STAFF REPORT

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

DATE OF MEETING:	May 14, 2026
TO:	Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee
FROM:	Peter Thicke, Island Planner Salt Spring Island Team
COPY:	Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager
SUBJECT:	OCP-LUB Project Update

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee approve the updated Project Workplan for the OCP-LUB Project.**

2. **That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee direct staff to develop a revised Communications and Engagement Strategy for the OCP-LUB Project.**

3. **That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee direct staff to develop a First Nations Engagement Plan for the OCP-LUB Project.**

4. **That the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee receive the draft Vision and Guiding Principles for the OCP-LUB Project for discussion.**

REPORT SUMMARY

This report responds to a resolution that the Salt Spring Island LTC passed at its April 9, 2026 Regular Meeting (SS-2026-063) and outlines potential LUB amendments that could be pursued by the LTC to support housing goals in advance of the completion of the OCP-LUB Update Project.

ANALYSIS

1. **Final Documents Received from the OCP-LUB Project Consultant**

   On March 31, 2026, the contract for the lead project consultant ended after they decided to not extend the contract and complete the remainder of the work on the OCP – LUB Project. They had previously agreed to provide certain deliverables associated with the project, outside of the Gap Analysis and Technical Review Summary Report received by the LTC at the January 20, 2026 meeting, which have been provided to staff and are attached to this report as Attachments 1-5. A brief outline of each of these documents is as follows:

   What We Heard So Far Report

   This report details the activities and results of the first round of public engagement for the project. Five key themes are noted in the report: Community Wellbeing, Housing, Environment and Sustainability,

Land Use and Settlement, and Infrastructure and Servicing. The summary section recommends further broad engagement to ensure that OCP policy development "[reflects] the full range of community experiences and expectations moving forward".

Draft Vision and Guiding Principles

The Draft Vision and Guiding Principles document outlines a key introductory piece of the OCP. The Vision Statement sets the tone for the OCP and outlines the type of community that the plan and all subsequent goals and policies is intended to create. It serves as a tangible reminder of the experience that Salt Spring Islanders should have if the plan is successful.

Guiding Principles flow from the vision statement and are the core values that shape the decisions that create the community described in the vision. While they are high level and aspirational in nature, they serve as compass to check policies and actions against to ensure the Islands Trust is aligned with the vision and desires of the community expressed through the OCP.

One Page Summaries

This document summarizes the major topics and updates needed for the revised OCP based on the initial engagement, Gap Analysis, and Technical Document review. While it is unlikely that every item noted in this document will be incorporated, it provides a succinct and clear outline of identified needs to increase OCP effectiveness and usability.

LUB Memo

The LUB Memo describes the results of a review of the Land Use Bylaw by the project consultant. The document describes potential revisions that would address certain minor housekeeping issues and also bring the LUB into greater alignment with the revised OCP.

Draft OCP

The project consultant has also provided an initial draft of the OCP (without mapping and several other key sections). As this draft was provided as a working document, and would be subject to substantial amendment resulting from further community, inter-governmental and First Nations engagement necessary for the completion of the project plan, staff are disclosing that this resource exists but note that it is not suitable for public dissemination at this time and largely reflects the proposed organization of the document, not the final content.

2. Updated Project Plan for the OCP/LUB Project

Following the conclusion of the lead consultant's contract, staff have prepared an updated project workplan to guide the OCP-LUB Update Project through to completion. The updated workplan is attached to this report as Attachment 1. The workplan is presented as a draft, but if the LTC does not see the need for significant changes staff recommend it be approved so that next steps in the process can begin.

The workplan outlines four phases of work. Phase 1, anticipated to begin in November 2026 following local government elections, will deliver additional community engagement on priority policy areas identified through earlier work. Phase 2 will translate engagement findings into a draft updated OCP and preliminary LUB amendments. Phase 3 will formally introduce the draft OCP and LUB amendments,

complete required referrals, and prepare for the public hearing process. Phase 4 will carry the bylaws through adoption, including Ministerial approval as required under the Islands Trust framework. Throughout all phases, ongoing and meaningful engagement with affected First Nation Governments will remain a central project commitment. The schedule is designed to maintain clear momentum toward completion while retaining flexibility to accommodate consultation timelines, policy complexity, and Provincial approval processes.

Should the workplan be approved as presented, staff will revise the design of the document for final release but will not alter the content.

3. Project Guiding Principles

As part of the initial phase of the OCP-LUB Update Project, the project consultant developed a Draft Vision and Guiding Principles document, attached to this report as Attachment 2. The document was prepared based on findings from the first round of community engagement, as summarized in the What We Heard So Far Report, and informed by the Technical Background Review and OCP Gap Analysis. It is presented here for information.

The Draft Vision and Guiding Principles represents a foundational element of the updated OCP. The Vision Statement articulates the long-term aspirations of the Salt Spring Island community, while the Guiding Principles establish the core values that will shape the goals, policies, and actions of the plan. Together, they will set the tone for all subsequent policy development and serve as a reference point for evaluating whether draft policies reflect community direction.

The document that has been prepared by the consultants is in draft form. Staff recognize that certain parts of the draft will need to be revised, including:

- Strengthening and adding language to acknowledge not only the historical stewardship of Salt Spring Island by First Nation Groups, but also recognizing their ongoing involvement, interest, and rights on the island.
- Adjusting and improving the language relating the OCP to the Islands Trust Policy statement and outlining the relation between the two documents clearly.
- Adjustment to the principles to better reflect the structure of this section and to be more easily read and understood.
- Adjusting the language of the vision to better incorporate and reflect the various guiding principles that follow.
- Other amendments as discussed by LTC.

Staff anticipate that the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles will serve as the first substantive referral to affected First Nation Governments as the project moves forward. Prior to that referral, staff are presenting the document as it was received to review with the LTC and identify any refinements needed to ensure the document reflects the values and interests of all communities connected to Salt Spring Island.

4. Prioritization of available NSSWD Connections

Resolution SS-2026-063 directs staff to bring forward policy direction and regulatory options to prioritize the allocation of water servicing within the Ganges Village area for housing forms that meet identified community needs, including affordable and workforce housing. Staff have undertaken initial work to respond to this direction, including a meeting with NSSWD staff. Further discussion with Islands Trust legal counsel is anticipated following LTC review of the initial considerations described below.

