



DATE OF MEETING: May 21, 2026

TO: Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee

FROM: Narissa Chadwick, Island Planner
Local Planning Services

COPY: Stephen Baugh, Island Planner; Renee Jamurat, Regional Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Presentation of Gabriola Draft OCP & Next Steps

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request staff send the draft Gabriola Official Community Plan “Gabriola Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 325” out for referral to relevant agencies and First Nations.
2. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee endorse the revised project charter for the Gabriola OCP and LUB Review project.

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Gabriola OCP to the Gabriola Local Trust Committee and identify next steps related to the review of the draft OCP including a CIM, referrals and updates to project documents (charter, engagement plan).

Note that there is work to be done on OCP formatting before it is moved to 1st reading.

BACKGROUND

Gabriola Island Official Community Plan Review Timeline



= public engagement opportunities

The Gabriola OCP project began in 2023. It has moved through two phases involving many public engagement activities. Phase 1 focussed on community visioning through in person engagement and surveys. Phase 2 focussed on public engagement around key policy areas and included a number of focus groups as well as broader public engagement. The results of these phases can be found on the Gabriola OCP project webpage. <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/island-planning/gabriola/projects/>.

Phase 3 has focussed on bylaw drafting. Now that the bylaw is ready for review there will be further engagement, as part of Phase 3, as identified in the communications and engagement plan presented to the LTC at the March 23rd LTC meeting.

Project Charter and Communications and Engagement Plan

Project Charter - At the March 23, 2026 Gabriola LTC meeting, staff provided the LTC with an updated project charter and a communications and engagement plan. A revised project charter has been presented with this report (see Attachment 1) which moves first reading to the July LTC meeting as opposed to June. This will provide the community with more time to review and provide comments on the draft prior to first reading and remove the need to schedule a special meeting in June.

There has been a small change in the sequencing of the Land Use Bylaw. In order to ensure that the land use bylaw is informed by the draft OCP that has been through the referral process, first and second readings of the LUB has been moved to be in line with the public hearing and third reading of the draft OCP Bylaw.

Engagement Plan – The engagement plan presented at the March 23, 2026 Gabriola LTC meeting will remain the same except for the change in timing related to first reading (shift from June to July). Staff have determined that the most effective way to receive feedback is directly through email to northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca.

Community Information Meeting

At the March 23, 2026 Gabriola LTC meeting:

It was **MOVED and SECONDED**

that the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request staff amend the Project Charter to include a Community Information Meeting prior to First Reading to be held in person in the late afternoon or evening.

A community information meeting has been scheduled for this evening, May 21 in the Agricultural Hall from 6:30-8:00pm. The meeting will provide an opportunity to present the draft OCP to the community and answer questions in an open forum.

OCP Changes

The draft OCP is different from the existing OCP in a number of ways. To assist the LTC and the community with the review of the draft OCP, a Gabriola Draft OCP Companion Document has been created (see Attachment 2). The companion document provides background on what the purpose of an OCP is, how the draft OCP is different from the existing OCP and provides some rationale related to the changes. The policies within the OCP have been informed by previous policies, community input, input from Trustees and Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) staff, freshwater footprint analysis and land use planning best practices.

Summary of OCP Change Highlights:

Document Structure and Community Values

- The format of the draft OCP has been changed to increase ease of use.
- A community context section has been added.
- A planning context section has been added.
- There is increased focus on consideration of First Nations data and input.
- Criteria for evaluating proposals for changes in use and density are extensive and connected directly to community values.
- An implementation and advocacy section has been included to encourage work to support the Gabriola 2050 vision which is both within and outside of the Islands Trust's jurisdiction.

Subdivision and Density Changes

- Outright subdivision permission has been removed by increasing minimum lot size for subdivisions aimed at creating private lots. Rezoning will be required for subdivision to support interests that are not identified to be of community benefit. (= reduction of 90 permitted units)
- Changes have been made to the subdivision approach to make it easier to subdivide for community benefit (e.g. affordable housing, protection of environment and cultural heritage, community service use).
- There is increased flexibility to rezone areas to support multiple units in areas outside freshwater hazard areas (All rezoning must go through public process).

Housing and Additional Units

- Permission for dwellings accessory to an institutional use has been provided. (= increase in ~17 permitted units)
- Change in total units permitted outright:
 - density removed due to changes in subdivision policy
 - additional secondary units in Agricultural designation and Freshwater Hazard Area
 - + secondary dwellings permitted in Rural Residential designation on lots 2ha or larger and outside of Freshwater Hazard Area
 - + secondary dwellings permitted in Institutional designation**= Addition of ~83 dwelling units**
- Guidelines for temporary use permits for tiny homes and recreational vehicles has been added.

Freshwater Protection and Hazard Areas

- Freshwater hazard mapping, resulting from the freshwater footprint analysis plays a major role in limiting increases in density in freshwater hazard areas. Related mapping has been added to the OCP.

More detailed changes are identified in the Gabriola Draft OCP Companion Document in Attachment 2.

Land Use Bylaw Update Process

An important part of this project is the update to the Land Use Bylaw for consistency with the new Official Community Plan. In support of this process, staff will provide the LTC with a list of proposed changes at their July LTC meeting. Staff will use this list to guide LTC amendments.

Other Items for Review

At the March 23, 2026 LTC meeting and the April 5, 2026 meeting there were two items identified by the LTC for staff to provide clarity on and consider during the OCP drafting process. These were: review of Gabriola population projections and review of the Gabriola Enterprise Report.

Gabriola population projections - the population projections previously provided to the LTC and the community were preliminary. The revised population projections, included in the Community Context section of the OCP, are based on linear, logarithmic, and regional step-down approaches. Staff recognize that these projections, as well as those provided in the most recent Housing Needs Report, have limitations, as demographic trends and growth patterns can change over time, and the regional step-down approach is not an effective measure for the Island context.

For this reason, the OCP policy development approach has focused specifically on identifying ways to address the need for more affordable housing, as opposed to addressing projected population growth specifically, while seeking to ensure that any additional density is only supported in areas where it will have the least negative impact on the environment, groundwater systems, and cultural heritage, and have accessible and clean freshwater over time.

Gabriola Enterprise Report - The Gabriola Enterprise report provided a gap analysis related to business development on Gabriola Island and introduces the concept of an “Enterprise Zone”. The consideration of an “Enterprise Zone” is something that could be incorporated into the Land Use Bylaw review. If it is outside the currently designated Commercial and Industrial area, the designation of an area to support an Enterprise Zone would need to be contemplated as part of the OCP review. If there is a proposed location, staff can provide analysis of including this in a commercial designation prior to first reading.

Other Process Updates

Archaeological Overview Assessment – The 2026/27 business case for the OCP/LUB review included \$25,000 for and Archaeological Overview Assessment (AOA) for Gabriola Island. The need for an AOA was identified through engagement with Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN). The AOA with preliminary field reconnaissance will cost much more than the \$25,000 allocated. For this reason, the LTC supported staff recommendation to apply for additional funding through the Real Estate Foundation. Unfortunately, the application for funding was unsuccessful. Islands Trust staff will be working with SFN staff to identify next steps.

Update of Steep Slope Mapping – One item that has come up many times throughout the OCP engagement process is the inaccuracy of the existing steep slope mapping upon which the current steep slope DPA is based. This mapping has been updated. The new DPA boundaries are identified in the DPA map in Schedule C. A comparison between the new DPA boundaries and the previous is identified in Attachment 4.

ANALYSIS

Islands Trust Policy Statement:

The OCP draft has been create to be consistent with the existing Islands Trust Policy Statement as well as consider the current draft of the new Islands Trust Policy Statement.

Land Use Bylaw:

The land use bylaw will be updated to ensure consistency with the draft OCP. Readings of the Land Use Bylaw will be sequenced with the OCP.

Islands Trust Conservancy:

The Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) has already provided some input into the draft OCP. There will be further engagement with the ITC prior to first reading

Agency and First Nations Consultation

Referral of amendment or repeal of an Official Community Plan by the LTC to “*persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected*” is required under the *Local Government Act (LGA)*. In the case of the Gabriola OCP, staff are recommending the Islands Trust standard 90-day referral period. This would begin at the end of May, providing opportunity to address input by the Gabriola LTC meeting on September 3rd , 2026 when second reading is being proposed. There will be further opportunity for engagement with relevant agencies and First Nations prior to public hearing and third reading.

Staff of the Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) have already had an opportunity to review the OCP draft with Islands Trust staff. The draft will be sent to a number of other Nations with interest in the Gabriola Island Planning Area.

Referral Agencies and Organizations, and First Nations are identified below:

Referral Agencies and Organizations:

Regional District of Nanaimo
Island Health Authority
Ministry of Transport and Transit
Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Ministry of Water Land and Resource Stewardship
Agricultural Land Commission
BC Ferries Corporation
School District 68

Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department
Gabriola Advisory Planning Commission
Gabriola Health and Wellbeing Collaborative
Gabriola Transportation Society
Sustainable Gabriola
Gabriola Land and Trail Trust
Gabriola Chamber of Commerce

First Nations:

Cowichan Tribes
Halalt First Nation
Lyackson First Nation
Penelakut Tribe
Chemainus First Nation

Semiahmoo First Nation
Snuneymuxw First Nation
Stz’uminus First Nation
Ts’uubaa-asatx First Nation

Public Engagement

As per the communication plan endorsed by the LTC at the March 23rd, 2026 meeting, public engagement will take the form of: a community meeting on May 21st, and staff and Trustee presence at the Saturday market on a number of Saturdays to be determined. Community members can provide their direct feedback via northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca . All feedback will be public. Community members are encouraged to provide group responses. Guidance on providing feedback is included in the companion document and will be available on the project webpage.

Rationale for Recommendation

While there has been extensive public engagement contributing to the development of Gabriola's draft OCP review, it is important to provide the community with time to review the draft OCP prior to first reading.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1. Request Changes to the Project Charter** – The LTC may choose to change the timing of readings and other steps identified in the project charter.
- 2. Request Changes to the Draft OCP** – The LTC may request changes to the draft OCP. The revised draft will be posted on the project webpage.
- 3. Request Additional Organizations and Agencies receive referral** – The LTC may identify additional organizations and agencies for referral.
- 4. Request Additional Public Engagement** – The LTC may request additional public engagement. This may be challenging to support given budget and limited staff availability.

NEXT STEPS

If the recommendations are endorsed staff will:

- Send out referrals to identified agencies, organizations and First Nations;
- Present Land Use Bylaw list of proposed changes at the July LTC meeting;
- Complete the draft of the Development Application Information Bylaw (DAI);
- Set up webpage for OCP review to include OCP draft and guidance for feedback;
- Make copies of the draft OCP available at the Gabriola Islands Trust office and the library;
- Prepare the bylaw for first reading in July.

Submitted By:	Narissa Chadwick, RPP MCIP, Island Planner	May 12, 2026
Concurrence:	Renée Jamurat, RPP MCIP, Regional Planning Manager	May 13, 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Project Charter
2. Draft Gabriola OCP Companion Document
3. Draft Gabriola OCP
4. Draft Steep Slope Boundary Comparison Map

Gabriola Island Official Community Plan(OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) Review (Phase 3) - Project Charter

Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee (LTC)

Date: March 2026 (Version 7)

Purpose: To explore, through targeted engagement specific questions related to key topics relevant to the OCP and LUB review and begin to draft OCP policies and related LUB changes needed to for consistency with OCP policies .

Background: An OCP describes the long-term vision for a community, through policy statement that guide decisions on planning and land use. An LUB contains regulations to implement the OCP policies. The Gabriola OCP has not been updated since 1997 and the LUB since 1999. The Gabriola Island OCP and LUB Comprehensive Review will address a number of issues of importance to the Gabriola Community. In Phase 1 (2023/24) helped to identify vision and values of the community. Phase 2 (2402/25) explored, though focussed public engagement, specific questions related to different topics. A freshwater footprint was developed. Part 3 focusses on the writing, review and approval of the new OCP, a Development Approvals Information (DAI) Bylaw to support OCP policy as updates to the LUB to ensure constancy.

Objectives

Through targeted and focussed engagement on specific topic areas, begin to draft OCP policies and LUB based on the values and principles emerging from Phase 1.

In Scope

- First Nations Engagement.
- Public engagement
- LUB changes for consistency OCP policies
- DAI bylaw to support OCP policy implementation

Out of Scope

- New DPA mapping
- Substantial LUB amendments

Workplan Overview

Deliverable/Milestone	Date
First Nations consultation	ongoing
Milestone: LTC Review of draft policy language	April 2026
Community Meeting	April/May 2026
Public Engagement - review of OCP draft policy language	April – June 2026
LUB update and DAI creation for consistency	March – 2026
Milestone: First Reading OCP and LUB	April-July 2026
Legal Review as needed	April 2026 – July 2026 – September 2026
Public Review of draft bylaws/referrals	April 2026 – July 2026 – September 2026
AOA Initiated	September January 2026
Milestones: OCP – Second Reading LUB – First and Second Reading DAI – First, Second Readings	September 2026
Milestones: OCP – PH + Third Reading; LUB - First, Second, Third Reading; DAI – Third Reading	Winter 2026/27

Project Team

Regional Planning Manager	Renée Jamurat
Regional Planning Team Project Lead	Narissa Chadwick
Gabriola Island Planner	Stephen Baugh
Planning Team Assistant	Shalini Nakai

Budget

Budget Sources:		
26/27	Communication and Engagement	\$6,000
	Arch Overview Ass.	\$25,000
	Legal + contingency	\$4,000
TOTAL		\$35,000

Gabriola Draft OCP Companion Document

May 2026

Background

What is the Purpose of this Document?

The purpose of this document is to help guide the Gabriola LTC and others interested in reviewing the first draft of the Gabriola Plan Area OCP. It provides guidance on how draft OCP is different from the existing OCP and provide rationale for the changes.

While staff have attempted to guidance on differences between the existing and the draft OCP, every specific change may not have been identified. This would be very challenging given the significant change in format. This document may evolve as question from the public and the LTC emerge. The most updated version of the document will be posted on the project webpage.

What is the Purpose of an OCP?

An Official Community Plan (OCP) in the Islands Trust Area is a long-term plan that guides **how land is used** and **how future development can proceed** on the islands.

Unlike most local governments in British Columbia, the Islands Trust has a special mandate to preserve and protect the unique island environment, which means protecting ecosystems, shorelines, water resources, and the rural character of the islands is a central focus of the plan.

Another important difference is that the Islands Trust does not provide infrastructure or services such as water systems, sewer systems, roads, or garbage collection- these are delivered by other levels of government or by service providers. As a result, this OCP focuses mainly on land use decisions and environmental protection rather than managing services. The OCP must align with higher level policies, including the Local Government Act, the Islands Trust Act, and the Islands Trust Policy Statement.

The OCP provides direction not only for where and how growth may occur, but also helps shape the type and scale of development that is appropriate in different areas of the islands. In this way, the OCP reflects community values while supporting the shared responsibility to care for the islands for the long term.

When is an OCP Used?

An OCP is used to guide decision-making about land use and development over the long term. It provides a framework for evaluating proposals such as rezoning applications, subdivision plans, and development permits to ensure they align with the community's vision and policies. Local Trust Committees refer to the OCP when considering changes to land use regulations, helping ensure consistency, transparency, and fairness in decision-making.

The OCP is also used by residents, landowners, developers, First Nations and other agencies to understand what types of development are supported in specific areas, as well as the environmental and community priorities that should be considered. While it does not regulate land directly (this is done through zoning bylaws), the OCP sets the direction for those regulations and helps guide future updates.

In addition, the OCP is used as a reference point for planning over time. As community needs evolve or new challenges emerge, such as climate change or housing pressures, the OCP may be reviewed and updated to ensure it continues to reflect current priorities and conditions.

Why Has the OCP Been Reviewed?

The Gabriola Official Community Plan (OCP) has not been updated since 1997. Since then, a number of important changes have taken place that affect the community and how planning decisions need to be made today:

- **Population growth:** The island has grown by about 1,000 people (from ~3,500 in 1996 to ~4,500 in 2021), increasing overall pressure on land and natural systems.
- **Rising housing costs:** Home prices have increased significantly (from roughly \$200,000 in the late 1990s to \$700,000+ today), reducing affordability and making it harder to maintain a diverse community. This impacts both paid and volunteer service delivery.
- **Ageing population:** Gabriola's population is now significantly older, which affects housing needs, transportation, health services, and volunteer capacity.
- **Changing housing patterns:** There are fewer entry-level and rental housing options, with more reliance on secondary suites and smaller-scale housing forms.
- **Increased development pressure:** More demand for housing has led to greater complexity in balancing growth, water availability, and protection of environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Environmental change and awareness:** There is greater understanding of climate change impacts such as drought, wildfire risk, and ecosystem stress, increasing the focus on protecting water and natural systems.

- **Infrastructure and service constraints:** While the Islands Trust does not provide services, limitations in water supply, transportation, and emergency response are increasingly important planning considerations.
- **First Nations interests and reconciliation:** There is now much greater awareness of, and commitment to, working with First Nations, including respecting supporting government-to-government relationships in land use planning.

Together, these changes mean the OCP needs to be updated to better reflect current conditions, community values, and long-term sustainability goals.

To What Extent Has Public Input Been Incorporated in the Draft?

A large part of this project was focussed on gathering public input. The input received from the public in numerous ways, as identified below, has been considered in every part of the development of the OCP draft. In addition to letters and information shared with the Gabriola LTC public engagement involved the following:

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

- Online survey (363 respondents)
- Group led engagement events (200 community members engaged)
- Community meeting (40+ community members attended)

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

Part 1 - Reviewing the key principles emerging from the Gabriola Visioning 2050 engagement

- Survey (163 Survey respondents)
- Summer engagement at markets and events

Part 2 - Engaging the community in topic-focussed discussion.

- Survey (590 respondents)
- Focus groups on the following themes: connectivity, economy, environment, housing, resources stewardship, water. Focus group reviewed draft policies.
- Methodology and data collection for the water balance project.

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

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

Have First Nations Been Consulted in the Process?

Staff have been working with the staff of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. The LTC allocated funding to the Nation to support this engagement. This engagement has enabled staff to understand some of the key interests of the Nation. In particular, the interest in protecting the environment and cultural heritage. Staff will continue to work directly with the staff for SFN through the review of the draft to assist with review by their Chief and Council. Other Nations with interests in the Plan Area will be engaged in the formal referral process.

