

Policy DIRECTIONS

Islands 2050: The Future of the Trust Area

Visual Policy Analysis
& Public Engagement Phase II

January 2021



Illustrations by:
Michelle Buchholz | CASSYEX
CONSULTING
cassyexconsulting.com

Acknowledgment

We respectfully and humbly acknowledge...

The Islands Trust Area is located within the treaty and territorial lands and waters of the BOKÉĆEN, Cowichan Tribes, Halalt, Homalco, K'ómoks, Klahoose, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Lək'wəŋən (SXIMEŁŁŁ, Songhees, T'Sou-ke), Lyackson, MÁLEXEŁ, Penelakut, Qualicum, Scia'new, səlılwətaʔt, SEMYOME, shíshálh, Snaw-naw-as, Snuneymuxw, Skwxwú7mesh, SḶÁUTW, Stz'uminus, Tla'amin, Tsawwassen, We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum, WJOŁŁŁP, WSIKEM, and x^wməθk^wəyəm.

...these lands and waters have been home to Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial

...we honor the rich history, stewardship and cultural heritage of this place

Islands 2050: The Future of the Trust Area

We are updating the [Islands Trust Policy Statement](#) to be current, to be resilient to new challenges, and to take advantage of new and evolving opportunities.

In the Fall of 2019, through online and in-person engagement processes, we asked the public the following questions:

What do you value about the Trust Area?

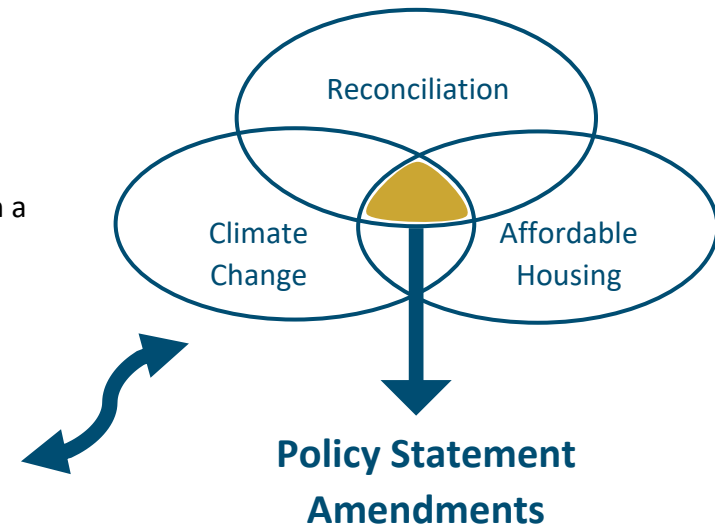
What opportunities do you see to protect and preserve the Trust Area?

In the context of a changing climate, what concerns do you have for the next 30 years?

At the same time, Islands Trust began a parallel process of engagement with First Nations governments on the Policy Statement for the first time in the history of Islands Trust. Meaningful engagement with First Nations is critical to Trust Council's commitment to reconciliation.

In July 2020, we summarized the first round of public feedback received in a ["What We Heard" Report](#).

Over the past six months, we have been considering the feedback received and examining how amendments to the Policy Statement could help preserve and protect what is most valued in the Islands Trust Area. We are now sharing some of our high-level policy directions in three priority areas and launching a new online survey for further public input.

