



Islands Trust

Engagement Summary Report

Islands 2050 Policy Statement Amendment Project Public Engagement Phase 3

June 2022





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1.0 Overall Engagement Summary

1.1 Project Overview

The Islands 2050 Policy Statement Amendment Project is a major, multi-phase project that has been underway since 2019. It is designed to help Trust Council plan for the challenges and opportunities that the Islands Trust Area will face over the next 30 years.

The project involves updating the Islands Trust Policy Statement, which contains the policies that Trust Council uses to carry out its provincial mandate to preserve and protect the unique amenities and environment of the Islands Trust Area. The Policy Statement shapes land and marine use planning across the Islands Trust Area, by guiding the development of more detailed, locally specific official community plans and regulatory bylaws, as well as Trust Council’s intergovernmental collaboration and advocacy.

Since the Policy Statement was first adopted in 1994, the regional context has changed from the perspective of climate change, commitments to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and First Nations, population demographics, and increasing housing and land costs. Islands Trust is updating the current Policy Statement to address these topics, while also undertaking a general modernization of the document.

The Islands 2050 Policy Statement Amendment Project is going through several iterative phases, meaning that each phase of the project will build on, and be informed by, the phase that came before it. The project is currently in Phase 3 of a four-phase process, which is summarized in Figure 1.1 below.

The Policy Statement bylaw must pass three readings before it goes to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for approval. This means that Trust Council has three opportunities to consider the pros and cons, and to vote on any changes it wants to make. This process ensures that every bylaw is carefully considered before it is passed.

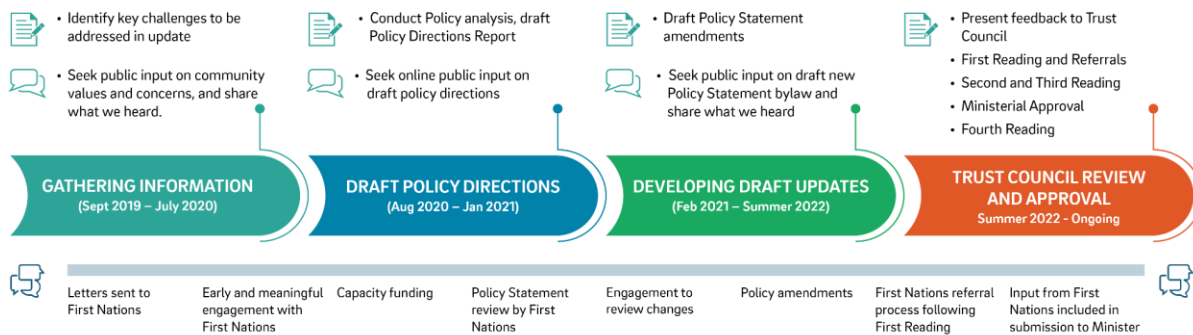


Figure 1.1 Islands 2050 Process

1.2 Engagement Overview

The purpose of conducting public engagement as part of the Policy Statement Amendment Project is to gather community input on key Policy Statement topics and ensure community voices and priorities are heard. Public input is one of many streams of input informing the Policy Statement Amendment Project, along with input from interested and affected parties, First Nations and Indigenous community members, referral agencies, Trust Council and its committees, and staff.

In Phase 1 Public Engagement (Fall 2019), Islands Trust completed online engagement and hosted 24 events across the Islands Trust Area. Approximately 1,600 people provided input through the Phase 1 online and in-person opportunities on community values, concerns related to climate change, and opportunities to preserve and protect the Islands Trust Area.

In Phase 2 Public Engagement (Winter 2021), Islands Trust gathered input on draft policy directions related to climate change and affordable housing. Approximately 400 people provided feedback through an online survey and approximately 108 people attended a virtual Open House in Phase 2.

Trust Council's committees reviewed and refined a preliminary round of draft amendments in May-June 2021, and presented a Draft New Policy Statement to Trust Council for consideration of first reading in July 2021. Following expressions of public concern, first reading was paused, and Trust Council called for an expanded third phase of public engagement. Following a public procurement process, ISL Engineering and Land Services was contracted in November 2021 to implement the Phase 3 Public Engagement Plan.

In Phase 3 of public engagement, we collected public input on the Draft New Policy Statement amendments through multiple engagement activities, including:

- Information session with speakers and live Q+A;
- An online survey;
- A community discussion guide with self-guided materials, including the questions from the online survey;
- Community event booths and drop-in events in each local trust area (LTA) and Bowen Island;
- A multi-day virtual workshop for all interested community members across the Islands Trust Area; and
- Focus groups representing a variety of community voices.

Other input was also received by Islands Trust in parallel with the engagement process, including project correspondence and delegation presentations. These are summarized separately in Appendix A and B, respectively.

1.2.1 Phase 3 Engagement Objectives

The objectives of Phase 3 of public engagement were:

- To build relationships and trust with the residents and community members of the Islands Trust Area;
- To increase the understanding and awareness of the Islands Trust, its mandate, and the role that the Policy Statement plays in the governance structure and network of policies that impact the LTAs and Bowen Island Municipality;
- To facilitate meaningful engagement with targeted engagement methods and communications materials;
- To allow the Islands Trust Area community to feel their opinions and voices are reflected in the update – and that the community feels proud and included in this process;
- To clearly communicate how public input was used throughout this process;
- To honour the concurrent First Nations and Indigenous community engagement process and relationship building; and
- To confirm Policy Statement updates that address key challenges of our time – climate change, affordable housing, and reconciliation – informed by insight from community perspectives.

1.2.2 Phase 3 Engagement Activities

The following table provides a summary of engagement events and activities that were undertaken through Phase 3 public engagement.

Table 1.1 Summary of Phase 3 Engagement Events

| Date and Time | Location | Type of Event | Attendance |
|--|--|-----------------------------|-------------|
| March 1, 2022 6:00 - 8:30 pm | Virtual Session | Information Session and Q+A | Approx. 90 |
| March 18, 2022 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. | Hornby Island Community Hall | Community Drop-in Event | 9 |
| March 19, 2022 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Hornby Island Co-op Grocery Store | Community Event Booth | 70 |
| March 18, 2022 10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Denman Island Downtown Denman | Community Event Booth | 55 |
| March 19, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Denman Island Community Centre | Community Drop-in Event | 16 |
| March 20, 2022 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. | Thetis Island Pub / Post Office | Community Event Booth | 10 |
| March 20, 2022 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. | Thetis Island Forbes Hall | Community Drop-in Event | 4 |
| March 22, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Virtual Session | Workshop #1 | Approx. 100 |
| March 27, 2022 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. | Bowen Island Steamship Company Marina | Community Event Booth | 43 |
| March 27, 2022 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. | Bowen Island Library Annex | Community Drop-in Event | 4 |
| March 28, 2022 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. | Gambier Island Virtual Event (in lieu of in-person event) | Presentation and Q+A | 24 |
| March 29, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Virtual Session | Workshop #2 | Approx. 100 |
| April 2, 2022 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. | Salt Spring Island Fire Hall #2 | Community Event Booth | 34 |
| April 3, 2022 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. | Salt Spring Island Mahon Hall | Community Drop-in Event | 23 |
| April 4, 2022 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. | Lasqueti Island Provisions Cafe | Community Event Booth | 25 |
| April 5, 2022 10:30 a.m. - 2:30p.m. | Gabriola Island FolkLife Village / Nesters | Community Event Booth | 45 |
| April 5, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Gabriola Island The Haven | Community Drop-in Event | 8 |
| April 9, 2022 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Salt Spring Island Saturday Market | Community Event Booth | 22 |
| April 10, 2022 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. | Salt Spring Island Harbour House Hotel | Community Drop-in Event | 7 |
| April 11, 2022 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. | Saturna Island General Store | Community Event Booth | 22 |
| April 11, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Saturna Island Recreation Centre | Community Drop-in Event | 22 |

| Date and Time | Location | Type of Event | Attendance |
|--|---|---|------------|
| April 11, 2022 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Mayne Island Tru Value Foods | Community Event Booth | 25 |
| April 11, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Mayne Island Agricultural Hall | Community Drop-in Event | 17 |
| April 12, 2022 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. | North Pender Island Driftwood Centre | Community Event Booth | 77 |
| April 12, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | North Pender Island St. Peter's Anglican Parish Hall | Community Drop-in Event | 5 |
| April 12, 2022 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Galiano Island Daystar Market | Community Event Booth | 12 |
| April 12, 2022 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. | Galiano Island South End Community Hall | Community Drop-in Event | 2 |
| April 13, 2022 9:45 a.m. - 1:45 p.m. | South Pender Island Church of the Good Shepherd | Community Event Booth | 14 |
| April 14, 2022 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. | Virtual Session | Focus Group (Businesses / Contractors / Others) | 4 |
| April 14, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Virtual Session | Focus Group (Citizen Groups) | 5 |
| April 19, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Virtual Session | Focus Group (Agricultural) | 3 |
| April 20, 2022 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. | Virtual Session | Focus Group (Environmental and Conservancy Organizations) | 4 |
| April 20, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Virtual Session | Focus Group (Youth) | 5 |
| April 21, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Virtual Session | Focus Group (Housing and Social Organizations) | 3 |

1.2.3 Promotion of Events

Engagement events were promoted using various communication channels to reach a broad audience, to raise awareness of the project and to encourage participation in the process. Communications activities were led by Islands Trust staff and included the following measures.

Table 1.2 Summary of Phase 3 Engagement Promotion

| Tool or Tactic | Audience | Purpose | Distribution | Quantity |
|---|----------|--|--|---|
| Islands Trust website – Islands 2050 page | All | Generate awareness about the project, public sessions, and virtual engagement opportunities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anyone who is searching for or finds the website All engagement materials and promotions provided the project website | From the beginning of Feb 2022 through the end of April 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3,955 page views 3,097 unique page views |
| News Releases | All | Generate awareness about the project, public sessions, and virtual engagement opportunities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media List Subscribed members to an email list Local Trustees | 2 news releases sent via 4,800 emails |

| Tool or Tactic | Audience | Purpose | Distribution | Quantity |
|---|--|---|--|--------------------------|
| Household Flyer | All | Generate awareness about the project, public sessions, and virtual engagement opportunities. | Mailed to all property owners in the Islands Trust Area through the BC Mail service | 21,830 households |
| Email Updates | Individuals who have subscribed to Islands Trust email updates | A series of email messages were sent promoting in-person and virtual events for each island. Email reminders were sent two weeks, one week and/or the day before the events took place. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entire Islands Trust Area (x3) • Thetis Island LTA • Hornby Island LTA • Denman Island LTA • Bowen Island Municipality • Gambier Island LTA (x2) • Salt Spring Island LTA (x2) • Lasqueti Island LTA • Gabriola Island LTA (x2) • Saturna Island (x2) • Mayne Island (x2) • Galiano Island (x2) • North Pender LTA (x2) • South Pender LTA (x2) | 11,323 total emails sent |
| Emails to Interested and affected parties | Organizations / community groups in the Islands Trust Area, identified by Trustees, staff, and ISL | Email message directly asking organizations and community groups to help promote and make their groups aware of the public events and virtual engagement. | Entire Islands Trust Area (x2) | 372 total recipients |

| Tool or Tactic | Audience | Purpose | Distribution | Quantity |
|-----------------------|----------|--|--|---|
| Newspaper Advertising | All | Notification of public sessions and virtual engagement opportunities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Flagstone (x2) • Mayneliner (x2) • Pender Post (x2) • Saturna Scribbler (x2) • Active Page (x2) • The First Edition (x2) • Our Isle and Times (x2) • Driftwood (x2) • Gabriola Sounder (x2) • Grey Dawn Printing Hornby Tribune (x2) • Salt Spring Exchange • The Islands Grapevine (x2) plus one insert • Bowen Island Undercurrent (x2) • Bowen Island Online (x2) | 27 published ads in the physical publication and/or the publication's online option |
| Discussion Guides | All | Printed discussion guides and pre-paid envelopes were available at one or more locations on all major islands in the Islands Trust Area to encourage more participation. | <p>Bowen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowen Island Municipality • Bowen Island Public Library <p>Denman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abraskas Bookstore • Denman Island General Store <p>Gabriola</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Northern Office • Gabriola Island Branch, Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) <p>Galiano</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DayStar Market • Galiano Island Community Library <p>Hornby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hornby Island Co-op • Hornby Island Regional Library <p>Lasqueti</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions Cafe <p>Mayne</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayne Island Tru Value Foods • Mayne Island Resort | 25 public locations (on average 2 per local trust area / Bowen Island) |

| Tool or Tactic | Audience | Purpose | Distribution | Quantity |
|--|------------|--|--|--|
| | | | <p>N/S Pender Islands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pender Tru Value Foods • Poet's Cove Resort & Spa • Community Resources Head Office (Pender Island) <p>Salt Spring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt Spring Islands Trust Office • Salt Spring Island Public Library <p>Saturna</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturna Island Recreation & Cultural Centre • Saturna General Store and Freight • The General Store <p>Thetis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thetis Island Marina & Pub • Thetis Island Community Library <p>IT Victoria Office</p> | |
| <p>Social media postings (Feb 24 – April 14)</p> | <p>All</p> | <p>Facebook and Twitter posts were created to promote the in-person and virtual engagement opportunities. Some of the posts promoted the events on specific islands and others were educational posts about the Draft New Policy Statement.</p> <p>Content was posted on the Islands Trust Facebook page, and directly to community public or private Facebook groups.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of Phase 3 post (1 Facebook post, 1 Twitter) • Join the Conversation posts (3 Facebook posts, 3 Twitter) • Specific island events (9 Facebook posts, 6 Twitter) • Virtual Events (3 Facebook posts, 4 Twitter) • Question and Answer (2 Facebook posts and 1 Twitter) • Survey (3 Facebook posts, 1 Twitter) • Videos (3 Facebook posts, 3 Twitter) • Thank you (1 Facebook posts, 1 Twitter) | <p>21 posts of photos and videos directly on the Islands Trust Facebook page: Islands Trust 18 Twitter posts of photos and videos directly from the Islands Trust Twitter handle: @Islands_Trust</p> <p>(Note: these numbers do not include the number of times content was posted directly to community public or private Facebook groups.)</p> |

1.3 What We Asked

Questions asked during each type of engagement event varied, however the questions were all designed to understand the public's level of support for the proposed amendments to the Draft New Policy Statement and why they supported or didn't support the proposed changes. Understanding the level of support and reasons why will provide valuable input to Trust Council and staff when considering whether the amendments should be maintained, modified, strengthened or removed.

For the online survey we asked the following questions:

- Demographic questions
- How did you hear about the survey?
- How do you prefer to receive information?
- Tell us to what level you agree or disagree (and why) with the proposed Policy Statement amendments in the following categories:
 - Regional Governance
 - Ecosystem Preservation and Protection
 - Environmental Integrity
 - Freshwater Stewardship
 - Forest Stewardship
 - Agricultural Stewardship
 - Coastal and Marine Stewardship
 - Sustainable and Resilient Communities
- Do you have suggestions for policies to be included to support reconciliation in the Islands Trust Area?
- Do you have feedback you wish to share related to the structure of the Draft New Policy Statement?
- Would you like to see a Glossary of Key Terms added to the Draft New Policy Statement?
- Do you have feedback you wish to share related to the implementation of the Draft New Policy Statement?

At the in-person community event booths and drop-in events we asked the following questions:

- Please tell us if there is anything else we should consider when updating policies related to reconciliation?
- Tell us what you think about the proposed updates to the following sections of the Policy Statement:
 - Regional Governance
 - Freshwater Stewardship
 - Forest Stewardship
 - Agricultural Stewardship
 - Coastal and Marine Stewardship
 - Housing
- Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

During the virtual workshops we asked the following questions:

- Regarding the Policy Statement amendments proposed for each topic area, what do you like / what should be kept, or how could this be made better / what should be added?
 - Regional Governance
 - Reconciliation
 - Freshwater Stewardship
 - Forest Stewardship

- Agricultural Stewardship
- Coastal and Marine Stewardship
- Housing

During the virtual focus groups we asked:

- Do you have feedback you wish to share related to the structure of the Draft New Policy Statement?

Questions for each topic area (Regional Governance, Reconciliation, Freshwater Stewardship, Forest Stewardship, Agricultural Stewardship, Coastal and Marine Stewardship, and Housing) included:

- How might the proposed policy changes impact your organization or its operations / interests and/or the populations you serve?
- What suggestions do you have that would improve the policy changes or mitigate any possible impacts?
- Thinking about 2050, what would your organization need to consider or do differently in the next 30 years? How could the policy amendment consider the needs of your group / organization in future?

During the virtual youth focus group we asked:

- What do you like about living in the Islands Trust Area? How can we protect those things for future residents?
- Do you have any concerns about your future in the Islands Trust Area? What kinds of things would encourage you to stay?
- Islands Trust is trying to update its policies to 1) support reconciliation with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples 2) take action on climate change and 3) foster more affordable housing in the Islands Trust Area. Do you have any thoughts or ideas to share on these topics?
- What else is important to you?

1.4 What We Heard

Over 2,000 participants shared their thoughts with Islands Trust and the engagement team through a variety of activities including focus groups, workshops, community event booths and drop-in events and an online survey. A record of verbatim feedback has been submitted separately to Islands Trust in the document entitled *Compilation of Detailed Islands 2050 Phase 3 Engagement Feedback*.

The updates reflected in the Draft New Policy Statement are complex and cover a wide range of topics that are of significant interest to many residents of the Islands Trust Area. Therefore by its very nature, the feedback received was plentiful and complex. While feedback was structured to align with the Islands Trust's need to gain specific feedback on the Policy Statement amendments, the feedback received addressed a number of broader topics including governance and the engagement process itself. An overall summary of what was heard across all engagement activities, for each area of interest in the Policy Statement and other major topics, is provided in the sections below. From the engagement process as a whole, the aspects of the Draft New Policy Statement that warrant the most attention of Trust Council and staff are:

- Private docks and seawalls;
- Desalination;
- Tree cutting by individual landowners on private land;
- Agriculture as a valued activity;
- Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) advocacy;
- Floor area and lot coverage limitations for residential development;
- Definition of key terms (Glossary), especially including the definition of "small scale" agriculture;
- Need for more information about reconciliation and how it will affect decision-making; and
- Need for simpler structure and language in the Policy Statement.

1.4.1 Regional Governance

Throughout all engagement activities, participants shared that their priorities are a balance of environmental protection and sustaining residents' valued communities and way of life. Many would like to see more consideration of residents' needs throughout the Policy Statement, with some expressing that they feel the Draft New Policy Statement aims to over-emphasize environmental protection at the cost of residents' rights. Many people called for Islands Trust to modify the Policy Statement to better respect residents' private property rights.

Participants felt strongly that the Policy Statement should include a commitment to making decisions based on objective, scientific data and for Islands Trust to direct local trust committees to do the same. While some shared a criticism that data can be manipulated, more participants were calling for objective and better data as a basis for the proposed Policy Statement and future decision-making.

Participants shared common concerns around the rate of development and the urgency of acting on climate change, noting that they have visibly seen the landscape change in a matter of decades. Participants are generally appreciative of the Policy Statement addressing climate change and agreed that development should be carefully managed to protect the Islands Trust Area from further impacts.

Many participants expressed concerns about the precautionary principle, noting that it is open to broad interpretation, could be contradictory to scientific evidence, and could be manipulated based on emotions and personal bias. Some see the precautionary principle as a means to stop potential progress.

Many participants indicated they would have supported the Draft New Policy Statement but are concerned about the precautionary principle, prioritization of Indigenous knowledge, a one-size-fits-all approach, and the vague terminology and policies that could be left to individual interpretation.

1.4.2 Advocacy

There were three areas where the majority of survey respondents strongly agreed that Islands Trust should advocate to other levels of government. Respondents were most strongly in favour of advocating to support the removal of abandoned and derelict vessels, plastics, ghost fishing gear and other marine debris from the Islands Trust Area.

A high number of participants were also in favour of advocating for developing effective oil spill prevention, preparedness and geographic response plans in the area, as well as advocating for rainwater harvesting either as a principal or supplemental water source.

In contrast, there were two areas where participants did not support advocacy across all engagement activities. These were in the areas of regulating tree-cutting and advocating that farming in the Agricultural Land Reserve should not adversely impact Indigenous food security, harvesting practices, cultural heritage or protected area networks in the Islands Trust Area.

1.4.3 Ecosystem Preservation and Protection

There was general support for including many of the proposed commitments in the Policy Statement, including:

- monitoring the effects of climate change and other influences on the ecosystem;
- using nature-based solutions;
- limiting development in areas where there is inadequate freshwater;
- valuing agriculture and forestry through small-scale harvesting practices;
- banning industrial-scale clear-cutting and logging of old growth trees;
- keeping marine dependent land uses away from eel grass and kelp forests; and
- advocating to other levels of government to prohibit ocean dumping and commercial freighter anchorage sites.

In contrast, policies around prohibiting desalination and private docks were strongly opposed by participants across all engagement activities. In addition, participants were evenly divided between those that support and don't support prohibiting hard seawalls.

When asked if Islands Trust should require local trust committees and municipalities to address the same commitments in their official community plans and bylaws, again the majority of survey respondents supported this in every area except the two policy areas (desalination and private docks) mentioned above.

1.4.4 Freshwater Stewardship

Many participants indicated they feel that water is finite and want to protect it, noting availability of water is a widespread concern in much of the Islands Trust Area.

There is strong support for Islands Trust to advocate for rainwater as a supplemental water source – however, many people also indicated they agreed with the commitment as they want to encourage rainwater harvesting as a primary source, not just a supplemental source.

Participants shared an overall support for restricting development in areas where freshwater is limited, however some suggested using rainwater harvesting as a primary source for water for new developments, while others did not want limited quantities of groundwater to be an excuse to limit development.

Participants indicated they strongly disagree with the proposed prohibition of desalination, which was heard consistently across all engagement activities. Many stated that new technologies can be used to develop energy efficient desalination plants, and that desalination may be appropriate in locations where saltwater ingress is already happening.

Many participants shared that as groundwater is in short supply, desalination is a means to augment existing water supplies and is appropriate during peak seasons such as the summer. They also noted that it is an appropriate climate adaptation strategy for the islands. Many also asked for more information on why desalination has a negative impact on the environment.

1.4.5 Coastal and Marine Stewardship

There is overall support from participants for Islands Trust to prioritize the protection of the coastal and marine environment. Some are noticing degradation of the foreshore and would like to protect it against continued erosion while others are concerned for the eelgrass meadows and kelp forests and want to protect them against harm from dumping and freighter anchoring. Participants supported shoreline setbacks and keeping marine dependent land uses away from these sensitive areas.

Participants most strongly disagreed with the proposed policy to prohibit private docks, with 56% of survey respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the proposal. Reasons for this included wanting access to the water for safety in case of emergencies, access for recreation purposes, and lack of good transportation alternatives in some areas. Those who supported a ban shared that community docks were favoured as a solution to providing access to the water. Others shared that a blanket policy was not appropriate and that the need for a dock should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

With respect to the shoreline protection, participants were more evenly split between agreeing or disagreeing that seawalls or hard shoreline armouring should be prohibited. Those who support the prohibition worry about the impact of hard structures on the shoreline, while those that disagree say they are necessary to protect homes and infrastructure against rising sea levels and winter storms, or saying that they might be the only practical option in some areas. Similar to the sentiments about private docks, many participants shared that different locations require different shoreline treatments, and that regulations should be either implemented locally as appropriate for each island or on a case-by-case basis. Participants also noted the need for flexibility to decide what is best in each case.

1.4.6 Forest Stewardship

In the online survey, 70% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a commitment by Islands Trust should be included in the Policy Statement that indicates industrial-scale clear-cutting of forests and logging of old-growth trees is inappropriate in the Islands Trust Area. Respondents noted their challenges with the current wording of these policies as there was no indication of size associated with this. Many participants through the survey and in-person sessions clarified their support for this was based on prohibiting industrial-scale clear-cutting.

In contrast, participants across all engagement activities strongly disagreed that Islands Trust should advocate to the Provincial government to regulate general tree cutting or forest management by individual property owners. There was substantial support in the survey comments and at the in-person sessions for allowing individual private property owners to manage forests and cut trees on their own lands. Reasons for this included the need to protect homes and infrastructure from dangerous or unhealthy trees, using wood for warmth or housing, improving fire prevention, and clearing space for growing food.

There were some comments about the need to define the terms “old growth” and “second growth,” with participants sharing that most of the islands have been previously logged, with only second growth now present. Participants also commented that education and tree planting programs are needed for the sustainability of the forests.

Some participants commented that management of forestry is needed on public lands and others shared that removing trees promotes healthy forests. Some also noted that the Policy Statement should further address measures needed to mitigate risk from forest fires.

1.4.7 Agricultural Stewardship

Seventy-two (72%) of online survey respondents agreed and strongly agreed that agricultural impacts should be considered when preserving areas for agriculture. Slightly fewer indicated they support this directive for local trust committees, and 56% indicated they support Islands Trust Council advocating that legislation, guidelines and incentives should be established to support local farmers to adopt practices that protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

There were some participants across all engagement activities said they would like to both protect and encourage farming, noting its local economic benefit and its contribution to food security and self-sustainability of the islands. There was concern that agriculture had been removed as a “valued activity” in the Draft New Policy Statement, suggesting that this implies Islands Trust does not see it as a valued activity any longer. Participants also noted they are worried about food shortages in the future and would like to protect farming to ensure access to food in the future.

Participants shared that farming has a long history on the islands and should be sustained, but some are concerned about the use of chemicals and the impact on the environment. Many participants indicated they support sustainable and regenerative farming practices, and that education is needed to support this.

Some feedback also concerned the use of the term “small-scale” with respect to agriculture and the need to better define the term.

1.4.8 Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Throughout all engagement activities, most participants agreed there is a housing shortage in the Islands Trust Area, and that this is one of their greatest concerns and priorities.

Participants stated there is a need for affordable housing for many sectors of the population including seniors and youth, and that there is a lack of affordable rental housing for those who work on the island, particularly in the tourism or service sectors. Some participants shared they would like to remain on the islands as they age but are concerned about the lack of appropriate housing available to them.

A slight majority of survey respondents (55%) agreed that the Policy Statement should include an Islands Trust commitment to strategic, multijurisdictional, equitable and integrated approaches to diverse housing needs, and that local official community plans should carefully manage the rate and scale of growth and development in the area. However, much of the feedback from those who elaborated on their responses through the survey and at in-person events indicated they do not think housing belongs in the Policy Statement.

Participants supported the proposed policy that new development should be small-scale, low-impact and energy efficient, tying into earlier feedback that rainwater could be used as a primary source of water for new developments. While there was some concern expressed about size of homes, a slight majority of respondents (51%) did not support directives to local trust committees on limits of floor area and lot coverages.