Is There Still Time for Additional Feedback to be incorporated into the Draft?

As indicated in the timeline below, there are a number of public engagement opportunities. The engagement plan presented to the LTC on March 23, 2026 provides more detail on these opportunities.

Gabriola Island Official Community Plan Review Timeline



 = public engagement opportunities

Key things to think about when providing feedback:

- Review the OCP and the companion document to familiarize yourself with the content.
- Provide focussed feedback. Quoting the OCP policy number is helpful.
- The OCP focusses on what is within the Islands Trust jurisdiction. While comments on the advocacy and implementation section are welcome it is important to remember that collaboration will be needed and LTC resources are limited.
- What part of the OCP is your comment related to:
 - Format?
 - Content? Do you have feedback on:
 - What permitted in a specific land use designation?
 - How proposals to change use and density are to be evaluated?

- Who should be engaged (and how) to help implement the aspects of the Gabriola 2050 vision that the LTC can not directly implement?

Feedback can be sent to: northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca

OCP Changes

Key changes to OCP:

New Format - The OCP has been designed to make it easier for community to understand and for Trustees and Staff to use. The previous format mixed context, goals, designation, criteria for evaluating changes to use and density, and advocacy policies throughout the OCP. The revised draft separates the document in to distinct parts:

Why? (Part 1) - Community Context; Planning Context; Community Vision, Values and Goals

What? Where? (Part 2) - Land Use Designations (how the land can be used currently)

How? (Part 2 & 3) - Policies Related to Future Development Decisions (what can be changed and how it can be can be changed)

Who? (Part 4) – Implementation and Advocacy (next steps and collaboration needs)

Summary of Highlights:

Document Structure and Community Values

- The format of the OCP has been changed to increase ease of use.
- A community context section has been added.
- A planning context section has been added.
- There is increased focus on consideration of First Nations data and input.
- Criteria for evaluating proposals for changes in use and density are extensive and connected directly to community values.
- An implementation and advocacy section has been included to encourage work to support the Gabriola 2050 vision which is both within and outside of the Islands Trust's jurisdiction

Subdivision and Density Changes

- Outright subdivision permission has been removed by increasing minimum lot size for subdivisions aimed at creating private lots. Rezoning will be required for subdivision to support interests that are not identified to be of community benefit. (= reduction of X permitted units)
- Changes have been made to subdivision approach to make it easier to subdivide for community benefit (eg. affordable housing, protection of environment and cultural heritage, community service use).
- There is increased flexibility to rezone areas to support multiple units in areas outside freshwater hazard areas.

Housing and Additional Units

- Permission for dwellings accessory to institutional use provided.
- Lots in the Agricultural Zone above 2 hectares are permitted to have one secondary suite and one accessory dwelling unit (in line with provincial regulations) in areas outside the freshwater hazard area.
- Increases in total units (existing buildout – density removed due to changes in subdivision policy + (additional secondary units in Agricultural Zone + accessory dwelling unit permitted in Institutional zone) permitted is ~83 units.

Freshwater Protection and Hazard Areas

- Freshwater hazard mapping, resulting from the freshwater footprint project plays a major role in limiting increases in density in freshwater hazard areas. Related mapping has been added to the OCP.

Broad Changes

Changes that are related to broad level considerations that impact the whole OCP are identified in Table 1. Changes to specific areas of the OCP will be identified in comparison tables found under each OCP theme below.

Table 1: Broad Changes

Current OCP	Proposed Change	Rationale
Objectives are related to each area of land use.	Objectives link directly to OCP Goals which link directly to values.	This ties the objectives directly to the overall goals and the vision and values identified by the community.
Uses in all zones – There are references to some uses (eg. public park and community care facility) that can be located in any zone.	Reference to things that can occur in all zones removed.	Unless it is explicitly stated that a use is should not be prohibited in a zone it is permitted.

<p>Climate Targets – Climate targets are required by the province. Current climate targets are based on previous provincial guidance and are unrealistic.</p>	<p>Section 2.3. - Climate targets have been aligned with the goals and are connected to things that can be measured.</p>	<p>The proposed targets satisfy the provincial requirement and provide something the community and the LTC can move toward realistically.</p>
<p>Criteria for evaluating proposed changes are identified throughout the OCP.</p>	<p>Section 2.5 -Criteria for changes to use and density are clearly identified and listed under each goal.</p>	<p>This approach makes it easier for applicants to understand how their applications will be evaluated and easier for staff and trustees to know how to find and/or change the policies related to evaluation criteria.</p>
<p>Reference to other jurisdiction policy is throughout the OCP.</p>	<p>These references have been removed in instances where adherence to these regulations is required.</p>	<p>Reference to policies that must be adhered to is redundant and can create inconsistencies in the OCP if external policies change and the OCP is not updated to reflect those changes.</p>
<p>Policies that read like regulations exist throughout the OCP</p>	<p>Removed. As part of the OCP review process the land use bylaw will be updated to ensure consistency.</p>	<p>OCPs should not contain policies that read like narrowly focussed regulations. This limits flexibility and leads to additional process if they need to be changed.</p>
<p>Advocacy Policies are identified throughout the document.</p>	<p>Replacement of advocacy policies with section 4.4 Advocacy which aligns OCP goals with Advocacy actions recognizing the importance of collaboration.</p>	<p>Advocacy policies hold little weight in an OCP unless there is commitment to follow up. The new approach is an invitation to all interested and influential parties to help support Gabriola’s vision and values. This section incorporates some of the public feedback that could not be incorporated in other sections.</p>
<p>Freshwater Footprint maps not included.</p>	<p>Freshwater Footprint maps that have been added to the Map Schedule are the freshwater hazard map (Schedule D) and</p>	<p>The freshwater footprint analysis, based on the assessment of a variety of data, was a part of the OCP review project. The maps</p>

	the groundwater recharge map (Schedule E).	included are maps that are referred to in the OCP.
Maps are included in the body of the OCP as well as schedules.	Maps that are referred to in policy are in the schedules section of the OCP. Other maps are in the appendix.	This approach is consistent with best practices.
First Nations interest acknowledgement is limited.	More detailed acknowledgement of first nations context and settlement history as well as integration of interests. This was informed by engagement with Snuneymuxw First Nation.	“Integrating First Nations interests” was identified as one of the key community values and is a focus for the Islands Trust in general.
Total buildout (potential total units) base on policies within the existing OCP is ~4120	Total buildout base on draft OCP is ~83 unit greater than the existing. This includes removal of potential number of primary units and related secondary units based on subdivision potential and increase number of secondary dwelling units (secondary to principal dwelling) and accessory dwelling units (accessory to use other than residential).	There was strong community interest in increasing diversity of housing. The approach taken in the draft OCP provides increased opportunity to residential, institutional and commercial property owners to build rental units and/or additional units for family members and caretakers.

Why? - Community Context; Planning Context; Community Vision, Values (Part 1)

Community Context – Provides over view of key aspects of the community including population and demographics, natural features, economy and service needs. Of note is the addition of a section on Indigenous context and history which acknowledges a commitment to a relationship-centred approach to land use planning and stewardship in the Local Trust Area. As well, the section on groundwater resources which identifies the work that was done on the Freshwater Footprint which was a part of the OCP review process.

Planning Context – A section on planning context as it related to Provincial Legislation and the Islands Trust Policy statement has been included. This will be something to be adopted across the Islands Trust Area as OCPs are updated.

Vision and Values – The vision and values are the backbone of the OCP. They were developed through extensive community engagement which included an online survey, group led events and community meetings.

What? Where? - Land Use Designations (Part 2)

Land use designations can be seen as the foundation of an OCP. They identify what types of uses can occur where on the island.

How the use of land on Gabriola has been perceived has evolved over time from a focus on settlement and resource extraction to a need for the preservation and protection of the natural environment and cultural heritage as development impacts increase. Increasing population has also raised concerns about available groundwater and the impact of septic systems.

Proposed changes to land use designations and what uses can be accommodated in these designations addresses some of the change in perspective over time. In the draft OCP, policies that apply to more than one designation are identified in 2.4.2 General Land and Marine Use Policies. The remainder are identified under the designation they apply to. All changes are identified in Table 2.

Table 2: Policies Related to Land Use Designation – What Uses Can Occur Where

Current OCP	Proposed Change	Rationale
General Land and Marine Policies – Applying to multiple designations		
There are no policies related explicitly to cemeteries and green burial.	2.4.2.8 Cemeteries and Green Burial places limitation on use and considers groundwater impacts	Without an explicit policy any area could be rezoned to accommodate cemeteries and green burial (this is a consideration for the LTC).
Permits Bed and Breakfast as a home occupation.	2.4.2.2.2/3 Tourist accommodation clarification provided. B&B defined in definitions.	Without clear definition of what is permitted bylaw enforcement can be challenging.
Cisterns for new builds are not required.	2.4.2.9.3 Cistern requirements for all new builds	Policy has been added given the concerns raised regarding groundwater quality and quantity.

There is no requirements for potable rainwater catchment systems.	2.4.2.9.4 Potable rainwater catchment systems consistent with the installation and maintenance requirements of Islands Health are required for all secondary dwelling located in freshwater hazard areas.	This provides the opportunity to support existing permissions for secondary dwellings in the freshwater hazard area as well as accessory dwelling units in commercial and institutional designation while addressing the need protect vulnerability of the ground water.
Provides some policies related to protection of archeological sites.	2.4.2.10 Protection of arch sites section focusses policies	Provides clearer direction including what to do if remains area found.
Considers need to address fire hazard.	2.4.2.11 Fire Safety section focusses on fire hazard.	More specific accommodations to address fire hazard are identified. This will be reviewed with the fire chief .
Does not speak specifically to shoreline modification	2.4.2.12.2 identifies restrictions on shoreline armouring encouraging nature-based approach	Hard armouring to prevent shoreline erosion is detrimental to the environment and can cause more erosion than natural approaches in may instances.
Minimum lot sizes permit further subdivision on the island.	2.4.2.13 Subdivision permission for private lots is removed outright by increasing minimum lot size. Subdivision for private use will require rezoning. Subdivision for community benefit, excluding housing, are exempt from minimum lot size and will not require rezoning for subdivision.	This approach has been introduced as a means of focussing creation of additional lots only for community need which includes environmental protection, cultural heritage protection, community service and affordable housing.
Parks and Protected Areas Designations		
Parks and Outdoor Recreation section includes a lot of background information and map of areas. Policies predominately related to park allocation. "Park" is the related designation.	Existing Park designation split into 2 designations: 2.4.3.1 Park (P) and 2.4.3.2 Conservation (C) Map of parks and protected moved into Appendix. Background info moved to community context. Site specific changes are identified on the map in Schedule B (highlighted in green).	LTC requested a conservation designation for Elder Cedar and other locations.

Stewardship Designations		
<p>Resource (R), established to help maintain the rural landscape. Area where transfer of density can apply.</p> <p>This designation also applies to the surrounding islands that are part of this planning area.</p>	<p>Resource (R) replaced by Rural Stewardship (RS) and Small Island Stewardship (SI)- maintains the spirit of protecting larger lots and small islands, focussing on stewardship and conservation while maintaining residential use.</p> <p>Density transfer details have been removed as new minimum lot sizes remove outright density.</p>	<p>Community input reflects seeing the land as an asset to look after to ensure long term sustainability as opposed to resources to extract.</p> <p>With proposed changes to subdivision policy there will no longer be density to transfer.</p>
Sustainable Resource Designations		
<p>Agriculture (A) single dwelling permitted (not consistent with LUB which permits secondary suite and manufactured home).</p>	<p>Permitted dwellings in line with ALR permissions on lots that are at least 2.0 hectares and outside the freshwater hazard area.</p> <p>Outside the freshwater hazard area one principle dwelling, one secondary suite and one detached secondary dwelling on lots 2.0 hectares or larger.</p>	<p>Consistency with ALR policy will support housing flexibly on agricultural land. Providing restrictions in the freshwater hazard area and on smaller lots is in line with permission in the rural residential designation.</p>
<p>Forestry (F) permits one single dwelling (not consistent with the LUB which permits secondary suite).</p>	<p>Flexibility to permit secondary suite or detached secondary unit.</p> <p>Permits “passive recreation” (eg, hiking birding etc).</p>	<p>The retention of land for sustainable forestry was identified through public engagement with a keen interest in wildfire resiliency.</p>
Residential – General Polices		
<p>Density Bank collects unused residential density from rezonings or voluntary donations and reallocates them to support affordable multi-unit housing. Multi unit housing can only be permitted using the density in the bank.</p>	<p>Removal of density bank resulting from the change in subdivision approach and creating more detailed and clear criteria related to rezoning.</p>	<p>With the changes to subdivision approach there will be no outright density that could be transferred to a density bank.</p>
<p>Multi-unit housing restricted to “affordable housing for special needs residents, seniors”</p>	<p>POLICY 2.5.2.2.2 Changes to “non market housing for special needs residents living with physical and cognitive disabilities, seniors 60 years or older or moderate and low-</p>	<p>Public feedback in surveys, community meetings and focus groups identified a need for more housing flexibility. It was clear that even middle income individuals are</p>

	income persons to be secured through a housing agreement”	challenged to find secure housing on Gabriola.
Flexible Housing policies, allowing rezoning for multiple dwellings within a max combined floor area don't exist.	POLICY 2.4.2.1.2 permits rezoning to create zone to allow multiple small units with in a maximum floor area as opposed to one large unit. POLICY 2.4.2.1.3 restricts area that this can occur.	These changes enable a more flexible use of lots where there is groundwater water and there is limited impact to the environment and cultural heritage. The LTC has not identified areas for these approaches at this time. That would be a separate project.
Secondary dwelling units – secondary suite permitted on parcels 2.0 ha or larger	POLICY 2.4.2.1.4 permits rezoning to allow secondary dwelling units on lots <2 ha outside the freshwater hazard zone.	
Home Occupation – permits bed and breakfast, does not specify whether accessory dwelling can be considered for short-term vacation rental.	POLICY 2.4.2.2.3 Permitting short-term vacation rental for dwelling (includes primary dwelling and secondary dwelling) through TUP.	This provides clarity related to short term vacation rentals.
Residential – Designation Specific		
Small Rural Residential (SRR) designation for smaller lots	POLICY 2.4.3.6.1 – 2.4.3.6.3 Rural Residential (RR) Designation – one designation for both smaller and larger residential lots. Differences related to secondary unit permissions are identified.	Simplifies approach. Difference only existed because of restriction based on size of lot. These differences will be identified in the zoning.
Large Rural Residential (LRR) designation for larger lots		
Multi-Dwelling Affordable Housing (MAH) designation for special needs, seniors and low to moderate income families.	MAH and SSN has been combined. The designation is Multi-Unit Housing (MUH).	This approach provides flexibility overtime without compromising the interests in providing housing where it is most needed.
Seniors and Special Needs (SSN) designation for seniors and special needs (2 locations)		
Commercial		
Commercial Activity (General) policy supports one dwelling unit per parcel.	POLICY 2.4.3.9.1 provides a limit on max size of residential to half commercial floor area but does not limit number of units .	Surveys, focus groups and the Housing APC encouraged residential floor area to be proportional to commercial.
Village Commercial (C(V)) designation is the		

focus of commercial activity	Requirements for potable water system in freshwater hazard area will apply.	
District Commercial (C(D)) includes two specific sites outside village	2.4.3.11 Secondary Commercial (SC) combines both District Commercial and Local Commercial.	This approach is more consistent with best practices and does not impact what is permitted in these areas.
Local Commercial (C(L)) includes four sites identified in OCP	Site specific changes related to commercial zoning are identified in Schedule B.	Site specific designation changes are introduced to support existing use.
Institutional applies to a variety of institutional uses. No residential permitted.	Permits same variety of institutional use and residential units to a maximum of half the total floor area of all institutional buildings. Requirements for potable water system in freshwater hazard area will apply	This provides the opportunity for service providers to provide housing to staff. This can be one of the most effective ways to support affordable housing given that service providers are in a good position to receive community support.
Marine		
Marine designation applies to the waters within the plan area.	The area designated “Marine” has been expanded. Permissions in the Marine area have been strengthened to protect the marine and foreshore, including the consideration of setbacks that consider risks.	The marine environment is fragile as well as changing. Efforts are required to address impacts to the environment as well as infrastructure.
Ferry Terminal designation does not exist	Ferry terminal designation that addresses onshore and marine uses has been created.	A specific designation recognizes the important and unit use in the ferry terminal designation.

How?-Policies Related to Future Development Decisions (Part 2&3&4)

Policies related to future development decisions include evaluation criteria for :

- all proposed changes to use and density as they relate to community values
- subdivision
- specific to designations
- development variance permits
- crown lease referrals
- temporary use permits
- development permits for development permit areas

Policies related to future development information also includes:

- using development approval information
- implementing the freshwater footprint
- considering heritage conservation areas

Previous Designation	Proposed Changes	Rationale
Criteria for evaluating proposed changes to use and density based on community values		
<p>Criteria is scattered throughout the OCP as it related to specific designations.</p>	<p>The criteria identified in this section are to be considered with all changes to use and density where applicable .</p>	<p>This approach provides a direct link to community values and help reduce repetition of criteria in the document. This</p>
Subdivision		
<p>Subdivision reflects traditional lot size requirements and average lot sizes as a result there are policies relating to lot averaging and lot size maximums. No exceptions for community benefit subdivision.</p>	<p>Rezoning to create additional lots that are not a community benefit are not encouraged. Any rezoning to facilitate subdivision will require a community amenity.</p>	<p>Subdivision is one of the most impactful mechanisms for increasing housing density and shaping settlement patterns. Subdivision potential has historically been allocated without fully accounting for environmental features and functions, groundwater constraints, cultural heritage, or long-term community values. The LTC's main mechanism to limit subdivision is establishing a minimum lot size that results in minimal or no subdivision potential. This provides the opportunity for a full evaluation of subdivision proposals through a rezoning process.</p>

Lot Size exceptions for parks	2.4.2.13 Lot size exemptions for lots create for park, heritage conservation, community service. 2.4.2.13.2 Lot size for single unit affordable or non-market housing should not be less than 1ha . Lot size for multi-unit non-market housing should not be more than 2ha.	This helps to facilitate the donation of land for the protection of cultural heritage and the environment as well a for community service and non-market housing. Rezoning to subdivide would not be required.
Designation specific criteria		
Multi-Family housing criteria does not specify attached or detached units.	Multi-unit housing evaluation provides criteria for detached small units as well as other types of multi-unit housing.2.5.2.2.1 -2.5.2.2.6.	Community engagement identified support for all types of multi-unit housing including clusters of small units.
Commercial and Tourism policies address a number of criteria that is contained in the proposed draft in 2.5.	There is additional focus on cumulative impacts as well as connection to residential area and active transportation routes 2.5.2.3.1 – 2.5.2.3.4	Community engagement highlighted importance of having easy access to amenities without the need to drive. This also supports climate action target policies.
Agriculture policies address a number of criteria that is contained in the proposed draft in 2.5.	Existing policies retained and simplified 2.5.2.4.1.	Simplifies OCP policies making it easier for properties holder to understand and trustees and staff to use.
Forestry policies address a number of criteria that is contained in the proposed draft in 2.5.	Existing policies retained and simplified 2.5.2.4.2.	
Marine policies address a number of criteria that is contained in the proposed draft in 2.5.	Existing policies supported in 2.5.2.6	
Development Variance Permits		
Specific evaluation criteria does not exist	Includes general polices related to development variance permits 2.6.	Increases understanding of criteria for property owners, trustees and staff.
Crown Lease Referrals		
Specific evaluation criteria does not exist.	Includes general polices related to crown lease referrals 2.7.	Increases understanding of criteria for property owners, trustees and staff.
Temporary use Permits (TUP)		
Guidance related to TUPs exists for a number of uses.	Addition of general guidelines for all TUP applications.	Update important to ensure that extraction of water for sale is limited.