Achieving the intent of the resolution requires recognizing how authority is divided between the two parties. NSSWD, as an improvement district, provides water servicing through the execution of its connection policies, but as an improvement district, the *Local Government Act* prioritizes its duties to service provision, ensuring infrastructure capacity and fiscally-responsible capital management. The Islands Trust, through enabling legislation, controls land use, zoning, and density. Neither party can fully achieve the resolution's intent acting alone, and there is no single regulatory lever that allows water connections to be reserved for specific housing types directly. The achievable path forward is a coordinated approach that uses each party's authority where suitable to affect this role. Such an approach avoids jurisdictional overlap and works where both organizations are aligned.

A viable approach would use zoning to direct more housing to where water servicing capacity is able to most reliably meet that need. Connections are then directed by geography and capacity to lands where the LTC has already determined that priority housing forms should be developed through existing and emerging policy and regulatory bylaws. This is a more defensible approach than attempting to restrict connections based on housing outcomes.

Tools staff are investigating to address this request include:

- OCP policy direction to revise land use designations so that in addition to reflecting community values and legal obligations, designations are geared towards suitable protection of character, while identifying priority servicing areas for suitable housing forms intended, and presenting a policy foundation for the zoning and coordination tools discussed.

- Review of zones and some zoning amendments that align permitted housing forms with serviceable lands within Ganges Village or other appropriate areas, ensuring that available connections produce multi-family, affordable, or workforce housing rather than lower-density forms. Staff are mindful that broad rezoning carries risks for both services and community character, and recommend a parcel- or area-specific approach in this case rather than broader changes, combined with partnerships with landowners interested in pursuing these types of development.

- Coordinated geographic prioritization between the Islands Trust and NSSWWD, in which the LTC identifies priority growth areas and NSSWWD's connection processes focus on those same areas. This alignment can be supported through a memorandum of understanding or similar instrument.

- Coordination with NSSWD to allow a phased release of connections tied to planning milestones and development readiness, allowing servicing decisions and land use changes to advance in step with one another.

This approach trades the directness of the resolution's framing for a higher likelihood of legally defensible, politically feasible outcomes. Staff acknowledge that this will not produce a system in which NSSWWD selects between applicants on the basis of housing type — that outcome is not available

within the current legal framework — but it can produce a system in which the lands positioned to receive connections are those zoned to deliver the housing forms the community needs.

While the most effective tool at the Islands Trust disposal to direct priority housing into appropriate areas is already in progress – the OCP update – staff acknowledge that due to the delayed timeline LTC may wish to pursue a specific policy, rezoning option, or other approach to more quickly establish the LTC's position. Should this be desirable, staff will formulate a list of properties suitable for the type of rezoning described above (discussed below) and continue working with Islands Trust legal counsel to develop any other tools available. Such an approach would require development of a suitable project outline and work plan review in accordance with Trust Council policies. This would also affect staff resourcing for projects.

5. First Nations Engagement

Resolution SS-2026-063 directs staff to ensure that development of project outcomes is informed by First Nations engagement and a First Nations engagement plan. Meaningful engagement with First Nation Governments is not only a matter of good planning practice, but is required both under the *Local Government Act* and the ministerial approval process that the OCP will eventually be subject to.

While a draft First Nations Engagement Plan has not yet been completed for LTC review, it is anticipated at an upcoming LTC meeting for a more fulsome review. In the meantime, staff are committed to an approach that goes beyond procedural compliance and reflects a genuine desire to advance reconciliation through the planning process. The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area encompasses the Treaty and traditional territories of many First Nations, and the OCP-LUB Update Project — as the foundational land use and policy document for the island — has direct implications for rights and interests that those nations hold.

The engagement approach will be guided by the following principles, based on legislation outlined in both the *Local Government Act, Islands Trust Act,* and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*:

- Engagement will be ongoing and integrated throughout all phases of the project, rather than confined to formal referral periods
- Staff will pursue informal dialogue and relationship-building with First Nation Government staff in advance of formal referrals, to allow for early identification of interests and concerns
- Engagement timelines and practices will be designed to respect relevant Indigenous protocols and allow for meaningful internal review and response within First Nation Governments
- Staff will document engagement throughout the project and include relevant engagement efforts in regular updates to the LTC.

Should the LTC desire additional principles or the removal/modification of any of those listed above, staff will incorporate that into the First Nations Engagement Plan.

6. Considerations for LUB amendments prior to completion of the OCP/LUB Project

While not considered in resolution SS-2026-063, staff understand that the LTC has expressed interest in exploring zoning changes that could enable additional housing in a shorter timeframe than the OCP-LUB

Update Project allows. Staff remain committed to the OCP-LUB project as the most effective path to the changes discussed, while recognizing the urgency of Salt Spring Island's housing challenges.

It is worth noting that rezoning alone does not guarantee housing will be built. Market conditions, construction costs, financing, and capital availability are often the determining factors in whether development proceeds, regardless of what zoning permits. Further, advancing significant rezonings outside of the established process — without the community engagement, First Nation consultation, and partner coordination that the LTC typically completes — risks compromising the credibility of the broader planning process.

However, staff recognize there may be targeted opportunities to advance focused zoning amendments ahead of the OCP-LUB project's completion as they would not be inconsistent with the current OCP. If the LTC wishes to pursue this, staff could prepare a short-list of properties that are:

- Of sufficient size to accommodate one or more significant housing projects
- Ability to be serviced by NSSWWD.
- Confirmation of adequate supporting services.
- Located within the Ganges Village OCP designation.

LTC could consider whether to initiate zoning amendment for one or more properties on a case-by-case basis. Staff note that even a targeted rezoning process takes time, and there is no guarantee this approach would produce housing sooner than focusing on the OCP-LUB project itself. For this reason, staff do not recommend pursuing pre-zoning as a substitute for the OCP-LUB process, and advise that such a project should not extend beyond the scale of a minor project. Without a specific development application or proponent, the effort required may not justify the likely outcome. Any amendments pursued in advance of the OCP-LUB project's completion should be narrow in scope, clearly justified, and undertaken in a way that complements rather than competes with the OCP-LUB project.

7. Next Steps

Revise Vision and Guiding Principles Document

While staff intend to use the Vision and Guiding Principles section of the OCP as an initial referral to affected First Nations, it is anticipated that the LTC will have comments and discussion around the document that should be addressed prior to the referral.

Feedback received from LTC on this initial draft will be incorporated into a revised draft for final review at the next LTC meeting before being sent out to First Nations for comment.

