



**GABRIOLA ISLAND
HOUSING ADVISORY PLANNING
COMMISSION**

AGENDA

Thursday April 1, 2021 at 1:00 pm
Online Via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87414946859?pwd=NFF0ZUFuZ3NyelNhSjBrQUcyYXhKQT09>

Meeting ID: **874 1494 6859**

Passcode: **257222**

		<i>Approx. Time*</i>
1.	CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME	1:00 pm
1.1	Territorial Acknowledgement	
2.	APPROVAL OF AGENDA – add or change items	1:05 pm
3.	MINUTES	1:10 pm
3.1	Adoption of Gabriola Island Housing Advisory Planning Commission Draft Minutes (to be distributed by email) dated March 23, 2021.	
4.	RECEIVE FINAL REPORT FROM HWG	1:15 pm
4.1	<i>Discussion of Report and Questions</i>	
4.2	<i>RESOLUTION: “That the Report be forwarded to the LTC for their consideration.”</i>	
5	WORKSHOP SESSION TO CONSIDER HWG RECOMMENDATIONS	1:25 pm
5.1	<i>Roundtable with HAPC members to discuss recommendations in the HWG report, considering:</i> <i>1. <u>What</u> are the priorities among this broad range of community solutions; the collective impact of their recommendations; any other recommendation that members may want to include;</i> <i>2. <u>How</u> these recommendations might be realised through the next phases of community engagement, the innovation and collaborative leadership required to implement to implement changes to address the desired future outcomes;</i> <i>3. <u>Who</u> or what agencies might be responsible for what outcomes, how we will evaluate the impact, measure change.</i>	

- 5.2 *RESOLUTIONS: "That the LTC consider... explore... the following priorities in this next fiscal year..."*
- 6.0 **Break** 2:15 pm
- 7.0 **NEXT STEPS: STRATEGY, HAPC SUPPORT, FINANCING, TIMEFRAMES** 2:30 pm
- 7.1 *Consider innovative approaches to implement the recommendations.*
- 7.2 *Consider future role of HAPC, Terms of Reference.*
- 7.3 *Consider short, intermediate and long-term actions within the range of recommendations presented.*
- 7.4 *RESOLUTION: "That the LTC resource (the next stages of the HOIRP) through... in the next fiscal..."*
8. **ADJOURNMENT** 3:30 pm

*Approximate Time is provided for the convenience of the public only and is subject to change without notice.

A Strategic Approach to Affordable Housing, Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation on Gabriola Island – A Community-Informed Process



March 26, 2021

Prepared by Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley, Jennefer Laidley and Katharine Patterson on behalf of the Gabriola Housing Working Group for the Gabriola Housing Advisory Planning Commission

The Gabriola Housing Working Group respectfully acknowledges and recognizes the Coast Salish Nations whose territory we live and work on. In particular, we acknowledge and recognize Gabriola Island as the unceded territory of Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN). We respect the longstanding relationships that Coast Salish and Hul'qumi'num-speaking Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge that the Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854 (Douglas Treaties) was signed with the British Crown and colonial governments and asserts SFN treaty rights and title. We acknowledge and recognize that SFN rights and title is affirmed by Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Acknowledgements

This report reflects the work and support of many individuals and organizations; most of this work was accomplished by volunteers. The following individuals contributed to this process: Kenda Chang-Swanson, Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley, Steve Earle, Tobi Elliott, Jennefer Laidley, Katharine Patterson, Angela Pounds, Janice Power, and John Woods. Professional support was provided by Sonja Zupanec (Island Trust Planner), Rob Hellenius (website design), Nola Johnson (graphic design), and Chris Mallison (website hosting).

The *Gabriola Sounder* was an important partner in ensuring that information about the project and surveys was regularly available to Gabriolans. And we thank the Islands Trust for providing funding to advertise the engagement process. A special thanks goes to the Gabriola Island Chamber of Commerce who matched Island Trust funding, which allowed us to engage the professional support necessary to launch the project website. Our thanks also to the Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative for producing the *Gabriola Health Report* ([Gabriola Health Report](#)) which served as a foundation document for the substantial background data that was prepared for each survey. The Gabriola Land & Trails Trust (GaLTT) provided a backgrounder on the major conservation threats facing Gabriola and their conservation priorities. Sonja Zupanec of the Islands Trust provided critical support to the project, including providing the information contained in the key policy backgrounders.

Most importantly, we want to acknowledge the hundreds of Gabriolans who participated in this process. We have done our best to ensure their perspectives are reflected in this work.

Executive Summary

This report addresses the question: how do we ensure the availability of affordable housing *and* protect biodiversity and freshwater resources? The report presents community members' attitudes to affordable housing, biodiversity, and freshwater conservation on Gabriola and the actions that could be taken to address all three needs. Three surveys—*Housing Need, Affordability and Diversity of Supply; Biodiversity, Water Conservation and Housing; Managing Growth and Diversity of Housing Supply*—were conducted over a six-week period running from January 20 to March 2, 2021. Each survey gave participants opportunities to respond to multiple-choice questions and give narrative comments. There were 1087 respondents who made 2031 comments. Educational materials relevant to each survey were prepared and made accessible on the website.

Survey 1 respondents supported expanding categories of need, enhancing current multi-dwelling unit evaluation criteria, investigating expanding options for secondary accommodation including lots less than 2 ha, and flexible zoning in residential zones dependent on ensuring ecological and water conservation objectives could be addressed. In Survey 2, respondents gave very strong support for defining biodiversity, all groundwater protection measures and strong support for the implementation of the Douglas-fir protection measures in the CDF Toolkit. In Survey 3, more than half of the respondents supported regulations that would result in a *decrease* in the projected population if fully built out. The remaining respondents were almost evenly divided between maintaining the current regulations and allowing an increase in the population. Respondents were supportive of local government taking more directive action to ensure biodiversity and freshwater conservation objectives are met.

The 28 recommendations in this report are based on these findings. Because protecting the environment while also increasing the supply of affordable housing are interconnected challenges, we have grouped our recommendations under four headings:

- Managing Growth so that it is gradual and targeted
- Protecting Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation to balance human and environmental needs and ensure long-term sustainability
- Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing to ensure a timely supply of affordable housing that meets the needs of Gabriolans with minimal environmental impact, and
- Enhancing Governance and Oversight Capacity through appropriate resourcing and implementation planning, explicitly through the establishment of a staffed Housing Affordability and Managed Growth Planning Commission.

We extend our thanks to the hundreds of Gabriolans who contributed their ideas.

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Introduction

The findings of the “Gabriola Housing Matters” public engagement process, undertaken between January 13 and March 2, 2021, are the subject of this report to the Gabriola Housing Advisory Planning Commission. This report describes the creation of the Gabriola Housing Working Group and its relationship to the Housing Advisory Planning Commission, and the planning context in which the engagement process was conducted. It includes a description of the methodology employed and the results achieved. The information gathered through background research and the surveys of community members is summarized for each of the major topic areas including findings for each of the survey questions. Finally, an overview is provided of the research findings and the recommendations that evolved from them.

History of Gabriola Housing Matters

In 2019, the Gabriola Local Trust Committee (LTC) committed to a multi-year land use planning review project on Gabriola Island called the ‘Housing Options and Impacts Review Project’ (HOIRP). The goal of the project was “to develop new policies and regulations that will promote an increase in housing options on Gabriola Island, coupled with a high level of protection of the island’s groundwater supply, remaining biodiversity and sensitive ecosystems” (HOIRP Engagement Strategy, p.1). To oversee this process the LTC appointed a Housing Advisory Planning Commission (HAPC) to create and implement engagement activities in the community, under the direction of the LTC and coordinated by Islands Trust staff.

The reason for the engagement is “to inform the LTC’s decisions to amend the Gabriola Official Community Plan and/or Land Use Bylaw. In order to make an informed decision, the LTC is committed to consulting with the community to build relationships in the community and involving the stakeholders in order to build the capacity of our community to understand the decision(s)” (HOIRP Engagement Strategy, p. 6).