TUP can only be applied for identified uses in specific locations.	<p>Changes to the TUP guidelines for “Extracting, Processing, and Sale of Water” introduced by the Islands Trust’s Freshwater Specialist.</p> <p>TUP for residential use of a tiny home on wheels or RV added.</p> <p>TUPs can be applied for any use in all designations except for SI and C.</p>	
Development Permit Areas		
Contains a number of development permit areas many of which are focussed on specific areas of the island.	<p>Priority DPAs are identified in 4.3.1.</p> <p>Updates have been made to DPA 4 – Flat Top Islands and DPA 3- Riparian Areas.</p> <p>New mapping has been introduced for DPA 7 - Escarpment Area.</p>	The creation of new DPAs were not within the scope of this project
Heritage Conservation Areas (HCA)		
Does not consider heritage conservation areas	Identifies heritage conservation area tool as and opportunity to protect indigenous cultural heritage. No HCAs have been created to date.	Provides an option to be considered as a step in implementing the goals of the proposed OCP.

Who? Advocacy (Part 4)

This proposed OCP focuses on the land use planning tools available to the Gabriola LTC to guide land use in the Plan Area. The main body of the plan does not contain actions that fall outside the Islands Trust’s jurisdiction. However, it is recognized that

achieving the Plan's goals, and advancing the broader interests of the community, will require partnership and collaboration with community organizations, other levels of government, First Nations, and other partners.

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



Islands Trust

DRAFT

**Gabriola Island
Official Community
Plan
2026**

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SCHEDULE A

Planning Context, Community Profile, Vision and Values

1 . PART ONE

1.1 Purpose, Structure and Application

1.1.1 Purpose of an Official Community Plan

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

1.1.2 Plan Structure

This plan is divided into four main parts:

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

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

PART 3- Guidelines for Development Permit Areas (DPAs).

PART 4 – Includes an identification of tools for supporting the implementation of Plan goals and objectives as well as advocacy directions.

ADDITIONAL SCHEDULES – Maps

APPENDIX – Includes definitions relevant to OCP

1.1.3 Legislative Authority

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

1.1.4 Amendment Procedure

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

1.1.5 Interpretation

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

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

In interpreting the objectives and policies of the Plan, the term “must” is used to denote that the indicated measure “must” be taken or applied. The term “should” indicates that the suggestion is intended as a guideline to apply or implement by the authority having jurisdiction. Appendix A to this Plan provides a set of definitions which apply to the interpretation of this Plan.

1.2 Community Context

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

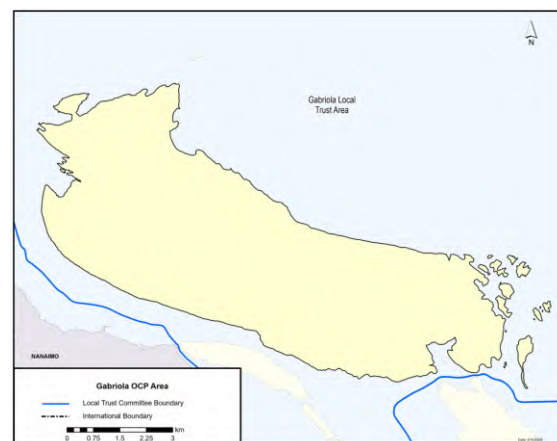
1.2.1 Location

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

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

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

Map 1: Gabriola Local Trust Area



Map 2: Gabriola Planning Area

1.2.2 Indigenous Context and Settlement History

The Gabriola Island Local Trust Area is located within the territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, Cowichan Tribes, Halalt First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Semiahmoo First Nation, Stz'uminus Nations and Ts'uubaa-asatx First Nation. The Snuneymuxw First Nation retains two reserve lots in the Gabriola area totalling about 1.4 hectares. This is the only reserve land on the Island. This limited land base is the result of historic colonial reserve allocation practices and does not reflect the scale or significance of First Nations connections to the island.

Archaeological evidence, such as village sites including shell middens, and petroglyphs as well as culturally modified trees and other cultural features, demonstrates an enduring Indigenous presence and relationship with the land and waters since time immemorial. Indigenous stewardship practices, including shellfish gardens and forest gardens, reflect sophisticated, place-based systems of sustainable resource management developed through generations of knowledge, observation, and care.

Patterns of colonial settlement, reserve allocation, subdivision, residential development, and protected area designation occurred without recognition of Indigenous title and rights. These patterns continue to shape land ownership and land use within the Local Trust Area. This Plan acknowledges this historical and ongoing context and affirms a commitment to advancing reconciliation in line with the Islands Trust's mandate.

Part of the plan area's heritage includes archaeological sites – the physical evidence of how and where people lived in the past. For 98% of the time people have lived in this area, no written records were made. Archaeological sites and oral tradition are the only vestiges of this rich history extending back many thousands of years. The Plan area contains recorded and non-recorded archaeological sites and due to their sensitive nature, the locations are not identified in this Plan.

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

On March 14, 2019, Islands Trust Council unanimously adopted the Reconciliation Declaration:

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

Islands Trust Council is committed to establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Islands Trust states a commitment to Reconciliation with the understanding that this commitment is a long-term relationship-building and healing process.

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

Within this context, a relationship-centred approach provides a guiding framework for land use planning, stewardship, and community decision-making in the Local Trust Area. For Gabriola Island, reconciliation is understood as an ongoing, place-based process grounded in listening, learning, and shared responsibility. It includes acknowledging Indigenous presence, rights, and responsibilities to the land and waters; protecting cultural and archaeological values; and working collaboratively to integrate First Nations' interests, knowledge, and stewardship practices into land use planning and decision-making. This approach supports the long-term health of the island and surrounding marine environment while fostering mutual understanding, respect, and shared care for place.

The Gabriola LTC plays an important role by integrating cultural heritage protection and ecological conservation into land use planning through strengthened policies, improved site protection, and respectful, ongoing engagement with First Nations.

Reconciliation as expressed by implementation of policies in this Plan does not alter ownership of private lands or existing legal interests. It guides how land use decisions are approached within the Local Trust Area.

1.2.3 Population and Demographics

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

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

While projections are estimates are subject to challenge based on methodology and can change overtime, growth is trending upward. Planning for future growth must therefore balance accommodating change with the island's environmental limits, infrastructure capacity, and community values.

1.2.4 Housing and Services Needs

The BC Provincial Government requires all local governments in BC to consider its most recent Housing Needs Report and housing information when amending OCPs. Based on the Islands Trust Housing Needs Assessment prepared in 2025, the projected housing need in the next five years is 367 additional housing units and 1,196 additional housing units in the next twenty years. This calculation is based on a portion of growth projections for the Nanaimo region which does not consider the unique nature of the Islands. Given the freshwater limitations and interests in preserving and protecting the environment on the island the provision of housing should be limited, and focussed on the type of housing that is needed most – non-market housing attainable by low and middle income residents.

Gabriola Island currently has approximately 589 vacant residentially zoned lots, however this does not suggest that true housing needs will be adequately addressed. A limited rental supply, rising property costs, and a growing proportion of residents on fixed or lower incomes has contributed to housing insecurity. The portion of households that experience core housing need¹ (270 units as indicated in 2021 Census), and projected population growth, combined with demographic aging, points to increasing demand for more diverse, accessible, and affordable housing options. Market conditions and affordability challenges limit the ability of existing housing supply to meet community needs.

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

1.2.5 Groundwater Resources

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

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

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

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

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

1.2.6 Natural Environment and Biodiversity

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

Approximately 12 percent of the island's land base is protected through parks, conserved lands, and conservation covenants, reflecting only a small fraction of the ecological sensitivity of island ecosystems and the importance of long-term stewardship. Data presented in the Islands Trust Conservancy Regional Conservation Plan for 2018-2027 indicated that the amount of land conversion in the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area was approaching the threshold for increased species loss within ecosystem types. In total there are 16.3 hectares of land protected by conservation covenant. The Islands Trust Conservancy protects the 65-hectare Elder Cedar (S'ul-hween X'pey) Nature Reserve, a site of significant ecological and cultural value.

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

Habitat loss and degradation through land conversion and development is a common threat for all these species, along with competition from invasive species, pollution and other contaminants, and climate change. Large scale industrial logging and gravel sandstone

extraction had huge impacts on the biodiversity, and clear cutting of forests during the early 1900s for homesteading and agriculture altered much of the landscape and natural water flows.

1.2.7 Local Economy and Income Levels

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

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

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

1.2.8 Transportation and Connectivity

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

Public transportation options on Gabriola Island are limited. A community bus provided by the Gabriola Community Bus Foundation (GERTIE), operates with limited hours and routes and is supported by a combination of grants, donations, capital funding, and tax support. As a result, most residents rely on private vehicles to get around and on BC Ferries for connection to Vancouver Island.

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

1.2.9 Community Spaces

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

1.2.10 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

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

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

Outdoor recreation opportunities extend beyond formal park boundaries and include courts, playing fields, school sites used for recreation, a privately operated golf course, public road ends, Crown foreshore access, and an extensive trail network. While the Islands Trust does not manage park operations, this Plan recognizes the importance of parks and open space and includes objectives and policies to guide their future protection and enhancement.

1.3 Land Use Planning Context

1.3.1 Policy Layers

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

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

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

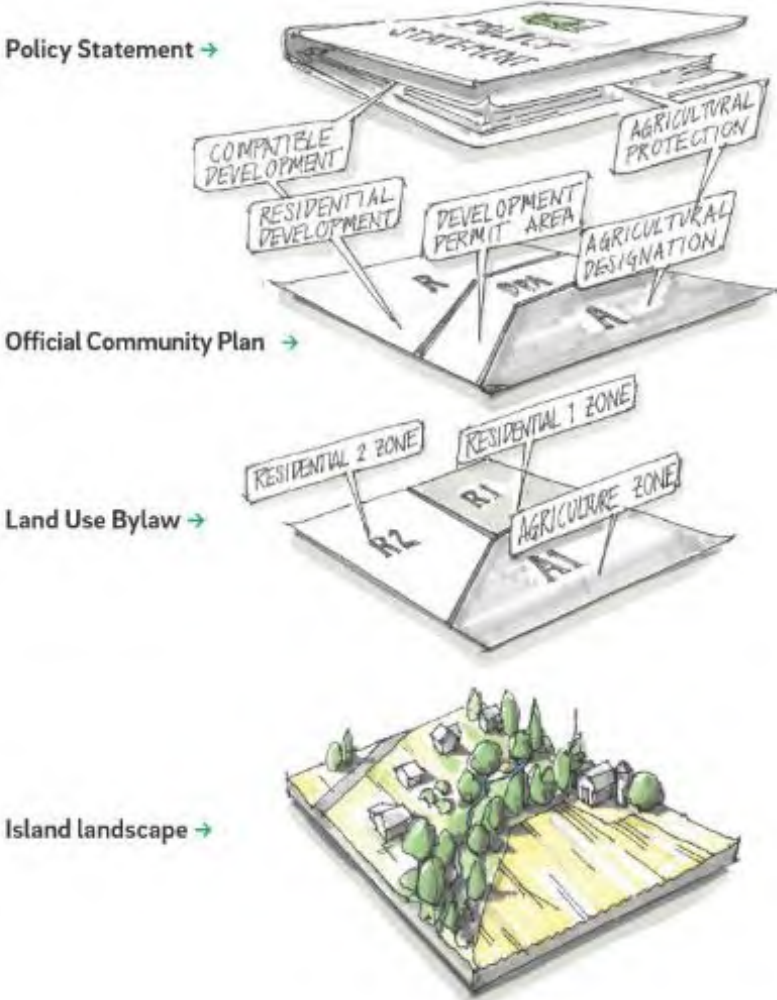


Figure1: Policy Layers

Legislative Framework

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

Once an OCP has been adopted, all decisions related to planning, subdivision, development, and land use matters must conform to the OCP. In accordance with the LGA, the OCP should be reviewed and updated every five years, incorporating public engagement to ensure that it continues to represent community objectives and addresses important and emerging issues and trends as they evolve over time.

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

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

1.3.2 The Islands Trust

In 1974, the Government of British Columbia established the *Islands Trust Act* to preserve and protect the Islands Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment against unrestrained growth and development. Islands Trust is a federated body responsible for the Trust Area, comprised of 13 major islands, more than 450 smaller islands, and the surrounding waters in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound. Islands Trust regulates local land use, works with other levels of government, and through the Islands Trust Conservancy, protects places of natural or

cultural significance. This unique governmental mandate is defined in Section 3 of the Islands Trust Act and is commonly referred to as the “Islands Trust Object.”

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

1.3.3 Islands Trust Priorities

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

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

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

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

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

low-to-moderate income earners, impacting community well-being and economic sustainability across the Trust Area.

1.3.4 Island’s Trust Policy Statement

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

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

1.3.5 The Development of the Plan

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

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

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

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

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

- **Part 1** - Reviewing the key principles emerging from the Gabriola Visioning 2050 engagement
 - Survey (163 Survey respondents)
 - Summer engagement at markets and events
- **Part 2** - Engaging the community in topic-focussed discussion.

- Survey (590 respondents)
- Focus groups on the following themes: connectivity, economy, environment, housing, resources stewardship, water. Focus group reviewed draft policies.
- Methodology and data collection for the water balance project.
- Engagement with Snuneymuxw First Nation continued

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

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

1.4 Guiding Vision, Values and Goals

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

1.4.1 Community Vision

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

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

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

Regional districts and provincial agencies provide essential infrastructure, services, and regulatory oversight that support local efforts and ensure alignment with broader public interests. Meaningful and ongoing collaboration with Indigenous Governing Bodies is fundamental, bringing Indigenous knowledge, values, and stewardship practices into planning and decision-making. Together, these partnerships create the conditions for a socially equitable, culturally vibrant, environmentally sustainable, and resilient Gabriola for generations to come.

1.4.2 Community Values

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PART TWO

Plan Goals, Objectives, Designations and Policies

2.1 Using This Plan

2.1.1 Policy Structure

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

This Part of the Plan includes:

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

2.2 Goals and Objectives

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

2.2.1 Integrating First Nations Interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.2.2 Protection of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.2.3 Responsible Resource Stewardship

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

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

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

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

Objective 2.2.3.4: Minimize the environmental and community impacts of mineral and aggregate extraction and processing by limiting such uses and ensuring responsible site management and restoration.

2.2.4 Community Resilience and Climate Readiness

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

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

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

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

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

Objective 2.2.4.5: Support transportation systems that reduce reliance on private automobiles while maintaining Gabriola’s rural island character.

2.2.5 Diversity and Community Wellbeing

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

Objective 2.2.5.1: Provide a range of housing options that meet the diverse needs of Gabriola residents, with attention to housing accessible to low and medium income residents and families.

Objective 2.2.5.2: Encourage housing forms and settlement patterns that compliment rural character and protect natural environments, Indigenous and archaeological heritage, biodiversity, and agricultural lands.

Objective 2.2.5.3: Support housing near commercial areas and community services where environmental impacts can be minimized and freshwater resources are sufficient.

Objective 2.2.5.4: Enable multi-unit non-market housing forms where compatible with community character, infrastructure capacity, and environmental protection.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.2.6 Collaboration, Transparency, and Shared Responsibility

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.3 Climate Action

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

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

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

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

2.3.1 Climate Mitigation Targets (Reducing GHG Emissions):

From 2026 levels:

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

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

POLICY 2.3.1.3: Increase trail development.

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

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

2.3.2 Climate Adaptation Targets (Increasing Climate Resilience) :

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

POLICY 2.3.2.2: All new buildings and infrastructure consider local hazards and long-term resilience.

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

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

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

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

2.4 Land and Marine Designations

2.4.1 Purpose

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

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

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

2.4.2 General Land and Marine Use Policies

The following policies apply to all applicable use designations. Designation specific policies are outlined in Section 2.4.3.

2.4.2.1 Residential Density Policies

POLICY 2.4.2.1.1: A secondary dwelling unit may not be subdivided from the principal dwelling unit under the *Land Title Act* or the *Strata Property Act*.

POLICY 2.4.2.1.2: This Plan supports flexible housing options by permitting two or more small dwellings within a maximum combined floor area on a lot as an alternative to one single large dwelling.

- The land use regulations may regulate areas of the island within which flexible housing may be permitted on a lot based on analysis of available data; and
- Land use regulations may establish overall floor area limits and the number of additional dwellings based on lot area.

POLICY 2.4.2.1.3: Areas designated and zoned for Flexible Housing should exclude lots:

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

POLICY 2.4.2.1.4: Flexible housing and other approaches to increasing the number of dwelling units close to the village commercial area and outside freshwater hazard areas, including

permitting secondary suites on lots equal to or smaller than 2 hectares and permitting a secondary suite and a detached secondary units on lots larger than 2 hectares, are encouraged where consistent with the exclusions in POLICY 2.4.2.1.3.