Communications and Engagement Strategy

Based on the recommendations in the *What We Heard So Far* report, attached as Attachment 3 to this report, staff recommend the development of a supplemental Communications and Engagement Strategy to guide additional engagement scheduled for Fall/Winter 2026 in the draft Project Workplan.

This strategy will build on what was suggested by McElhanney but adjust it to consider staff capacity, technology availability, and other constraints in order to develop an engagement program that is

efficient but ensures the necessary perspectives and considerations regarding policy details are captured.

Staff anticipate that this strategy will be brought forward for LTC consideration at the June Regular Meeting.

First Nations Engagement Plan

Following LTC direction in resolution SS-2026-063, staff intend to prepare a draft First Nation Government engagement plan based on the principles outlined earlier in this report and any additional considerations the LTC would like to add.

Staff intend to bring this plan forward for LTC consideration at a future Regular Meeting.

In the mean time, staff continue to follow up and engage with First Nations, including ongoing contributions to the SȾÁUTW̱ (Tsawout) Working Group.

Water Allocation and Land Use Bylaw Amendments

While some additional research and coordination may occur related to water allocation and near-term Land Use Bylaw amendments to better facilitate housing development opportunities, the OCP-LUB Update Project remains the most viable path forward for addressing these concerns in a concerted and effective manner.

However, should LTC direct staff to develop a more detailed strategy, staff will undertake the steps described in the relevant sections of this report to better direct water connection allocation and near-term Land Use Bylaw amendment(s) to facilitate desired housing forms.

ALTERNATIVES

The LTC may consider the following alternatives to the staff recommendation:

1. **Request further information**

   The LTC may request further information prior to making a decision. Staff advise that the implications of this alternative are the additional time required to prepare reports and related information. 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 that staff provide further information related to [describe appropriate topic].

2. **Deny/defeat the recommendations**

   The LTC may deny/defeat staff recommendations. Staff advise that the implications of this alternative are the loss of staff and consultant time and effort already invested in the project, and a lack viable alternative tool to address identified housing needs on Salt Spring Island.

3. **Receive for information**

   The LTC may receive the report for information. If no direction regarding this project is given to staff, then the project will be placed in abeyance until such direction is received.

Submitted By:	Peter Thicke, Island Planner	April 28, 2026
Concurrence:	Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manner	May 5, 2026

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft OCP-LUB Update Project Workplan
2. Draft Vision and Guiding Principles
3. What We Heard So Far Engagement Report
4. One Page Summaries
5. Land Use Bylaw Memo

Attachment 1

DRAFT Salt Spring Island OCP-LUB Update Project Workplan

Contents

1. Introduction to the Workplan
    a. Workplan Overview
    b. Timeline Philosophy
    c. Islands Trust Policy Statement
    d. First Nation Government Engagement

2. Building on Initial Success
    a. Work Completed to Date
    b. Outstanding Items

3. Work Plan
    a. Ongoing First Nation Government Engagement
    b. Phase 1 – Detailed Community Engagement
    c. Phase 2 – Drafting Core OCP Elements
    d. Phase 3 - Formal OCP Introduction and Land Use Bylaw Amendments
    e. Phase 4 – OCP and Land Use Bylaw Adoption Process

4. Conclusion

1. Introduction to the Workplan

1.a Workplan Overview

This workplan provides a roadmap to completing the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw (OCP-LUB) Update Project. Building on work completed to date, it outlines key progress stages, deliverables, and timelines required to bring the project to completion. Guiding priorities include meaningful public engagement, consistent engagement with affected First Nation Governments, and the development of clear goals, policies, and regulations that reflect the breadth of community interests on Salt Spring Island.

1.b Timeline Philosophy

Advancing this project requires balancing firm deadlines with flexibility to accommodate:

- Community engagement needs and concerns
- First Nation consultation processes that respect Indigenous protocols and allow for meaningful dialogue
- Complexity in policy development
- Provincial Government involvement in regulatory and approvals processes
- Seasonal considerations for community engagement and Local Government Election processes.
- Emerging issues or opportunities identified during project development

Regular check-ins with the PAPC, LTC, and other partners will maintain momentum and drive the project toward completion.

1.c Islands Trust Policy Statement

Islands Trust is currently updating its Policy Statement — the overarching document that directs local planning decisions across the Trust area. Close coordination between the OCP-LUB project and this process is essential to ensure alignment.

Project staff will maintain ongoing communication with Islands Trust staff working on the Policy Statement update, monitor relevant background and draft documents, and

coordinate as needed to ensure consistency between the two documents. Alignment from the outset will reduce the risk of conflicts that could complicate adoption and implementation.

1.d First Nation Government Engagement

Islands Trust is committed to engaging with First Nation Governments in a collaborative and meaningful way that reflects their long history and continued connection to the plan area. Engagement will be ongoing and consistent, informed by relevant policy and legislation, and grounded in a genuine commitment to advancing reconciliation through this project.

Where possible, staff will pursue informal collaboration with First Nation Government staff in advance of formal referrals, and will structure engagement practices and response timelines to respect relevant protocols and support meaningful dialogue.

2. Building on Initial Success

2.a Work Completed to date

Prior to this updated workplan, the consultant delivered all required final deliverables under their contract:

- Technical Background Review Summary Report
- OCP Gap Analysis Report
- What We Heard Report (summarizing initial engagement findings)
- Draft Vision and Guiding Principles
- Land Use Bylaw Review Memo

These documents provide a strong foundation and position staff to move efficiently into targeted engagement activities and policy development. The Draft Vision and Guiding Principles, in particular, is anticipated to serve as the first formal referral to First Nation Governments, following LTC review and any necessary refinement.

2.b Outstanding Items

Several items must be addressed to advance the project over the coming months:

- Strengthening communications and engagement with affected First Nation Governments.
- Conducting additional consultation on specific policy areas.
- Refining the Vision, Guiding Principles, and overarching policy framework in preparation for detailed policy drafting.

3. Workplan

3.a Ongoing First Nation Government Engagement

First Nation Government engagement will continue throughout all phases of the project rather than being confined to a single stage. Staff will maintain regular informal communication with First Nation Government staff, share draft materials in advance of formal referrals where appropriate, and adjust timelines to accommodate response and review processes.