Participants generally supported short-term rentals but are in agreement with ensuring regulations be put in place. They shared that short-term rentals add to the economy and there is a need to house seasonal workers. Some of the concerns shared around short-term vacation rentals are that they may impact availability of longer-term rentals for those who permanently reside on the islands.

A majority of survey respondents (58%) supported Islands Trust advocating for appropriately-situated transportation networks for electric vehicles and electric bikes. Some participants did offer a contrary perspective, raising concern about the long-term environmental impact of the disposal of batteries, the large amount of energy that goes into building vehicles, and lack of connectivity or capacity of the electrical grid in some areas.

When asked about advocating to BC Ferries for the electrification of their fleet, feedback was more mixed, with some participants indicating this is outside the Islands Trust mandate and is an issue better left to other levels of government. Others indicated that better ferry service is needed and would like to see Islands Trust work with BC Ferries to ensure safe and efficient travel.

1.4.9 Engagement Process

A common theme across all engagement activities and in response to the online survey questions was a frustration with the engagement process and structure of the survey. Many participants felt the survey was designed to elicit desired responses and that there were too many concepts contained in the survey questions, making it difficult to answer. For example, as forestry and agriculture were combined into one question, participants expressed they had difficulty answering as they felt differently about the two topics.

Participants expressed the questions were confusing and many were frustrated with having character limits on their survey responses.

With respect to the overall engagement process, participants shared they would have liked a more thorough and transparent process, and more time to understand the Draft New Policy Statement document and proposed changes.

Participants identified barriers that may have affected participation including residents not receiving mail outs, not having computer access, and apprehension about attending in-person engagement activities due to the pandemic.

Many participants also commented there should have been more transparent engagement with First Nations and some expressed a concern with the approach taken by Islands Trust to hold separate engagement processes. These participants noted they would have liked to have had the opportunity to learn and share their perspectives with each other, and by holding separate activities, there is a lack of transparency in the process.

1.4.10 General Policy Structure

Common feedback across all engagement activities regarding the Draft New Policy Statement is that the language used in the Policy Statement is vague, confusing, and technical, and that the document contains too many overlapping themes, a lot of repetition and does not express the concepts well. There was strong support for a Glossary of Key Terms to be added to the Draft New Policy Statement.

Many participants shared concerns that Islands Trust is expanding its mandate to include climate change, affordable housing, forestry, agriculture, community, and reconciliation. Many considered these new policy mandates to overlap with existing regulations by other levels of government and questioned whether Islands Trust staff would have the appropriate expertise or adequate capacity to implement the scope of these policy changes.

Many responses from participants indicated that they would like less involvement from Islands Trust in local decision-making, that Islands Trust is becoming too large, or that it shouldn't exist at all. Some expressed concern that the Draft New Policy Statement is an effort of Islands Trust to gain more control and centralize decision-making and governance in the Islands Trust Area.

Some participants were concerned about Islands Trust's financial accountability in terms of policy changes that they perceived would broaden the Islands Trust mandate and thereby increase budgetary needs and impact taxes.

There was a common desire for more local decision-making with participants noting the Islands Trust Area is geographically and socio-economically diverse and that communities need the ability to address their own issues independently.

Some participants asked that Islands Trust review their governance model before moving forward with updates to the Policy Statement.

1.4.11 Reconciliation

While most agree with and support reconciliation work and are happy to see inclusion of reconciliation policies in the Policy Statement, many participants noted this is a complex topic and that it has overlapping responsibility with other levels of government. Some shared that Islands Trust doesn't have the expertise, funding or jurisdiction to address this, and that many actions are already being taken by senior governments. Participants shared a sentiment that relationships with local bands are better built at the local level.

Many participants would like to see a definition of terms such as "Indigenous ways of knowing" and want to better understand how this will be used in decision-making.

There was a recognized need across all engagement activities for more broad and genuine engagement with First Nations on the Policy Statement, and a concern about how engagement has been handled by Islands Trust to date.

With respect to governance, some participants shared that Islands Trust should include First Nations representatives on the Trust Council, and others recognized First Nations' right to self-govern.

2.0 Online Survey

2.1 Online Survey Overview

An online survey was available to all Islands Trust Area residents on the Islands Trust website from February 20 to April 17, 2022. A total of 1,299 responses were received, constituting the largest single component of the engagement program feedback.

A detailed summary of the responses for each of the 35 survey questions is provided in the following sections. All questions were optional, so the number of responses varied for each. Where the questions were open-ended, responses have been themed and are presented in order of how frequently the theme was discussed. Only the themes that were mentioned more than five times have been included in the tables.

A common theme of the responses was a frustration with the engagement process and structure of the survey. Some participants felt the survey was designed to elicit desired responses and that there were too many concepts contained in the survey questions, making it difficult to answer. For example, as forestry and agriculture were combined into one question, participants expressed they had difficulty answering as they felt differently about the two topics. Participants expressed the questions were confusing and many were frustrated with having character limits on their survey responses.

On a practical level, the complexity of the survey was a necessity due to the complex and wide-ranging underlying subject matter of the Draft New Policy Statement. Character limits are also a common best practice of any online engagement tool, in order to ensure that the feedback can be coded and summarized. More open-ended feedback opportunities for longer responses were also available to residents, including the open correspondence channel.

Even with the focused questions, residents were readily able to provide feedback on broader matters such as the overall governance and mandate of Islands Trust, which has been reflected in this summary. Many of the responses for each question indicated that the participants believed that the issue or topic was outside of the Islands Trust mandate, that participants would like less involvement from Islands Trust, that the Trust is becoming too large or that it shouldn't exist at all.

2.2 Questions 1-14 – Demographic Information

In response to demographic questions to understand where survey participants were located, participants shared which area of the Islands Trust Area they feel most connected with. A summary of the geographic connectedness of respondents is provided in Figure 3.1 below. Other highlights of the demographic questions included:

- Most survey respondents (81%) identified themselves as full-time residents, and half (49%) identified themselves as having lived in the Islands Trust Area for more than 20 years;
- Most survey respondents (65%) identified themselves as seniors (aged 60+);
- About 15% of survey respondents identified themselves as members of a First Nation within the Trust Area (1%), as Indigenous, Métis or Inuit (4%), or as visible minorities (10%);
- More men (48%) than women (41%) responded to the survey, and most (63%) live in 2-person households;
- Most survey respondents (90%) identified themselves as homeowners;
- About 16% of survey respondents have children (aged both under and over 18) living at home;
- About an equal number of survey respondents identified themselves as retired (46%) or employed full- or part-time (47%);
- Survey respondents fell within a wide range of income brackets, in relatively close proportion; and
- Survey respondents heard about the survey through a wide range of media, with the three highest (>20%) being email from the Islands Trust, word of mouth, and a community blog or website.

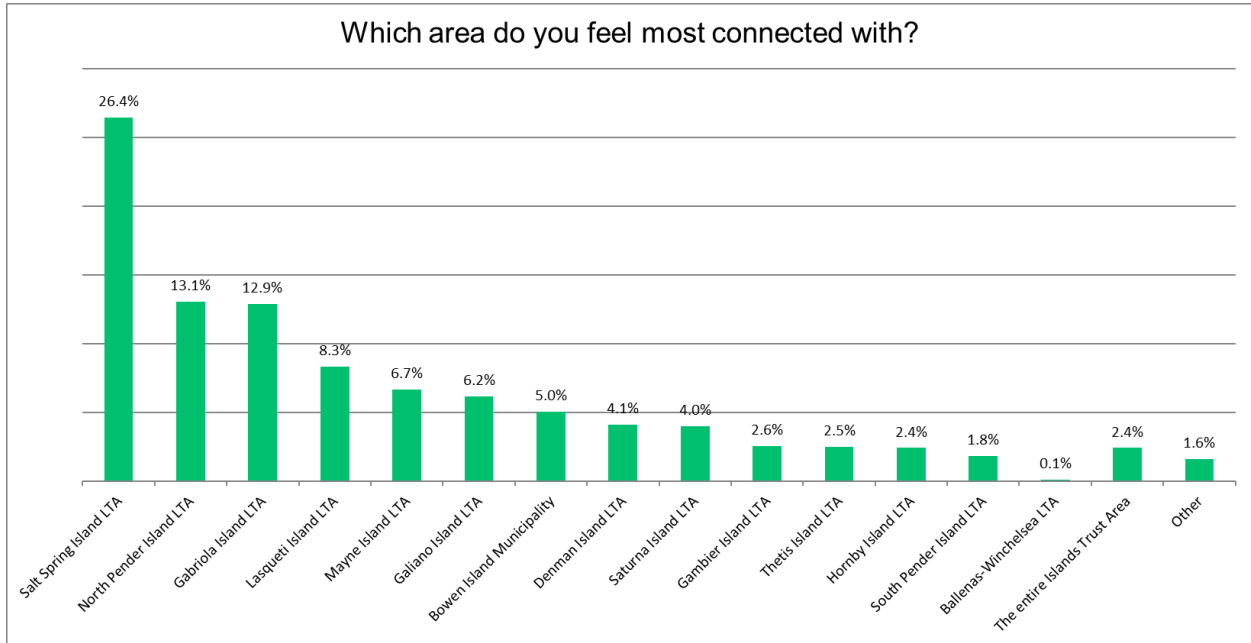


Figure 3.1 Geographic Connectedness of Online Survey Responses

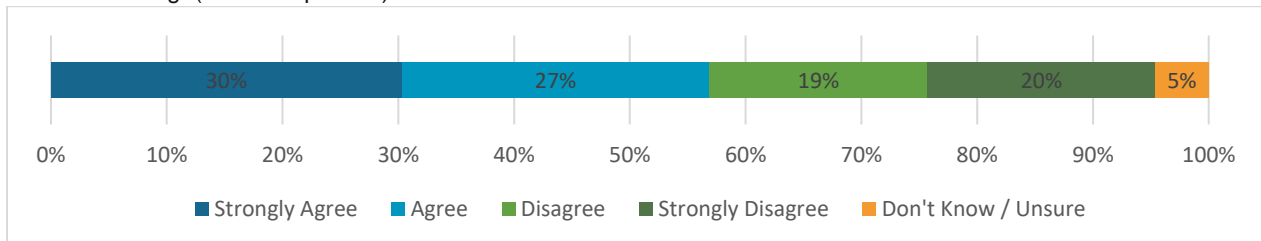
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2.3 Question 15 – Regional Governance Commitments

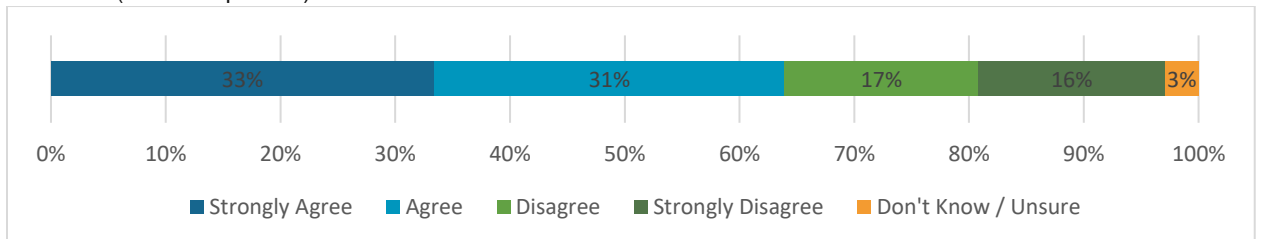
For Question 15, respondents were asked about four agree/disagree statements related to the regional governance commitments in the Draft New Policy Statement. The results are summarized below.

Q15) Commitments identify the guiding principles and approaches Trust Council should use when making decisions. Tell us to what level you agree or disagree that the Policy Statement should include Commitments of Trust Council that state that:

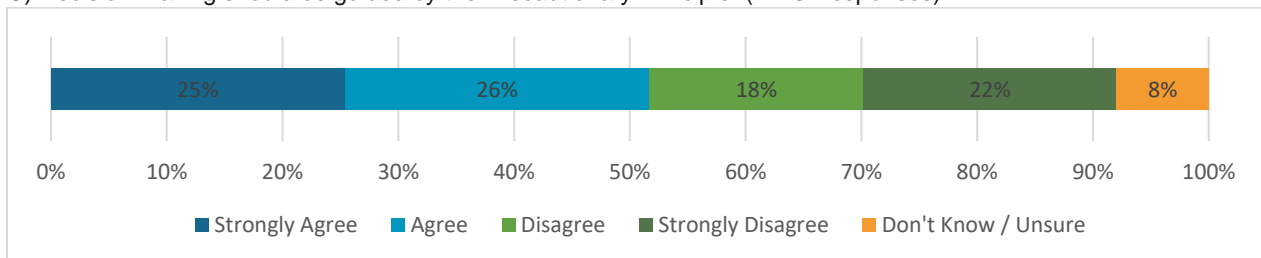
A) Priority should be placed on preserving and protecting the environment and Indigenous cultural heritage in all decision-making. (1145 Responses)



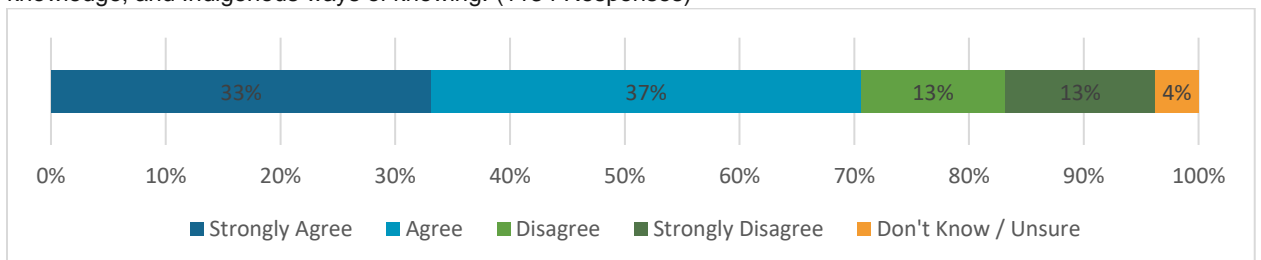
B) The rate and scale of growth and development in the Islands Trust Area must be carefully managed and requires limitation. (1147 Responses)



C) Decision-making should be guided by the Precautionary Principle. (1143 Responses)



D) Decision-making should be guided by the best available area-based mapping, science, social science, local knowledge, and Indigenous ways of knowing. (1134 Responses)

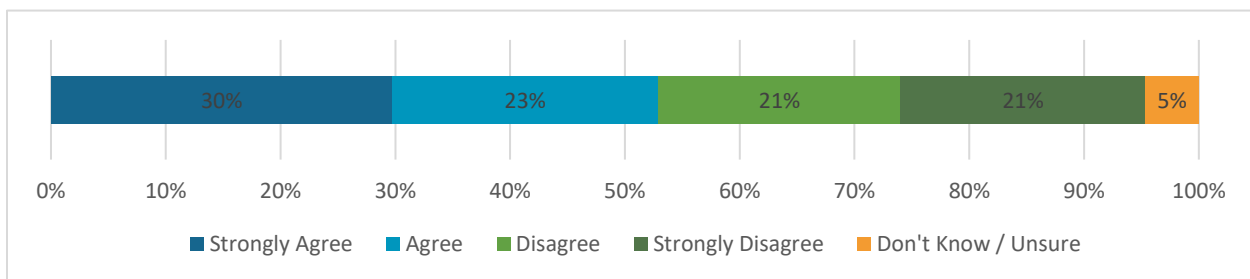


2.4 Question 16 – Regional Governance Directive Policies

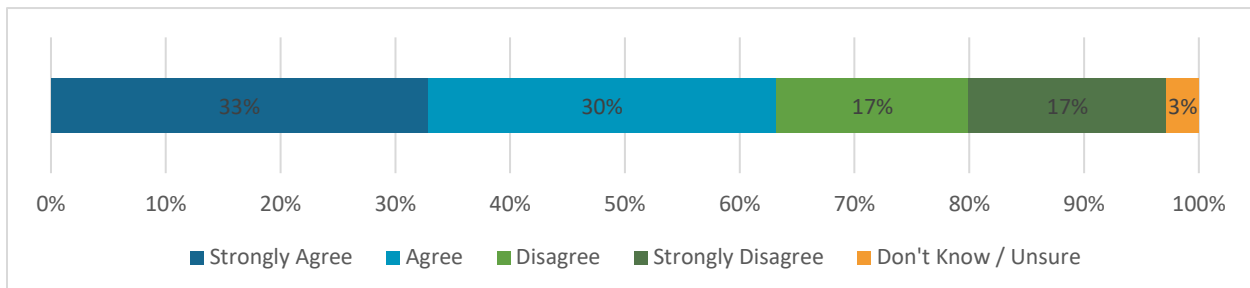
For Question 16, respondents were asked about four agree/disagree statements related to the overall regional governance Directive Policies in the Draft New Policy Statement. The results are summarized below.

Q16) Directive Policies require local trust committees and island municipalities to include certain types of policies and approaches in their official community plans and land-use bylaws. Tell us to what level you agree or disagree that Trust Council should require local trust committees and island municipalities to address the following policy directives in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws:

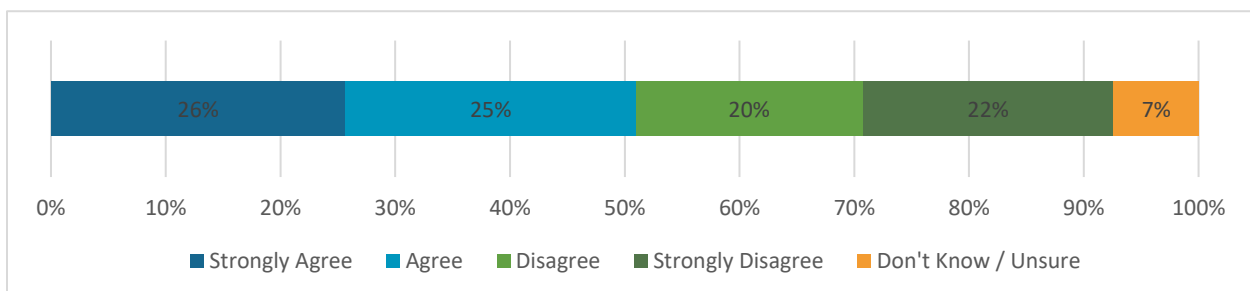
A) Priority should be placed on preserving and protecting the environment and Indigenous cultural heritage in all decision-making. (1136 Responses)



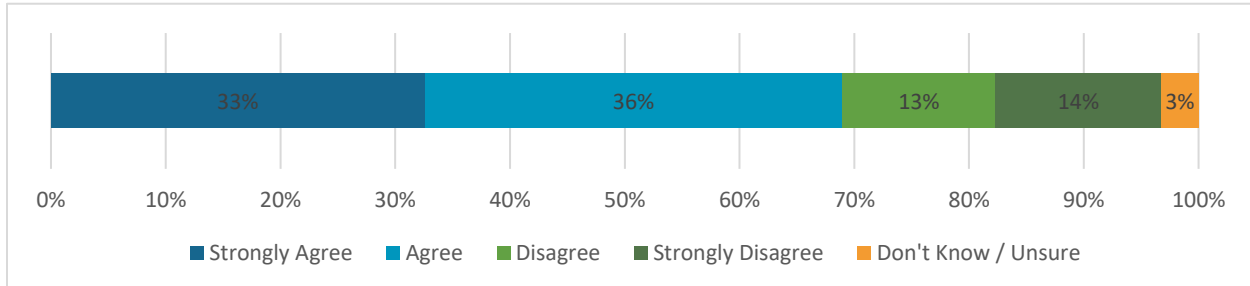
B) The rate and scale of growth and development in the Islands Trust Area must be carefully managed and requires limitation. (1136)



C) Decision-making should be guided by the Precautionary Principle. (The Precautionary Principle recognizes that delaying action until there is compelling evidence of harm will often mean that it is then too costly or impossible to avert the threat. Use of the principle promotes action to avert risks of serious or irreversible harm to the environment.) (1134 Responses)



D) Decision-making should be guided by the best available area-based mapping, science, social science, local knowledge, and Indigenous ways of knowing. (1130 Responses)



2.5 Questions 17-18 – Open Feedback on Regional Governance

2.5.1 Question 17

For Question 17, respondents were able to elaborate on the reasons why they agree or disagree with the policy directions addressed in Questions 15 (Commitments) and 16 (Directive Policies) on Regional Governance.

Q17) Tell us more about your responses, why you agree or disagree with the policies listed above.

The most frequently heard theme from respondents was the need to prioritize environmental protection. These comments were generally supportive of how the Draft New Policy Statement would allow the Islands Trust to fulfill its preserve and protect mandate. Relatedly, some respondents expressed concern about development and growth on the islands, and how it could outpace island capacity.

The second most common theme expressed a slightly different stance, stressing the need to balance resident needs such as housing, amenities, and services with environmental protections. Some respondents remarked that residents should be considered part of the environment and that community needs should be considered along with environmental protection. Some respondents brought up housing availability and livability of the islands as examples of residents' needs.

The third most common theme was concern about the precautionary principle and the potential for it to be applied to obstruct beneficial and necessary development. Many respondents also felt the Draft New Policy Statement wording was too vague, leaving room for multiple interpretations.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- Prioritize environmental protections;
- Balance resident needs and environmental protections;
- Concern about precautionary principle;
- De-prioritize Indigenous knowledge;
- Policy Statement is an overreach;
- Policy Statement is too vague;
- Decisions should be made at local level;
- Policies are too restrictive;
- Islands Trust is disconnected from local communities;
- Prioritize science-based decision making;
- General support for Policy Statement;

- Concern about availability of affordable housing;
- Prioritize resident needs;
- Restrict growth and development;
- More consideration of residents needed;
- Policy Statement is not consistent with the Islands Trust mandate;
- Should not include Bowen Municipality;
- Manage but not restrict growth and development;
- Overlaps with other jurisdictions;
- Concerned about too much growth;
- Questions about how policies will be implemented;
- Concern about effective use of tax dollars;
- Allow development and growth;
- Separate environment from reconciliation in the Policy Statement;
- Protect local livelihoods;
- Science is not neutral (can be biased);
- Gives Islands Trust too much control;
- Prioritize Indigenous knowledge;
- Water concerns;
- Preserve rural character; and
- General non-support for the Policy Statement

2.5.2 Question 18 – Additional Feedback

For Question 18, respondents were asked to provide any additional feedback in relation to the topics covered in Questions 15 (Governance) and 16 (Directive Policies).

Q18) Did we forget to ask something about the draft policies related to regional governance that is meaningful to you? Provide additional comments.

The most frequent theme heard in response to this question was the absence of consideration for residents in the questions and Policy Statement updates. Respondents felt there should be greater consideration of resident and community needs. Some respondents also felt that decisions should be made at the local level as much as possible, and therefore decisions would be directly connected with residents.

Many respondents expressed concern that the language in the Draft New Policy Statement allows loopholes, and that they should be made stronger. Respondents also expressed that the wording of the Draft New Policy Statement was too vague, noting terms such as “Indigenous ways of knowing” and “the precautionary principle” need to be better defined. They expressed concern that the Draft New Policy Statement could be interpreted differently by different Trustees or staff in future.

The third most frequently heard theme was the desire for decisions to be made at the local level, supporting earlier feedback about local decision-making better meeting residents’ needs.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- More consideration of residents needed;
- Make directive policies stronger;
- Decisions should be made at local level;
- Policy Statement is too vague;

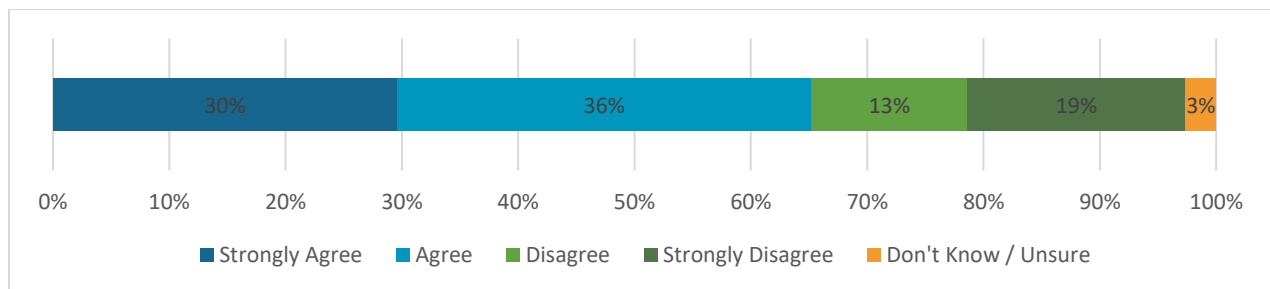
- Policy Statement overlaps with other jurisdictions;
- Policy Statement is beyond the Islands Trust mandate (overreach);
- Prioritize environmental protections;
- Concern about the process for updating the Policy Statement;
- Concern about the structure of Islands Trust Council;
- Concern about availability of affordable housing;
- Concern about effective use of tax dollars;
- Policy Statement affords Islands Trust too much control;
- Desire to preserve rural character / island way of life;
- Policy Statement is not consistent with original mandate; focus on land use matters;
- De-prioritize reconciliation focus;
- Engage with residents in different and more meaningful ways;
- Consider all three pillars of sustainability;
- Respect residents' private property rights;
- Balance resident needs and environmental protection;
- Enforcement is an important consideration;
- Don't be swayed by outside influence; and
- Prioritize science-based decision making;

2.6 Question 19 – Ecosystem Preservation and Protection Commitments

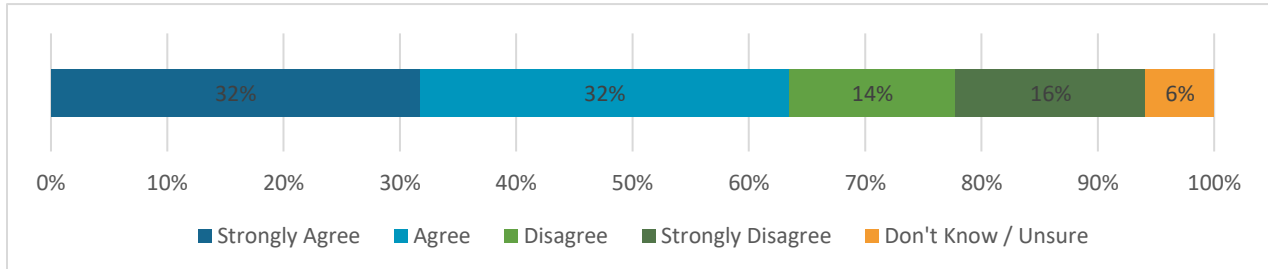
For Question 19, respondents were asked about eleven agree/disagree statements related to the ecosystem preservation and protection commitments in the Draft New Policy Statement. The results are summarized below.

