MEMORANDUM

File No.: 6500-20-2007
OCP-LUB Project

DATE OF MEETING:	November 6, 2025
TO:	Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee
FROM:	Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager Salt Spring Island Team
SUBJECT:	Salt Spring Island OCP-LUB Project – Phase 1 Project Update

RECOMMENDATION

1. **That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee endorse a project change Option 2, as outlined in the report titled Phase 1 Update Project Memorandum from McElhanney.**

2. **That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee amend the Major Project Business case for the OCP-LUB Project for the fiscal 2026–2027 year budget by increasing the budget by $40,000 in order to address the recommended actions and timeline outlined in the Phase 1 Update Project Memorandum from McElhanney.**

PURPOSE

To provide LTC an update on the OCP-LUB project's progress.

DISCUSSION

The LTC Project Consultants have prepared an update (Attachment 1) that outlines concerns identified in its early reflection on Phase 1 community engagement and other factors impacting the project at this time. The project consultants have provided options for LTC staff concur with these recommendations.

ALTERNATIVES

1. **Request further information**

   The LTC may request further information prior to making a decision. In this scenario, McElhanney would complete as much work as possible on other elements of the project that do not require analysis of engagement results, but completion of Phase 1 would not be complete, and work would eventually stop, leading to further completion delays. If selecting this alternative, the LTC should describe the specific information needed and the rationale for this request. Recommended wording for the resolution is as follows:

   That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee request staff to submit to the Islands Trust [identify additional information].

2. **Receive for information**

   The LTC may receive the report for information, and request that the consultants continue with the project as they can. In this case, a draft report would be prepared on engagement results, and referred to the

PAPC prior to presentation to LTC in at a following meeting. As noted in the memo, this action could present challenges to the legitimacy of the project and reduce support and effectiveness of the resulting bylaws. Recommended wording for the resolution is as follows:

That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee receive this memo for information.

NEXT STEPS

If LTC approves the recommendation, the project consultants will proceed to advance supplemental engagement materials to a meeting of the PAPC, before engaging further with LTC on the matter. Staff will update the 2026-2027 OCP-LUB Project business case to reflect the altered timeline and budget.