Formal referrals will be issued at key project milestones, beginning with the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles. Subsequent referrals will accompany draft OCP policies, the draft updated OCP and LUB amendments, and the formal bylaws prior to adoption. Staff will document engagement throughout the project to support transparency and ministerial approval processes.

3.b Phase 1 – Detailed Community Engagement

Anticipated start: November 2026

Duration: Approximately 2 months

Phase 1 will build on the initial engagement summarized in the *What We Heard Report* by undertaking focused consultation on specific policy areas identified through the OCP Gap Analysis and earlier engagement. The intent is to gather the targeted input needed to draft policy in Phase 2, rather than to repeat broad visioning exercises already completed.

Key activities will include:

- Confirming priority topic areas for detailed engagement in coordination with the LTC and PAPC
- Designing and delivering topic-specific engagement opportunities (workshops, open houses, online tools, and other meetings as appropriate)

- Continuing engagement with affected First Nation Governments on policy areas of mutual interest
- Synthesizing input into a follow-up engagement summary to inform Phase 2 drafting

Timing this phase to follow the October 2026 local government elections allows new LTC members to be briefed and confirm direction before significant public engagement resumes.

3.c Phase 2 — Drafting Core OCP Elements

Duration: Approximately 2–3 months, beginning alongside the latter portion of Phase 1

Phase 2 will translate the refined Vision, Guiding Principles, and engagement findings into a draft updated OCP. Drafting will begin alongside the final weeks of Phase 1 to maintain momentum and will continue following the close of engagement.

Key activities will include:

- Drafting the framework, policies, and supporting maps, organized around the structure confirmed through the background studies and engagement.
- Ensuring alignment with the updated Islands Trust Policy Statement, including any directions emerging from that parallel process.
- Reviewing draft sections with the LTC and PAPC at regular check-ins to confirm direction before further drafting.
- Issuing a formal referral of the draft OCP to affected First Nation Governments, with sufficient time for review and response.
- Preparing a consolidated draft OCP for presentation in Phase 3.

Where Land Use Bylaw amendments are clearly required to implement emerging policy directions, preliminary drafting of those amendments may begin in this phase to support an efficient transition into Phase 3.

3.d Phase 3 — Formal OCP Introduction and Land Use Bylaw Amendments

Duration: Approximately 3 months, beginning February 2027

Phase 3 marks the transition from drafting to the formal bylaw process. The draft updated OCP will be introduced to the LTC for first reading, and the corresponding Land Use Bylaw amendments needed to implement the OCP will be finalized and introduced in parallel.

Key activities will include:

- Presenting the consolidated draft OCP and LUB amendments to the LTC for review and first reading
- Confirming that all required referrals — including to First Nation Governments, the Province, neighbouring local governments, and other affected agencies under section 475 of the *Local Government Act* — are issued and tracked
- Coordinating with Islands Trust staff to confirm consistency with the Policy Statement and to prepare for Provincial review
- Compiling responses from referrals and incorporating revisions as appropriate
- Preparing materials for the public hearing required under section 464 of the *Local Government Act*

This phase concludes with the bylaws positioned for second reading and public hearing.

3.e Phase 4 — OCP and Land Use Bylaw Adoption Process

Duration: Approximately 3–4 months, including Ministerial approval, beginning May 2027.

Phase 4 carries the OCP and LUB amendments through the statutory adoption process. Because the OCP bylaw must be approved by the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs per the *Islands Trust Act*, the timeline for this phase is longer than it would be for other bylaws.

Key activities include:

- Holding the public hearing on the OCP and LUB amendments, with appropriate public notice.
- Receiving, summarizing, and responding to public hearing input through a report to the LTC.

- Proceeding to further reading of the bylaws, with any revisions reported and considered in accordance with applicable requirements.
- Submitting the OCP bylaw for Ministerial approval, and addressing any feedback or required changes.
- Bringing the bylaws forward for adoption following all required approvals.
- Communicating the adopted OCP and LUB to the community, First Nation Governments, and project partners, and transitioning into implementation.

Phase 4 concludes the project with the adopted planning documents providing a clear regulatory framework for Salt Spring Island land use planning going forward.

4. Conclusion

This workplan sets out a pathway to completion for the Salt Spring Island OCP-LUB Update Project. Building on the foundation of work already completed, the project will move through focused community engagement beginning in winter 2026, drafting of the updated OCP and corresponding LUB amendments, formal introduction and referral, and a statutory adoption process culminating in Ministerial approval.

Prior to the detailed engagement anticipated following the Local Government elections in the fall of 2026, Islands Trust staff will focus on engagement with affected First Nation Governments, developing a Communications and Engagement plan for detailed engagement activities with support from the PAPC and LTC, and relationship building with various community partners.

Two principles will guide the project through to completion. First, meaningful and consistent engagement with affected First Nation Governments will remain central at every phase. Second, the schedule will retain enough flexibility to respond to the considerations identified at the outset of this plan — including First Nation consultation timelines, policy complexity, Provincial approval processes, seasonal engagement windows, and emerging issues — without losing the momentum needed to bring the project to a successful conclusion.

Regular check-ins with the LTC, PAPC, and project partners will keep the project on track and ensure that the final OCP and LUB reflect a clear, well-considered vision for Salt Spring Island.

Attachment 2

1.0 Vision and Guiding Principles

THE ISLANDS TRUST

In recognition of the unique amenities and environment of the Gulf Islands, the province passed the Islands Trust Act in 1974 which established the Islands Trust with a mandate, embodied in the "object" of the Islands Trust:

> *"The object of the trust is to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia."*

The Islands Trust Area encompasses the Gulf Islands and water areas stretching from Denman Island in the north to the US border in the south, and from the foreshore of Vancouver Island to the Mainland. As part of the Islands Trust Area, planning for Salt Spring Island must consider and address the unique mandate of the Islands Trust. The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area is one of 12 local trust areas and one Island Municipality within the Islands Trust Area. Each Local Trust Committee has been provided with most of the land use planning authority of a regional district board.

THE SALT SPRING ISLAND OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

This Official Community Plan provides a community vision for Salt Spring Island and defines the land use objectives, policies and actions that could achieve this vision. It acts as a guide for future decisions of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee ("the Local Trust Committee").

The Plan explains the way in which the *Islands Trust Policy Statement* can be put into effect on Salt Spring Island.

Vision Statement

A vision statement defines the long-term aspirations and guiding purpose of a community, organization, or initiative. It paints a picture of the desired future and serves as a source of inspiration, direction, and unity.