Q.19 Commitments identify the guiding principles and approaches Trust Council should use when making decisions. Tell us to what level you agree or disagree that the Policy Statement should include Commitments of Trust Council that state that:

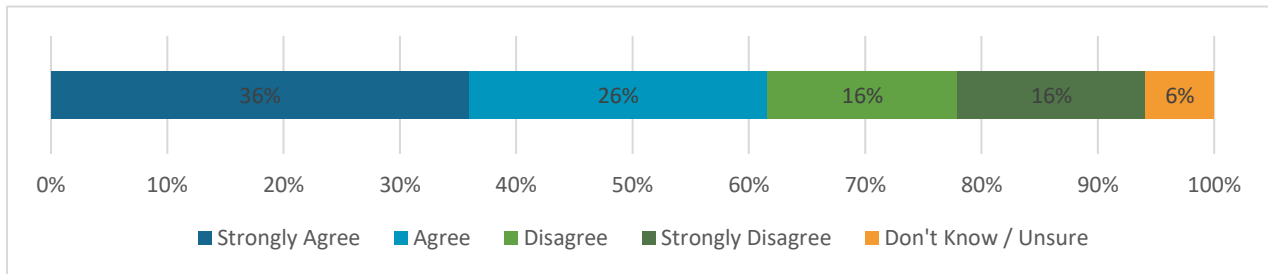
A) The impacts of climate change on ecosystems should be identified and monitored through climate vulnerability assessments in each local planning area. (1014 Responses)



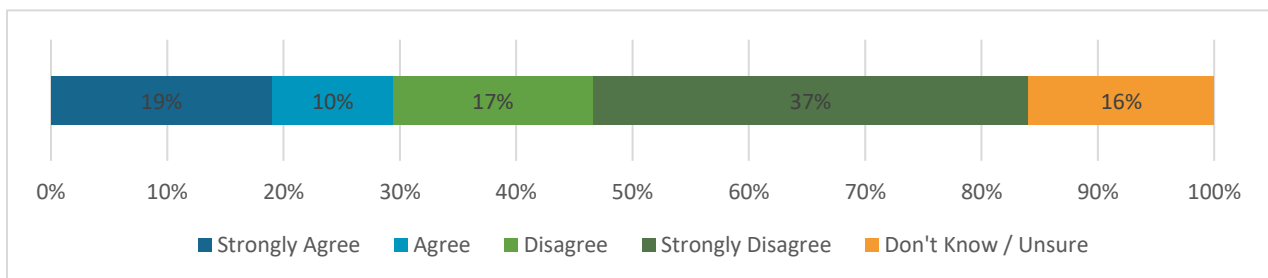
B) Nature-based solutions should be used to minimize climate vulnerabilities in each local planning area. (Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, providing both human well-being and biodiversity benefits.) (1004 Responses)



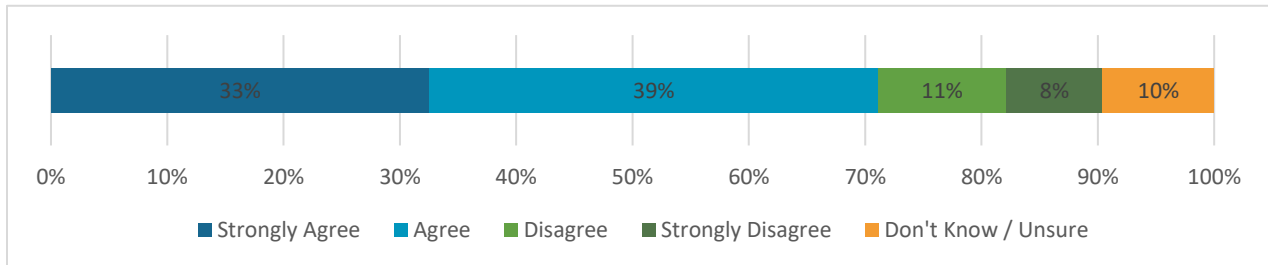
C) Neither the density nor intensity of land use should be increased in groundwater regions where the quality or quantity of freshwater is likely to be inadequate or unsustainable. (1012 Responses)



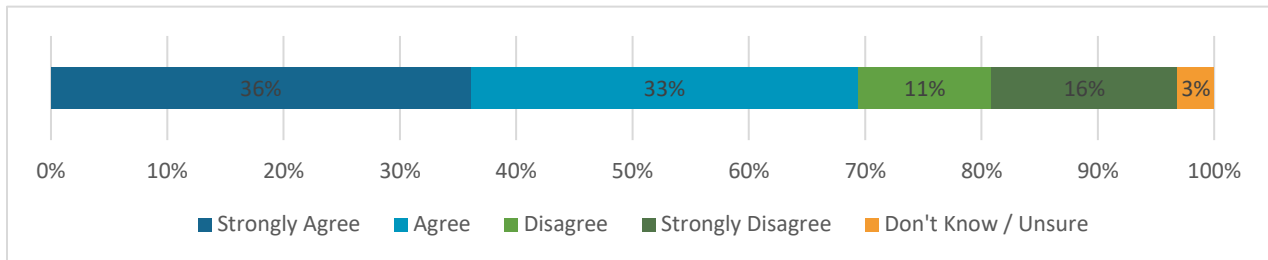
D) New desalination plants in the Islands Trust Area should be prohibited, due to their intensive energy demands and potentially adverse impacts to coastal and marine ecosystems. (1020 Responses)



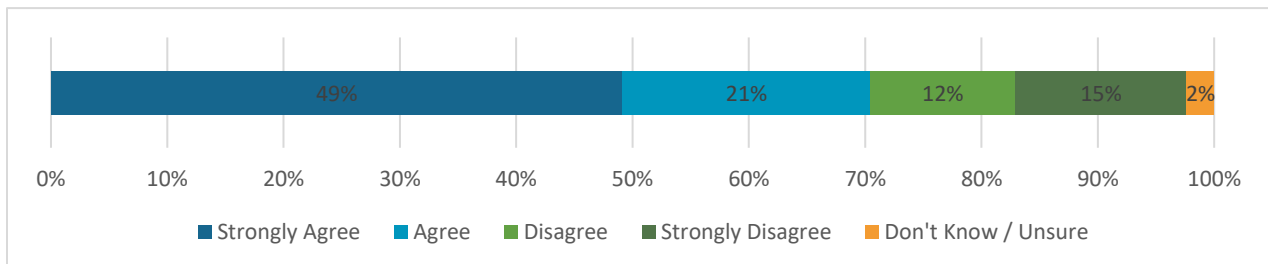
E) Agriculture and forestry are valued activities in the Islands Trust Area. (Note: Previous Commitments of Trust Council that recognized agriculture and forestry as traditional and valuable activities in the Islands Trust Area were removed from the Draft New Policy Statement, with reconciliation principles in mind, and without any regulatory impact on communities. Trust Council could consider reframing these statements instead of removing them.) (1011 Responses)



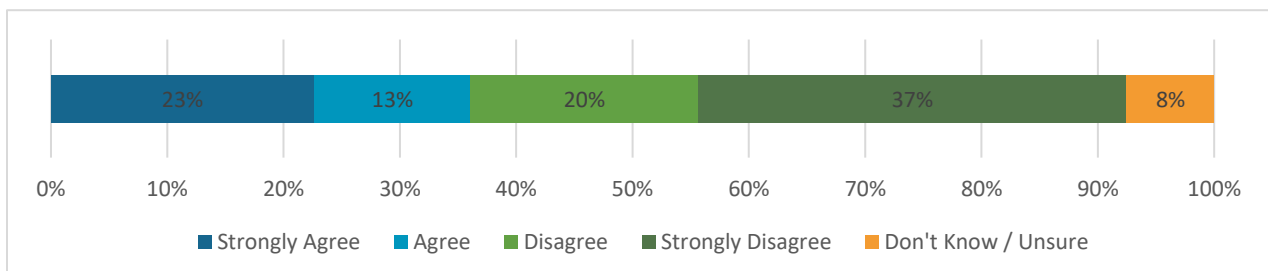
F) Harvesting practices (i.e. forestry, agriculture, and aquaculture) should be small-scale, sustainable, regenerative, supportive of climate action, respectful of Indigenous harvesting areas, and protective of the environmental integrity of the Islands Trust Area. (1017 Responses)



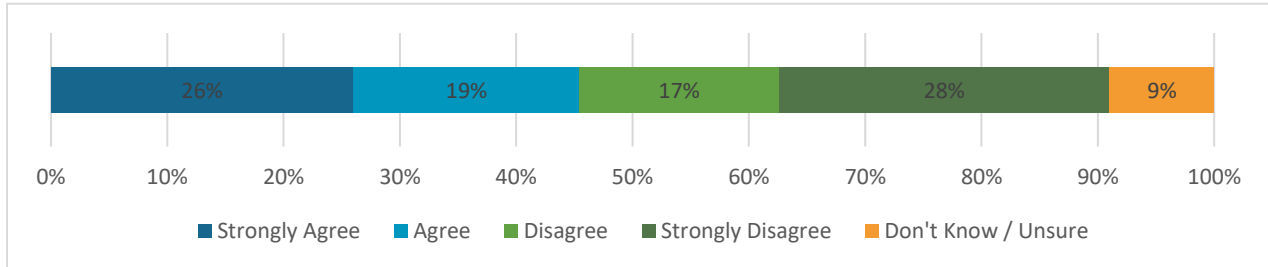
G) The clear-cutting of forests and logging of old-growth trees is inappropriate anywhere in the Islands Trust Area, in light of the harmful impacts of these activities on ecosystems and natural area carbon sinks. (1022 Responses)



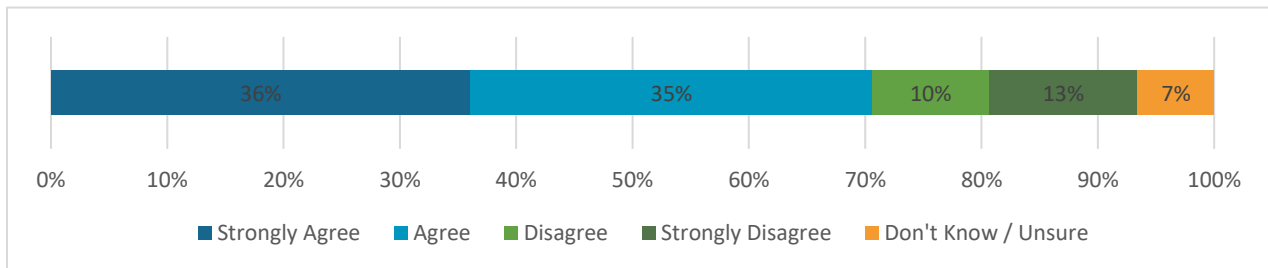
H) New private docks should be prohibited in light of their potentially harmful cumulative effects. (1025 Responses)



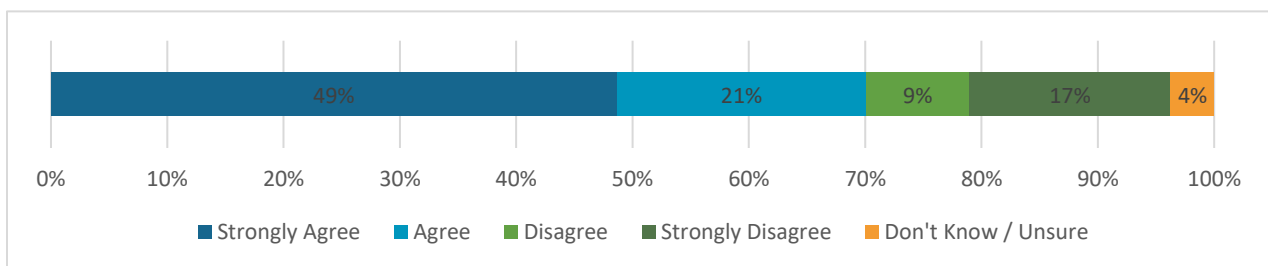
I) New seawalls or other hard shoreline armoring should be prohibited, whereas soft shoreline protections should be encouraged. (1023 Responses)



J) Marine dependent land uses should be directed away from eelgrass meadows, kelp forests, forage fish spawning areas, tidal salt marshes, mud flats, and coastal wetlands, acknowledging the important roles they play in capturing and storing carbon, protecting shorelines, and supporting marine food webs and species at risk. (1017 Responses)



K) Trust Council should advocate to other levels of government to prohibit ocean dumping, commercial freighter anchorage sites, oil tanker traffic for export, and moorage/anchorage sites in eelgrass meadows, throughout the Islands Trust Area. (1020 Responses)

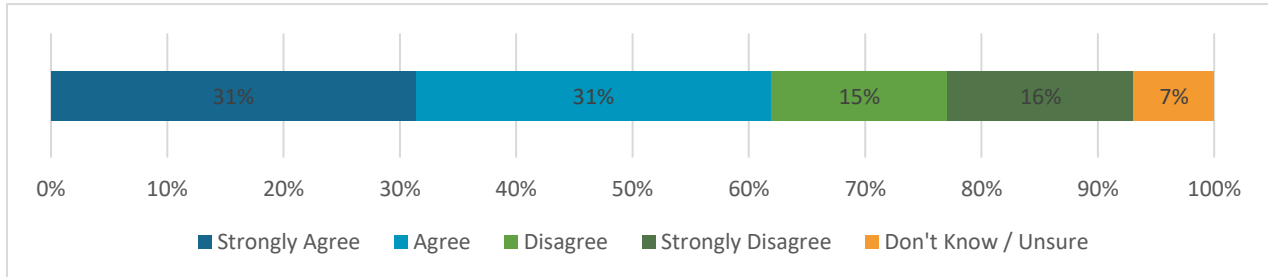


2.7 Question 20 – Ecosystem Preservation and Protection Directive Policies

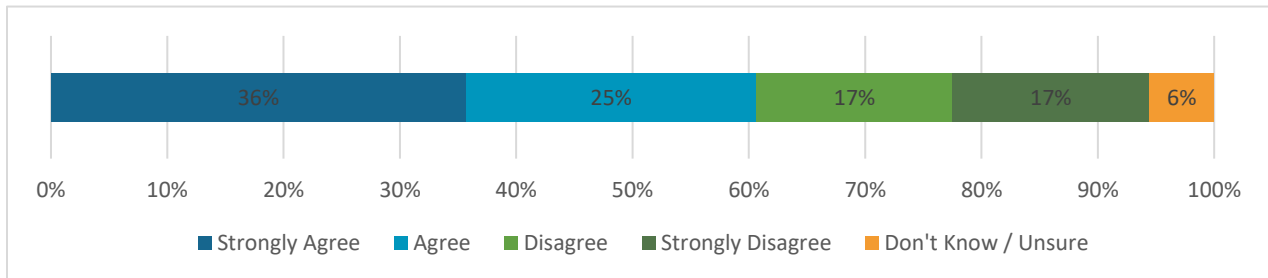
For Question 20, respondents were asked about eight agree/disagree statements related to the ecosystem preservation and protection Directive Policies in the Draft New Policy Statement. The results are summarized below.

Q20) Directive Policies require local trust committees and island municipalities to include certain types of policies and approaches in their official community plans and land-use bylaws. Tell us to what level you agree or disagree that Trust Council should require local trust committees and island municipalities to address the following policy directives in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws:

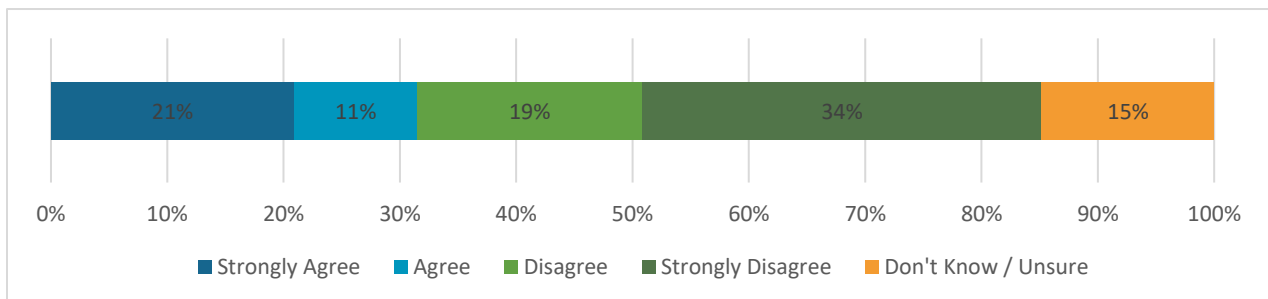
A) Nature-based solutions should be used to minimize climate vulnerabilities in each local planning area. (Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, providing both human well-being and biodiversity benefits.) (998 Responses)



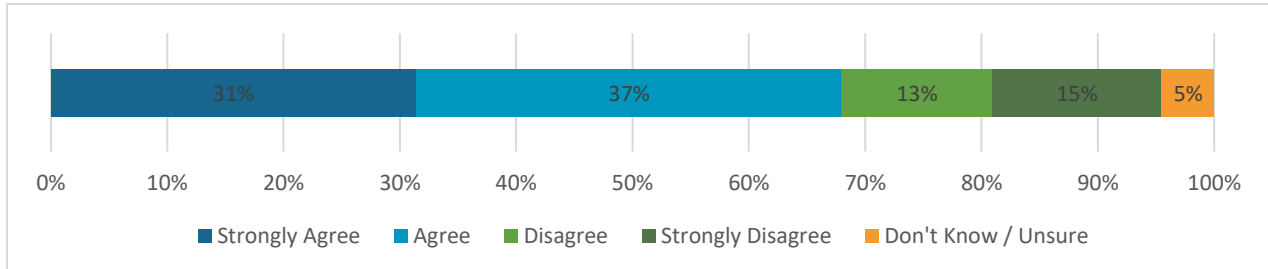
B) Neither the density nor intensity of land use should be increased in groundwater regions where the quality or quantity of freshwater is likely to be inadequate or unsustainable. (1004 Responses)



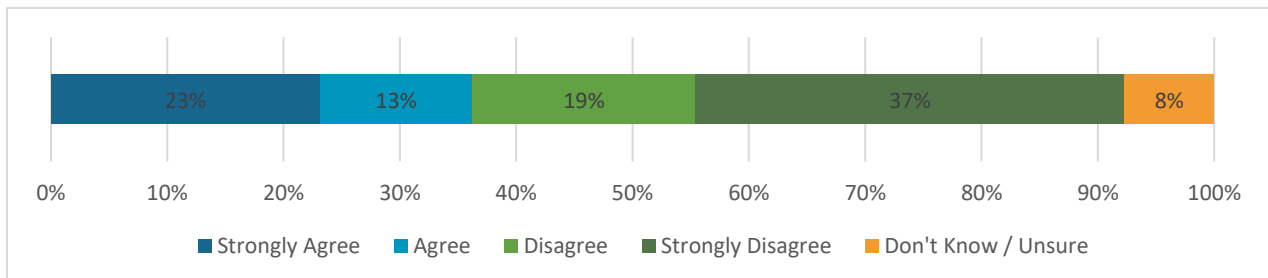
C) New desalination plants in the Islands Trust Area should be prohibited, due to their intensive energy demands and potentially adverse impacts to coastal and marine ecosystems. (1000 Responses)



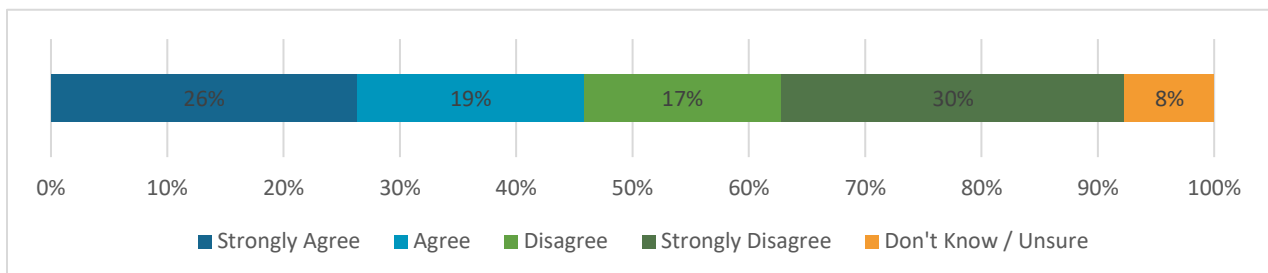
D) When identifying and preserving appropriate areas for agricultural land in the Islands Trust Area, consideration should be given to the impacts of agricultural activity on downstream ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and adjacent properties. (1000 Responses)



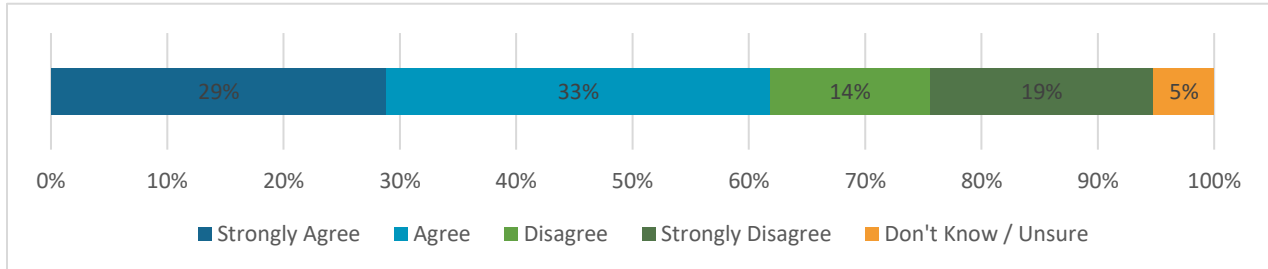
E) New private docks should be prohibited (except where properties are boat access only), in light of their potentially harmful cumulative effects on nearshore ecosystems, marine food webs and species at risk, Indigenous harvesting areas, and cultural heritage sites. (994 Responses)



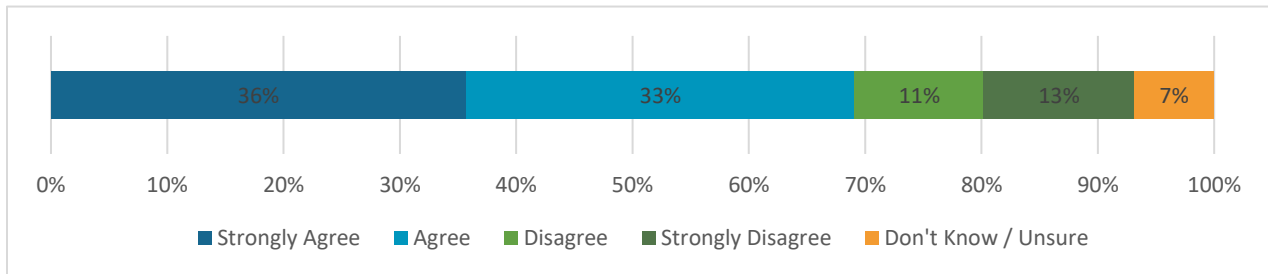
F) New seawalls or other hard shoreline armoring should be prohibited, whereas soft shoreline protections should be encouraged. (1002 Responses)



G) Shoreline buffers and setbacks should be established in accordance with the current and anticipated impacts of sea level rise in each local planning area. (998 Responses)



H) Marine dependent land uses should be directed away from eelgrass meadows, kelp forests, forage fish spawning areas, tidal salt marshes, mud flats, and coastal wetlands, acknowledging the important roles they play in capturing and storing carbon, protecting shorelines, and supporting marine food webs and species at risk. (1000 Responses)

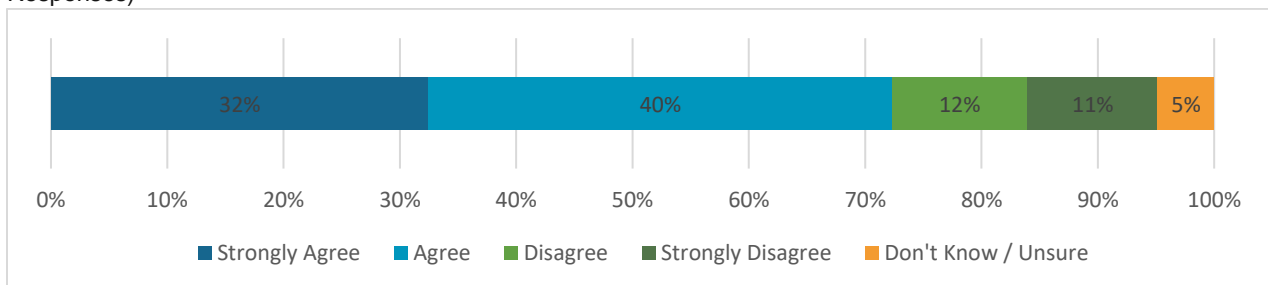


2.8 Question 21 – Ecosystem Preservation and Protection Coordination Policies

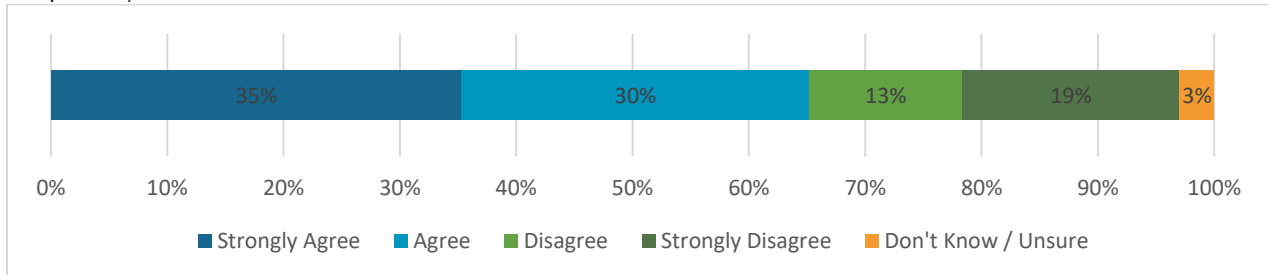
For Question 21, respondents were asked about nine agree/disagree statements related to the ecosystem preservation and protection environmental protection Coordination Policies in the Draft New Policy Statement. The results are summarized below.

