



Salt Spring Island

Project Advisory Planning Commission

AGENDA

Date: Tuesday, April 21, 2026

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: Salt Spring Island United Church – Upper Hall, 111 Hereford Avenue

1. AGENDA **Pg. 1**

1.1 Approval of Agenda

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS **Pg. 2**

Please propose amendments to the draft minutes as worded resolutions in writing to be presented at the meeting.

2.1 Draft Minutes of the January 29, 2026 Meeting – For Adoption

3. BUSINESS ITEMS **Pg. 7**

3.1 Review final deliverables from McElhanney
Verbal Presentation

Attachments:

- Public Engagement Summary Report
- OCP Major Topic Summaries
- OCP Policy Gap Analysis
- Background Documents Technical Review Summary Report
- SSI Land Use Bylaw Review Memo
- Draft Vision and Guiding Principles

4. OTHER BUSINESS

5. ADJOURNEMENT



Salt Spring Island Project Advisory Planning Commission Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date of Meeting: Thursday, January 29, 2026

Location: United Church, Upper Hall Meeting Room
111 Hereford Avenue, Salt Spring Island

Members Present: Eric March, Chair
Robert Steinbach, Commissioner
Riley Donovan, Commissioner
Anne Gunn, Commissioner
Maxine Leichter, Commissioner

Regrets: John Cade, Commissioner
Tim Hiltz, Commissioner

Staff Present: Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager
Carly Bilney, Recorder (electronic)

Others Present: There were 2 members of the public present.
Sandra Borton, McElhanney Consulting (electronic)
Kevin Brooks, McElhanney Consulting (electronic)

1. AGENDA

Chair March called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. He acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations.

1.1 Approval of Agenda

The following item was proposed to be added to the agenda:

- Discussion of Terms of Reference

By general consent the agenda was adopted as amended.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 Draft Minutes of the December 16, 2025 Meeting – For Adoption

It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Project Advisory Planning Commission accept the minutes as presented.

CARRIED

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

3.0 Discussion of Terms of Reference

Discussion ensued about the expectations of the consultants, the Project Advisory Planning Commission, and of staff as the project progresses. Some Commissioners expressed concern about going beyond the scope of the Terms of Reference.

It was moved and seconded that the task of the Commission be kept to that described in the Terms of Reference which is to advise on the public consultation for this project.

Discussion on the motion was held, and the RPM read the Terms of Reference. Different views were expressed about whether the Project Advisory Planning Commission is to advise only on details related to the community engagement plan, or also on the Official Community Plan. A suggestion was made to amend the motion in such a way that does not describe what the Terms of Reference are.

The consultant noted that the meeting in March is to continue engagement on the overall process, ensure people are aware of upcoming engagement, and have a fulsome conversation about the expectations from the Terms of Reference. He commented that discussion can be had as needed if the Project Advisory Planning Commission is in disagreement with Islands Trust staff about the role the Commission was intended to play. He suggested that today's discussion focus on the engagement plan, the next steps – which will include marketing to ensure people are aware of the process – and the tools that might be used.

A Commissioner emphasized a need to clarify to the public that the Project Advisory Planning Commission is not providing advice on the amendments to the Official Community Plan, but is helping with related communication.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Project Advisory Planning Commission requests that the Local Trust Committee makes clear to the consultant and staff that the task of this Project Advisory Planning Commission should be limited to the Project Advisory Planning Commission Terms of Reference.

CARRIED

3.1 Review Communications and Engagement Plan

The consultant provided a presentation on the Communications and Engagement Plan, and highlighted the following points:

- The plan was developed to ensure efforts are strategic and aligned with the project budget
- Reviewed the timeline for engagement
- Reviewed various engagement tools to be used
- The Project Advisory Planning Commission plays a critical role as champions of the process

Discussion ensued and the following points were made:

- A Commissioner suggested the consultants and Islands Trust staff have a different view of the role of the Project Advisory Planning Commission
- A Commissioner expressed disappointment that the consultants did not acknowledge that Commissioners had already read the plan and were prepared to provide feedback before the presentation
- A Commissioner explained that Commissioners are already talking to their neighbours about the project, and a recurring message is that Salt Spring islanders are so divided that people do not want to get involved – there is extreme polarization, perhaps perceived as opposed to real, between housing and the environment
- A Commissioner suggested that all engagement and marketing strategies provide a balance between: housing, environment and Reconciliation with First Nations
- The consultant noted that Reconciliation with First Nations is included in the project scope (just not in the presentation)
- The consultant noted there is need to be clear that the project is a focused update to improve clarity, usability and effectiveness (not a rewrite)
- A Commissioner suggested CBC Radio and CHIR FM (Salt Spring radio) be used as a means to reach people (the consultant responded that the two stations are on the press release list)
- A Commissioner suggested that all engagement strategies acknowledge that Salt Spring has become a divided community

A Commissioner expressed a desire to individually discuss engagement tools and provide feedback on how to use each of them to build trust. A Commissioner suggested an additional meeting be scheduled; the RPM suggested waiting until the consultants have had a chance to provide feedback.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Project Advisory Planning Commission has, as soon as practical, a meeting to provide input on the marketing and engagement strategies, and that the Project Advisory Planning Commission members provide input to the consulting team.

CARRIED

Commissioner Gunn left the meeting at 10:29 a.m.

The consultant asked which groups should be invited to participate in the engagement, and the following suggestions were offered:

- Positively Forward
- Transition Salt Spring
- Salt Spring accommodations providers
- The Chamber of Commerce
- Groups that would provide insight on accessibility: Gulf Islands Families Together Society (GIFTS), Community Services of Salt Spring, the Food Bank, the Salt Spring Island Primary Care Network, Island Health, Island Community Clinic Society, Chuan Society, IWAV, Ministry of Transportation and Transit
- Go to the people: sports activities (soccer or baseball), churches, etc.
- Do not hold meetings at the Salt Spring Island Multi Space (SIMS) because of limited parking
- Salt Spring Island (SSI) Conservancy, SSI Water Preservation Society, Keep Salt Spring Sustainable
- SSI Farmland Trust, SSI Farmers' Institute, SSI Agricultural Alliance
- North Salt Spring Waterworks District

In response to a question from a Commissioner, the consultant noted that there is no dedicated project email; rather, members of the public will submit emails to the Islands Trust Salt Spring Island info email address for staff to manage.

In response to a question from a Commissioner, the RPM described actions that have been taken or will be taken to consult with First Nations.

A Commissioner recommended the following documents be included in the review:

- An Ecosystem of Health Perspective related to Salt Spring Island's Official Community Plan Review
- The SSI Complete Community's Assessment Final Report
- Positively Forward – Pathways to Affordable Housing

A Commissioner requested that materials going out to the public be submitted to Commissioners to review in advance, and the consultant responded that all materials will be submitted through staff.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Project Advisory Planning Commission requests that the Local Trust Committee advise staff to submit written outreach materials to the Project Advisory Planning Commission in advance for comments and suggestions.

CARRIED

A Commissioner expressed disappointment that a meeting had not been planned for February to review the documents discussed. Discussion was held about how the Project Advisory Planning Commission can continue to provide effective feedback while keeping the project in line with budget and timeline goals.

Comments were made about how the Official Community Plan relates to opportunities for affordable housing.

The consultant asked for feedback about suitable locations for pop-up engagement events and the following suggestions were made:

- Mother Goose events
- Library literacy program's reading groups
- 10% Tuesdays at Country Grocer draws people

The following venues were recommended for workshop events:

- Lions Hall
- Meeting hall at the Legion
- Fulford Hall (should be a south end location) or Beaver Point

The consultant asked for feedback on which landmarks to include in Crowdmapping, and a suggestion was made to allow Commissioners to send suggestions to the consultants, through staff, up to a given date. The consultant agreed to send a list of questions to all Commissioners with a deadline for feedback.