Its core purposes are to:

- Articulate a shared dream: It expresses what the group ultimately hopes to achieve or become.

- Guide decision-making: It helps leaders and members align actions with long-term goals.
- Motivate and inspire: It energizes people by connecting daily efforts to a meaningful future.
- Unify diverse stakeholders: It provides a common language and purpose across different roles, backgrounds, and interests.
- Set the tone for planning: It anchors strategic plans, policies, and initiatives in a clear sense of purpose.

In short, a vision statement is the North Star—it doesn't describe where you are, but where you're going and why it matters.

Vision

We envision a vibrant, resilient island community rooted in respect—for our land, our history, and one another. Guided by a deep sense of stewardship, we are committed to preserving the island's natural beauty, ecological integrity, and cultural heritage. We honor the legacy of the First Nations and early settlers whose traditions of harmony with the land inspire our path forward.

In the face of global and local challenges—from climate change to housing and resource scarcity—we embrace thoughtful planning, sustainable development, and community self-reliance. We recognize that true progress respects environmental limits, nurtures social diversity, and secures our agricultural and ecological future.

Our vision is of a rural, inclusive, and creative island where future generations thrive, where children grow up proud to call this place home, and where every step we take leaves a legacy of care, balance, and hope.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are the core values that shape decisions, actions, and behaviors within the community. They serve as a strategic compass, helping the Trust stay aligned with their shared community purpose, especially when facing complex choices or uncertain circumstances.

These principles:

- Reflect what matters most to the group

- Provide consistency and clarity in planning and decision-making
- Help evaluate whether actions are in harmony with long-term goals and values
- Inspire trust, accountability, and unity

In the context of a community, guiding principles aim to guide policies that ensure that honors the community's identity and aspirations.

1. Deep Connection to Place and Stewardship

- The community resides in a uniquely beautiful and ecologically significant island environment.
- There is a strong collective sense of **responsibility to protect, preserve, and honor** the island's past, present, and future.
- The emphasis is on **legacy over impact**, suggesting a long-term, sustainable vision rather than short-term change.

2. Honoring Cultural and Historical Heritage

- The community acknowledges and respects the **First Nations peoples**, recognizing their traditional stewardship of the land and sea.
- Tribute is also paid to **early settlers**—Hawaiian, Black, and Japanese pioneers—who brought rich cultural traditions and resilience.
- The contributions of **long-standing island families** are celebrated for shaping the community's identity over generations.

3. Recognition of Present-Day Challenges

- The island faces **global issues** like climate change and dwindling fossil fuel resources, which are especially critical for isolated communities.
- **Local challenges** include:
    - An aging population
    - Declining socioeconomic diversity
    - Housing shortages
    - Limited access to safe drinking water
- These issues are acknowledged as urgent and multifaceted.

4. Sustainable Development and Environmental Limits

- The community accepts that **growth must be limited** by environmental capacity and resource availability.
- There is a clear understanding that **healthy ecosystems are foundational to healthy societies**.
- Restoration and conservation efforts are prioritized, especially in **agriculture**, which is seen as both a cultural tradition and a necessity for food security.

5. Community Identity and Aspirations

- The vision is to maintain a **rural, resident-centered community** with inclusive economic opportunities.
- The island values its **artistic and creative residents**, seeing them as vital to its cultural richness.
- There is a heartfelt hope that **children raised on the island will remain connected to it**, proud to call it home.

6. Resilience, Self-Reliance, and Adaptation

- The community is described as **vibrant, engaged, and capable**, with confidence in its ability to address challenges through planning and ingenuity.
- In the face of climate change, there is a call to **"tread with small feet"—**a poetic metaphor for reducing environmental impact and embracing sustainable living.

Attachment 3

Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project

What We Heard Report

March 2026



McElhanney

FALL ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Introduction

This report presents a summary of what we heard in the first round of public engagement for the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project.

The **What We Heard Report** serves as a tool to record and document community knowledge and sentiments and to bring the wealth of information provided by the community into the process alongside technical data and assessments for a wholistic picture. The report is a provided as a reference for planning and decision-making.

About the Project

The purpose of the project is to update the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) to better respond to current and emerging community needs. The project is focused specifically on increasing housing options and housing equity on the island, while remaining consistent with the Islands Trust mandate and policy framework.

The Engagement Process

Engagement provides a structured opportunity for people and organizations with knowledge and lived experience to share and inform the project outcomes. Community members hold understanding of practical realities that can provide insights that technical data and analysis alone can not reveal. Engagement is an opportunity to identify, clarify, and record community priorities and sentiments and to engage in productive dialogue and information sharing.

The **Communications and Engagement Plan** set out the engagement process, identified ways to reach diverse audiences, described equity and accessibility approaches, ethical engagement practices, and provides a roadmap for awareness building and engagement activities. Awareness building is communication of clear information so people understand the project and know how, when, and where they can participate. Engagement provides the opportunities for people to share their perspectives and contribute input that informs the work. The Engagement Plan defines the areas of inquiry – topics that planners, staff, and decision makers need to understand community desires when making decisions. To inform engagement planning, the project team held two 45-minute workshops with Islands Trust staff and one 45-minute engagement discovery meeting with the PAPC to identify and understand local needs, context factors, and key issues to engage on. The

project team listened carefully to input and worked to build an engagement process that was accessible, balanced, and unique to the Salt Spring Island community.

Engagement design was guided by International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) best practices, professional expertise, and input from Islands Trust staff and the Project Advisory Planning Commission (PAPC).

Awareness Building

Ahead of the engagement period, a marketing and communications campaign was used to create public awareness of the role of an OCP and LUB, the project purpose, and to encourage participation by sharing details of upcoming opportunities to participate. Communications and outreach efforts included:

- Designated project webpage
- Social media
- Posters and handouts in community

The awareness building campaign was launched in the weeks leading up to engagement and continued during the engagement period.



Figure 1:Sample social media post from Islands Trust Linkedin

Engagement Activities

The first round of public engagement gathered feedback from the community on key themes that will guide updates to the bylaws. Questions addressed a wide range of topics, including housing needs, land use planning, infrastructure capacity, environmental considerations, and sustainability. This approach ensures that public input will inform all aspects of the Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw development process.

