



DATE OF MEETING: April 9, 2026

TO: Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee

FROM: Oluwashogo Garuba, Planner 2
Salt Spring Island Team

COPY: Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Harbour House Hotel – Rezoning to Permit Additional Commercial Guest Accommodation Units
Applicant: Patrick Wheeler
Location: 121 Upper Ganges Road, SSI

RECOMMENDATION

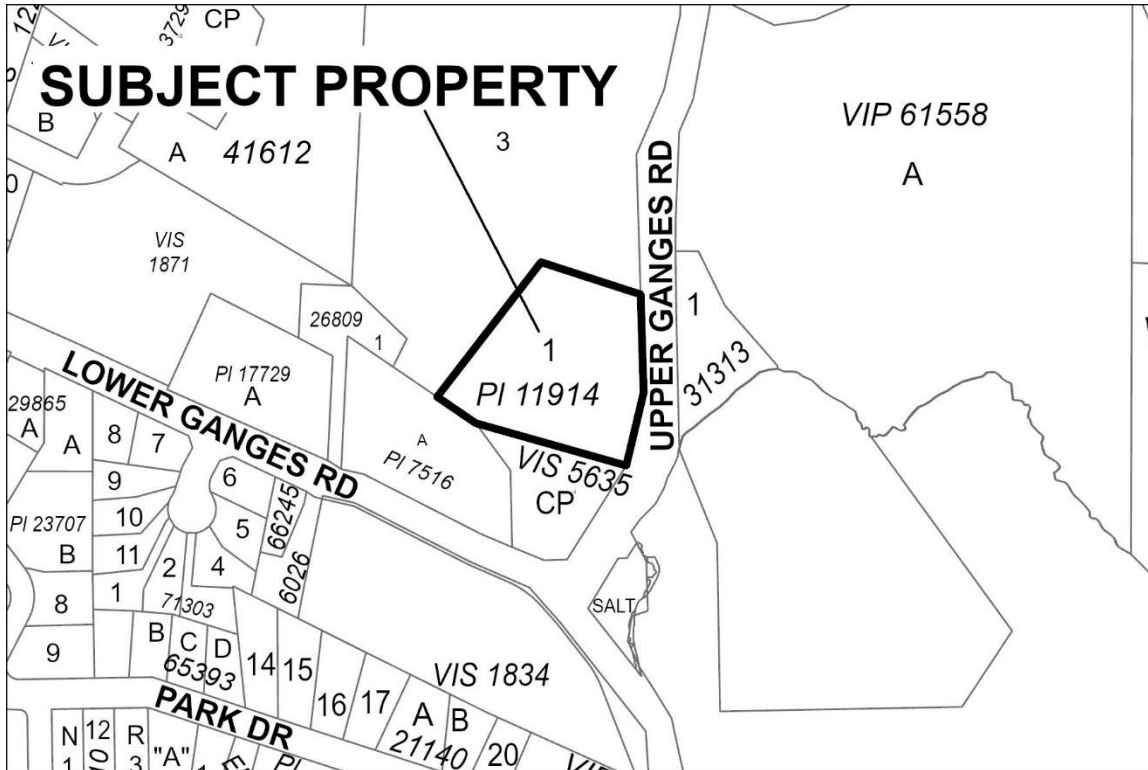
1. That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee request staff to proceed with processing application PLRZ20250177.
2. That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee request staff to prepare a draft bylaw to amend Salt Spring Island Land Use Bylaw No. 355, 1999 to rezone LOT 1 SECTION 3 RANGE 3 EAST NORTH SALT SPRING ISLAND COWICHAN DISTRICT PLAN 11914 EXCEPT PARTS IN PLANS VIP56622 AND VIP59981, from the CA1 (f) zone to permit a maximum of 75 commercial guest accommodation units.
3. That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee request staff to refer the draft amendment bylaw for file PLRZ20250177 and other information to First Nations, Advisory Planning Commission, Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission and other applicable agencies to seek comment on the proposal to amend Salt Spring Island Land Use Bylaw No. 355, 1999.
4. That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee request staff to schedule a Community Information Meeting at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which the draft bylaw for file PLRZ20250177 is anticipated to be provided to LTC for first reading.