Q21) Coordination Policies outline Trust Council’s intentions for working with, or advocating to, government agencies and other interested and affected parties. Tell us to what level you agree or disagree that the Policy Statement should include Coordination Policies of Trust Council that state that:

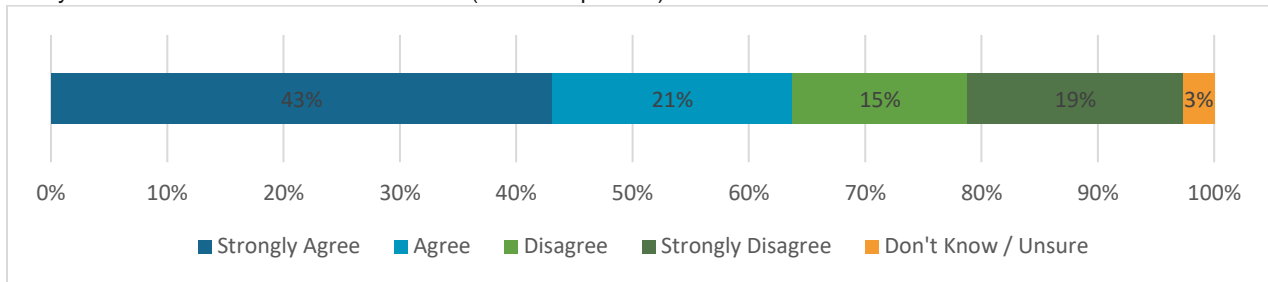
A) Trust Council should advocate for rainwater harvesting as a supplemental (not primary) water source. (1010 Responses)



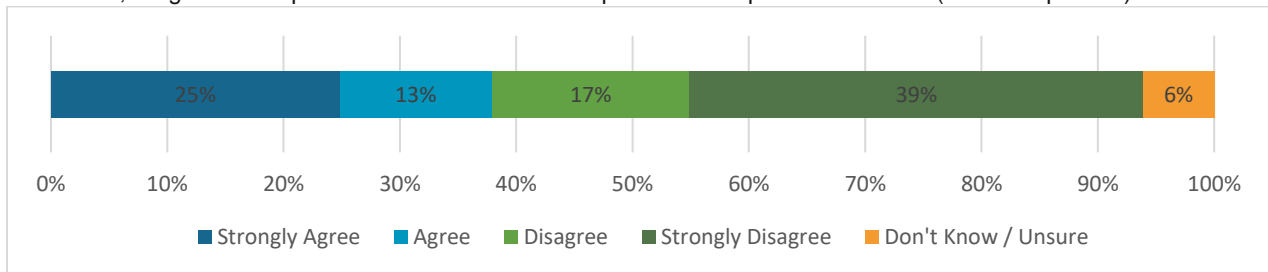
B) Trust Council should advocate to other levels of government that harvesting practices (i.e. forestry, agriculture, and aquaculture) in the Islands Trust Area should be small-scale, sustainable, regenerative, supportive of climate action, respectful of Indigenous harvesting areas, and protective of the environmental integrity of the region. (1011 Responses)



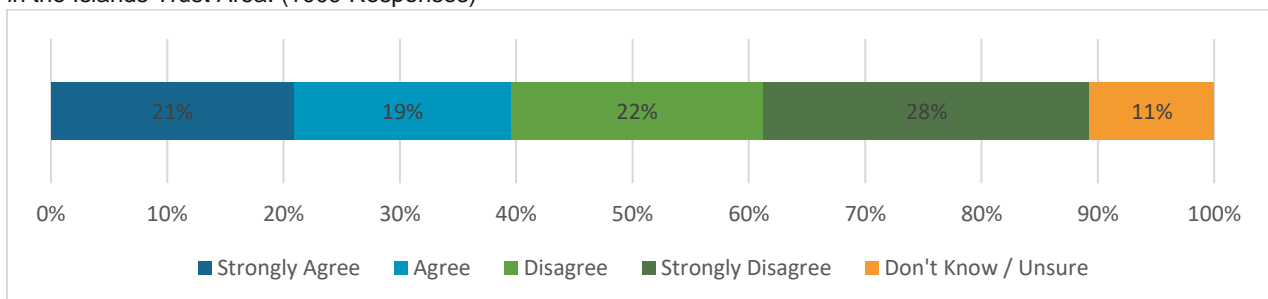
C) Trust Council should advocate to other levels of government for legislation to prohibit the clear-cutting of forests and logging of old-growth trees in the Islands Trust Area, in light of the harmful impacts of these activities on ecosystems and natural area carbon sinks. (1009 Responses)



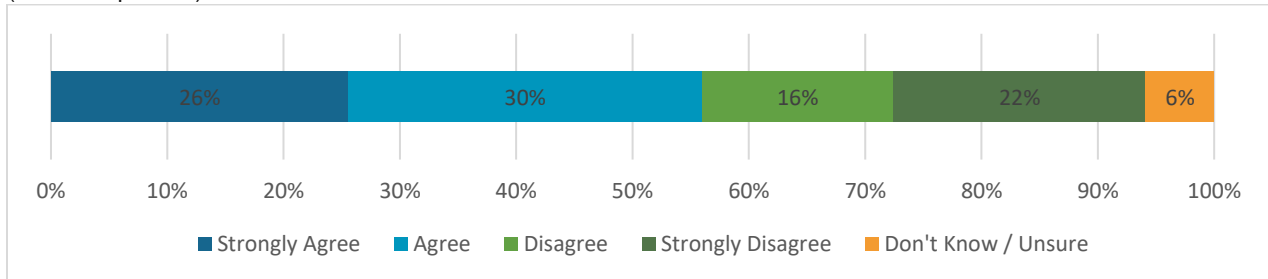
D) Trust Council should advocate to the provincial government for authority to regulate tree cutting in the Islands Trust Area, in light of its importance to the Islands Trust preserve and protect mandate. (1011 Responses)



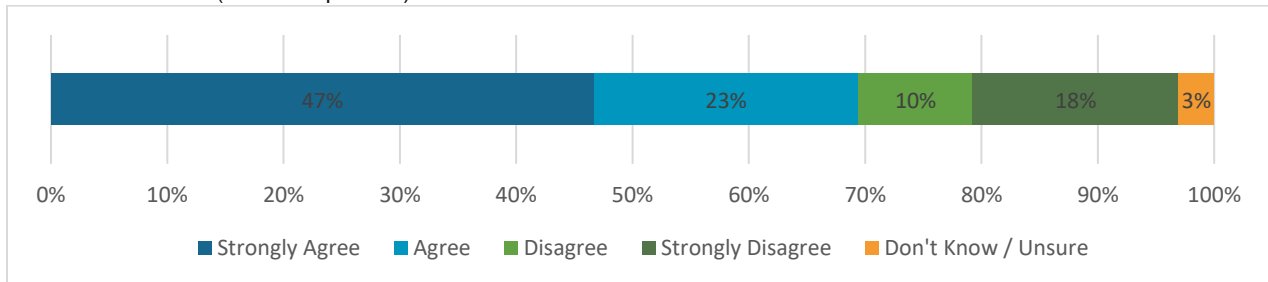
E) Trust Council should advocate to other government agencies that farming in the Agricultural Land Reserve should not adversely impact Indigenous food security and harvesting practices, cultural heritage, or protected area networks in the Islands Trust Area. (1009 Responses)



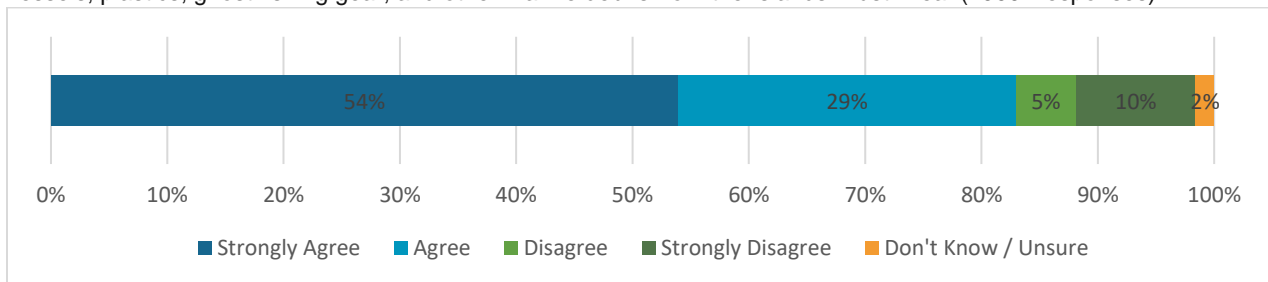
F) Trust Council should advocate to other government agencies that legislation, guidelines, and incentives should be established to support local farmers to adopt the highest standards of environmental protection, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and adapt to climate variability, in accordance with the Islands Trust preserve and protect mandate. (1001 Responses)



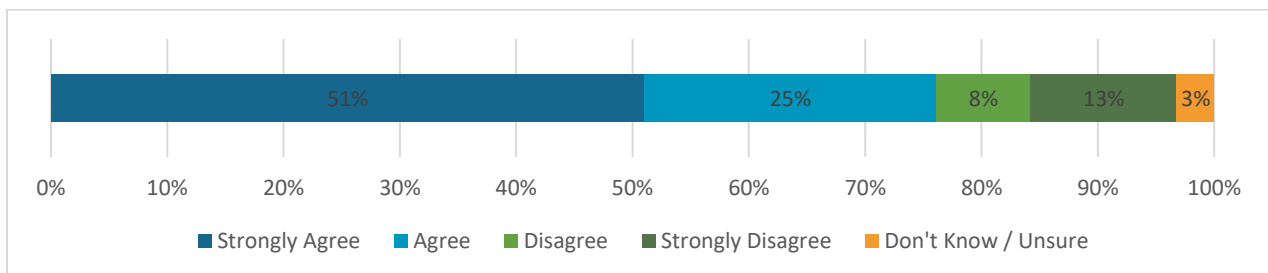
G) Trust Council should advocate to other levels of government to prohibit ocean dumping, commercial freighter anchorage sites, oil tanker traffic for export, and moorage/anchorage sites in eelgrass meadows, throughout the Islands Trust Area. (1007 Responses)



H) Trust Council should advocate to other levels of government to support the removal of abandoned and derelict vessels, plastics, ghost fishing gear, and other marine debris from the Islands Trust Area. (1009 Responses)



I) Trust Council should advocate to other levels of government to develop effective oil spill prevention, preparedness, and geographic response plans for the Islands Trust Area. (1000 Responses)



2.9 Questions 22-26 – Open Feedback on Ecosystem Preservation and Protection

2.9.1 Question 22 – Freshwater Stewardship

For Question 22, respondents were able to elaborate on the reasons why they agree or disagree with various components of the policy directions addressed in Questions 19 (Commitments), 20 (Directive Policies) and 21 (Coordination Policies) related to freshwater stewardship.

Q22) Tell us more about your responses, why you agree or disagree with the policies related to freshwater or groundwater listed in the questions above.

The most frequently heard theme in response to this question was a concern about a ban on desalination plants. Respondents stated that new technologies can be used to develop energy efficient desalination plants, that the engineering of brine discharge is already regulated, and that desalination may be appropriate in locations where saltwater ingress is already happening. Respondents noted that groundwater is in short supply and that desalination is a means to augment existing water supplies. They also noted that it is an appropriate climate adaptation strategy for the islands.

Noting that groundwater is in short supply, many respondents suggested rainwater catchment should be encouraged if not mandatory, especially in new developments, stating it would ease the burden of the shortage of groundwater.

Closely related to the desire to encourage rainwater harvesting is the third most frequently heard theme of permitting and encouraging rainwater as the primary source of water, not as a supplemental source. Some noted it is the only source available to residents while a few participants felt rainwater harvesting should not be discounted as it is a well-established method used in other places around the world.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- Keep desalination – there are ways to make it environmentally friendly;
- Encourage and allow rain catchment / harvesting;
- Rainwater as primary / potable resource;
- Protect water – it's finite;
- Implement limitations on development;
- Availability of water is a concern;
- Protect groundwater;
- Water use needs to be managed;
- Data being used is flawed;
- Prioritize the environment;
- Vague language in the Policy Statement;
- Water is renewable / abundant;
- Respondents need more information;
- Need more water storage;
- Regulations already exist, don't need more;
- Blanket policy is not appropriate;
- Islands Trust should advocate for water protection; and
- General support for the Policy Statement.

2.9.2 Question 23 – Coastal and Marine Stewardship

For Question 23, respondents were able to elaborate on the reasons why they agree or disagree with various components of the policy directions addressed in Questions 19 (Commitments), 20 (Directive Policies) and 21 (Coordination Policies) related to coastal and marine stewardship.

Q23) Tell us more about your responses, why you agree or disagree with the policies related to marine and coastal stewardship listed in the questions above.

Respondents most often suggested that protection of the coastal and marine environment should be the priority as human activity and climate change are having significant impacts. Some noted they have seen visible changes to the foreshore and are worried about continued degradation.

The second most frequently heard theme in response to the question was with respect to support for private docks. Some noted docks provide shelter for juvenile marine life, they provide safety during events such as wildfires and other emergencies and are a means to access transportation. While there was support for allowing private docks, a few participants offered that guidelines and inspection around building docks should be encouraged.

The third most frequently heard theme was that regulations from other levels of governments already exist in this subject matter area and that these regulations should govern these activities.

With respect to the soft shore proposal, there was a frequent theme of support for seawalls with respondents noting they are important for protecting homes and infrastructure against rising sea levels resulting from climate change. Respondents noted that seawalls are sometimes the only option, especially on islands that are steep and don't have gentle sloping topography.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- Desire to protect coastal waters;
- Allow private docks and/or disagree with prohibiting docks;
- Regulations already exist, don't need more;
- Ban freighter parking / activity;
- Disagree with banning seawalls / soft shoreline proposal;
- Proposed Policy Statement will be ineffective;
- General support for the proposed Policy Statement;
- Support for commercial freighter activities;
- Blanket policy is not appropriate – different locations need different policies;
- Respondents need more information;
- Address derelict boats;
- Consider seawalls / docks on a case-by-case basis;
- Support desalination;
- Educate for positive change; and
- Policy Statement is beyond the Islands Trust mandate (overreach).

2.9.3 Question 24 – Forest Stewardship

For Question 24, respondents were able to elaborate on the reasons why they agree or disagree with various components of the policy directions addressed in Questions 19 (Commitments), 20 (Directive Policies) and 21 (Coordination Policies) related to forest stewardship.

Q24) Tell us more about your responses, why you agree or disagree with the policies related to forestry in the questions listed above.

The most frequently heard theme in response to this question was that there should be no restrictions for cutting trees on private land. The majority of respondents who feel this way noted that trees on private land belong to the homeowner, and people who own property are stewards of the land and they know best what to do.

Many noted that they need to cut trees on their property as firewood for warmth, for fire prevention, for food production, and for safety reasons such as preventing trees from falling on homes or other infrastructure. Many noted they should not have to pay to cut down a tree on their own property.

While many respondents wanted to be able to manage their own cutting on private property, they also strongly supported a ban on industrial-scale clear-cutting, noting the damage to the environment and a desire to protect old growth trees in the process.

Respondents noted that small-scale forestry is part of an island's economic activity and a source of local building materials. Reasons for supporting small-scale, local forestry are that it reduces carbon footprint and contributes to an island's self-reliance and resilience. Many respondents also noted small-scale forestry is important in assisting with management of overgrowth and dangerous trees and could help preserve the character of an island.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- There should be no restrictions on private land;
- Prevent industrial-scale clear-cutting;
- Small / sustainable / private forestry is acceptable;
- Preserve / protect trees;
- Focus on protecting old growth trees;
- Cutting to reduce hazard should be allowed (e.g. fire prevention, fallen trees);
- Forestry is not appropriate for islands;
- Need wood for housing and warmth;
- Some management / regulations of the forests are needed;
- Deforestation to reduce fire hazards promotes healthy forests;
- Ban commercial forestry;
- Islands have already been heavily forested;
- Need sound / sustainable forestry practices;
- Vague language in the Policy Statement;
- Cost is prohibitive / don't want to pay fees to cut down a tree;
- Cutting for farming and housing is ok;
- Logging is an important industry and livelihood for some; and
- Restrict cutting on private land.

2.9.4 Question 25 – Agricultural Stewardship

For Question 25, respondents were able to elaborate on the reasons why they agree or disagree with various components of the policy directions addressed in Questions 19 (Commitments), 20 (Directive Policies) and 21 (Coordination Policies) related to agriculture.

Q25) Tell us more about your responses, why you agree or disagree with the policies related to agriculture in the questions listed above.

The most frequently heard theme in response to this question was overall support for farming and a call to protect agriculture on the islands. Respondents shared that agriculture is valuable, benefits the economy, and contributes to food security and climate resiliency. Some respondents feel agriculture is diminishing and therefore needs protection and encouragement. They also noted that agriculture is an historically important activity and contributes to the character of the islands.

Small-scale agriculture is supported for its minimal impact to the environment and contribution to locally grown food. Many noted that buying locally grown food is important to them as it has community-wide economic and environmental benefits. Others commented that small-scale farming is costly and that too much regulation will have business and end-user impacts.

Some respondents noted sustainable farming practices should be encouraged and advanced so as not to damage the local ecosystem, noting that damaging practices can lead to carbon loss, micronutrient loss and biodiversity loss.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- General support for farming / protect it;
- Support for local / small-scale farming
- Farming contributes to food security;
- Sustainable farming is important;
- Regulations already exist, don't need more;
- Balance agriculture and forestry with environment;
- Islands should be self-sustaining;
- Vague language in the Policy Statement;
- Encourage more agriculture;
- Farming is essential;
- Need food to survive;
- Farming needs oversight / regulation;
- Prevent chemical use;
- Protect the environment above all else;
- Agriculture does not belong in the Policy Statement;
- Trust farmers to do what's right;
- Concern about some farming practices;
- Don't sacrifice trees for farming;
- Ensure survival of local farms;
- Farming harms the environment;
- Respondents need more information;
- Proposed Policy Statement harms farmers / farms; and
- Regulate water usage when it comes to farming.

2.9.5 Question 26 – Additional Feedback

For Question 26, respondents were asked to provide any additional feedback in relation to the topics covered in Questions 19 (Commitments), 20 (Directive Policies) and 21 (Coordination Policies) related to ecosystem preservation and protection.

Q26) Did we forget to ask something about the draft policies related to ecosystem preservation and protection that is meaningful to you? Provide additional comments.

The most frequently heard theme in response to this question was that regulations around forestry, agriculture and coastal marine environments already exist through other jurisdictions and do not belong within the Islands Trust mandate. Some stated there is a lack of evidence or sound data for creating the proposed policies, and that with already too many layers of government, these policies are redundant and better left to experts in those areas.

The second most frequently heard theme is that environmental protection should be prioritized. Respondents noted that the island lifestyle relies on protecting the ecosystem and the priority should be to preserve and protect it. Respondents would like Islands Trust to consider new ideas and possibilities when it comes to protecting the environment and to ensure the islands thrive environmentally and economically for future generations.

The third most frequently heard theme was a concern about how the cost of implementing these policies could be translated into additional taxes. Respondents would like to see documentation about the fees, costs and taxes for implementation and management of the Policy Statement.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

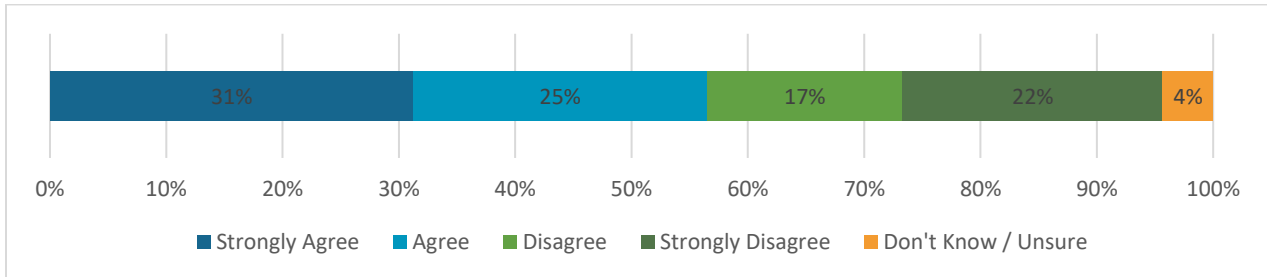
- Policy is beyond the Islands Trust mandate (overreach);
- Prioritize environmental protection;
- Concern about impact to taxes to implement policy changes;
- Balance social, economic and environmental needs;
- Concern with cell towers' effect on the environment;
- Development has a negative effect on environment;
- Support environmental preservation policies;
- Policy Statement is confusing;
- Prioritize environment above all else;
- Encourage rainwater harvesting;
- Implement incentives to make green choices;
- Protect local livelihoods; and
- Focus on education.

2.10 Question 27 – Sustainable and Resilient Communities Commitments

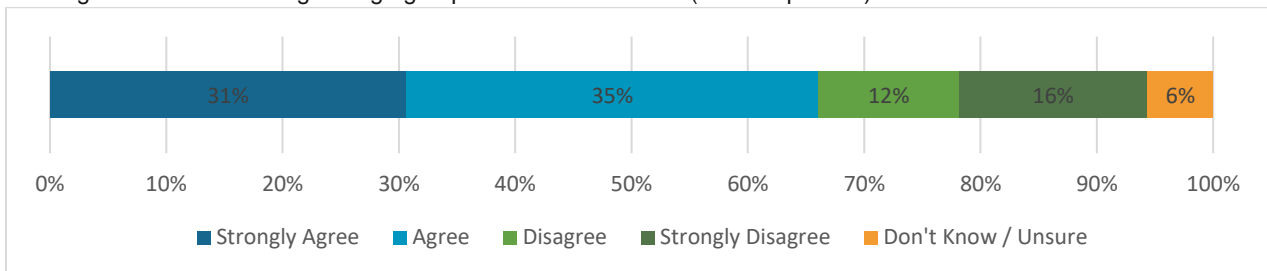
For Question 27, respondents were asked about four agree/disagree statements related to the sustainable and resilient communities commitments in the Draft New Policy Statement. The results are summarized below.

Q27) Commitments identify the guiding principles and approaches Trust Council should use when making decisions. Tell us to what level you agree or disagree that the Policy Statement should include Commitments of Trust Council that state that:

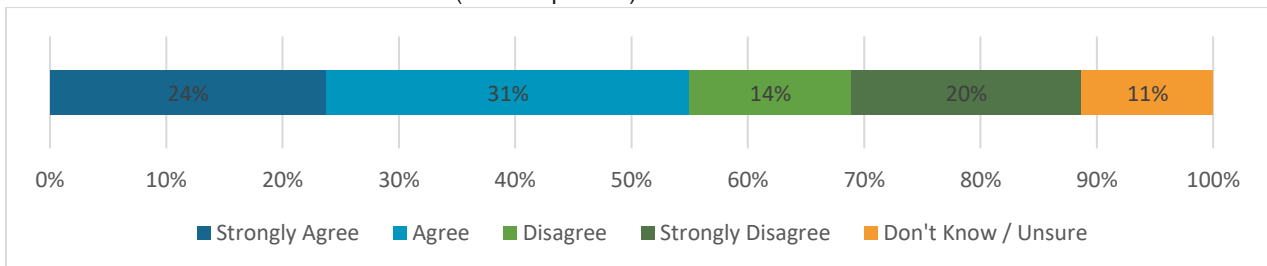
A) New development and housing in the Islands Trust Area should be small-scale, low-impact, energy efficient, and appropriately situated in order to minimize greenhouse gas emissions, and safeguard protected area networks, freshwater sustainability, a healthy marine environment, and Indigenous cultural heritage. (944 Responses)



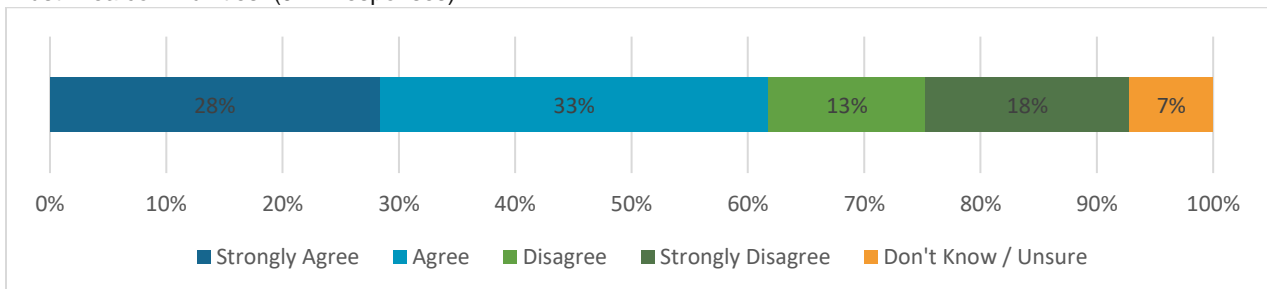
B) Community sustainability and resilience are supported by the availability of diverse, low impact, and affordable housing that caters to a range of age groups and income levels. (937 Responses)



C) Strategic, multijurisdictional, equitable, and integrated approaches are needed to address the diverse housing needs of Islands Trust Area communities. (938 Responses)



D) Appropriately situated public and active transportation networks should be established to support electric vehicles and electric bicycles, in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote health and well-being in the Islands Trust Area communities. (942 Responses)

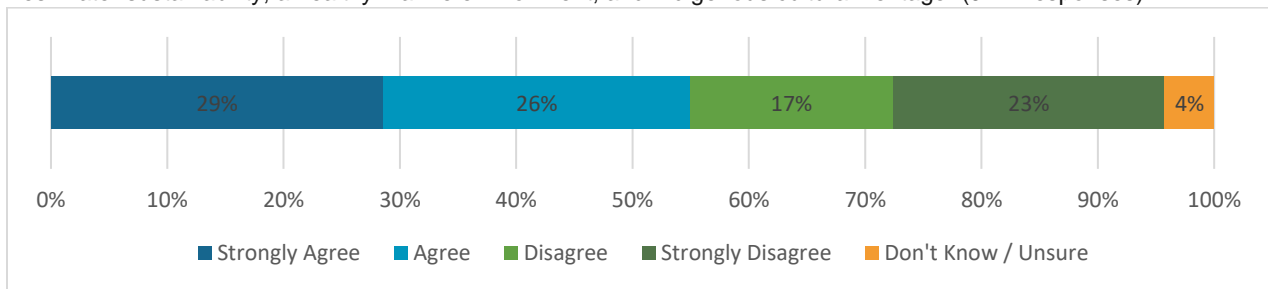


2.11 Question 28 – Sustainable and Resilient Communities Directive Policies

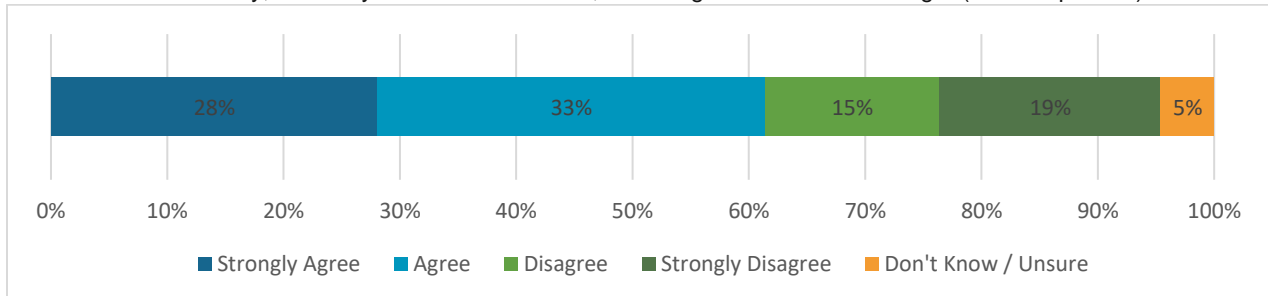
For Question 28, respondents were asked about six agree/disagree statements related to the sustainable and resilient communities Directive Policies in the Draft New Policy Statement. The results are summarized below.

