supported where they would:

- Fragment agricultural landholdings,
- Introduce non-farm uses that are not ~~accessory~~clearly subordinate to agricultural activity, or
- Undermine current or future farm use.

POLICY 2.7.4.2: The Local Trust Committee may support applications to the Agricultural Land Commission for non-adhering residential use, or exclusion where the proposal provides small-scale, permanently affordable housing and meets all of the following:

- The land is outside the freshwater hazard area
- Housing is designed and sited to minimize impact on the agricultural capacity of the land
- Long-term affordability is provided through a housing agreement

2.7.5 Forest Land

POLICY 2.7.5.1: ~~Bylaw amendment applications~~ ~~Rezoning to increase density or use within of~~ or adjacent to Forest ~~Protection~~ry designated lands should not be supported where it would ~~immediately or incrementally~~ introduce residential, institutional, or infrastructure uses that

undermine long-term forest management, ecological integrity, contiguous forest cover, or watershed resilience.

2.7.6 Marine

POLICY 2.7.6.1: Bylaw amendment applications for marine-related commercial, recreational, institutional, or transportation uses should demonstrate how potential impacts on marine ecosystems, shorelines, cultural heritage and marine resources will be avoided, minimized, or mitigated.

POLICY 2.7.6.3: Proposals for marinas, docks, wharves, boat launches, and other marine infrastructure should be appropriately sited, designed, and serviced to minimize impacts on ecological values, public access, navigation, surrounding land uses, and community infrastructure.

POLICY 2.7.6.4 Bylaw amendment Applications should demonstrate adequate wastewater management, sewage pump-out facilities, solid waste management, spill prevention measures, transportation access, parking, and compatibility with ferry operations, public wharves, and community docks.

POLICY 2.7.6.5: Development in the marine area should minimize visual and environmental impacts and incorporate measures to respond to coastal hazards, including sea level rise, flooding, storm surge, and erosion.

POLICY 2.7.6.6 floating accommodations, live-aboard facilities, or other forms of permanent residential use on the water should not be supported.

POLICY 2.7.6.15 When assessing applications for a rezoning for a marina, the provision of toilet facilities should be considered.

2.8 Development Variance

2.8.1 General Policies

POLICY 2.8.1.1: Development Variance Permits should only be issued where variances are consistent with the objectives of this Plan.

POLICY 2.8.1.2: In considering a development variance permit application, the Gabriola LTC will evaluate whether the proposed variance:

- Is minor in nature;
- Does not undermine the intent of the bylaw being varied;
- Is consistent with the form and character of the surrounding area; and
- Will not result in significant adverse impacts on adjacent properties.

POLICY 2.8.1.3: Development Variance Permit applications should demonstrate that environmental values, ecosystem functions, and archaeological sites are adequately protected.

POLICY 2.8.1.4: Development Variance Permit applications near the shoreline should demonstrate that natural shoreline processes, coastal vegetation, and public access to the foreshore are maintained.

POLICY 2.8.1.5: Where a Development Variance Permit affects setbacks, siting, or lot coverage near environmentally sensitive areas, a Section 219 covenant may be required to [preserve and](#) protect ecological values, including vegetation retention, wildlife habitat, or shoreline integrity.

POLICY 2.8.1.6: Where a retroactive Development Variance Permit is considered, the Gabriola LTC may require conditions to mitigate impacts of the existing development, including but not limited to environmental remediation, landscaping, or registration of protective covenants.

2.9 Crown Lease Referrals

POLICY 2.9.1: Crown Lease referrals will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Consistency with land use regulations;
- Whether the proposed referral advances the objectives of this plan;
- Avoidance or mitigation of impacts to sensitive ecosystems, known First Nations interests, and archaeological sites;
- Appropriate management of hazards, including climate related hazards; and
- Whether there is appropriate servicing that will not impact sustainability of freshwater resources or generate waste that cannot be managed without detrimental impacts to the environment.

POLICY 2.9.2: When insufficient information is available for a review of a crown lease referral, additional information may be requested prior to a response in support of an application.

POLICY 2.9.3: When a crown lease referral significantly affects community interests, recreational areas, or neighbourhood amenities; referral responses will request that additional consultation occurs to understand and address community concerns prior to an application advancing.

2.10 Temporary Use Permit Applications

An OCP may designate areas where temporary uses may be allowed. A TUP may allow a use not permitted by zoning, specify conditions under which the temporary use may be carried on, and allow and regulate the construction of buildings or structures in respect of the use for which the permit is issued. A permit may be issued for a period of up to three years and may be renewed only once, after which a new application is required.

Guidelines recognize conditions that may be taken into account when evaluating a TUP application. The Gabriola LTC may identify site-specific performance measures to be attached as conditions of an approved permit.

2.11 Development Permit Areas

Pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, DPAs are designated in this OCP to establish objectives and guidelines for the ~~preservation and~~ protection of the natural environment, the protection of development from hazardous conditions, and the establishment of the form and character of development.

Within areas designated as DPAs, a development permit may be required prior to subdivision, construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or structure, or prior to certain alterations of land.

This section designates DPAs, describes the special conditions or objectives that justify the designation and specifies guidelines for each DPA intended to guide applicants, staff, and decision-makers in the review of development proposals.

Unless otherwise noted, the geographic areas that apply to each DPA are defined in Schedule C. Where land is subject to more than one DPA, guidelines from all relevant DPAs will apply, and only one development permit application is required.

PART THREE

Implementation and Advocacy

Implementation of the goals and objectives of the Plan in support of the communities' vision for 2050 will involve making use of planning tools available as well as working with other agencies and government bodies.

This part of the Plan identifies steps, beyond what is currently in Part 2 and Part 3 of the Plan, that could be taken by the Gabriola LTC to support the goals and objectives of the Plan. These steps include the use of development approval information, the creation of additional DPAs and the creation of heritage conservation areas.

In addition, this part of the Plan identifies steps to be taken in collaboration with First Nations, other agencies and government bodies as well as community groups, in support of the Gabriola 2050 vision and related community values, to address interests and implement actions beyond the scope of the Gabriola LTC's jurisdiction and area of focus.

3.1 Using Development Approval Information

The Plan Area is designated as an area for which development approval information can be required. In accordance with the *Local Government Act* and a development approval information bylaw adopted by the Gabriola LTC, applicants for ~~zoning bylaw amendments~~ rezoning, TUPs, and Development Permits may be required to provide development approval information.

Requiring development approval information is justified given the island's unique environmental conditions, including sensitive shoreline ecosystems, aquifer-dependent water supply, areas subject to slope instability, coastal erosion, and sea level rise, as well as the presence of significant biodiversity and cultural heritage resources.

In addition, the island's limited transportation infrastructure, rural land use pattern, and finite servicing capacity create conditions where development proposals may have notable impacts on ecological integrity, public safety, freshwater availability, and community character. Collectively, these special conditions and community objectives support the need for technical information that enables the Gabriola LTC to evaluate the potential impacts of proposed development and ensure that land use decisions are consistent with OCP goals.

3.2 Implementing the Freshwater Footprint

A Freshwater Footprint was developed for Gabriola Island, as part of the 2020-2026 OCP review, to provide a planning-scale framework for assessing freshwater conditions, constraints, and vulnerabilities in relation to land use planning. The Freshwater Footprint included aquifer conceptualization, groundwater region mapping, groundwater recharge mapping, water balance, aquifer stress analysis, freshwater hazard mapping, saltwater intrusion assessment, groundwater quality interpretation, watercourse mapping, wet-area interpretation, and watershed resilience mapping.

Freshwater information forms an integrated planning framework for land use planning and decision making. The mapped and interpretive layers contained in the Freshwater Footprint address interrelated aspects of groundwater recharge, water balance, aquifer stress, freshwater hazard, groundwater quality, groundwater-dependent ecosystem function, and watershed condition. Used in combination, they support assessment of freshwater constraints, site sensitivity, and the implications of land use change, including where additional technical information, protection, restoration, or land use limitations may be warranted.

3.3 Implementing New Development Permit Areas and Heritage Conservation Areas

DPAs and a Heritage Conservation Area can both be used to achieve some of the goals and objectives of this Plan. DPAs are designated in this OCP to establish objectives and guidelines for the [preservation and](#) protection of the natural environment, the protection of development from hazardous conditions, and the establishment of the form and character of development. Heritage Conservation Areas, which have not yet been implemented through this plan, can be created to protect both settler and indigenous cultural heritage.