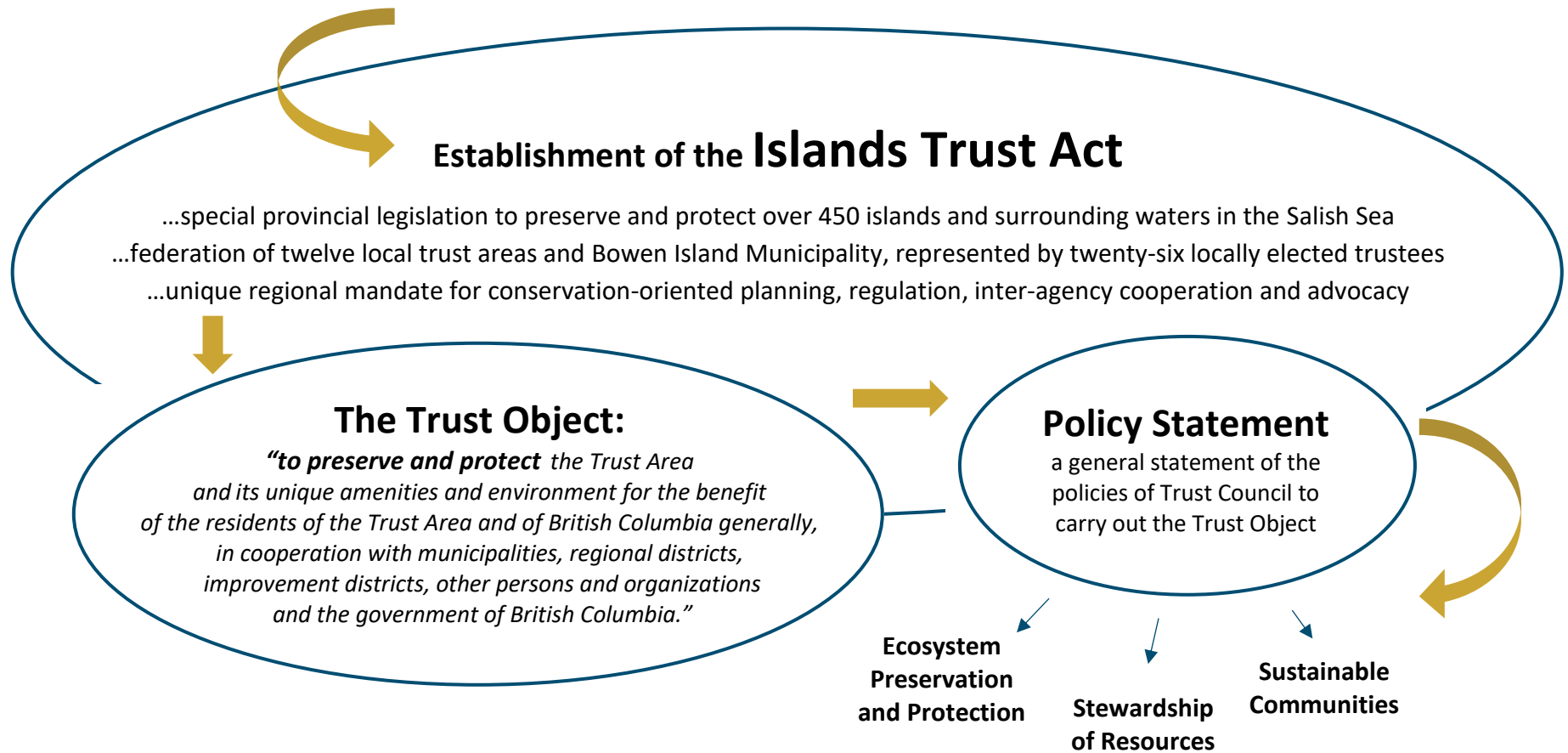


The ISLANDS TRUST Object

A Unique Mandate to Preserve & Protect

To understand the Policy Statement, it is important to understand its origins...

In **1974**, the Government of British Columbia acknowledged that unrestrained development arising from the Trust Area's proximity to major urban centres could irreversibly damage this uniquely biodiverse and ecologically sensitive region.



Preserving & Protecting

In Phase I of the Islands 2050 Public Engagement, we asked the public two questions related to the preserve and protect mandate. The [“What We Heard” Report](#) highlighted several priority themes:

What do you value about the Trust Area?

- **Connection to Nature**
- **Preserve & Protect Mandate**
- **Planning, Policy & Governance**
- **Rural Island Culture**
- **Community Resilience**
- Infrastructure, Transportation & Services
- Biodiversity & Species Protection
- Food & Water Security
- Affordable Housing
- Cultural Heritage & Reconciliation

“The Trust Area’s beautiful natural landscapes, its rural character, and its relatively clean environment are the values that are important to me and my family, but they are also linked to sustainability of the islands and their natural ecosystems.”

-Public Engagement Participant

What opportunities do you see to protect and preserve the Trust Area?

- **Planning & Policy**
- **Economics & Employment**
- **Alternative Living & Community Resilience**
- **Partnerships & Programs**
- **Water System Infrastructure & Management**
- **Biodiversity & Species Protection**
- Education & Communication
- Food Security
- Alternative Energy & Infrastructure
- Governance

“I value being near water and wooded areas; love the surrounding beauty and peacefulness this affords. Beauty influences how people think about home. People in beautiful places tend to love where they live and feel strongly about caring for it. They are then more likely to be active in its protection.”