Q28) Directive Policies require local trust committees and island municipalities to include certain types of policies and approaches in their official community plans and bylaws. Tell us to what level you agree or disagree that Trust Council should require local trust committees and island municipalities to address the following policy directives in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws:

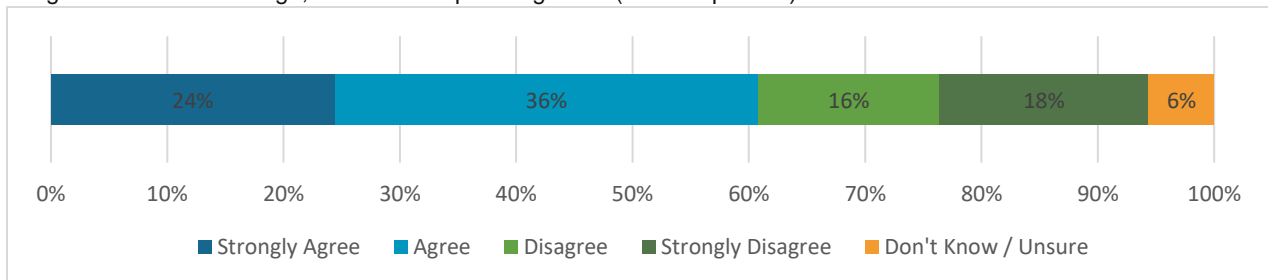
A) New development and housing in the Islands Trust Area should be small-scale, low-impact, energy efficient, and appropriately situated in order to minimize greenhouse gas emissions, and safeguard protected area networks, freshwater sustainability, a healthy marine environment, and Indigenous cultural heritage. (941 Responses)



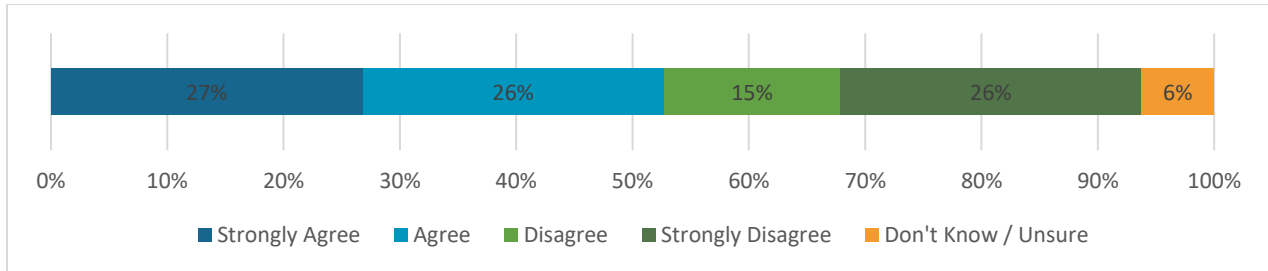
B) New development and housing in the Islands Trust Area should be small-scale, low-impact, energy efficient, and appropriately situated in order to minimize greenhouse gas emissions, and safeguard protected area networks, freshwater sustainability, a healthy marine environment, and Indigenous cultural heritage. (940 Responses)



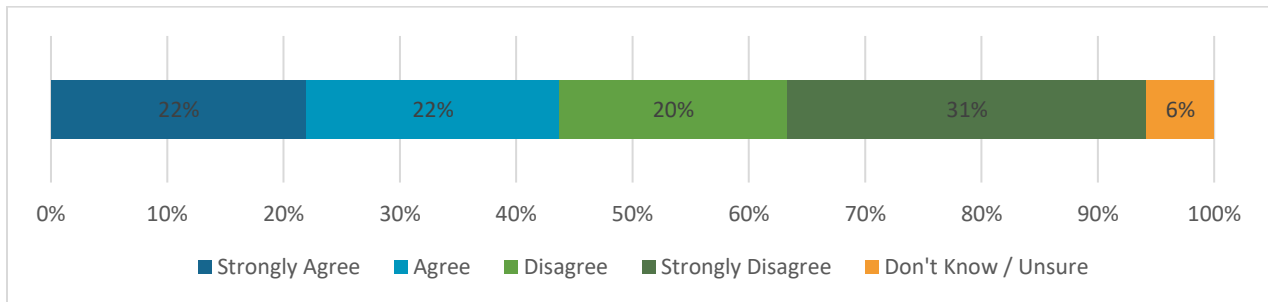
C) Appropriate locations should be identified where density increases could support safe, secure, and affordable housing, without compromising protected area networks, freshwater sustainability, a healthy marine environment, and Indigenous cultural heritage, in each local planning area. (939 Responses)



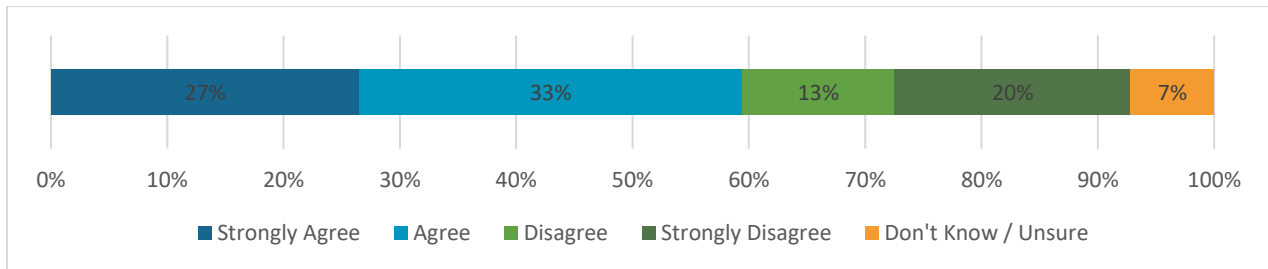
D) The impacts of short-term rentals of dwellings on the availability of safe, secure, and affordable housing should be identified, assessed, and, where necessary, regulated, in each local planning area. (940 Responses)



E) Appropriate floor area and lot coverage limits for residential development should be established to minimize greenhouse gas emissions and cumulative effects on the environment and Indigenous cultural heritage in each local planning area. (941 Responses)



F) Appropriately situated public and active transportation networks should be established to support electric vehicles and electric bicycles, in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote health and well-being in the Islands Trust Area communities. (943 Response)

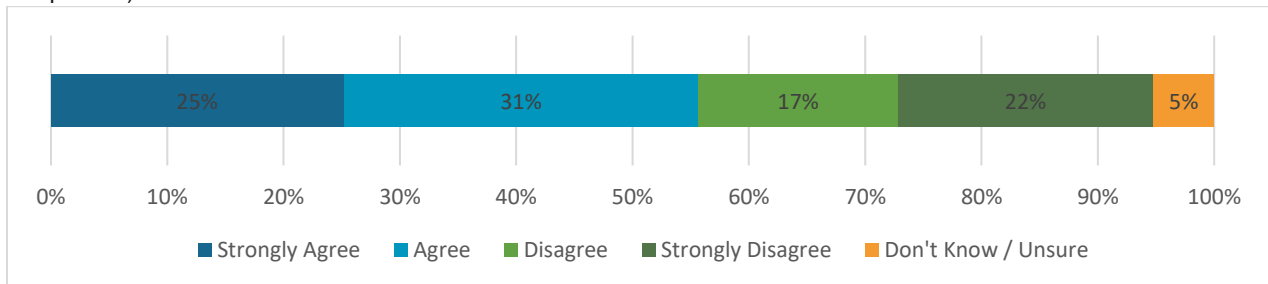


2.12 Question 29 – Sustainable and Resilient Communities Coordination Policies

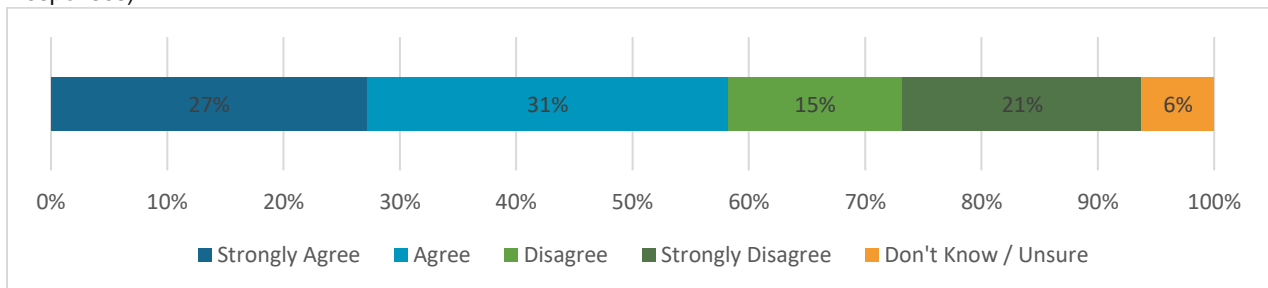
For Question 29, respondents were asked about three agree/disagree statements related to the sustainable and resilient communities Coordination Policies in the Draft New Policy Statement. The results are summarized below.

Q 29) Coordination Policies outline Trust Council's intentions for working with, or advocating to, government agencies and other interested and affected parties. Tell us to what level you agree or disagree that the Policy Statement should include Coordination Policies of Trust Council that state that:

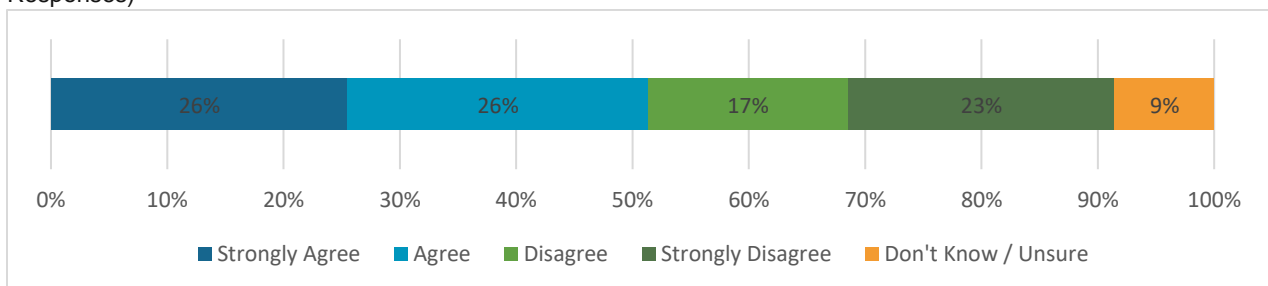
A) Trust Council should coordinate with, and advocate to, other levels of government to foster safe, secure, and affordable housing in the Islands Trust Area, in alignment with the Islands Trust preserve and protect mandate. (934 Responses)



B) Trust Council should coordinate with, and advocate to, other levels of government to establish appropriately situated public and active transportation networks to support electric vehicles and electric bicycles, in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote health and well-being in the Islands Trust Area communities. (93 Responses)



C) Trust Council should advocate to provincial government agencies to support the electrification of ferries in the Islands Trust Area, in order to minimize greenhouse gas emissions and protect coastal and marine ecosystems. (937 Responses)



2.13 Questions 30-31 – Open Feedback on Sustainable and Resilient Communities

2.13.1 Question 30

For Question 30, respondents were able to elaborate on the reasons why they agree or disagree with various components of the policy directions addressed in Questions 27 (Commitments), 28 (Directive Policies) and 29 (Coordination Policies) related to sustainable and resilient communities.

Q30) Tell us more about your responses, why you agree or disagree with the policies listed in the questions above.

Affordable or low-cost housing is indicated by many respondents to be an urgent issue, making it the top priority across many of the islands. Respondents noted a need for short-term rental flexibility, multi-generational housing, housing for seniors and youth, and accommodations for workers. Many respondents noted that there is an aging population that wants to stay on the islands, but the lack of affordable housing may not allow that. The second most frequently heard theme was around the description of the policies, with many noting they disagreed with the statements as many of the terms used are vague or undefined. Respondents are looking for definitions around “affordable housing,” “sustainable resilient communities,” “protected area network,” “small-scale,” “low impact,” and other similar terms. Respondents offered that the vague terms leave too much open to variable interpretation, so they are not able to support the Policy Statement.

The third theme that was mentioned most frequently was a desire to protect the environment. Respondents noted that every facet of life is dependent on the environment in different ways and that it is needed to sustain life. Many feel native ecology is threatened and that protecting the environment will protect the unique character of the islands. Some noted they do not support putting social and economic factors on equal footing with the environment.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- Need more housing choices - workforce, seniors, affordable housing, rentals;
- Vague terms in the Policy Statement;
- Protect environment above all else;
- Housing should not be included in the Policy Statement;
- Don't agree with Islands Trust role in advocating for housing;
- Electric bikes / vehicles not appropriate due to lack of disposal sites and grid connections;
- Allow for local solutions;
- Do not support high-density housing;
- Policies overlap with other jurisdictions;
- Affordable housing is not appropriate on the islands;
- Allow short-term rentals;
- Stop development;
- Directives do not belong in the Policy Statement;
- Respondents need more information;
- General non-support for the proposed Policy Statement;
- Support for improved transportation;
- First Nations role in Policy Statement too dominant;
- General support for the Policy Statement;
- Adapt ferries or marine vessels to electric
- High density housing is acceptable as it is lower impact;
- Concern about increased cost of building homes; and
- Need better / more objective data.

2.13.2 Question 31 – Additional Feedback

For Question 31, respondents were asked to provide any additional feedback in relation to the topics covered in Questions 27 (Commitments), 28 (Directive Policies) and 29 (Coordination Policies) related to sustainable and resilient communities.

Q31) Did we forget to ask something about the draft policies related to sustainable and resilient communities that is meaningful to you? Provide additional comments.

The most frequently heard theme, after the sentiment that the Policy Statement is beyond the Islands Trust mandate, was that better data is needed to support the proposed Policy Statement. Some called for decisions to be based on independent, scientific, and up-to-date data, with some respondents calling for traditional Indigenous practices to also be used in decision-making.

Concern about the cost of implementing the Policy Statement and its potential impact on taxes was the next most frequently mentioned theme. Many of the respondents who shared this concern are against spending more money amid the high cost of living on the islands.

As with other questions, a call to protect the environment was one of the most frequent themes mentioned. Respondents shared that the environment should be a priority over development which negatively impacts the environment. Some noted climate change impacts and depletion of resources means that their current way of life on the islands is not sustainable.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- Policy Statement is beyond the Islands Trust mandate (overreach);
- Need better / more objective data;
- Concern about cost and potential impact to taxes to implement policy changes;
- Protect environment above all else;
- Vague terms in the Policy Statement;
- Desire for community owned fibre optic networks;
- Need policies that support people;
- Address housing needs;
- Allow for more local governance;
- Housing should not be included in the Policy Statement;
- Policy Statement overlaps with other jurisdictions;
- General non-support for the Policy Statement; and
- Engage with residents in different and more meaningful ways.

2.14 Question 32 – Reconciliation

For Question 32, respondents were asked to provide open-ended feedback on reconciliation in the Islands Trust Area.

Q32) Given Islands Trust Council’s commitment to align policies with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, do you have suggestions for policies to be included to support reconciliation in the Islands Trust Area?

While most respondents agree and support reconciliation work, participants noted this is a complex topic and the majority of survey respondents indicated this is the responsibility of other levels of government. Some shared that Islands Trust doesn’t have the expertise, funding or adequate power to address this, and that many actions are already being taken at other levels.

The second most frequently heard theme was that meaningful engagement with First Nations should take place, with some respondents suggesting that Islands Trust let First Nations lead and direct it. Respondents asked that First Nations timelines for engagement be respected and called for transparency in the process and a report back on its outcomes. They also noted relationships with local bands are island-specific and should be done at the local level. Some offered suggestions that Islands Trust not assume how to engage with First Nations and to include those who are not represented by larger nations. Respondents' hopes for engagement is to understand what the First Nations want and to better understand their challenges.

Respondents who don’t support including reconciliation in the Policy Statement shared a variety of reasons including concern that the policy will be mishandled, that they don’t want Islands Trust to tell them how to act, and that the Policy Statement could lead to more divisiveness in the community.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- This direction is not in Islands Trust jurisdiction / mandate;
- Engage First Nations in ways that are meaningful to them;
- Do not support reconciliation in the Policy Statement;
- General support for reconciliation work;
- Align these policies with rights of all people;
- Include First Nations representative(s) on Islands Trust;
- More education is needed;
- First Nations rights and knowledge need to be defined;
- Protect environment above all else;
- Relationships and reconciliation work should be done at the local level;
- Respondents need more information;
- Give / gift land back to First Nations;
- Revisit naming of important places; and
- Policies are too early to align with Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) plan of action.

2.15 Question 33 – Policy Statement Structure

For Question 33, respondents were asked to provide open-ended feedback on the structure of the Draft New Policy Statement.

Q33) The Draft New Policy Statement largely follows the structure of the Current Policy Statement. Do you have feedback you wish to share related to the structure of the Draft New Policy Statement?

The most frequently heard theme in response to this question is the sentiment that Islands Trust is attempting to manage areas that are already regulated by other levels of government, and that the Draft New Policy Statement is perceived to be overreaching and will contribute to overspending. Many who shared this concern see the Draft New Policy Statement as broadening Islands Trust power while limiting local power. Others commented that many of the new policies do not align with the original mandate of Islands Trust.

The second most frequently mentioned theme is that the Policy Statement is too long and could be improved by removing redundancies and simplifying the language. Many also suggested that the Policy Statement should just concentrate on the directive policies in order to streamline the document.

Along those same lines, many respondents mentioned the Policy Statement is inaccessible for the readers, noting that it contains jargon, that there are many undefined / vague terms, that it is confusing, that there are too many overlapping themes, that there is a lot of repetition, and that it is too technical and does not express the concepts well.

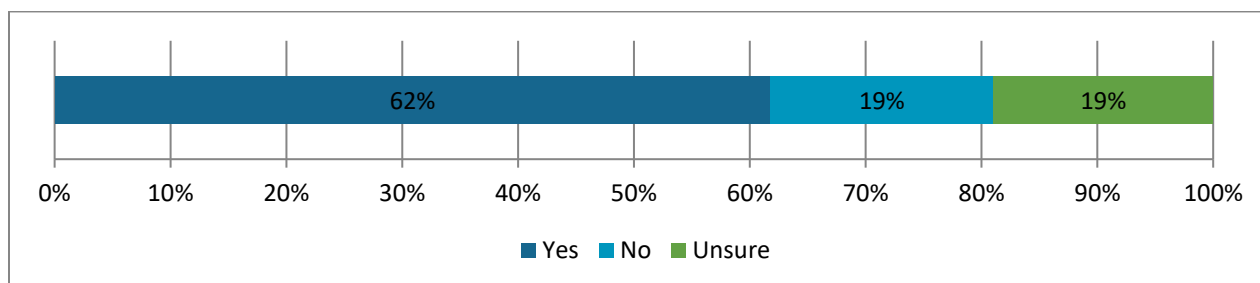
A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- Policies are beyond the Islands Trust mandate (overreach);
- Shorten the Policy Statement and focus on directives;
- Document is inaccessible - hard to read, wordy, confusing, repetitive;
- Simplify language and structure;
- Prioritize environmental protection;
- Concern about associated costs;
- Focus on directive policies;
- Concern about process for engagement and decision-making;
- Start over;
- More consideration of residents needed;
- Policy Statement overlaps with other jurisdictions;
- Language in the Policy Statement is too vague;
- Policy Statement is too restrictive;
- Policy Statement is not consistent with mandate;
- Stay with existing Policy Statement;
- Needs definitions / glossary;
- General support for the Policy Statement;
- Engage with residents in different and more meaningful ways;
- Respect private property rights;
- General non-support for the Policy Statement;
- Decisions should be made at local level;
- De-prioritize reconciliation focus;
- The Draft New Policy Statement is not similar to previous statement;
- Stop the project;
- Enforcement is an important consideration;
- Housing should not be included in the Policy Statement; and
- Policy Statement is too broad.

2.16 Question 34 – Glossary

For Question 34, respondents were asked whether a glossary of key terms is needed in the Policy Statement. A majority (62%) of respondents were in favour of this addition.

Q34) Would you like to see a Glossary of Key Terms added to the Draft New Policy Statement?



2.17 Question 35 – Implementation

For Question 35, respondents were asked to provide open-ended feedback on future implementation of the Policy Statement.

Q35) The implementation of the Policy Statement is guided by Trust Council’s Policy Statement Implementation Policy, which is currently set to be updated after a new Policy Statement has been adopted. Do you have feedback you wish to share related to the implementation of the Policy Statement?

The most frequently heard theme in response to this question was that many respondents do not support the implementation of the Policy Statement for such reasons as it is not necessary, it is expensive, bureaucratic, and is seen as an attempt to gain more control. Some also commented that the timing of the project during a pandemic is unacceptable and that the previous Policy Statement is preferred.

As many do not support the Policy Statement, they also do not want to see it implemented, and some wanted the project to be completely abandoned. Respondents shared there is already governance in many of these subject matter areas from other levels of government, so Islands Trust does not need to be involved in them. Some respondents also feel some of the supporting information contains false or misleading information.

Those respondents who commented that the project should be stopped, shared reasons such as not being clear on what the amendments are trying to achieve, feeling that the Policy Statement is redundant and is poorly written, and that it feels like the direction is being driven by special interest groups. Some respondents suggested the engagement process needs to be redone to address challenges that some had with online or virtual participation.

A summary of themes heard in response to this question is as follows:

- General non-support for the Policy Statement;
- Do not implement the Policy Statement;
- Stop the project;
- Concern about the cost;
- Provides Islands Trust with too much control / power;
- Policy Statement is too vague;
- Engage with residents in different and more meaningful ways;
- Consider the impact on residents;
- Remove directives from the Policy Statement;

- Policy is beyond the Islands Trust mandate (overreach);
- Wait for election then weigh options;
- Prioritize environmental protection;
- Do not support the process or timing of the project;
- General support for timing of project;
- Implementation plan is ineffective;
- These decisions should be made at local level;
- Does not balance resident and environmental needs; and
- Too much bureaucracy.

2.18 Survey Responses by Island

While responses to survey questions were largely comparable across all islands, there were some variations for specific islands on particular topics. The following section provides a summary of key differences (varying by more than 15% from the overall survey average) that were noted in each major policy area, based on reviewing survey responses in coordination with the geographic location that respondents most identified with.

2.18.1 Regional Governance

Respondents most connected with Bowen, Saturna, and South Pender Island had lower levels of agreement with questions around Regional Governance than other islands. For example, only 34% of respondents from Bowen, 35% from Saturna, and 33% from South Pender strongly agreed or agreed the Policy Statement should include a commitment that decision-making should be guided by the Precautionary Principle. Responses from other islands were more mixed, with 52% of all respondents selecting 'strongly agree' or 'agree' on this question.

Respondents most connected with Denman and Gabriola marked very high levels of agreement that the rate and scale of growth and development in the Islands Trust Area must be carefully managed and require limitation, at 93% and 82% respectively. Across all islands, 63% of respondents selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree'. Only 40% of respondents from Saturna selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree' on this question.

2.18.2 Ecosystem Preservation and Protection

All islands showed a high level of agreement (70%) that the industrial-scale clear-cutting of forests and logging of old-growth trees is inappropriate anywhere in the Islands Trust Area, particularly respondents from Lasqueti (89%). 65% of respondents agreed that Trust Council should advocate to other levels of government for legislation to prohibit the clear-cutting of forests and logging of old-growth trees in the Islands Trust Area. Saturna and South Pender showed a lower level of support, with 42% and 44% respectively selecting 'strongly agree' or 'agree'. Gabriola (81%), Gambier (81%), and Lasqueti (83%) showed high levels of agreement.

Only 33% of Saturna respondents selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree' regarding neither the density nor intensity of land use should be increased in groundwater regions where the quality or quantity of freshwater is likely to be inadequate or unsustainable. 61% of respondents from across all islands and 78% of respondents from Denman selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

Denman, Gabriola, and Lasqueti showed higher support for directive policies prohibiting new private docks than other islands, with 65%, 55%, and 54% marking 'strongly agree' or 'agree' respectively. Mayne, Saturna, and South Pender showed very low support for prohibiting new private docks, with only 19%, 15%, and 17% marking 'strongly agree' or 'agree'. Just 36% of respondents from across all islands selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

Respondents from Gabriola (63%), Hornby (68%), and Lasqueti (66%) also showed high agreement with directive policies that new seawalls or other hard shoreline armoring should be prohibited, whereas soft shoreline protections should be encouraged. Across all islands, 45% selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree', with only 25% on Saturna and 28% on South Pender.

Most respondents (70%) agree that Trust Council should advocate to other levels of government to prohibit ocean dumping, commercial freighter anchorage sites, oil tanker traffic for export, and moorage/anchorage sites in eelgrass meadows, throughout the Islands Trust Area. Respondents from Bowen and South Pender were less supportive, with only 52% and 50% respectively marking 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

85% respondents from Denman and 88% from Galiano selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that, when identifying and preserving appropriate areas for agricultural land in the Islands Trust Area, consideration should be given to the impacts of agricultural activity on downstream ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and adjacent properties. Just 47% of respondents from Saturna and 35% from South Pender selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree' on this question, compared to 68% from across islands.

Respondents from Gabriola (80%) and Lasqueti (81%) expressed high agreement that there should be directive policies requiring nature-based solutions be used to minimize climate vulnerabilities in each local planning area. Only 44% of respondents from South Pender selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree', compared to 62% from across all islands.

83% of respondents from Denman selected 'agree' regarding shoreline buffers and setbacks should be established in accordance with the current and anticipated impacts of sea level rise in each local planning area. Only 43% and 36% of respondents from Bowen and Saturna selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree', compared to 62% from across all islands.