POLICY 2.4.2.1.5: Land use regulations should identify where detached secondary dwelling units must be located in relationship to the principal dwelling. Locating detached secondary dwelling units in close proximity to the principal dwelling is encouraged to reduce impact to the lot and facilitate sharing of well and septic system where feasible.

2.4.2.2 Home Occupation Use Policies

POLICY 2.4.2.2.1: A home occupation use should be permitted as an accessory use in all land use designations where a residential use is permitted. Land use regulations should establish conditions of use for home occupations, such as:

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

POLICY 2.4.2.2.2: Bed and Breakfast tourist accommodation use may be permitted as a home occupation on a lot where the home occupation operator resides in the legal dwelling where the bed and breakfast occurs.

POLICY 2.4.2.2.3: Short term vacation rental of a dwelling in its entirety should not be permitted as a home occupation and may be permitted through a temporary use permit (TUP).

2.4.2.3 Trails and Parks

POLICY 2.4.2.3.1: Public parks, trails, ecological reserves, and public utilities should be permitted in all land use designations.

POLICY 2.4.2.3.2: Where feasible, new trail proposals should connect public parks, waterfront access points, and existing trail systems.

POLICY 2.4.2.3.3: Trails may be secured through subdivision and rezoning applications, or voluntary measures, and should be legally registered on title by a right-of-way, easement, or other appropriate means.

POLICY 2.4.2.3.4: Parks and trail development and acquisition should be consistent with the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Parks and Trails Master Plan for Area B, where feasible.

POLICY 2.4.2.3.5: Trails and parks should incorporate wildfire risk reduction measures, including defensible space along trail corridors and fire-resistant landscaping in parklands adjacent to residential areas.

2.4.2.4 Marine Access

POLICY 2.4.2.4.1: Public boat launch facilities may be permitted in any land use designation providing waterfront access, subject to adequate parking and consideration of First Nations' interests.

2.4.2.5 Commercial and Light Industrial

POLICY 2.4.2.5.1: Industrial production that generates significant noise, vibration, odour, emissions, or heavy truck traffic and/or uses a significant amount of water are not permitted.

POLICY 2.4.2.5.2: The use of lands, buildings, or structures for the manufacturing or research of genetically engineered seeds, plants, or animals should not be permitted.

POLICY 2.4.2.5.3: Timeshare developments should not be permitted.

POLICY 2.4.2.5.4: Land-based airports, other than an emergency helicopter landing area, are not permitted.

2.4.2.6 Agricultural Use

POLICY 2.4.2.6.1: Agricultural uses should be permitted in all designations except for areas designated Parks and Protected Areas.

POLICY 2.4.2.6.2: Establish regulations to prohibit the removal of soil from or the deposition of soil where it would reduce the agricultural viability of the lot.

2.4.2.7 Aggregate Extraction

POLICY 2.4.2.8.1 Processing of mineral and aggregate resources is not permitted unless the product will be exclusively for local use.

POLICY 2.4.2.8.2: Bylaw amendment applications for new aggregate extraction facilities should not be supported.

2.4.2.8 Cemeteries and Green Burial

POLICY 2.4.2.8.1: Cemetery use, including green burial, should only be permitted in Institutional, Forestry and Park designations subject to an analysis of groundwater impacts.

2.4.2.9 Freshwater Sustainability

POLICY 2.4.2.9.1: Bylaw amendments for increases in density or intensity of use should demonstrate no adverse impacts to groundwater quality or quantity.

POLICY 2.4.2.9.2: The commercial sale of groundwater for use outside of the Plan Area should not be permitted.

POLICY 2.4.2.9.3: Land use regulations should require all new residential, commercial, and institutional development to incorporate cisterns for freshwater storage, sized to support water needs during prolonged drought conditions.

POLICY 2.4.2.9.4: Land use regulations should require potable rainwater catchment systems consistent with installation and maintenance requirements of Island Health for all secondary and accessory dwelling units located in freshwater hazard areas (see Schedule D);

2.4.2.10 Protection of Archaeological Sites

POLICY 2.4.2.10.1 Ground disturbance activities in areas of known or potential archaeological significance are subject to the requirements of the provincial *Heritage Conservation Act* and may require a provincial heritage alteration permit prior to site alteration or disturbance.

POLICY 2.4.2.10.2: Property owners undertaking ground disturbance must implement a chance find protocol, including the immediate cessation of work and notification of the Province and affected First Nations if archaeological materials are encountered.

POLICY 2.4.2.10.3: Early notification and engagement with the Snuneymuxw First Nation is encouraged when development or land alteration is proposed in areas of known or potential archaeological significance.

POLICY 2.4.2.10.4: Notification and engagement with the Snuneymuxw First Nation and the Province is required as a first step when archaeological remains are found on a property.

2.4.2.11 Fire Safety

POLICY 2.4.2.11.1: Fire safety measures must be considered with all new development, including:

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

2.4.2.12 General Siting and Use

POLICY 2.4.2.12.1: Land use regulations, including use, density, lot size, setbacks, and site coverage, should consider addressing the following:

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

POLICY 2.4.2.12.2: Shoreline modifications such as shoreline armoring should only be permitted when there is a threat to human health and wellbeing, and when managed retreat or nature-based approaches (e.g. green shores) are not possible.

POLICY 2.4.2.12.3: Establish setbacks for septic drainfields from the natural boundary of the sea and watercourses to prevent negative impacts to the environment, and slope instability along the shoreline.

POLICY 2.4.3.12.4: Freshwater cisterns should not be included in the calculation of lot coverage.

2.4.2.13 Subdivision

POLICY 2.4.2.13.1 The minimum lot size for subdivision resulting in additional lots should be 35 hectares, with the exception of subdivision solely for one, or a combination of, the following uses which may have a smaller minimum lot size:

- Park;
- Conservation;
- Community Use;

- Heritage conservation, including Indigenous cultural or historical heritage protection;
- Utilities;
- Public infrastructure; and
- Non-market housing

POLICY 2.4.2.13.2 Despite 2.4.2.13.1 minimum lot size established for single unit non-market housing must be a minimum of 1 hectare.

POLICY 2.4.13.2 Despite 2.4.13.1 minimum lot size established for multi-unit non-market housing must be a minimum of 2 hectares.

POLICY 2.5.2.1.3: Subdivision regulations may support lot consolidation, or boundary adjustments which do not increase the number of lots or subdivision potential.

POLICY 2.4.2.13.4: Subdivision regulations should require provision of transportation infrastructure to be designed to connect to and improve existing networks and contribute to island-wide active transportation objectives.

POLICY 2.4.2.13.5: Subdivision regulations should not permit new roads or modifications to existing roads to fragment agricultural land or environmentally sensitive areas.

POLICY 2.4.2.13.6: In areas where individual septic systems are adversely affecting the environment or the quality of water, subdivision regulations should require a sewer system for new development.

2.4.3 Policies Related to Specific Land Use Designations

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

Parks and Protected Areas

Park (P)
Conservation (C)

Small Island Stewardship (SI)

Sustainable Resource

Agriculture (A)
Forest Protection (FP)

Residential

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

Commercial

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

Institutional (IN)

Industrial (I)

Aggregate Deposit (AD)

Marine

Marine (M)
Ferry Terminal (FT)

Parks and Protected Area Designations

2.4.3.1 Park (P)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.1.1 In the Park designation, land use regulations:

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

2.4.3.2 Conservation (C)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.2.1: In the Conservation designation, land use regulations should only permit wilderness recreation, ecological reserves, cultural heritage protection, environmental protection, and environmental restoration.

Small Island Stewardship

2.4.3.3 Small Island Stewardship (SI)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.3.1: In the Small Island Stewardship designation, land use regulations should:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.3.2: All lands designated Small Island/Islet should be designated part of a DPA for the purposes of protection of the natural environment and biodiversity.

Sustainable Resource Designations

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

2.4.3.4 Agriculture (A)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.4.1: In the Agriculture designation, land use regulations should permit:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.4.2: Small scale, low impact, uses related to agriculture (such as selling of farm goods and agri-tourism) should be permitted where it is demonstrated that such uses:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.4.3: Additional dwellings on farms for seasonal workers actively employed in the farm operation, where permitted by the Agricultural Land Commission and consistent with this Plan, may be permitted.

POLICY 2.4.3.4.4: Generally, land in the Agricultural Land Reserve is designated Agriculture (A).

Forestry Protection Designation

2.4.3.5 Forest Protection (FP)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.5.1: In the Forest Protection designation, land use regulations should permit:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.5.2: All land within the Private Managed Forest Land should be included in this designation.

Residential Designations

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

2.4.3.6 Rural Residential (RR)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.6.1 Consolidation of small lots is encouraged.

POLICY 2.4.3.6.2: In the Rural Residential designation, land use regulations should:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.6.3 Land use bylaws can establish flexible housing areas, outside freshwater hazard areas, to allow up to two or more dwellings per lot within a maximum combined floor area provided total combined floor area does not exceed a maximum prescribed in the land use regulations.

2.4.3.7 Multi-Unit Residential (MUR)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.7.1: In the Multi-Unit Residential designation, land use regulations should permit:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.7.2: All new multi-unit housing requires a housing agreement which restricts use to one or more of the following:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.7.3: Any lands designated for multi-unit housing should be included in DPA 9 (Multi-Unit Affordable Housing) for the purposes of addressing form and character.

POLICY 2.4.3.7.4: Establish Multi-Unit Residential DPA guidelines that protect dark skies.

Commercial Designations

2.4.3.8 General Commercial Policies

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

POLICY 2.4.3.8.1: In commercial designations, land use regulations:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.8.2: All commercial designated lots should be designated within a DPA to regulate the form and character of development.

POLICY 2.4.3.8.3: Bright lights at night are discouraged and DPA guidelines for commercial areas should be established to protect dark skies.

2.4.3.9 Village Commercial (VC)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.9.1: The Village Commercial area should be recognized as the main location for commercial activity in the Plan Area providing for a range of uses including commercial, institutional and residential.

POLICY 2.4.3.9.2: Land in the Village Commercial designation and any future additions to the Village Commercial designation should be placed in the DPA 8 Village Commercial so as to ensure that the form and character of development:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.9.3: Land should only be added to the Village Commercial designation if it is contiguous with other land in the designation.

2.4.3.10 Secondary Commercial (SC)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.10.1: In the Secondary Commercial designation, zoning regulations should:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.10.2: Expansion of the SC designation in the Twin Beaches area is not supported by this Plan.

2.4.3.11 Tourist Commercial (TC)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.11.1: In the Tourist Commercial designation, land use regulations should not permit more than 13 tourist accommodation units per hectare and 30 tourist accommodation units per lot.

POLICY 2.4.3.11.2: Land use regulations should support a campsite zone subject to analysis of freshwater impact.

Institutional Designation

2.4.2.12 Institutional (IN)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.12.1: In the Institutional designation, land use regulations should:

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

Industrial Designation

2.4.2.13 Industrial (I)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.13.1: In the Industrial designation, land use regulations:

- Should allow industrial uses as principal uses;
- May permit one dwelling unit that is limited in floor area.
- Should not permit any industrial use that are:
 - Likely to generate significant off-site impacts;
 - Incompatible with Gabriola Island’s rural character, environmental sensitivity, and limited servicing capacity;
 - Located within an area where residential lots under 2ha are clustered;
 - Likely to result in significant industrial traffic through small lot residential areas; or
 - Likely to threaten the sustainability of groundwater.
- Should address the need for screening, fencing, buffering and landscaping to separate the proposed use from adjoining properties.

POLICY 2.4.3.13.2: All Industrial designated sites should be designated as a DPA to establish objectives for the form and character of development and, energy and water conservation.

POLICY 2.4.3.13.3: The Land Use Bylaw may include, where appropriate, zoning for Sustainable Enterprise Zone to support local small scale manufacturing.

Aggregate Deposit Designation

2.4.1.14 Aggregate Deposit (AD)

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

POLICY 2.4.3.14.1: Publicly owned sand and gravel deposits are designated AD on Schedule B.

POLICY 2.4.3.14.2: In the Aggregate Deposit designation, land use regulations should not permit residential use.

Marine Designations

2.4.3.15 Marine

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

POLICY 2.4.3.15.1: Marshes, bluffs and beaches along the coast shall be protected from the impacts of development by ensuring foreshore zoning protects against disruption of the natural systems and pollution.

POLICY 2.4.3.15.2: Ensure that setbacks from the natural boundary of the sea consider:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.15.3: In the Marine designation, zoning regulations should:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.15.4: Land use regulations for commercial use of the foreshore and coastal areas should:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.15.5: No offshore reef or islet shall be developed or used for commercial activities.

POLICY 2.4.3.15.8: A structural link to Vancouver Island or any other island is not supported.

POLICY 2.4.3.15.9: Ferry service from Gabriola Island to the mainland is not supported.

POLICY 2.4.3.15.10: When necessary, shoreline erosion control should be achieved using an approach that protects and restores natural shoreline processes, and hard shoreline armouring (including seawalls, bulkheads, and riprap) should be prohibited, except where a qualified professional confirms that no feasible nature-based alternative exists and the works are necessary to address an immediate threat to public safety or critical infrastructure.

2.4.3.16 Ferry Terminal (FT)

POLICY 2.4.3.16.1: Land use regulations should permit the existing Descanso Bay ferry terminal site on Gabriola Island.

POLICY 2.4.3.16.2: The following uses are permitted:

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

POLICY 2.4.3.16.3: Residential use is not permitted.

POLICY 2.4.3.16.4: Land Use Bylaw should include parking for vehicle and other modes of transportation.

2.5 Policies Related to Amendments to the Plan and Land Use Bylaw

2.5.1 General Bylaw Amendment Evaluation Considerations

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

2.5.1.1. Integrating First Nations Interests

POLICY 2.5.1.1.1: When considering amendments to the Plan or LUB, the Gabriola LTC should consider:

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

POLICY 2.5.1.1.2: Bylaw amendments should not increase density or intensity of development within 200m of known or potential archaeological or cultural heritage sites, unless it can be demonstrated that such development will not adversely affect Indigenous heritage values.

POLICY 2.5.1.1.3: The Snuneymuxw First Nation and other relevant First Nations should be informed at early stages for bylaw amendments within 200m from the natural boundary of the sea and within 200 m of known archaeological sites or areas of high archaeological potential.

POLICY 2.5.1.1.4: Where a petroglyph or other fragile archeological sites are located on a property subject of a bylaw amendment application, these features should be protected through a covenant or other appropriate means from i use which may alter or destroy the significance of the site .

2.5.1.2 Protection of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

POLICY 2.5.1.2.1: When considering amendments to the LUB, the Gabriola LTC should consider the following information related to ecosystem protection and integrity:

- Potential land use and development impacts, at appropriate ecological scales, on terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems, with particular attention to cumulative effects on ecosystem integrity, ecosystem connectivity, and projected climate change impacts; and
- The interests and expertise of the Islands Trust Conservancy and local land conservancies in land use decision-making, including opportunities for collaboration on land protection, stewardship, and the use of conservation covenants.

POLICY 2.5.1.2.2: Bylaw amendments should not result in development that is anticipated to significantly harm terrestrial, freshwater, or marine ecosystems, disrupt habitat connectivity, or undermine ecosystem resilience.

POLICY 2.5.1.2.3: When a bylaw amendment increases the density or intensity of use; protections and, where feasible, restoration of ecologically significant ecosystems (including wetlands, forests, riparian areas, shorelines, and nearshore marine environments) should take place through the use of regulations, DPAs, covenants, or other regulatory mechanisms.

POLICY 2.5.1.2.4: When considering bylaw amendment applications, the Gabriola LTC should require the retention or establishment of native vegetation buffers around sensitive ecosystems, watercourses, and shorelines, including the retention of natural tree cover along shorelines, through the use of DPAs or a covenant.

2.5.1.3 Responsible Resource Stewardship

POLICY 2.5.1.3.1: When considering amendments to the Plan and LUB, the Gabriola LTC should consider the following related to responsible resource stewardship:

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

- Buffering, siting and design measures to reduce conflicts between farm and non-farm uses.

POLICY 2.5.1.3.2: Proposed bylaw amendments should demonstrate approaches that protect watersheds and freshwater resources, such as clustering, covenants, parkland dedication, and other suitable approaches.

POLICY 2.5.1.3.3: Bylaw amendments should not result in increases in density or intensity of development where it would result in adverse effects on watersheds and aquifers.

POLICY 2.5.1.3.4: Bylaw amendments for land in the Agriculture designation should not result in increased subdivision potential or risk for agricultural land to be fragmented.

2.5.1.4 Community Resilience and Climate Readiness

POLICY 2.5.1.4.1: When considering amendments to the Plan and LUB, the Gabriola LTC should consider the following related to community resilience and climate readiness:

- Climate change projections, including freshwater availability, wildfire risk, flooding, risk of salt water intrusion to aquifers, and sea-level rise;
- Whether proposed increases in residential density can be supported by community services, emergency response, and transportation networks without degrading service levels;
- Whether proposed increases in residential density enable access to parks, trails, or public open space without creating increased pressure that is likely to result in damage to sensitive ecosystems; and
- The establishment and protection of climate-resilient water conservation areas.

POLICY 2.5.1.4.2: Bylaw amendments should not result in higher density residential and mixed-use development in locations where emergency response, evacuation capacity, and firefighting services cannot be efficiently and safely provided.

POLICY 2.5.1.4.3: Bylaw amendments should not result in higher density or intensity of use along shorelines that are subject to erosion, flooding, or sea-level rise.

POLICY 2.5.1.4.4: When considering bylaw amendment applications, the Gabriola LTC should require sewage disposal systems to be designed and sited to avoid adverse effects on groundwater, surface water, and marine ecosystems.

POLICY 2.5.1.4.5: When considering bylaw amendment applications, the Gabriola LTC should require evidence of sufficient quantity and quality of freshwater to support the proposed use without adverse effects to existing water users, neighbouring properties and future use by First Nations.

POLICY 2.5.1.4.6: When considering bylaw amendment applications, the Gabriola LTC should require the integration of wildfire resilience by:

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

2.5.1.5 Community Diversity and Wellbeing

POLICY 2.5.1.5.1: When considering amendments to the Plan and LUB, the Gabriola LTC should consider the following related to community diversity and wellbeing:

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

POLICY 2.5.1.5.2: When considering bylaw amendment applications for commercial or multi-unit residential uses, the Gabriola LTC should require provisions for bicycle parking and connections to existing or planned trail networks in commercial, institutional, and multi-unit residential developments.