3.3.1 Priority Development Permit Areas

In the development of this Plan it was identified that the existing DPAs, which focus primarily on location specific interests, were inadequate to implement the communities vision on their own. Through the development of the Plan a number of topics for future DPAs were identified as priorities. These topics are listed below in order of priority. Those with existing data and where model guidelines exist are identified as top priority followed by those where there was no data or guidelines at the time of the drafting of this Plan. Form and Character DPAs are not included in the list of priority DPAs as they can be created at anytime when there are specific changes to bylaws in particular locations. They do not require data.

Priority DPA topics which could be supported with existing mapping, data, and model guidelines:

1. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas: This DPA would address the critical need to protect limited freshwater resources. The Freshwater Footprint project provided sufficient information to inform the creation of a DPA. In addition, guidelines exist for Galiano Island which could inform the development of guidelines of DPA guidelines for Gabriola.

2. Steep Slopes Hazard: Steep Slope Hazard DPAs help to protect property owners from potential geotechnical issues due to erosion, earthquake and other natural hazards. While there was a steep slope hazard DPA for Gabriola Island at the time of the Plan development, the data upon which the DPA was developed was identified to need review. New mapping would be required.

3. Shorelines and Marine Areas: Shoreline and marine areas are vulnerable to erosion, sea-level rise and destruction of vulnerable ecosystems requiring protection. A DPA for shoreline and marine areas is of particular interest to First Nations as there is much cultural heritage and archaeological sites along the shoreline. A number of islands in the Islands Trust Area have DPAs for shoreline and marine areas, their guidelines can help inform guidelines for Gabriola.

4. Endangered Species Habitat: Changing climates and development impacts threaten endangered species. As the provincial government updates endangered species data annually, the boundaries of a DPA could be easily informed by updated data.

5. Riparian Areas: Provincial legislation requires all local governments have DPAs to protect riparian areas. Gabriola's riparian area DPA boundaries are out of date. The province updated riparian area data in 2019.

Priority DPAs without existing data or guidelines:

6. Fire Resilience: With the increase in dryer periods during the year, the importance of addressing fire resilience increases. The development of a fire resilience DPA would require working closely with the Gabriola fire department.

7. Sensitive Ecosystems: There are a number of sensitive ecosystems in the Plan Area. Current sensitive ecosystem data is out of date. Identifying DPA boundaries would require detailed studies to update data involving collaboration with professionals, local environmental protection groups as well as First Nations. Some of Gabriola's existing DPAs can also help inform DPA boundaries and guidelines.

8. Forested Areas: There is very strong interest in protecting forested areas in the Plan Area. The development of a DPA would need to begin with an assessment of land which could involve community members and groups.

9. Wetlands: The freshwater footprint work can help inform the identification of wetlands. Additional work by professionals and the community would be needed to establish the boundaries for a wetland DPA.

10. Habitat Corridors: During the development of the Plan, interest in a DPA to support habitat corridors was identified. Identifying DPA boundaries would require detailed studies to update data involving collaboration with professionals, local environmental protection groups as well as First Nations. ~~This was a lower priority than the topics above.~~

4.3.2 Heritage Conservation Areas

Consistent with an objective of this plan to protect Indigenous heritage and advance reconciliation the Gabriola LTC may establish Heritage Conservation Areas for the purposes of:

- Protecting settler and/or Indigenous cultural heritage
- Protecting historic buildings, view corridors and settler heritage sites.
- Protecting values, including Indigenous values, stories, cultural uses of landscapes and ecosystems that are integral to the cultural safety of Indigenous peoples

A Heritage Protection Area should:

- Reflect multiple voices representing broad cultural uses of the island and protect them for all future generations, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous.
- Be uniquely tailored to the heritage it protects, and can include other structures, lands or features of the land, significant trees or First Nations cultural heritage sites.

The establishment of a Heritage Conservation Area to protect Indigenous heritage should be undertaken through a future project to amend this Plan. The protections, restrictions and geographic boundaries that apply to an HCA should be described in the Plan or an addendum to the Plan. A future HCA would include the following:

- Location;
- Justification;
- Objectives;
- Essential Features and Characteristics of the area;
- Guidelines that development must adhere to;
- Exemptions from Permit Requirements to help balance development with conservation objectives.

HCAs are a means of increasing public awareness, recognition, and protection of Indigenous cultural heritage, and provide a framework to explore and accommodate First Nations interests in the context of development and land disturbance.

3.4 Advocacy

This Plan focuses on the land use planning tools available to the Gabriola LTC to guide land use in the Plan Area. Previous Parts of the Plan do not include actions that fall outside the Islands Trust's jurisdiction. At the same time, it is recognized that achieving the Plan's goals, and advancing the broader interests of the community, will require partnership and collaboration with community organizations, other levels of government, First Nations, and other partners.

Rather than identifying detailed advocacy policies, this Plan highlights key challenges and opportunities. This approach reflects past experience, where direct action-oriented advocacy policies have often been difficult to support or have not been consistently implemented. By focusing instead on issues, opportunities, and areas for collaboration, the Plan creates space for agencies, First Nations, and community groups to take the lead on matters that cannot be fully addressed through land use planning tools alone.

Plan Goals and Advocacy Action

Advocacy actions in this section are organized according to the primary goal they support, recognizing that many contribute to multiple goals. While some potential actions and partners have been identified, they reflect only the ideas identified through the engagement process during the development of the Plan and are not intended to be comprehensive. Other actions or partners not specifically identified may also help advance these issues in meaningful ways.

The actions identified in this section:

- Relate directly to land use;
- Support the goals of the Plan; and
- Address matters outside the sole authority of the Gabriola LTC or require collaboration with other governments, organizations, and community partners.

3.4.1 Integrating First Nations Interests

3.4.1.1 Protecting Cultural Heritage Sites

Background:

The Plan Area contains numerous Indigenous cultural heritage sites, both recorded and unrecorded, that reflect long-standing relationships between First Nations and the land. These sites are vulnerable to disturbance from development, erosion, recreational use, and climate change. Protecting cultural heritage is a key priority for First Nations and is essential to reconciliation, stewardship, and respectful land use planning.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

While the Gabriola LTC can influence land use and development, the identification, management, and legal protection of cultural heritage sites involve provincial legislation, Crown processes, and First Nations governance. Effective protection requires coordinated advocacy and collaboration.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Support completion of an Archaeological Overview Assessment in collaboration with Snuneymuxw First Nation;
- Advocate for monitoring, enforcement, and protection measures to prevent damage or disturbance;
- Ensure land use decisions, provincial approvals, and Crown referrals meaningfully involve First Nations and respect Indigenous rights;
- Support joint advocacy with First Nations to advance shared stewardship goals.
- Promote public education to increase awareness of cultural heritage values and appropriate protocols;
- Encourage agreements, partnerships, or conditions that support shared stewardship, land protection, or management outcomes with First Nations, where consistent with this Plan.

Key Collaborators:

Snuneymuxw First Nation and other First Nations, Province of BC, private landowners, and community organizations.

34.4.1.2 Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into Land Use Planning

Background:

Indigenous knowledge systems reflect generations of place-based understanding of ecosystems, cultural landscapes, and stewardship practices. Integrating this knowledge into land use planning supports more resilient, informed, and culturally respectful decision-making.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC can incorporate Indigenous perspectives into planning policies; however, meaningful integration depends on collaboration with Indigenous Governing Bodies and alignment with provincial and federal decision-making processes.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Strengthen referral processes to ensure timely and meaningful First Nations involvement;
- Advocate for alignment of provincial and federal decisions with First Nations' cultural and ecological priorities;
- Support respectful handling of Indigenous knowledge, including confidentiality and cultural protocols.

Key Collaborators:

First Nations, Province of BC, Government of Canada, Islands Trust Conservancy, RDN, and local stewardship organizations.

34.4.1.3 Educating on First Nations History, Rights, and Cultural Values

Background:

The history, cultural values, governance systems, and ongoing rights of First Nations shape Gabriola Island's identity and contribute to a fuller understanding of its past and future. Increasing community awareness supports reconciliation by fostering respect, cultural understanding, and informed decision-making. Public awareness also helps protect cultural sites, reduces inadvertent harm, and strengthens relationships between residents and First Nations.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC has a central role in guiding community conversations about land use. However, many opportunities to share First Nations history and cultural values, such as public signage, school curricula, park programming, and public lands interpretation, fall outside LTC jurisdiction.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Public education initiatives such as cultural programming, interpretive signage, storytelling events, and land-based learning;
- Collaboration with First Nations to develop accurate and respectful educational materials related to local history, cultural values, and Indigenous governance;
- Integration of First Nations perspectives into parks planning, public art, interpretive trails, community facilities, and public signage;
- Expansion of opportunities for youth and adults to learn about First Nations rights, title, and responsibilities through schools, workshops, and community programs; and
- Promotion of awareness of legal obligations related to cultural heritage protection, including respectful land stewardship practices.