4. OTHER BUSINESS – None

5. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Eric March, Chair

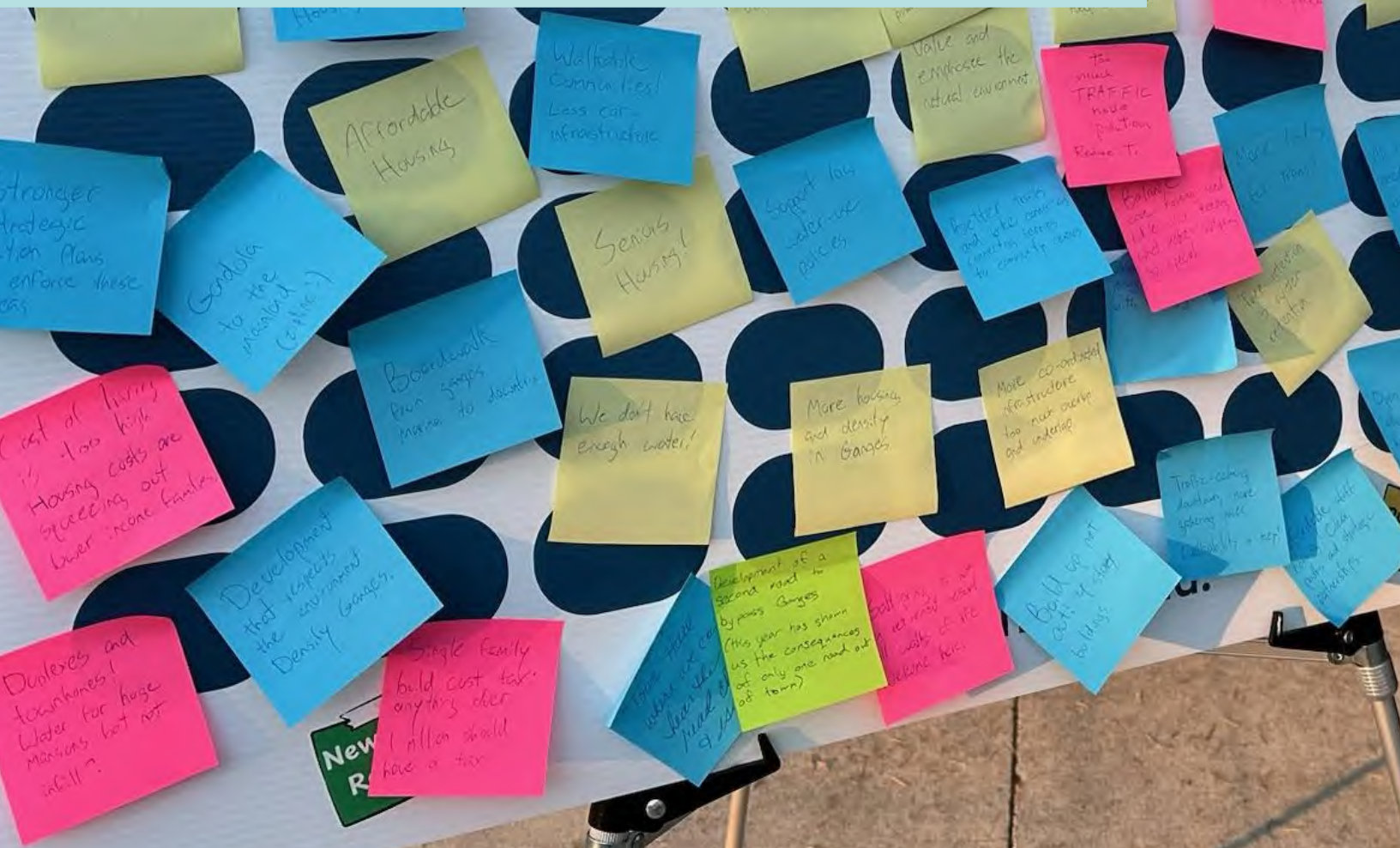
CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Carly Bilney, Recorder

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

What We Heard Report

March 2026



Stronger
strategic
plans
enforce these
plans

Sendola
to the
municipal
(public?)

Affordable
Housing

Walkable
communities
Less car-
infrastructure

Seniors
Housing!

Support low
water-use
policies

Value and
embrace the
natural environment

Too
much
TRAFFIC
noise
pollution
Reduce it.

Better
roads
and public services
to connect areas

Cost of living
is too high
Housing costs are
squeezing out
lower income families

Boardwalk
from Ganges
marina to downtown

We don't have
enough water!

More housing
and density
in Ganges

More coordinated
infrastructure
too narrow
and winding

Development
that respects
the environment
Density Ganges

Single family
build cost too
anything else
1 million should
have a tax

Development of a
second road in
by-pass Ganges
(this year has shown
us the consequences
of only one road out
of town)

Build up
retail and
walkable
business
districts

Build up
outlets of energy
buildings

Traffic calming
measures
more
openness
visibility a key

More
public
participation

More
affordable
housing

More
open
Tiny homes

More
open
Tiny homes

More
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Tiny homes

Levy
Tiny
Homes

More
open
Tiny homes

More
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Tiny homes

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Tiny homes

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More
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Tiny homes



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 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.

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)



Figure 1: Sample social media post from Islands Trust LinkedIn



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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Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Update

 Islands Trust

The Spring Island OCP & LUB update project aims to refresh the 1988 policy and regulation through a community driven process to identify and implement solutions to address current housing gaps. Through this exercise, the Local Trust Committee remains committed to identifying solutions in line with the interests of First Nations with treaty and territorial interests in the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area; maintaining system integrity and connectivity; and ensuring climate change resiliency.

WHAT IS AN OCP AND LUB?

- An OCP sets the long-term vision and goals for how land will be used and how the community will grow.
- An LUB puts that vision into action by setting the specific rules for how land can be used, developed, and built on.

CAN'T STAY LONG?

Learn more about the project at:
islandstrust.bc.ca/projects/salt-spring-official-community-plan-review/
 Or scan the QR Code to take the online survey



  @Islandstrust

Share your thoughts... 1

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

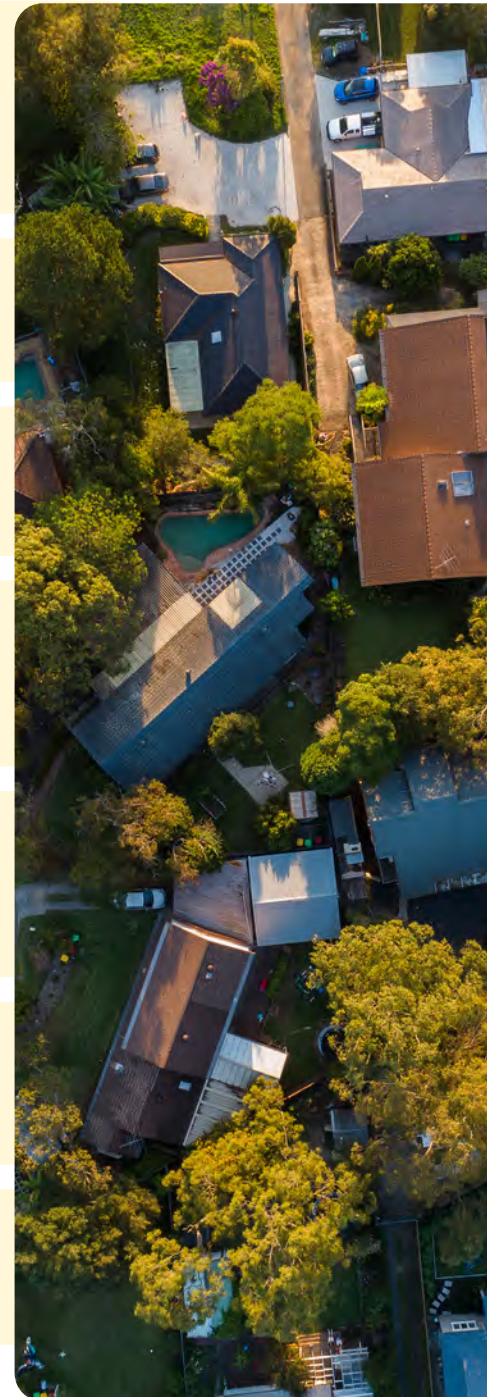
Reinforce role of secondary suites and ADUs in meeting housing needs, such as enabling suites where servicing is sufficient, removing outdated restrictions, creating policies around density bonuses and establish criteria to identify suitable sites for development.

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

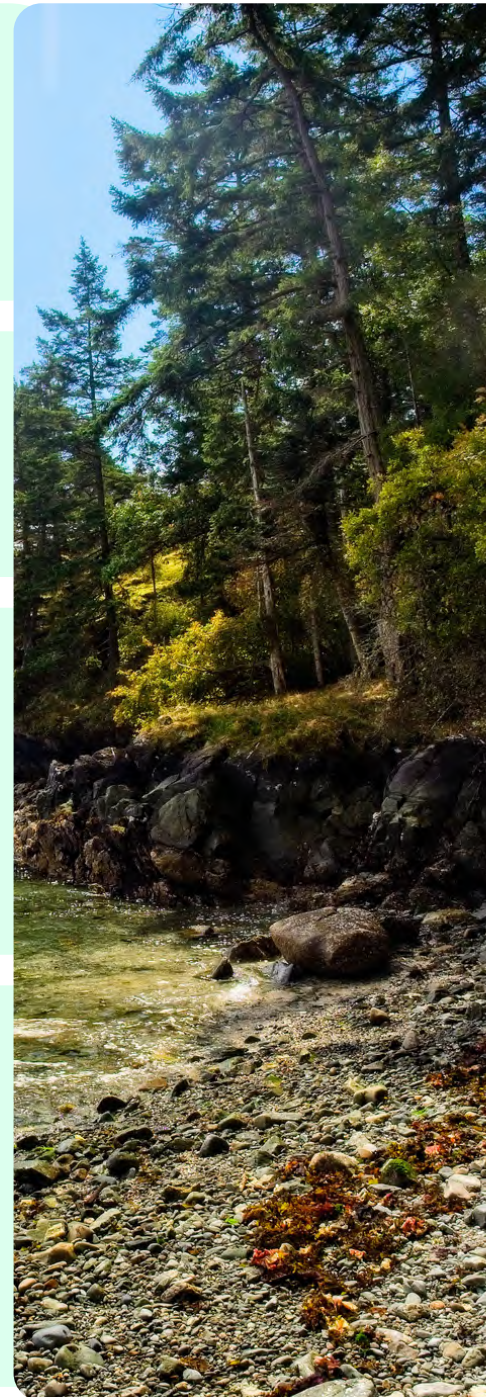
Food Systems, Agriculture, and Community Resilience