The engagement period held between September 15 and October 24, 2025 combined in-person and digital engagement methods. In-person events were hosted on Salt Spring Island during and outside of typical work hours to reach a wide range of community members. Activities included:

September 15th

- 0530-0700 – Intercept style “tailgate talks” around Ganges Harbour and town centre area
- 0700 – 1200 – Grocery Store Pop Up at Country Grocer (1-2 staff, display boards, activities)
- 1330 – 1830 – Tuesday Farmer Market, Centennial Park (2 staff, display boards, activities)

September 16th

- 0730 – 0930 - Intercept style conversations and post card handout around Ganges Harbour and town centre area
- 0930 1230 – Pop up at the Library (1 staff, display boards, activities)
- 1600 – 1900 – Pop up at the Swimming Pool (1 staff, display boards, activities)

Data collection methods and activities at in-person events (*Figure 2*) included:

- Display boards with selective questions from the online survey.
- Time Capsule activity with Salt Spring Island-shaped paper cutouts and a prompt: *What should Salt Spring Island look like 20 years from now?* Participant responses will remain with the Islands Trust as an option activity to revisit during the next OCP update.



Figure 2. In-person engagement at the library.

An online survey was available throughout the duration of the engagement period, and paper copies were available for pick up and drop off at the library. A QR code link to the survey was posted at in person pop-up events and on posters and post cards handed out to advertise the engagement.

Questions on display boards and in the online survey were open-ended to encourage participants to share their perspectives in their own words. Questions were broad and future-oriented, inviting participants to consider how the Island should address housing needs, guide development, and promote economic and environmental sustainability over the next decade and beyond.

What We Heard So Far

In-person and online feedback from the first round of public engagement reflects a range of perspectives, with some themes emerging, as well as concerns and questions from community members that require further exploration.

Community Wellbeing

Participants described Salt Spring as having a strong sense of community and small-town character, where people look out for one another. This sense of wellbeing was closely tied to shared pride in the island's agricultural heritage and long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship. Participants emphasized the importance of protecting watersheds, forests, and shorelines, noting that conservation and sustainability practices are already embedded in the Island's identity and planning approach and should be maintained. Ganges Village was frequently characterized as an artisan-focused centre with a distinct charm that supports social connection, local livelihoods, and overall community wellbeing. Responses consistently reflected that these were qualities participants felt were important to preserve.

Participants also highlighted the beauty of ocean views, trails, parks, and shoreline access as one of the island's great recreational assets. The walking loops, nature paths, and green corridors were praised as intrinsic to Salt Spring's quality of life. Additionally, some respondents noted that social infrastructure, such as gathering spaces that support social connections, are just as crucial to community wellbeing and economic vitality as physical infrastructure like roads and pipes.

Housing

There was strong consensus among participants that environmental protection and expanded, affordable housing can and must coexist, provided development is guided by responsible, place-based planning. Numerous respondents emphasized that *"Salt Springers want both affordable housing and environmental protection"* and rejected the idea that these goals are mutually exclusive.

Participants widely encouraged building upward within existing developed areas and avoiding outward expansion, to protect sensitive ecosystems and reduce the impacts of sprawl. As one respondent stated, *"Ganges can go UP not out"*. Another added that clustering housing *"...near transit routes... reduces reliance on the automobile..."* and helps maintain affordability.

There was strong support for expanding purpose-built rental, co-operative housing, smaller scale ground-oriented forms, mixed-use buildings (ground floor commercial with residential above) tiny homes, secondary suites, and flexible housing options. Participants repeatedly stressed the need

for residential options "*for a range of incomes*" located close to daily amenities, with many describing the lack of affordable homes as a key barrier for working families, health-care staff, and young residents. Comments highlighted that "*we need affordable housing close to transit or areas where people work*" and urged enabling "*housing for families, workforce housing, co-ops... 2 or 3 floors*"

A very large portion of respondents pointed to the Common Ground Consensus for the Future document as an important foundation and document to inform the OCP update. Many comments emphasized that they felt the document *"reflects community agreement, is aligned with the LTC's priorities, and has been vetted by a planner."* Note: many comments in the survey dataset were repetitious or verbatim, reflecting coordinated inputs rather than distinct individual inputs.

Environment and Sustainability

Participants frequently linked environmental stewardship with economic stability and equity, emphasizing that long-term economic health depends on protecting ecosystems, water, and farmland. Many comments stressed that *"environmental protection must come first"* and that economic development cannot outpace ecological limits, especially water, forests, and sensitive habitats. Respondents noted that the island's economy is inseparable from its natural assets, with several stating that *"the natural environment is why we live here"* and why visitors come.

Participants also encouraged policies that integrate conservation with community planning, with repeated calls for *"nature reserves, not just parks intended for recreation"* and for economic decisions to reflect *"measurable ecological targets—water consumption, energy efficiency, and ecosystem protections tied to carrying capacity"*. Many urged the OCP to support green infrastructure, water conservation, rainwater collection, and clustered development to reduce sprawl and protect ecological corridors.

A large portion of respondents also supported strategies that treat environmental sustainability as the foundation for economic resilience, frequently repeating that *"all of these priorities are interconnected"* and must be planned together. Several noted that the island's long-term economic stability depends on avoiding overdevelopment and respecting its limits: *"Growth has to be contained... that's the point of the legislation and the OCP"*.

Land Use and Settlement

Participants strongly emphasized that land-use decisions in the OCP and LUB must take a coordinated, integrated approach, ensuring that housing, infrastructure capacity, servicing, and community needs are planned together rather than in isolation. Many cautioned against allowing expedited residential growth to override broader requirements, with several noting that development

"must meet measurable…targets" and that policy areas must be aligned to avoid fragmented or contradictory decision-making. Respondents stressed that growth management should be deliberate, paced, and connected to clear planning frameworks rather than driven by development pressure.

Across the engagement, participants showed broad support for directing growth to established village nodes, with Ganges Village overwhelmingly identified as the most viable centre due to existing services, transit access, and walkability. Feedback showed strong, repeated opposition to further development in Channel Ridge, citing limited water availability, distance from services, lack of transit, high fire risk, and general unsuitability for a village designation, with many recommending its removal from the OCP. In contrast, some respondents identified Vesuvius as a more appropriate candidate for a village designation due to proximity to ferry service, transit links, and mixed land uses. Overall, respondents favoured concentrating density in Ganges, and where feasible, Fulford and Vesuvius, to reduce dispersed development, improve efficiency, and ensure growth occurs where infrastructure can support it.

