

**From:** Chris Hutton  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 9, 2025 12:56 PM  
**To:** SSIInfo  
**Subject:** FW: Part 1 of Common Ground submission for OCP/LUB review

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Please file/include in engagement info.

Sincerely,

**Chris Hutton**, MPA, MCIP, RPP  
Regional Planning Manager  
Islands Trust | 250-538-5608

*The Salt Spring Island Islands Trust office at 500 lower Ganges Rd is now closed to in-person service. Islands Trust staff will continue to provide services by phone and e-mail until the new office space at 121 McPhillips Avenue opens. During the in-person office closure period, enquiries can be submitted by email at [ssiinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:ssiinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca), or call 250.537.9144.*

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 5, 2025 5:52 PM  
**To:** Chris Hutton <[chutton@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:chutton@islandstrust.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Part 1 of Common Ground submission for OCP/LUB review

Hi Chris – As promised, I’m following up on our email of September 29<sup>th</sup>, which had a link to the set of proposals that arose out of the Common Ground process over the past year, now called the [COMMON GROUND CONSENSUS FOR THE FUTURE](#). That Consensus is the centerpiece of our submission to the LTC as input on housing for the current OCP/LUB review. As mentioned, it has been aligned with the LTC’s lenses and reviewed by a planner (Kacia Tolsma) for legality, feasibility and relevance to your process.

In this email – which is Part 1 of our official submission – I’ll briefly recap the Common Ground process that produced this Consensus, with links to supporting documents and video, in order to establish its credibility as a representation of community priorities. (All the documents referenced below are in [this google drive folder](#).) We’re currently doing a public engagement campaign to encourage people to give input to the LTC during your Phase 1 engagement (ending Oct 24<sup>th</sup>), which will indicate community support of this Consensus by those who have explored and agree with its holistic approach to addressing our long-time housing crisis.

Part 2 of our official submission will be a set of specific suggestions for revisions to the OCP and accompanying LUB’s that would implement this Consensus, currently being prepared by Ms. Tolsma.

FW: Part 1 of Common Ground submission for OCP/LUB review

This second submission will be sent to you before the end of Phase 1, and we hope it will be useful to you as you and Sandra Borton begin the rewrite of the OCP. Given the constraints on Ms. Borton's public engagement caused by unavoidable internal delays this year, we're very happy that we undertook our own deep and broad engagement of the community, and hope you'll feel, as we do, that the results of the Common Ground process deserve to be foundational to the OCP and LUB revisions.

#### COMMON GROUND ENGAGEMENT NOV 2024 TO APRIL 2025

I was hired by Transition Salt Spring (TSS) in October 2024 to do a public engagement that would feed into the LTC's engagement in 2025. TSS felt that having sufficient affordable housing on Salt Spring was a critical element of community resilience in the face of dangerous climate change and other challenges, both environmental and social, and so wanted to create a space to see if community consensus could be found. TSS felt that the community had long been divided by a false narrative that we had to choose between having enough affordable housing for our community to thrive, and preserving and protecting our beloved natural environment, whereas in fact there might be common ground – not agreement about everything, but enough for us to move forward together as a community. And that, over and over, is exactly what we found.

I began with a sprint of one-to-one conversations with a diverse group of community representatives, in order to prepare for an initial gathering which took place at the Salt Spring Library on November 25, 2024. There were 19 participants at this initial gathering, including representatives of the SSI Farmland Trust, the Agricultural Alliance, IWAV, the Chamber of Commerce, Salt Spring Arts, Island Community Services, Country Grocer, Salt Spring Health Action Network, the SSI Foundation, Positively Forward, the Chuan Society, and the Penelakut Tribe.

I'm including my remarks as facilitator, as part of a written report on this phase of the process, but the meat of the gathering was each participant sharing what they most wanted to see emerge from this process. Those desires then became the guiding principles for the 6 community dinners that followed, over the period from January 16<sup>th</sup> to April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025. These dinners were attended by members of the initial November gathering as well as numerous others I connected with in additional one-to-one conversations after November. Altogether 52 community representatives were consulted in one-to-one conversations, at the dinners, or both.

- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND PRE-SUMMIT REPORT - 1st gathering - engagement to date - dinner series plans at 2-25-25
- DOCUMENT: Common Ground One-to-one engagement list with dinner participation

Each dinner was recorded, and from the transcripts I created lists of potential points of consensus within that dinner group. I then circulated these lists to each dinner group for feedback, and revised the consensus points accordingly. I then circulated each revised set of consensus points to the larger group of 52 community representatives for feedback and again revised accordingly. I was helped enormously in this process by certain members of the group who had a fair bit of expertise in dealing with the OCP and LUB's, but in each case I maintained the original intent of each consensus point as best I could.

During this period, you also graciously joined our OCP tutorial zoom on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to which all participants in the process were invited. We recorded the zoom and sent it out to all participants in the process.

- DOCUMENT: OCP tutorial recording - email to group 3-25-25

At the end of the community dinner process, I combined all the revised consensus points from all the dinners, and eliminated some duplicates. The end product was 64 potential points of consensus to present to an even larger group at our Common Ground Summit, which was scheduled for April 25, 2025. It had become clear in the process that only some of these potential consensus points were directly related to the OCP-LUB review process, where others would require community action, changes at the Provincial level, etc. So I coded each consensus point accordingly, and grouped them into categories for presentation at the Summit. I'm attaching these original 64 consensus points as formatted for the booklet handed out at the Summit.

- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND SUMMIT HANDOUT - Consensus Points for Discussion v3a 4-20-25

#### THE COMMON GROUND SUMMIT (APRIL 25, 2025)

192 community members were invited to the Common Ground Summit, including TSS staff and table facilitators, several of whom had been participants in the pre-Summit process. Of these, 71 ultimately were able to attend. The breadth and depth of the community representatives included was, as far as we know, unprecedented for a gathering of this kind, and this time included representatives our local government agencies: Trustee Patick, CRD Director Gary Holman, LCC members Gayle Baker and Brian Webster, and both Mark Boysen and Brian Pyper from NSSWD. Although our MLA Rob Botterell was unable to attend, he did send two representatives, Patricia Pearson and Curt Firestone. Also in attendance were the ED's of most of our major non-profits, business owners, members of Positively Forward and Keep Salt Spring Sustainable, representatives of the marginalized community, tradespeople, farmers, artists, architects, environmental advocates, affordable housing advocates, representatives of our hospital and medical services, a pastor, an educator, and others.

Notably absent, unfortunately, were Indigenous participants. We did invite several non-rightsholders, including the Anishinaabe and Métis participants who had joined the dinner process, but they weren't able to attend. Pre-Summit, I had also had one-to-one conversations with 3 rightsholders: Jennifer Claxton (Tsawout First Nation), Joe Akerman (Quw'utsun Tribe), and Kurt Irwin, a Councillor for the Penelakut Tribe who had attended one of the community dinners. But Trustee Patrick was very concerned that my conversations would interfere with the government-to-government meetings that the Islands Trust was starting to undertake with rightsholder nations directly, so in deference to her concerns, we did not invite rightsholders to the Summit. Nonetheless, one of our moderators brought along Perry LaFortune, now a Councillor for the Tsawout First Nation, and the Summit greatly benefited from his attendance and sharing with the group.

- DOCUMENT: Common Ground Summit - full invitee list with emails
- DOCUMENT: Final Common Ground Summit Attendees List with affiliation 9-9-25

I'm including my remarks as lead facilitator of the Summit, which incorporate the day's schedule and cite our multiple handouts to the group. The Summit was a full 6 hours, and included relationship-building, wrestling with dilemmas like the economic viability of building affordable housing in the face of high land and construction costs, and how to include the interests of (absent) Indigenous rightsholders in a discussion of building affordable housing on stolen land. But the majority of the day was devoted to a discussion of the 64 proposed consensus points, which participants had been asked to read in advance so they could prepare lists of their most and least favourites, with counterproposals for those they didn't like. All discussions were moderated and by all accounts were very productive and thoughtful.

- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND SUMMIT - Homework form v3 4-20-25
- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND SUMMIT - Lead facilitator remarks & summit schedule v18 at 4-24-25 clean
- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND SUMMIT - TSS Board Chair Bryan Young Summit Remarks
- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND SUMMIT - Agenda formatted only start & end times
- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND SUMMIT - Table facilitator guide to discussions v2 clean
- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND SUMMIT HANDOUT - Farming Issues v2
- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND SUMMIT HANDOUT - Map Your Friends v1
- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND SUMMIT HANDOUT - Rainbow Jackson Road - 32 unit affordable housing project v4 clean

During the day, we took video of the event, particularly summary reports from the various tables after discussions, but also had participants speak on camera if they were willing. These remarks and video clips were later transcribed and are available at the following link. There was universal surprise among participants about how civil and intelligent the discussions were, and how much they agreed with others, including those they had previously thought they wouldn't agree with. This seemed to prove the original thesis, that local news and social media had stoked a false narrative of community agreement by focusing on the few things we don't agree on, instead of the significant common ground we share.

- LINK: [Links & comments from transcribed videos](#)

At the end of the day the participants were given 5 green dots and 5 red dots, and asked to upvote/downvote the 64 proposed consensus points. More green dots were placed than red dots, reflecting the remarks by several participants that they liked all of the consensus points. This gave a "net popularity" ranking of the proposed consensus points. All of the written feedback left behind was gathered for later collation.

- DOCUMENT: COMMON GROUND SUMMIT - Original Dotmocracy Rankings with consensus point titles

#### PREPARATION FOR THE COMMON GROUND LTC SUBMISSION

After the Summit, the written feedback and video from the Summit were digitized and collated, so that feedback about a given proposed consensus point would be adjacent to that feedback when our planner was brought on board for revisions. We also put out a public report on the Summit and talked to the Driftwood about the results.

- LINK: [Original 64 consensus points in numerical order with participant feedback embedded](#)
- DOCUMENT: Common Ground Summit Report - Public
- LINK: [Driftwood article on the Summit](#)

The next step in preparation for our LTC submission was to align the top-voted community priorities with the LTC's prioritized "lenses" for OCP housing input: climate change, whole ecosystems and Indigenous interests. I had noted this issue in my remarks at the Summit, knowing in particular that our agreed-upon lack of Indigenous participation would skew the results toward a settler point of view, and incidentally also lessen support for proposals that would address climate and environmental concerns, which are generally an integral part of Indigenous thinking. To address this, I weighted the 64 proposals for the LTC's 3 lenses, such that a consensus point that was relevant to all 3 lenses would now be about as "popular" as the most upvoted consensus point at the Summit. An explanation of my methodology is

included.

- DOCUMENT: Common Ground Consensus for the Future - methodology of weighting top consensus points v1 9-17-25

The net result was a combination of the highest priorities of the community representatives at the Summit and the LTC's 3 priorities – 18 interconnected consensus points that together represent a holistic solution to Salt Spring's enduring housing crisis. These 18, collectively called the COMMON GROUND CONSENSUS FOR THE FUTURE, were then reviewed by our planner for feasibility, legality and relevance to your process. These proposals were in the link we sent you on September 29<sup>th</sup>, in hopes they would inform the LTC engagement and reduce redundancy, i.e., polling Salt Springers on general values questions when a broad and diverse group of community representatives has already come together and worked out a detailed set of proposals for moving forward. The link to the Consensus below includes our planner's remarks about the Summit feedback she addressed in her revisions.

- LINK: [Common Ground Consensus for the Future – revised consensus points with feedback noted](#)

It's worth noting here that we are not abandoning the other 46 proposed consensus points that arose from the Common Ground process. Whether popular at the Summit or not, all were important to the person or dinner group that originally suggested them. Per our early discussions with you, they are all relevant as context for our submission and so, as you asked, we are submitting them all. Of those 46, however, many are not directly relevant to the OCP-LUB revision, and are being pursued in other ways, i.e., through on-going community discussions, or in other cases discussions directly with the Province, where Provincial action would be required to address an issue, such as inter-agency conflicts with the ALC or the approval of the Islands Trust review.

That concludes Part 1 of our submission! We'll be sending Part 2 as soon as Ms. Tolsma finishes preparing her detailed suggestions for implementation of the Consensus through OCP and LUB revisions, which we hope you'll find to be of professional quality and aligned with your work. As always, we deeply appreciate you and the work that everyone at the LTC and the Trust is doing, with never enough time or money. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if there's anything we can do to help your process. We want our relationship to be a partnership!

Jon

Consultant, Common Ground engagement