Key Collaborators:

First Nations, School District No. 68, RDN, Province, Federal agencies, Gabriola Museum, Islands Trust Area Services, local stewardship organizations.

34.4.2 Preservation and Protection of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

34.4.2.1 Ecosystem Preservation, Protection and Restoration of Terrestrial Ecosystems

Background:

The Islands Trust mandate includes environmental preservation and protection, but coordinated action across jurisdictions provides additional opportunities.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The LTC has limited authority over private land management and relies on cooperation with others to preserve and protect sensitive ecosystems.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Ensuring up to date data is available to support decision making;
- Educating the public to develop land responsibly and with ecological care;
- Placing covenants on areas of high ecological value;
- Protecting ecologically sensitive lands through stewardship, and conservation tools;
- Preventing habitat destruction and undertaking ecological restoration in areas where damage or destruction has occurred;
- Restoring damaged habitat and ecosystems.

Key Collaborators:

First Nations, private landowners, the Gabriola community, local conservancies, the Islands Trust Conservancy, Islands Trust Area Services, RDN, the Province.

34.4.2.2 Preservation and Protection of Marine and Shoreline Ecosystems

Background:

Shorelines are high-value areas with significant ecological, cultural, and heritage importance. They are also subject to substantial natural change, intensified by climate change.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC does not regulate fisheries, issue Crown land tenures, or have knowledge of all culturally significant shoreline sites.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Educating the public about the implications of developing near the shoreline;
- Educating the public on green shores approaches to shoreline impacts;
- Simplifying Crown tenure processes that support nature-based shoreline protection;
- Support coordinated shoreline planning and protection efforts;
- Finfish farming should not be supported within the Plan Area.

Key Collaborators:

First Nations, private Landowners, RDN, the Province, the Federal Government, and First Nations all share responsibilities for shoreline management.

34.4.2.3 Species at Risk

Background:

Species at risk are highly valued for their contribution to ecosystem health but remain vulnerable to impacts from existing and new development.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC can use DPAs and regulatory tools to support protection, but primary authority to protect species at risk rests with senior governments.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Educating the public about local species at risk;
- Protecting species at risk and their habitats;
- Supporting data collection, mapping, and monitoring programs;
- Conserving land that provides suitable habitat for local species at risk.

Key Collaborators:

Private land owners, the Gabriola community, the Province, local conservancies, the Islands Trust Conservancy, Islands Trust Area Service, RDN, and the Federal Government.

34.4.3 Responsible Resource Stewardship

34.4.3.1 Preservation and Protection of Quality and Quantity of Freshwater Resources

Background:

Gabriola has limited freshwater resources, which are critical to ecological health, watershed function, agriculture, and the well-being of residents. Protection of freshwater resources depends not only on long use planning, but on monitoring, stewardship, public education, and coordination between multiple agencies and community groups.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC does not regulate groundwater licencing, well construction standards, water allocation, drinking water regulation, or regional water programs. Those responsibilities are shared across multiple provincial agencies. Advocacy is needed to improve coordination, strengthen freshwater literacy, support stewardship initiatives, and advance programs that protect freshwater quality and quantity.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Support continued development of tools for public access to freshwater mapping, data, and planning information such as the Islands Trust Freshwater Atlas;
- Support coordination with the RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program;
- Support collaboration with First Nations, the Province, the Regional District of Nanaimo, Island Health, and community organizations on freshwater protection priorities and watershed stewardship;
- Support monitoring programs that improve the evidence base for freshwater planning and protection;
- Advocate for provincial groundwater authorization, water allocation, and regulatory processes that reflect freshwater sustainability, local hydrogeologic conditions, and cumulative effects;
- Advocate for programs and partnerships that support rainwater harvesting, freshwater storage, drought preparedness, source protection, and reduction of contamination risks.

- Support public education initiatives that improve freshwater literacy, good well practices, among residents, trustees, landowners, and applicants.

Key Collaborators:

First Nations, Province, RDN, Island Health, Islands Trust Conservancy, private land owners, local stewardship organizations, and water users.

43.4.3.2 Preservation of Agriculture

Background:

Agriculture contributes to local food security, rural character, and community identity on Gabriola Island. However, productive agricultural land is limited and vulnerable to fragmentation, land use conflicts, and changing economic conditions. Agricultural lands fall under multiple jurisdictions, including the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and local regulatory bodies.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

Although the Gabriola LTC regulates land use and density, it does not oversee agricultural practices, farm classification, or enforcement within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Many policies that influence agricultural viability (such as water licensing, taxation, farm standards, and provincial agricultural programs) are outside Gabriola LTC control.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Protecting agricultural land through ALC decision-making, land stewardship tools, and prevention of non-farm uses that fragment or degrade farmland;
- Supporting farmers by improving access to water, infrastructure, and programs that strengthen agricultural viability;
- Promoting regenerative and climate-resilient farming practices that maintain soil health, protect groundwater, and enhance biodiversity;
- Advancing food security initiatives, including local food distribution networks, farm-to-community programs, and agricultural education.
- Support and encourage local agricultural organizations to purchase and hold agricultural land for agricultural purposes.

Key Collaborators:

First Nations, Agricultural Land Commission, Province of British Columbia, RDN, local farmers and agricultural organizations.

34.4.3.3 Preservation of Forests

Background:

Forests in the Plan Area provide essential ecological functions, including carbon storage, groundwater recharge, habitat connectivity, and climate regulation. They also support cultural values, recreation, and the rural character of the island. Many forested areas are privately owned or fall under provincial jurisdiction for land and resource management, making long-term forest preservation a shared responsibility across agencies and landowners.

The Gabriola LTC can regulate land use, subdivision, and certain development activities, but it does not manage forestry practices, issue cutting permits, or regulate resource extraction on private managed forest land or Crown land. Because many decisions affecting forest health (such as logging approvals, provincial land authorizations, wildfire management, and conservation funding) lie outside Gabriola LTC authority, advocacy is necessary.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Prioritizing conservation of ecologically important and mature forest areas through land acquisition, covenants, and stewardship agreements.
- Supporting sustainable forest management practices that preserve biodiversity, soil health, and long-term forest function.
- Reducing wildfire risk through fuel management and forest health initiatives led by provincial agencies and First Nations.
- Protecting habitat connectivity in decisions related to forestry, subdivision, and Crown land.
- Providing incentives and support for private landowners to maintain forest cover and adopt stewardship practices.
- Educating on sustainable forestry practices.

Key Collaborators:

First Nations, Province, Islands Trust Conservancy, RDN, Private landowners and forestry operators, Local conservancy and stewardship organizations

34.4.3.4 Mining and Aggregate Extraction

Background:

Mining and aggregate extraction can create noise, dust, pollution, and significant environmental and cultural impacts.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC does not have jurisdiction to regulate mining activities.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Referral of Crown applications for mining to the Islands Trust;
- Ensuring mining permits protect cultural heritage, groundwater, and the environment; and
- Monitoring operations to ensure compliance with permit conditions.

Key Collaborators:

The Province

34.4.4.5 Community Resilience and Climate Readiness

Addressing climate change on Gabriola requires both reducing greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and preparing for the impacts of a changing climate (adaptation). While emissions in the community are primarily generated by transportation, buildings, and waste, the Plan Area is also increasingly affected by climate-related risks such as drought, wildfire, flooding, and coastal erosion.

The Gabriola LTC plays an important role by shaping land use policies that support low-carbon and resilient community systems, while advocating to other levels of government and organizations that hold responsibility for infrastructure, services, and regulatory frameworks. Through a coordinated approach to mitigation and adaptation, Gabriola can reduce its climate impact while strengthening long-term community resilience and well-being.

34.4.4.11 Transportation and Mobility

Background:

Transportation represents 40-60% of emissions in BC communities. As many rural communities, Gabriola's transportation system relies heavily on personal vehicles. The community seeks safer and more accessible walking, biking, and transit options as well as increased ability to access community amenities without the use of a personal vehicle.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC can influence land use to support active transportation but does not build paths, construct roads, or operate public transit.