During a phase called “Laying the Groundwork” that began in summer 2019, the HAPC developed an engagement strategy with a schedule of activities for the community – roundtable discussions, forums, interviews and other face-to-face research methods – under the direction of the LTC and coordinated by Islands Trust staff. The public launch of the project occurred November 4, 2019 at the Haven, with an event called “Stories from Home: Exploring Key Themes to Address Gabriola’s Housing Needs While Protecting the Environment”. Snuneymuxw Knowledge Keeper David Bodaly shared stories of the land, and other community members shared their perspectives on the housing challenges, care for the ecosystem, ways that other Gulf Island communities and Nanaimo are addressing housing needs, and climate change.

The HAPC's engagement strategy was endorsed by the LTC in February 2020 with the primary research question being framed:

How might we amend Gabriola's OCP policies and/or LUB regulations to fulfil our obligations to our community and the unique natural ecology in which we all live, by allowing a range of affordable, accessible housing options in accordance with water and climate change imperatives set by Islands Trust?

The second phase of the HOIRP, "Exploring our Options", was to begin in Spring 2020 and was intended "to support a series of comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement opportunities over the course of a year, evaluating specific options to address housing affordability, protection of the natural environment, cultural heritage, and an increase in housing diversity" (HOIRP Engagement Strategy, p.3). However, COVID-gathering restrictions and a severe reduction in Islands Trust staffing and resources to guide the project resulted in an inability to implement the approved engagement plan.

In August, the HAPC was finally able to convene in order to figure out next steps for accomplishing the work, in the likelihood of another wave of COVID and public gathering restrictions. Given these constraints, HAPC members proposed collaborating with other community members as an ad hoc group. This approach meant the group could be more nimble and able to adapt to rapidly changing social conditions in order to execute the engagement work and might expand the base for funding and support to include other key Gabriola organizations. (This idea came from the Lasqueti Community Association model: <https://lasqueti.ca/lca>).

In early November, a small group primarily made up of HAPC members formed the Gabriola Housing Working Group (GHWG) and began to assess what could be done, under current conditions, to fulfill the requirements of the highly engaged consultation process and robust research work that needed to be done. The team chose to build on the highly successful, community dialogue model for respectful, inclusive engagement set up by *Gabriola Talks*, which aimed to "reflect the many different views and ideas that exist in this island community, and to strengthen the capacity of islanders to work together to address difficult issues by building understanding of one another's perspectives and wisdom" (*Gabriola Talks Charter*). Other, non-HAPC members of the community were brought on board to contribute their particular expertise and skills. The GHWG's public engagement process, entitled *Gabriola Housing Matters*, launched on January 13, 2021.

The Approach

The *Gabriola Housing Matters* public engagement project involved the creation of the following tools:

- A research methodology, including survey design and analysis and outreach activities
- A website for public education and survey distribution
- Preparation of supporting background materials on topics relating to housing, biodiversity, freshwater conservation, and growth management
- Large, attractive ads printed in the local newspaper with key background information for each survey, and
- A final report.

The project was managed through a series of interconnected teams with specific responsibilities and links to external community organizations as described below:

Project Coordination and Evaluation

- *Tobi Elliott*: Project coordinator and website management; HAPC member; liaison with renters and community at large
- *Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley*: HAPC member; liaison to Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative
- *Steve Earle*: HAPC member, liaison to Sustainable Gabriola, and Transportation Network

Outreach Strategy Team

- *Kenda Chang-Swanson*: Team Lead: HAPC member; liaison to PHC and vulnerable populations
- *Angela Pounds*: HAPC member; liaison to Rural & Remote Division of Family Practice, and vulnerable populations
- *Janice Power*: HAPC Member; liaison to Gabriola Health Auxiliary, general public, and vulnerable populations

Research, Editorial and Analysis Team

- *Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley*: Team Lead: survey design, survey quantitative analysis, and report writing
- *Jennefer Laidley*: social & economic statistics research; backgrounder writing and design; report editing and design
- *Steve Earle*: HAPC member; editorial support
- *Katharine Patterson*: qualitative analysis and editorial support; liaison with GERTIE and *Gabriola Talks*

Engagement Strategy and Communication Team

- *Tobi Elliott*: Team Lead
- *Steve Earle*: Sounder Article lead and liaison
- *John Woods*: HAPC member; liaison with Gabriola Chamber of Commerce; employers, employees in need of sustainable, affordable rental housing

Professional Support Team

- *Sonja Zupanec*: Island Trust Planner; liaison to Gabriola LTC
- *Rob Hellenius*: website design
- *Nola Johnson*: graphic design
- *Chris Mallison*: website hosting

Project Financing

Gabriola Housing Matters was implemented outside of the auspices of the HAPC and was eligible for LTC funding for only direct expenses such as advertising. The LTC provided \$4,000 for advertising and the Gabriola Chamber of Commerce matched the funding, which covered some of the costs of web design, graphic design and web hosting.

The majority of the work was done by volunteers. Over 1000 hours of volunteer time was donated to implement this project, representing between \$44,000 to \$100,000 in value based on professional service rates ranging from \$50/hour to \$100/hour. This is likely a low estimate.

Table 1 shows an estimate of the voluntary hours contributed by team members and their projected actual cost. Note that not all team members are included in this table.

Table 2 below shows the project's funding sources and disbursements.

Team Member	Task	Hours	Total
Kenda Chang-Swanson	Survey interviews and glossary preparation	25	25
Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley	Background documents	30	
	Survey development and revision	105	
	Survey analysis and report drafting	105	
	Final report preparation	50	
	Meetings	50	340
Steve Earle	Meetings	50	
	Writing Sounder articles	75	
	Analysis documents (edits and figures)	30	155

Tobi Elliott	Engagement design	25	
	Website set up	24	
	Website re-writes	30	
	Admin/operations	35	
	Meetings	50	164
Jennefer Laidley	Meetings	40	
	Background documents, research & writing	70	
	Review of survey materials, articles, website copy, etc.	40	
	Final report preparation	50	200
Katharine Patterson	Survey data analysis	45	
	Editorial writing/meetings	12	
	Editing	6	
	Presentation prep	12	
	Meetings	8	83
Rob Hellenius	Additional website work - pro bono	40	40
Total Voluntary Hours Contributed			1007
Billing at \$50/hour			\$50,350
Billing at \$75/hour			\$75,525
Billing at \$100/hour			\$ 100,700
Staff/Planner Time Jan - March (Sonja Zupanec)		56 hours	

Table 2: Revenue and Expenditures	
Revenue	\$
Island Trust Project Funds	3,995.05
Gabriola Chamber of Commerce	4,000.00
Total	\$7,995.05
Expenditures	
Advertising (Sounder)	4,264.49
Survey Monkey license	102.00
Print and logo design	1,000.00
Web design	1,000.00
Domain name	20.89
Hosting set-up and subscription	189.00
Bank charges	13.50
Total	\$6,589.88
Balance Remaining	\$1,405.17

A condition of the Gabriola Chamber of Commerce funding is that the project provide a legacy platform for ongoing community discourse. The Gabriola Housing Matters website has been transitioned to a community Discourse space to provide this ongoing legacy platform (see: <https://gabriolamatters.ca/>). The outstanding balance from the project funding will be used to ensure that the platform can be used to host important community conversations going forward.

Planning Context

The GHWG’s primary consideration for this work is to balance Gabriola’s environmental and human needs – to do this we posed the question: how do we protect biodiversity and freshwater resources while recognizing that “the islands are first of all an existing community of people, and the welfare of those people, and those who join them and come after them, must always be a primary concern of the Trust” (Islands Trust 1974 Policy document)? This imperative is reinforced in the [Trust 2003 Policy Statement](#), which establishes three main goals:

- “...preservation and protection of the Trust Area’s ecosystem
- Ensur[ing] that human activity and the scale, rate and type of development in the Trust areas are compatible with maintenance of the integrity of the Trust Areas ecosystems, and
- Sustain[ing] island character and healthy communities”.

To understand the community’s housing needs, the GHWG drew on the *Gabriola Housing Needs Assessment* (Dillon Consulting, 2018). This report suggests that Gabriola’s projected population growth may require an additional 686 housing units, or 28 units per year, by 2041. Over 42% of these units will need to be “affordable” – to meet this projected need, 12 new affordable housing units would need to be built per year for the next 20 years. The data supporting this projected need identified over 130 vulnerable people who access the grocery program (food bank) and other People for a Healthy Community (PHC) services, as well as the “many illegal and inappropriate housing units including garden sheds, mobile homes, recreational vehicles, and summer cottages that have no heat, are improperly insulated, and have no running water or potable water” (Dillon Consulting, 2018).