POLICY 2.5.1.5.3: When considering bylaw amendment applications for commercial or multi-unit residential uses, the Gabriola LTC should identify opportunities to secure trail connections or public access through covenants, easements, statutory rights-of-way, or other legal mechanisms.

POLICY 2.5.1.5.4: Bylaw amendments should, where possible, enhance public access to waterfronts and parks, provided that environmental protection, cultural heritage, and fire safety considerations are not compromised.

POLICY 2.5.1.5.6: Support low-impact recreational uses

POLICY 2.5.1.5.7: Support the establishment of ecological reserves to expand parkland and public access while protecting environmental values.

POLICY 2.5.1.5.8: Encourage community parks within residential neighbourhoods to support local recreation needs, including, playgrounds, greenbelts, and pocket parks and the development of additional field space in close proximity to the Village Centre or existing playing fields.

2.5.2 Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendments

2.5.2.1 Bylaw Amendment for Subdivision

POLICY 2.5.2.1.1: Bylaw amendments to facilitate the creation of additional lots that are not for uses identified in POLICY 2.4.2.13.1 is not encouraged. When received, applications for this purpose should provide community amenities such as park dedication, conservation, affordable housing, and heritage conservation.

POLICY 2.5.2.1.4: Land transferred to support the uses in 2.5.2.1.13.1 must be secured through a covenant, restrictive covenant, housing agreement, or other legal instrument registered against the parent lot prior to final subdivision approval, ensuring that upon creation the lot will be used only for the intended purposes.

POLICY 2.5.2.1.8: Where the subdivided lot is intended for residential use or community use involving development and/or the use of groundwater the applicant should demonstrate land suitability, including but not limited to:

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

POLICY 2.5.2.1.12: All subdivisions for the purposes of supporting non-market housing should ensure that water supply is provided for through designs that are supported by a freshwater footprint informed water management plan demonstrating long-term aquifer sustainability under expected changes to climate conditions.

2.5.1.2 Changes in Use and Density - Residential

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

POLICY 2.5.1.2.1: Additional dwellings on lots larger than 8 hectares may only be considered through a bylaw amendment application where a portion of the land is proposed to be permanently protected under a conservation covenant.

Multi-Unit Housing

POLICY 2.5.1.2.2: Consideration of multi-unit housing may only be given to applications intending to provide non-market housing for special needs residents living with physical and cognitive disabilities, seniors 60 years of age or older or moderate and low-income persons to be secured through a housing agreement.

POLICY 2.5.1.2.3: Multi-unit housing developments are limited to 12 units per hectare and 24 units per development.

POLICY 2.5.1.2.4: Multi-unit housing should be located within proximity to roadways and include screening to minimize environmental impacts and visual impacts on surrounding properties.

POLICY 2.5.1.2.5: The siting and height of the proposal should be sensitive to the surrounding land uses and should not negatively impact adjacent properties.

POLICY 2.5.1.2.6: Multi-unit housing should be included in DPA 9 – Multi-Unit Residential

POLICY 2.5.1.2.7: For bylaw amendment applications to permit detached multi-unit housing, the following considerations should be addressed:

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

2.5.2.3 Changes in Use and Density - Commercial and Tourism

POLICY 2.5.2.3.1: Bylaw amendment applications for commercial or tourist accommodation uses should assess cumulative impacts on housing availability, freshwater demand, parking, and transportation infrastructure.

POLICY 2.5.2.3.2: Where an application for commercial or tourist accommodation development requiring a bylaw amendment are proposed to generate significant employment, on-site or nearby employee housing may be required, with priority given to locations accessible by active transportation or transit.

POLICY 2.5.2.3.3: Bylaw amendment applications for commercial uses should take into account access to other commercial uses as well as residential areas through active transportation routes.

POLICY 2.5.2.3.4: Applications to allow for commercial or industrial uses should provide a conditional provincial water license for the proposed use.

2.5.2.4 Changes in Use and Density - Agriculture

POLICY 2.5.2.4.1: Bylaw amendment proposals affecting lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve, or lands designated Agriculture, should not be supported where they would:

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

2.5.2.5 Changes in Use and Density - Forest Land

POLICY 2.5.2.5.1: Rezoning within or adjacent to Forestry designated lands should not be supported where it would incrementally introduce residential, institutional, or infrastructure uses that undermine long-term forest management, ecological integrity, contiguous forest cover, or watershed resilience.

2.5.2.6 Changes in Use and Density - Marine

2.5.2.6.1 When assessing a rezoning for a marina the provision of toilet facilities should be considered.

2.6 Policies Related to Development Variance Permit Applications

2.6.1 General Policies

POLICY 2.6.1.1: Development Variance Permits should only be issued where variances are consistent with the objectives of this Plan.

POLICY 2.6.1.2: In considering a development variance permit application, the Gabriola LTC will evaluate whether the proposed variance:

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

POLICY 2.6.1.3: Development Variance Permit applications should demonstrate that environmental values, ecosystem functions, and archaeological sites are adequately protected.

POLICY 2.6.1.4: Development Variance Permit applications near the shoreline should demonstrate that natural shoreline processes, coastal vegetation, and public access to the foreshore are maintained.

POLICY 2.6.1.5: Where a Development Variance Permit affects setbacks, siting, or lot coverage near environmentally sensitive areas, a Section 219 covenant may be required to protect ecological values, including vegetation retention, wildlife habitat, or shoreline integrity.

POLICY 2.6.1.6: Where a retroactive Development Variance Permit is considered, the Gabriola LTC may require conditions to mitigate impacts of the existing development, including but not limited to environmental remediation, landscaping, or registration of protective covenants.

2.7 Policies related to Crown Lease Referrals

POLICY 2.7.1: Crown Lease referrals will be reviewed using the following criteria:

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

POLICY 2.7.2: When insufficient information is available for a review of a crown lease referral, additional information may be requested prior to a response in support of an application.

POLICY 2.7.3: When a crown lease referral significantly affects community interests, recreational areas, or neighbourhood amenities; referral responses will request that additional consultation occurs to understand and address community concerns prior to an application advancing.

2.8 Policies Related to Temporary Use Permit Applications

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

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

Subject to the guidelines, TUPs may be issued in all land use designations, with the following exceptions:

- Areas designated on Schedule B as 'Conservation' and 'Small Islands Stewardship';
- For commercial vacation rentals, only within areas designated on Schedule B as 'Rural Residential', 'Forest Protection', or 'Agriculture';
- For aggregate processing, only within areas designated on Schedule B as 'Industrial', 'Agriculture' or 'Forest Protection';
- For a barge load out site, only on lots 8 hectares or larger within areas designated on Schedule B as 'Forest Protection';
- For a log handling site, only on lots 8 hectares or larger within areas designated on Schedule B as 'Forest Protection';
- For campground use, only on lots 8 hectares or larger within areas designated on Schedule B as 'Rural Residential', 'Agriculture' or 'Forestry';
- For water sales, only on lots 2 hectares or larger within areas designated on Schedule B as 'Rural Residential', or 'Forest Protection'.

2.8.1 TUP Guidelines

2.8.1.1. General Guidelines

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.1: TUPs should only be issued for activities that are of short and fixed duration. Re-application for the same use on the same property is discouraged.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.2: The Gabriola LTC should consider First Nations interests when considering issuance of a TUP. The Gabriola LTC may request additional information, apply conditions, or refuse a TUP to avoid or mitigate potential impacts on First Nations interests.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.3: When a TUP application is for a use that is listed with guidelines, the guidelines apply to that application.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.4: All TUP applications should demonstrate there is a suitable sewage system, and sufficient quantity and quality of water available for the proposed use.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.5: All TUP applications should indicate how the proposed use will benefit the local Gabriola Island community.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.6: The time period, days of the week and scale of activity permitted on the site may be specified in the permit.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.7: The impact of the proposed use on the local neighbourhood, including traffic, should be considered where significant increases in traffic or an increased number of commercial and industrial vehicles are anticipated.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.8: No permanent buildings or structures should be erected related to the proposed use.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.9: The proposed use should not preclude or compromise future permitted uses of the lot.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.10: Permit conditions should ensure that sufficient off-street parking is provided for proposed and existing uses.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.11: Where a lot is within the Agricultural Land Reserve, a TUP should not be issued prior to the proposed use being approved by the Agriculture Land Commission.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.1.12: The Gabriola LTC may require that a security be provided so as to ensure compliance with the terms of the permit

2.8.1.2 Aggregate Processing, Barge Load-Out, Log Handling, and Campgrounds

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.2.1: The applicant should demonstrate that it is advantageous to the local island community to permit the proposed use on a temporary basis.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.2.2: The application should provide evidence that the intended use will not adversely affect the local groundwater quantity or quality for the natural environment, including the marine environment.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.2.3: The application should provide a plan of remedial work to be undertaken at the end of the permit period in order to return the site to a state resembling its conditions prior to the use being undertaken or to an alternate state, as agreed to by the Gabriola LTC.

2.8.1.3 Limited Public Markets

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.3.1: Permit conditions should be consistent with applicable DPA Guidelines.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.3.2: The application should provide a plan of remedial work to be undertaken at the end of the permit period in order to return the site to a state resembling its conditions prior to the use being undertaken or to an alternate state, as agreed to by the Gabriola LTC.

2.8.1.4 Extracting, Processing, and Sale of Water

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.4.1: The applicant should provide a report prepared by an independent qualified professional engineer or professional geoscientist, registered in British Columbia and competency in hydrogeology, identifying the source aquifer, recharge area, zone of influence, proposed rate and volume of withdrawal, and any hydraulically connected surface water features, and providing an assessment that the proposed extraction is not likely to cause detrimental effects on existing wells, the aquifer, hydraulically connected streams or wetlands, or the natural environment. The report should confirm that the source well, and any proposed alteration to the source well, is consistent with the Water Sustainability Act, the Groundwater Protection Regulation, and applicable provincial well construction, wellhead completion, and pumping test requirements.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.4.2: A TUP does not authorize the diversion or use of groundwater. The applicant should provide evidence that the required provincial authorization to withdraw groundwater has been obtained, or written confirmation from the Province respecting the status of the groundwater licence application, including a conditional water licence where applicable, before extraction, processing, or sale of water occurs

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.4.3: The quantity of water to be extracted and processed may be limited, and the amount approved should be based on the information provided by the qualified professional report, any applicable provincial authorization, site-specific aquifer conditions, seasonal water availability, and the need to avoid adverse effects on other water users and the natural environment.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.4.4: The proposed operation must not cause, or be likely to cause, the intrusion of saline groundwater, sea water, or contaminated water into the source aquifer, another aquifer, or a hydraulically connected stream, and must not cause a significant adverse impact on groundwater quality or existing uses of water.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.4.5: Metering and reporting of water withdrawals may be required, together with monitoring of groundwater levels and water quality in the supply well and, where appropriate, in adjacent wells, including trigger levels for pumping reduction or shut down.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.4.6: Outdoor water storage should be screened from public rights-of-way and adjacent properties by fencing, landscaping, or a combination of both, and a screening plan should be included in the application.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.4.7: The application should provide a plan of remedial work to be undertaken at the end of the permit period to return the site to a condition resembling its condition before the use commenced, or to an alternate condition acceptable to the Gabriola LTC.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.4.8: The Gabriola LTC may require additional information respecting aquifer viability, access, traffic, noise, dust, hours of operation, source well monitoring, adjacent well monitoring, lowest pumping levels, mitigation measures, and contingency measures in the event of well interference or water quality degradation.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.4.9: The applicant must demonstrate compliance with applicable drinking water requirements, including operator certification and other requirements under the Drinking Water Protection Act and the Drinking Water Protection Regulation, where the proposal involves a regulated water supply system.

2.8.1.5 Commercial Vacation Rental of Single-Dwelling Residential Units

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.1: The Gabriola LTC should consider the cumulative effects on the neighborhood and Island of all the TUPs issued for commercial vacation rentals;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.2: The Gabriola LTC should consider the impact on the residential appearance of neighbourhood;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.3: The Gabriola LTC may require mitigating measures to address neighbour concerns, such as screening and fencing; TUPs should not be issued for commercial vacation rentals in situations where the proximity of dwelling under consideration for a commercial vacation rental to a neighbouring dwelling is such that screening or fencing is not practical, not able to mitigate potential impacts or address neighbour privacy issues;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.4: The applicant should provide a written plan for the supply of water for the duration of the permit in the amount of 227 litres per guest per day;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.5: The applicant should be required to provide documentation from a qualified professional that the septic system has been inspected, is working properly, and is capable of supporting the proposed occupancy load;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.6: The applicant should provide proof of an occupancy permit and written proof from a qualified professional that the dwelling meets the fire code;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.7: If an occupancy permit is not available, the Gabriola LTC may consider a report from a certified house inspector indicating that the house is safe and appropriate for the proposed commercial vacation rental use and activities

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.8: The owner or an operations manager should be required to reside on Gabriola Island and a condition of the permit should require that the owner or operations manager be available by telephone 24 hours/day, seven days per week

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.9: A condition of the permit should require that the owner or operations manager must provide neighbours within 100 metres of the lot subject to the TUP with the owner and operations manager's phone numbers, and a copy of the TUP;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.10: A condition of the permit should require that the landowner posts guest information on noise bylaws, water conservation, fire safety, storage of garbage, septic care and control of pets (if pets are permitted);

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.11: The Gabriola LTC may require the landowner to post information for guests about awareness and sensitivity to First Nation sites and artifacts.

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.12: A condition of the permit should restrict the maximum number of people that can stay to a maximum of two guests per bedroom;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.13: A condition of the permit should restrict the maximum number of signs advertising the commercial vacation rental to one sign, with a maximum area of 0.3 square metres, be made of wood and not illuminated;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.14: A condition of the permit should prohibit the rental or provision of motorized personal watercraft to rental clients;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.15: A condition of the permit should limit the number of bedrooms to:

- A maximum of 3 on lots smaller than 2.0 hectares; and
- A maximum of 4 on lots of 2.0 hectares or larger;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.16: A condition of the permit should prohibit recreational vehicles or camping on the same lot as a commercial vacation rental;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.17: The Gabriola LTC may require water metering;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.5.18: Commercial vacation rental uses must comply with all applicable provincial legislation. A TUP will not be issued where the use is prohibited under provincial law, including where the dwelling is not a principal residence as defined by the Province.

2.8.1.6 Residential Use of a Tiny Home on Wheels or Recreational Vehicle

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.6.1: The tiny home on wheels or recreational vehicle should be safe for full time occupancy;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.6.4: That the tiny home on wheels or recreational vehicle should be appropriately screened from roads and neighbours;

GUIDELINE 2.8.1.6.5: The permit should include a plan showing the location of the tiny home on wheels or recreational vehicle with a requirement that it be sited in the specified location which is outside of setback areas, not within a hazardous area, and not within a sensitive ecosystem.

PART THREE

Development Permit Areas

3.1 Development Permit Areas

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

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

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

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

3.1.1 Development Permit Area 1 - The Tunnel

Designation

DPA1 – The Tunnel is designated as a DPA for the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

Justification

This DPA relates to the shrub and tree canopy along North Road, this is an important scenic, heritage and environmental amenity that enhances the rural character of Gabriola.

The designation of this area as a DPA will help ensure that the tree canopy and shrub buffer area will be maintained along North Road.

Objective

The objective of this DPA is to maintain these natural values by minimizing the encroachment of subdivision roads, works and services, buildings and structures into the designated area.

Applicability

POLICY 3.1.1.1: Unless specifically exempted, a Development Permit must be issued prior to the following development activities occurring within this DPA:

- Subdivision of land
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure
- Alteration of land

POLICY 3.1.1.2: The following activities are exempt from any requirement for a development permit:

- Subdivision for the purpose of a lot consolidation.

Guidelines

POLICY 3.1.1.3: In considering issuance of a Development Permit, the following guidelines apply:

GUIDELINE 3.1.1.3.1: A 183 metre (600 foot) wide tree canopy and shrub buffer should be retained along North Road, measured 90.8 metres (300 feet) on either side of the centre line of the existing right-of-way, except in the case of land in the ALR, in which case the canopy buffer should not be less than 30 metres.

GUIDELINE 3.1.1.3.2: Construction within the buffer area should be limited to roads, trails, and public utility works (within a road right-of-way).

GUIDELINE 3.1.1.3.3: Where a utility corridor crosses the buffer area, the alignment should be perpendicular to North Road so as to minimize the removal or disturbance of natural vegetation.

GUIDELINE 3.1.1.3.4: Roads should alter the natural vegetation as little as possible and the number of accesses to North Road within the DPA should be limited to two on each side of North Road.

GUIDELINE 3.1.1.3.5: Water supply storage, utility buildings and wells should be located outside of the tree canopy area.

GUIDELINE 3.1.1.3.6: Trees greater than 30.4cm (12") calliper, measured 5 feet from the ground, should not be cut or damaged.

GUIDELINE 3.1.1.3.7: Where this area includes trees that bear the nests of eagles or other species of birds, a buffer area around each nest tree should be left undisturbed. The size of the buffer should be determined prior to development by a qualified professional, with advice from the Ministry of Environment or the Canadian Wildlife Service.

3.1.2 Development Permit Area 2 – Lock Bay

Designation

DPA2 – Lock Bay is designated as a DPA for the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

Justification and Objective

Lock Bay has been identified as a sensitive, unique beach of sand and gravel isolating a marsh of about 40 acres. The designation of this area as a DPA will help ensure that the environmental values of this area are protected from the potential impacts of land development.

Applicability

POLICY 3.1.2.1: Unless specifically exempted, a Development Permit must be issued prior to the following development activities occurring within this DPA:

- Subdivision of land
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure
- Alteration of land

POLICY 3.1.2.2: The following activities are exempt from any requirement for a development permit:

- Subdivision for the purpose of a lot consolidation.

Guidelines

POLICY 3.1.2.3: In considering issuance of a Development Permit, the following guidelines apply:

GUIDELINE 3.1.2.3.1: There should be no disturbance of the vegetation or use of chemicals within 30 metres of the natural boundary of the sea except in accordance with any conditions specified in the permit.

GUIDELINE 3.1.2.3.2: Garry oak meadows and similar native species should be identified and their habitats protected from disturbance.

