



Islands Trust

Housing Action Program Public Engagement Framework

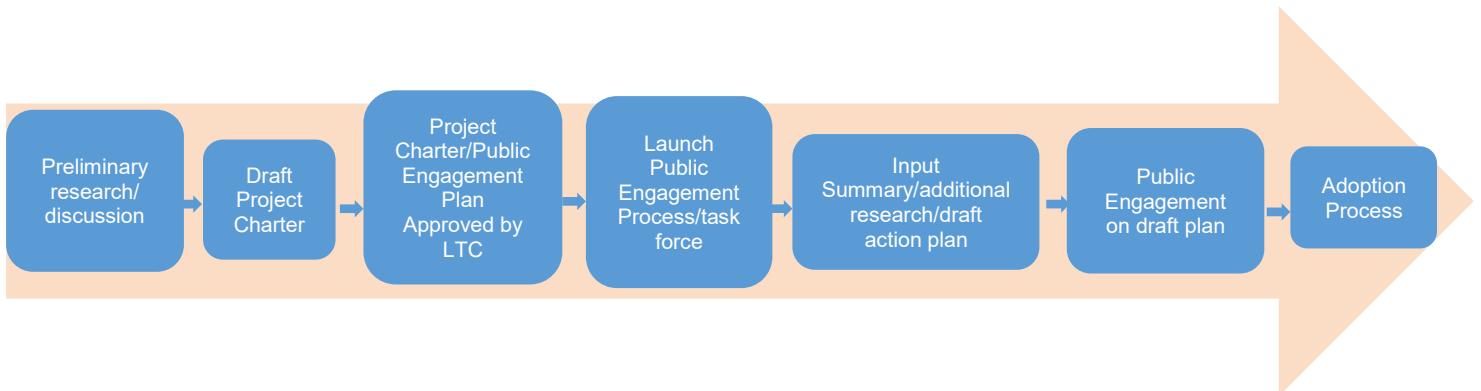
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A “Housing Working Group Report” was presented to Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee (SS LTC) at their meeting on Oct 6, 2020. Upon receipt of the Report, SS LTC elevated the “Housing challenges and solutions” initiative as a priority at their meeting on November 10, 2020, and directed staff to provide a Project Charter for the implementation of this initiative. This document intends to provide a framework based on best practices on public engagement program. A subsequent more detailed public engagement plan that identifies key stakeholders and partners involved, timing and types of engagement activities, and specific tools being utilized will be developed as part of the planning process.

HOUSING ACTION PROGRAM

The Housing Action Program is proposed to tackle a range of issues that impact the affordability of housing, the types of housing options, and the environmental sustainability as they relate to the locations, sizes, and designs of housing development. Issues such as water availability and the moratorium on new connections to the North Salt Spring community water system, storm-water and sewer systems, active transportation infrastructure, innovative site and building design, arts and culture, archaeological significance will all be examined in the process. The Action Program intends to address the housing issues on Salt Spring Island from a holistic and comprehensive manner. The parameters for the development of an Action Program planning process include the Islands Trust’s commitment to preserve and protect the unique and fragile environment of the island; to address the [climate emergency](#) (passed March 2019); and to advance reconciliation efforts set forth in the [Reconciliation Declaration](#) (passed March 2019) and the [Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2022](#) (passed June 2019). This project will build on work by community groups, government agencies and collaboration with First Nations and stakeholders.

GENERAL PLANNING PROCESS



KEY ACTIVITIES

The project will be implemented in three key phases over the next two years:

- LTC adopt “Terms of Reference” and appoint members to the Task Force
- Establish Technical Working Group with agencies and subject-matter experts
- Early conversation with stakeholders and First Nations
- Launch public engagement process
- Identify issues, and research and analysis on existing conditions
- Identify the mission for the Action Program with Task Force
- Review existing efforts, BC legislations, housing program and relevant SS regulation, policies and tools (e.g., OCP, LUB, housing agreements, subdivision regulations, etc.)
- Explore land use development, regulatory, incentive tools and pilot programs
- Draft the Housing Action Program to address, at a minimum, the following elements:
Land use development standards, housing density, increase diversity of housing types and tenures sustainable site and building design, climate resiliency, transportation, open space, infrastructure servicing (water, sewer, storm-water), economic sustainability, community health, housing management program and First Nations heritage
- Develop actionable items
- Develop processes that promote and support innovative designs and best practices, incentive programs, and a monitoring system
- Conduct amendment to OCP, LUB, and relevant policies, and various implementation measures as recommended by the Action Program