Need was identified in the following groups: women and children fleeing violence; seniors; young adults; persons living with mental health and addiction problems; LGBTQ2+ persons; racialized individuals; recent immigrants and refugees; people experiencing homelessness; Indigenous people; people with disabilities; and veterans. These data were reinforced by the 2020 *Gabriola Health Report* that showed high

incidence of low-income households with almost 40% of children living in low income, and very high homelessness rates compared to the rest of BC.

The Dillon report included the following recommendations for Gabriola:

1. “Local not-for-profit organizations can acquire land through donation and apply for funding to construct affordable housing
2. The Local Trust Committee can strengthen their affordable housing policies and direction in the OCP to support various forms of affordable housing; and
3. The Local Trust Committee could consider entering into Housing Agreements with individual owners of housing and not-for-profit organizations to ensure affordable housing stays affordable in the long-term” (p.62).

In addition to the Dillon Report, *Gabriola Housing Matters* also drew on findings and recommendations found in *Protecting the Coastal Douglas-fir Zone & Associated Ecosystems – An Islands Trust Toolkit* (2018), *Gulf Islands Groundwater Protection – A Regulatory Toolkit* (2014); and the *Gabriola Health Report* (2020).

Methodology

Consistent with the HAPC mandate to give Gabriolans “opportunities to learn about and inform policy and regulatory options,” the GHWG implemented a two-pronged engagement design, one focus being education and communication, the other on eliciting Gabriolans’ opinions through three surveys. Between January 20 and March 4, each of the surveys was open for two weeks successively, accessible through the Gabriola Housing Matters website at <http://gabriolahousingmatters.ca/>. Paper copies of each survey were made available at the Gabriola branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library and through the social service agency People for a Healthy Community (PHC), where staff were available to assist those needing help to complete the survey.

In the week prior to the opening of each survey, two half-page advertisements with information about the survey topic and an invitation to participate were placed in the *Gabriola Sounder*. Information and invitations to participate were also sent to a range of organizations for distribution to their memberships and were posted on Facebook.

Draw prizes were donated by local businesses and organizations for every survey and awarded to participants who chose to enter the draw. To encourage sustained engagement with the survey process, an online discussion forum called Pol.is was made available on the website.

The Surveys

The surveys were designed to examine how respondents understood and evaluated policies and approaches to addressing housing affordability within the context of environmental and water conservation challenges and growth pressures.

The survey questions were designed to elicit both quantitative and qualitative data. All questions asked respondents to choose an option closest to their own opinion (e.g., strongly agree; agree; disagree; strongly disagree; not sure; or, yes, no, unsure). These answers are easy to tabulate, express as percentages and illustrate graphically. Most questions gave respondents an opportunity to comment.

The following table shows the distribution of quantitative and qualitative responses for each of the surveys.

Table 3: Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Responses Across Three Surveys		
Survey	Quantitative Responses	Qualitative Responses
Housing Need, Affordability and Diversity of Supply (Jan 20 - Feb 2)	411	835
Biodiversity, Water Conservation and Housing (Feb 3 - Feb 16)	340	692
Managing Growth and Diversity of Housing Supply (Feb 17 - Mar 2)	336	504
Total Responses	1087	2031

Survey Analytics

Quantitative data was analyzed using the Survey Monkey analysis tool. Each question was assessed for percentage completion and skip rate. Because each survey captured data on respondents’ property status – whether they owned property, rented or were precariously housed – where pertinent, questions were analyzed by two groupings: property owners, and renters/precariously housed individuals. This helped to illuminate whether there were significant differences between those who owned property and those who did not. Where differences existed, the results were noted. Where applicable, results were also compared to existing data (for instance, Census data on core housing need, and proportion of owners to renters).

Comments were analyzed thematically and grouped, the results viewed within the context of the quantitative data for the question, and representative quotations were

chosen as illustrations. The qualitative data give a more nuanced view of the survey respondents' take on the issues than the quantitative data alone. Respondents were not required to answer every question in order to move through the survey and some opted to skip questions or parts of questions.

Public Education

To help Gabriolans to learn more about existing policies and regulations as well as housing and environmental concerns, extensive background materials were prepared and presented on the website. Material relevant to each survey could be accessed through a sidebar while answering survey questions or read in advance through the Resources list.

These supporting background documents were:

- Survey 1: *Housing Need on Gabriola; Gabriola Official Community Plan (OCP) Policies Governing Housing*
- Survey 2: *Forest Ecosystems, Protected Land, and Groundwater on Gabriola; GaLTT Conservation Priorities; Key Policies on Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation for Gabriola Island; and CDF Toolkit*
- Survey 3: *Growth on Gabriola; Key Policies on Managing Growth on Gabriola Island; Gabriola Island Development Potential 2021 Draft Map; and Information about the BC Energy Step Code and Universal Access Design.*

A Glossary of terms was also provided for each survey.

The advertisements which appeared in the *Gabriola Sounder* for each of the three surveys drew on these materials.

All of these background resources can be found in the appendices to this report.

Survey Findings

The Gabriola Housing Working Group prepared three surveys to gauge Gabriolans' attitudes in three separate areas: 1) *Housing Need, Affordability and Diversity of Supply*; 2) *Biodiversity, Water Conservation and Housing*; and, 3) *Managing Growth*.

Each of the surveys started with a question about housing / property status – whether respondents own property, rent, are precariously housed, or have unceded treaty rights. This data was used to analyze the responses to questions through the perspectives of two groups: owners; and renters and the precariously housed. The findings for each of the questions note areas of difference between these groups, where a significant difference exists.

Due to the small number of responses from those with unceded treaty rights (one for each of the three surveys) we have not analysed the data through this perspective - given that it is not statistically significant or necessarily representative of all persons who may fit this category. This person's responses were, of course, included in the general findings and qualitative responses. We acknowledge that the issue of unceded treaty rights and their connection to development on Gabriola is significant and look forward to building relationships with those who have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola as we progress with this work.

Both the quantitative and qualitative responses are included in the analysis for each of the questions. Each question is presented as it was posed in the survey followed by presentation of the quantitative and qualitative response data. (Note that some percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.) A conclusion statement is included for each question.

Background information for each survey was provided in a series of backgrounders that included facts and statistics about the issues at hand, current applicable goals, policies and regulations as contained in Gabriola's Official Community Plan, information from other sources as required, and glossaries defining key terms. These backgrounders are all attached in the appendices.

Survey 1 – Summary Report

The first of the surveys, *Housing Need, Affordability and Diversity of Supply*, gave Gabriolans the opportunity to comment on: criteria for affordable housing proposals; categories of housing need; secondary suites on larger lots; and, secondary suites on smaller lots. Each question provided space for comments.

Background for Survey One

Background information for the first survey was provided in two documents: *Housing Need on Gabriola* (Appendix 1); and, *Gabriola Official Community Plan (OCP) Policies Governing Housing* (Appendix 2) A glossary of key terms was also provided. In brief:

- **Homelessness:** The rate of homelessness on Gabriola is four times that in Nanaimo and ten times that for all of B.C. Although the total number of people experiencing homelessness on Gabriola (approx. 60) is smaller than in other areas, the proportion is very high.
- **Housing Affordability:** 539 Gabriola households spend more than 30% of their incomes on housing costs, which is the standard measure of affordability. More than half of the 365 renters and one-fifth of the 1,780 homeowners on Gabriola are living in unaffordable housing.
- **Low Income:** Average income on Gabriola is quite low. 25% of Gabriolans get by on less than half the national median income, which is the standard measure of low income, compared to 17% for Nanaimo and 16% for all of BC. Almost 40% of children, 29% of working age adults, and 16% of seniors are in low income.
- **Housing Stock Diversity:** Only 7% of Gabriola's dwellings are apartments, condos or other semi-detached homes, compared with 56% for all of BC. Gabriola is experiencing a significant lack of diversity in its housing stock.
- **Current Policy:** Detailed information about current policy related to housing diversity and affordability is in Appendix B of this report. In general:
 - Affordability is addressed in Gabriola's Official Community Plan (OCP) through policy that supports an increase in residential density on the island, without subdivision and only when it is specifically for affordable housing for special needs residents and seniors.
 - The OCP allows for "multiple-dwelling affordable housing" (defined as three or more affordable units), governed by a housing agreement, that serves the needs of: special needs residents living with physical and/or mental disabilities; seniors 60 years of age or older; and/or low-income families. Approvals of multiple-dwelling affordable housing projects are guided by a

number of criteria as outlined in the OCP with regard to: density; number of units; size of units; location relative to services; major road access; common area amenities; and, water / waste / emissions / energy efficiency.