-Public Engagement Participant

"It's important to always have a climate change lens on everything Islands Trust does. Policies and land use decision making should reflect these decisions."
 -Public Engagement Participant

"What is the "carrying capacity" of each island? If these are not ascertained, continued and sustained, incremental growth and development (no matter how "green" the development may be), will continue to be allowed to erode the functionality of the very ecosystems and resources that the Islands Trust is mandated to protect."
 -First Nations Engagement Participant

"I'm concerned most about running out of potable water. We've had an increase in dry winters, long droughts, and our water aquifers and lakes not filling. We need water to survive. Why aren't we making this a priority?"
 -Public Engagement Participant

A Complex Policy Environment

Growing **development pressures** and a **climate emergency** are leading to an increasingly complex policy environment. The Islands Trust Council is updating the Policy Statement to better address these issues and more effectively uphold its commitments to **reconciliation** and the **preserve & protect mandate**.

Climate Change Impacts

Freshwater Scarcity

Biodiversity Loss

Housing Crisis

Destruction of Cultural Heritage

Marine Pollution

"We would like to see Islands Trust take a stronger stance on protection of marine resources like shellfish (...) Most of the bays are polluted and we have very few stretches of shoreline left to harvest in the Islands Trust jurisdictional area."
 -First Nations Engagement Participant

"Low impact rural solutions to affordable housing like land sharing, co-op housing, tiny home villages, retirement communities can be accomplished. Creative and ecological small footprint solutions are out there and can be obtained when there is a will."
 -Public Engagement Participant

"Many archaeological sites within the Gulf Islands have been damaged in the name of development."
 -First Nations Engagement Participant

PRESERVE AND PROTECT

Reconciliation & First Nations Engagement

Climate Action

Affordable Housing

MMIWG CALLS FOR JUSTICE

Reconciliation Declaration

TRUTH AND Reconciliation Commission (TRC) CALLS TO ACTION

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ACT (DRIPA)

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Resilient Communities



Islands Trust Council

Reconciliation Declaration

*“The Islands Trust Council acknowledges that the lands and waters that encompass the Islands Trust Area have been **home to Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial** and honours the **rich history, stewardship, and cultural heritage** that embody this place we all call home.*

*The Islands Trust Council is committed to establishing and maintaining mutually **respectful relationships** between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.*

*Islands Trust states a **commitment to reconciliation** with the understanding that this commitment is a **long-term relationship-building and healing process**.*

*The Islands Trust Council will strive to create opportunities for **knowledge sharing and understanding** as people come together to **preserve and protect** the special nature of the islands within the **Salish Sea**.”*

Adopted March 2019

Reconciliation Declaration

Reconciliation Action Plan

Commitment to the Foundation Documents:

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([UNDRIP](#))

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act ([DRIPA](#))

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action ([TRC Calls to Action](#))

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice ([MMIWG Calls for Justice](#))

"The road we travel is equal in importance to the destination we seek. There are no shortcuts. When it comes to truth and reconciliation, we are all forced to go the distance."

- Justice Murray Sinclair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission



Policy Statement Review by First Nations for the first time in Islands Trust History

- Capacity Funding
- Cooperation Accords
- Long-term relationship building

• Meaningful Engagement with First Nations in the Trust Area

- Inter-agency collaboration with provincial and federal partner agencies
- Policies and overlay mapping for the protection of cultural heritage
- Recommendations to implement MMIWG Calls for Justice
- Standing Resolutions by 11 Local Trust Committees on relationship building and implementation of UNDRIP

Respectful Relations

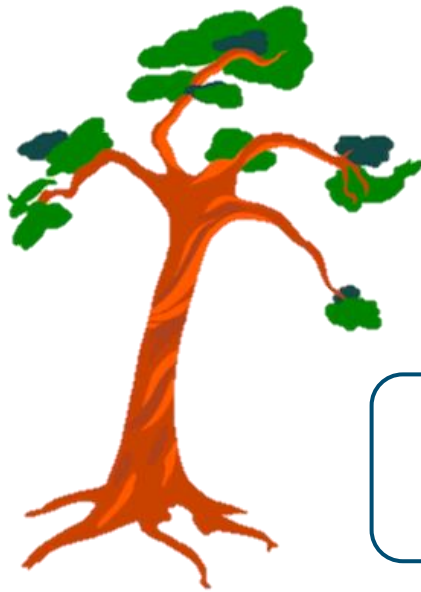
Building Trust

Cultural Heritage

Access to Harvesting

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Cultural Safety



Climate Change

In March 2019, Islands Trust joined governments around the world in declaring a **Climate Emergency** and making a commitment to take **urgent and equitable** climate action.

