

DATE OF MEETING: October 9, 2025

TO: Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee

FROM: Narissa Chadwick, Senior Planner  
Local Planning Services

COPY: Renee Jamurat

SUBJECT: OCP Review – Table of Contents/Engagement Feedback

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee direct staff to draft Official Community Plan policies in accordance with the draft table of contents presented at the October 9, 2025 Local Trust Committee Meeting.
2. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee endorse the revised project charter presented at the October 9, 2025 Local Trust Committee Meeting.

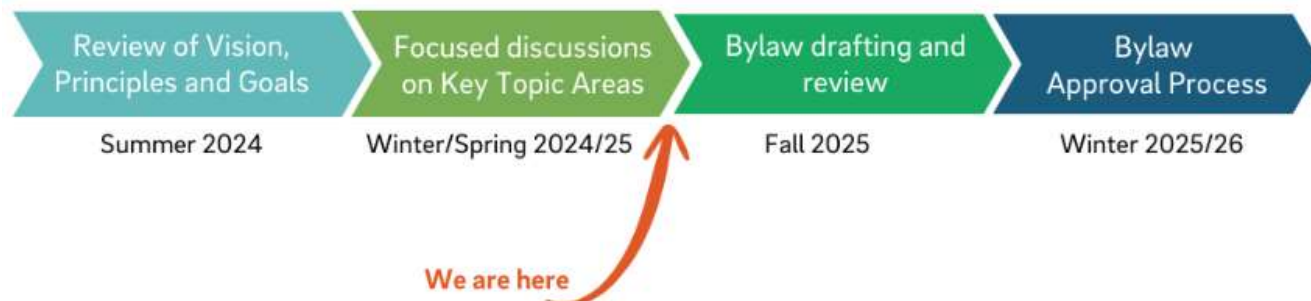
## REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide a project update
- Present to the LTC the final summary of focus group engagement, topic-focussed survey and the engagement session on re-imagining growth for review.
- Present to the LTC the Community Profile for review.
- Present to the LTC the draft OCP table of contents for endorsement.
- Present to the LTC a revised project charter for endorsement.
- Encourage the LTC to provide direction to staff to begin drafting the revised OCP based on the draft table of contents.

## BACKGROUND

### Project Update:



As identified in the timeline above, the OCP process has advanced through a number of phases in the past year:

- The review of vision, principles and goals; and
- Focussed discussions on key topic areas

Work during the project phases have included the development of communications materials -including discussion guides on relevant topics, community engagement, data mapping, freshwater footprint work and the development of a community profile.

### **Community Engagement**

**Community engagement related to the vision, principles and goals discussion** included a survey (363 respondents), community lead engagement events and a community meeting. The summary report related to this engagement was shared in a previous staff report to the LTC and can be found [here](#).

**Focus groups reviewed draft policy language that was informed by previous community feedback.** The results of each focus group discussion were shared in both special meetings and regular meeting LTC meetings. This phase of the project also involved a community survey (590 respondents). The summary report for this phase of engagement is included in this report as Attachment 2. It can be found online [here](#).

**Focus group feedback emphasized water protection, environmental sustainability, and clear, enforceable policies.** There is strong support for affordable, diverse housing that aligns with water and infrastructure limits, alongside a resilient local economy supporting small businesses, farms, and working residents. Participants stressed safe, accessible mobility, ecological stewardship, and preparedness for wildfire and climate risks, highlighting the need for policies that are flexible, sustainable, and equitable.

**Survey respondents identified a number of climate-related environmental changes**—drier summers, lower groundwater, forest stress, and erosion—and prioritized protection of sensitive areas. Support exists for diverse, low-impact housing such as secondary units on existing lots, with safeguards for water and the environment. Water security, forest and watershed preservation, walkability, and ecological stewardship were recurring priorities. Respondents also emphasized strengthening Indigenous cultural heritage, reconciliation, and integrating Indigenous perspectives into planning.

**A discussion on growth management was requested by the LTCs as an additional topic for outreach.** This was a departure from the more general discussion of OCP direction. It involved a survey and workshop focussed on questions relating to options for addressing questions related to residential density. A summary of feedback from the workshop and summary results to-date is included in Attachment 3. Note that this is a summary and a more detailed record has been compiled.

**Workshop participants emphasized that housing must prioritize affordability, options for local workers, and flexible models such as co-housing, secondary units, and cluster housing, while discouraging luxury or oversized homes.** Protecting water, ecosystems, and cultural heritage was identified as a top priority, alongside the need to address climate change and infrastructure capacity (ferry, health services, schools). Participants supported innovative approaches such as cistern requirements, rainwater harvesting, and shared servicing, and

stressed the importance of reconciliation with Snuneymuxw First Nation, transparent governance, and flexible zoning that balances growth with environmental protection.

**A focused survey with key questions related to addressing growth and change was provided.** The survey, which received 110 responses, focused on questions related to subdivision, alternative approaches to rezoning and secondary dwellings. The results of this survey are contained in Attachment 4. A high-level summary of the survey outcomes is as follows:

Subdivision: Respondent feedback showed strong interest in reducing subdivision permission, with many comments stressing that Gabriola is already overdeveloped and that water, ferry, and infrastructure limits make further density unsustainable. Protecting groundwater, ecosystems, and cultural heritage was identified as a top priority.