Development project proponents must demonstrate: affordability in perpetuity; type of management and administration; how units will be made available to qualified occupants; and, the mix of rental and ownership units. No market housing is allowed. Densities for the creation of multi-dwelling affordable housing can come only from the Density Bank, but currently there are no banked densities.

- Housing affordability and diversity are also addressed through policy on secondary suites, which are allowed on lots 2 hectares (5 acres) or larger. The policy allows for one suite of up to 968 square feet, either within or attached to the main dwelling, or detached. For lots in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), a secondary suite must be within the main dwelling.
- Affordable housing is defined in the OCP to mean housing that costs no more than 30% of a household's gross income applied to those households with incomes at or below 60% of the median household income for Gabriola Island (using Canada Census information).

Survey Responses

A total of 411 people responded to this survey, representing 1 response for every 8 Gabriolans aged 19 and over. Not every respondent answered all five questions.

In addition to the quantitative data collected, respondents shared 896 comments.



Question 1: Housing / Property Status

Q1: Please tell us your current housing / property ownership status on Gabriola by choosing the category that applies to your situation (check all that apply)

- Own and reside here full time
- Own and reside here part time
- Own and visit occasionally
- Own vacant property
- Own and rent out property
- Rent and reside here full time
- Rent and reside here part time
- Do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing
- Live elsewhere but work here
- Have treaty rights to unceded land here
- Prefer not to answer; and,
- Other

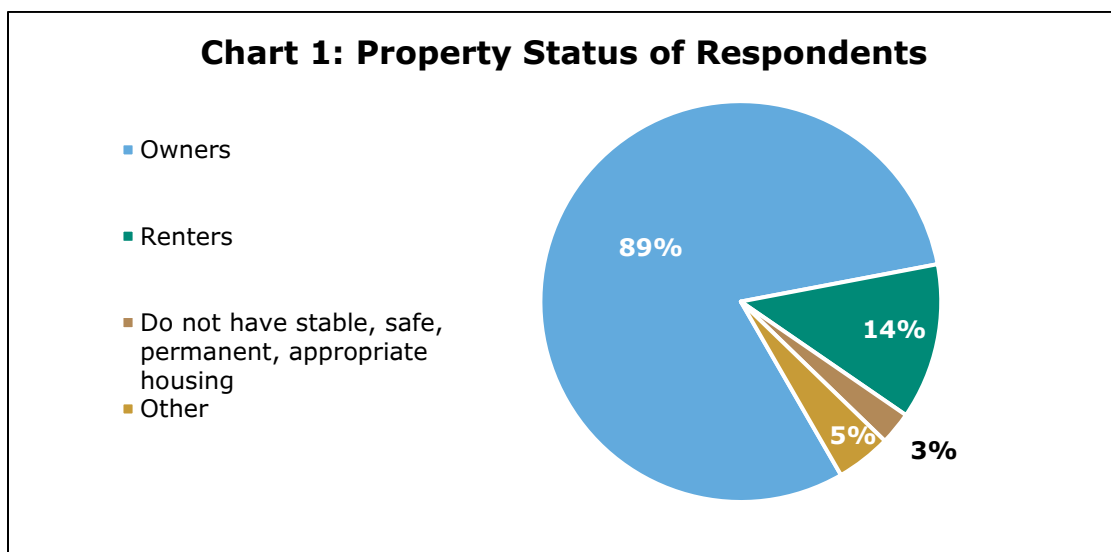
These categories are not mutually exclusive. For instance, a person could own property and be in a precarious housing situation.

General Findings

408 respondents provided 453 responses to this question.

Options	Proportion	Number
I own property and reside here full time	79%	322
I own property and reside here part time	3%	11
I own property and visit occasionally	1%	6
I own vacant property	3%	11
I own property which I rent out	3%	14
I am a renter and reside here full time	14%	57
I am a renter and reside here part time	0%	0
I do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing	3%	12
I live elsewhere but I work on Gabriola	1%	3
I have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola	0%	1
I prefer not to answer	1%	3
Other (please specify)	3%	13

As Chart 1 shows, the majority of the 408 respondents to this question are property owners (89%) with the remainder renting (14%) and precariously housed (3%). *Other* includes all other respondents.



The proportion of owners to renters (including the precariously housed) is consistent with 2016 Census data (which was 83% to 17%).

It should be noted that respondents were asked to identify all the categories that applied to them. For instance, a property owner could indicate that they own and live on the property full-time, and that they own and rent out a property.

Owners

Of the 338 / 83% of respondents who own property:

- The majority occupy the property full time (88%)
- 3% reside here part-time
- 2% occasionally visit
- 3% own vacant property
- 4% own property that they rent out.

Renters & Precariously Housed, and Those with Unceded Treaty Rights

17% of respondents indicated that they either rent, are precariously housed, work on Gabriola and live elsewhere, or have unceded treaty rights. Of those:

- 78% rent and reside on Gabriola full-time
- 17% do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing
- 4% work on Gabriola but live elsewhere
- 1% indicated they have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola.

Qualitative Responses

13 comments were made by respondents that describe their unique housing circumstances – these include housing insecurity, inadequacy, precariousness of tenancy and reliance on family. The comments create a snapshot of some of the multiple challenges members of the community face and the solutions they adopt:

- “I rent property for my tiny house.”
- “Living out of my car.”
- “Married to land owner with no marital rights to property.”
- “I live in a dwelling that isn’t regulated or technically legal in this community.”

Conclusions: Question 1

Responses to the question about property status generally reflect the proportion of owners to renters as recorded in the 2016 Census.

Question 2: Criteria for Affordable Housing Proposals

Q2: The Gabriola OCP includes several criteria intended to help the Local Trust Committee (LTC) decide whether or not to approve affordable housing proposals. Please tell us how important each of these criteria should be in the LTC’s decision making process (see criteria outlined below).

As noted above, the Local Trust Committee’s decisions to approve “multi-dwelling affordable housing” development proposals are guided by a number of criteria listed in the OCP. Respondents were asked to rank the importance of these various criteria.

General Findings

There were 340 responses to this question; 70 people skipped it (17%).

The five highest ranked criteria (between 88% and 100%) are:

- Rents geared to an affordability test
- Ensuring affordability in perpetuity
- Specifying how the project would be managed and administered
- Specifying how tenancy decisions would be made
- Having the lowest possible net water, waste, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use

The next four criteria ranked lower than the criteria listed above but all exceed 50% support:

- No more than 12 units per hectare
- Average number of units not to exceed 24
- Average size of dwelling not to exceed 83 square meters (900 square feet)
- Site within 0.5 km of the Village or within 2 km walking distance.

Note that support for the last two criteria is significantly lower and varies depending on the housing status of the respondent:

- The site’s main access is off a main road not an existing neighbourhood – Property owners are more likely to attach higher importance to this criterion than renters or those precariously housed
- Common areas such as kitchen and recreation facilities are provided – This criterion is considered less important than all the other criteria. However, renters (54%) are more likely to see it as important than owners (47%) and those precariously housed (17%). Given that 13% of the respondents indicated they are unsure about this criterion, it should be evaluated further before concluding it is unimportant.

A full breakdown of support for the criteria by housing status is below.

Findings by Housing Status

Table 1 below shows those who ranked the various criteria as *Very Important* or *Important* broken down into responses from owners, renters and those precariously housed. The highlighted lines indicate a significant spread in values between owners, renters and the precariously housed.

Property owners are more likely than renters and the precariously housed to support the criterion that ensures access to a housing project be off a main road and not through an existing residential neighbourhood (57% compared to 46% for renters, and 33% for the precariously housed).

The lowest ranking was given to providing common area amenities. Renters, however, see this as more important than owners (54% to 47%). Only 17% of those precariously housed think this is an important consideration. In addition, 13% of respondents indicated that they are *Not Sure*.