Submitted By:	Chris Hutton, MCIP RPP, Regional Planning Manager	October 29, 2025

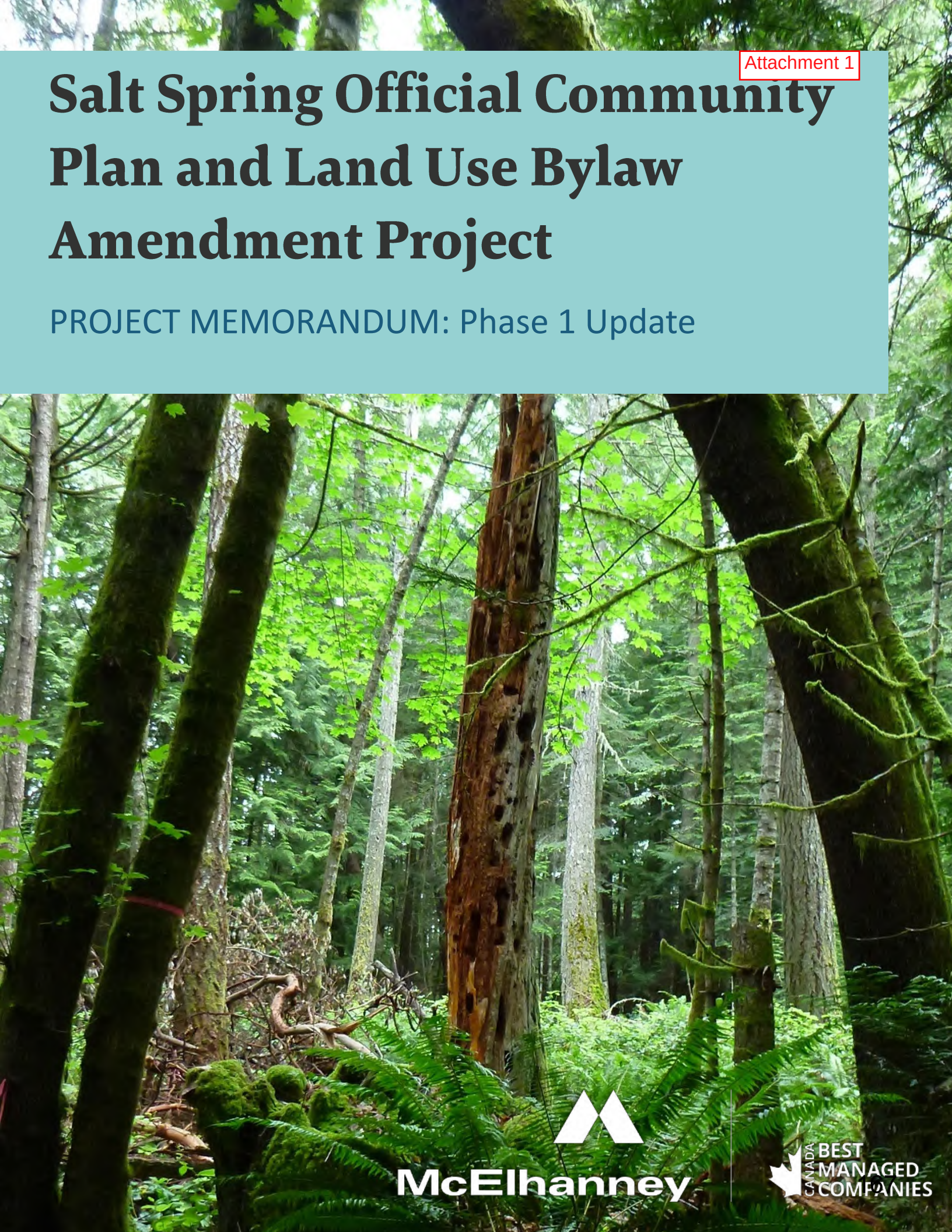
ATTACHMENTS

1. Phase 1 Update Project Memorandum from McElhanney

Attachment 1

Salt Spring Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project

PROJECT MEMORANDUM: Phase 1 Update



McElhanney

CANADA'S BEST MANAGED COMPANIES

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1. Introduction

1.1. Phase 1: Targeted Community Visioning and Initial OCP Development

Phase 1 of the Salt Spring Island OCP and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project was designed to establish the foundational elements for policy development through a combination of technical analysis and community engagement. Running from August through December 2025, this phase focused on three core workstreams: conducting a comprehensive technical review of the existing OCP and supporting documents; facilitating targeted community visioning to understand resident priorities around housing, environmental protection, and island character; and translating these inputs into draft revised vision statements, general goals, and residential objectives.

Key deliverables include a *Technical Review Summary Report*, a *Policy Gap Analysis* identifying disconnects between current policy intentions and implementation tools, a *Summary of Engagement Findings* documenting community input and priorities, and the development of foundational policy elements that would guide subsequent OCP amendments. This phase was intentionally structured to build upon Salt Spring's existing body of community knowledge while creating space for new voices and perspectives, with particular attention to engaging underrepresented groups in the planning process. The work undertaken in Phase 1 is critical to ensuring that subsequent policy development and land use bylaw amendments are grounded in both technical best practices and authentic community values.

1.2. Phase 1 Engagement Outcomes

The Phase 1 engagement campaign spanned 40 days. Activities included an online survey (with printed copies available in community), and in-person pop ups from September 16th to 18th at the Country Grocer (5 hours), Tuesday Market (5.5 hours, with additional time for market vendors to participate), Rainbow Recreation Centre (3 hours), and informal “walking” engagement, handing out mail out cards with links to the survey and building project awareness.