- 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

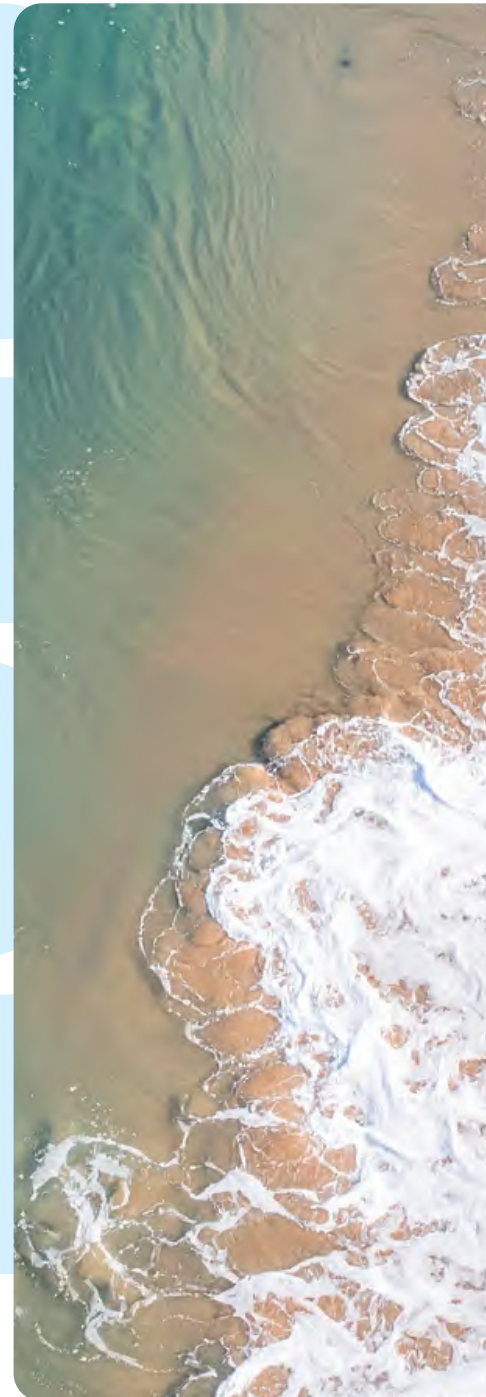
Encouraging Low-Carbon Construction

- Authorities can no longer require energy efficiency measures in buildings through regulation due to recent changes 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



Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan

Gap Analysis



February 2026

INTRODUCTION

The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area is undertaking an update to the Salt Spring Island (SSI) Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB). To address and plan for housing affordability, environmental protection, and climate change resilience on SSI, an update is required. This memo provides an assessment of the OCP gap analysis and legislative review to confirm the alignment of the OCP with the Islands Trust Act and the Local Government Act (LGA). The current OCP was adopted in 2008 with updates in 2020. The LUB review is to begin in April 2026.

Purpose of Official Community Plan

An OCP provides a framework for decision-making by the local government and is not a regulatory document. Instead, it serves as a foundational policy document used to guide future decisions and development. Further information on what exactly an OCP is used for is found below:

IT DOES:

- Outline the community’s desired vision
- Include objectives and policies to achieve vision
- Include a framework that officials use to justify land-use decisions
- Enable developers and residents to plan with clarity and confidence
- Align with other municipal bylaws and zoning amendments
- Protect the community by guiding land use away from hazards such as flood zones and steep slopes

IT DOES NOT:

- Get approved without being vetted by the community
- Contain objectives and policies contrary to community vision
- Override provincial requirements for housing needs
- Rezone land or stop future rezoning applications from being submitted
- Remove or alter the island’s population goals
- Remove existing protections that have been established through regulatory document

The Gap Analysis Report provides an assessment of gaps within the current OCP as well as a legislative review to confirm the alignment of the OCP with the Islands Trust Act and the Local Government Act (LGA).

McElhanney has been retained to provide consulting services to support SSI in completing a comprehensive review and update of the OCP. The policy gap analysis deliverable is identified in phase 1 of the Salt Spring Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project work plan. This task entails reviewing the current OCP and identifying gaps, areas for improvement, and discuss the implications of recent legislative changes to the LGA, enacted by Bill 44 – 2023.

Summary of OCP Review

The OCP review and Gap Analysis highlights opportunities to strengthen and modernize the plan to better reflect current community needs and provincial requirements. While the existing OCP covers many important topics, improvements can be made to enhance clarity, usability, and alignment with updating housing, environmental and climate goals. The review encourages a more streamlined and accessible document that supports clear and effective decision making.

Key opportunities for improvement:

- Create dedicated sections for housing, environmental protection and climate resilience
- Align policies with updated legislation and local housing needs
- Use clear, consistent language and improve document structure and organization
- Ensure objectives are supported by actionable policies
- Refresh and consolidate content to reduce concept duplication and improve clarity

The table below identifies gaps and issues in the existing OCP split into categories of housing and development, environmental protection and water sustainability, climate action, compliance with the Local Government Act and Islands Trust Policy Statement, structure and length, clarity and actionability, and relevance. Recommendations follow for the OCP update based on the findings within these categories.

The recommendations provided within this report are for review and consideration. The intent is that these recommendations will provide the basis for the next round of community engagement

Existing OCP	Gap / Issue	Recommendation
Housing and Development		
<p>The current OCP addresses housing issues across various sections but does not provide a standalone housing section. As a result, housing-related objectives (such as affordability housing need, special housing etc.) are fragmented and often embedded in with regulatory style land use policies.</p>	<p>Affordable housing is generally treated as an exception to density limits rather than a central planning priority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a dedicated housing section in the updated OCP that consolidates all housing related objectives and policies including affordable housing, housing diversity, housing needs, rental supply and special needs housing. This section should touch on the key areas of local need. This would align the OCP with the provincial housing needs report requirements and making housing related policies easier to apply and interpret for all bylaw users. • Consider reframing affordable housing as a core community objective rather than an exception of land use rules. Policies could enable flexible density, partnerships, and innovative forms of housing where they address identified needs, ensuring the OCP actively supports housing solutions within servicing and environmental constraints. • Streamline the land use section to focus on location, form and scale of residential development, while referencing a new housing section for policies on needs, affordability and diversity. This will reduce duplication and clarify the intent of each section.

	<p>The current OCP does not address housing need.</p>	<p>Establish in a dedicated housing section that references the Housing Needs Report, the 5- and 20-year projected housing needs metrics and ensures policies support the development of housing types and forms that aligns with the SSI goals. Growth management objectives should be located in the land use and settlement section to avoid conflict with provincial housing objectives and to reflects the intent of policy B2.1.2.1.</p>
<p>Objectives are missing actionable policies to support the written objectives. For example, see the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section B.2.1.1.1 Objective – To support a mix of housing types in appropriate locations without compromising protection of the natural environment. • Section B.2.1.1.2 Objective – To develop zoning that allows many different types of housing and accommodates a diverse population. • Section B.2.1.1.3 Objective – To acknowledge that a framework that limits growth may restrict housing choices as supply is limited; to respond to the challenge of fostering socioeconomic diversity within such a framework. 		<p>Have policies that support the objectives section.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section B.2.1.2 Policy - Zoning changes should be avoided if they would likely result in a larger island population than is expected under the development potential zoned in 2008. Exceptions to this policy are to be few and minor and only to achieve affordable housing and other objectives of this Plan. 		
<p>Some policies included in the land use section would be better suited in a housing section as they are foundational tools in housing policy planning and not the physical use or designation of land. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section B.2.2.2.1 – The Local Trust Committee will initiate a Housing Needs Assessment, to be updated regularly and on the basis of which the Local Trust Committee may establish priorities for consideration of affordable housing applications. Section B.2.2.2.2 – The Local Trust Committee, in cooperation with the Capital Regional District and the community, should work to establish a target level for the percentage of rented and owned affordable housing units in the total housing stock, based on projected community housing needs. 		<p>Create a Housing section to consolidate all housing related policies. Restructure document to have existing policies and objectives in a consolidated housing section</p>

Environmental Protection and Sustainability		
<p>In “The Island Environment” section, there are currently 27 policies covering topics such as water quality, riparian and wetland protection, soil, environmentally sensitive areas, etc.</p>	<p>While comprehensive, there is some repetition, and the policy language is occasionally vague, which may reduce clarity. The volume of policies makes the section difficult to navigate. Need to maintain and highlight how these strive to meet the Islands Trust Mandate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate overlapping policies into thematic groups (e.g., sensitive ecosystems, water management, habitat protection, sustainable development) to improve clarity. • Maintain comprehensive coverage of environmental topics while making the section more readable and user-friendly, potentially using subpoints under thematic policies.
<p>Overall the document currently has fragmented environmental policies throughout the document as well as the 27 policies that exist in the Island Environmental section.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate environmental policies: develop a dedicated section in the OCP that consolidates all environmental protection policies providing clearing and cohesive framework. • Strengthen policy language: replace ambiguous terms with more definitive language to enhance the enforceability of environmental policies.
Climate Action		
<p>Limited climate change considerations: the OCP does not adequately address climate change impacts or resilience strategies. An</p>	<p>The OCP lacks updated targets and policies that will achieve those targets.</p>	<p>Implement current targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and associated</p>