Factor	All	Owners	Renters	Precariously Housed
The rents that will be charged meet an affordability test, such as 30% of a household's income	92%	91%	100%	100%
The maximum density doesn't exceed 12 units per hectare	67%	69%	58%	67%
The average number of dwelling units per development is no more than 24 units	89%	73%	65%	58%
The average size of a dwelling unit doesn't exceed 83 square metres (900 sq. ft.)	58%	60%	52%	58%
The site is within 0.5 kilometres of the Village core or within a 2-kilometre walking distance	65%	65%	63%	67%
The site's main access is off a main road and not through an existing residential neighbourhood	55%	57%	46%	33%
Common area amenities such as kitchen and recreation facilities are provided	47%	47%	54%	17%
The proposal ensures affordability in perpetuity	89%	88%	100%	100%
The proposal specifies how the housing project will be managed and administered	91%	92%	96%	90%
The housing proposal specifies how decisions will be made about tenancy approval	92%	92%	98%	83%
The proposal has the lowest possible net water, waste, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use	90%	90%	96%	92%

Summary of Qualitative Responses

480 comments were generated for this question. Comments focused on concerns about water sufficiency and wastewater management, and concerns tied closely to density and its implications for pressures on water (48). Few respondents raised concerns about forest protection (3). A number of respondents oppose any type of affordable housing or the creation of any additional housing of any type (33).

Many of the comments emphasize flexibility, noting that requirements might be project specific:

- “I am concerned about differing restrictions that are imposed by financial agencies, especially if LTC requirements may make it impossible to get financing from some or all sources.”

Another commenter is also concerned about financing, saying:

- “Good goal [30%] but need to have an economically viable mix of rents.”

Similarly, when it came to restrictions on site density, number, and size of units, commenters are concerned about environmental impact and project design requirements:

- “Each housing project needs to consider the land and water resources available at the specific location.”
- “Planners need to be given a lot of flexibility so that they can design to achieve a low-cost supply.”

In terms of proximity to the Village or a main road, many commenters see these restrictions as unnecessary or even undesirable:

- “As long as it’s within easy walking distance of a GERTIE stop, affordable housing could be spread throughout the island so it didn’t have to overload ‘downtown.’ This would remove some concerns about stress on the water supply and overload of septic.”
- “Low income people/families should not be treated as unwelcome in existing neighbourhoods. We should be encouraging a diverse and mixed community on Gabriola, where all people have opportunities to get to know each other.”

A not-for-profit model is preferred, especially for multi-unit projects so that affordability can be sustained, the project managed over the long term, and the selection criteria transparent:

- “This [criterion] applies to larger developments. Should be owned by a not-for-profit corp.”

While environmental protection is important when it comes to construction requirements, affordability is also important:

- “Lowest practicable not lowest possible. Affordability is important here and we cannot make the ‘perfect’ the enemy of the ‘good’.”

Conclusions: Question 2

Overall, the highest ranked criteria are all related to administrative guidelines and processes about how proposals would be evaluated and managed, with one exception – the impact on water, waste, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.

The lower ranked criteria are all related to infrastructure, suggesting that with the exception of ecological impact considerations, concerns about infrastructure such as project density, dwelling size, etc. are of less concern than how the project is designed to meet need and managed. Nonetheless all the criteria received more than 50% approval.

Question 3: Categories of Need

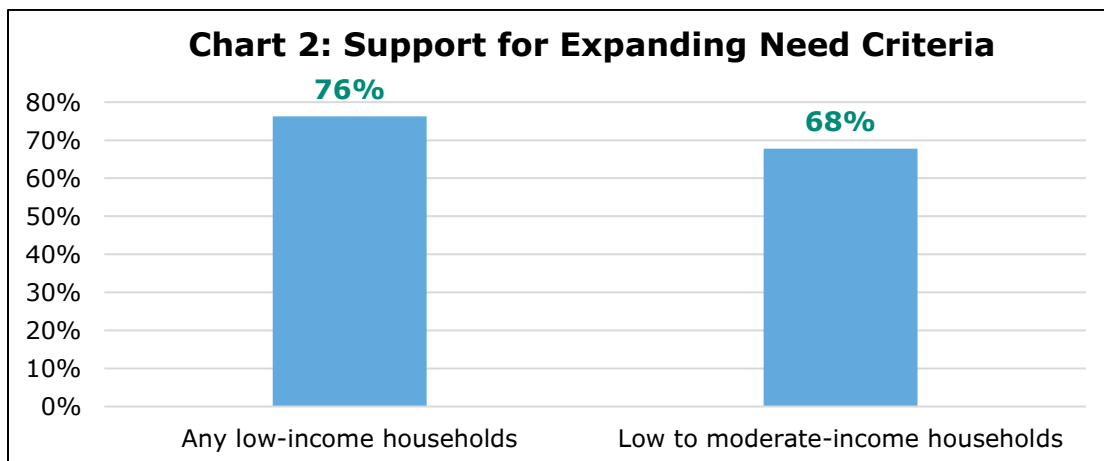
Q3: Would you support expanding the categories of need to include any of the following? Any low-income households; low to moderate income households

As noted above, the OCP currently only permits “multi-dwelling affordable housing” for special needs residents, seniors, and low-income families. Respondents were asked if they would support expanding the categories of need to include *Any Low-Income Households* or *Low to Moderate Income Households*.

General Findings

333 responses were given to this question; 77 people skipped it (19%).

As Chart 3 shows, the majority of respondents support expanding the criteria to include the two additional categories.



Findings by Housing Status

Although owners, renters and the precariously housed all support expanding the criteria (ranging from 64% to 100%), owners are less likely than renters and the precariously housed to support the inclusion of low to moderate-income households (64%).

Summary of Qualitative Responses

There were 132 narrative responses to this question. Roughly one-quarter are comments about: the definitions; the criteria that should be considered; the importance of design criteria that reduce stigma and would result in a stable housing community, including the need for a range of income levels; and, the importance of preserving the special rural character, aesthetic, and feel of Gabriola. The remaining 98 comments reflect respondents' ideas about the considerations that should guide decisions about expanding the need criteria.

Commenters have many ideas for criteria expansion although they are concerned to ensure that low income residents receive priority.

- “Higher priority for other groups (seniors/families/special needs) but perhaps a few small apartments to suit single working-aged people.”

Commenters recognize that many Gabriolans face housing challenges:

- “Both low and moderate income households face rental issues here.”

Some see value in a diversity of income levels and housing solutions:

- “A mix would lower stigma and increase options.”
- “If it is a cooperative then it should include higher incomes to help pay the market rents.”

No one model is sufficient:

- “I think we want a range of affordable housing for all people, especially rental housing.”

Conclusions: Question 3

Respondents strongly support expanding the criteria to include any low income households (76%) and to include low to moderate income households (68%).

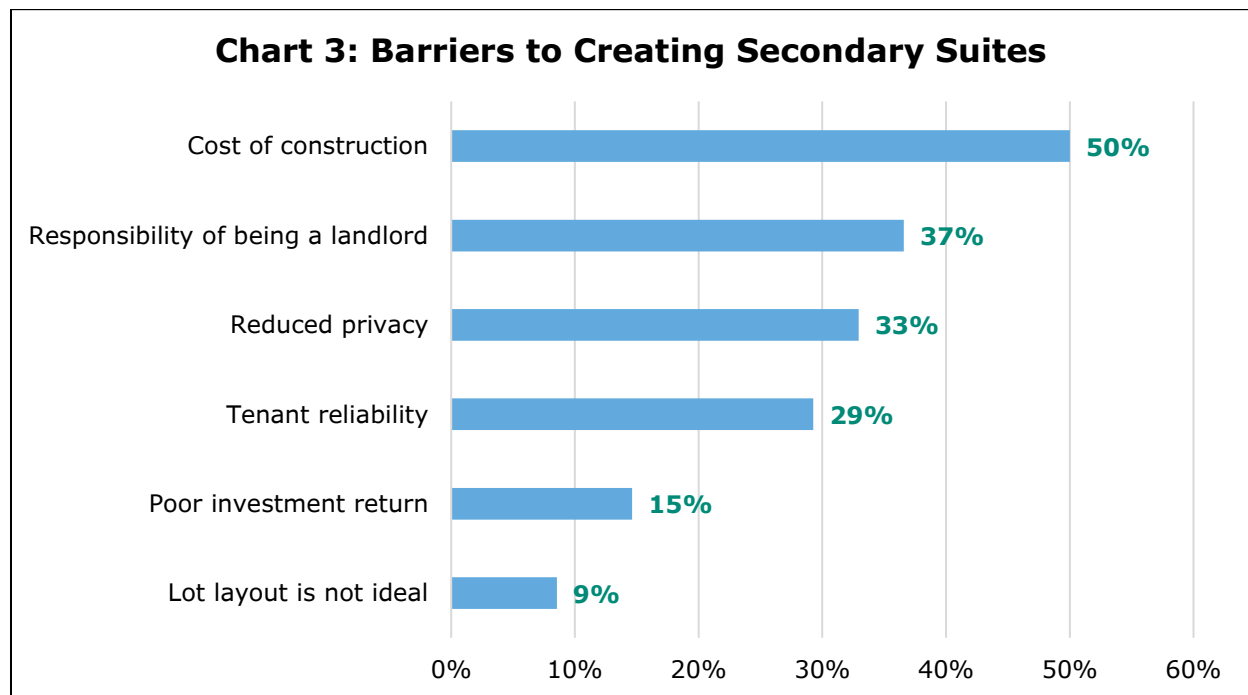
Question 4: Barriers to Creating Secondary Suites on Larger Lots