421 online and 6 paper copy surveys were received. Feedback from pop up engagements was collected through activities (dotmocracy, input boards) and notes made by staff. Engagement materials (boards, activity instructions and materials) and promotional materials (posters, post cards, sandwich boards) remained on island at the end of the in-person engagement hosted by McElhanney.

1.3. Emergent Challenges

The Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project has progressed through its initial phase while navigating several unforeseen operational and contextual challenges. These challenges—which range from external factors like labor disruptions to internal capacity constraints and community engagement dynamics—have impacted the project timelines and the effectiveness of public engagement efforts. This memo documents these challenges, assesses their implications for the project schedule, and proposes adjusted timelines and strategies to ensure successful delivery of updated planning documents that genuinely reflect community priorities while maintaining the integrity of the engagement process.

1.4. Key Challenges

The following summary is a description of the key challenges faced in Phase 1 of the project.

1. Due to BCGEU public service labor action and Island Planner position vacancy, Islands Trust has operated with a limited capacity to support the project, impacting project timelines; public information sharing and project transparency. This resulted in:

    - Limited Islands Trust staff capacity to support in-person and online engagement.
    - Limited promotion of engagement activities.
    - No scheduled October OCP advisory committee meeting.

2. A separate group conducted its own outreach and presented it as part of the official process, which led to confusion among participants. This included distributing a survey labeled as an OCP survey, which led many participants to mistakenly believe they were engaging in the official process.

3. On-island confusion created by community groups prior to IT engagement process (including running their own survey labeled as OCP survey). This resulted in:

    - A significant number of letters submitted through unofficial OCP engagement channels.
    - Similar or identical

4. Canada Post labor action impacting communications materials to support the engagement campaign.

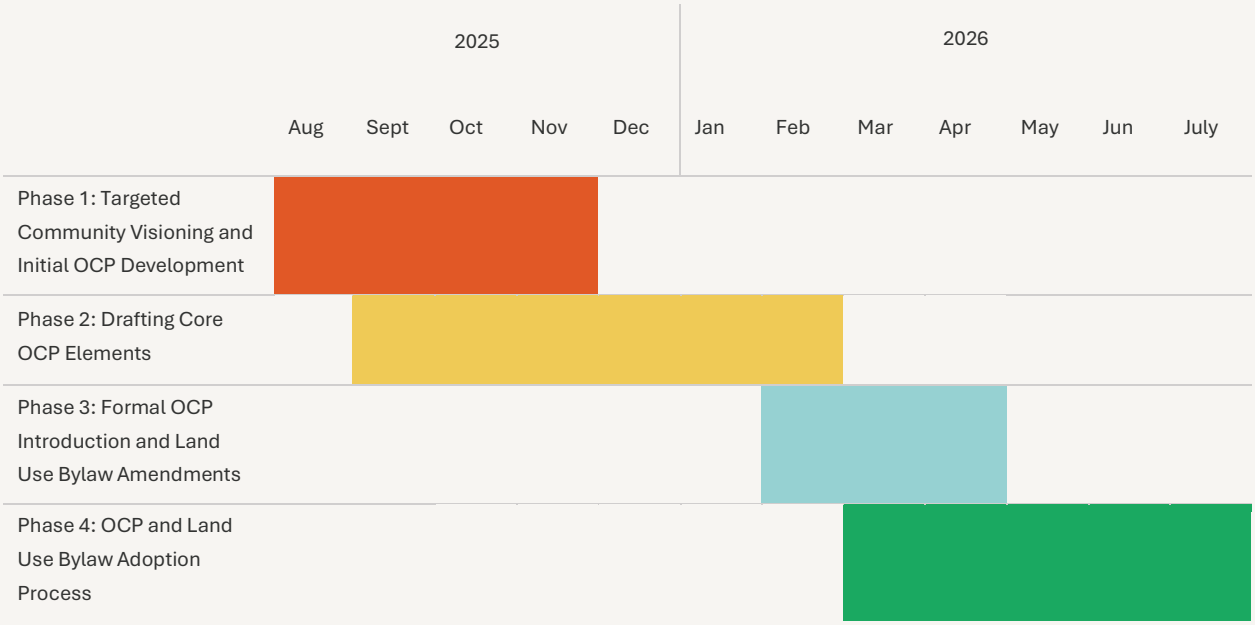
5. Some on island engagement was limited when a few individuals dominated the booth and extended conversations. Despite efforts to redirect these folks and make space for everyone,

the dynamic created an environment that discouraged participation of others, particularly intended audience of underrepresented groups.