REPORT SUMMARY

This is a preliminary staff report to the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee (SS LTC) for a proposed amendment to Salt Spring Island Land Use Bylaw No. 355, 1999 (LUB) to permit additional 20 units of commercial guest accommodation at 121 Upper Ganges Road (the subject property). The report examines relevant policies, including the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan Bylaw (OCP) No. 434 and the Islands Trust Policy Statement (ITPS)); and evaluates the proposed rezoning in consideration of these policies, and provides recommendations on how to proceed with the application. The application as submitted would amend the LUB by amending the current zoning of the subject property Commercial Accommodation 1 variant f (CA1 (f)) to permit up to 75 commercial guest accommodation units.

BACKGROUND

The 1.2 ha (2.97 ac) property is located on Upper Ganges Road on East North end of Salt Spring Island, zoned CA1 (f) is currently occupied by a hotel (Harbour House hotel), restaurant and meeting room. In 2017, the owners of the hotel submitted a rezoning application to permit additional 13 units bringing the total number of commercial guest accommodation units to 55. In order to support regenerative tourism as indicated in the applicant's letter of narrative (See Attachment 2), another application has been received to increase the number of units to 75 by adding 20 more units on the subject property.



ANALYSIS

Policy/Regulatory

Islands Trust Policy Statement:

The following are policies contained in the ITPS that are considered relevant to this proposal:

Agricultural Land Policy:

4.1.5 Local Trust Committees and Island Municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address the preservation, protection, and encouragement of farming, the sustainability of farming, and the relationship of farming to other land uses.

Planner comments: the subject property is bordered by land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR); therefore, the proposed use must be consistent with the preservation, protection, and long-term sustainability of farming in relation to the property.

4.1.6 Local trust committees and island municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address the use of adjacent properties to minimize any adverse affects on agricultural land.

Planner comments: the subject property is adjacent to land within the Agricultural Land Reserve and its current use has not been determined to have any potential impacts on agricultural land, including changes to natural drainage patterns or risks of water supply contamination. Since the use of land is not being altered, the application is considered to be consistent with this policy. The application will however be referred to the Agricultural Advisory Planning Committee (AAPC) and Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for their review and comments.

Freshwater Resources Policy:

4.4.2 Local trust committees and island municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address measures that ensure:

- *neither the density nor intensity of land use is increased in areas which are known to have a problem with the quality or quantity of the supply of freshwater,*
- *water quality is maintained, and*
- *existing, anticipated and seasonal demands for water are considered and allowed for.*

Planner comment: the proposed rezoning and development of 20 additional commercial guest accommodation units does not seek to increase the density or intensity of land use as the proposed addition is still within the permitted density and therefore is considered to be in compliance with this policy.

5.2.5 Local trust committees and island municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address means for achieving efficient use of the land base without exceeding any density limits defined in their official community plans.

Planner comment: the density limit is not considered to be exceeded as a result of this application, therefore consistent with this policy.

Cultural and Natural Heritage Policy:

5.6.2 Local trust committees and island municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of local heritage.

Planner comment: desktop review indicates that the subject property is within 100m of a known archaeological site. Staff therefore recommends that the application be referred to First Nations for review and comment on the proposed use.

Staff will undertake a full review of the applicant's proposal relative to the Islands Trust Policy Statement and provide a policy checklist for LTC's review at a later date if the application proceeds.

Official Community Plan:

The subject property is designated as Ganges Village Upper (GVU) in the OCP and it is also within the Development Permit Area 1 (DPA1) – Island Villages. Future development on subject property according to the proposal will require a development permit application submitted to Islands Trust by the applicant. Staff have evaluated the application against relevant policies contained in the OCP and note several policies that relate to the proposed rezoning, but have not noted any inconsistency with the OCP at this time.