In Phase I of the Islands 2050 Public Engagement, we asked the following question about climate change:

In the context of a changing climate, what concerns do you have for the next 30 years?

The [“What We Heard” Report](#) highlighted several priority themes:

- **Ecosystem Change**
- **Water**
- **Land and Marine Use Decision-Making**
- **Governance**
- **Transportation**
- **Community Resilience**
- Food Security
- Fire Risks
- Education
- Sea Level Rise

“Should we as a community be able to invest in other means of collecting water, such as, rain barrels, roof water catchments and other types? Climate change is reducing the amount of rain in our area, which reduces the water in the aquifers.”

-Public Engagement Participant

“We need to rethink our island transportation system. We need to move away from the auto-centric way of commuting. We need to encourage park and ride (limiting traffic on islands) and invest in electrified transportation.”

-Public Engagement Participant

“I’m concerned about the loss of uninterrupted tracts of Coastal Douglas-fir forest and depreciating soil... because we can’t preserve and protect what we don’t have, and we are losing it rapidly.”

-Public Engagement Participant

Islands Trust Climate Emergency Declaration

Indigenous Knowledge

ensure climate action policies and processes are inclusive of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, cultural knowledge holders, and First Nations' relationship with the land

Ecosystem-Based Approaches

look at the broader landscape; acknowledge that everything is interconnected; seek nature-based solutions

PRINCIPLES & PARADIGMS for Climate Action

Precautionary Principle

where there is scientific uncertainty, proceed cautiously to avoid harm

As we strive to update the Islands Trust Policy Statement with climate change in mind, we've identified a few key principles and paradigms **to guide our policy making.**

Climate Equity

support those most vulnerable to adapt to climate change; foster resilient communities

No More Business-as-Usual

it is time for bolder environmental protections and new low-carbon ways of life

Policy Goals for Climate Action

Preserve, Protect, and Restore Carbon Sinks

Preserve mature forests, greenspace, soils, wetlands and eelgrass meadows

“carbon sink”: a forest, ocean, or other natural environment viewed in terms of its ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (Oxford)

Foster Low-Carbon, Compact, and Connected Communities

Plan for smaller footprints, clustered development, active transportation, low carbon agriculture, and low carbon buildings

Much of what we can do to enhance **climate resilience** in the Islands Trust Area lies in preserving, protecting, and restoring existing **natural areas** and learning to **live lightly** on the land.

We can fulfill these policy goals through land use planning, advocacy, and inter-agency cooperation, with the understanding that thriving, biodiverse, and resilient ecosystems = **thriving, diverse, and resilient** Trust Area communities.

Preserve, Protect, and Restore Biodiversity

Protect sensitive Coastal Douglas-fir and Coastal Western Hemlock ecosystems, wildlife corridors, culturally-significant species and species at risk, and marine food webs for Southern Resident Killer Whales

Safeguard Freshwater Sustainability

Protect finite water supply; regulate alternative water supplies

⋮

Mitigate Wildfire Risk

Minimize fire risks through land use planning tools, advocacy and outreach

Protect Shorelines and Foreshore

Protect shorelines and foreshore habitats through setbacks and upslope protections; safeguard Indigenous shellfish harvesting areas and archeological sites

Droughts

Biodiversity

Loss

Wildfires

Sea Level

Rise

Extreme Weather

Events

Ocean
Acidification

Affordable Housing



Many islands in the Trust Area are experiencing a shortage of **safe, secure and affordable** housing. Development patterns of the past that led to large single-family houses and rural sprawl have proven to be **environmentally unsustainable** and have led to **social equity** challenges.

To address these challenges, the Policy Statement could require the use of **rezoning** tools to facilitate housing that is **energy-efficient** and **located close to island services**. It could further require that housing density be moved from areas needing extra protection to areas that are less vulnerable and less biodiverse. We are also looking at the impacts of **short-term vacation rentals** on affordability for both home owners and renters, investigating where policy guidance may be needed.