Q4: If you currently own a property that is 2ha / 5 acres or larger without a secondary suite, please describe the barriers to constructing and renting a suite on your property

Gabriola’s OCP currently permits secondary suites on residential lots 2 hectares / 5 acres or larger. Respondents who own these types of properties were asked to describe the barriers to constructing and renting accommodation.

General Findings

82 property owners responded to this question. This represents 21% of this survey’s total respondents who indicated they owned property. 328 people skipped it (79%).



As the chart above indicates, the primary concern for property owners is the cost of construction followed by the responsibility of being a landlord. It would be reasonable to group “responsibility of being a landlord” with “ability to find reliable tenants”. The responses to these two issues grouped together exceed those related to cost concerns (cost = 30%; landlord / tenant issues = 38%). Combining “cost of construction” with “not a sound investment” brings the proportion of respondents concerned about cost issues to 35%, which is still smaller than those concerned about landlord / tenant issues.

Summary of Qualitative Responses

There were 31 narrative responses to this question.

One respondent noted confusion about the term ‘secondary suite’ which seems to imply attachment to an existing dwelling. ‘Secondary suite’ is the terminology used in the OCP (section 2.6.1a). A review of the *Housing Issues* Facebook page revealed a thread dealing with this issue, which proposed that the terminology be changed to ‘secondary accommodation’ to account for the variety of allowed approaches (e.g., separate cottage, suite in house, suite over garage, etc.).

Conclusions: Question 4

The main barriers to construction of secondary suites on properties over 2 hectares / 5 acres are financial cost, responsibility of being a landlord, and the risk of reduced privacy.

The question asked those with these properties what the barriers are to building a secondary suite on their property, but did not ask them *whether* they would consider doing so. We can’t assume that these 77 property owners would build secondary accommodation even if there were no barriers. It appears from the data that even if financial considerations are not a factor, a major stumbling block is the responsibility associated with finding and keeping reliable tenants.

Question 5: Creating Secondary Suites on Smaller Lots

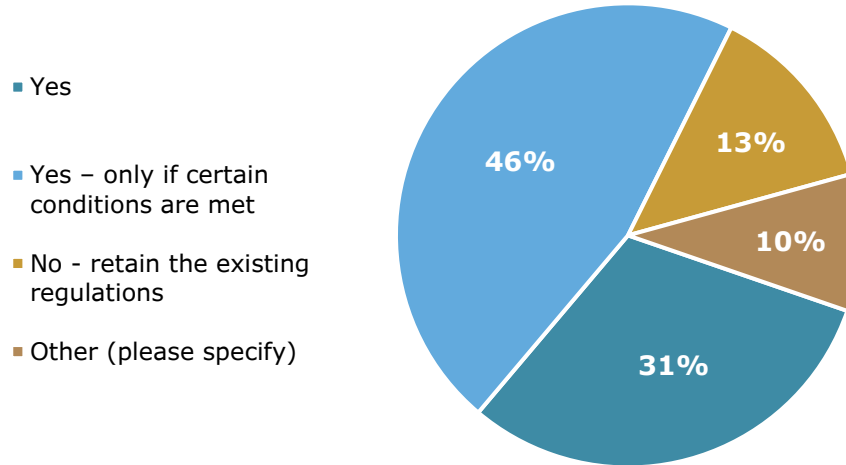
Q5: Would you support a re-write of policies and regulations to enable secondary suites to be constructed on Gabriola Island on residential parcels that are smaller than 2 hectares / 5 acres?

Respondents were asked whether they would support secondary suites on smaller lots.

General Findings

314 respondents answered this question, and 96 people skipped it (23%). Of the respondents, one-third support allowing secondary suites on smaller residential properties unconditionally, 46% are supportive but with conditions, and 13% do not support the change.

Chart 4: Support for Secondary Suites on Smaller Lots



Findings by Housing Status

Property owners are more likely to say *Yes – only if certain conditions are met* (54% compared to 46% of the total respondents).

Conclusions: Question 5

The vast majority (77%) of respondents support allowing secondary suites on smaller lots, but the majority of those would require some form of conditionality (as explored in Question 6).

The difference in responses by housing status may reflect concerns that property owners have about the responsibilities associated with being a landlord compared with the attraction of this option for renters faced with housing challenges.

Question 6: Criteria for Secondary Suites on Smaller Lots

Q6: If the LTC was to consider allowing secondary suites on properties less than 2 hectares / 5 acres, please rate the importance of the following conditions

- A minimum lot size is established
- Limits are set on rental rates to ensure affordability
- Ecological protection measures are required on the lot
- Higher construction standards are required for new buildings
- Limits are set for maximum floor area / lot coverage for the principle dwelling AND secondary suite

General Findings

There were 312 responses and 63 comments. 98 people skipped this question (24%).

Of the 312 responses:

- 91% rate ecological protection measures as essential or desirable
- 80% rate setting limits on floor area/lot coverage as essential or desirable
- 71% rate establishing a minimum lot size as essential or desirable
- 69% rate setting rent limits as essential or desirable
- 61% rate requiring higher construction standards as essential or desirable.

Findings by Housing Status

There is very little difference in responses between property owners, renters and the precariously housed with two exceptions. First, renters and those who are precariously housed are much more likely to support setting limits on rental rates to ensure affordability (92%) compared to owners at (64%). Second, renters are more likely to support higher construction standards for new buildings (71%) than owners or the precariously housed (~ 59%).

Summary of Qualitative Responses

Although 31% of respondents support allowing secondary suites on properties under 2 hectares / 5 acres and 46% support this option with specific conditions, a variety of issues were raised in the comments, some of which were not addressed in the options listed above.

The dominant issues relate to: the existence of illegal and substandard rental accommodation (including unpermitted AirBnBs; 10) and the lack of regulation of this existing stock and the inherent enforcement challenges (7); the costs and unintended impact of meeting the standards in the existing building code (13); the feasibility of setting limits on rental rates without the authority to regulate (3); and, the importance of ensuring sufficient water and appropriate septic (17).

Two respondents noted that if a decision is made to allow secondary suites on smaller lots, it should be *instead* of multiple family housing developments, not in addition. And two respondents noted the challenges of aging in place and the need for someone to live onsite to provide supports.

These excerpts from the 63 narrative responses shine a light on some of the concerns:

- “Until we can find a way to monitor and improve or shut down secondary suites that are substandard, this option should not be expanded. No matter how many

‘good places’ are built, new people will still arrive and move into the sub-standard units, which simply increases the island population without improving the results of the survey. Until this gap is addressed, we will not be able to fix the problem of poor living conditions. I think it is important not to demonize the owners who are providing these suites but help them do it correctly. For many, that is how they are managing to live affordably in an ownership-dominant region.”