Applicable OCP Policies to Island Heritage

A.8.2.9 When it considers rezoning applications that concern land with a known heritage feature, archaeological site, or other First Nations cultural site, the Local Trust Committee should ensure that the heritage features would not be damaged as the result of a zoning change.

Planner comment: desktop review indicates that the subject property is within 100m of known areas of archaeological site and there is a high probability of additional archaeological values on the property itself. Staff therefore recommends that this application be referred to First Nations for their review and comments.

Applicable OCP Policies relevant to Ganges Village Development

B.5.1.2.12 The form and character of commercial, general employment and multi-family development in Village Designations will be guided through Development Permit guidelines in Part E.

Planner comments: Future development on subject property is subject to the development permit guidelines outlined in Part E of the OCP to ensure that the development is carried out in general conformity with development permit guidelines to meet the above policy.

B.5.2.2.2 Zones within the Ganges Village Designation will continue to allow the wide range of commercial, general employment, institutional land uses and the various densities of residential development allowed by existing zoning.

Planner comments: This policy ensures that the zoning within Ganges Village continues to allow for diverse land uses, including commercial developments. The applicant's proposal aligns with the existing designation framework, supporting its integration into the broader vision of Ganges Village

B.5.2.2.6 When considering rezoning applications in the Ganges Village designation, the Local Trust Committee will consider the impact that the proposed change would have on the Ganges sewer treatment plant. The Local Trust Committee should obtain confirmation from the Capital Regional District of sewage system capacity for any change to zoning within the boundaries of the sewer area that may result in a significant change in sewage volume or quality. This policy is further outlined in Section C.4.2.

Planner comments: This policy will be further analysed to determine if the proposal is consistent with this policy and staff will obtain confirmation from the Capital Regional District through the recommended referral that the proposed development would not result in a significant change in sewage volume or quantity.

Applicable policies relevant to Agricultural Land

B.6.2.2.19 When it considers rezoning applications for land that borders or drains into agricultural land, the Local Trust Committee will ensure that zoning changes are not made in a way that would have a negative effect on farming. For example, the Committee could require that a vegetation buffer be maintained on land that is being rezoned next to farm land, if the proposed use could result in conflicts with a farming operation. The Committee should also ensure that a zoning change would not result in detrimental changes to natural drainage or pollution of water supplies. The Agricultural Advisory Committee will be asked for advice about rezoning applications on land that borders or drains into agricultural land.

Planner comments: staff recommends that the application be referred to Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission for comments as the subject property borders land within ALR. The proposed development needs to be assessed to establish that there are no detrimental impacts to natural drainage and pollution of water supplies. The proposal also needs to align with the edge

planning guide in order to reduce potential land use conflict between agricultural and other uses. In accordance with the guide to edge planning, the applicant will be required to maintain 15 meter setback from the ALR boundary and an 8 metre vegetated buffer within the setback area. This will however be a requirement at the development permit review stage prior to development of the proposal if the rezoning is approved and will be incorporated as conditions of permit at that stage.

Development Permit Area 1 – Island Villages:

As discussed in detail above, the subject property is located within Development Permit Area (DPA) 1 - Island Villages and therefore the development of the subject property as proposed is subject to a development permit obtained from Islands Trust if the rezoning application is successful. The intent of this DPA is to guide the community's most significant, concentrated and visible new development so that it is compatible with existing buildings, with the natural environment and with community objectives for villages. Activities that could require a DP as outlined in the OCP include:

- subdivision of land zoned for commercial, general employment or multifamily use
- subdivision of land that adjoins agricultural land or that drains into agricultural land
- installation of plastic backlit signs, of signs that do not comply with the local sign bylaw, or of signs that are to be placed more than 5 m above the ground
- new construction or alterations to existing buildings on land zoned for commercial, general employment or multi-family use if the new development is of a size that must provide off-street parking (according to the local bylaws) or if the new development would change the capacity of an existing parking lot
- development of a parking lot with more than ten spaces for commercial, general employment or multi-family residential use
- removal of vegetation within 7.5 m of agricultural land (excluding the emergency removal of a hazardous tree)
- removal of vegetation within 7.5 m of a lot line that abuts land zoned for residential or commercial guest accommodation uses (excluding the emergency removal of a hazardous tree)