<p>official community plan must include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the area covered by the plan, and policies and actions of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets.</p>	<p>Some policies may be out of date or no longer allowed in the OCP.</p>	<p>policies to support those targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid referencing external documents and resources that could change over time. • No longer permitted to require building energy efficiency due to changes in the Building Act. Encourage the development of low carbon and energy efficient building through incentives.
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Compliance with Local Government Act

<p>The Local Government Act (LGA) outlines the provincial requirements for municipal Official Community Plans. (Note: The Island Trust is exempt from the SSMUH requirements as outlined in Bill 44)</p>	<p>The following sections of the LGA are not currently met by the current OCP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 473 (1) (a) 	<p>Review the current OCP and ensure that all provincial requirements per the Local Government Act are met or exceeded in the updated OCP.</p>
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Compliance with Islands Trust Policy Statement

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Islands Trust is currently revising the Policy Statement and the timeline for adoption of a new Policy Statement is not presently defined. Trust Council currently utilizes a “check list” approach for ensuring that land-use related bylaws are consistent with the Island Trust Policy Statement. Islands Trust staff advise that if a new Policy Statement is adopted a new approach to review for Policy Statement congruency may be developed. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly consult with the Islands Trust Policy Statement Amendment Project team to continually ensure the most up-to-date process for adoption of a new OCP is followed. • Develop the new OCP against the draft Islands Trust Policy Statement to ensure the OCP is “future proofed” against the likely changes to the Policy Statement.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current draft of the updated Islands Trust Policy Statement builds off the existing Policy Statement but also addresses how the Trust Area will adapt to current and future challenges and opportunities, and to reflect its commitments related to climate change and housing development – key factors being considered through the Salt Spring Island OCP update. 		
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Structure and Length

<p>The OCP is currently split into 2 volumes. Volume 1 is Land Use and Servicing Objectives and Volume 2 is Development Permit and Conservation Areas, Temporary Commercial and Industrial Use Permits, Appendices and Attachments.</p> <p>The current OCP is organized in a manner that may lead to confusion and difficult wayfinding for document users and some section names could be made clearer.</p>	<p>The OCP is divided into two volumes, which can be cumbersome for users.</p> <p>Section names like “The Island Environment” sounds more like a description of the Island vs a focused section on environmental protection and stewardship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidating the two volumes into a single document could improve accessibility and usability. Use clear section names that are not descriptive and rather directive. Restructure the document for ease of use and administration. <p><i>Recommended Table of Contents is attached in Appendix A</i></p>
<p>The definitions are split between V1 & V2.</p>	<p>Definitions are separated between the two volumes and can be difficult to navigate.</p>	<p>Have one complete document with all definitions in once location.</p>
<p>Part A.1 The Islands Trust lacks any visual to represent the area.</p>	<p>A visual aid may be helpful to support representing the area.</p>	<p>Include visual aids throughout the document where appropriate.</p>

<p>Each objective and policy is numbered and it is difficult to differentiate between the two, as well as hard to navigate the document.</p>	<p>The current OCP has a complex numbering format that can make the document difficult to navigate and less accessible to readers.</p>	<p>Simplifying the numbering system or supplementing it with clearer headings, summaries or visual aids could improve usability for readers and users of the document.</p>
<p>Clarity and Actionability</p>		
	<p>Some policies use vague language, which can lead to inconsistent interpretation and application.</p>	<p>An OCP should use directive words like shall, should, and may to guide action and avoid descriptive or vague terms like has, can or important, that doesn't provide clear direction or action.</p>
<p>Part A.3, Vision frames some of the many challenges faced by the island. Aging population is included in this paragraph</p>	<p>Aging population should not be seen as a problem, and rather a priority or emerging need.</p>	<p>Update the vision to be inclusive and forward focusing and highlight problems and priorities in language that does not feel discriminatory. Add Guiding principles to provide context to the policy framework in the document.</p>
<p>Part A.4.3 Limits to Growth is focused on the capacity of the island for development.</p>	<p>This could be included in a growth management section.</p>	<p>Reword this section to growth management or capacity for growth and move to the Land Use and Settlement Patterns section. This would make the section feel more of a parameter for responsible development.</p>
<p>Part A.7.2.2 says "The Local Trust Committee will continue to require applicants for large new commercial, general employment or multifamily developments in village areas to ensure their</p>	<p>The term "Large" could be interpreted differently and should be clarified to reduce ambiguity.</p>	<p>Consider defining or giving examples when referencing specific sizes or types of development.</p>

development does not increase flooding of downslope properties”		
Part B.2.1.2.1 is a growth management policy.	This policy is currently in the residential land use policy section.	Have growth management policies in a growth management section and have housing related policies on use and form in the land use section as well as a new housing section.
Themes in different sections, e.g. environmentally sensitive areas.	There may be opportunity to streamline or condense recurring policy themes throughout the OCP, particularly where similar objectives appear in multiple sections.	Create key policy areas within the document to streamline the document while making it easier to find policies. This could enhance clarity, reduce redundancy and document length and help highlight the interconnections between policy areas.
There are times in the current document where the policies don’t seem to provide direction for the objectives, or the policy is lacking all together. For example, B.2.2 Affordable, rental and special needs housing.	A lack of supportive policy can lead to unclear direction for staff and the local trust committee.	Consider ensuring that policy direction supports the objectives of each section.
Section B.4.1 General Community and Institutional Land Uses, Resource Land Use Objectives and Sand and Gravel Deposits have existing objectives but no supportive policy.	No policy to support these land uses and does not provide actionability or direction.	Include policy for this type of land use.
Section B.5.1.2.2 in General Village Land Use Objectives and Policies reads more regulatory and better suited for a zoning bylaw than an OCP.	The policy includes overly detailed regulatory standards better suited to a zoning bylaw.	The OCP should express broader policy intent and defer specific density and design limits to land use regulations.

Relevance

There are policies in the OCP that are still relevant to the SSI community today and others that may not be as relevant.	Retain policies that are still relevant to the SSI Community.	Keep the existing policy framework and modernize. Engage with the community to ensure that policies that are still relevant to the community are retained. Implement policies to help achieve the community’s needs.
There are currently multiple aquatic/marine related land use designations.	Review these different designations and consider relevance.	May be an opportunity to consolidate.
Table 2 in the OCP is related to the current water connections and remaining water supply capacity.	This may be out of date.	Ensure these tables are relevant and updated as necessary.
This DPA applies to foreshore owned by the crown.	There should be clarity that the DPA only applies to the crown land when a private party holds tenure.	Provide clarity on this.

Closing

The Gap Analysis summarizes key findings from the review of the current Salt Spring Island OCP. The document is organized to present an overall summary, detailed observations, and an assessment of compliance with the LGA and Islands Trust Policy Statement. Observations are grouped by topic, each with associated recommendations to help guide updates to the OCP.

Appendix A – Draft OCP Table of Contents

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Housing

Environment & Sustainability

Land Use & Settlement

Facilities, Parks & Recreation

Infrastructure & Servicing

Implementation

Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan

Technical Review Summary Report



February 2026

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INTRODUCTION

The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area is undertaking an update to the Salt Spring Island (SSI) Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB). The OCP update is focused on the areas of environmental protection, housing development, and climate change resilience.

Purpose of Official Community Plan

An OCP provides a framework for decision-making by the local government and is not a regulatory document. Instead it serves as a foundational policy document used to guide future decisions and development. Further information on what exactly an OCP is used for is found below:

IT DOES:

- Outline the community’s desired vision
- Include objectives and policies to achieve vision
- Include a framework that officials use to justify land-use decisions
- Enable developers and residents to plan with clarity and confidence
- Align with other municipal bylaws and zoning amendments
- Protect the community by guiding land use away from hazards such as flood zones and steep slopes

IT DOES NOT:

- Get approved without being vetted by the community
- Contain objectives and policies contrary to community vision
- Override provincial requirements for housing needs
- Rezone land or stop future rezoning applications from being submitted
- Remove or alter the island’s population goals
- Remove existing protections that have been established through regulatory documents

The Technical Review Summary Report provides an assessment of the key technical and policy documents that relate to settlement patterns on SSI. To address and plan for housing affordability, environmental protection, and climate change resilience on SSI, an update to the OCP is required.

McElhanney has been retained to provide consulting services to support SSI in completing a comprehensive review and update of the OCP. The technical review summary report is identified in Phase 1 of the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project work plan. This task entails providing an assessment of the current OCP and supporting documents, identifying strengths to build upon and areas requiring updates to address contemporary housing challenges and regulatory requirements.

