



STAFF REPORT

Date: April 24, 2015

File No.: 6500-20 Gambier OCP Review

To: Gambier Island Local Trust Committee
For the meeting of May 7, 2015

From: Aleksandra Brzozowski, Island Planner

CC: Courtney Simpson, Regional Planning Manager

Re: Gambier Island Official Community Plan (OCP) Review

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from the Local Trust Committee (LTC) regarding project management of the Gambier Official Community Plan (OCP) review project.

Project Background

A review of Gambier's Official Community Plan (OCP) was placed as Priority #4 on the Top Priorities work program at the February 12, 2015 LTC meeting.

For information regarding background and relevant policy and land use considerations, please refer to the project's Preliminary Report presented at the March 26, 2015 LTC meeting.

At the March 26, 2015 LTC meeting, the LTC discussed Gambier-oriented topics to address as part of this project, as well as whether a review of the OCP was the desired manner in which to address these topics. The decision was made to direct staff to continue conversation on the matter with the local trustee from Gambier. The following report stems from those two discussions.

Project Topics

The following OCP topics have been identified as in want of review:

- Policies regarding the current Wilderness Conservation (Crown) lands
- Park and trail prioritization
- Shoreline protection
- Updating OCP schedules based on more current mapping data
- Review of Development Permit Areas (including Riparian Areas Regulation)
- Protection of archaeological and cultural sites
- Review of advocacy policies
- Policies to promote economic development
- Policies to support the revitalization of New Brighton

Summary histories and anticipated work for these topics are elaborated below.

Policies regarding current Wilderness Conservation (Crown) lands

The advertisement of two community woodlots on Gambier in late 2013 triggered extended effort by Planning Staff and the LTC throughout 2014 to implement the advocacy policies in the OCP regarding the Wilderness Conservation land use designation. During this time, concerns about the outdated protocol agreements between Islands Trust and the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) as well as concerns about the current land use designation policies for Wilderness Conservation were raised by the LTC and the community.

A proper review of this land use designation, particularly as it regards permitted uses, will require direct and engaged involvement of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO). In addition, a revision of the Islands Trust's protocol agreements with FLNRO is set to start in 2015 and finish in 2016; the new protocol agreement will likely impact this issue review and will need to be considered when preparing a work plan for this issue.

Park and Trail Prioritization on Gambier

Members of the Gambier community have called for long-range planning for the parks and trails on Gambier Island. This request has been made to the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) Parks Department; however, SCR D Parks does not have plans to create a Master Plan for Gambier Island.

The LTC could conduct a revision of the OCP's policies about parks and trails, with an aim to prioritize which parklands and trails are particularly desired on Gambier Island based on the policy directives of the Islands Trust Policy Statement as well as community input.

Shoreline Protection

Shoreline Protection has been a top priority project for the entire Local Trust Area since last term. Last term's efforts focused on education and outreach; reviewing current policies and bylaw provisions to improve shoreline protection is the next step for this issue. A review of OCP policies on this topic for Gambier Island would readily fall into the Gambier OCP review.

Updating OCP schedules based on more current mapping data

A substantial amount of mapping and ecological data has accumulated over the ten years since the Gambier OCP was adopted. Maps included in the OCP should be revised and updated to convey this information. As well, a revision of the text-based Schedules G and H is warranted to ensure that the information is still relevant and appropriate as schedules to the bylaw.

Updating Development Permit Areas

When the Gambier OCP was adopted in 2002, no guidelines were set for Development Permit Area (DPA) #3: Watersheds and Streamside Protection and Enhancement Areas. Reviewing the permit area itself as well as establishing guidelines for DPA #3 would be advisable. It is expected that the forthcoming work on Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR) guidelines will be included as part of these guidelines.

Protection of Archaeological and Cultural Sites

When meeting with the Squamish Nation in 2014, there was discussion about the opportunities to improve policies in the OCP regarding protection of archaeological and culturally significant sites. As well, an Archaeological Overview Assessment project was raised as a mapping project that could serve both the LTC and the Squamish Nation.

Review of advocacy policies

The advocacy policies in the Gambier OCP are policies requesting other levels of government or the public to consider Gambier LTC objectives when making land use planning decisions for Gambier Island. The expectation is that these advocacy policies be continually conveyed when appropriate. The current Gambier OCP contains an exceptionally high number of advocacy policies, many of which contain outdated references. A review of the OCP's advocacy policies will keep the policies on point and relevant to current day realities.