1.5. Adjusted Project Timeline

The original workplan anticipated a 12-month project schedule concluding in summer 2026, with Phase 1 deliverables presented to the Project Advisory Planning Commission (PAPC) between October and November 2025, followed by Phase 2 core OCP drafting through early 2026.

While the overall project structure and sequencing outlined in the approved workplan remains achievable, the operational challenges encountered during Phase 1 have necessitated a timeline adjustment of approximately one month to six weeks. The timeline preserves all planned phases, deliverables, and engagement opportunities while providing the necessary flexibility to address capacity constraints and optimize communication strategies moving forward.



1.6. Risks with Continuing with Existing Workplan

While the engagement campaign achieved strong participation numbers, several concerns have emerged that warrant careful consideration before proceeding to Phase 2. First, preliminary analysis suggests that input received to date may have been disproportionately influenced by a single organized community group, raising questions about whether the engagement findings truly represent the full spectrum of Salt Spring Island perspectives and priorities. This concentration of participation creates risk that subsequent policy development could reflect the values and preferences of a vocal subset of the community rather than achieving the broad-based consensus necessary for a successful OCP.

Second, despite intentional efforts to reach underrepresented groups, the engagement process has not yet achieved the community-wide representation essential for an inclusive and equitable planning process—particularly concerning given the project's explicit focus on housing equity.

Third, confusion has emerged on-island regarding the official OCP engagement process, with some community members indicating they believed they had already completed "an OCP survey" when they had participated in a separate community group survey conducted prior to the formal; Islands Trust engagement campaign. This confusion may have suppressed participation in the official engagement process and contributed to misunderstandings about the project's scope and objectives.

Proceeding to Phase 2 policy development without addressing these representation gaps and clarifying the official engagement process could result in an OCP that lacks broad community support and ultimately requires substantial revision following later engagement phases—undermining both project timelines and community trust in the process.

2. Supplementary Phase 1 Engagement

2.1. Supplementary Engagement Option

In recognition of the representation gaps and community confusion identified during the initial Phase 1 campaign, as well as the importance of extended timelines for First Nations engagement, an alternate approach proposes implementing a supplementary Phase 1 engagement period before finalizing Phase 2 policy development. This additional engagement phase would be strategically designed to address the specific deficiencies in the initial campaign: clarifying the official OCP process and distinguishing it from other community surveys, implementing targeted outreach strategies to engage underrepresented groups who did not participate in the first round, allowing more time for project specific First Nations engagement, and broadening participation beyond the dominant voices that characterized initial engagement activities.