B.6.2.2.21 The Local Trust Committee will use the Development Permit process to ensure that development in higher density areas such as commercial, general employment and multifamily zones remains buffered from agricultural areas, is designed to reduce conflicts with agriculture, and does not result in detrimental impacts due to water pollution or changes in the drainage regime.

Planner comment: if the rezoning is successful, prior to development, the applicant will be required in addition to the DPA 1 guidelines for development to ensure that the proposed development is buffered from agricultural land and also designed to reduce conflict with agriculture in accordance with the above policy to ensure consistency with relevant OCP policies especially E.1.4.18 - Developments adjoining agricultural land should be designed to minimize conflicts with that land...including the Guide to Edge Planning (2015). Site designs should allow for a vegetated buffer, as outlined in Guidelines for Landscaping and Parking Surfaces Subsection E.1.7.22 – these will be required to be satisfied at the development permit application stage.

Land Use Bylaw:

The subject property is zoned Commercial Accommodation 1 variant (f) CA1(f) in the LUB. The following density applies to properties in this zone:

- Despite Article 9.3.2(1), a total floor area not to exceed 215 square metres may be devoted to an accessory liquor store provided this floor area is located entirely within the existing main building.

- Despite Article 9.3.2(1), a total floor area not to exceed 41.5 square metres may be devoted to accessory retail services provided that this floor area is located entirely within the existing main building.
- Despite Article 9.3.2(1), lands zoned CA1(f) permit 55 (fifty-five) commercial guest accommodation unit.
- Despite Article 9.3.2(1), lands zoned CA1(f) permit 3 (three) accessory dwelling units.
- For zone variation CA1(f), the term accessory dwelling units if further defined as: exclusively for residential use by persons employed at the hotel for wages or salary and their families.
- Buildings in the CA1(f) zone must be sited as shown on Schedule “L”.

Based on the current zoning regulations, the applicant is unable to develop more than 55 units of commercial guest accommodation, hence the need for an amendment to the LUB in order to permit the development of 75 units of commercial guest accommodation on the subject property.

The maximum total lot coverage permitted for all buildings and structures in CA1 zones is 33%. The proposed development results in a lot coverage of 18.43%, which is below the allowable limit of 33% and therefore complies with this regulation, as illustrated below:

Buildings and structures	Floor area
Floor area of existing building	1,565 m ² (16,849 ft ²)
Floor area of accessory structures – storage shed 1 and 2	16.5 m ² (177.60 ft ²)
Floor area of covered walk way	25.5 m ² (274.47 ft ²)
Floor area of bicycle canopy	9.3 m ² (100.10 ft ²)
Floor area of proposed additional units	574 m ² (6,182 ft ²)
Total combined floor area of buildings and structures	2,190.3 m ² (23,576.19)
subject property lot coverage:	18.43%

Islands Trust Conservancy:

In accordance with Islands Trust Conservancy Board Policy 3.1, the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) does not have covenants on the subject property or adjacent properties and therefore the proposal has no consideration for the ITC.

Issues and Opportunities

Archaeology

Desktop review indicates that the subject property is within 100 metres of a known archaeological and therefore there is a high probability of additional archaeological values on the property. Based on this, staff recommends that the application will be referred to First Nations and BC Archaeology Branch for their review and comments on the application. The Islands Trust reviews all applications to ensure the preservation and protection of cultural heritage, archaeological sites, and ancestral places. As reviewed, the application is consistent with respect to LTC Standing Resolutions on reconciliation. Notwithstanding, to provide applicants with awareness regarding unknown archaeological areas, staff forwarded the Islands Trust Chance Find Protocol and the provincial Archaeological Branch guidelines on Heritage Act directly to the applicants.