Our advocacy for safe and secure housing will be guided by the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (**MMIWG**) **Calls for Justice**.

Throughout it all, we will aspire to keep a watchful eye on the protection of **freshwater sustainability, sensitive ecosystems, biodiversity** and **First Nations' cultural heritage**, striving for a balanced and equitable approach.

"We need attainable, creative housing solutions for diverse populations. Because we aren't adapting our development policies in line with changing demographics, and people are suffering as a result."
-Public Engagement Participant

"We need to direct new growth closer to villages, ferry terminals and transit. This includes smaller dwellings, shops and services. Reduce vehicle trips; enhance our sense of community and belonging; protect wild lands and forest from rural sprawl."
-Public Engagement Participant

"We need more compact, eco-friendly and affordable housing. Otherwise, our communities will fall apart and only wealthy retirees will be left."
-Public Engagement Participant



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Phase II



Now that you have a sense of our high-level policy directions, we welcome your thoughts and ideas:

Regarding the policy directions we've outlined on Climate Change, please share your ideas.

Regarding the policy directions we've outlined on Affordable Housing, please share your ideas.

What other advice do you have for Trust Council as it updates the Policy Statement?

Please provide your feedback online through the:

ONLINE SURVEY

Find the survey online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Islands2050>

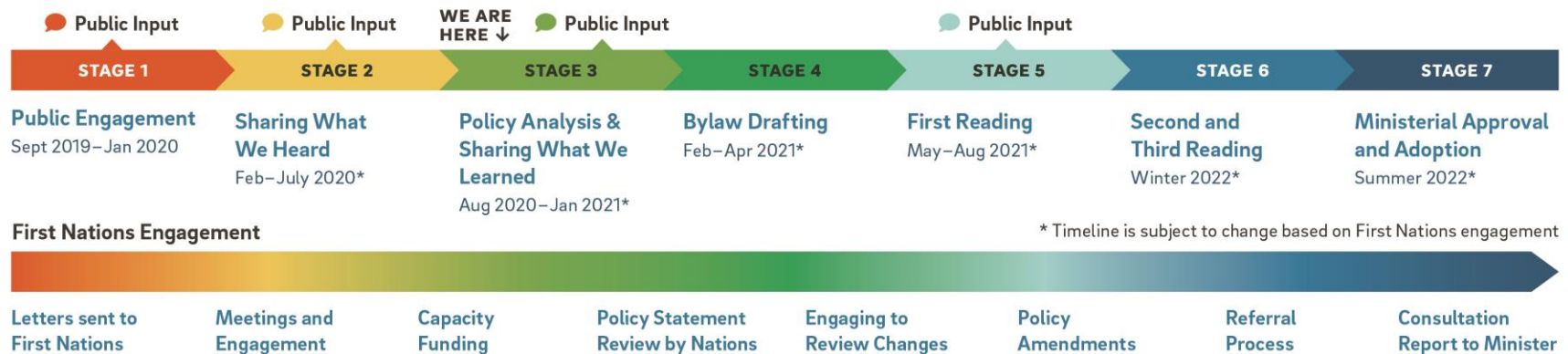
ISLANDS 2050: The Path FORWARD

In the coming months, we will begin to draft amendments to the Policy Statement based on all the feedback we will have received from **First Nations**, the **public**, and Islands Trust **locally elected officials** and **staff**.

Trust Council will consider draft Policy Statement amendments in **Spring 2021**, at which time there will also be opportunities for **further public input** as well as further input from First Nations and referral agencies.

Any input that is out of scope for this project will be considered by Trust Council for future Policy Statement amendment projects.

We look forward to **ongoing, inclusive** and **meaningful engagement** on this **living document** that sets out a vision for **the future of the Trust Area**.



Stay INFORMED

Thank you for your interest and engagement in the **Islands 2050 Policy Statement Amendment Project**.

Find this report online at: islandstrust.bc.ca/islands2050

Sign up for the [Islands 2050 Subscriber Notice](#) on our website to receive email updates about the project and future public engagement opportunities.

Public input is always welcome at Islands Trust. We encourage individuals, community groups and agencies to write to us directly at:

islands2050@islandstrust.bc.ca

200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8R 1H8

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