Infrastructure and Servicing

Survey respondents frequently described Salt Spring Island as highly automobile-dependent, noting limited safe or practical options for walking or cycling. Many highlighted the need for improved public transit, calling for better schedules, increased frequency, expanded routes, and greater reliability to strengthen connections between rural areas and Ganges Village. Participants also emphasized the importance of improving walkability, particularly for seniors, by creating interconnected pedestrian routes that allow residents to reach essential services without relying on a vehicle and to better support aging in place. These sentiments were paralleled at in person events, particularly those held at the library and grocery store. Community members emphatically described dangerous roadways and frustration at the lack of connectivity and active mobility on the island.

Feedback also supported revitalizing and modestly densifying Ganges Village to address island-wide transportation challenges and reduce car dependency. Participants felt that well-planned infill and more housing options within Ganges would allow more people to live close to shops, services, and community amenities. Several respondents suggested that bringing more residents into the village core would help rebuild a stronger sense of community connection while easing pressure on transportation infrastructure across the island.

Summary

The emerging themes show strong community support for a holistic and coordinated approach to growth and development. Residents want an approach that meets housing needs, preserves the natural environment, strengthens economic resilience, and acknowledges the limitations of existing infrastructure. This early engagement highlights where respondents share common priorities and where more discussion and collaboration will be needed as the work continues.

Feedback also shows the importance of broad and inclusive participation. These early insights help identify which perspectives were well represented and which groups should be invited more actively into future stages of the planning process.

Broad engagement is recommended in future phases to ensure that the next phases of policy development reflect the full range of community experiences and expectations moving forward. It is recommended that additional supplemental engagement be carried out in Phase 1 to build on what we learned in this initial phase, and that future stages of the process seek to engage a wide range of voices and community perspectives.

APPENDIX A

Statement of Limitations

Statement of Limitations

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Attachment 4

Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan

Major Topic Summaries



March 2026

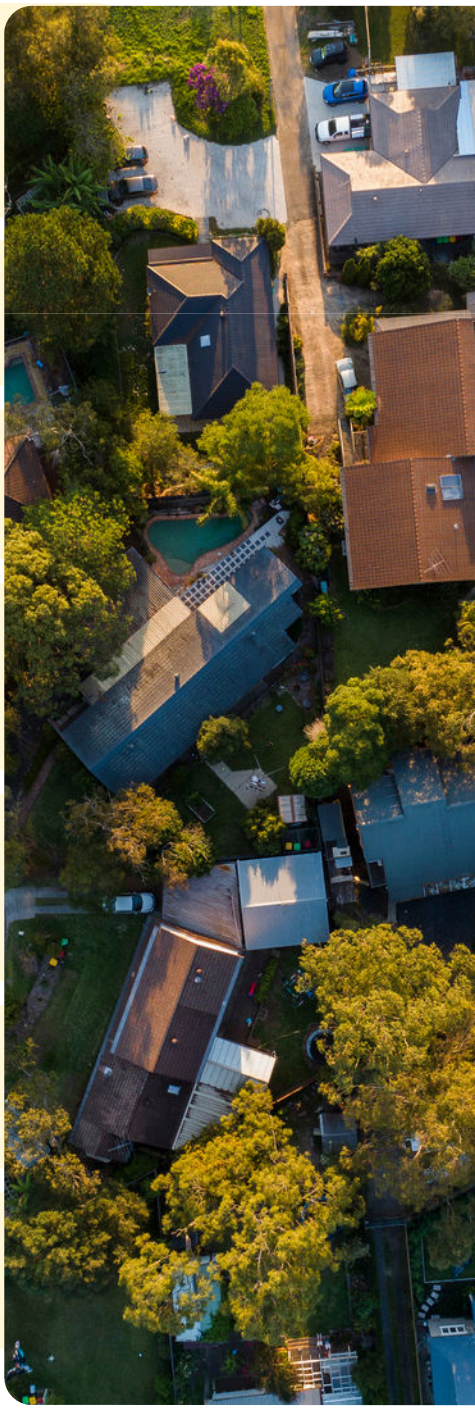
Salt Spring Island OCP

Housing Section Summary

March 31, 2026

The current Official Community Plan (OCP) addresses housing across multiple sections, but lacks a dedicated, cohesive housing section. As a result, policies related to affordability, housing diversity, rental supply, and special needs housing are dispersed and embedded within land-use designation policy. This fragmentation creates difficulty for interpretation, implementation, and alignment with provincial housing requirements. The following summary outlines the recommended restructuring of the OCP to create a unified, effective, and modernized housing framework.

1. Create a standalone housing section that consolidates all housing-related objectives and policies. This section would serve as the primary location for affordable housing policies, housing diversity and forms, current and projected housing needs, rental supply and tenure projections, and special needs and supportive housing.
2. Position affordable housing as a foundational community objective, rather than an exception within land-use rules.
3. Reduce redundancy by focusing land-use section more narrowly on location of residential development, form and scale of housing, and settlement patterns and growth management.
4. Prioritize Ganges Village and other serviced locations for housing development to reduce sprawl, preserve ecosystems, improve efficiency, support active transportation, and address climate adaptation.
5. Reinforce role of secondary suites and ADUs in meeting housing needs, such as enabling suites where servicing is sufficient, removing outdated restrictions, creating policies around density bonuses and establish criteria to identify suitable sites for development.
6. Acknowledge and support LTC authority to require rental tenure in multi-family housing developments.
7. Include policies enabling transfer of latent residential development away from sensitive areas and clear criteria for where growth should not occur to safeguard environmental assets.



Salt Spring Island OCP

Environment/Sustainability Section Summary

March 31, 2026

The current Official Community Plan (OCP) contains key environmental priorities such as ecosystem protection, water stewardship, agricultural preservation but they are not well integrated, and policy language is often vague, limiting effectiveness in guiding decision making. This fragmentation creates challenges for implementation and long-term sustainability. The following summary outlines recommendations to consolidate environmental policies into a unified framework with strengthened policy to support a more sustainable community.