Potable Water

The subject property lies within the North Salt Spring Water District (NSSWD). Accordingly, staff recommends that the application be referred to NSSWD to confirm that adequate potable water is available for the proposed 20 additional units and that the expansion is supported by NSSWD.

Sewer

The subject property is serviced by the Ganges Harbour sewer. Staff recommend referral of the proposed bylaw amendment to the Ganges Harbour Sewage Commission to ensure there is adequate capacity to accommodate the additional commercial guest accommodation units, per OCP policy B.5.2.2.6.

Parking

The LUB contains parking regulation requirements depending on use and intensity of use. Under the proposed land use change, the subject property would be required to provide parking spaces as calculated by the table below:

TABLE 3 MINIMUM NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES FOR AUTOMOBILES, DISABLED PARKING AND BICYCLES			
LAND USE	Number of Automobile Parking Spaces Required	Number of required Automobile Parking Spaces which must be designed for use by the disabled	Number of Bicycle Parking Spaces Required
COMMERCIAL			
Restaurants and <i>Liquor-primary</i> establishments	1 per 3 <i>indoor</i> seats	5%	1 per 250 sqm <i>floor area</i>
<i>Commercial guest accommodation units, campgrounds</i>	1 per unit or <i>campsite</i>	5%	1 per 15 units or <i>camp-sites</i>

Based on the proposed additional 20 units of commercial guest accommodation, a total of 20 additional parking spaces are required. The applicant has demonstrated this required additional parking requirements at this time however, at the time of development permit application they are required to be in compliance with the DPA guidelines for off-street parking lot location and design.

Consultation

Statutory requirements:

Should SS LTC endorse second reading at a future meeting, statutory notification of the proposed rezoning would be made for a public hearing in accordance with Section 466 of the *Local Government Act* and Salt Spring Island Development Procedures Bylaw No. 304. This will involve newspaper advertising and neighbourhood notification and will be undertaken once the LTC directs staff to schedule a community information meeting and public hearing. No such notice is required at this time.

Agencies

Provided that further analysis confirms no inconsistency with the OCP, staff recommends that the application be referred to the following agencies:

Adjacent Local Trust Committees and Municipalities

Galiano Island Local Trust Committee

Mayne Island Local Trust Committee
North Pender Island Local Trust Committee
Thetis Island Local Trust Committee
Cowichan Valley Regional District

Non-Agency Referrals

BC Ambulance Service
RCMP
SSI Fire-Rescue
Salt Spring Island
Coast Salish Society
North Salt Spring Waterworks District

Provincial Agencies

Agricultural Land Commission
Ministry of Agriculture
BC Assessment Authority
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
Front Counter BC
BC Archaeology Branch

Regional Agencies

CRD – All Referrals
CRD – Salt Spring Local Community Commission
Vancouver Island Health Authority
SSI Advisory Planning Commission
SSI Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission

First Nations

The Islands Trust reviews all applications to ensure the preservation and protection of cultural heritage, archaeological sites, and ancestral places. As reviewed, the application is consistent with respect to LTC Standing Resolutions on reconciliation. Notwithstanding, to provide applicants with awareness regarding unknown archaeological areas, staff forwarded the Islands Trust Chance Find Protocol and the provincial Archaeological Branch guidelines on Heritage Act directly to the applicants. Staff have identified the following First Nations for early engagement and referral:

- Cowichan Tribes
- Halalt First Nation
- Lyackson First Nation
- Pauquachin First Nation
- Penelakut Tribe
- Semiahmoo First Nation
- Stz'uminus First Nation
- Tsartlip First Nation
- Tsawout First Nation
- Tsawwassen First Nation
- Tseycum First Nation
- Ts'uubaa-Asatx (Lake Cowichan) First Nation

If the LTC decides to proceed, staff would notify these First Nations and request their input on the proposed rezoning application.