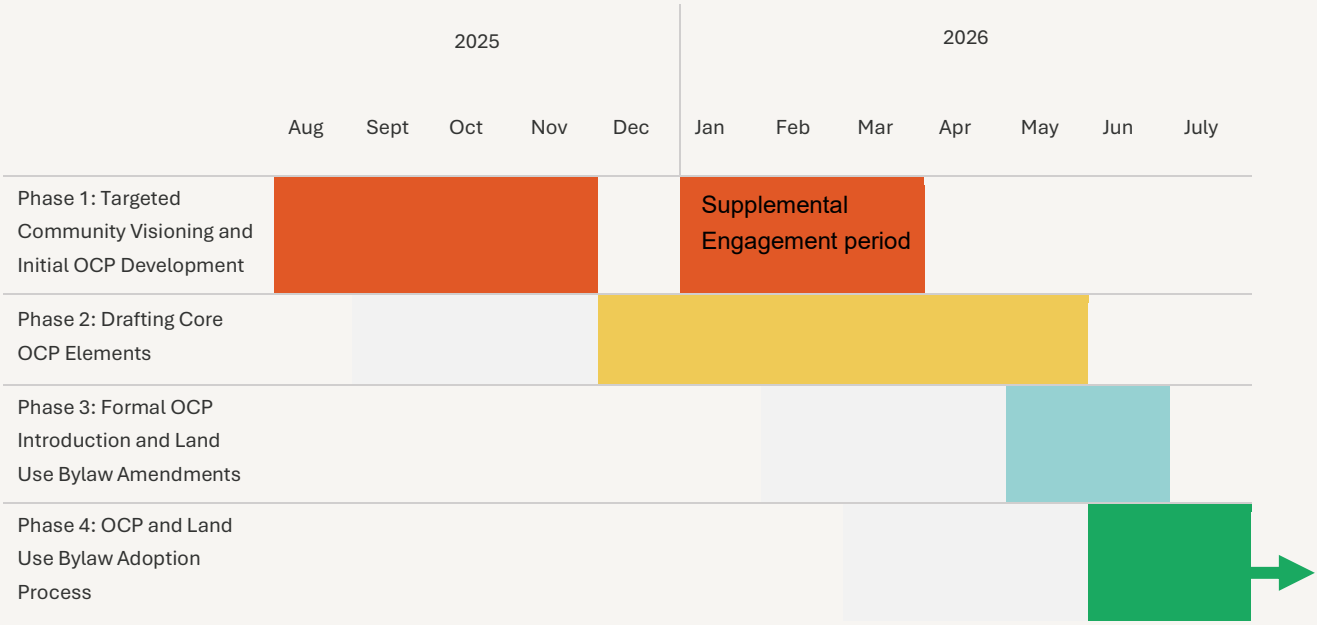
Rather than viewing this as duplicative effort, the supplementary engagement would build upon the foundation established in the first campaign while deliberately correcting for its limitations as the feedback received to date is valuable and important for influencing policy development. This approach acknowledges that proceeding with policy development based on potentially incomplete community input poses greater risk to project success than investing additional time upfront to ensure the engagement foundation is genuinely representative of Salt Spring Island's diverse community. The supplementary phase would be time-limited and focused, with clear objectives tied directly to addressing identified gaps. Further, it would include APC and LTC meetings and workshops to inform the development of the supplementary engagement workplan.

Timeline	Actions
November – December 2025	• Review engagement feedback and prepare an engagement summary report • Identify participants for supplemental rounds of engagement in the spring • Prepare marketing and engagement materials for additional round of engagement in February
Late January – March 2026	• Supplemental phase of public engagement (4 weeks)

Figure 1: Supplementary Engagement Development and Implementation Timeline

2.2. Revised Project Timeline

Implementation of this alternate approach would require revision of the approved workplan timeline to accommodate the supplementary engagement period while maintaining the integrity and sequencing of subsequent project phases, though some policy review and drafting work could proceed concurrently during the extended engagement period.



2.3. Supplementary Engagement Period Components

The supplementary engagement period will be designed in close collaboration with the Islands Trust staff to ensure alignment with organizational capacity and community context. This approach will build upon engagement completed to date rather than replacing it.

The engagement strategy will include components specifically designed to address Salt Spring Island's unique complexities and community context. Key elements under consideration include:

- Targeted outreach to equity-deserving groups to ensure diverse voices are heard.
- Engagement with established community advocacy organizations representing housing, environment, agriculture, business, and social equity perspectives.
- A comprehensive marketing and awareness campaign to build broad understanding of the project.

- Multiple participation pathways to accommodate different preferences and accessibility needs

- Respond to community calls for town hall-style gatherings by developing more robust project FAQs and more marketing effort to direct people to engagement opportunities.