2.18.3 Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Respondents from Denman expressed a high level of agreement with statements about housing. Particularly, 78% 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that strategic, multi-jurisdictional, equitable, and integrated approaches are needed to address the diverse housing needs of Islands Trust Area communities. 55% of respondents from across all islands marked 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

Higher numbers of respondents from Denman (74%) and Lasqueti (72%) selected 'agree' regarding new development and housing in the Islands Trust Area should be small-scale, low-impact, energy efficient, and appropriately situated in order to minimize greenhouse gas emissions, and safeguard protected area networks, freshwater sustainability, a healthy marine environment, and Indigenous cultural heritage. Bowen (38%), Saturna (35%), and South Pender (39%) showed lower levels of agreement. Across all islands, 55% of respondents selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

79% of respondents from Gambier strongly agreed or agreed that Trust Council should advocate to provincial government agencies to support the electrification of ferries in the Islands Trust Area, in order to minimize greenhouse gas emissions and protect coastal and marine ecosystems. Hornby (33%) and Saturna (30%) showed lower levels of agreement and 55% of respondents from across all islands.

3.0 In-Person Events – Community Event Booths and Drop-In Events

3.1 Overview of In-Person Events

A variety of in-person events were offered throughout the Islands Trust Area. These included informal community event booths and scheduled community drop-in events where participants could engage in conversations with the project team. Twenty-four (24) events in total were held from March 18 to April 13, 2022, covering the full geographic range of the Islands Trust Area.

Below is a summary of what we heard at the in-person events. Due to the nature of the community event booths and drop-in events, feedback was often informal and conversational, and therefore more difficult to organize into themes as many comments were individual or unique. The summary is a compilation of the feedback heard about the Draft New Policy Statement at each of the islands' events, organized into the key theme areas of Regional Governance, Freshwater Stewardship, Coastal and Marine Stewardship, Forest Stewardship, Agricultural Stewardship, Housing, General Policy Structure, Reconciliation, and Other.

3.2 Bowen Island

In-person events on Bowen Island were held March 27, 2022 and included a mid-day community event booth at the Steamship Company Marina and an evening drop-in event at the Library Annex. Forty-seven (47) people attended the two events and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on Bowen Island.

Regional Governance

- Bowen Island Municipality should separate from Islands Trust;
- Concerns for the multiple layers of government that Bowen Island residents support; and
- Concern that regional Islands Trust Council will overpower authority of local trust committees.

Freshwater Stewardship

- Desalination makes sense in some areas;
- Need more information about desalination – what is the concern and impact;
- Support banning desalination – learn from other parts of the world such as the Dead Sea; and
- Freshwater mapping has been valuable.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- Support for ban on docks – they impact the environment and aesthetic of the island;
- Would like to see community docks as they provide more community access to the water;
- More information about the impact of docks is needed;
- Blanket approach on docks is not appropriate;
- Supportive of dock permits;
- Concern about elevators from docks;
- There have been impacts to the waterfront over the past 30 years; and
- Coastal and marine stewardship needs to be a more island-specific approach.

Agricultural Stewardship

- Support advocacy for farmers; and
- Encourage farming.

Housing

- Housing is the top priority for many;
- Concerns about continued development. Appreciate that Islands Trust is curbing development;
- Want more housing choices – rentals, affordable, low-cost housing for workers; and
- Would like to see affordable housing but concerned about the lack of social services to support those residents and how it would be implemented.

General Policy Structure

- Vague language in the Policy Statement – needs definitions and care of language being used;
- Concerns about the use of “shall” throughout the document;
- General support for Policy Statement amendments; and
- Concerns the Policy Statement is too broad and may not be applicable to certain areas.

Reconciliation

- Need a definition for Indigenous ways of knowing;
- Unsure how cultural heritage is determined – use mapping to identify sensitive areas;
- Need more information about how First Nations will be engaged in housing decisions; and
- Supportive of reconciliation strategies.

Other

- Need a strategy for responsible tourism – want to protect Bowen Island while also attracting people;
- Trails on the island are appreciated and valued; and
- Create an inventory of natural assets.

3.3 Denman Island

In-person events on Denman Island included a mid-day community event booth on March 18, 2022 in downtown Denman, and an evening drop-in event on March 19, 2022 at the Community Centre. Seventy-one (71) people attended the two events, and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on Denman Island.

Regional Governance

- Use both science and Indigenous knowledge to make decisions

Freshwater Stewardship

- Create incentives for water catchment (similar to Hydrosmart program);
- Support rainwater harvesting;
- Concerns about continued development impacting availability of water supply;
- Beavers play a role in watershed management; and
- There is a high water-table with contaminated water in many areas.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- Concerns about impacts to the shoreline – protect it against pesticides and erosion;
- Unsure why there is a difference between lake owners and ocean front property owners having docks;
- Agree with ban on docks to protect sensitive areas;
- Work with Department of Fisheries and Oceans on aquaculture;

- Upgrade fish passage and fish habitat influenced by agricultural use;
- Denman is sedimentary and eroding badly. Education, like a greenshore workshop, is needed; and
- Place land protection on the upland of the owner.

Forest Stewardship

- Not supportive of clear-cutting or logging of old growth trees;
- Would like to be able to clear away deadfall and storm fall;
- Protect forests; and
- Work with landowners to find ways to limit tree loss.

Agricultural Stewardship

- Define the meaning of “small scale” – perhaps call it “historical scale”;
- Need to be able to grow large amounts of food with large scale agriculture;
- Support for farming – need to protect farmers;
- Need policy for management of sustainable wetlands; and
- Policy does not address food sustainability.

Housing

- Affordable housing is a priority – would like to speed up approvals, want affordable housing called “resident housing”;
- Need affordable seniors and youth housing;
- Would like to be able to solve housing at the local level;
- Would like low impact and affordable housing, with an eye to protecting the environment;
- Want to see more affordable rentals and shared housing;
- Include social housing as a directive policy; and
- Concerns about large houses on small lots.

General Policy Structure

- Unsure how the policies can be implemented – need more information;
- Need to define terms;
- Understand the native biodiversity of each island in order to protect it; and
- Good focus on environmental issues.

Reconciliation

- Facilitate interactions with local bands at the local level;
- Reconciliation should not be part of the Policy Statement; and
- Involve First Nations in naming of important areas.

Other

- Hard to balance resident needs with the pressures from tourism and growth from second homes;
- Environment supports everything – it is not a dichotomy of environment versus housing / jobs; and
- Implement a stewardship program to help residents to learn about the ecosystem on their properties.

3.4 Gabriola Island

In-person events on Gabriola Island were held April 5, 2022 and included a mid-day community event booth at FolkLife Village / Nesters, and an evening drop-in event at The Haven. Fifty-three (53) people attended the two events and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on Gabriola Island.

Regional Governance

- Need better representation on Islands Trust;
- There should be a First Nations representative on Islands Trust;
- Review governance before moving forward with Policy Statement.

Freshwater Stewardship

- Bigger concern is water retention, not supply; and
- Need more information on desalination plants.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- Protecting the marine environment is an obligation.

Forest Stewardship

- Would like to be able to manage dangerous or unhealthy trees on our own property;
- Concerns about not being able to manage our own lot – seen as punishment for homeowners;
- Allow selective cutting; and
- Protect old growth.

Agricultural Stewardship

- Small-scale agriculture is important for reducing carbon output;
- “Preserve” and “agriculture” are contradictory; and
- Large tracts of agriculture help as firebreaks.

Housing

- Support restrictions on short-term vacation rentals;
- Concern about density, affordability and lack of housing;
- Concerns about rapid development;
- Start density bank for affordable housing;
- Need housing for workers and more options for long-term rentals;
- Limit house sizes;
- Define density goals, include First Nations policies in Bylaw 17; and
- Need clarity on Islands Trust’s role with affordable housing and a definition of what affordable housing is.

General Policy Structure

- Need clarity on terms such as compact, diversity, equity and inclusion;
- Policy Statement needs to be written in plain language;
- General support for the direction of the Policy Statement;
- The Policy Statement is too complicated – make it less confusing;
- Need to simplify the Policy Statement;

- Implementation should be included with the Policy Statement;
- Should be talking about ecosystems, not single species; and
- Need regional policies, not local policies – everything is connected; use whole system thinking.

Reconciliation

- Support incorporating Indigenous knowledge and heritage in the Policy Statement;
- Include First Nations in development approvals;
- Report back on Indigenous engagement; and
- Incorporating and foregrounding Indigenous knowledge and heritage is long overdue.

3.5 Galiano Island

In-person events on Galiano Island were held April 12, 2022 and included a mid-day community event booth at Daystar Market, and an evening drop-in event at South End Community Hall. Fourteen (14) people attended the two events and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on Galiano Island.

Regional Governance

- Participants would prefer that local trust committees do the work instead of Islands Trust;
- Agriculture and forestry should fall under Provincial responsibility;
- The bureaucracy makes it challenging to build a livable community; and
- Policy Statement sets local trust committees up for failure.

Freshwater Stewardship

- Mixed comments on desalination – questions about why it's bad, another doesn't support it;
- Concerns about availability of water; and
- There is misinformation about freshwater – there is a lot of it.

Forest Stewardship

- Vague language will create concern for residents – they need to be able to remove trees for safety; and
- Ban clear cutting.

Housing

- Opposed to including affordable housing as a theme in the Policy Statement – can be an initiative instead of a policy;
- Make it easier to get housing;
- Supportive of affordable housing;
- Policy Statement should address the increased cost of housing;
- Affordable housing is important for Galiano; and
- Directives for housing will lead to NIMBY.

General Policy Structure

- What are the assumptions being used;
- Concerns about complaint-driven enforcement;
- Simplify the document—it's complex, lengthy, overwhelming, needs to be more succinct;
- Outline implementation of the Policy Statement more clearly;

- Articulate enforcement in the Policy Statement;
- Concerns about the ability of Islands Trust to enforce what they have outlined;
- Contradictions exist in the Policy Statement (e.g. highlighting the need to be less human-centric while planning for future generations, which is a human-centric goal);
- Information about the implications of the Policy Statement should be included; and
- Needs better definitions for vague terms (e.g. resilience, diverse).

Reconciliation

- Glad that the Policy Statement is more inclusive of First Nations.

3.6 Gambier Island

A dedicated virtual event was held for residents of Gambier Island, in lieu of an in-person event. The session was held on March 28, 2022 and included a presentation and Q+A. Twenty-four (24) people attended the event and the following provides examples of feedback we heard from Gambier Island.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- Participants had questions about the policies for hard shoreline armoured and seawalls, how dock sizes are determined for each Island, limiting oil tanker traffic and the prohibition of desalination plants; and
- It was suggested that dock sizes should be determined based on sound engineering and the environment / location it is being installed in.

Forest Stewardship

- Participants had questions about the tree cutting policy and if it would impact homeowner's ability to prune, trim, and cut firewood on their own property. It was noted that fire protection conducted by homeowners managing hazards on their properties is important.

Reconciliation

- Participants had questions about how the Policy Statement addresses the coordination of the different levels of government and who is responsible for what. It was noted that more clarification about this is needed in the Policy Statement. And it was suggested that there are opportunities considered for Islanders to be involved in reconciliation efforts to better understand government jurisdictions.

3.7 Hornby Island

In-person events on Hornby Island included a morning community event booth on March 19, 2022 at the Co-op Grocery Store, and an evening drop-in event on March 18, 2022 at the Community Hall. Seventy-nine (79) people attended the two events, and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on Hornby Island.

Regional Governance

- Enforcement concerns – there is a history with lack of trust and lack of response. Some noted enforcement is too heavy while others shared there isn't enough and that enforcement needs to be more proactive and less complaint driven.

Freshwater Stewardship

- Concerned that availability of desalination could lead to increased development;
- The concern is not availability of water but the redistribution of water;

- Encourage rainwater harvesting and allow rainwater as a primary water source. Create a rebate program to off-set the cost of water retention;
- Need better septic regulations; and
- People are fighting over water.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- Natural coastlines are important – support ban on seawalls.

Forest Stewardship

- Support tree cutting permits; and
- Support protection of trees.

Agricultural Stewardship

- Agriculture has been happening since the settlers have arrived and should be protected.

Housing

- Regulate short term vacation rentals. Concerns about the impact they have on water supply;
- Many are not supportive of rental restrictions as the additional revenue is needed for livelihood;
- Tie development to water availability;
- Build with fire prevention in mind;
- Affordability is a concern. Need affordable housing for young people, workers and seniors, as well as diversity of housing;
- Don't wait to implement affordable housing policy;
- Housing inspections are not being carried out; and
- Second home taxes should be reinvested into housing for people who live and work on Hornby.

General Policy Structure

- More clarity needed about what is allowed or not; and
- Support the precautionary approach.

Reconciliation

- Concern about loss of Indigenous traditional food plants from road widening and infrastructure;
- Protect the middens – not much is currently being done about them; and
- Use First Nations knowledge where available.

3.8 Lasqueti Island

An in-person community event booth was held on Lasqueti Island on April 4, 2022 at Provisions Café. Twenty-five (25) people attended the event and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on Lasqueti Island.

Regional Governance

- Timing of Council meetings needs to be advertised. Concerns about the format of the meetings and frequency; and
- Concerns about too many restrictions.

Freshwater Stewardship

- There is a lack of research on desalination. Don't ban desalination without evidence it is harmful; and
- Protecting freshwater is important.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- People should be allowed to have docks; and
- Residents want Islands Trust to mitigate the problems.

Forest Stewardship

- Need to ensure forestry decisions are science-based;
- Small clear-cuts can be of value;
- Concerns about fire, noting fire will likely be a significant cause of change to the island; and
- Use the term "second growth".

Housing

- Shouldn't need to oppose development in order to protect freshwater.

3.9 Mayne Island

In-person events on Mayne Island were held April 11, 2022 and included a mid-day community event booth at Tru Value Foods, and an evening drop-in event at the Agricultural Hall. Forty-two (42) people attended the two events and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on Mayne Island.

Regional Governance

- Support less regulation and enforcement.

Freshwater Stewardship

- Support ban on desalination. Other options need to be explored;
- Circumstances may change, don't support prohibitive language on desalination so to leave options open;
- Support water regulation;
- Rainwater harvesting needs more prominence; and
- Concern is not the availability of water but the storage of water.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- When docks break down, they can cause environmental issues – one option is to include serial numbers on docks to track ownership. Education on maintenance and impacts of derelict docks is needed;
- Prohibit new docks;
- Need more community docks. The other view shared is that community docks don't work;
- Concerns about foreshore development – need to protect the foreshore;
- Support restrictions on seawalls; and
- Build docks to an environmental code.

Forest Stewardship

- Education on tree-cutting is needed;
- Would like stronger action against tree-cutting;
- Do not support tree cutting regulations. There are more trees on Mayne than 50 years ago. Would like to cut trees on our own property without fees;
- Support permits for tree-cutting; and
- Support the ban on clear-cutting

Housing

- Homelessness should be addressed at the local level;
- Concerns about increase in population and available amenities; and
- Support restrictions / permits on short-term vacation rentals.

General Policy Structure

- Islands Trust should be questioning the science;
- Strengthen message about addressing invasive species;
- Define terms such as “small-scale”; and
- Overall, need to consider our impact on the environment. Can't keep doing things the way they've always been done.

Reconciliation

- The Policy Statement is not drafted from an Indigenous perspective. It was written in response to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), so participant questioned if it was written to be “politically correct”;
- Concerns about reconciliation policies; and
- Provide specific examples of the impacts of the policies.

Other

- It is difficult to stay on the island as you age;
- Policies should include air quality; and
- Concerns about promotion of electric vehicles – there is pollution involved with batteries.

3.10 North Pender Island

In-person events on North Pender Island were held April 12, 2022 and included a mid-day community event booth at Driftwood Centre, and an evening drop-in event at St. Peter's Anglican Parish Hall. Eighty-two (82) people attended the two events and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on North Pender Island.

Regional Governance

- Concerns about governance in general;
- Conduct a governance review before moving forward with the Policy Statement; and
- Decision-making should be guided by science.

Freshwater Stewardship

- North Pender doesn't have a groundwater issue so restrictions are not supported;
- Concerns that additional development will affect groundwater supply;
- Groundwater data is biased;
- Need to present alternative solutions to rainwater as a primary source of water; and
- Support for desalination If using best practices. Desalination plants can be used to support individual needs.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- Assess docks on a case-by-case basis;
- Support ban on docks;
- Dumping of sewage into the ocean is an issue; and
- Hard shoreline armoring is essential in some areas with rising sea levels. Need flexibility to decide what is best for a given location.

Forest Stewardship

- Do not support restrictions on tree-cutting, education and tree planting programs are what is needed instead;
- Don't want to restrict cutting on private property. Need to be able to manage personal properties;
- Restrictions on tree cutting on own property will be hard to enforce;
- Source local lumber for developments; and
- Trees over a specific size need to be protected.

Agricultural Stewardship

- Need a balance between livestock and food.

Housing

- Policies about housing should not be included in the Policy Statement. It is important but does not belong in the Policy Statement;
- Policy Statement does not solve the affordable housing problem;
- Challenging to find affordable housing;
- Don't support restricting house sizes – it is not going to have an impact;
- Short-term vacation rentals are decreasing the availability of long-term rentals and there is a lack of enforcement;
- Affordable housing is a common concern with nuanced opinions. Some who support it want it for people already living on the island – but not to attract people to the island;
- Challenging to find rentals for people working on the island – cottages could be used for long-term rentals or empty homes could be rented out;
- Need more housing, not mandating of housing size. There is a housing crisis;
- Policy Statement adds an extra level of approvals for building permits; and
- Don't support increased density.

General Policy Structure

- Policy Statement is written from an urban perspective;
- Policy Statement is repetitive;
- Concerns about the use of the word "shall";
- Language is too vague – for example, what does "environmental sustainability" mean;

- Some attendees had general support for the Policy Statement, while others were strongly opposed to the Policy Statement;
- Don't see how the policies will impact the island;
- Protect people's rights to do what they need to on their own properties, such as cutting trees and building docks;
- Enforcement is a concern – there is no equity in enforcement and asking neighbours to report on one another is concerning;
- Supportive of placing higher priority on protecting and preserving the environment;
- Need clarity of roles in relation to other jurisdictions and levels of government; and
- "Precautionary principle" is not enforceable or adequately defined.

Reconciliation

- General support for reconciliation;
- Concern about the practical influence of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing on decision-making;
- Reconciliation should stay within Provincial jurisdiction; and
- Generally supportive of protecting Indigenous heritage as long as there is a balance.

3.11 Salt Spring Island

In-person events on Salt Spring Island included:

- An afternoon community event booth on April 2, 2022 at Fire Hall #2;
- An afternoon community drop-in event on April 3, 2022 at Mahon Hall;
- An all-day community event booth on April 9, 2022 at the Saturday Market; and
- An evening drop-in event on April 10, 2022 at the Harbour House Hotel.

Eighty-six (86) people attended the four events, and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on Salt Spring Island.

Freshwater Stewardship

- Strong support for desalination on the island. A few participants supported a moratorium instead of a ban;
- Support and encourage desalination;
- Engage with First Nations regarding desalination;
- Availability of water is not a concern on Salt Spring Island; and
- Desalination is appropriate in the summer when water use is at its highest.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- Some questioned why docks are being targeted;
- Leave docks to the relevant jurisdictions;
- Don't restrict landowners from building single docks;
- Communal docks and more launch points would be helpful;
- Would like to see the salmon come back; and
- Soft shoreline approach does not work. Support for hard seawalls.

Forest Stewardship

- Logging is important for healthy forests;
- Concerned about the forests in general;
- First Nations have been logging for 180 years and don't want to be impacted by the Policy Statement;
- Need to be able to manage trees on private land without permits;
- Don't support tree cutting policy;
- Policy negatively impacts the forestry industry;
- Forests have been clear cut in the past and are constantly generating new growth. Trees are a renewable resource;
- Focus on large commercial clear-cutting instead of private property;
- Province didn't deal with the Pine Beetle issue so trees needed to be clear-cut;
- Forestry supports people's livelihoods; and
- Consider impacts of tree-cutting policy on Indigenous peoples, their economy and reconciliation efforts.

Agricultural Stewardship

- Long-time farmers on the island take exception to being told how to farm and cut trees;
- Perception that the Policy Statement is about getting rid of farming;
- Food shortages are coming so small-scale farming will be important; and
- Although the current Policy Statement recognizes that agriculture is a traditional and valuable activity, that value is now missing in the Draft New Policy Statement.

Housing

- Density impacts water availability;
- Limit size of homes;
- Tax those who aren't full-time residents;
- Consider seniors housing and group housing for the homeless;
- Supportive of affordable housing;
- Supportive of community deciding lot coverage in OCP;
- Not supportive of affordable housing zoning;
- Include height limits in the Policy Statement;
- Allow suites outside of the primary building;
- Support for short-term rentals as they are needed to support tourism and livelihoods;
- Need worker housing; and
- Support live-work commercial zoning.

General Policy Structure

- Don't restrict property owners' rights;
- Consult with the people who have been living on the island for a long time;
- Language is too vague, need more definitions. For example, define "small-scale" and "protected area network";
- Unsure what "highest standards of environmental protection" and "adaptation to climate change" mean;
- Regulations are forcing people off the island;
- People and the community need to be part of the Policy Statement;
- Previous Policy Statement included humans in the ecosystem. The new Policy Statement says humans impact it but are not part of it;

- It's not clear how climate issues are being addressed;
- Employment zones should be named industrial zones;
- The Policy Statement is not easy to read and is too long;
- Directives don't belong in Policy Statement;
- Remove the implementation policy; and
- Preserve and protect the lifestyle – not just the environment and people.

Reconciliation

- Concerned about economic impacts to First Nations;
- Not appropriate to insist on First Nations stewardship as a pre-guided principle;
- Unsure how Indigenous heritage is applied in decision-making; and
- Education needed on Indigenous relations and reconciliation.

Other

- Support selective harvesting on parkland;
- Concern about growing movement to force land to conservancy; and
- Concern about sewage from boats being dumped into the ocean.

3.12 Saturna Island

In-person events on Saturna Island were held April 11, 2022 and included a mid-day community event booth at the General Store, and an evening drop-in event at the Recreation Centre. Forty-four (44) people attended the two events and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on Saturna Island.

Regional Governance

- Confusion about jurisdictions and who is doing what.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- Different locations require different treatments – soft shore armouring is not appropriate in all locations;
- Supportive of the proposed dock policy but want to ensure public dock access in emergencies;
- Concerned about a blanket ban on docks. This limits the use of the ocean for recreation purposes;
- The public foreshore is degrading; and
- Banning seawalls doesn't make sense given rising sea levels and winter storms. They also protect roadways, homes and properties.

Freshwater Stewardship

- General support for precautionary principle around desalination and fresh water;
- Approve rainwater as potable water for new developments; and
- Support for desalination.

Forest Stewardship

- Concerns about permits for tree-cutting and the cost involved to bring in experts;
- Some in favour of regulating tree-cutting;
- Do not support tree-cutting policy – need to be able to cut trees if they pose a danger;
- Logging by First Nations is being taken advantage of by logging company;

- Keep the wood for local use;
- Policy Statement needs to be clearer so people aren't afraid of what will happen. People are rushing to cut trees now as they are afraid of what the Policy Statement will be;
- Small-scale clear cutting is needed to support Douglas Firs; and
- People are already cutting trees in a sustainable way.

Agricultural Stewardship

- Farming is not sustainable or regenerative;
- Agricultural policy is unclear as to the impact to individuals and the island; and
- The islands are perfect for growing food.

Housing

- Housing is a priority;
- Need affordable housing for youth and new residents;
- Supportive of affordable housing;
- Opposed to increased density – it's contrary to "preserve and protect";
- Allow houses to be constructed without drawing on the water system;
- The act of providing housing is protecting the environment;
- Locate housing next to amenities, within walking distance; and
- Discourage large homes.

General Policy Structure

- Concerned about "expressing preference" phrasing;
- Some policies reflect an individual's values;
- Feeling that basic freedoms are being eroded;
- Policy Statement needs to be clearer;
- Include case studies to demonstrate how policies work;
- Against any Policy Statement amendments;
- Not supportive of increased budgets;
- Policy Statement needs to recognize the people in the community;
- Include a timeframe for the next review;
- Need to talk about resiliency; and
- Would like clarity on how the Policy Statement impacts the local trust committees.

Reconciliation

- Reconciliation measures should be Indigenous led;
- Balance Indigenous knowing with science in decision-making;
- Building consensus among First Nations will take time;
- Concern about how to navigate reconciliation efforts; and
- More engagement with First Nations is needed.

3.13 South Pender Island

An in-person community event booth was held on South Pender Island on April 13, 2022 at the Church of the Good Shepherd. Fourteen (14) people attended the event and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on South Pender Island.

Regional Governance

- Number of trustees per island doesn't make sense.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- Support community docks;
- Concerned about environmental damage caused by docks;
- Support alternatives to shoreline protection to protect homes.

Forest Stewardship

- Support tree removal on private property within limits and small-scale removal;
- The same tree cutting policies should apply to both North and South Pender;
- There may not be old growth left on the island, use another term; and
- Support the ban on clear-cutting.

Agricultural Stewardship

- Support more active agriculture;
- Support for agriculture in the Policy Statement.

Housing

- Supportive of regulations around short-term vacation rentals;
- Short-term rentals make it hard for residents to find housing;
- Need more housing for seniors and youth;
- Set architectural and energy efficiency guidelines for homes;
- Support restricting development; and
- Not supportive of including housing in the Policy Statement.

General Policy Structure

- Generally supportive of the Policy Statement;
- Support equal footing of the environment and people;
- Policy Statement has accelerated a division between residents on the islands leading to polarization;
- There is overlap with other jurisdictions;
- Policy Statement needs definitions; and
- Policy Statement is confusing.

Reconciliation

- Supportive of opportunities to bring Indigenous youth to the Island;
- Unsure what consultation with First Nations means; and
- Unsure what Indigenous food security means to landowners.

Other

- Protect public pathways to the water.

3.14 Thetis Island

In-person events on Thetis Island were held March 20, 2022 and included a mid-day community event booth at the Pub / Post Office, and an evening drop-in event at Forbes Hall. Fourteen (14) people attended the two events and the following provides examples of feedback we heard on Thetis Island.

Regional Governance

- Islands with less development should pay less taxes;
- Have young people shadow Islands Trust decision-making; and
- Islands Trust should work alongside the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

- Promote community docks;
- Support seawalls as they protect eelgrass and middens / cultural heritage;
- Soft shore treatments are not durable; and
- Granite/rock armouring should be allowed.