Key Collaborators:

Gabriola Transportation Society, GERTIE, the Province, and RDN.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Build walking and biking paths within rights-of-way and in new development areas. A high priority area is creating a link between the Village and Descanso Bay Ferry Terminal;
- Reduce speed limits where appropriate;
- Expand public transportation infrastructure and service; and
- Use Gabriola Safe Roadways document for reference when considering road improvements to support increased walkability and safety.

34.4.4.272 Buildings

Background:

Buildings represent about 30-50% of total energy use in communities in British Columbia, primarily from space and water heating using fossil fuels such as natural gas, oil, and propane. On Gabriola, many homes rely on these fuels, and the island's older housing stock can be less energy efficient. Improving building performance and transitioning to low-carbon energy sources are key opportunities to reduce emissions while enhancing comfort, affordability, and resilience.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC can influence land use patterns and housing form but does not regulate or enforce building codes, energy systems, or fuel sources, which are governed by the Province and the RDN.

Supports and Advocacy:

Encourage higher energy efficiency standards for new construction (e.g., Step Code implementation).

- Advocate for programs and incentives to retrofit existing homes (insulation, windows, heat pumps);
- Encourage the transition from fossil fuel heating to electric systems;
- Support local renewable energy initiatives (e.g., rooftop solar where appropriate); and
- Promote education and capacity-building for builders, trades, and homeowners.

Key Collaborators:

BC Energy Step Code / Province, RDN, BC Hydro, FortisBC, and local builders and contractors.

34.4.4.3 Waste

Background:

Waste typically represents 5–15% of emissions in BC communities, primarily due to methane released from organic materials decomposing in landfills. On Gabriola, reducing waste and supporting reuse and recycling can significantly lower emissions while conserving resources. Community interest in waste reduction and stewardship is already strong and provides a foundation for further action.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC can influence land use and support local initiatives but does not manage waste collection, disposal systems, or regional waste policy, which are the responsibility of the Regional District.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Expand organics diversion (e.g., composting) to reduce landfill methane emissions;
- Support local reuse, repair, and sharing initiatives to reduce overall waste generation;
- Encourage waste reduction in new development (e.g., space for sorting, composting);
- Advocate for enhanced recycling and waste diversion programs at the regional level; and
- Promote education and behaviour change to reduce single-use materials and food waste.

Key Collaborators:

RDN, local reuse and recycling organizations, community groups, and residents.

34.4.4.4 Food Security

Background:

Food systems contribute to community emissions through transportation, production, and waste, while also playing a critical role in resilience and well-being. On Gabriola, strengthening local food systems can reduce reliance on imported goods, lower transportation-related emissions, and improve food security. Supporting local agriculture, food distribution networks, and community-based food initiatives also enhances the island's ability to respond to disruptions and climate impacts.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC can influence land use to support agriculture and local food production but does not regulate farming practices, food distribution systems, or broader food policy, which involve multiple levels of government and organizations.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Encourage local food production, including small-scale farms, community gardens, and urban agriculture.
- Promote programs that improve access to affordable, healthy, and locally produced food.
- Encourage reduction of food waste through education and community initiatives.
- Encourage that water be identified for current and future food production.

Key Collaborators:

Local farmers and food producers, community organizations, RDN, Island Health, and provincial agencies.

34.4.4.5. Natural Areas and Hazard Protection

Background:

Natural areas play a critical role in reducing climate-related risks such as wildfire, flooding, and erosion, while also supporting biodiversity and ecosystem health. On Gabriola, forests, wetlands, coastal areas, and riparian zones help absorb and store water, stabilize soils, and reduce the impacts of extreme weather events. Protecting and restoring these natural systems is a cost-effective and sustainable approach to climate adaptation, particularly in an island context where infrastructure is limited and ecosystems are closely tied to community well-being.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC can influence land use to protect environmentally sensitive areas and reduce exposure to hazards but does not manage forests, regulate natural resource use, or oversee emergency response. Many tools and decisions related to wildfire management, watershed protection, and coastal processes fall under provincial, regional, or other jurisdictions, requiring advocacy and collaboration.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Advocate for improved wildfire risk reduction strategies, including forest management and FireSmart initiatives;
- Encourage the use of nature-based solutions to address flooding, erosion (eg. green shores), and heat; and
- Support mapping and monitoring of hazard areas, including floodplains, erosion zones, and wildfire interface areas.

Key Collaborators:

Snuneymuxw First Nation and other Indigenous knowledge holders, RDN, Province of BC, local stewardship organizations, and emergency services.

34.4.5 Diversity and Community Wellbeing

34.4.5.1 Housing Diversity & Affordability

Background:

Housing on Gabriola faces pressures from limited supply, high costs, and the need to accommodate residents at different life stages and income levels. Ensuring a range of housing type with a focus on non-market options, is critical for sustaining a diverse and vibrant community. Strategic planning can enable housing solutions that meet local needs without compromising infrastructure or environmental values.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC cannot directly provide housing or manage housing policy, but it can guide land use, zoning, and community planning to support diverse, ~~attainable~~ **attainable-moderate income** housing options. Advocacy is essential to ensure regional and provincial policies align with local housing goals.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Encourage development of multi-unit and mixed-income housing that aligns with community character;
- Promote affordable and **attainable-moderate income** housing near services and commercial areas to reduce transportation emissions and support community accessibility.;
- Support housing designs that integrate energy efficiency, water conservation, and minimal environmental impact;
- Advocate for funding from senior government to supply non-market housing.;
- Support partnerships with non-profit and housing organizations to increase housing options.

Key Collaborators:

RDN, BC Housing, non-profit housing providers, developers, community groups, and residents.

34.4.5.2 Local Economy

Background:

A resilient local economy depends on accessible commercial spaces, home occupations, and light industrial uses that serve local needs and reduce reliance on off-island services.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC can influence zoning and land use but does not control economic development programs, business funding, or regional infrastructure. Advocacy is needed to support local economic resilience through external programs.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Advocate for regional or provincial programs that provide support, grants, or incentives for local businesses and home occupations.
- Encourage infrastructure investments (e.g., broadband, transportation) to support small-scale commercial and light industrial activities.
- Promote initiatives that strengthen local supply chains, self-reliance, and sustainable economic development.
- Support training and mentorship programs for local entrepreneurs.

Key Collaborators:

RDN, Chamber of Commerce, local business associations, economic development agencies, and community groups.

34.4.5.3 Parks & Public Access

Background:

Public access to parks, trails, and natural areas supports recreation, ecological health, and overall community well-being.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC can guide planning and designate areas for protection but does not manage parkland acquisition, funding, or stewardship programs. Advocacy is required to secure resources and partnerships for maintaining and expanding public access.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Advocate for province, RDN to acquire and maintain parkland and trails including shoreline access.
- Work with the Islands Trust Conservancy when considering land use covenants.
- Encourage and support programs that enhance stewardship, conservation, and public education about natural areas.

- Encourage partnerships with non-profits and community groups to manage and expand public access responsibly.
- Promote initiatives that balance public access with protection of sensitive ecological areas.

Key Collaborators:

Islands Trust Conservancy, RDN, provincial agencies, environmental and community groups, and residents.

34.4.5.4 Arts and Culture

Background:

Arts and cultural activities contribute to Gabriola’s unique identity, support community connection, attract visitors, and provide local economic opportunities. These activities can include visual and performing arts, music, literary events, heritage programs, and public art installations. While the Gabriola LTC can influence land use and zoning for cultural facilities, many funding, programming, and operational decisions are controlled by regional, provincial, and community and private organizations.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC cannot directly fund, operate, or manage arts and cultural programs. Advocacy is essential to secure resources, partnerships, and supportive policies that allow local artists, organizations, and cultural initiatives to thrive.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Advocate for provincial and regional funding programs that support local arts organizations, festivals, and cultural events.
- Encourage partnerships with arts councils, heritage societies, and community groups to expand access to creative spaces.
- Advocate for infrastructure investments, such as performance venues, studios, and galleries, that are accessible to residents and visitors.
- Promote initiatives that integrate arts and culture into public spaces, education, and tourism strategies.
- Encourage programs that preserve and celebrate Indigenous cultural heritage and practices.

Key Collaborators:

Gabriola Arts Council, local artists and cultural organizations, RDN, provincial arts agencies, Indigenous communities, schools, and community groups.

34.4.5.5 Sports, Recreation, and Active Living

Background:

Access to recreational facilities, trails, parks, and programs supports physical health, mental well-being, and community cohesion. Activities can include organized sports, informal recreation, walking and cycling, water-based activities, and outdoor fitness. While the Gabriola LTC can guide land use to accommodate recreational spaces, many programming, funding, and operational responsibilities lie with regional, provincial, or non-profit organizations.