Policies to promote economic development

In recent years, concerns have been raised about the economic sustainability of life on Gambier Island, particularly for those living on Gambier year-round. While recognizing the limited power of the Islands Trust in this regard, a review of the OCP with a view to promoting economic sustainability in its policies is something that the LTC could accomplish on this issue.

Promoting economic development will involve the SCRD as they are the body responsible for economic development on Gambier Island.

Policies to help revitalize New Brighton

This final topic emerged as connected to the request to review economic policies. Over the last ten years, changes in the New Brighton area such as shifting demographics, the closing of the General Store and the recent divestiture of the New Brighton dock have brought new realities to the neighborhood. A revision of policies focused on strengthening this neighbourhood has been identified.

This topic would require direct and engaged involvement with the Squamish Nation, the SCRD, and the New Brighton community.

Possible Project Approaches

At their last LTC meeting on March 26, Trustees indicated that the topics noted above would shape the scope of an OCP review.

Reviewing the topics listed, about half of the topics are ones that can be reviewed internally, as they fall under the jurisdiction and workload of the Islands Trust: shoreline protection, updating OCP schedules, review of DPAs, and review of advocacy policies. (To a large extent, park and trail prioritization can also be pursued internally.) Foreshore Protection and Riparian Areas Regulation are already noted as items on the Priority Work Program for the whole Local Trust Area.

The remainder – review of Wilderness Conservation policies, protection of archaeological and cultural sites, policies to promote economic development, and policies to support the revitalization of New Brighton – behoove partnership with other agencies to be most effective.

Many of these issues fall under the jurisdiction of other agencies or require similar direct buy-in from other bodies and authorities. Such engagement may require the LTC to be flexible about timelines set to address these issues.

Staff sees two viable manners in which these topics could be addressed over the term – a general OCP review, or as a series of priority projects. The two approaches are outlined below, with a brief analysis of the benefits and drawbacks of each approach.

Outline of a general OCP Review process

A general OCP review front-ends the process, looking to consult and analyze identified topics all at one time and review the OCP holistically.

One major early task would be to gather information to use during stakeholder engagement and to provide context for future bylaw amendment content. Part of this information gathering would include an Island Profile and a Crown Land Profile. The Island Profile would compile information about both the ecosystems and the community on Gambier Island through the lens of land use planning. The Crown Land Profile would compile information and various interests found on the Crown land on Gambier.

The other concurrent early task would be stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders for this project include agencies such as the Sunshine Coast Regional District, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, as well as First Nations with interests in Gambier Island, and all the neighbourhoods and community organizations that make up the Gambier Island community.

For a general OCP review, a series of stakeholder engagement sessions would take place over approximately a year, covering all the topics identified. If other issues were brought forward by any of the agencies, First Nations, or the community, the LTC would decide on whether to address those issues as part of this project as well.

Bringing together the information gathered in the early part of the project and the results of the stakeholder engagement, Staff would then conduct an analysis and introduce next steps for the bylaw amendment phase of the project. It could be that all suggested changes would become one major bylaw amendment requiring only one legislative process, or it could be that changes would become separate amendments each requiring their own legislative process.

Staff expects that a general OCP review process would take the majority of the term and would be the main item on the Gambier LTC work program.

Benefits of a General OCP Review

The main benefit of reviewing the identified topics as one large process is that referrals and consultation for these topics are conducted at once; doing so may be easier on the public and agencies. The OCP could then be reviewed as a holistic document taking into account how revisions to one section would impact another section. Planning staff would also be able to work on multiple OCP topics concurrently.

Drawbacks of a General OCP Review

A general OCP review opens the entire OCP to all agencies, First Nations, and the public for review and often sets up expectations for the process. If suggestions were made for additional topics to review, it would be up to the LTC to determine whether or not the topic will be added to the review. If the LTC decided to add the suggested topics, the scope would expand and impact

timing and workload. If the LTC decided to not add the topics, it would need to manage expectations and likely provide rationale for the decision.

With a general review, the focus would be on what impact the LTC can effect through modifications to policies in the bylaw. Work to be done with other agencies and organizations would be identified in advocacy policies or put onto the Projects List but implementation of such work would likely be put off until after the OCP review is complete.

Outline of a Series of Priority Projects

If the identified topics were addressed as a series of priority projects, each topic would be addressed as its own project with its own information gathering, stakeholder engagement, and bylaw amendment process.

The first task with this approach would be to place each OCP review topic on the Projects List and then identify which projects would be addressed first. Factors to consider would be issue urgency, availability of relevant agencies to work on the topic, and workload obligations elsewhere in the work program.

The topics would then be addressed one by one from beginning to end. Depending on the remainder of the priority work program, the LTC could work on up to three topics concurrently; however, it is most likely that two topics would be the maximum number of Gambier project items that the LTC would put on the work program, so as to leave Keats and/or the Associated Islands the final item.

It is expected that each OCP review topic would take at least a year to conduct, and that not all projects would be completed this term.

Benefits of Series of Priority Projects

The main benefit of taking on topics one at a time is the ability to prioritize topics based on urgency, importance, and strategic timing. Addressing each topic separately also means there would likely be few new additions or changes to the scope. Stakeholders would also be able to choose to not engage in projects in which they do not have interest.

Also, if a priority project focuses on a topic, the topic may be considered more completely; for example, in addition to a review of OCP policies, the LTC may craft a strategy or establish a new protocol agreement. (This type of project scope is, of course, far more complex than typical bylaw review approach and should not be employed lightly as it requires considerably more time and resources.)

Drawbacks of a Series of Priority Projects

The main drawback for pursuing these topics separately is the potential for the review to lose momentum over time, and that some projects will simply never be addressed in favour of other project items that seem more pressing. It is also possible that pursuing projects individually will foster stakeholder burnout.

Some projects may also take considerably longer than anticipated and could significantly delay review of other topics. It would be essential to try and mitigate this risk when prioritizing the projects.

Project Budget Considerations

There is \$10,000 allocated in the 2015/2016 budget for the first phases of a general OCP Review project. Anticipated expenditures would include hiring a contractor to prepare the Crown Land Profile, budget for engagement communications and meetings, and possibly a large contribution to an Archaeological Overview Assessment in partnership with the Squamish Nation.

Should the LTC decide to pursue something other than such a project, the LTC must notify the Financial Planning Committee to reallocate the funding to new Gambier priority projects. Staff does not anticipate this being an obstacle.

Consultation and Engagement Considerations

Section 879 of the *Local Government Act* specifies consultation requirements for local governments when working on amendments to Official Community Plans. It is the responsibility of local governments to consider whether the opportunities for consultation with one or more persons, organizations and/or authorities should be early and ongoing.

Regardless of the approach taken for this review, pursuing amendments to the OCP will require engagement with stakeholders on subjects, particularly with the two First Nations identified as having Aboriginal rights in the project area. Staff has included a recommendation at the end of this staff report for the LTC to pass a formal resolution to engage in early and ongoing consultation with the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, the SCRDC, and FLNRO on topics of concern to the Official Community Plan.

STAFF COMMENTS

Staff has requested trustees to identify outcomes for the OCP review project. Responses have been: a pragmatic modernization of the OCP to serve the needs of the current Gambier Island land use, a project that focuses on topics that have been raised previously as issues, and that the review not be a “make-work” project.

With these stated objectives and the information provided above, Staff would like confirmation whether a general OCP review process is what the LTC wishes to do, or if it wishes to break down the review project into a series of priority projects.

OPTIONS

1. Direct staff by resolution to draft a Project Charter and Communications Plan for a general review of the Gambier Official Community Plan.
2. Place the identified topics for review on the Projects List, decide which projects would be addressed first, replace the current Priority #4 with that project, and direct staff by resolution to notify the Financial Planning Committee of the LTC’s proposal to reallocate an appropriate portion of the \$10,000 budget allocated to the OCP review project in 2015/2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Gambier Local Trust Committee:

EITHER

1. request staff to draft a Project Charter and Communications Plan for a general review of the Gambier Official Community Plan,

OR

2. place the identified Official Community Plan Review topics onto the Projects List; remove Priority Item #4 (Gambier OCP Review) from the Priority Projects list; identify one topic to review first as Priority Item #4; and, request Staff to notify the Financial Planning Committee of the LTC's proposal to reallocate an appropriate portion of the \$10,000 budgeted to the OCP review for 2015/2016.
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April 27, 2015

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Date

Concurred in by:

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April 27, 2015

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Date