Rationale for Recommendation

The recommendations reflect that the proposal appears to be consistent with the policies of the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan No. 434 (OCP) and Islands trust Policy Statement (ITPS), and seeks to investigate important areas that should be confirmed prior to LTC’s consideration of adoption of such an amendment to the LUB.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Request further information

The LTC may request further information prior to making a decision. Recommended wording for the resolution is as follows:

That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee request that the applicant submit to the Islands Trust in addition to the recommended resolution the following..

2. Deny the application

The LTC may deny the application. Recommended wording for the resolution is as follows:

That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee deny application PLRZ20250177 for the following reasons..

NEXT STEPS

If the recommendations are supported, staff will proceed with preparing a draft bylaw, refer to First Nations and applicable agencies and return to the LTC for further consideration at a later date.

Submitted By:	Oluwashogo Garuba, Planner 2	March 18, 2026
Concurrence:	Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager	March 31, 2026

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Site Context
- 2. Applicant’s letter of rationale

ATTACHMENT 1 – SITE CONTEXT

LOCATION

Legal Description	LOT 1 SECTION 3 RANGE 3 EAST NORTH SALT SPRING ISLAND COWICHAN DISTRICT PLAN 11914 EXCEPT PARTS IN PLANS VIP56622 AND VIP59981
PID	004-909-721
Civic Address	121 Upper Ganges Road, SSI
Lot Size	1.2 ha (2.97 ac)

LAND USE

Current Land Use	Commercial Accommodation (CA1 (f))
Surrounding Land Use	Agriculture (A1), Commercial Accommodation (CA1), Commercial (Commercial 4)

HISTORICAL ACTIVITY

File No.	Purpose
SS-BP-2017.23	To alter the property (Harbour House Hotel)
SS-BP-2017.66	To alter a commercial property - Phase 2
SS-BP-2018.20	Hotel renovation
SS-BP-2018.88	Proposing to alter a commercial structure - (Harbour House Hotel)
SS-BP-2019.22	Proposing to alter a commercial structure - (Harbour House Hotel)
SS-BP-2019.73	Proposing to alter a commercial structure - (Harbour House Hotel)
SS-DP-1993.4	Information not found in TAPIS
SS-DP-1993.8	Information not found in TAPIS
SS-DP-1994.2	Information not found in TAPIS
SS-DP-1996.7	Information not found in TAPIS
SS-DP-2017.3	DP Amendment
SS-DP-2018.4	DP Amendment
SS-DP-2019.12	DP Amendment
SS-LCB-2017.1	LCB Addition
SS-LCB-2023.2	To expand alcohol service hours
SS-RZ-2002.7	Regularize existing uses
SS-RZ-2017.7	Proposal to Increase Accommodation Units from 42 to 55
SS-TUP-1997.1	Hairdressing Salon.
UN-DP-1988.21	Information not found in TAPIS
UN-DP-1993.3	Information not found in TAPIS

POLICY/REGULATORY

Official Community Plan Designations	Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 434, 2008 Designation: Ganges Village Upper – GVU Development Permit Area 1 – Island Villages
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Rezoning Application - Harbour House Hotel CA1(F) Zoning Amendment: Proposed Expansion from 55 to 75 Commercial Units

A Sustainable Solution for Salt Spring Island's Tourism and Housing Needs

Project Narrative:

For over a century, Harbour House Hotel has proudly served as both a welcoming retreat for visitors and a vital resource for our community of Salt Spring Island. As we confront pressing issues related to water scarcity, housing shortages, and contributing towards progressive destination management, we submit this application to expand our capacity from 55 to 75 commercial accommodation units. This thoughtful growth aligns with our commitment to support sustainable, regenerative tourism and as well, our community needs on our Island. As a longstanding hospitality provider that has invested significantly in our community and as regenerative tourism and sustainable tourism leader over the past nine years, we believe this expansion offers a responsible path forward that aligns perfectly with the island's new short-term rental regulations and broader environmental goals. We would like to start development as soon as possible, pending Islands Trust and CRD approvals.