Why Advocacy is Needed:

The Gabriola LTC cannot directly fund, operate, or manage recreation programs, facilities, or sports leagues. Advocacy is essential to secure partnerships, funding, and supportive policies that enhance recreational opportunities for residents.

Supports and Advocacy:

- Advocate for regional and provincial funding to build, maintain, and upgrade recreational facilities, trails, and active transportation networks.
- Encourage partnerships with local sports clubs, recreation societies, schools, and community groups to expand program availability.
- Promote initiatives that make recreation accessible to all ages, abilities, and income levels.
- Support programs that integrate active living into community design, including safe walking and cycling routes.
- Advocate for environmental stewardship in recreational planning to ensure natural areas are preserved while supporting public use.

Key Collaborators:

RDN, local recreation societies, schools, sports clubs, provincial recreation agencies, Indigenous communities, and community groups.

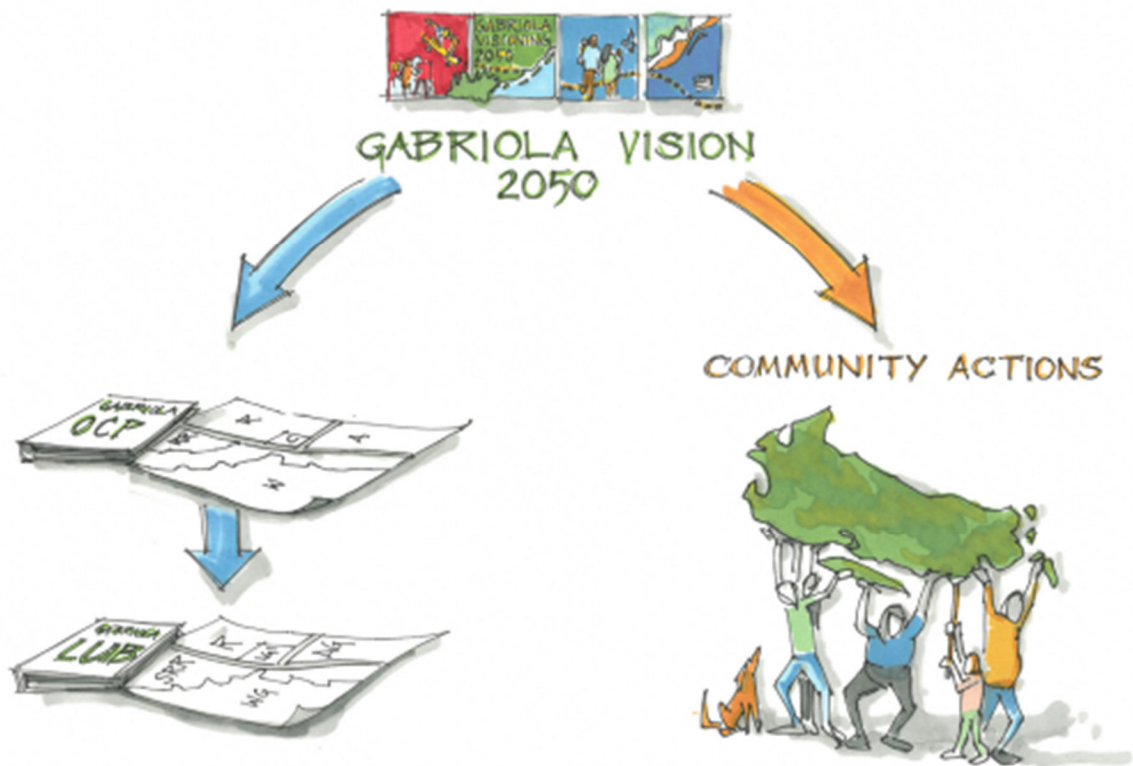
34.4.6 Collaboration, Transparency, and Shared Responsibility

Advocacy policies in this OCP reinforce the goal of Collaboration, Transparency, and Shared Responsibility by guiding the Gabriola LTC in championing coordinated, respectful, and accountable land use planning across jurisdictions. These policies help ensure early and ongoing coordination with First Nations and relevant agencies, support shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, and encourage alignment between Gabriola LTC planning initiatives and the related plans, priorities, and stewardship work of Indigenous, regional, and provincial partners.

By promoting interagency cooperation, recognition of Indigenous rights and knowledge, and transparent, inclusive engagement practices, the advocacy policies strengthen trust, improve information-sharing, and help the community participate meaningfully in decision-making. Together, they create a foundation for land use planning that is collaborative, and grounded in mutual responsibility for the shared environmental, cultural heritage, housing, and community wellbeing goals.

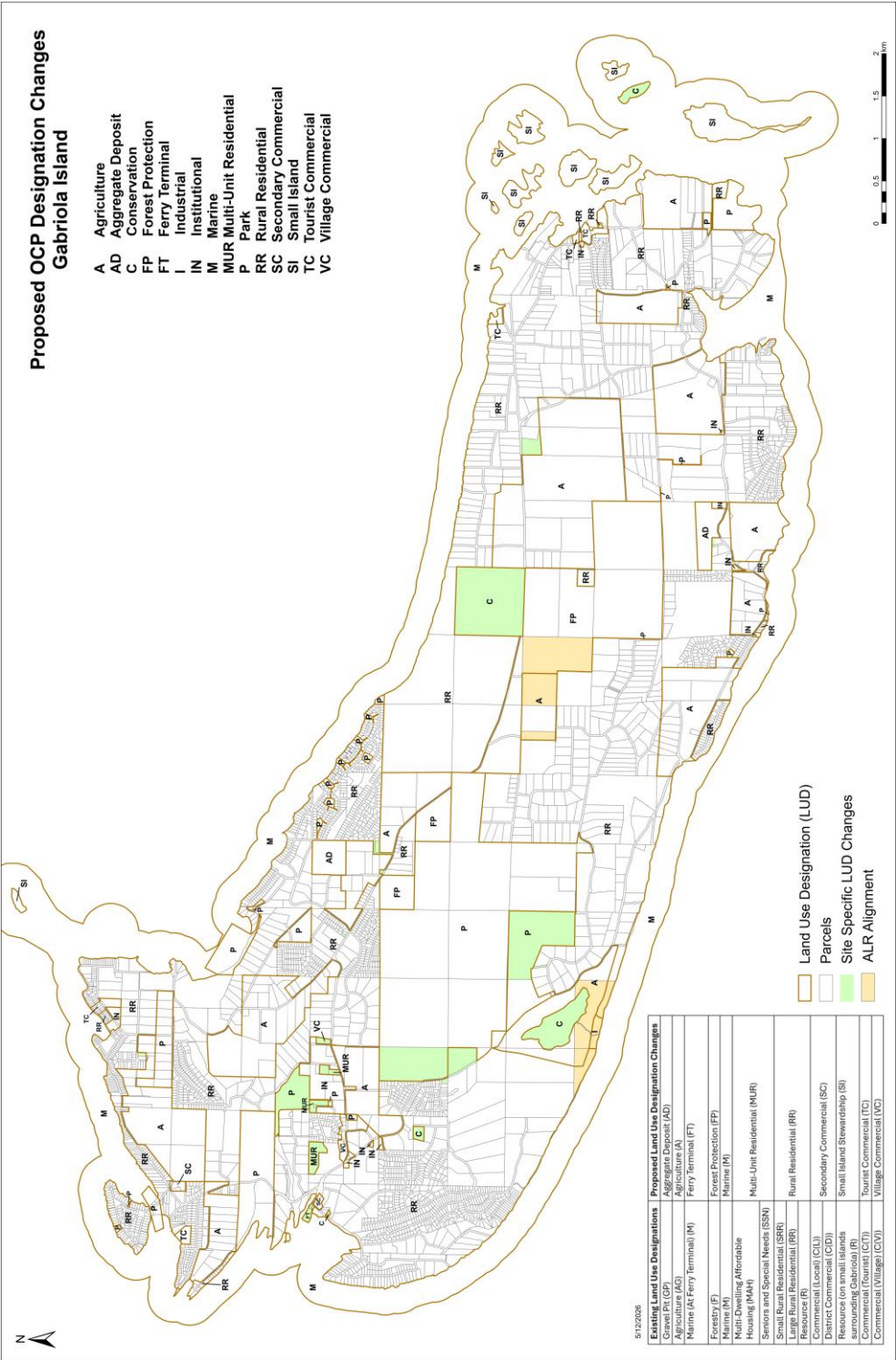
43.5 Implementation Plan

This Plan also supports the development of a separate Gabriola Vision 2050 implementation plan to identify specific actions, including advocacy-related initiatives, needed to advance shared community goals. Because effective partnerships often require further dialogue before clear actions can be defined, a separate implementation plan outside this bylaw, led by the community, is the appropriate place to outline concrete advocacy measures and targets.