GUIDELINE 3.1.2.3.3: There should be no alteration or disturbance causing a negative impact to the foreshore habitat.

GUIDELINE 3.1.2.3.4: Buildings should be integrated with the surrounding landscape and sited to minimize removal of vegetation.

GUIDELINE 3.1.2.3.5: An assessment of the environmental impact, including mitigation measures required, should be required prior to any new developments or the expansion of an existing development.

GUIDELINE 3.1.2.3.6: Existing trees and vegetation should be retained along the upland area and adjacent to the foreshore in order to maintain the habitat and prevent erosion.

GUIDELINE 3.1.2.3.7: Septic systems should not be constructed within 30 metres of the natural boundary of a watercourse.

GUIDELINE 3.1.2.3.8: Construction of a habitable building should not occur within 15 metres of areas subject to flooding, and other buildings should not be sited within an area subject to flooding.

GUIDELINE 3.1.2.3.9: Where a tree on the lot and within the DPA includes trees that contain eagle nests or nests of other bird species, a buffer area around each nest tree should be left undisturbed. The size of the buffer should be determined prior to development by a qualified professional with relevant expertise and experience.

3.1.3 Development Permit Area 3 – Riparian Areas

Designation

DPA3 - Riparian Areas is established for the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

Location

POLICY 3.1.3.1: DPA 3 – Riparian Areas, includes all land designated on Schedule C of this Plan. This mapping is intended to include any of the following that provides fish habitat:

- A watercourse, whether it usually contains water or not;
- A pond, lake, river, creek or brook; or
- A ditch, spring or wetland that is connected by surface flow to something referred to in the above bullet points.

The DPA also includes a buffer around these features as determined by the following:

- For a stream that is not located in a ravine, the DPA is a 30 metre strip on both sides of the stream measured from the high water mark, except for areas where a lesser distance is indicated on Schedule C;
- For a stream located within a ravine, the DPA is a 30 metre strip on both sides of the stream measured from the high water mark to a point that is 30 metres beyond the top of the ravine bank;
- For a lake, wetland or other water body, the DPA is 30 metres around the water body measured from the high water mark of the water body;
- For a ditch or lotic system, a 10 metre strip on both sides of the ditch measured from the high water mark.

However, due to the ephemeral nature of some streams and other factors, the actual location of the streams and water bodies and the actual extent of the DPA may need to be determined on a site-specific basis by a qualified environmental professional or a surveyor.

Justification and Objectives

Local governments in British Columbia are required to designate DPAs for the protection of riparian areas under the Local Government Act and the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation. These requirements ensure that development near streams, wetlands, and other watercourses is assessed to prevent harmful alteration of riparian ecosystems and fish habitat. Designating a Riparian DPA in the OCP helps ensure that development on Gabriola Island maintains appropriate setbacks, protects riparian vegetation, and supports the long-term health of watercourses and freshwater resources.

This DPA includes streams, lakes, wetlands, and their associated riparian areas that may provide fish habitat. Riparian ecosystems play a critical role in watershed health by supporting biodiversity, stabilizing stream banks, filtering sediments and pollutants, moderating water flows, and regulating water temperatures. Riparian vegetation also provides food, shade, and habitat for fish and wildlife, while fallen woody debris helps shape stream channels and creates aquatic habitat.

Land-altering activities such as clearing vegetation, building roads or structures, and installing septic systems near watercourses can damage these functions. Protecting riparian areas is therefore necessary to maintain ecosystem health and biological diversity on Gabriola Island.

Objectives of this DPA are to:

- Protect the biological diversity and habitat values of riparian and aquatic ecosystems;
- Conserve streams, wetlands, and associated riparian vegetation that support fish habitat; and
- Minimize the impacts of development and land use practices on riparian ecosystems and water quality.

Applicability

POLICY 3.1.3.2: Unless specifically exempted, a Development Permit must be issued prior to the following development activities occurring within this DPA: Subdivision of land

- Removal, construction, addition, or alteration of a building or other structure
- Removal, alteration, addition, or destruction of vegetation
- Addition, removal, or alteration of soils
- Creation of non-structural, impervious, or semi-impervious surfaces
- application of artificial fertilizer, pesticides, or herbicides

POLICY 3.1.3.3: The following activities are exempt from any requirement for a development permit:

- For certainty, all uses that are not residential, commercial or industrial or accessory to such a use;
- Interior or exterior alterations, renovations, maintenance, reconstruction or repair to a preexisting building or structure to an extent that does not alter, extend or otherwise increase the footprint;
- Repair or replacement of a septic field within the existing footprint of the septic field
- The removal of trees that have been examined by an arborist and certified to pose an immediate threat to life or property;

- With the exception of nesting trees protected under the *Wildlife Act*, cutting of vegetation and trees more than 15 meters from the stream's high water mark or the top of the ravine bank, provided the cutting is not a precursor to development, the roots/stumps are left in the ground, and the cutting does not result in land alteration;
- Gardening and yard maintenance activities, not involving the application of artificial fertilizer, pesticides or herbicides, within a pre-existing landscaped area, including mowing, pruning, planting, and minor soil disturbance that does not alter the general contours of the land;
- Manual removal of invasive species and manual planting of native vegetation conducted in accordance with best management practices;
- Pruning of not more than two trees in one growing season and that does not involve: the lift pruning of lower limbs to the extent that the live crown ratio is less than 50%, the removal of more than 25% of the crown in one growing season, topping, or the pruning or removal of a structural root within the critical root zone;
- Ecological restoration or enhancement projects undertaken or authorized by a public body;
- Work that is authorized by Fisheries and Oceans Canada by permit under Section 35 of the *Fisheries Act*;
- Emergency procedures to prevent, control or reduce immediate threats to life or property including:
 - Emergency actions for flood-protection and erosion protection,
 - Clearing of an obstruction from a bridge or culvert or an obstruction to drainage flow, and
 - Repairs to bridges and safety fences carried out in accordance with the *Water Act*;
- Farm operations as defined in the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*, farm uses as defined in Part 2, Division 2 of the *Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation*, and horticulture;
- The construction of a fence if no trees are removed and the disturbance of native vegetation is restricted to 0.5 meters on either side of the fence, or 1.5 meters on either side of the fence in agricultural areas;
- The construction of a private trail if all of the following apply;
 - The trail is 1 meter wide or less;
 - No native trees are removed;
 - The surface of the trail is pervious (for example, soil, gravel or wood chips);
 - The trail is designed to prevent soil erosion where slopes occur; and
 - Where the trail parallels the stream, the trail is more than 5 meters away from the high water mark of a stream;
- Disturbance of soils more than 15 meters from the stream's high water mark, or the top of the ravine bank, if the total area of soil disturbance is less than 5 meters squared;
- The constructing of a small accessory building such as a pump house, gazebo, garden shed or playhouse more than 15 meters from the stream's high watermark, or the top of the ravine bank, if the building is located within an existing landscaped area and the total area of small accessory building is less than 10 meters squared; or
- Subdivision for the purpose of a lot consolidation.

Guidelines

POLICY 3.1.3.4: In considering issuance of a Development Permit, the following guidelines apply:

GUIDELINE 3.1.3.4.1: In general, all development in this DPA should be undertaken in a manner that restores or maintains the proper function and condition of the riparian area, water bodies and ecosystems. Where a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) or other professional has made recommendations for mitigation measures, enhancement or restoration in order to lessen impacts on the riparian area and ecosystems, the Gabriola LTC may impose permit conditions, including a requirement for security, to ensure the restoration and/or protection of riparian areas and ecosystems is consistent with the measures and recommendations described in the report.

GUIDELINE 3.1.3.4.2: The development permit should not allow any development activities to take place within any Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area (SPEA) identified by the QEP and the owner should be required to follow any measures identified by the QEP for protecting the SPEA over the long term. These measures should be included as conditions of the development permit.

GUIDELINE 3.1.3.4.3: Where a QEP or other professional's report describes an area within the DPA as suitable for development, that is, where the SPEA is less than the width of the DPA, the development permit should only allow the development to occur in compliance with the measures described in the report. Monitoring and regular reporting by a QEP or other professional at the applicant's expense may be required during construction and development phases, as specified in the development permit.

GUIDELINE 3.1.3.4.4: The Gabriola LTC may consider variances to the subdivision, siting or size regulations of this Bylaw where the variance may result in enhanced protection of a SPEA, riparian buffer or riparian ecosystem in compliance with recommendations of a professional's report.

3.1.4 Development Permit Area 4 – Flat Top Islands

Designation

DPA4 - Flat Top Islands is designated as a DPA for the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

Justification and Objectives

The Flat Top Islands and Breakwater Island have been identified as having high and moderate-high marine, vegetation and wildlife natural areas.

The objective of this DPA is to help ensure that the environmental values of this area are protected from the potential impacts of land development.

Applicability

POLICY 3.1.4.1: Unless specifically exempted, a Development Permit must be issued prior to the following development activities occurring within this DPA:

- subdivision of land
- construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure
- alteration of land

POLICY 3.1.4.2: The following activities are exempt from any requirement for a development permit:

- Subdivision for the purpose of a lot consolidation.

Guidelines

POLICY 3.1.4.3: In considering issuance of a Development Permit, the following guidelines apply:

GUIDELINE 3.1.4.3.1: There should be no disturbance of the vegetation or use of chemicals within 30 metres of the natural boundary of the sea except in accordance with any conditions specified in the permit.

GUIDELINE 3.1.4.3.2: Garry oak meadows and similar indigenous species should be identified and their habitats protected from disturbance.

GUIDELINE 3.1.4.3.3: There should be no alteration or disturbance which would cause a negative impact to the foreshore habitat.

GUIDELINE 3.1.4.3.4: Buildings should be integrated with the surrounding landscape and sited to minimize removal of vegetation.

GUIDELINE 3.1.4.3.5: Development Permit should include conditions to require mitigation measures recommended by a qualified professional.

GUIDELINE 3.1.4.3.6: Existing trees and vegetation should be retained along the upland area and adjacent to the foreshore in order to maintain the habitat and prevent erosion.

GUIDELINE 3.1.4.3.7: Septic systems should not be constructed within 30 metres of the natural boundary of any watercourse (including a body of water or the sea).

GUIDELINE 3.1.4.3.8: Areas subject to flooding should be subject to a 15 metre setback.

GUIDELINE 3.1.4.3.9: Where this area includes trees that bear the nests of eagles or other species of birds, a buffer area around each nest tree should be left undisturbed. The size of the buffer should be determined prior to development by a qualified professional.

3.1.5 Development Permit Area 5 – Gabriola Pass

Designation

DPA5 – Gabriola Pass is designated as a DPA for the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

Justification and Objectives

Within the Gabriola Pass Area, the intertidal area is boulder-tiered ledges, sandstone and shale formations and sand and gravel banks. Tide pools exist along the length of Gabriola Island. The sub-tidal area is largely devoid of human impact and is exceptionally rich in an abundance of marine life. The designation of this area as a DPA will help ensure that the environmental values of this area are protected from the potential impacts of development.

The objectives of this DPA are:

- To provide a refuge for the naturally existing species;
- To provide opportunities for a wide-range of multiuse non-consumptive recreational activities; and
- To provide an educational opportunity for people to learn about the marine environment.

Applicability

POLICY 3.1.5.1: Unless specifically exempted, a Development Permit must be issued prior to the following development activities occurring within this DPA:

- Subdivision of land
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure
- Alteration of land

POLCY 3.1.5.2: The following activities are exempt from any requirement for a development permit:

- Subdivision for the purpose of a lot consolidation.

Guidelines

POLICY 3.1.5.3: In considering issuance of a Development Permit, the following guidelines apply:

GUIDELINE 3.1.5.3.1: Development Permit should include conditions to require mitigation measures recommended by a qualified professional.

GUIDELINE 3.1.5.3.2: There should be no alteration or disturbance which would cause a negative impact to the foreshore habitat.

3.1.6 Development Permit Area 6 – Environmental Protection

Designation

DPA6 – Environmental Protection is designated as a DPA for the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

Justification and Objectives

Gabriola Island has significant natural areas that support important plants and animal habitats. This DPA is intended for the protection of sensitive ecosystems that are generally classified as mature forest, woodland, herbaceous, cliff, wetland and freshwater. These ecosystems are sensitive to development due to their rarity and potential vulnerability to disturbance.

The objectives of this DPA are as follows:

To preserve, protect, restore or enhance environmental features and sensitive ecosystems on Gabriola Island;

- To manage development in environmentally sensitive areas;
- To minimize the loss of sensitive ecosystems;
- To increase protection for species at risk;
- To encourage retention of Coastal Douglas-fir and associated ecosystems; and
- To manage development in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Applicability and Exemptions

POLICY 3.1.6.1: Unless specifically exempted, a Development Permit must be issued prior to the following development activities occurring within this DPA:

- Subdivision of land
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure
- Alteration of land

POLICY 3.1.6.2: The following activities are exempt from any requirement for a development permit:

- Activities on land in respect of which the Islands Trust has received a written statement from a registered professional biologist with relevant experience certifying the absence of a sensitive ecosystem within the area that would be affected by the proposed work;
- Gardening and yard maintenance activities, not involving the application of artificial fertilizer, pesticides or herbicides, within a pre-existing landscaped area, including mowing, pruning, planting and minor soil disturbance that does not alter the general contours of the land;
- Manual removal of invasive species in accordance with best management practices;
- Manual planting of native vegetation conducted in accordance with best management practices;
- The construction of a trail if all of the following apply:
 - The trail is 1 metre wide or less;
 - No native trees are removed;
 - The surface of the trail is previous (for example, soil, gravel or wood chips);
 - The trail is designed to prevent soil erosion where slopes occur; and
 - Where the trail parallels a stream, the trail is more than 5 metres away from the high water mark of the stream;
- The construction of a fence if no native trees are removed and the disturbance of native vegetation is restricted to 0.5 metres on either side of the fence;
- Ecological restoration and enhancement projects undertaken or authorized by a public body;
- The reconstruction, repair or maintenance of a pre-existing permanent structure on its existing foundation, including general repair or replacement of a septic field within the existing footprint;
- Pruning of not more than 2 trees in one growing season and that does not involve: the lift pruning of lower limbs to the extent that the live crown ratio is less than 50%, the removal of more than 25% of the crown, or the pruning or removal of a structural root within the critical root zone;
- The removal of trees that have been examined by an arborist and certified to pose an immediate threat to life or property;
- The repair and maintenance of existing roads, driveways, paths and trails provided there is no expansion of the width or length of the road, driveway, path or trail, and no creation of additional impervious surfacing, including paving, asphaltting or similar surfaces;
- Works undertaken by a local government or a body established by a local government; or
- Subdivision for the purpose of a lot consolidation.

Guidelines

POLICY 3.1.6.3: In considering issuance of a Development Permit, the following guidelines apply:

GUIDELINE 3.1.6.3.1: Minimize the area cleared and disturbed for development within the context of the permitted use and density.

GUIDELINE 3.1.6.3.2: Site buildings and associated infrastructure to minimize removal of vegetation and to allow sufficient undisturbed space around retained significant mature or established trees to protect root systems.

GUIDELINE 3.1.6.3.3: Native vegetation and trees should be retained wherever possible.

GUIDELINE 3.1.6.3.4: Vegetation clearing should occur during the least risk timing window for bird species as recommended by a qualified professional. If works cannot be completed during this window, a qualified professional should be retained to survey the area prior to clearing to rule out the presence of nesting birds or other species.

GUIDELINE 3.1.6.3.5: Where this area includes trees that bear the nest of eagles or other species of birds, a buffer area around each nest tree should be left undisturbed. The size of the buffer should be determined prior to development by a qualified professional with relevant experience.

GUIDELINE 3.1.6.3.6: Avoid removal of mature and old Douglas-fir and western red cedar trees to the extent possible. Trees with unique identified wildlife habitat or unique habitat potential should be retained and incorporated into the design.

GUIDELINE 3.1.6.3.7: Where species at risk or critical habitat for species at risk have been observed, requirements to protect species at risk and mitigation measures should be in accordance with the federal *Species At Risk Act* and with the provincial *Wildlife Act*.

GUIDELINE 3.1.6.3.8: Additional conditions will be included in a development permit to incorporate any qualified professional recommendations within an environmental assessment.

GUIDELINE 3.1.6.3.9: Efforts should be made in construction and maintenance activities to source goods, supplies and services on-island to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions related to transportation.

3.1.7 Development Permit Area 7 – Escarpment Areas

Designation

DPA7 – Escarpment Areas is designated as a DPA for the protection of development from hazardous conditions.

Justification

Escarpment areas are areas where there is significant land slope, often greater than 80 per cent. These escarpment areas may not be suitable for development as they may be subject to erosion, land slip, rock falls or subsidence, or other hazards.

Objective

The objective of this DPA is to protect development from natural hazards, including terrain instability, erosion, land slippage, rock falls, subsidence, debris flows and flooding or changes to storm water runoff due to development on or in proximity to lands with excessive slope conditions.

Applicability

POLICY 3.1.7.1: Unless specifically exempted, a development permit must be issued prior to the following development activities occurring within this DPA:

- Subdivision of land
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure
- alteration of land

POLCY 3.1.7.2: The following activities are exempt from any requirement for a development permit:

- Development on, or subdivision of, a property that is in accordance with a Geotechnical report submitted to the Islands Trust prior to development or subdivision commencing. The report should be prepared by a geotechnical engineer or an engineer with expertise relevant to the applicable matter, and should contain recommendations for the development to address slope instability and soil erosion hazards; or
- Subdivision for the purpose of a lot consolidation.

Guidelines

POLICY 3.1.7.3: In considering issuance of a development permit, the following guidelines apply:

GUIDELINE 3.1.7.3.1: There should be no construction of buildings, septic tanks, drainage and deposit fields, irrigation or water systems unless a geotechnical engineer recommends that such construction may occur without subjecting land in the escarpment area to increased slope instability.

GUIDELINE 3.1.7.3.2: There should be no removal of trees or vegetation unless a geotechnical engineer recommends that such removal may occur without subjecting land in the escarpment area to increased slope instability.

3.1.8 Development Permit Area 8 – Village Commercial

Designation

DPA8 – Village Commercial is designated as a DPA for the establishment of objectives:

- For the form and character of commercial development;
- To promote water conservation; and
- To promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Justification

The Gabriola village commercial area is designated as a DPA to help ensure that commercial development will be pedestrian oriented, landscaped to conserve water resources, and encourage fuel efficient vehicles and alternative modes of transportation.