HOUSING ACTION PROGRAM TASK FORCE

The Task Force is an appointed advisory working group to the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee (LTC), which consisting of 11 members. The Task Force will have a hands-on role in creating and implementing engagement activities in the community under the direction of the LTC and coordinated by Islands Trust staff. The Task Force will facilitate discussions and host community events, review summary documents from the engagement sessions prepared by Islands Trust staff, and provide the LTC with recommendations on plan concepts, policy options, and the draft Housing Action Program. All discussions and meetings held by the Task Force are open to the public, and the Task Force members will objectively apply judgement based on their expertise, experience and knowledge of the subject matter as related to development of the Action Program process.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Values and principles are fundamental norms or rules that guide the perspective of an organized group of people, as well as their action. This Engagement Program is built upon the following Guiding Principles of the Islands Trust:

- The primary responsibility of the Islands Trust Council is to provide leadership for the preservation, protection and stewardship of the amenities, environment and resources of the Trust Area.
 - When making decisions and exercising judgment, Trust Council will place priority on preserving and protecting the integrity of the environment and amenities in the Trust Area.
 - Trust Council will seek information from a broad range of sources in its decision-making processes, recognizing the importance of local and traditional knowledge in this regard.
 - Trust Council believes that to achieve the Islands Trust objective, the rate and scale of growth and development in the Trust Area must be carefully managed and may require limitation.
 - Trust Council believes that open, consultative public participation is vital to effective decision making for the Trust Area.
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This Engagement Program is also built on the following values of the Islands Trust:

Inclusion

This Public Engagement Program seeks to ensure that every voice can be heard in an authentic way, and to create opportunities for people to contribute when, where and how they feel most heard. The priority interest of First Nations is a key element of the inclusion strategy, and the [First Nations Engagement Principles](#) of the Islands Trust will apply.

Respect

The strategy seeks to ensure that every voice is treated equitably, and the feelings, rights and traditions of others are honored through the engagement process. Input from the engagement will be wholly and broadly considered.

Community Voice

The Strategy will result in an engagement process that shares relevant and accurate information in order to increase the self-determination of the community so they can better express their diverse interests, needs, and perspectives in the planning process.

Transparent

The public engagement process will be communicated clearly and openly, including the purpose, timing, roles and responsibilities, constraints and outcomes. Timely feedback will be provided for the participants including the range of views expressed and how public input will be considered by the decision makers.

Innovation

The options and mechanisms for engagement will provide a range of ways for citizens and stakeholders to effectively participate in this project. Likewise, the strategy encourages innovation from participants as it seeks input around the identified issues, and encourages new approaches in how the Action Program may be developed for the Salt Spring community.

Wholly and Equitably Involved

The public engagement process seeks to ensure that anyone and everyone has access to relevant information on the issues related to this project and around the engagement process itself. Importantly, the public engagement program will ensure relevant information is available in a variety of ways and through multiple sources.

On-going Evaluation

This public engagement process will be evaluated on a regular basis to foster ongoing learning and improvement.

PRIORITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

The development of the Housing Action Program will provide objectives and policies that encompass a wide-range of issues; issues that are interconnected and all are within the context of the Trust Council's "preserve and protect" mandate. For this reason, the framework for the area plan will be outlined in the following Priority Engagement Themes:

Land Use Development

There is a strong link between housing prices and land use controls. Land use regulations are in place to ensure appropriate locations and site setting for different types of uses in order to protect the natural environment and archeological significance, but these constraints on land development can restrict the supply of housing especially for multifamily and low-income housing. The challenge lies in finding the balance of supporting diverse housing types, increasing density and the associated water demand with preservation of the natural environment and the limited infrastructure services on Salt Spring Island.