Freshwater Stewardship

- Explore other options to access fresh water without desalination;
- Concerned about aquifer use;
- Encourage rainwater harvesting. People need to be able to use rainwater when wells run dry; and
- The wording in the Policy Statement is negative against rainwater harvesting.

Forest Stewardship

- Forests are struggling due to tree rot. The trees should have been cut a while ago;
- Need to be able to cut trees on personal property. We pay for our properties so should be able to cut trees as we see fit;
- Clear-cutting is different from land cleaning. Should be able to cut trees to build a house;
- Problem of scale in the language. Clearcutting means 300 acres. One acre is a property owners' right.

Agricultural Stewardship

- Concern about the use of fertilizers making their way to the ocean.

Housing

- Concerned about the number of people who have moved to the island recently;
- Support development and increased density;
- Need housing for young people. If young people aren't able to live on the island there will be no support for seniors;
- Support affordable housing;
- Unsure what affordable housing means; and
- Density should be R1 & R2.

General Policy Structure

- Support “preserve and protect”;
- There should be more enforcement when it comes to protecting beaches;
- There is a lack of bylaw enforcement; and
- Policy 3B should specify Crown land only.

Other

- Freighters are a concern;
- Would like to see community marinas and hub where people can access services and programs; and
- Not able to get business permits on Thetis.

4.0 Virtual Events – Workshops

4.1 Overview of Workshops

Two virtual workshops were offered to residents from the Islands Trust Area to attend via Zoom. Participants were invited to listen to a presentation to learn about the Policy Amendment Project and Draft New Policy Statement and then participate in facilitated small group conversations organized by topic area including:

- Regional Governance and Reconciliation;
- Forest and Agriculture Stewardship;
- Coastal, Marine and Freshwater Stewardship; and
- Housing.

The workshops were held on March 22 and 29, 2022 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. and approximately 100 people attended each workshop. Based on feedback received from the first workshop about the event structure and how much time individual participants were provided for small group discussions, modifications were made to the second workshop to include more breakout rooms and to allow people to move more freely between the breakout rooms so they could decide which topics they wanted to discuss and how long to stay in the room.

Below is a high-level summary of what we heard at the workshops.

4.2 Summary of Workshop #1

Regional Governance and Reconciliation

- There was general support for reconciliation, however, some had concerns and questions about how the policies would affect them and decision-making around water, forestry, and land;
- There were questions about the proposed policy amendments relating to reconciliation and how they would be developed and implemented. Specifically, there were questions about the First Nations engagement process and outcomes, and how reconciliation is being handled by different levels of government. It was noted that Islands Trust should consider advice from other levels of governments and experts to help inform the Policy Statement;
- There was some interest in providing opportunities for learning and engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to better understand and work together;
- Some suggested the precautionary principle be removed from the Policy Statement as it is outdated and can be used to ban anything;
- There were questions about the definition of Indigenous ways of knowing, and whether science or Indigenous ways of knowing would be used to make a decision; and
- There was also some concern about the focus on preserving and protecting the environment over consideration of the residents.

Ecosystem Preservation, Forest Stewardship and Agriculture Stewardship

- There was general support for policies that address climate change, protection of ecosystems and forests, and promotion of small-scale agricultural practices;
- Some concerns were shared that the Draft New Policy Statement does not address elements such as the sky component of the climate, fire safety and risk, and rights of residents;
- Participants shared concerns about using the precautionary principle to make decisions and suggested that the Islands Trust should use good data and current peer-reviewed science to make decisions;
- It was noted that the Islands Trust should look at eco-regions for forest management rather than using the Coastal Douglas Fir zone;
- Some suggested allowing agriculture on residential zoned land (with or without a residence); and

- There were some comments about the Draft New Policy Statement being too vague and needing to be better defined. It was specifically noted that “small-scale agriculture” is a vague term and needs to be defined in the Policy Statement so it is understood how the policies would be implemented and how they may impact residents.

Coastal, Marine and Freshwater Stewardship

- There was support for improving the coastal and marine environments, however, many have concerns there are too many policies, that policies are too prohibitive and that they extend beyond the Islands Trust mandate and their responsibility;
- There were concerns about the number of changes proposed and that some of the proposed changes may overlap with Provincial jurisdiction;
- Some were supportive of encouraging communal or shared docks on islands that are not accessible only by boat as too many docks could have a negative impact on the coastal and marine environment. It was also noted that docks are needed for emergency access or evacuation purposes;
- There were mixed views on prohibiting seawalls and hard shoreline armouring as some were concerned their properties would not be as protected with the soft shoreline armouring; and
- There were also questions and concerns about why desalination plants would be prohibited, especially on Islands where there is limited access to freshwater.

Housing

- Participants shared concerns about using the term “compact” in relation to housing on the islands;
- The language in the Draft New Policy Statement does not focus on incentivizing affordable housing or focus on what can be done to remove barriers to encourage affordable housing and improve derelict buildings;
- Many are concerned about availability of long-term rental housing for people living and working on the islands;
- Participants indicated solutions for water and sewer capacity to support new development are needed;
- There were suggestions that secondary suites and tiny homes be considered for affordable housing options; and
- There were questions and concerns about how much more housing is needed / possible / desired on each Island. While participants agreed that more affordable housing was needed, some were concerned about the negative impact that too much housing would have on the Islands.

General Feedback

- Some participants were concerned about the structure and content of the workshop, and specifically with the perception of limited or overly structured opportunities to provide feedback during the workshop. As noted above, a few modifications were made to the format of Workshop #2 in response to this feedback.

4.3 Summary of Workshop #2

Regional Governance and Reconciliation

- There was support for reconciliation initiatives proposed in the Policy Statement, but some had questions about whether the reconciliation initiatives should be separate from the Policy Statement, how they would be achieved, if the language could be better defined and could be better informed by engagement with Indigenous Peoples;
- There was concern about the current governance structure of the Islands Trust and disconnect between the policy, vague and undefined language, and how the policies are implemented in planning practice;
- There were concerns about the lack of collaboration and productive communication between the Islands Trust staff and residents pertaining to bylaw enforcement and development which is divisive;
- Some felt that the proposed amendments to the Policy Statement significantly impacted the rights of landowners, were beyond the Islands Trust jurisdiction and mandate, and duplicated with the responsibilities of other levels of government; and
- It was suggested that Islands Trust staff and elected officials should all have to live on the islands.

Coastal, Marine and Freshwater Stewardship

- There was mixed support for the prohibition of desalination plants. There were questions about why prohibition of desalination plants was being recommended, especially in areas where there was limited access to freshwater. There were also questions about what studies are available to indicate the impact of desalination plants on the environment;
- There was support for the collection of rainwater, especially with new developments, as a supplemental water source;
- There were questions about how freshwater would be protected and what studies and information available about the current freshwater on the Islands and how much freshwater is needed to support future development;
- Some comments were received that were not in favour of the prohibition of new docks and desalination plants or that group moorage / community docks or clear regulations about desalination plants could be considered; and
- Protection measures should be considered to protect the shore, water and rare species.

Agricultural Stewardship

- There was support for small-scale agriculture for local food production and food security as large-scale farming can be detrimental to the environment. However, “small-scale” agriculture should be better defined as it is not clear what that means;
- It was suggested that small-scale farming should be allowed on residential land, community gardens should be permitted within existing regulations, and that there should be no further fragmentation of ALR land;
- It was suggested that accessory buildings or housing for farm workers should be permitted to support small-scale agriculture; and
- It was suggested that more education and collaboration was required between farmers and residents to support farming and local food production.

Ecosystem Preservation and Forest Stewardship

- Participants shared that the preserve and protect mandate should extend to people and their livelihoods, such as protecting farms and jobs, and ensuring their ability to raise families and protect their homes. It was noted that the Draft New Policy Statement reads as if the Islands Trust wants to remove the residents;
- One participant suggested the Policy Statement should include measurable goals;
- Another offered there would be less pushback on the Policy Statement if it stayed within Islands Trust's mandate;
- It was noted that the risk of fire is extreme at times and residents need to be able to cut trees on their properties to keep their homes safe;
- There was support for banning industrial-scale clear-cutting;
- Participants indicated that policies should be specific to each island and they should be governed by the official community plans that are in place, with one participant sharing that the islands need to stay independent;
- One participant shared there is a need to get away from the polarization of people and the environment;
- The “shall” directive around the environment and forests is unnecessary and puts local plans at risk; and
- It was noted that the environment is in the midst of a catastrophe, experiencing massive loss of biodiversity and widespread pollution of the natural systems, and that the timing of the Draft New Policy Statement is an opportunity to safeguard the environment.

Housing

- Participants shared that more details were needed on the proposed amendments related to housing to better understand the Draft New Policy Statement;
- There were mixed views on the proposed amendments to the housing policies as they may not encourage affordable housing and that housing should be looked at from the federal level and locally on each Island;
- One participant suggested that the energy efficiency of a home is a more important measure than its size;
- Many participants offered feedback about short-term rentals, with some cautioning that restricting vacation rentals does not necessarily create long-term rentals, and another sharing concerns that the Draft New Policy Statement will make it more difficult to create more affordable rental housing. Some residents indicated they rely on the extra income from their rentals;
- Many participants shared a concern about lack of affordable housing, and that creative solutions will come from the local Islands Trust Areas;
- Some noted that the proposed restrictions will cause supply shortage which will in turn drive up the price of housing. Another commented that the restrictions are causing a housing crisis; and
- Some participants feel that housing does not belong in the Policy Statement as it does not fall within Islands Trust's jurisdiction.

5.0 Virtual Events – Focus Groups

5.1 Focus Groups Summary

Six virtual focus groups were held for residents of the Islands Trust Area to provide more focused discussion opportunities for specific subject matter areas within the Draft New Policy Statement. Focus group attendees were confirmed by invitation, with invitations sent by email to over 150 organizations and community groups who either expressed interest in participating or were identified on the List of Interested and Affected Parties for this project. All respondents who expressed interest in participating did so, providing three to six attendees per session.

The sessions were held virtually by Zoom between April 14 and 21, 2022. The sessions were organized by topic to allow the project team to identify any common themes or differences among participants as they discussed how amendments to the Policy Statement in that specific area may impact their group. While each session had a focus area, participants offered feedback on a range of other areas covered by the Policy Statement, and these are all captured in the summary below in the key theme areas of Regional Governance, Ecosystem Protection, Freshwater Stewardship, Coastal and Marine Stewardship, Forest Stewardship, Agricultural Stewardship, Housing, General Policy Structure, Reconciliation, and Other.

The following table provides a summary of the focus group sessions.

Table 5.1 Summary of Focus Group Sessions

| Focus Group Session | Date / Time | Number of participants |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Businesses / Contractors / Other Organizations | April 14, 2022 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. | 4 |
| Citizen Groups | April 14, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | 5 |
| Agriculture | April 19, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | 3 |
| Environmental / Conservancy Organizations | April 20, 2022 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. | 4 |
| Youth | April 20, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | 5 |
| Housing and Social Organizations | April 21, 2022 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | 3 |

5.2 Businesses, Contractors and Other Organizations

The following sections provide a summary of what was heard at the focus group session with businesses, contractors, and other organizations, held April 14, 2022.

Regional Governance

Islands Trust needs to work with island residents on solutions rather than dictate to them.

Ecosystem Protection

Participants shared the following thoughts about the ecosystem protection aspects of the Draft New Policy Statement:

- It is important to maintain sustainable living and livelihood on the islands;
- There are conflicting values between the Policy Statement and residents;
- Affordable housing and environmental sustainability can both be achieved;
- Islands Trust needs to set achievable goals;

- There is value in community collaboration and climate change education; and
- The Policy Statement is not forward thinking and does not address the consequence of policy initiatives.

Freshwater Stewardship

Overall, participants felt that the wording for this section of the Draft New Policy Statement needs to be clearer and that more research is required to fully understand the fresh water supply challenges in the area as well as potential solutions.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

Participants shared the following thoughts about the coastal and marine aspects of the Draft New Policy Statement:

- There are too many unnecessary policies;
- The Islands Trust needs to take on more of an advocacy role rather than an enforcement role;
- There needs to be a better explanation for why certain areas are being protected over other coastal and marine areas or resources;
- The policy about docks doesn't make sense;
- Policies about desalination need to be further investigated;
- There is no strong science behind decisions; and
- Wording needs to be clearer.

Agricultural Stewardship

Participants shared the following thoughts about the agricultural stewardship aspect of the Policy Statement:

- Farming is more about ecotourism than food production;
- There are no good solutions to food sustainability on some islands;
- It is important to maintain high quality, sustainable, small-scale agriculture on the islands;
- The Islands Trust does have regulatory authority over this area;
- Aligning this policy with other local policies and bylaws is important;
- There needs to be protection for sustainable living and the livelihoods of local residents; and
- There is some duplication of authority in this policy section.

Housing

Participants felt that the Draft New Policy Statement may have a negative effect on affordable housing by discouraging new development. They also felt there was a deficit in housing in general, not just affordable housing, including seniors accommodations.

General Policy Structure

Participants shared that the document lacks clarity and that many of the policies appear to duplicate the work of other local, Provincial or Federal bodies.

Reconciliation

Participants felt that the approach to First Nations engagement needed to be changed to provide more transparency for all interested and concerned parties. Finally, some participants expressed concern that reconciliation has the potential to slow down or roadblock progress on the islands.

5.3 Citizen Groups

The following sections provide a summary of what was heard at the focus group session with citizen groups, held April 14, 2022.

Regional Governance

Participants felt that the Draft New Policy Statement makes locals feel like they are not good stewards of the islands. They also said that there needs to be more thought put into how to encourage sustainable living and protect local livelihoods. Participants also felt that the Islands Trust may not have the expertise to make decisions on behalf of the islands about specific topics and that there doesn't seem to be strong science behind the Islands Trust's decisions.

Ecosystem Protection

Participants shared the following thoughts about the environmental aspect of the Draft New Policy Statement:

- The terms in this section are not defined clearly or at all;
- Plans for fire management need to be developed for the islands;
- The policy perpetuates fear around climate vulnerability;
- The Islands Trust should focus on strategies that are currently working to manage climate change and build off of those; and
- The Islands Trust should stick to their original mandate.

Freshwater Stewardship

Participants felt that policies about desalination need to be further investigated.

Forest Stewardship

Participants shared the following thoughts about the forest stewardship aspect of the Draft New Policy Statement:

- Things are working well so there is no need to change processes or policies;
- More clarification is needed regarding the need to protect corridors;
- There is no strong science behind the Policy Statement; and
- A forest fire management plan needs to be created.

Agricultural Stewardship

Participants expressed fear that the policy will impede upon local farming rights. Some participants mentioned the need to protect local livelihoods including farming. Generally, participants felt this section needed to include more well-defined terms and that instead of developing a new Policy Statement the Islands Trust should revert back to their original mandate.

Housing

Participants felt the terms within the Draft New Policy Statement were clearly defined but that ultimately the amendments will not support affordable housing.

General Policy Structure

Participants shared the following thoughts about the Draft New Policy Statement in general:

- Guiding principles should be developed, not specific directives;
- The Islands Trust should work with each island to take action;
- The Policy Statement is confusing, poorly written and repetitive;
- There needs to be more focus placed on sustainable living and protection for local livelihoods;

- There is no strong science behind the policies and decisions;
- The Islands Trust should focus on land-use only;
- The Islands Trust does not have the expertise to develop these new policies;
- There needs to be a democratic process implemented for re-writing the Policy Statement;
- There is duplication of authority in many sections of the Policy Statement; and
- The Islands Trust should stick with its original mandate.

Reconciliation

Participants said that the approach the Islands Trust took to engage with First Nations wasn't appropriate and has caused distrust and unease amongst island residents. Some participants expressed fear that the Islands Trust may use reconciliation as an umbrella for other policies.

5.4 Agriculture Organizations

The following sections provide a summary of what was heard at the focus group session with agriculture organizations, held April 19, 2022.

Ecosystem Protection

Participants felt that it was important to state that farmers are concerned about the possible ecological impacts caused by farming and that farmers feel they are important land stewards to the area.

Freshwater Stewardship

Participants felt there were negative assumptions being made in the Policy Statement about how much water farmers use. They also felt that policies about desalination needed to be investigated.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

Participants felt that emergency evacuation solutions needed to be developed for the islands and that banning private docks in the policy was an overreach for the Islands Trust.

Agricultural Stewardship

Participants shared the following thoughts about the agricultural aspects of the Draft New Policy Statement:

- Terms throughout the Policy Statement are not clearly defined or defined at all, which leaves policies open for interpretation and causes confusion for island residents;
- The document is too long and too detailed;
- Concern that the Islands Trust has removed the Policy Statement acknowledging agriculture as a "valued activity";
- The Islands Trust has a lack of agricultural policy knowledge;
- Clarification is needed regarding jurisdiction and conflict resolution when the Policy Statement overlaps with other levels of government;
- The small-scale farming section of the Policy Statement is poorly defined and too restrictive;
- The Islands Trust should be prioritizing agriculture over development;
- The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is the best form of preserving land in its original state;
- The Islands Trust should not be discouraging land in the ALR; and
- The Islands Trust wants land out of ALR to control it.

Housing

Some participants expressed that they felt this section of the Draft New Policy Statement was reasonable. However, they felt there were some gaps including agri-tourism and affordable housing. Some participants expressed that agri-housing has been addressed in other local bylaws on some islands and that this section of the policy may be in duplication of other local authorities.

General Policy Structure

Participants felt that the Islands Trust may be overlapping or duplicating policies already governed by local, Provincial or Federal authorities. Participants also felt that the Islands Trust should be aligning their policies with other local policies and bylaws. However, some participants stated that they felt that all the islands are different so the Policy Statement needs to be broader. Participants also expressed concern that the Islands Trust was overreaching their jurisdictional bounds.

Reconciliation

Participants shared the following thoughts about the reconciliation aspects of the Draft New Policy Statement:

- There needs to be a broader and more clearly communicated First Nations consultation process;
- Statements regarding reconciliation in the Policy Statement are vague;
- Clarification needed about whether local Indigenous peoples will want access to private lands;
- Provide more opportunities for Indigenous people's involvement in decision-making, including participation in local government;
- Indigenous cultural heritage has not been acknowledged enough locally;
- Research on Indigenous archeological sites is needed;
- Agriculture was being represented as one of the causes of environmental and Indigenous reconciliation challenges on the islands;
- Involve more people from the agriculture industry in the Policy Statement discussion;
- Clarification is needed about the possible impacts of Indigenous access to private properties; and
- Returning Crown land to Indigenous people is a path to reconciliation.

5.5 Environmental and Conservancy Organizations

The following sections provide a summary of what was heard at the focus group session with environmental and conservancy organizations, held April 20, 2022.

Regional Governance

Participants felt that establishing a regional governance structure should be the priority before implementing the Draft New Policy Statement.

Ecosystem Protection

Participants were concerned with the lack of information or plan regarding waste management on the islands. Participants also felt that the Islands Trust's original mandate, to "preserve and protect", should include the well-being and sustainability of both the community and the environment, not the environment alone.

Forest Stewardship

Participants supported the protection of old growth trees and felt the Islands Trust should also explore innovative ways to manage tree cutting rather than completely prohibiting the activity.

Housing

Participants shared the following thoughts about the housing aspects of the Draft New Policy Statement:

- Different islands should have different policies on housing densities;
- Too much housing development will have a negative impact on the environment; and
- Bylaw enforcement is needed to ensure development policies are being followed.

General Policy Structure

Participants shared the following general comments about the Draft New Policy Statement:

- Clear outcomes and measurements of success need to be developed for Policy initiatives;
- Different policies for each island need to be developed to address their unique environmental and community needs;
- There is concern that policies will be approved but not implemented and enforced;
- Terms throughout the Policy Statement are not clearly defined or defined at all, which leaves policies open for interpretation and causes confusion for island residents;
- The Policy Statement needs to be scientifically informed; and
- It is difficult to predict or plan for what challenges the islands will be facing in 2050.

5.6 Youth

The following sections provide a summary of what was heard at the focus group session with youth, held April 20, 2022.

Housing

Participants shared the following thoughts about the housing aspects of the Draft New Policy Statement:

- The charm of the islands is tied to the quiet, rural feel and new development may take away from the local character;
- Policies that address rental dwellings on private properties under 5 acres are too restrictive. The Islands Trust should allow rental properties if the dwelling is considered 'off the grid' or does not require water, sewer, and electricity connections;
- Airbnb and other vacation rentals are needed, as the islands have limited accommodation options for tourists;
- Some islands have only one high-density retail area, which can be difficult to access when residential dwellings are dispersed across the islands, some up to an hour's distance or more; and
- Participants expressed wanting to live on the islands for the long-term but felt they may face barriers such as lack of job opportunities or undesirable changes to the character of the islands.

General Policy Structure

Participants wanted more connected and safer bike and trail systems on the islands. Participants also expressed that the sense of community interconnectedness was one of the most valued aspects of island life.

Reconciliation

Participants expressed a desire to incorporate more Indigenous culture into their local communities through interpretive signage and local monuments.

5.7 Housing and Social Organizations

The following sections provide a summary of what was heard at the focus group session with housing and social organizations, held April 20, 2022.

Regional Governance

Participants felt that the Islands Trust should find a better balance in the Policy Statement between social and human needs on the islands, and environmental sustainability.

Freshwater Stewardship

Participants felt that the Province should be the authority over freshwater stewardship. Participants also felt that desalination plants should be prohibited.

Housing

Participants shared the following thoughts about the housing aspects of the Draft New Policy Statement:

- The Islands Trust should be supporting affordable housing development on the islands;
- Increasing the density of specific urban areas would be the best approach to support social needs and environmental sustainability, as opposed to urban sprawl;
- Instead of prohibiting rental home development on private property, each request should be considered on a case-by-case basis, to evaluate the size of the dwelling, feasibility and local need;
- The Islands Trust should better regulate the number of single-family homes to encourage more diverse and affordable housing options. However, participants felt that the term “affordable” needed to be better defined in the Policy Statement and that standards set by CMHC and StatsCan should be used to provide a more credible starting point for housing development statements;
- The Islands Trust may not have the expertise needed to make informed decisions surrounding housing development; and
- Overall, the Islands Trust should reduce barriers to the development of rental properties to improve access to affordable housing options now and in the future.

General Policy Structure

Overall, participants felt that the Islands Trust should prioritize innovative and creative solutions in their Policy Statement to better tackle current and future challenges with housing and environmental sustainability. Participants suggested the possibility of implementing pilot initiatives to explore solutions and gather data on what might work for the islands over the long-term.

Reconciliation

Participants felt that Indigenous engagement on the Draft New Policy Statement should be broader to incorporate all bands. Participants also felt that Policy Statement related to reconciliation should align with other related local bylaws and policies.

6.0 Participant Evaluation

Participants at all in-person and virtual events were provided the opportunity to fill our evaluation forms about the engagement process and events that they had participated in.

A total of 23 evaluation forms with feedback about virtual and in-person events were provided back from event participants. The feedback from these forms is summarized below.

Table 6.1 Summary of Participant Evaluations

| Level of Satisfaction | How satisfied are you with today's... | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| | Clarity of information provided | Format of today's session | Opportunity to provide my input | Opportunity to hear others' input | Session time |
| Satisfied | 9 | 11 | 13 | 12 | 14 |
| Somewhat Satisfied | 8 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 3 |
| Somewhat Dissatisfied | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Dissatisfied | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |

Broadly, participants were satisfied with the clarity of information provided. Some comments included frustration or concern about the high-level nature of the information and the lack of details, but in general the feedback indicated that most participants felt heard and appreciated hearing from other participants at their specific events.

Participants were also broadly satisfied with the format of both virtual and in-person sessions, though some would have appreciated technical support for virtual sessions. In particular, participants appreciated smaller group conversations and the opportunity to speak and ask questions of staff directly.

APPENDIX
Summary of Project Correspondence

A

Appendix A - Summary of Project Correspondence

A.1 Overview of Project Correspondence

Throughout the public engagement period, many residents submitted correspondence to Islands Trust to be considered in parallel with the engagement feedback. Examples of correspondence included emails, letters and presentations. The most frequent themes from the correspondence included:

- Balance social, economic and environmental needs;
- There is a desire for sustainable communities, for example: “Sustainability improves the quality of our lives, protects our ecosystem and preserves natural resources for future generations”;
- Some correspondents are concerned that the Policy Statement is too broad and is taking a “one size fits all” approach to governing the islands;
- Correspondents want Islands Trust to work with the community to find solutions, not to dictate to them;
- There is a need for a balance between human needs and environmental needs to create a more holistic approach to sustainable community development on the islands;
- Support for the commitment to engage First Nations and support for reconciliation work;
- Correspondents often mentioned the urgency of climate change;
- Correspondents are concerned about environmental preservation aspects of the Draft New Policy Statement. They felt that these policies were negatively affecting local livelihoods and private property autonomy;
- Correspondents highlighted the housing crisis and need for sustainable solutions;
- Correspondents called for strong scientific data to back up the Policy Statement;
- Correspondents are concerned with jurisdictional overlap; and
- A more thorough and transparent engagement process is needed.

A.2 Detailed Summary of Project Correspondence

The following sections provide a summary of key themes heard through the project correspondence.

Regional Governance

- Correspondents expressed their concerns about land use and development. They shared the importance of balancing social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors when making land use decisions, while aligning with Islands Trust’s mandate to preserve and protect;
- Many correspondents had concern that Islands Trust is expanding its mandate to include climate change, affordable housing, community, and reconciliation. Many of these correspondents considered these new policy mandates as an overreach of jurisdictional authority and bureaucratic and financial capacity:
 - Many requested that Islands Trust remove these policy mandates and return to the original mandate of preserving and protecting the environment;
 - That said, many correspondents also expressed that climate change, affordable housing, community, and reconciliation are not mutually exclusive from preserving and protecting the environment and they felt that all policy mandates worked together to create a livable and sustainable island;
- Some correspondents were concerned that the Islands Trust’s policy mandate is expanding, along with its jurisdictional authority. Some expressed concern that Islands Trust is centralizing their decision-making power and governance. They were concerned that each island held uniqueness and centralizing would cause a loss in island specific land use planning;
- Some correspondents were concerned with the expanding mandates of the Islands Trust and questioned whether Islands Trust staff would have the appropriate expertise and adequate capacity to implement the scope of these policy changes; and
- Some correspondents were concerned about Islands Trust’s financial capacity in terms of policy changes that broaden the Islands Trust mandate and may increase budgetary and taxation needs.