List of Documents Reviewed

The Technical Review includes the following documents:

- Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Plan
- Islands Trust Housing Needs Assessment
- Homes for Islanders: An Integrated Housing Solutions Framework for Salt Spring Island
- Islands Trust Housing Options Toolkit
- Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan Renewal 2020-2030
- Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan 2.0 (CAP 2.0)

Each of the sections in this report contains a summary of the documents above, along with a table of key policy recommendations relevant to the OCP and LUB review. Strategies are split into three key categories: environmental protection and water preservation, climate action, and housing and development.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Environmental Protection and Water Preservation

Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Plan (March 2023)

This multi-agency watershed protection plan covers 2023-2032 and was jointly developed and endorsed by the Capital Regional District, Islands Trust, and North Salt Spring Waterworks District. The plan represents a unified approach to watershed stewardship in a complex jurisdictional environment where responsibility is shared among federal, provincial, Indigenous, and local governments, water service providers, and community organizations. Building on previous strategies from the past two decades, including Islands Trust's Freshwater Sustainability Strategy (2021) and North Salt Spring Waterworks District's Strategic Plan (2021), this plan consolidates collaborative action toward watershed protection.

The plan addresses critical water availability challenges and development pressures through 19 actions organized into five categories: Watershed Ecosystem Science, Groundwater Science, Community Water Use Efficiency and Stewardship, Watersheds and Drinking Water Protection Planning, and Watershed Protection Governance and Coordination. The plan emphasizes the need for improved data collection, integrated monitoring programs, enhanced coordination between agencies, and incorporation of water availability information into land use planning decisions. A key governance reform includes completing a review of coordination arrangements to optimize administrative structures.

Key Topic Summary Relevant to OCP Review	
Topic	Summary
Integrate water availability and vulnerability information into land use policies and regulations (Action 13)	<p>The Local Trust Committee should use new water availability data to inform OCP policies and land use bylaws, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updating OCP policies based on water availability assessments ○ Considering zoning changes that support density in areas with sufficient water availability and lower risk ○ Ensuring density increases are guided by groundwater and surface water budget outcomes ○ Protecting groundwater aquifer recharge zones through development permit areas
Establish groundwater regions as a focus for land use planning (Action 14)	Use the 17 identified groundwater sub-regions as primary geographic management units for freshwater allocation and land use planning purposes
Develop proof-of-water requirements for development applications (Action 15)	Incorporate Salt Spring-specific proof-of-water requirements into land use bylaws for subdivision and rezoning applications, accounting for climate change projections and considering the role of rainwater harvesting, non-potable sources, and cistern storage

<p>Update watershed and riparian mapping (Action 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review application of existing riparian areas mapping for Development Permit Area 7 ○ Update/expand mapping for Development Permit Area 4 (Lakes, Streams, Wetlands) ○ Create watershed resiliency maps for climate change adaptation ○ Harmonize watershed mapping across partner agencies
<p>Climate change integration</p>	<p>Water availability assessments and planning tools must account for "most recent climate change projections" and emerging information about changing hydrological conditions</p>
<p>Watershed resilience mapping</p>	<p>Complete mapping including wildfire risk and extent of contiguous forest to understand landscape adaptation to climate change</p>
<p>Link development decisions to water capacity</p>	<p>The plan explicitly states that "decisions to increase development density [should be] guided by the outcomes of the groundwater and surface water availability assessments"</p>
<p>Consider density bonusing</p>	<p>The plan notes that density bonusing could "encourage lot clustering focused on preserving important aspects of the watershed"</p>
<p>Require water storage in new development</p>	<p>Investigate requiring "freshwater storage cisterns in new development and redevelopment"</p>
<p>Investigate source substitution</p>	<p>Explore "the potential role of source substitution for non-potable purposes including rainwater, greywater, and recycled water"</p>

Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan Renewal 2020-2030 (March 2020)

The Area Farm Plan Renewal, prepared by Upland Agricultural Consulting, is a community-driven strategic framework advancing agriculture and local food production through 2030, integrating climate emergency response with agricultural viability and environmental stewardship. Developed through extensive engagement (two town halls with 90 and 75 participants, steering committee, three working groups), the plan builds on 2008 AFP successes while addressing persistent challenges.

Critical Context:

- Local production <10% of island food supply despite significant land base
- 2,943 ha in ALR + 3,000+ ha with agricultural zoning
- 1,197 ha ALR land potentially available; 135 ha inactive farmland (easiest expansion opportunity)
- 196 farms (2016), median income \$9,554, average farmer age 58.3 years
- Water availability already limiting and worsening with climate change
- 40% of SSI GHG emissions from imported food - local production is critical climate action
- Acute farmworker housing shortage constraining expansion

The plan positions agriculture as central to multiple OCP priorities: environmental protection (regenerative practices), climate action (carbon sequestration, reduced food miles), water preservation (best management practices), and economic sustainability (viable farm businesses). It frankly acknowledges implementation challenges: volunteer limitations, funding difficulties, and infrastructure gaps—providing valuable lessons for OCP implementation.

The AFP organizes recommendations around three goals directly aligned with OCP priorities:

Key Topic Summary Relevant to OCP Review	
Topic	Summary
Build Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding for AFP implementation coordinator and grant-writer • Engage paid administrative support and project coordinators • Establish stable funding for essential work (addresses decade of volunteer limitations)
Strengthen Food System Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support operationalization of community food hub (The Root) with commercial kitchen, storage, distribution, seed bank, demonstration gardens, and education programs • Ensure sustainable operations within the abattoir; explore collective livestock marketing, value-added processing, increased retail opportunities • Implement market development program with crop planning, aggregation, GAP certification incentives, online platform, diversified sales channels
Reduce Input Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish composting facility to reduce input costs, build soil organic matter, sequester carbon, increase water holding capacity. Currently organic materials shipped off-island at high cost; finished compost trucked on-island • Coordinate bulk purchasing/storage of inputs to reduce costs and transportation GHG

<p>Facilitate Land Access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Farmland Trust land matching program to connect inactive farmland with new farmers • Includes landowner outreach, tenure agreements, management services • Consider agricultural potential of publicly-owned land
<p>Build Resiliency in Local Food and Agriculture System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote redundancy in critical inputs (backup power, multiple water sources) • Promote diversity in crops, livestock, farm ecosystems • Increase human capacity through knowledge sharing and skill building • Encourage increased food production at all levels (home gardens to commercial farms) • Showcase resilient systems on demonstration sites and farm tours
<p>Increase Supply of Locally Adapted, Good Quality Seed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Salt Spring Seed Sanctuary and local seed growers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preserve and adapt heritage seed for region ○ Bulk up supply of locally grown seed for commercial production ○ Conduct trials for ongoing improvement and selection for region.

<p>Improve Integrated Water Management on Farms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile and disseminate best practices for water conservation to producers • Promote practices through peer-to-peer learning, demonstration sites, farm tours • Coordinate bulk-buying of water management equipment • Create opportunities for farms to share water storage reservoirs (with legal agreements) • Demonstrate feasibility of conservation methods on farm trial sites • Work with water organizations on SSI to promote conservation
<p>Build Soils and Improve Soil Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish composting facility • Investigate new technologies/methods for composting different waste streams • Work with CRD to purchase chipping equipment for wood waste mulch/composting (alternative to burning) • Promote best practices to build soil organic matter and prevent nutrient loss

<p>Widely Adopt Regenerative Agriculture Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate best practices for regenerative agriculture to producers • Learn from and work with Indigenous communities to revitalize traditional food production, harvesting, foraging • Promote increased production on already-cleared land rather than clearing new areas • Encourage additional tree planting in farm landscapes • Encourage use of local compost sources for soil health • Explore potential for biochar on SSI and its role for carbon sequestration
<p>Promote and Showcase Resilient, Regenerative and Indigenous Agricultural Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather data on regenerative practices already used on SSI and more widely • Establish demonstration sites and farm trials (on individual farms and/or demonstration farm) • Provide incentives for farmers to conduct on-farm trials (cost-sharing, funding, workshop/tour fees) • Host workshops and farmer-to-farmer field tours • Seek funding for Indigenous food projects and work with Indigenous communities to support revitalization of traditional food production, harvesting, foraging

<p>Increase Habitat for Pollinators Across the Island</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on local pollinators and plants enhancing habitat • Summarize and share research on preventing pollinator decline (pesticide use, EMF effects, habitat loss) • Monitor and review research on pollinator decline & EMF technology linkages; advocate accordingly • Consider Bee BC partnership program for funding opportunities • Consider requirements for sustaining both native bee and honey bee populations
<p>Support Ongoing Program Development and Activities at The Root</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build partnerships between The Root, producers, food retail businesses, restaurants, schools, other organizations • Provide resources to continue program development
<p>Expand Agriculture and Food Knowledge Among SSI Residents and Visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue promoting local food and agriculture at community events • Create online platform for sharing information about agriculture and food on SSI • Host skill-building workshops and learning activities for community development • Build on current school gardens and create further educational programming • Further develop agri-tourism strategy to supplement farm income (adhering to ALC rules) • Identify ways to engage residents and visitors through events, tools, resources (e.g., "eat local" resources)

<p>Broaden Role of Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission (AAPC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand AAPC role with LTC and Islands Trust to provide consistent agricultural representation to local government • Use AAPC meetings as venue to receive and discuss public input on urgent agricultural matters • Enable AAPC review of issues including farmworker housing, commercial cannabis production, composting regulations
<p>Work with Local Government to Ensure Policies and Regulations Support Agricultural Production and Protect Farmland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place agriculture/local food production as top priority in Islands Trust strategic plans • Include "no net loss" of agricultural land provisions in OCP and LUB (both ALR and productive land outside ALR); ensure no removal of prime agricultural land • Align wording and provisions in LUB and OCP relating to agriculture • Ensure local government decisions don't create barriers to Class A agricultural compost production aligning with provincial regulations • Request tax-based support of agricultural infrastructure on SSI, similar to other community infrastructure • Carry out advocacy at provincial and local levels for policies supporting small to medium scale agriculture