- “Yes - On our <1 acre lot, we have a 1 bedroom cabin that has its own driveway, its own septic system, shares water from our water system (well + 3 cisterns), and we're close to the village. Under the current bylaws, we are not allowed to legally rent it out even though we know there's a shortage of housing on the island. This actually is very, very disappointing.”
- “For me this is a water issue. The point as I understand it is that we want to spread out the number of households/people drawing on the restricted water supply. Allowing secondary suites on smaller properties implies densification, which our water resources cannot support and will be decreasingly available as the climate crisis intensifies.”
- “Conditions should include adequate water provision including rainwater harvesting and a sufficien[tly] robust waste system. Such properties and applications would have to meet current septic regulations (post-2007) which are mu[ch] more rigorous than the earlier regs, so many existing septic systems may not be able to handle the increased load.”
- “Sometimes strict adherence to building codes means that people who are poor or choose to live in a different way are harassed or made homeless. I am against forcing people out of their homes or dwelling just because they don't adhere to codes.”
- “I could agree with expanding the secondary suites category to 1 ha or 2.5 acre lots only. Densification beyond that would be far too much for Gabriola to bear. I think that the IT has to address the large number of illegal secondary suites currently on much smaller properties. I know there are many people who rely on illegal suite income to survive and many people rent those suites because it is the only way to find a place to rent here. However, all efforts to plan and manage density are a sham without more directly and proactively addressing the illegal secondary suites.”
- “Even if people are home owners, many of us already need or will need the extra income that rental housing on our properties would give us. Plus, as we age, having the ability to have some younger folk on the property to help out with things would make a huge difference! The current bylaws that prohibit secondary

dwellings on lots smaller than five acres is harming islanders and I wish that was discussed more.”

- “I am totally against secondary suites on [G]abriola. We don't need more people moving here because we do not have the infrastructure. One grocery store that is already too busy especially in summer months, won't cut it with an increased population. The problem with housing affordability is that the prices are too high to be[gin] with, so many if not most people now can't afford to buy. Homeowners should not rely on secondary suite income to make more money or pay off their mortgage faster when others can't afford to buy. The main issue is that our ferry wait times are already really long, our roads aren't in great shape, we only have one grocery store. There is simply not enough services in this rural community to grow the population.... This is a rural area and a protected area. It is not meant to have a high population.”

Conclusions: Question 6

Fewer than one-third of respondents support allowing secondary suites on properties smaller than 2 hectares / 5 acres. 46% feel it would be appropriate, but their support comes with significant caveats regarding ecological protection, limiting floor area and lot coverage, specifying a minimum lot size, requiring rent limits to ensure affordability, and requiring higher construction standards.

Survey 2 – Summary Report

The second of the three surveys, *Biodiversity, Water Conservation and Housing*, gave Gabriolans the opportunity to comment on: including the concept of biodiversity in the Official Community Plan; the effectiveness of various biodiversity policy options; the value of implementing actions outlined in the Coastal Douglas-fir Toolkit; and the importance of various measures to protect groundwater. Each question provided space for respondents to make comments in their own words.

Background for Survey Two

Background information for the second survey was provided in three documents: *Forest Ecosystems, Protected Land, and Groundwater on Gabriola* (see Appendix 4); *Key Policies on Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation for Gabriola Island* (Appendix 5); and, *GalTT Major Conservation Threats and Priorities* (Appendix 6). A glossary of key terms was also provided. In brief:

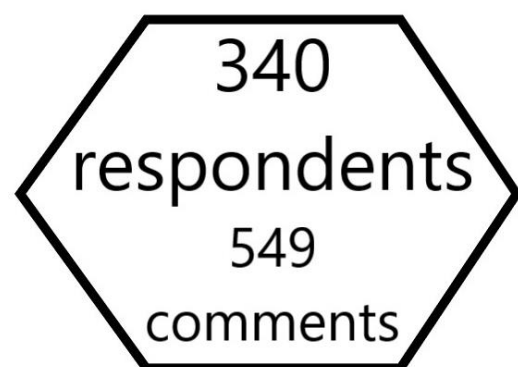
- **Unique Ecosystems:** Gabriola Island lies within the Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) Biogeoclimatic Zone, which is the smallest of BC's 16 major ecosystem zones. The ecosystems found within it are rare and highly endangered and include Douglas-fir forests, as well as Garry Oak woodlands, wetlands, estuaries, and other unique communities of plant, animal, and fungi found nowhere else in the world.
- **Conservation Threats:** According to the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust, apart from climate change, most conservation threats on Gabriola result from population growth and related development, which lead to:
 - Tree cutting
 - Stress on ground water
 - Fragmentation of natural habitat
 - Disturbance of sensitive ecosystems and rare species
 - Increase in invasive species.
- **Groundwater Resources:** Gabriola's primary source of water for household consumption and irrigation is groundwater stored in aquifers, which are recharged from rainwater. 57% of rainwater comes in November through February and only 13% in May through August. Gabriola thus has a freshwater storage problem, not a supply problem. While a lot of water is stored in the ground, accessing it can be difficult. Increased development and climate change will put pressure on Gabriola's groundwater resources.

- **Current Policy:** Detailed information about current policy related to biodiversity and groundwater protection is in Appendix D of this report. In brief:
 - The term biodiversity is not used in the current Official Community Plan (1997); however, the OCP does state that “This Plan attempts to preserve the unique environment of the Gabriola Planning Area for future generations through its established goals, which speak to the protection of the natural environment and its sensitive ecosystems.”
 - The OCP includes a number of goals, policies and objectives related to the natural environment and its protection, including groundwater resources.
 - There is currently no overarching strategy in the OCP to identify biodiversity and freshwater conservation priorities and ensure that effective objectives and policies are both in place and regulated.
 - Many of the OCP’s policies and regulations use ‘soft’ language like ‘encourage’ rather setting a requirement. Currently, requirements are expressly stated only in regard to environmentally sensitive area designations, marine resource areas, and specific development permit areas.
 - In 2018, the Islands Trust published a toolkit for protecting the Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) ecosystem. The document includes maps showing areas needing protection along with guidance on a number of regulatory tools that Local Trust Committees can use to help preserve this unique ecosystem. None of the CDF Toolkit recommendations have yet been incorporated into the Gabriola OCP and Land Use Bylaw.
 - The Islands Trust’s *Groundwater Protection Toolkit* provides guidance on various regulatory tools that can be used to protect groundwater resources. Only one of the Groundwater Protection Toolkit recommendations has been incorporated into the Gabriola OCP and Land Use Bylaw so far.

Survey Responses

A total of 340 people responded to this survey, representing 1 response for every 10 Gabriolans – a slightly lower response rate than for the first survey.

In addition to the quantitative data collected, respondents shared 549 comments.



Question 1: Housing / Property Status

Q1: Please tell us your current housing / property ownership status on Gabriola by choosing the category that applies to your situation (check all that apply)

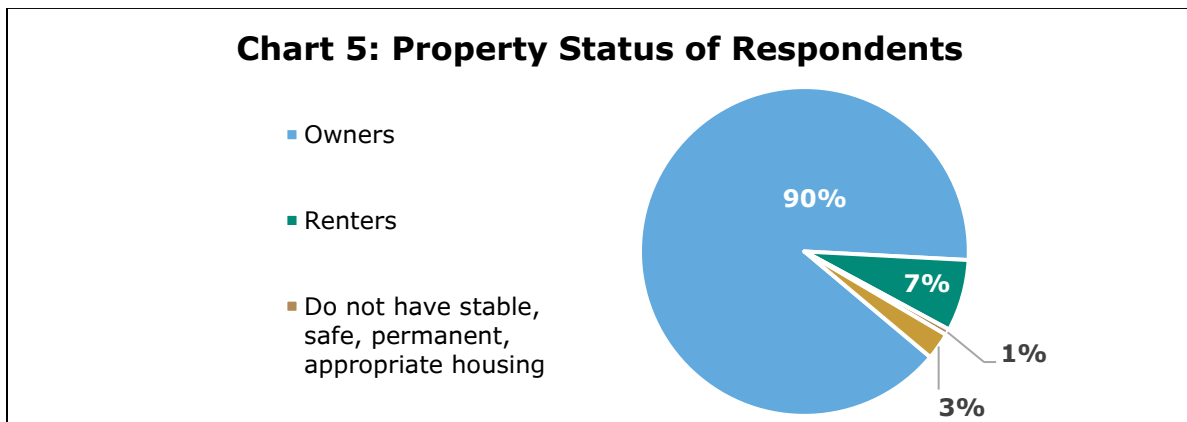
The list of possible responses to this question is the same as for Question 1 in Survey 1.

General Findings

332 respondents provided 340 responses to this question.