The specific design, timing, and implementation of these engagement components will be developed collaboratively with PAPC and Islands Trust staff through Phase 1, ensuring that planned activities match available capacity and respond to evolving community needs. Regular PAPC workshops will provide opportunities to review findings and refine the engagement approach as the project progresses.

2.4. Extended Time for First Nations Engagement

The supplementary engagement period would provide essential additional time for additional First Nations engagement, conducted through Islands Trust's established protocols and relationship-building processes. Rather than treating Indigenous consultation as a parallel track to community engagement, this extended timeline recognizes that government-to-government dialogue requires appropriate time for information sharing, internal deliberation, and thoughtful response that respects Indigenous governance structures and decision-making processes.

Islands Trust staff, who have cultivated relationships with First Nations whose territories encompass Salt Spring Island, would lead this engagement using established communication channels and protocols that honor existing relationships and cultural protocols. This approach ensures that Indigenous Governing Bodies receive adequate notice and information about the OCP amendment process, have sufficient time to review technical materials and policy directions, and can provide input at a pace that aligns with their own governance schedules and priorities rather than being constrained by compressed project timelines.

3. Summary and Recomendations

3.1. Summary

The project team has identified two options for proceeding with the Salt Spring Island OCP and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project.

Option 1 is to continue with the approved workplan structure, acknowledging a delay of four to six weeks due to the operational challenges encountered during Phase 1, while accepting the identified risks associated with potentially skewed community input, limited representation from underrepresented groups, and ongoing community confusion about the official OCP process. This option maintains the current project budget and achieves a faster timeline to completion, but carries significant risk that the resulting OCP may lack the broad-based community support necessary for successful adoption.

Option 2 is to implement a supplementary Phase 1 engagement period that would extend the overall project timeline and increase project costs, but would comprehensively address the engagement deficiencies through additional community surveys with enhanced marketing, expanded on-island events led by Islands Trust staff, targeted focus groups with key advocacy groups, additional time for project specific First Nations engagement through established Islands Trust protocols, utilization of the new village office space, and additional PAPC workshops. While some technical policy review and drafting work could proceed concurrently to minimize delays, this option requires acceptance of extended timelines and additional budget allocation in exchange for establishing a robust, representative engagement foundation that significantly reduces the risk of community opposition, policy revision requirements, and adoption challenges.

Both options are presented for consideration by the PAPC and LTC, with the understanding that the decision involves weighing timeline and cost considerations against engagement quality and project success risk.

3.1. Recommendations

Based on the challenges encountered during Phase 1 and the analysis of engagement outcomes, the project team recommends the following course of action:

1. Adjust the project timeline to reflect the realities of Phase 1 implementation and accommodate a supplementary engagement period that addresses identified gaps in community representation, and public awareness of the official OCP process.

2. Conduct a supplementary Phase 1 engagement period that is specifically designed to address the challenges and contextual factors that limited the effectiveness of the initial campaign, including:
    - Extended lead time for comprehensive marketing and awareness building
    - Alignment with PAPC and LTC meeting schedules and marketing lead times
    - Enhanced on-island presence utilizing Islands Trust staff
    - Targeted outreach to underrepresented groups
    - Additional time for meaningful project specific First Nations engagement through ongoing Islands Trust relationship building
    - Clear differentiation of the official OCP process from other community surveys
3. Engage directly with the community group that conducted the pre-existing survey to understand their methodology, findings, and priorities. We recognize the importance of all voices and welcome the opportunity to engage with this group, better understand their methodology, and incorporate their input into the official process in a transparent and constructive manner.
4. Develop a detailed Supplementary Engagement Plan for PAPC and LTC review before implementation, outlining specific activities, timelines, and success metrics tied to addressing identified representation gaps.
5. Continue technical policy review and drafting work in parallel during the supplementary engagement period to minimize overall project delays and maintain momentum on deliverables that do not require additional community input.