Rezoning: Respondent views are divided, with the options provided all receiving close to 50% support. Comments indicate that some support diverse, affordable housing options (cluster housing, suites, flexible models) if carefully managed, while many oppose new rezonings that increase density, citing limited groundwater, ferry capacity, and ecological risks.

Secondary units: There was limited support for changes to secondary unit permissions. This was a contrast to the support for secondary units that had been identified at the workshop, focus groups and previous survey (590 respondents). Respondent comments emphasized affordability, with many urging that new units be reserved for long-term housing rather than short-term rentals or speculative uses.

### **Data Mapping**

Information systems (IS) staff at the Islands Trust have been working with planning staff to develop a mapping tool that integrates all the data available (sensitive ecosystems, species at risk, groundwater recharge potential, watershed resiliency, etc.) to provide an indication of areas that are more and less suitable for additional housing development. This work has been done in coordination with Islands Trust Conservancy staff. As well, IS staff has been working with planning staff to complete build-out mapping on Gabriola Island. Build-out mapping identifies how many potential dwellings are possible under existing zoning. This map is being updated to conform with the Islands Trust new format for build-out maps. It will be presented to the LTC at the November meeting.

### **Freshwater Footprint Work**

The freshwater footprint work is now completed. It is currently being reviewed by the Island Trust's Senior Freshwater Specialist. The freshwater footprint consolidates prior technical work—recharge mapping, availability assessments, watershed resiliency, and the freshwater atlas to help inform the development of OCP policies and Land Use Bylaw regulations that are aligned with sustainable freshwater capacity.

## **Community Profile**

The Gabriola Community Profile provides a summary of baseline conditions and markers for trends for Gabriola Island. It provides a current context for understanding and assessing potential impacts for decision-making as it relates to land use to help inform the Gabriola Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw. The community profile is included as Attachment 5 and can be found on the project website [here](#). Note that some change might still be made to the section on housing need.

## **Draft Table on Contents**

The draft table of contents (Attachment 6) has been designed to focus on land use planning tools and processes within the Island Trust jurisdiction. Review of the existing Gabriola OCP and OCPs throughout the Island Trust Area has revealed that the traditional themed approach to the development of OCPs (e.g. Economy, Residential, Resource) has lead to repetition and a large number of scattered advocacy policies. Organizing the OCP by land use tools such as land use designations and type of development application will remove repetition and make it easier for the community, trustees and planners to understand and use. Moving all advocacy policies to an “implementation and advocacy” section will help to focus advocacy actions and inform a Gabriola Vision 2050 implementation plan.

Staff will be drafting the revised OCP by starting with the review of the policies discussed at focus groups and other relevant feedback. Draft language will be organized using the draft content page structure. There will continue to be opportunity to change the structure of the OCP as the process evolves.

## **Updated Project Charter**

The project charter has been updated to reflect realistic timelines (see Attachment 1). Dates for draft policies and readings have been pushed ahead due to the additional staff time taken to organize the focus groups and the growth management workshop as well as additional time needed to ensure that First Nations interests are effectively addressed. The project charter reflects the timelines in the proposed business case for 2026/27 which is included in a separate report.

## **Rationale for Recommendation**

This project has involved substantial community engagement. Staff feel confident in moving forward with bylaw drafting. There will be opportunity for further community engagement on the draft OCP language prior to first reading and for changes to be made to the draft prior to proposed second and third readings in June 2026. The revised project timeline provide a realistic estimate of key milestones.

## Alternatives

### 1. Request staff to make changes to the proposed table of contents

The LTC may request staff make changes to the table of contents and begin drafting the OCP in accordance with the changes. If the LTC chooses this option they will need to provide very clear instructions to staff.

*That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request staff make the following changes to the table of contents.....*

### 2. Request staff to do further public engagement

The LTC may request staff to organize further public engagement prior to bylaw writing. This strongly discouraged as a significant amount of input has been received to-date. As well, the public will continue to have the opportunity to send their interests and concerns to the LTC as well as opportunity to comment on draft bylaws up until June 2026.

## NEXT STEPS

- Staff will draft the revised OCP draft;
- Staff will provide the build out analysis to the LTC;
- Staff will provide a review of DPA options to the LTC;
- Staff will provide overview of the H2O balance assessment report and how it will inform the OCP and LUB;
- The public will have an opportunity to review the draft OCP (~Feb-April 2026);
- The draft OCP will be read for the first time (~April)

Submitted By:	Narissa Chadwick, RPP MCIP, Island Planner	October 1, 2025
Concurrence:	Renée Jamurat, RPP MCIP, Regional Planning Manager	October 1, 2025

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Revised Project Charter
2. What We Heard Report (topic focused)
3. Reimagining Growth Workshop - Feedback summary
4. Reimagining Growth Survey Results
5. Community Profile
6. Draft Table of Contents