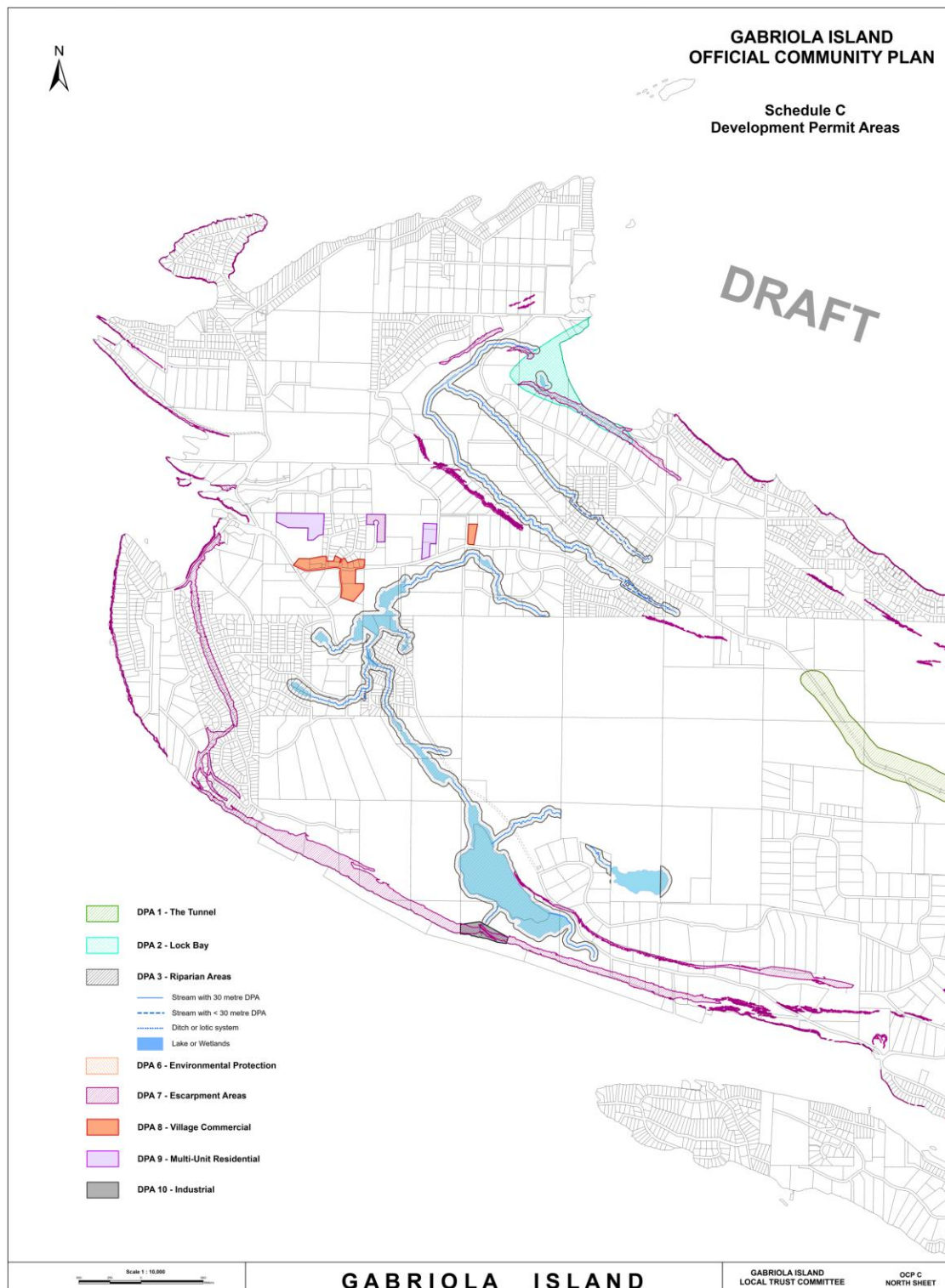
ADDITIONAL SCHEDULES

Schedule B – Land and Marine Designations

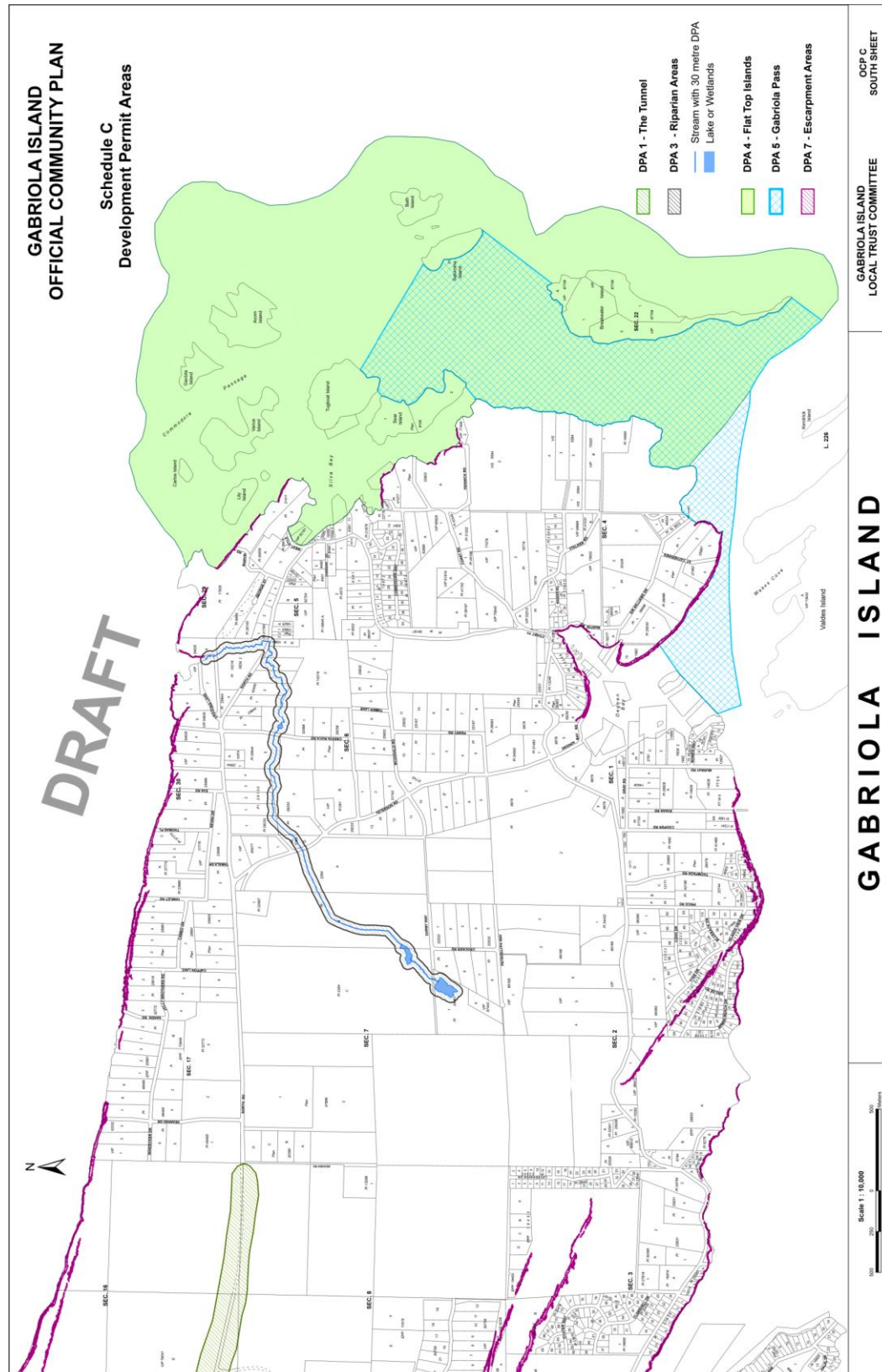


Schedule C – Development Permit Areas

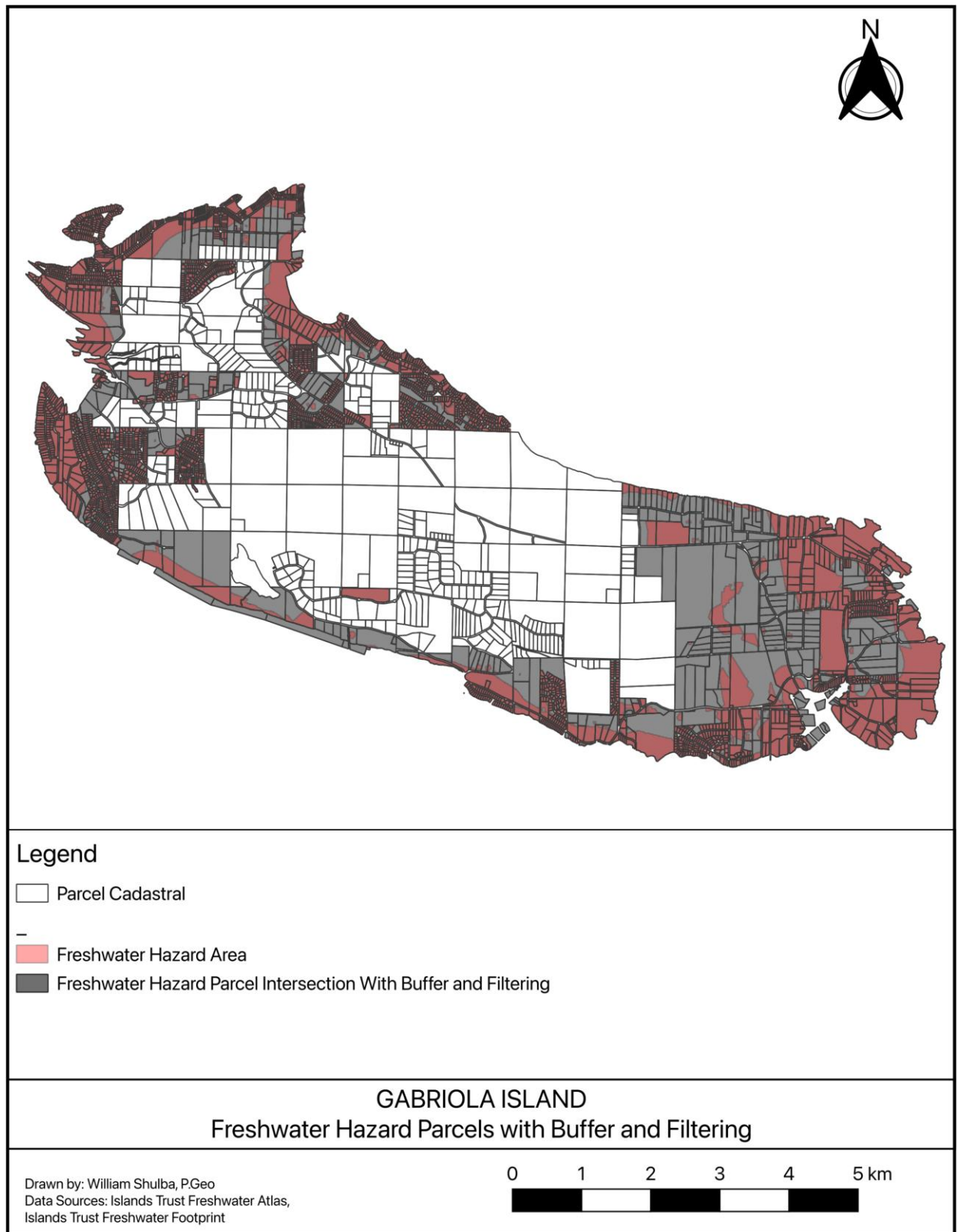
North Map



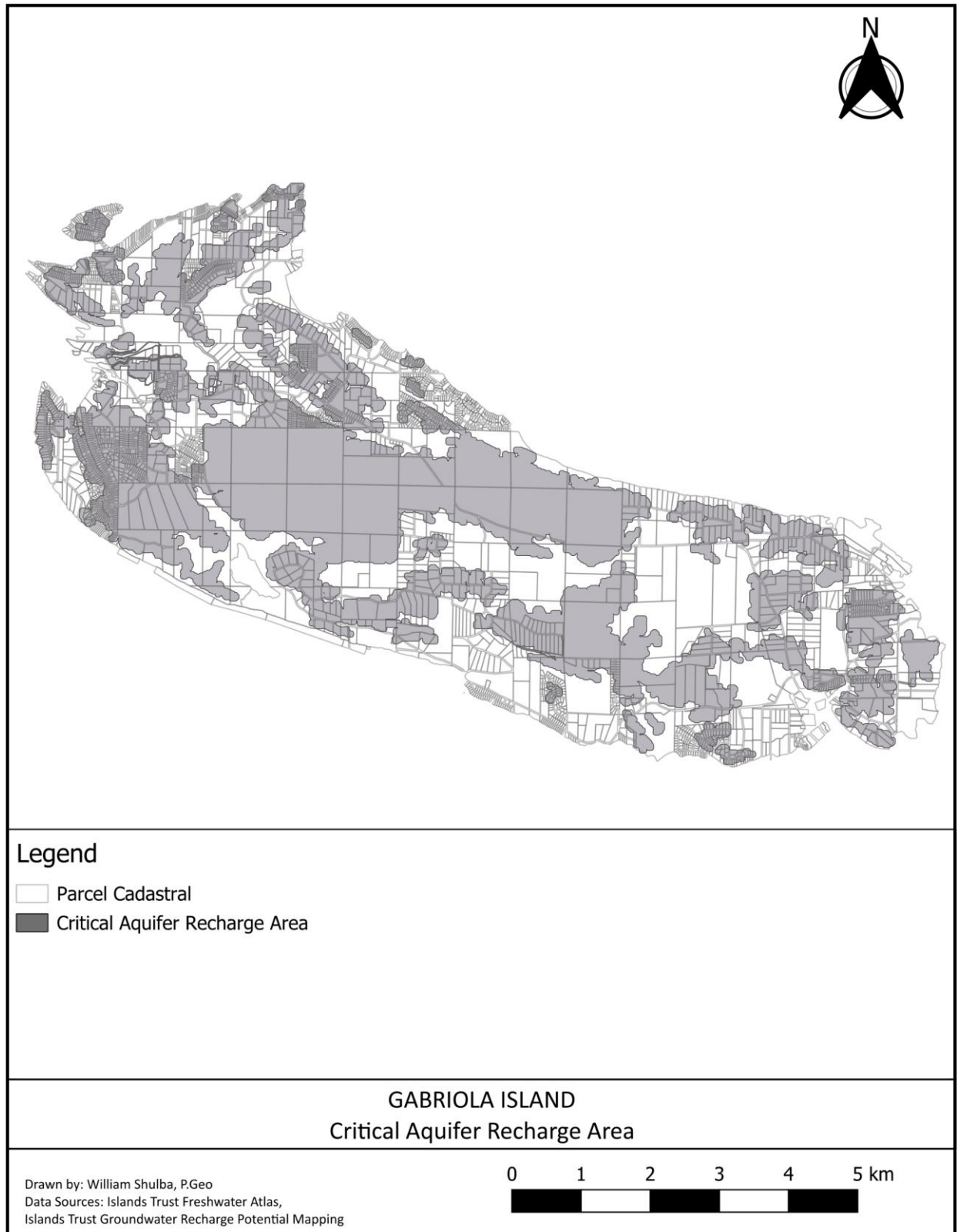
South Map



Schedule D – Freshwater Hazard AreaMap



Schedule E – Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas



APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Definitions

~~**Accessory dwelling unit** means a dwelling unit accessory to a use that is not residential.~~

Affordable Housing dwelling unit means a deed restricted and/or rent controlled dwelling unit that is secured by a housing agreement, and is accessible to persons with ~~moderate~~ **medium** to low income as defined by the housing agreement for the dwelling unit.

Horticulture means the cultivation of plants, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, herbs, sprouts, mushrooms, and ornamental/landscape plants.

Attainable Housing—means housing that is priced below prevailing market levels and **designed intended** to be inhabited by moderate-income households, including local workforce and first-time buyer households, without reliance on deep ~~or~~ ongoing subsidies.

Community Services Uses means uses that support community services ~~to be and are~~ managed by an established government or registered not for profit organization. Examples include schools, health care facilities, community centres, ~~s, and~~ recycling depots.

Bed and Breakfast means short term rental of a bedroom in a dwelling which is occupied by the operator.