The existing uses of site include a hotel with 55 units, conference room, and restaurant. The uses of neighboring properties include:

- A1 zoned property to the North and West sides of site
- C4 zoned property adjoining the SW corner of site
- R1 zoned property adjoining the SE corner of site
- CA1(C) zoned property across the street to the East

Reasons In Support Bylaw Amendment

Water Conservation Through Proven Efficiency and Prudent Density

Our extensive renovations over the past nine years have established Harbour House as an accommodation model of water stewardship on Salt Spring Island:

- Landscaped with native plants to help limit water usage and 100% of irrigation/outdoor water usage comes from harvested rainwater.
- installation of low-flow fixtures reduce per-guest water use by 40% compared to a residential home in use as a short-term rental.
- Centralized systems allow for precise monitoring and conservation.
- Eco Friendly linens cleaned in optimized commercial laundry systems that are professionally maintained and monitored monthly on site.

-With our 3-acre property's existing infrastructure, we can accommodate additional guests without increasing our water footprint proportionally - a critical advantage during drought conditions.

Direct Relief for the Housing Crisis & Reducing Community Impacts.

The additional 20 units are specifically designed to provide comfortable extended-stay accommodation that can flex between tourist and community needs. Unlike a non-conforming short term that can remove housing from the long-term market, our expansion creates new capacity while generating additional MRDT revenue that can support affordable housing initiatives. Our exceptional location and amenities directly address key island concerns:

- ****186 existing parking stalls**** on our 3-acre property help alleviate Ganges' and residential parking pressures.
- Walkable access to 2 marinas (across the street), float plane terminal and public transit routes with direct access to 3 BC Ferries Terminals. We encourage our guests to come as you are without your car to limit your carbon footprint when visiting the Island. We also offer complimentary guest shuttle service.
- density distributed accommodation that reduces pressure on specific areas, mitigates infrastructure strain, and addresses the proliferation of short-term rentals, thereby protecting neighborhood character and quality of life.

Alignment With Community Priorities.

This proposal actively supports:

- The island's new short-term rental regulations by providing better-managed alternatives.
- Water conservation goals through responsible, efficient operations.
- Economic stability through year-round employment and visitor spending.
- Heritage preservation by adapting our historic property for modern needs.

Our Continued Commitment to Salt Spring.

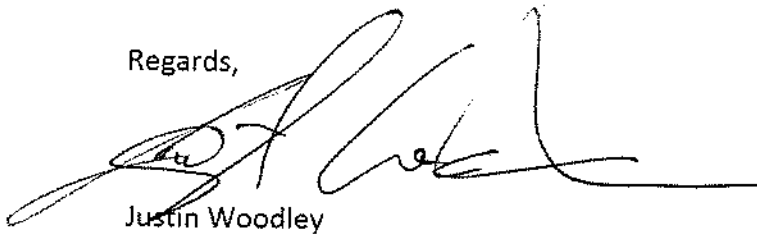
From housing the builders of the island in our early days to sheltering emergency crews after storms, we've always adapted to serve our community. We've carefully designed this expansion to simultaneously respect our community neighbors and the environment. We actively explore ways to promote regenerative travel practices, preserving the unique character of Salt Spring Island while educating our guests on our sustainable practices. This carefully considered expansion allows us to:

- Protect our limited water resources through collective efficiency.
- Offer tangible solutions during housing shortages.
- We recognize our obligation to past, present, and future visitors.
- Create new capacity while contributing more to the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) that supports other housing initiatives on Salt Spring Island.

- Maintain our Island vibrant visitor's economy without displacing our own residents.
- Preserve the character of Salt Spring Island while welcoming visitors responsibly.

We respectfully request your approval for this measured growth that benefits both visitors and residents alike. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss more how this expansion aligns with Salt Spring Island's long-term vision.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Woodley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Justin Woodley