Increase Availability of Farm Worker Housing

- Include farmworkers as subset in CRD/Islands Trust Housing Needs Assessment reports for SSI
- Conduct survey of farmers and farmworkers to determine housing needs; develop and implement remedial plan
- Investigate Temporary Use Permits for farmworker housing outside ALR
- Make standard provisions for farmworker housing within OCP/LUB regardless of zoning
- Encourage ALC to review SSI farmworker housing provisions in ALR and provide feedback
- Provide OCP/LUB consistency so farmworker housing and farm business provisions apply to all zones where agriculture permitted
- Require annual Statutory Declaration and/or other mechanisms (Housing Agreement, Covenant) to ensure year-round and seasonal farmworker housing used only for farmworkers
- Explore 'eco village' designation on "home plate" portion of property with farm business to enable co-owning families to live and work on property outside ALR
- Reduce environmental impact through design: require rainwater catchment, encourage composting toilets and greywater systems

Housing

Islands Trust Housing Needs Assessment (April 2025)

The Islands Trust Housing Needs Assessment provides a comprehensive, provincially-mandated analysis of housing needs across the Islands Trust Areas (excluding Bowen Island), prepared by Urbanics Consultants Ltd. This report uses the methodology provided by the Province of British Columbia in summer 2024 to assess current housing deficits and project future needs through 2041. The assessment represents a significant update to housing data and projections for the region.

For Salt Spring Island specifically, the assessment projects a need for 821 housing units over the next 5 years and 2,525 units over the next 20 years (2021-2041). These projections are primarily driven by anticipated growth based on provincial demographic projections for fertility, mortality, migration patterns, and household formation. The housing need calculations incorporate multiple factors including addressing current homelessness, households experiencing extreme core housing need (extreme unaffordability), projected changes, achieving healthy rental vacancy rates, and a provincial "demand factor" buffer for municipalities.

The report acknowledges that these regional projections may not fully capture the unique characteristics of individual islands, and provides an alternative, more fine-grained demographic analysis in Section 4. Across all study areas, the total projected need is 6,361 units between 2021 and 2041, with Salt Spring Island representing approximately 40% of this total need, reflecting its position as the largest and most populous island in the Trust Area.

Key Topic Summary Relevant to OCP Review	
Topic	Summary
Housing & Development	
Increase housing supply and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the significant projected housing need of 2,525 units over 20 years through diversified housing types • Focus on creating housing options that serve current deficits key underhoused populations - • Prioritize housing development near transportation infrastructure supporting walking, bicycling, public transit, and alternative modes of transportation
Establish affordable and rental housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address extreme core housing need (ECHN) affecting households experiencing severe unaffordability • Increase rental housing stock to achieve healthier vacancy rates • Develop targeted approaches for key sectors including seniors, renters, families, and those with special needs
Develop and implementation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build upon findings from previous housing needs assessments with concrete implementation strategies • Integrate housing planning with transportation infrastructure to reduce vehicle dependency • Ensure housing solutions align with the Islands Trust mandate to preserve and protect the unique environment

Homes for Islanders: An Integrated Housing Solutions Framework for Salt Spring Island (2023)

"Homes for Islanders," prepared by Salt Spring Solutions Society, represents a community-driven, integrated approach to Salt Spring Island's housing crisis that explicitly connects housing solutions with environmental protection, climate action, and water preservation. Unlike previous siloed planning efforts, this framework synthesizes recommendations across multiple local government organizations (Islands Trust, Capital Regional District, and North Salt Spring Waterworks District) to create a coherent implementation strategy.

The report identifies a critical pattern: decades of housing studies and recommendations have failed to be implemented due to lack of coordination, inadequate resources, and insufficient public engagement. The authors emphasize that unregulated housing development is causing severe environmental impacts including deforestation, soil erosion, loss of green space and wildlife corridors, stressed freshwater resources, and increased greenhouse gas emissions, while simultaneously failing to address the housing needs of working-class and vulnerable residents.

The framework proposes five interconnected strategies that balance environmental protection with housing equity. A central theme is that compact, clustered development in appropriate locations can simultaneously protect rural areas and nature spaces while providing more affordable housing options. The report strongly advocates for coordinating housing policy with water supply management, recognizing that the current water moratorium in Ganges Village is a critical barrier to creating needed housing, particularly non-market and community housing.

Key Topic Summary Relevant to OCP Review	
Topic	Summary
Housing and Development	
Coordinated and Properly Resourced Local Approach to Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and resource a dedicated local housing entity (CRD-led) • Expand the CRD's Rural Housing Program for Southern Gulf Islands to include Salt Spring Island • Develop an implementation-focused Salt Spring Island housing strategy • Hire or identify an experienced housing planner to coordinate work across CRD, Islands Trust, and other partners
Effective Public Education, Engagement, and Dialogue on Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate elected officials and staff on public education and engagement best practices • Develop and resource a Public Education and Engagement Policy across Islands Trust, CRD, and NSSWD <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Public understanding of the connections between compact development, environmental protection, and housing affordability is essential for implementing protective policies.</p>

Preservation of Rural Areas and Nature Space through Clustered Housing

- Create public education programs about the benefits of compact development
- Update OCP and Land Use Bylaw to enable and incentivize compact, clustered development
- Increase contiguous land protection in rural areas and cap detached housing size
- Establish coordinated approach for covenants ensuring housing affordability and land protection
- Create agency capacity to negotiate and administer housing agreements
- Update priorities for acquiring new local and regional parks aligned with conservation community opportunities
- Allocate Regional Housing Trust Fund resources to support rural-scale, covenant-restricted affordable housing
- Make water supply research and mapping publicly available with clear direction on where density can be accommodated
- Proactively share research on actual domestic water use and system leaks
- Advocate to Province to lower proof-of-water requirements to reflect actual usage
- Create capacity for homeplate zoning and conservation community implementation

Environmental/Climate Connection:
This strategy directly addresses the OCP review's focus on environmental protection by preserving contiguous natural areas, protecting wildlife corridors, reducing habitat fragmentation, and concentrating development to minimize ecological footprint. Clustered housing reduces infrastructure needs, vehicle trips, and

	<p>greenhouse gas emissions while protecting rural character.</p>
<p>Readying Ganges Village for More Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively and respectfully engage with local First Nations • Actively pursue alternatives to water moratorium for community housing in Ganges Village and for non-market housing and ADUs district-wide • Allocate resources for leak monitoring, resolution, and reporting to reduce system leaks • Hold joint public meeting on 2020 Water Service Optimization Study findings • Coordinate to revise proof-of-water requirements based on actual use and prioritize water for compact and non-market housing • Create regional interagency strategy for sustained advocacy on alternative water supply and conservation practices • Prioritize remaining sewer capacity for non-market housing, ADUs, and multi-unit housing in Ganges Village • Expand wastewater treatment plant capacity and develop greywater repurposing infrastructure • Map and plan for projected sea level rise in Ganges Village • Coordinate planning and prioritize infrastructure for residential development in areas outside sea-level rise zones • Catalogue all ALR properties in Ganges Village and engage Agricultural Land Commission about potential removals • Establish comprehensive interagency planning process for Ganges Village

Accessory Dwellings for Housing, in the Right Places

- Update OCP and Land Use Bylaw to enable ADUs (secondary suites, garden cottages, carriage houses) in appropriate locations aligned with water availability
- Establish clear regulations distinguishing long-term ADUs from short-term vacation rentals
- Implement business licensing system for short-term rentals following best practices
- Resource internal capacity for managing private housing agreements with affordability controls
- Identify funding for capital grants and incentives for ADU development under housing agreements
- Provide recommendations for optimal ADU locations based on water supply information
- Revise policies to define ADUs as intensification of existing service rather than new hook-up
- Remove barriers to legalizing existing ADUs within NSSWD service area
- Explore innovative water conservation policies, alternative non-potable water sources, and restrictions on domestic water use

Islands Trust Housing Options Toolkit (January 2024)

The Islands Trust Housing Options Toolkit, prepared by Islands Trust Regional Planning Committee, is a comprehensive, practical implementation guide designed to accelerate housing-related land use planning projects across the Islands Trust Area. Unlike the previous two documents that focus on needs assessment and strategic frameworks, this toolkit provides trustees, planning staff, and community groups with concrete procedural tools, templates, and technical guidance for executing housing initiatives within the authority of Local Trust Committees (LTCs) under Sections 29 and 31 of the Islands Trust Act.

The toolkit is explicitly structured as a living document with three types of tools: Process tools (project timelines and workflows), Template tools (standardized formats for planning documents), and Background tools (reference materials including an annotated bibliography of three decades of Islands Trust housing reports). This comprehensive resource consolidates information that would otherwise be scattered across multiple documents, enabling projects to "advance rapidly and along a predictable trajectory."

A critical strength of this toolkit is its grounding in Islands Trust's actual regulatory authorities and limitations. The document is realistic about what LTCs can and cannot accomplish through land use regulation alone, while providing a full menu of options within their jurisdiction. The toolkit emphasizes that housing projects should be undertaken with "a clear view to any other land use planning work underway, to maximize efficiency and consistency" - particularly relevant for Salt Spring's OCP review, which must integrate housing with environmental protection, climate action, and water preservation goals.

The toolkit's annotated bibliography synthesizes lessons from over 30 housing reports dating back decades, revealing a pattern of unrealized recommendations due to coordination failures, resource constraints, and implementation gaps—precisely the issues identified in "Homes for Islanders." The baseline report component documents existing housing policy and regulation across all islands, enabling comparative analysis and identification of best practices.

The toolkit is organized around specific housing forms and regulatory mechanisms rather than overarching strategies. The following recommendations are organized by category:

Key Topic Summary Relevant to OCP Review	
Topic	Summary
Housing and Development – (Form and Use Options)	
Secondary Suite Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit secondary suites (self-contained units within the same building as the principal residence) in some or all residential zones • Ensure OCP policies support secondary suite zoning and address specific community concerns • Remove owner-occupancy restrictions that impede rental opportunities <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Secondary suites maximize use of existing building footprints and infrastructure without additional land clearing or sprawl.</p> <p><i>Water Preservation Connection:</i> Accommodates additional housing with minimal increase in water demand by utilizing existing service connections efficiently.</p>

<p>Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Development (Cottages/Garden Suites)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit detached accessory dwelling units separate from but accessory to principal residences • Ensure sufficient buildable area through appropriate setback and lot coverage regulations • Consider strata subdivision of ADUs to enable entry-level homeownership • Provide recommendations for optimal ADU locations based on water supply availability <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> ADUs provide housing with minimal additional environmental impact by utilizing existing property infrastructure and avoiding greenfield development.</p> <p><i>Water Preservation Connection:</i> Strategic placement based on water availability; treat as service intensification rather than new connections; explore alternative water sources and conservation measures.</p>
<p>Alternative Dwelling Unit (AltDU) Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider permitting tiny homes on wheels, yurts, recreational vehicles, and other non-Building Code compliant structures as principal or accessory dwellings • Note: Regional districts with building permit authority may not support this approach • Use OCP policies to guide rezoning or Temporary Use Permit applications for AltDUs <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Smaller dwelling forms have reduced environmental footprints, though permanence and servicing considerations require careful planning.</p>

<p>Single-Family Dwelling Variation Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit duplexes, rooming houses, boarding houses, and flex housing (adaptable to changing household needs) • Update OCP policies to support these housing forms in appropriate zones <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Provides housing diversity and density without multi-story construction, maintaining neighborhood character while reducing per-unit land consumption.</p>
<p>Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (Market) Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, and rowhouses on single residential lots • Amend lot coverage, setback, and height limits to create sufficient buildable area • Establish OCP criteria for identifying suitable locations <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Efficient land use that concentrates housing while maintaining human scale; reduces infrastructure requirements per dwelling unit.</p>

<p>Multi-Family Dwelling Unit (Market and Affordable) Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit larger multi-family developments (apartments, condominiums) in appropriate locations • For affordable housing, require development by government/non-profit organizations with rent/purchase/resale price controls through housing agreements • Ensure OCP policies are supportive and establish clear criteria for suitable locations <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Highest density residential form enables preservation of rural lands; most efficient infrastructure and services delivery; supports transit and active transportation.</p>
<p>Unit-Based Zoning (Rather Than Housing Type)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zone for maximum number of dwelling units rather than specifying types • Allow property owners to determine appropriate housing mix within total unit cap • Manage intensity through lot coverage, impervious surface, and total floor area maximums <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Flexibility enables optimal site design that responds to specific environmental features while achieving housing targets.</p>

<p>Conversion and Adaptive Reuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit principal residential use of under-used commercial or other-zoned properties • Allow conversion of commercial accommodation to residential use (coordinate with short-term rental regulation) • Consider Temporary Use Permits for appropriate situations <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Adaptive reuse of existing structures avoids new construction impacts while utilizing existing infrastructure.</p>
<p>Housing and Development – (Density Options)</p>	
<p>Multi-Family Density Bonus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish base permitted density with provisions for additional density in exchange for affordable housing creation • Require clear OCP policies establishing criteria for suitable locations and affordability expectations <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Incentivizes affordable housing while concentrating density in appropriate locations; bonus density should be contingent on environmental performance standards.</p>
<p>Subdivision Density Bonus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow additional lot density in exchange for provision of lots for affordable housing • Establish clear OCP guidance on market/non-market mix and affordability expectations <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Can enable conservation subdivisions that protect sensitive areas while meeting housing needs.</p>

<p>Conservation Density Bonus/Homeplate Zoning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow flexibility in dwelling numbers and types within maximum homeplate or total floor area (e.g., 500m²) in exchange for conservation covenants • Likely implemented through rezoning applications with negotiated covenant terms • Ensure OCP contains guiding policies for navigating such applications <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Directly advances environmental protection goals by permanently protecting large portions of properties through conservation covenants while enabling appropriate housing development. This is a key mechanism for achieving both housing and conservation objectives simultaneously.</p> <p><i>Water Preservation Connection:</i> Clustered development within homeplates enables shared water systems and conservation measures.</p>
<p>Ecovillage Zoning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow subdividable properties to be developed as strata with flexible dwelling types and sizes • Place large portions in conservation covenants while incorporating ecological building principles • Maintain full protection of sensitive ecosystems through Development Permit Areas <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Primary mechanism for conservation communities that protect rural character, wildlife corridors, and ecosystems while providing housing. Aligns directly with "Homes for Islanders" Strategy 3.</p>

<p>Eco-Density Bonus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional dwelling units for exceeding ecological standards (solar panels, rainwater harvesting, ecological materials, greywater recycling, net-zero energy, solar hot water) • Reduce operating costs and ecological impacts of dwellings <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Directly incentivizes climate action through building performance; reduces energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p><i>Water Preservation Connection:</i> Encourages rainwater harvesting and greywater systems that reduce demand on potable water supplies.</p>
<p>Increase Overall Density</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If build-out analysis shows current zoning insufficient for projected needs, consider upzoning suitable areas • Ensure alignment with OCP land use designations <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Strategic density increases in appropriate locations prevent sprawl in sensitive areas.</p>
<p>Housing and Development – (Size, Siting, and Miscellaneous)</p>	
<p>Mixed-Use Zoning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit residential use above ground-floor commercial uses • Consider raising height/storey limits for two storeys of residential above commercial in specific locations <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Maximizes land use efficiency in village cores; supports walkability and reduces vehicle trips.</p>

<p>Floor Area/Footprint Limits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit size of permitted dwellings to discourage oversized single-family homes and inappropriate commercial accommodation <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Critical tool for resource conservation and limiting environmental impact per dwelling unit; addresses "mega-home" development pattern identified in "Homes for Islanders."</p>
<p>Reduced Setbacks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and reduce lot line setbacks where multiple units are permitted • Ensure sufficient buildable area without requiring variance permits <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Enables compact development while protecting more of each property in natural state.</p>
<p>Reduced Automobile Parking Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce parking requirements particularly in village areas near jobs and services • Focus reductions on small lots with secondary suites, ADUs, or small-scale multi-unit housing <p><i>Environmental/Climate Connection:</i> Reduces impervious surfaces and allows land to be used for housing rather than car storage; supports shift to active transportation modes.</p> <p><i>Climate Action Connection:</i> Reduces vehicle dependency and associated greenhouse gas emissions; supports pedestrian-oriented village development.</p>
<p>Housing and Development – (Tenure Options)</p>	

<p>Residential Rental Tenure Zoning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise Local Government Act Section 481.1 authority to require all or some multi-family housing be rental tenure • Include OCP policies acknowledging this LTC power <p><i>Affordable Housing Connection:</i> Addresses rental housing shortage identified in Housing Needs Assessment; prevents conversion of rental stock to strata.</p>
<p>Strata Subdivision of ADUs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow ADUs to become separate real estate entities through building strata subdivision • Develop OCP policies to guide decision-making when applications received <p><i>Affordable Housing Connection:</i> Creates entry-level homeownership opportunities; increases housing diversity.</p>
<p>Remove Owner-Occupancy Restrictions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate requirements that property owners live on-site when secondary suites, ADUs, or small-scale multi-unit housing permitted • Review OCP policies to ensure they don't encourage such restrictions <p><i>Affordable Housing Connection:</i> Maximizes rental housing opportunities; removes artificial constraints on housing supply.</p>
<p>Housing and Development – (Workforce Housing)</p>	

<p>Require Workforce Housing with New Commercial/Industrial/Institutional Zoning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require provision of workforce housing units as condition of new commercial development • Ensure all commercial zones permit on-site workforce housing • Identify and zone locations for off-site workforce housing <p><i>Economic Sustainability Connection:</i> Addresses critical workforce housing shortage that undermines island economy and service provision.</p>
<p>Seasonal Workers Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zone land to permit seasonal worker housing or establish guiding policies for rezoning/TUP applications • Address unique needs of agricultural, tourism, and seasonal industries
<p>Housing and Development – (Seniors Housing)</p>	
<p>Multi-Family Seniors Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zone to permit larger developments exclusively for elderly residents • Establish OCP policies defining conditions for such development
<p>Accommodate Aging in Place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement sufficiently flexible residential zoning (secondary suites, ADUs, AltDUs, flex housing) to enable elderly residents to remain on properties longer <p><i>Social Equity Connection:</i> Addresses demographic reality of aging island demographics while enabling intergenerational housing through ADUs.</p>
<p>Housing and Development – (Agriculture/Farmland)</p>	