Objectives:

The objectives of this DPA are as follows:

- To promote small scale building design;
- To promote development that is pedestrian oriented with amenities such as public open spaces and walkways;
- To promote water conservation; and
- To promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Applicability

POLICY 3.1.8.1: Unless specifically exempted, a Development Permit must be issued prior to the following development activities occurring within this DPA:

- Subdivision of land
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure
- Alteration of land

POLICY 3.1.8.2: The following activities are exempt from any requirement for a development permit:

- Building painting, structural alterations and repairs of a minor nature that do not require a building permit;
- Building repairs and maintenance where the materials to be used are of the same type and form as the existing materials;
- The installation of carved wood signs on lots where there are existing buildings
- The installation of bicycle racks, bicycle or bus shelters, or electric vehicle charging stations;
- Additions resulting in less than a 5% increase in floor area of a principal building or an accessory building where no changes to landscaping or access to the site are proposed;
- Subdivision for the purpose of a lot consolidation.

Guidelines

POLICY 3.1.8.3: In considering issuance of a Development Permit, the following guidelines apply:

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.1: The character of each development should be in keeping with the island environment and be capable of blending in with the aesthetic qualities of the natural surroundings.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.2: The development should incorporate small scale building designs with such amenities as public walkways and outdoor open spaces for use by the public.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.3: Natural vegetation and trees should be retained, or planted and maintained, for screening of parking and storage areas and to enhance the atmosphere of public open spaces. Safety and visibility should be considered in landscape design.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.4: Lighting should be kept to the minimum necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility, in order to maintain a low level of light in the night-time atmosphere.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.5: Signs made from natural materials or incorporating material produced by local artisans and crafts people are encouraged.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.6: Pedestrian requirements include accessible, safe and landscaped walkways connecting the street to the businesses.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.7: Off-street parking should be designed to be as unobtrusive as possible and where possible, located to the rear of the lot away from public open spaces and eating areas and businesses should open to the street to create a greater sense of intimacy and walkability in the village commercial area.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.8: On-site integrated storm water management plans prepared by a qualified professional should be required and implemented to reduce impervious cover, promote infiltration and capture and treat storm water runoff from 90% of the average annual rainfall using acceptable best management practices.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.9: Where a building or use provides more than 25 parking spaces, one electric vehicle charging station capable of at least 110V and 220/240V charging must be provided and marked with a sign or symbol identifying the space is reserved for charging/parking an electric vehicle, electric scooter or electric bicycle.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.10: Landscaping design and maintenance should facilitate water retention, minimize the need for irrigation, and discourage the use of lawns unless for a gathering or play area.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.11: Landscaped islands of trees and shrubs no smaller in area than 4 square metres each should be used in parking areas located at a minimum of every 15 stalls to break up expanses of paving and parking and capture and infiltrate runoff.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.12: Fifteen percent of the property should be devoted to public open space with fifty percent of that amount along the road frontage. Storm water retention areas or rain gardens may be used to meet this requirement.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.13: Seventy-five percent of the designated public open space should be contiguous with no portion less than two metres in width and designated spaces should be connected, where possible, to public pedestrian paths or access points on adjacent properties or roads.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.14: Exterior surfaces of local and/or natural materials such as wood, stone or brick should be encouraged.

GUIDELINE 3.1.8.3.15: Facilities for recycling should be provided in garbage collection areas.

3.1.9 Development Permit Area 9 – Multi-Unit Residential

Designation

DPA9 – Multi-Unit Residential is designated as a DPA for the establishment of objectives for the form and character of multi-unit residential development.

Justification

This DPA is established to ensure that the scale and character of new multi-unit residential development and alteration of existing multi-unit residential development is undertaken in a manner which is in keeping with the rural character of the Island.

Objectives

The establishment of form and character of multi-unit residential development

Applicability

POLICY 3.1.9.1: Unless specifically exempted, a Development Permit must be issued prior to the following development activities occurring within this DPA:

- Subdivision of land
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure
- Alteration of land

POLICY 3.1.9.2: The following activities are exempt from any requirement for a development permit:

- Building painting, structural alterations and repairs of a minor nature that do not require a building permit;
- Building repairs and maintenance where the materials to be used are of the same type and form as the existing materials;
- The installation of carved wood signs on lots where there are existing buildings; or
- Subdivision for the purpose of a lot consolidation.

Guidelines

POLICY 3.1.9.3: In considering issuance of a Development Permit, the following guidelines apply:

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.1: The character of the development should be in keeping with the island environment and be capable of blending in with the aesthetic qualities of the natural surroundings.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.2: Natural vegetation and trees should be retained or native vegetation planted and maintained for screening of parking and storage areas. Safety and visibility should be considered in landscape design.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.3: Landscaping should facilitate water retention.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.4: Facilities for recycling should be provided in garbage collection areas.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.5: Lighting is to be kept to a minimum necessary for pedestrian safety and visibility. Lighting in off-street parking areas should be adequate for security purposes.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.6: Signs made from natural materials or incorporating materials produced by local artisans and craft people are encouraged.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.7: Off-street parking should be designed to be as unobtrusive as possible and, where possible, located to the rear of the lot.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.8: Exterior surfaces of buildings and structure should reflect a locally crafted character and, to the extent possible, be comprised of natural local materials such as wood or stone.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.9: Common area amenities should be provided prior to alteration and/or occupancy.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.10: A vegetation screen should be provided within the required setback area which provides and adequate visual screen of the intended use from an adjoining residential lot.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.11: Bicycle storage areas and structures, bicycle and pedestrian paths and areas for community garden space should be provided as a means of decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

GUIDELINE 3.1.9.3.12: Where possible, water conservation measures, and energy efficient building siting and design should be provided.

3.1.10 Development Permit Area 10 – Industrial

Designation

DPA10 – Industrial is designated as a DPA for the establishment of objectives for the form and character of industrial development.

Justification

While it is important to have some industrial use on the island, it should not impact the rural character of the island.

Objective

This DPA is established to ensure that the scale and character of the new and existing industrial development is undertaken in a manner which is in keeping with the rural character of the Island.

Applicability

POLICY 3.1.10.1: Unless specifically exempted, a Development Permit must be issued prior to the following development activities occurring within this DPA:

- Subdivision of land
- Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure
- Alteration of land

POLICY 3.1.10.2: The following activities are exempt from any requirement for a development permit:

- Subdivision for the purpose of a lot consolidation.

Guidelines

POLICY 3.1.10.3: In considering issuance of a Development Permit, the following guidelines apply:

GUIDELINE 3.1.10.3.1: The character of the development should be in keeping with the island environment and, with the exception of points of access to the property, adequate natural vegetation screening should be maintained along the perimeter of the property.

GUIDELINE 3.1.10.3.2: No buildings should be located closer than 30m from a watercourse of the high water mark of the sea.

PART FOUR

Implementation and Advocacy

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

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

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

4.1 Using Development Approval Information

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

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

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

4.2 Implementing the Freshwater Footprint

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

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

4.3 Implementing New Development Permit Areas and Heritage Conservation Areas

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

4.3.1 Priority Development Permit Areas

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Priority DPAs without existing data or guidelines:

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

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

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

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

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

4.3.2 Heritage Conservation Areas

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

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

A Heritage Protection Area should:

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

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

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

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

4.4 Advocacy

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

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

Plan Goals and Advocacy Action

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

The actions identified in this section:

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

4.4.1 Integrating First Nations Interests

4.4.1.1 Protecting Cultural Heritage Sites

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.1.2 Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into Land Use Planning

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

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

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.2 Protection of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

4.4.2.1 Ecosystem Protection and Restoration of Terrestrial Ecosystems

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

- Ensuring up to date data is available to support decision making;
- Educating the public to develop land responsibly and with ecological care;
- Placing covenants on areas of high ecological value;

- Protecting ecologically sensitive lands through stewardship, and conservation tools;
- Preventing habitat destruction and undertaking ecological restoration in areas where damage or destruction has occurred;
- Restoring damaged habitat and ecosystems.

Key Collaborators:

Private landowners, the Gabriola community, local conservancies, the Islands Trust Conservancy, Islands Trust Area Services, RDN, the Province.

4.4.2.2 Protection of Marine and Shoreline Ecosystems

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.2.3 Species at Risk

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.3 Responsible Resource Stewardship

4.4.3.1 Protection of Quality and Quantity of Freshwater Resources

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.3.2 Preservation of Agriculture

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.3.3 Preservation of Forests

Background:

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

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.3.4 Mining and Aggregate Extraction

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

The Province

4.4.4 Community Resilience and Climate Readiness

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

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

4.4.4.1 Transportation and Mobility

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

4.4.4.2 Buildings

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.4.3 Waste

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.4.4 Food Security

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.4.5. Natural Areas and Hazard Protection

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.5 Diversity and Community Wellbeing

4.4.5.1 Housing Diversity & Affordability

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.5.2 Local Economy

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.5.3 Parks & Public Access

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

- Advocate for province, RDN to acquire and maintain parkland and trails including shoreline access.
- Work with the Islands Trust Conservancy when considering land use covenants.
- Encourage and support programs that enhance stewardship, conservation, and public education about natural areas.
- Encourage partnerships with non-profits and community groups to manage and expand public access responsibly.
- Promote initiatives that balance public access with protection of sensitive ecological areas.

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.5.4 Arts and Culture

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.5.5 Sports, Recreation, and Active Living

Background:

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

Why Advocacy is Needed:

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

Supports and Advocacy:

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

Key Collaborators:

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

4.4.6 Collaboration, Transparency, and Shared Responsibility

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

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

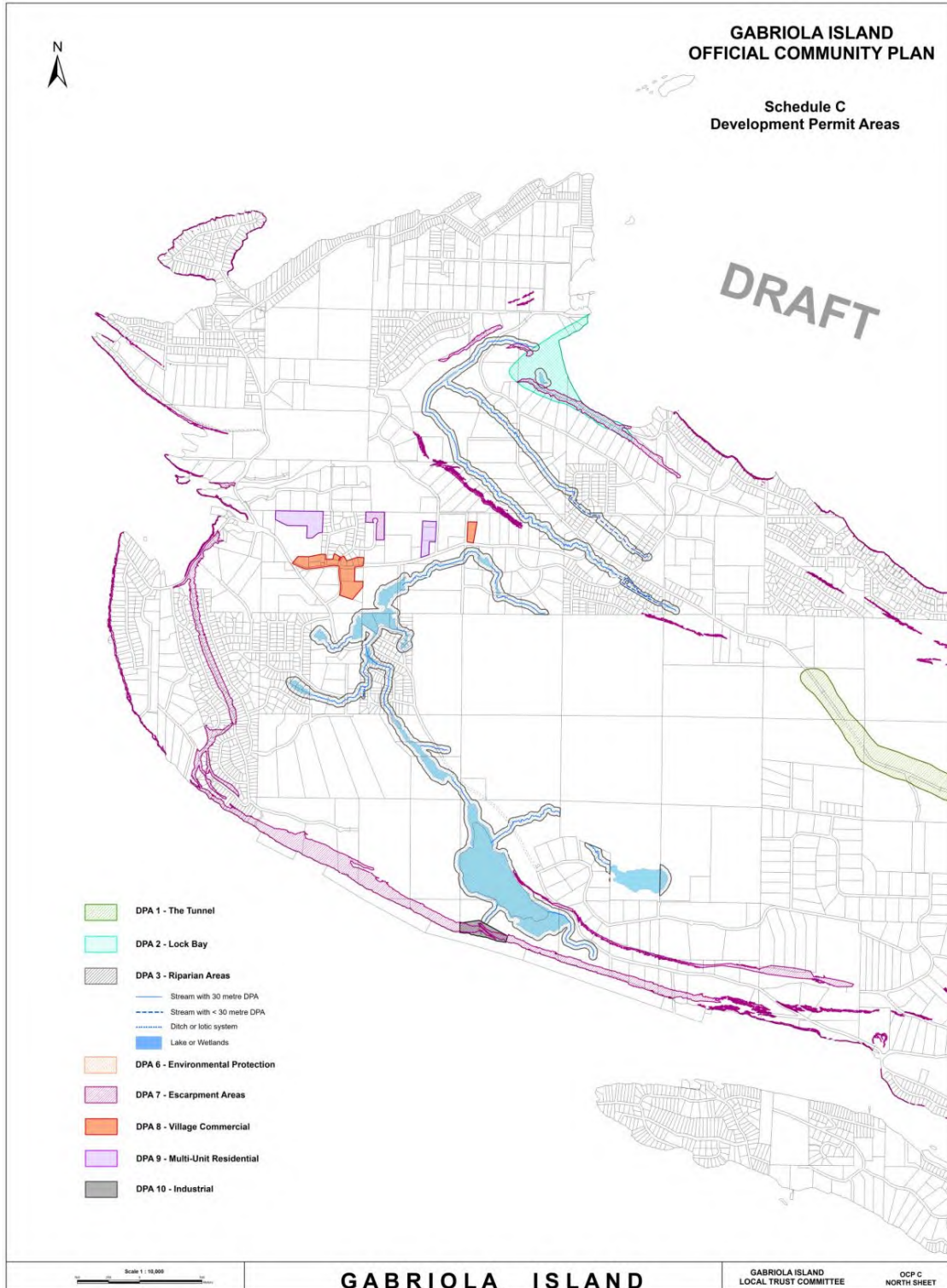
4.5 Implementation Plan

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

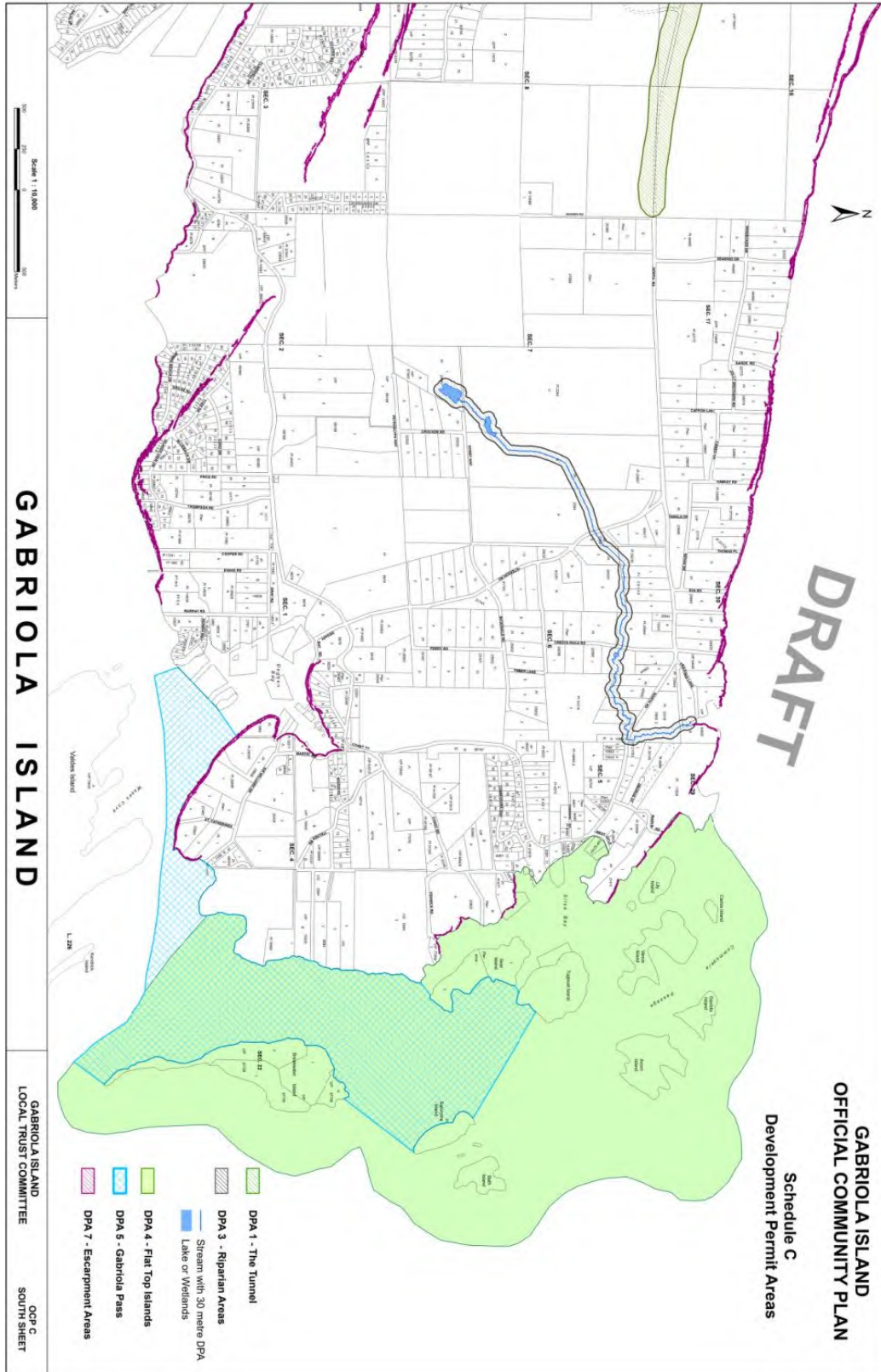


Schedule C – Development Permit Areas

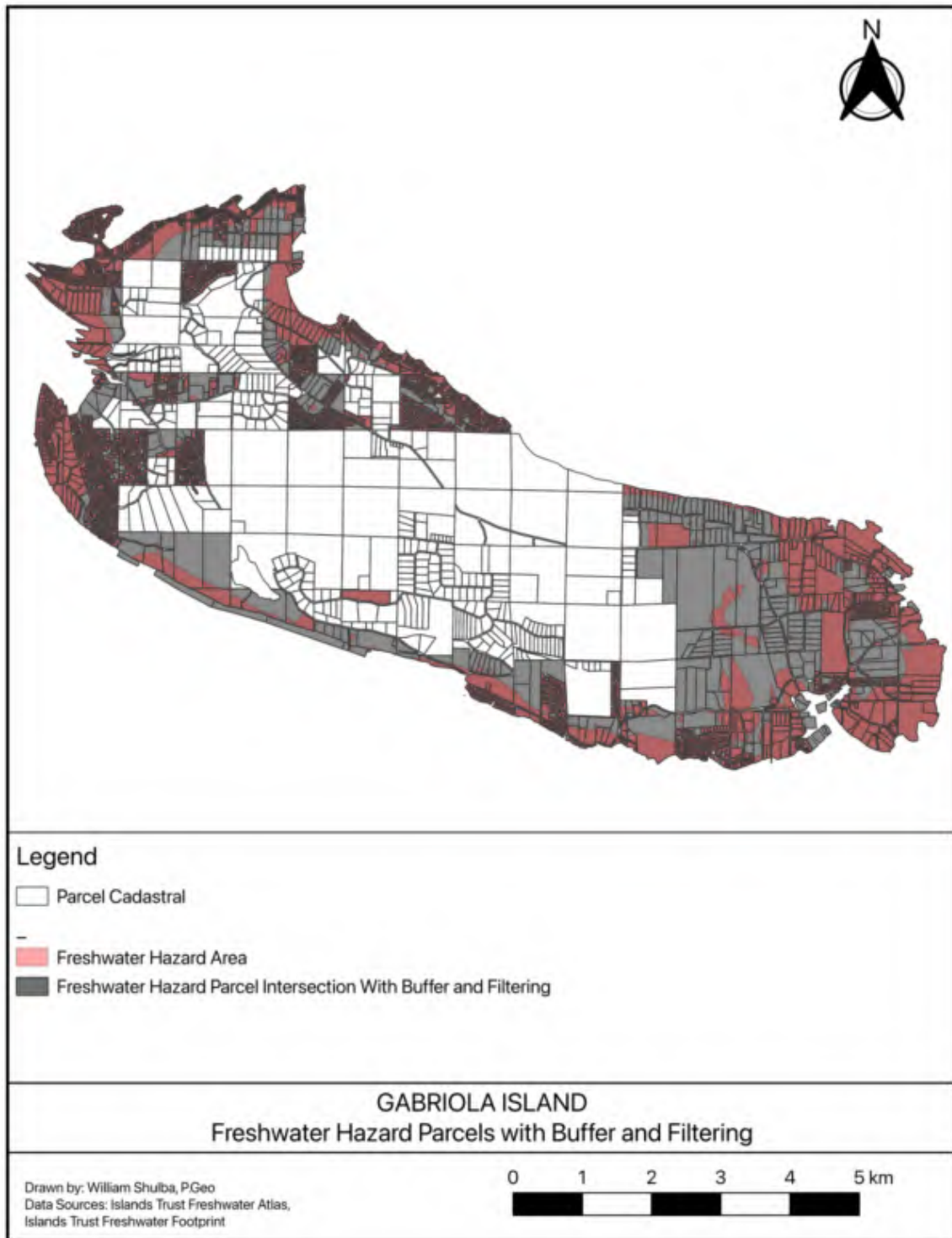
North Map



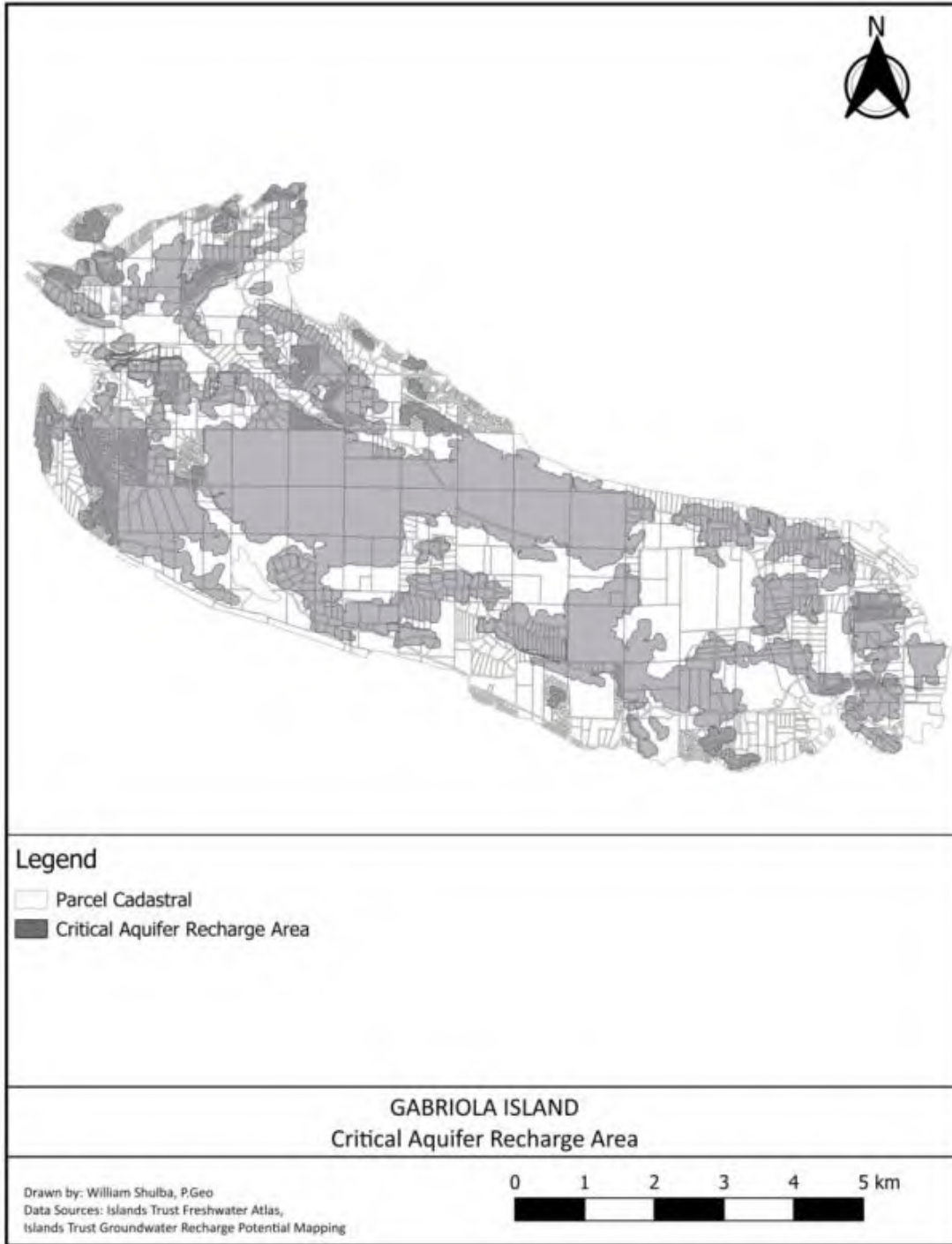
South Map



Schedule D – Freshwater Hazard Map



Schedule E – Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas



APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Definitions

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

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

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

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

Community Services uses means uses that support community services to be managed by an established government or registered not for profit organization. Examples include schools, health care facilities, community centre, recycling depot.

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

Critical Aquifer Recharge Area means a designated land surface area that plays a vital role in replenishing (recharging) aquifers used for potable water.

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

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

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

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

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

Multi-unit dwelling means a building containing two or more dwelling units (excluding a principal dwelling with a secondary suite), each having their own entrance, which may include an entrance from a common interior corridor or and exterior entrance.

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

Park, Passive Recreation means a park which is retained in its natural state other than for walking and hiking trails and signage and no other uses including driveways and parking lots.

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

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

Secondary Suite means an accessory, self-contained dwelling unit that is within the principal dwelling having equal or lesser floor area than the principal dwelling unit.

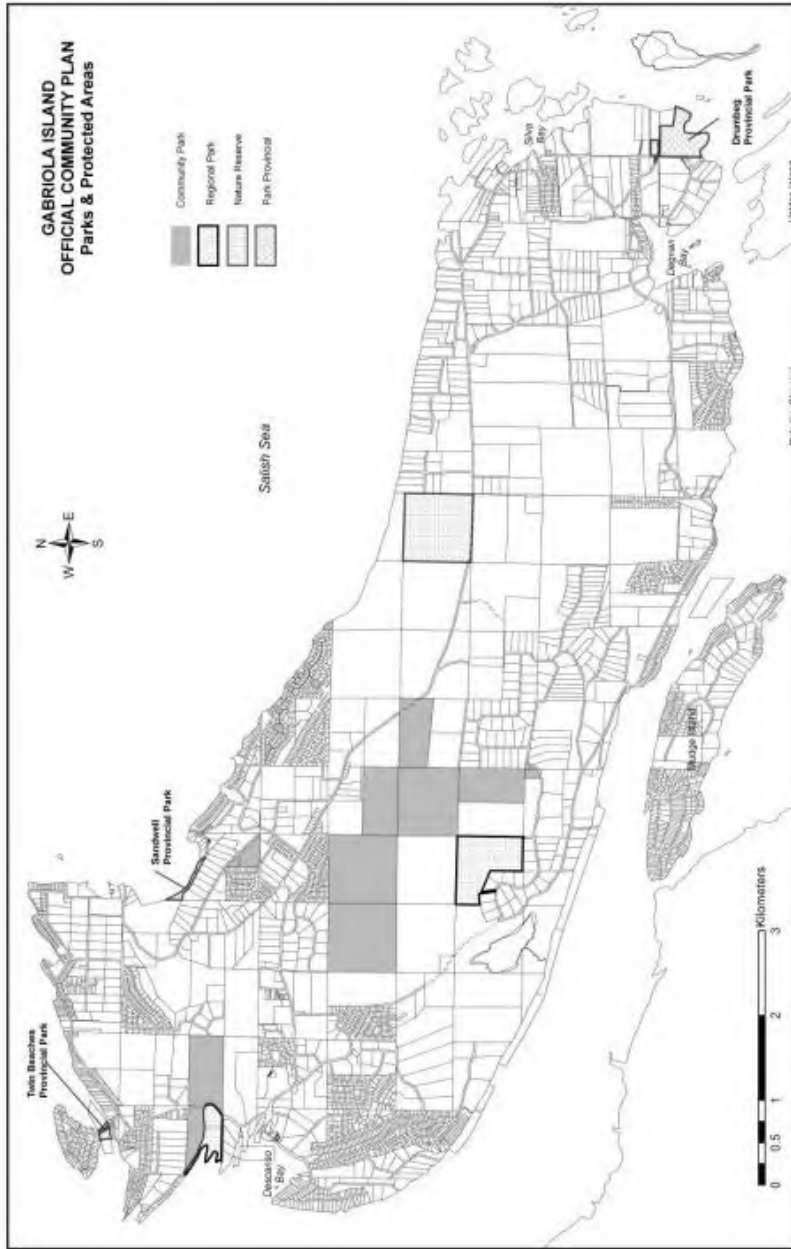
Sensitive Ecosystems means ecosystems which are fragile and/or rare, or those ecosystems which are ecologically important because of the diversity of species they support.

Short Term Vacation Rental means short term rental (less than 30 days) of a dwelling or part of dwelling.

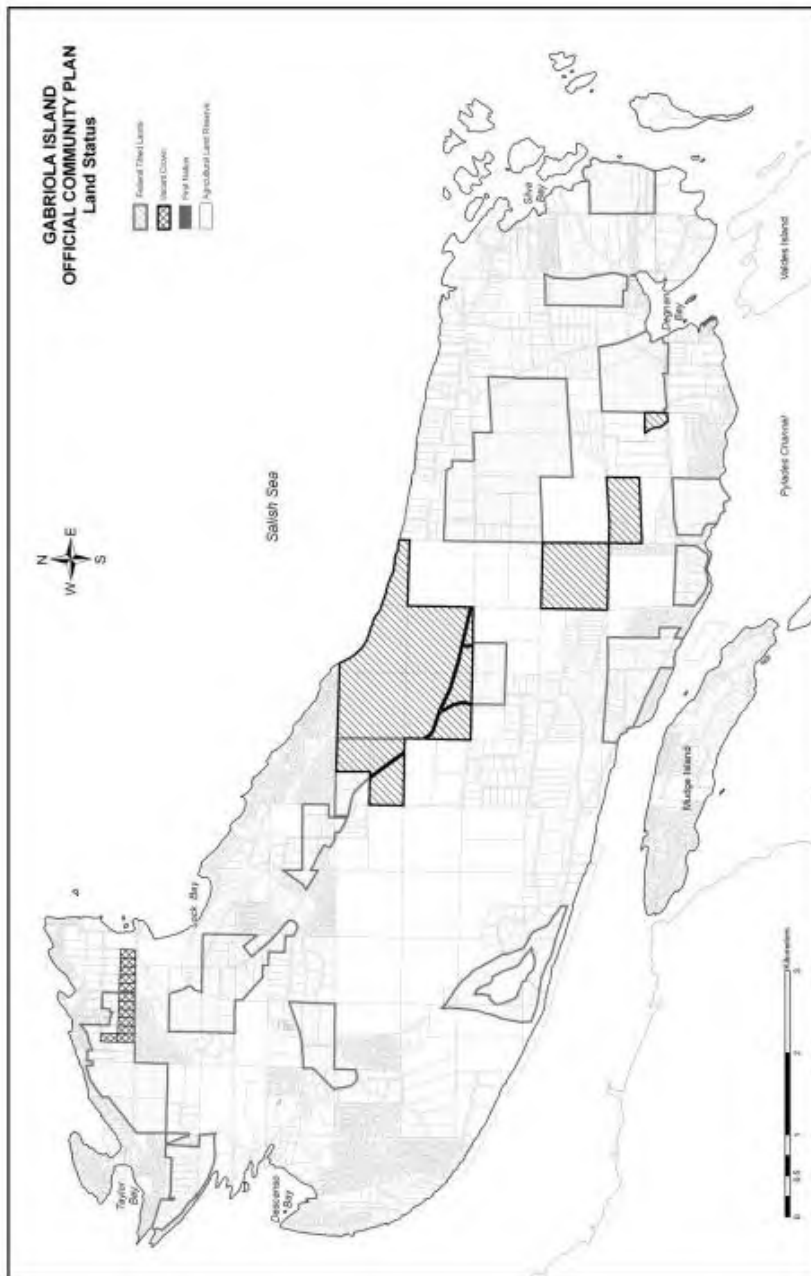
Special Needs Housing means housing that is purpose-designed or operated to accommodate individuals or households who require additional supports, services, or physical adaptations in order to live safely and independently, including housing for persons with disabilities, seniors requiring assistance,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

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

Appendix 2– Parks and Protected Areas



Appendix 3- Land Status





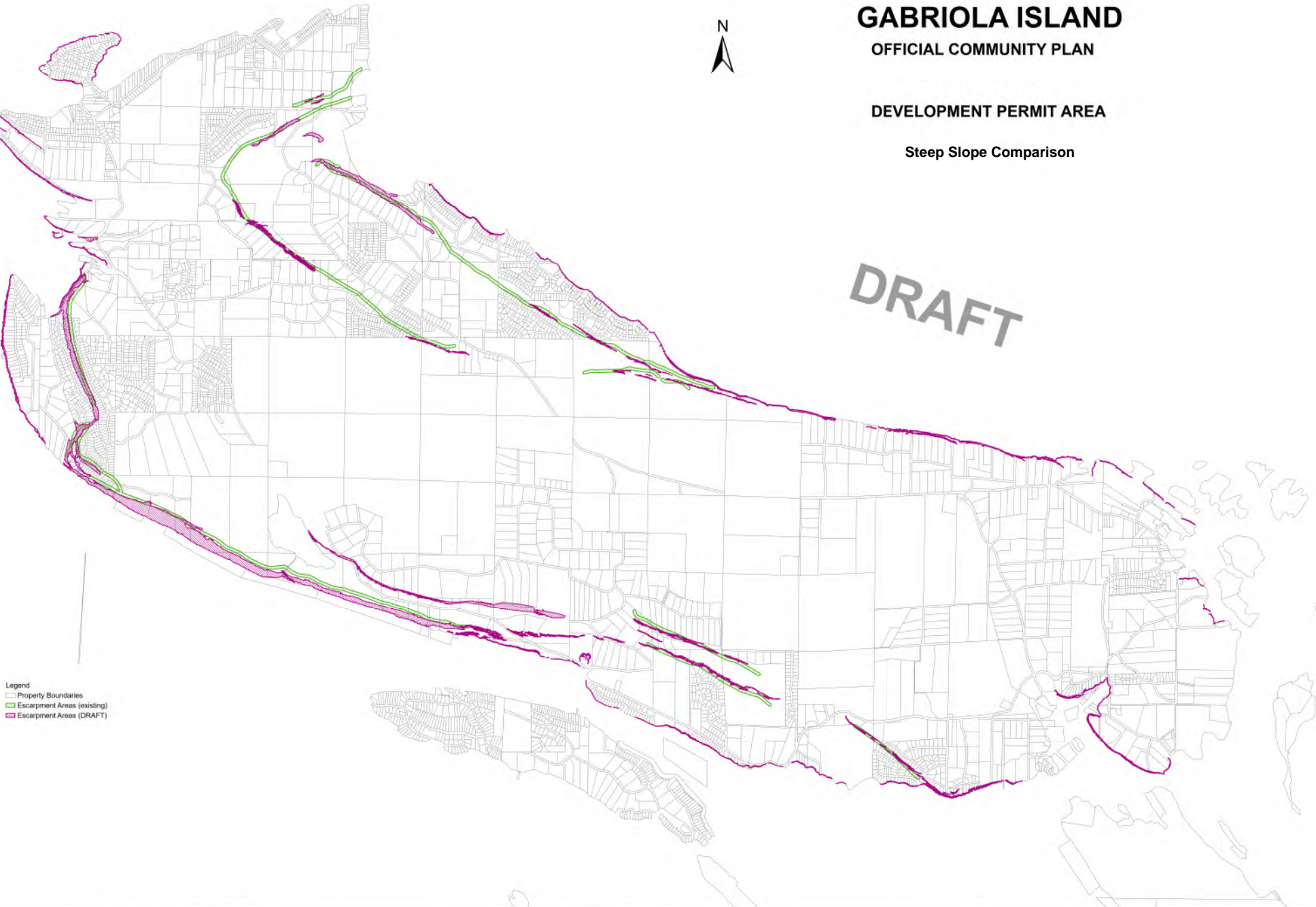
GABRIOLA ISLAND

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA

Steep Slope Comparison

DRAFT



- Legend
- Property Boundaries
 - Escarpment Areas (existing)
 - Escarpment Areas (DRAFT)



GABRIOLA ISLAND

GABRIOLA ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE
OCP - DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREAS