
From: Jet Carruthers <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, December 4, 2025 7:56 PM
To: Gabriola2050
Subject: Proposal for a Government-Funded Equitation Arena that Strengthens Community, Supports Youth, and Aligns with the Gabriola OCP

Dear Trustees of the Gabriola Island Trust,

I am writing to formally present a proposal for the creation of a government-funded equitation arena on Gabriola Island—an initiative that I believe represents a meaningful opportunity to advance several key objectives identified within the Gabriola Island Official Community Plan (OCP), while offering long-term social, economic, and cultural benefits to the community.

This facility would serve far more than equestrian enthusiasts. An equitation arena provides a versatile community space that supports multiple priority areas for Gabriola, including:

• **Youth development and safe recreation:**

A dedicated arena offers a supervised, skill-building environment for young people, promoting physical activity, responsibility, and confidence. Many communities have successfully used equestrian programs to engage youth who may not connect with traditional sports.

• **Community wellness and therapeutic programming:**

Equine-assisted wellness programs are increasingly recognized for their benefits in supporting mental health, trauma recovery, and accessibility needs. A local arena would allow these services to be developed right here on Gabriola.

• **Support for rural livelihoods and island culture:**

The OCP highlights the importance of maintaining Gabriola’s rural character and supporting agricultural and land-based activities. An equitation arena reinforces this identity by strengthening local rural economies, providing opportunities for teaching, events, and small-scale agricultural partnerships.

• **Environmentally responsible planning:**

The proposal includes low-impact design, careful site selection, and sustainable construction practices in keeping with the OCP’s long-standing emphasis on environmental stewardship and protection of island ecosystems.

Given the community-oriented nature of this proposal—and the potential for government funding to significantly reduce financial barriers for local residents—this project represents a rare chance to add a publicly beneficial amenity at minimal cost to Gabriola taxpayers.

At this stage, I respectfully request guidance from the Trust on the most appropriate next steps, including the procedural requirements, applicable OCP policies, and any preliminary assessments or consultations you recommend. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with planning staff or Trustees to review the concept in detail and ensure it moves forward with full transparency and alignment with community values.

Thank you for your time and consideration of a project that has the potential to enrich the lives of Gabriola residents across generations. I look forward to the possibility of working together to develop

a facility that honors the unique spirit of the island while providing lasting benefits for the entire community.

Warm regards,
Jet Carruthers
Gabriola Island B.C.

Sent from my iPhone