Transportation and Mobility

Active transportation refers to all human-powered forms of commuting, including but not limited to, walking and

cycling are the most common, horseback riding, using electric bicycles or scooters. Transportation planning plays an important role on choice of residence, particularly on renter housing. Trust Council is committed to promote local and inter-community transportation systems that reduce dependency on private automobile use, and to evaluate and modify road construction and road systems that encompass the environmental, economic and social values of the community.

Housing

The population on Salt Spring Island has increased over time, with more people living and working on the island, but housing options have not been able to meet current needs. Increasing the diversity of housing options, especially secure and affordable rental housing are critical in alleviating the housing crisis on the island.

Archaeological Protection

Salt Spring Island has a rich First Nations history; Trust Council, through the Reconciliation Declaration, is committed to incorporate Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, stewardship, and understanding in the land use planning and policies guides, and to preserve and protect the cultural sites and archeological significance.

Arts and Cultural

Arts and culture play an intentional and integrated role in place-based community planning and development. The concept of “creative place-making,” is not new; such strategy was pioneered by Jane Jacobs who believed that community development must be locally informed, human-centric, and holistic. Salt Spring Island is rich in Indigenous culture as well as home to many craftsman and artists whose creations have drawn many tourists onto the island. It is important to explore how arts and cultural practitioners could help build an affordable, livable and attractive community on the island.

Climate Resiliency

Global climate change has profound implications for human societies, adapting to a rapidly changing global environment will be a major challenge. In the context of increasing population on the island where additional housing will be required to accommodate the growing population; siting, designing and the construction material and methods will play a critical role in housing development on the island. The Islands Trust Council has joined thousands of governments around the world declaring a climate emergency with a goal to “pursue an absolute reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in this very special area.” Accordingly, every Islands Trust project must be carried out with a view to minimizing the impacts on the climate.

Infrastructure Servicing

Efficient and cost-effective infrastructure servicing is vital to development growth in Salt Spring Island, but the provision of such services must not be at the expense of the environment, especially with the limited water, wastewater and storm-water systems on the island. Land-use planning, infrastructure design, and service delivery go hand-in-hand in creating and maintaining a healthy community. The challenge is to find the balance between housing needs versus the demand on the limited infrastructure available on the island.

Protection of Aquifers and Biodiversity

For all the islands in the Salish Sea, the impacts of a changing climate and housing demand cause serious threats to our already limited aquifers. Land conservation and more robust land use planning tools to minimize loss of species and their habitat are critical to allow for resilience of our ecosystems particularly as they relate to sustainable growth for the community of Salt Spring Island.

PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

The primary reason for public engagement is to **inform** the LTC’s decisions in the planning process. In order to make an informed decision, the LTC is committed to **consulting** with the community, to **building** relationships in the community, to **involving** the stakeholders, and to **consulting** with First Nations.

EVALUATION OF THE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

An on-going evaluation will be performed on the public engagement process, and the evaluation framework will include:

1. Evaluation sessions to examine, diagnose, discuss, and dialogue the cause-and-effect links and assumptions regarding the engagement process, outcomes, and intended and unintended consequences and impacts;
2. A plan to organize and allocate resources for total evidence-based evaluation of the engagement process (who was engaged, how many, number of responses, depth and quality of responses);
3. Incorporation of lessons learned to be included in future engagements;
4. Development of an ongoing engagement strategy to support current and future LTC processes and projects.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

The public engagement tools will include, at a minimum, the following items. Additional methods that could help better engage with the community will be identified in a separate public engagement plan.

- Virtual open houses, and/or in-person if proper physical distancing is achievable
 - Virtual design charrettes, and/or in-person if proper physical distancing is achievable
 - Virtual/telephonic conversation with the planner and/or in-person if proper physical distancing is achievable
 - Online survey
 - Subscribers option
 - Email
 - Direct mail
 - New release
 - Paid ad
 - Letter to editor/editorial
 - Webpage
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