Community Water Supply means a water supply system that provides potable water to multiple properties through shared infrastructure. A community water supply is typically managed by a public authority, improvement district, strata corporation, utility provider, or other organization responsible for the operation, maintenance, and regulation of the system.

Critical Aquifer Recharge Area means an area designated as such in Schedule E.

Dwelling Unit means a structure or set of rooms in a building, intended for year round human habitation containing cooking, sleeping, and living facilities.

~~**Dwelling Unit, Accessory** means a Dwelling Unit that is accessory to a principal use that is not residential and is limited in floor area.~~

~~**Dwelling Unit, Attached Secondary**, means a self-contained dwelling unit (secondary suite) that is accessory to a principle use that is residential, is attached to the principle dwelling unit, and is limited in floor area.~~

~~**Dwelling Unit, Detached Secondary** means a self-contained dwelling unit that is accessory to a principle use that is residential, is not attached to the principle Dwelling Unit, and is limited in floor area.~~

~~**Dwelling Unit, Secondary** means a self-contained dwelling unit that is limited in floor area and located on an attached (secondary suite) or detached secondary dwelling unit that is accessory on the same lot as another dwelling unit or use, including institutional and commercial uses, to a principal dwelling, and is limited in floor area.~~

Dwelling Unit, Principal means the the primary Dwelling Unit on a parcel that constitutes the principal residential use of the property ~~and to which secondary dwelling units may be accessory.~~

Sustainable Forestry means the management, stewardship, and sustainable use of forested lands and forest resources, including the growing, maintaining, harvesting, and protection of trees, for ecological, economic, and community benefit over the long term. This includes measures to conserve forest ecosystems, soil, water, biodiversity, and climate values, while supporting forest-based livelihoods and rural land uses.

Freshwater Footprint means a spatial planning framework that identifies areas where freshwater quantity, freshwater quality, recharge conditions, saltwater intrusion risk, land use density, and water demand indicate known or potential pressure on freshwater supply.

Freshwater Management Plan means a site-specific assessment and management plan prepared by a qualified professional that evaluates the anticipated impacts of a proposed development or land use change on freshwater resources and identifies measures to ensure sustainable water use.

Income, Low means a level of income at which an individual or household has fewer economic resources than typical members of society, commonly measured as having an adjusted household income below 50% of the median population income, accounting for household size.

Income, Moderate means a level of income that falls between the low-income threshold (commonly defined as 50% of median income) and the median income of the population, indicating modest but not severely constrained economic resources.

Multi-unit dwelling means a building comprised of ~~ntaining~~ two or more dwelling units (excluding a principal dwelling with a secondary suite), each having their own entrance, which may include an entrance ~~in the form of a form-a~~ common interior corridor ~~or~~ and ~~an~~ exterior entrance.

Non-market Housing means housing provided by governments, non-profit organizations, housing cooperatives, Indigenous housing providers, or other community-based entities, where affordability is secured over the long term and rents or housing charges are set based on income or established affordability benchmarks rather than market demand.

Park, Passive Recreation means a park which is retained in its natural state other than [low impact infrastructure required to support nature appreciate such as for](#) walking and hiking trails, and signage, ~~and no other uses including driveways and parking lots.~~

Public Utilities means a use of land, or unoccupied works and structures including pipes, wires, poles or towers, for the provision of electricity, gas, water, sewage collection, telephone, [internet](#), ~~cablevision~~ or telecommunication services for the benefit of the general population; or the use of land or unoccupied structures for navigational aids.

~~**Secondary Dwelling Unit** means an attached (secondary suite) or detached secondary dwelling unit that is accessory to a principal dwelling on the same lot that is limited in floor area.~~

Secondary Suite means ~~an accessory, self-contained~~ [a secondary](#) dwelling unit that is within the principal dwelling having equal or lesser floor area than the principal dwelling unit.

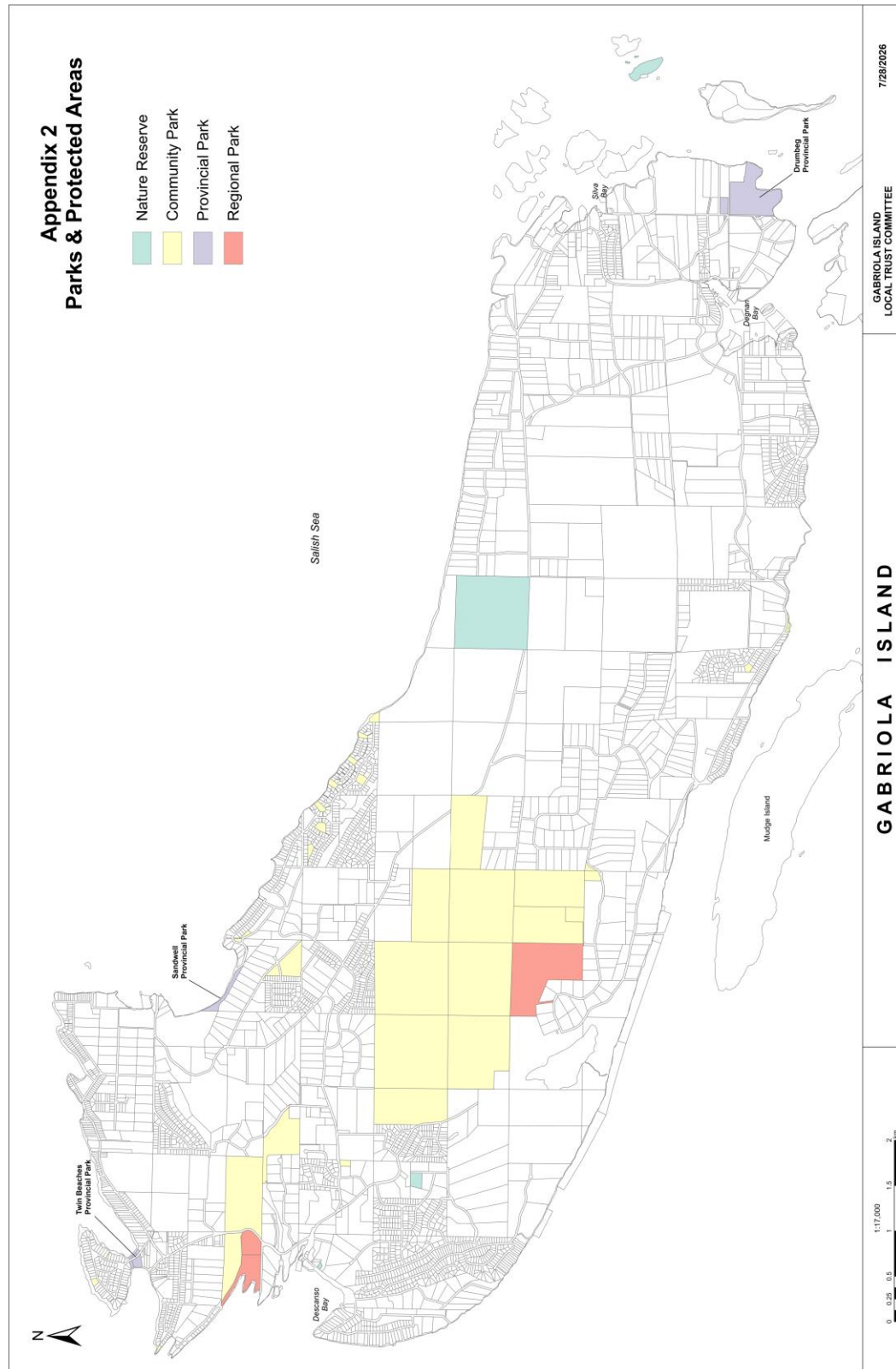
Sensitive Ecosystems means ecosystems which are fragile ~~and/or~~ rare, ~~or and~~ those ecosystems which are ecologically important because of the diversity of species they support.

Short Term Vacation Rental means ~~a short term~~ rental ~~(less than 30 days)~~ of a dwelling or part of dwelling [with a duration that is less than 30 days](#).

Special Needs Housing means housing that is purpose-designed or operated to accommodate individuals or households who require additional supports, services, or physical adaptations in order to live safely and independently, including housing for persons with disabilities, seniors requiring assistance, and others with identifiable support needs.

Wilderness Recreation means outdoor activities, including hiking and wildlife observation, conducted in natural, undeveloped areas that emphasize connection with nature and involve minimal human interference.

Appendix 2– Parks and Protected Areas



Appendix 3- Land Status