<p>Consistency with Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure ALR land zoning permits residential use consistent with current ALC regulations • Monitor ALC regulation changes and update zoning accordingly <p><i>Environmental Protection Connection:</i> Protects agricultural land resource while enabling appropriate farm-related housing.</p>
<p>Additional Density for Non-ALR Farmland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For large working farms, consider additional dwelling units for farmworker use • Allow additional units in exchange for restrictions on future subdivision • Establish minimum lot sizes and other criteria in OCP <p><i>Environmental Protection Connection:</i> Supports agricultural viability without fragmenting farmland.</p>
<p>Consider ALR Exclusions for Residential Purposes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If ALR land determined suitable for additional residential development, identify in OCP as candidate for future exclusion application by LTC <p><i>Note:</i> This is a significant policy decision requiring careful analysis of agricultural capability, community needs, and environmental impacts. For Ganges Village, this aligns with "Homes for Islanders" Strategy 4 recommendations.</p>
<p>Housing and Development – (Density Transfer Mechanisms)</p>	

<p>Transfer of Development Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish OCP policies to guide transfer of latent residential development potential away from sensitive ecosystems, groundwater recharge areas, car-dependent areas• Direct development toward more suitable locations• Ensure policies are clear and accessible to landowners <p><i>Environmental Protection Connection:</i> Key mechanism for protecting critical environmental areas while enabling housing development in appropriate locations; enables market-based conservation.</p> <p><i>Water Preservation Connection:</i> Directs development away from groundwater recharge areas and toward locations with adequate water supply.</p>
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GIS and Mapping

McElhanney prepared 4 maps to contextualize housing issues and considerations for the OCP update, provided in Appendix A. The table below provides descriptions of these maps and summarizes their implications.

Mapping Implications Relevant to OCP Review	
Map Description	Implications
<p>Park Proximity Map – Shows the location of all parks on the island with 500 and 1000-metre buffers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parcels on the island are within 1000-metres of a park. Notable gaps include parcels along Beddis Road and in Fernwood. • Development in areas without close proximity to park access may need to provide enhanced on-site or shared outdoor amenity space to compensate. • Parcels may require future trail, sidewalk, or greenway connections to link residents to existing parks. • Redevelopment or subdivision in these areas should consider parkland dedication, cash-in-lieu, or identification of future park sites to close access gaps.
<p>Development Permit Area Map – Shows the location of the 7 DPAs along with high soil erosion hazard areas, slope stability hazard areas, and heritage conservation areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas with combined hazards can signal potential long-term infrastructure challenges
<p>Land Use Designation Map</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies whether existing development is aligned with intended long-term land use vision • Shows where growth is expected to concentrate • Flags locations where incompatible uses may be adjacent

<p>Parcel Density Map – Shows parcel density (sparse to dense gradient) along with 250-, 500- and 1000-metre Village boundary buffers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights where development is already concentrated, helping identify areas more suitable for infill or servicing upgrades • Low-density areas may indicate high per-unit servicing costs • Helps identify where new policies for housing diversification or DPA refinements should be focused based on existing density patterns • Can be used to show overlaps with park proximity and transit service, indicating areas that may be underserved
<p>Bus Route Map – Shows bus routes along with a 200-metre buffer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parcels within buffer can be highlighted as suitable for higher density or infill development due to good transit access • Areas outside of buffer may be flagged for improved pedestrian connections and future transit expansion or alternative mobility options • Areas with limited access to transit should be considered for policy development aimed at reducing mobility barriers for seniors and youth

Climate Resilience

Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan 2.0 (CAP 2.0) (February 2021)

The Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan 2.0, prepared by Transition Salt Spring Society, is a comprehensive community-led climate emergency response providing 250 recommended actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030 and adapt island ecosystems and infrastructure to accelerating climate impacts. Building on CAP 1.0 (2011), this plan represents over a year of intensive work by volunteers, experts, and broad community engagement, developed concurrently with the Area Farm Plan and explicitly integrated with it.

Critical Context:

- 21-37% of global GHG emissions come from the food system (land-clearing, production, transport, processing)
- 40% of SSI's GHG emissions from imported food - making local food production a primary climate action strategy
- Climate impacts already occurring: hotter/drier summers, warmer/wetter winters, increased extreme weather
- 2026 modeled drought: 18 days over 30°C, three months without rain
- Salt Spring must both reduce emissions AND adapt to unavoidable changes already underway

The plan emphasizes that climate action creates co-benefits: meaningful livelihoods, increased food security, economic vitality, avoided damage costs, and preserved tourism/natural amenities. It requires significant investments but positions these as economic opportunities rather than burdens.

Three Critical Prerequisites for Success:

1. Foster systemic change: Break down organizational silos; coordinate across CRD, Islands Trust, water districts, fire rescue, non-profits
2. Build better policy frameworks: Update OCP and Land Use Bylaw for climate resilience; raise carbon price to \$200/tonne
3. Provide adequate funding: Carbon tax revenues, grants, community bonds, institutional restructuring to reflect emergency gravity

Key Topic Summary Relevant to OCP Review	
Topic	Summary
Climate Action – (Land Use and Settlement Patterns)	
<p>Build in a manner that promotes efficiency and sustainable growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Densification within walking distance of transit routes • Transit-supportive subdivision regulations • Land use planning integrated with transportation planning • Village-centered growth to reduce vehicle dependency • Protection of agricultural lands and forests • Sea level rise planning for coastal areas • Fire risk reduction through settlement pattern decisions <p><i>OCP Integration:</i> Land use chapter should be rewritten with climate resilience as organizing principle. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village-centered density • Active transportation connectivity • Transit-oriented development principles • Agricultural land protection as climate strategy • Forest protection for carbon storage and fire management • Water availability mapping guiding development decisions • Sea level rise adaptation in coastal planning

OCP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Theme	Document	Policy Recommendation
Environmental Protection & Water Sustainability	Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Plan (March 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to land use and settlement section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When considering any new development, an assessment of water quality and quantity should be provided that illustrates the feasibility of the proposal. ○ LTC should consider the development of development permit area for the confirmation of ground water availability. This DP should utilize the available mapping as the basis for the DP areas if warranted.
	Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan Renewal 2020-2030 (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize food infrastructure as an essential community service. • Support composting as an environmental and agricultural priority. Enable appropriate zoning for agricultural facilities. • Support land matching as a strategy for activating farmland without new clearing. • Recognize food system resilience as a climate adaptation strategy and support policies enabling

		<p>diverse agricultural activities, backup systems, and local production at multiple scales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support seed saving as an agricultural activity and recognize seed banks/sanctuaries as valuable agricultural infrastructure. • Prioritize composting infrastructure and policies that support soil building practices. Address barriers to agricultural composting operations. • Support agricultural demonstration sites and education programming as a community benefit. Recognize value of Indigenous food knowledge and support appropriate collaboration. • Recognize The Root and similar facilities as community food infrastructure deserving support similar to other community facilities. • Support agri-tourism as an economic development strategy and ensure regulations enable appropriate on-farm activities (farm tours, education, events) within ALC guidelines. • Establish an explicit policy that there shall be no net loss of agricultural land (ALR and productive non-ALR) and no removal of prime agricultural
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		<p>land. This provides clear direction for all land use decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize agricultural infrastructure (processing, storage, composting, water management) as an essential community service deserving public investment consideration.
<p>Housing & Development</p>	<p>Islands Trust Housing Needs Assessment (2025)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support diverse options within areas that have adequate servicing • Work with CRD and the province to establish opportunities for the underhoused and unhoused
	<p>Homes for Islanders: An Integrated Housing Solutions Framework for Salt Spring Island (2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination ensures housing development aligns with environmental protection goals and avoids piecemeal development that fragments ecosystems. • Prioritize housing in areas with existing servicing. Concentrating housing in Ganges Village reduces sprawl, protects rural areas, enables active transportation, and facilitates water/sewer infrastructure efficiency. Sea level rise planning directly addresses climate adaptation.

	<p>Islands Trust Housing Options Toolkit (2024)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support secondary suite and ADU development, which maximize use of existing building footprint and infrastructure • Establish criteria for identifying suitable locations for small-scale multi-unit housing development and multi-family dwelling units • Develop guiding policies for navigating density bonuses and strata subdivisions of ADUs • Include policies acknowledging LTC power of requiring rental tenure in multi-family housing • Review OCP policies to remove restriction of requiring property owners to live on-site • Recognize through policy unique needs of agriculture, tourism and seasonal industries • Establish policies defining conditions for multi-family seniors housing development • Establish policies to guide transfer of latent residential development away from sensitive ecosystems and groundwater recharge areas
<p>Climate Action</p>	<p>Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan 2.0 (CAP 2.0) (2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use section of OCP should be written with climate resilience as an organizing principle

Appendix A - Mapping



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

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.