1 Environmental Protection and Policy Integration

- Consolidate overlapping and dispersed policies to develop cohesive environmental policy framework
- Have a dedicated environmental section with strengthened policy language
- Embed climate action targets into environment section

2 Water Stewardship and Development Feasibility

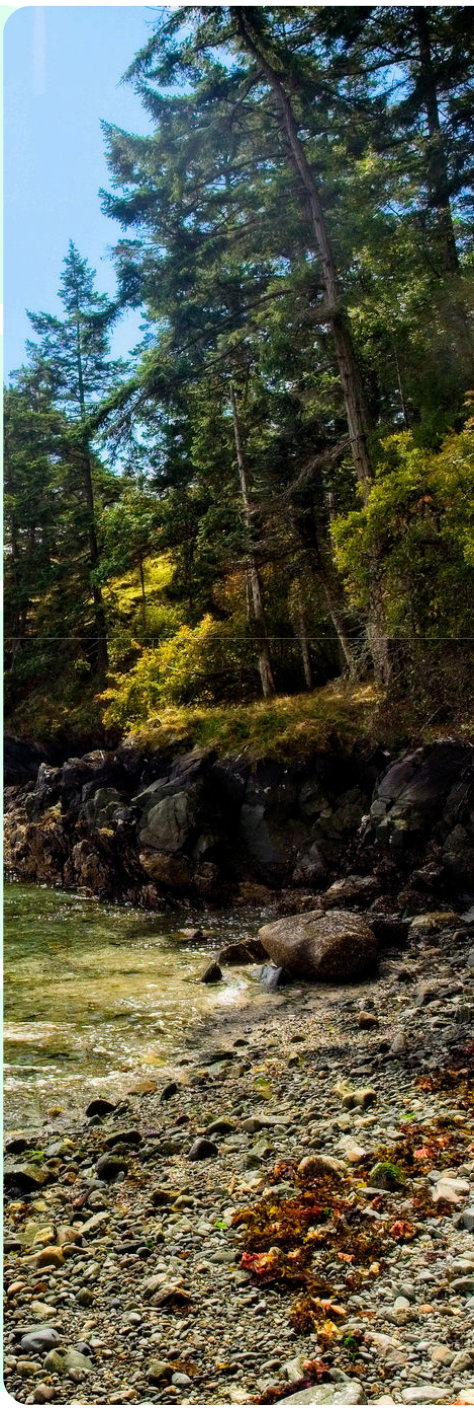
- New development proposals should include detailed assessments of water quality and quantity
- Consider establishing Development Permit Area for groundwater availability, using existing mapping

3 Food Systems, Agriculture, and Community Resilience

- Food-related facilities should be recognized as essential community services
- Policies should establish no net loss of agricultural land, land matching programs and promotion of agri-tourism activities
- Frame food systems as a climate change adaptation strategy
- Highlight composting as an environmental necessity and develop policies that address regulatory barriers and encourage soil-building practices

4 Integrated Themes and Cross-Cutting Benefits

- Organize policies thematically to improve navigation and clarity
- Embed climate considerations throughout land-use, water, and environmental policies
- Agricultural lands, forests, water resources, and coastal zones should all receive explicit policy attention
- Strengthen policy to encourage stronger food systems, active transportation networks, and water stewardship
- Use definitive language and mapping tools to provide clearer guidance for future decision-making



Salt Spring Island OCP

Climate Change Resilience

March 31, 2026

The current Official Community Plan (OCP) addresses climate change through various policies, but these are fragmented and lack a cohesive, overarching framework and are not unified under a clear climate resilience lens. Implementation of greenhouse gas reduction targets is inconsistent, and legislative limits now also restrict regulatory approaches to building efficiency. The following summary outlines recommendations to consolidate climate elements into a clear and integrated framework while being in compliance with provincial requirements.

1 Climate-Resilient Land Use Planning

- Encourage compact, village-centered growth
- Focus densification near transit routes
- Integrate walking and cycling infrastructure into land-use planning
- Protect forests and agricultural lands
- Map water availability
- Plan for sea level rise and fire-resilient growth patterns

2 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets

- Implement modernized greenhouse gas reduction targets to apply to existing policies and develop actions that directly support the targets

3 Encouraging Low-Carbon Construction

- Authorities can no longer require energy efficiency measures in buildings through regulation due to recent chnages in the Building Act
- Support low-carbon and energy-efficient building practices through incentives, such as financial support or streamlined permitting

4 Climate-Informed Water Resource Planning

- Ensure that water available assessments and planning tools incorporate the most recent climate change projections
- Water management should remain adaptive and evidence-based



Attachment 5

Salt Spring Island Land Use Bylaw

Review Memo



March 2026

REVIEW MEMO

We have completed a preliminary review of the current Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and have provided a summary below of potential revisions to not only address key housekeeping issues identified by staff, but other revisions that would bring the LUB into greater alignment with the Official Community Plan. The 'timeline' column is given to prioritize which actions should be pursued in the short-term (**6 months to 1 year**), medium-term (**2 to 4 years**), and long-term (**5 years and over**).

Action	Rationale	Timeline
Graphic updates	Adding graphics and visual aids such as lot area and dimensions, setbacks, sightline triangles and height will assist in easier interpretation	**Short-Term**
Legal reference updates	Ensure legislative compliance	**Short-Term**
Housekeeping updates	To address key issues such as definition inconsistencies and clarity updates.	**Short-Term**
Uses permitted in all zones	Staff have noted the need for a minor amendment to allow government offices and certain institutional uses in all zones	**Short-Term**
Secondary suites in single family zones	Housing Needs Targets – encourage gentle density but it needs to be tied to adequate servicing. Allowing secondary suites will also reduce building footprints further limiting potential ESA encroachment. This needs to be reviewed in the context of the most appropriate zones to permit the use and possibility of additional units in rural areas.	**Medium-Term**
Review of Carriage Houses, full-time rental cottages more broadly	Housing Needs Targets – encourage gentle density but it needs to be tied to adequate servicing and ESA avoidance.	**Medium-Term**
Limit seasonal cottage rentals	Housing Needs Targets – seasonal rentals can impact long-term rental stock.	**Medium-Term**
Short-term rentals and B&B review	As above.	**Medium-Term**
'Building Height' definition review	Noted by staff that definition can be cumbersome to administer. Building height definition changes can often result in non-conformance issues. Requires a detailed review as to not create non-conformance.	**Medium-Term**
Permit townhouse and apartments in Villages	A review of servicing capabilities needs to occur to determine if there is capacity to allow this form of housing. Fire services should be engaged as part of this review.	**Long-Term**
Accessory Building research	Review the restrictions on floor area and rooms as there is a concern of non-residential accessory buildings being used as dwellings. Staff notes.	**Long-Term**