In addition to the general correspondence, a petition including 697 signatures was submitted as correspondence requesting that Islands Trust Council and staff consider a number of revisions to the Draft New Policy Statement. Specifically, the petition includes:

- Support for amendments to address reconciliation and housing affordability;
- Concern about the perceived expansion of regulatory authority, duplication with other levels of government, and potential tax increases;
- Concern about prioritization of governmental and non-governmental organizations over residents;
- Concern about lack of justification for a number of specific restrictions related to private docks, seawalls, desalination plants, forestry management, tree cutting, agriculture, harvest management, and housing size and density;
- Concern about how broad some of the concepts are;
- Recommendation to include policy related to forest fire risk; and
- Support for a glossary of key terms.

Ecosystem Protection

- Many stated a sense of urgency to protect the environment as a priority for the Policy Statement;
- Concern that the Islands Trust's primary objective to preserve and protect the environment is being diluted or lost with the new Policy revisions;
- Many correspondents want the Policy Statement to find a balance between environmental protection and development, specifically around affordable housing;
- Some correspondents were concerned that the Draft New Policy Statement places a higher value on community needs and development than on environmental needs;
- Many correspondents felt that private property rights should not overshadow environmental stewardship and protection;
- Some correspondents asked that Islands Trust limit tourism on the islands to help protect them from environmental degradation and to maintain quality of life for residents; and
- Some correspondents were concerned about the impact that burning wood has on the environment; others were concerned about the negative impact that wood burning restrictions would have on those who heat their homes with wood burning fires.

In addition to the general correspondence, a "Joint Statement on the Draft Islands Trust Policy Revisions" was received from 11 local environmental conservancies as follows:

- Denman Island Conservancy
- Bowen Island Conservancy
- Gabriola Land and Trails Trust
- Galiano Island Conservancy
- Gambier Island Conservancy
- Conservancy Hornby Island
- Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy
- Mayne Island Conservancy
- Pender Island Conservancy
- Salt Spring Island Conservancy
- Thetis Island Nature Conservancy

The statement received from the conservancy groups included:

- Support for new commitments and policies regarding meaningful engagement with First Nations, inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing and including consideration of cooperative decision-making, heritage preservation and harvesting rights;
- Support for grounding decision making in best available data, although they recommended revising the statement to read “ground decision-making using credible and best available ...”;
- Support for the new policies protecting land, freshwater and marine environments, as well as Islands Trust’s adoption of a precautionary approach in preservation and protection;
- Support the new commitment (4.1.3) to “establish and sustain a network of protected areas throughout the Trust Area, in collaboration with the Islands Trust Conservancy Board...”, noting this is an improvement over the previous commitment “to work towards” a network of protected areas;
- Support for new forest harvesting and tree cutting policies and the commitment to regulate tree-cutting;
- Endorsement of the new provisions for agricultural lands related to sustainable and regenerative practices, scale of operations, and farm class status considerations;
- Concern about the directive policy (6.1.8) “...that growth and development, of any scale or for any purpose, is compact, energy-efficient, sustainable, and appropriately situated in order to minimize greenhouse gas emissions...” may have unintended outcomes resulting in densification in already overburdened village areas and stress on already overused resources;
- Concern that the Islands Trust Object and Its Meaning section of the Policy Statement is de-emphasizing the critical and overarching priority of Trust Council to “preserve and protect” the integrity of the unique amenities and environment of the Islands Trust Area;
- Support having local trust committees and Island Municipalities consider the full Policy Statement prior to making all decisions associated with development proposals or applications;
- Section 1.4 needs to be revised to better convey the urgency and importance of not only protecting valuable and threatened Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystems but also implementing conservation practices that restore, enhance and sustain these systems into the future;
- The new coordinating policy (4.3.9) to advocate for “authority to regulate tree cutting in the Trust Area” requires clarification and strategies to protect old growth and even second growth. The conservancy suggests mapping sensitive areas and maintaining a permit system;
- The specific directive restricting the building of new private docks (4.6.7) is not necessarily compatible with the goal of protecting sensitive coastal waters. They suggest small individual docks make more sense than community docks, and advocate for better dock design;
- Goals and measures should be developed to track progress in the areas of density limits and sustainability, as well as ecological goals for each island and for the Islands Trust Area as a whole;
- Clearly define the following terms: Precautionary Principle, nature-based solutions and sustainable stewardship; and
- Suggestions for a number of revisions to terms in the Policy Statement, including the use of stronger terms such as “ensure” instead of “strive to ensure”, substituting “must” for “should”, and “prohibit” instead of “strive to ensure”.

Freshwater Stewardship

The following concerns were identified most frequently by correspondents:

- Correspondents showed significant concern about the freshwater stewardship section of the Policy Statement, but held contrary perspectives:
 - Some correspondents felt that this section of the Policy Statement was too heavy-handed and limited personal freedoms to manage water;
 - On the other hand, some correspondents expressed that the policy wasn't strong enough in protecting freshwater; for example, some felt that new development would have negative impacts on freshwater supply;
- Some correspondents felt that desalination should be better investigated, and others felt that rainwater capture should be mandatory for use in gardens; and
- Overall, correspondents felt strongly that this section of the Policy Statement needs more public input and scientific investigation to determine the best ways to approach freshwater stewardship on the islands.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

The following concerns were identified most frequently by correspondents:

- Correspondents mentioned the negative effect the policy changes may have on local dock businesses;
- Some correspondents mentioned that the process to build a dock is already heavily regulated;
- Correspondents expressed concern that limiting docks may affect emergency evacuation options;
- Some correspondents mentioned they currently have difficulty traveling using the public transportation system and that limiting docks would restrict mobility between islands and the mainland for residents;
- Some correspondents supported the updated section in the Draft New Policy Statement;
- Some correspondents felt that the new policy recommendations contradict one another and require further review;
- Some correspondents felt that the Draft New Policy Statement will restrict regular boating routes and mooring locations and negatively affect local connections and culture;
- Some correspondents felt that the seawall and hard structure restrictions in the Draft New Policy Statement don't consider erosion issues some waterfront residential properties face from local boating and ferry traffic; and
- Many correspondents felt the updates in the Draft New Policy Statement were beyond the Islands Trust mandate, duplicating other Provincial and Federal jurisdictions.

Forest Stewardship

The following concerns were identified most frequently by correspondents:

- Some correspondents expressed concern about the amount of tree-cutting on the islands and the negative impact that tree-cutting may have on the environment in the future;
- Some felt the restrictions on tree cutting in the Draft New Policy Statement may negatively affect private landowners and those who cut trees for a living;
- Some correspondents mentioned that they feared without tree cutting limits, landowners will be able to clear cut properties which will negatively affect the already depleted tree sources on the islands; and
- Correspondents also mentioned concerns with jurisdictional overlap with the Provincial and Federal governments, and that the Policy Statement may be creating another unnecessary layer of bureaucracy for island residents and business owners.

Agricultural Stewardship

- Some correspondents stated that they are concerned about the revisions to “agriculture, farming, and livelihoods”;
- Some correspondents expressed their concerns that the Policy Statement is restricting local agricultural practices and farming, such as regenerative farming methods, on the island. They highlighted the value and importance of “on-island” and “local” food systems, the promotion of food security / resilience, access to local food produce, and a “local farm economy”;
- Some correspondents mentioned the urgent need for small-scale and “low carbon” agriculture, specifically in the context of global climate change;
- There were questions about how policy changes regarding agriculture and farming align with the Islands Trust mandate to protect and preserve the environment;
- The Agricultural Land Reserve: Correspondents expressed policy concerns pertaining to the ALR. They did not support a policy which prevents or removes agriculture and farming as a legitimate land use; and
- Indigenous Food Sovereignty: Along with general concerns regarding sustainable agriculture and farming on islands, correspondents acknowledged the importance of land use for traditional and ancestral First Nations practices, such as growing and harvesting food on the islands. They felt that First Nations should be consulted on this issue.

Climate Change & Emergency Management

- Climate Change in Policy & Planning: Many correspondents expressed they were pleased to see “Climate Change” incorporated into the Policy Statement:
- IT mandate & Climate Change Action: Many felt that climate adaptation, resilience, and mitigation strongly aligned with Islands Trust’s mandate to preserve and protect the environment and unique amenities. Many correspondents expressed the need to include a call to action for ecosystem and human survival:
 - A call to action was highlighted by many. They believe that directives should speak to how precisely Islands Trust can play a role in, for example reducing greenhouse gas emissions or ensuring fresh water supply;
 - However, some correspondents questioned the ability of Islands Trust to enact climate action and questioned their jurisdictional ability to take concerted action;
- Extreme Environmental Events: Correspondents highlighted the importance of climate change directives and a call to urgent action in policy, considering past and recent extreme weather and environmental events affecting social, cultural, and economic life on the islands:
 - Many correspondents highlighted a wide range of examples of how climate change is affecting their lives. To name some examples, residents described extreme weather events such as the BC wildfires, drought, and the 2021 ‘heat dome’ that caused heat-related deaths;
 - Others described slow onset effects of climate change, such as sea level rise and ocean acidification, significantly affecting small island communities;
 - Many correspondents described the issue of fresh water supply and water insecurity;
 - BC Wildfires & Firesmart Principles: Some correspondents noted that there was no mention of wildfires and suggested including “fire smart” principles and forest fire management and responses in the Policy Statement;
- Stewardship & Climate Emergency: Some correspondents used the term “climate emergency” to describe their experience of climate change. The need for urgent and swift action to mitigate ecological and human loss and ensure survival was a key theme. Many used the term “stewardship” to refer to human responsibility to protect and preserve the islands and respond to climate change;
- Economic Activity: Many correspondents stated their concern with economic activities on the islands that were harmful to the environment;
- Intersecting themes: Several interrelated themes arose that intersected with climate change mitigation and resilience such as water access, forest and tree management, sustainable agriculture, human health and wellbeing, coastal and marine stewardship, and reconciliation; and

- Reconciliation & Climate Change: Some correspondents acknowledged the value of Indigenous knowledge systems and teachings as helpful contributors to climate mitigation and adaptation. They viewed reconciliation and meaningful and authentic relationship building with local First Nations and Indigenous peoples as part of the work towards ensuring sustainability and stewardship of the land.

Sustainable Communities

- Correspondents expressed the importance of Islands Trust supporting innovative approaches to sustainable communities to ensure local people can continue to live on the islands while creating a clear path for environmental preservation; and
- Some correspondents expressed concern about “community health and wellness” being removed from the Policy Statement. Others felt that the Islands Trust mandate and policy should remove community health and wellness because it was out of Islands Trust’s policy scope.

Housing

- Many correspondents were concerned that “affordable housing” could be removed from the new Islands Trust Policy Statement. Many felt that creating safe, secure, affordable housing options is a priority;
- Many correspondents shared the sentiment that creative housing solutions were urgently needed to sustain island communities;
- Some correspondents shared concerns about the development of short-term vacation rentals, development permits for large housing sizes, and rapid growth of island tourism. Some mentioned concern for residential density and a need to limit and regulate development on islands;
- Some correspondents highlighted that affordable housing and preserving and protecting the environment were not mutually exclusive policy areas. Housing and environment were stated as integral policy areas to create sustainable and healthy island communities;
- Service Workers: Some correspondents highlighted the issue of housing for service workers. They acknowledged that the lack of affordable housing options creates socio-economic issues and barriers to attract specific workers to island communities. For example, many service workers face long commutes to serve seniors and tourists in the community;
- Youth: Some correspondents were concerned that there was a lack of affordable housing for youth and observed youth leaving island communities due to a lack of housing options;
- Seniors: Some correspondents were concerned that many seniors struggled to find affordable and appropriate housing options on the islands;
- Year-Round, Low Income Rental Housing: Some correspondents shared that diversifying housing options such as prioritizing year-round, lower income rental housing would create more affordable housing in the area;
- Some correspondents expressed concerns that Islands Trust policy is expanding to include housing:
 - Some questioned the capacity (financial etc.) to enact housing policy and suggested removing it;
 - Some stated that adding housing into the Trust Policy Statement was either outside of the jurisdictional authority of Islands Trust or a duplication of the work of other levels of government;
 - That said, other correspondents were in favour of housing as an Islands Trust policy area and called for Islands Trust to work in partnership with other levels of government, including Indigenous governments; and
- Some correspondents mentioned that Islands Trust should review residential zoning and bylaw policies regarding the development of mega mansions, short-term vacation rentals, and residential density as well as other particular housing priorities, such as labour / housing shortages, rental housing, family friendly housing and others.

Engagement Process

Some correspondents found the engagement process itself to be problematic. The following concerns were identified most frequently by correspondents:

- Some correspondents suggested that there was not enough time for residents and local organizations to review and respond to the policy changes;
- Some correspondents suggested that the engagement process was flawed by not being thorough enough;
- Some correspondents didn't feel the Policy Statement was properly circulated to governmental, Indigenous and special interest groups;
- Some correspondents felt that there were too many issues being addressed at the same time, and because of this more time for public understanding and review was required in the engagement process;
- Correspondents identified barriers that may have affected participation including residents not receiving mail outs, not having computer access, and an inability to attend or cancellation of in-person engagements due to pandemic restrictions;
- Correspondents often used the same language "lack of meaningful consultation" when describing their unhappiness with the process;
- Some correspondents felt that engagement should have been conducted before a draft policy was created;
- Some identified that input from part-time residents may not have been captured due to their inconsistent presence on the islands;
- Some correspondents felt that the Policy Statement was being rushed with little public consultation to enable Islands Trust to enact a specific agenda; and
- Correspondents expressed concern regarding what they felt were excessive costs invested in the consultation process

General Policy Structure

- Some correspondents felt the changes to the Policy Statement were timely as a lot has changed since the last revision 25 years ago with regards to environmental concerns, the evolution of the islands and the housing market;
- Some correspondents felt the revisions were positive because they focused on increasing environmental preservation and protection along with new importance on incorporating and protecting local Indigenous culture;
- Many correspondents noted that the wording of the policy and lack of clear or consistent definitions made the Policy Statement difficult to understand and/or interpret; and
- Correspondents wanted updates to the term "unique amenities" to include both the community and the environment.

Lack of Jurisdictional Authority

- Some correspondents expressed concern that Islands Trust would be unable to implement the policy because much of it, they felt, was out of the Islands Trust's jurisdiction;
- Some correspondents said that the policy should be implemented through local bylaws only;
- Some correspondents expressed concern over the cost of implementing the new policy;
- Some correspondents felt that more senior or parallel levels of government have the mandates and resources to better address more complex issues and provide superior and more effective social, environmental and governance solutions at less cost;
- Some correspondents felt that Islands Trust should stick with their mandate to manage land use; and
- Correspondents expressed that the updated Policy Statement overreaches the mandate of the Islands Trust into areas which they feel are currently competently managed by various departments of the Provincial government, and many of which supersede the rights of private property owners.

Policy Change Issues

- Some correspondents felt that the Draft New Policy Statement includes language changes that do not consider the unique needs of each of the islands, for example using the term “shall” instead of “should”
- The Draft New Policy Statement changes do not support the Islands Trust mandate to ‘preserve and protect’.
- Some correspondents felt that several of the new policies are not in alignment with local area bylaws; and
- The Policy Statement should establish a balance between the demands of the built environment and needs of the natural environment.

Reconciliation

- Correspondents recognized that Islands Trust is located on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples;
- Some correspondents recognized that the islands are the lands where First Nations have significant cultural heritage and roots, such as cultural and spiritual sites, artifacts, place names, as well as culturally significant species and traditional lands for harvesting;
- Some correspondents recognized the past and present historical impacts of “colonialism” and “paternalism” and the potential for Islands Trust policy changes and process to continue to carry out this legacy;
- Some correspondents expressed gratitude for the efforts to include reconciliation in the Policy Statement given the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Calls to Action and the implementation of provincial (DRIPA), federal, and international policies (UNDRIP);
- Some correspondents appreciated the Islands Trust’s efforts to include “reconciliation” as a focus area in Policy Statement. That said, some also questioned the jurisdictional authority of the Islands Trust in terms of implementing reconciliation as a policy mandate;
- Some correspondents were unsure if and how Indigenous peoples and local First Nations were involved in developing policies. They commented that Indigenous peoples should be actively, meaningfully, and authentically engaged and consulted in policy development;
- Some correspondents were concerned that policies and planning processes were “settler centric” and not authentically involving local Indigenous leaders and First Nations in leadership and decision making, as well as interpretation of policy;
- Some correspondents advocated for a policy that ensures the provision of safe, secure and affordable Indigenous housing;
- Some correspondents expressed concern regarding the development and building occurring on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the Coast Salish people. They shared the opinion that a first step before more development occurs is the implementation of First Nations Treaty settlements;
- Some correspondents acknowledged local First Nations as “rights holders”. They recognized Indigenous governance and their right to self-determination of land use and the preservation and revitalization of cultural heritage; and
- Correspondents voiced support for meaningful engagement with Indigenous people on the islands, however some correspondents expressed concern that the approach taken by Islands Trust of separate engagement events with Indigenous people didn’t provide opportunities for sharing local perspective or process transparency with other residents.

APPENDIX
Summary of Delegation Presentations

B

Appendix B - Summary of Delegation Presentations

B.1 Overview of Delegation Presentations

Trust Council offers the opportunity for Island Trust Area residents and organizations to undertake Delegation Presentations. Between January 1, 2021 and April 17, 2022, a total of 16 Delegation Presentations were made to Trust Council about the Draft New Policy Statement and process. An archive of all Delegation Presentations is available on the Islands 2050 project website <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/programs/islands-2050/>, under “Delegation Presentations” under the Project Library heading. The following section provides a brief summary of the Delegation Presentations.

B.2 Detailed Summary of Delegation Presentations

The following sections provide a summary of key themes heard from the Delegation Presentations.

Regional Governance

The delegation presentations expressed the following concerns and recommendations for the regional governance section of the Policy Statement:

- Concern about the top-heavy bureaucracy of the Islands Trust Council that is not representative of its electors;
- Recommend revising the governance structure so that the Islands Trust can ensure that the ‘preserve and protect’ mandate is effective in practice;
- Concern about the Islands Trust federal governance structure and that land use planning for local Islands Trust Areas has come to take precedence over Trust Council and other Islands Trust Area services. The consequence of this approach is that the checks and balances with the federal governance model and oversight are lost;
- Recommend that Islands Trust implement the two-level, hierarchical federal governance structure established by the Act, with oversight of local area land-use planning by expert staff in the necessary disciplines. This will guide rural environmental land-use planning on the islands, as opposed to planning for mainland urban growth;
- Recommend a regional governance approach that will uphold the Islands Trust Object and honour regional commitments to reconciliation and climate change;
- Concern about the expansion of the regulatory / geographic scope of the Trust;
- Concern about duplication of regulatory / management roles with other levels of government;
- Concern about the lack of justification or explanation for restrictions or bans, for example, restrictions placed on private docks, seawalls, desalinization plants, forestry management, tree cutting, agriculture, harvest management, housing density and house size;
- Concern about the increased cost and associated tax increases to implement the updated Policy Statement; and
- Concern that the budget allocated to local planning services will minimize the effectiveness at the federal governance level.

Ecosystem Protection

The delegation presentations expressed the following concerns and recommendations for the ecosystem protection section of the Policy Statement:

- Include experts such as scientists and traditional knowledge holders in environmental decision-making;
- Delegations expressed support for the policy’s effective preservation and protection policies;
- Recommend taking steps toward recognizing the rights of nature within the Islands Trust Area;

- Recommend strengthening environmental protection policy by working with the Province and Federal jurisdictions to find alignment;
- A petition including 500 signatures was submitted to Islands Trust Council requesting that Trustees and Islands Trust staff give clear priority to the protection of the natural environment in its revision of the Draft New Policy Statement and all its land-use decision-making. Specifically, the petition requests that the Trust Policy Statement effectively implements the following policies:
 - That the Islands Trust’s top priority is to protect the natural environment of the islands and surrounding waters and to preserve rural character;
 - That no further rezoning be allowed in areas where overall ecosystem health is threatened, or where the quantity or quality of freshwater supplies for already approved development may be adversely affected;
 - That all decisions relating to more intensive use of land and water be guided by independent, up-to-date scientific data and traditional Indigenous practices; and
 - It was recommended that Trust Council consider public input, use a fact-first approach, rely less on advocacy group promotions, align with Federal Support for Ecoregions, do due diligence on the Status of Environment Risk and biodiversity and focus on the 3 main problems of wildfire risk, deer browse and abandoned boats.

Freshwater Stewardship

The delegation presentations expressed the following concerns and recommendations for the freshwater stewardship section of the Policy Statement:

- Concern about the pressure on water supply due to the demands for intensified land use and residential development. Suggest there should be more attention in the Present Context to the continuing & accelerating development threats to the Islands Trust Area’s environment, sensitive ecosystem, and limited resources;
- Concern about the negative impact new developments may have on freshwater availability for adjacent residents and wells;
- Recommend that when applications for commercial water licenses are issued, Ministry of Forestry, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development should be asked to assess the cumulative effect of the requests, providing clear evidence that any already-occurring water problems have been investigated; and
- Recommend that Islands Trust Council thoroughly investigate current and future projections for freshwater resources on the islands.

Coastal and Marine Stewardship

The delegation presentations provided the following recommendation for the coastal and marine stewardship section of the Policy Statement:

- Recommend that Islands Trust consider working together with First Nations to restore lands and culture using nature-based climate solutions through reconciliation-driven terrestrial and marine-based restoration and stewardship in the Salish Sea.

Forest Stewardship

The delegation presentations expressed the following concerns and recommendations for the forest stewardship section of the Policy Statement:

- Better define “sustainable forestry” and explore options for value-added forestry practices within the Islands Trust Area;
- Revise the tree-cutting section as it is too vague and difficult to interpret;
- Recommend working with the provincial government to establish development permit areas to protect the forest and regulate forest practices on private lands;
- Clarify the power of local governments to enforce development area requirements;
- Enhance Islands Trust’s jurisdiction over tree-cutting bylaws to allow for forestry protection measures on privately managed forest lands; and

- Include more about forest fire risk and management.

Agricultural Stewardship

The delegation presentations provided the following recommendation for the agricultural stewardship section of the Policy Statement:

- Implement security measures for the Islands Trust Area agricultural lands, given the effects of a climate emergency and the threat of the ongoing pandemic.

Housing

The delegation presentations expressed the following concerns and recommendations for the housing section of the Policy Statement:

- Recommend that the inclusion of affordable housing should be removed from the three high-level sections of the Trust Policy Statement: Present Context (1.3); Islands Trust Object and Meaning (1.4) and Affordable Housing (Part 6). Affordable housing is outside the legislated object of the Islands Trust, thus making directive policies challenging to formulate and implement;
- Recommend that solutions to the affordable housing crisis fall within the authority of the Provincial and Federal governments;
- Concern that identifying locations for increased density does not translate into affordable housing;
- Some delegations noted that identifying appropriate floor area and lot coverage for residential development can be beneficial for minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing natural habitat loss, and maintaining local character, however, they do not translate into an increased stock of affordable and available housing;
- The Policy Statement addresses the issue of short-term vacation rentals so that support is there for the work of local trust committees to strengthen their OCPs and LUBs in ways that discourage short-term vacation rentals and encourage long-term housing rentals; and
- Suggested that the Provincial and Federal governments address and remediate the housing crisis.

Land Use and Development

The delegation presentations provided the following recommendations for the land use and development considerations in the Policy Statement:

- Improve understanding of “limitations of the natural environment” before approval of additional development;
- Consider floor area restrictions and a basal area strategy to replace trees felled for development; and
- Recommend that the entire process of land-use planning, from application to the bylaw, should be accountable to the Trust Object and directive Islands Trust Area policies.

Engagement Process

The delegation presentations expressed the following concerns and recommendations for the engagement process:

- Recommend that Islands Trust consider how the history of the Trust can inform its future, understand what the pathways forward are and understand the importance of language and listening;
- Concern and questions about why the engagement was conducted on the draft vs. the final intentions of the Trust Council;
- Concern about the minimal role of Indigenous People and Residents vs. Governments and Non-governmental Organizations;
- Correspondents expressed support for the Islands Trust in achieving its mandate, but more public and stakeholder feedback is needed to strengthen the work of the Trust Council; and
- Take a more thorough record of what was said and what was done in Trust Council meetings.

General Policy Structure

The delegation presentations provided the following recommendations for the general structure of the Policy Statement:

- Reframe language to better reflect the values and the “preserve and protect” mandate of the Islands Trust;
- Clarify the language used to describe the governance structure of the Islands Trust;
- Concern that local area jurisdictions could select new Islands Trust Area policies to suit their needs and set aside those that don’t, which negates the federal model of the Trust Act;
- Clearer wording is needed in the Policy Statement such as the use of “shall” rather than “should”, to create a stronger policy that cannot easily be manipulated or misinterpreted;
- Edit the Policy Statement to include a glossary and consistent use of defined terms;
- Recommend that words like “residential density” and “environment” be defined in the Policy Statement to ensure policy clarity;
- Delegations noted that there is a considerable improvement in the clarity of intent and purpose of the Draft New Policy Statement versus prior versions;
- Recommend the inclusion of language such as, “Climate and Biodiversity Crises” and “Restoration and Adaptive Management” in Part 4: Ecosystem Preservation and Protection.

Proposed Policy Revisions

- Revise the Policy Statement so it directly informs the day-to-day business of Trust bodies with Islands Trust Area policies;
- Revise the current bylaw to be more compact, unambiguous, and sufficient as a regional plan to guide Islands Trust Area local policy and regulation;
- Delegations identified several positive changes in the Draft New Policy Statement regarding reconciliation, housing, and climate change but the number of additions, modifications and bans was concerning;
- Clarify how the Policy Statement will impact or mandate revisions to the Official Community Plans; and
- Improve the structure of the Draft New Policy Statement by removing unnecessary division of how the policies are organized in the document.

Directives

The following are concerns and recommendations regarding directives in the Policy Statement:

- Demonstrate more direction and transparency in the land-use planning process, in terms of how it connects back to Islands Trust’s policy objectives and directives;
- Implement processes that prevent directive policies from interfering with the Trust Object;
- Concern that policy directives are ambiguous and compromise the preserve and protect mandate; and
- Recommend Islands Trust implement planning tools and measures to commit the islands to curb environmental and cultural heritage loss and degradation. The Islands Trust has an established priority (the Act), and a plan (the Mandate). The islands require explicit prescriptive directive policies to be developed as the next step to enacting the Trust Object.

Reconciliation

The following are concerns and recommendations for the reconciliation section of the Policy Statement:

- Recommend updating the Policy Statement to include an acknowledgement of Islands Trust Area as the Traditional Territory of Coast Salish Nations; and
- Some Delegations expressed support for the Draft New Policy Statement in its mission to preserve the integrity of the environment and Indigenous cultural heritage in all decision-making and where necessary limit the rate and scale of growth and development.



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