Options	Proportion	Number
I own property and reside here full time	83%	281
I own property and reside here part time	4%	14
I own property and visit occasionally	1%	3
I own vacant property	1%	3
I own property which I rent out	1%	4
I am a renter and reside here full time	7%	23
I am a renter and reside here part time	0%	1
I do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing	1%	2
I live elsewhere but I work on Gabriola	0%	0
I have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola	0%	1
I prefer not to answer	1%	2
Other (please specify)	2%	6

As Chart 5 shows, most of the 332 respondents are property owners (90%) with the rest renting (7%) and precariously housed (1%). *Other* includes all other respondents.



It should be noted that respondents were asked to identify all the categories that applied to them. For instance, a property owner could indicate that they owned and lived on the property full-time, and that they owned and rented out a property.

Owners

Of the survey respondents who owned property:

- The majority occupied the property full time (92%)
- 4.5% resided here part-time
- 1% occasionally visit
- 1% owned vacant property
- 1.5% owned property that they rent out.

Renters & Precariously Housed, and Those with Unceded Treaty Rights

Renters, the precariously housed, and those that have unceded treaty rights represented 8.5% of the responses. Of those:

- 88% rent
- 8% do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing
- 4% indicated they have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola.

Qualitative Responses

Five of the six respondents who defined themselves as “other” identified themselves as renters, and two as long-time Gabriola residents of 20 years or more. They focused on the insecurity of their housing, a situation made worse by the lack of available, affordable rental housing.

- “I am a renter who resides here full time for the past 25 years. My rental is going on the market, so I also consider my family in unstable housing with zero rental availability.”
- “I am a full-time rental resident (for 3 years) and do not have safe, affordable and stable housing.”

Conclusions: Question 1

The majority of responses are from property owners (92%). This is a higher proportion of owners to renters than in the first survey and is higher than the distribution of owners to renters in the 2016 Census.

No effort was made to weight the responses to balance the perspectives between owners and renters; however, each question was evaluated to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in responses between owners and renters.

Question 2: Inclusion of Biodiversity in the OCP

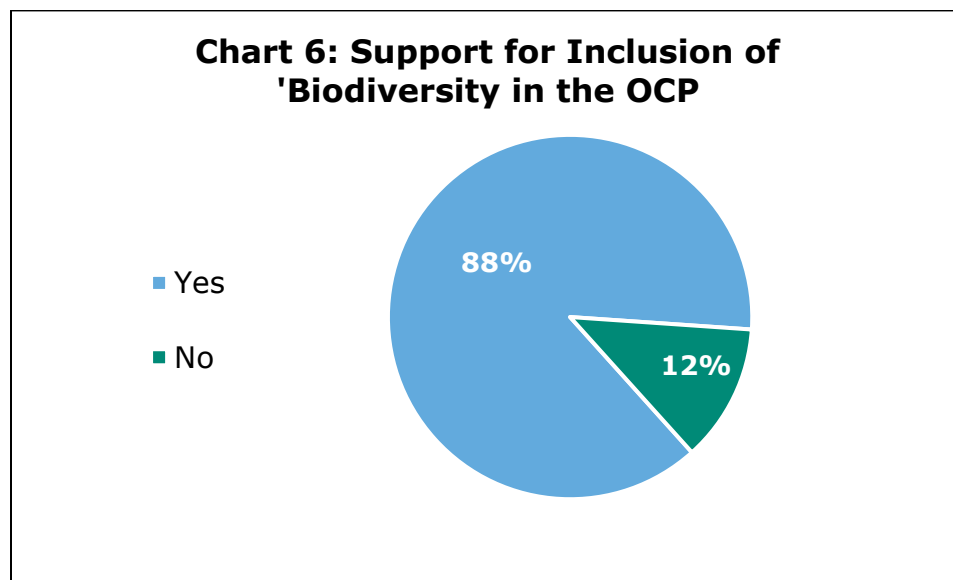
Q2: Should the Local Trust Committee draft new policies to specifically address protection of biodiversity and restoration of the natural environment on the island?

This question was asked to gauge support for more specific policies than the current OCP general statements about “preserving and protecting” Gabriola’s unique natural environment and its sensitive ecosystems.

General Findings

There were 286 responses to this question and 74 comments. 54 people skipped this question (16%).

As Chart 6 below indicates, respondents indicated strong support for the inclusion of policies that explicitly address biodiversity in the Official Community Plan (88%).



Findings by Housing Status

87% of owners support new policies around biodiversity, compared to 100% of renters.

Qualitative Responses

Seventy-four comments were received on this topic.

A majority of the comments are about the sufficiency of the current OCP: 11 feel there is no need to change the current situation, although they are not explicitly opposed to adding 'biodiversity.' Four commenters want to amend 'biodiversity' to 'biocultural diversity' recognizing that human activity is an essential element and in recognition of the need for social justice and fairness. Several stressed the need for an educational component.

Six commenters deemed the current plan inadequate. Of particular concern is the clear-cutting of lots (6) although 3 commenters recognized the difficulties of balancing property rights with forest protection. Seven commenters called for new policies that are clear and have measurable and actionable policies. Two commenters want policy specificity by zone and the protection of farmland. Three commenters want no new development or growth.

The following quotes show the range of these perspectives.

- “Our ecosystem is under pressure from a variety of external forces, including climate change and increased rates of development. The status quo is not adequate to protect it.”
- “The challenge is to extend reasonable regulation over private land to put some limits on the rights to cut trees. Too many lots are being clearcut. Striking a balance between property rights and protection will be hard and legally difficult.”
- “Yes, but biodiversity should not be compartmentalized on its own. A better more inclusive term that considers environment and culture is biocultural diversity, biocultural diversity as a framework better recognizes both nature and culture as interconnected.”

Conclusions: Question 2

The responses to this question show clear support among respondents for incorporating the concept of biodiversity into the Official Community Plan. However, the concept itself needs to be clearly articulated – for instance, delineating the difference between *biodiversity* or *biocultural diversity*, which incorporates the role of human activity.

Question 3: Effectiveness of Biodiversity Policy Options

Q3: Please rate how effective you think the following options would be in protecting biodiversity:

- Encouraging property owners to voluntarily take protective measures
- Setting requirements on a case-by-case basis for each new rezoning application
- Establishing new Development Permit Areas to regulate development and protect biodiversity
- Establishing new regulations for specific conservation objectives (e.g., reducing tree cutting) that would apply to all property owners

Question 3 allows respondents to evaluate the effectiveness of various policy options to protecting biodiversity, ranging from the current ‘soft’ language in the OCP to ‘harder’ approaches such as more specific requirements that would apply to all property owners.

General Findings

There were 297 responses to this question and 234 comments. 43 People skipped this question (13%). As Table 7 shows, respondents rated the effectiveness of each of the policy options depending on the relative effectiveness of the requirements.

Policy Option	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Neither Effective nor Ineffective	Somewhat Ineffective	Very Ineffective	Not Sure
Encourage property owners to take protective measures	6%%	25%	13%	19%%	35%	2%
Set requirements on a case by case basis for each new rezoning application	25%	40%	8%	12%	10%	5%
Establish new Development Permit Areas to regulate development to protect biodiversity	45%	36%	6%	5%	4%	5%
Establish new regulations for specific conservation objectives that would apply to all property owners	50%	26%	7%	4%	7%	6%

When *Very Effective* and *Somewhat Effective* responses are combined, respondents ranked the approaches in the order shown in the table below.

Table 8: Ranked Combined Effectiveness Ratings			
Policy Option	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Combined Rating
Establish new Development Permit Areas to regulate development to protect biodiversity	45%	36%	81%
Establish new regulations for specific conservation objectives that would apply to all property owners	50%	26%	76%
Set requirements on a case by case basis for each new rezoning application	25%	40%	65%
Encourage property owners to take protective measures	6%	25%	31%

The last (*Encourage Property Owners to Take Proactive Measures*) is clearly seen as the least effective policy tool with 54% of respondents seeing it as either *Very Ineffective* (35%) or *Somewhat Ineffective* (19%).

Findings by Housing Status

Renters are much more likely to see the “Encouraging landowners to voluntarily take protective measures” option as ineffective than property owners.

Qualitative Responses

Of the 234 comments received, 20% are aimed at the voluntary option, 28% for the case-by-case option, 20% for the DPA option, and 31% for regulations that would apply to all property owners.

Voluntary Compliance

Although a clear majority of quantitative question respondents found relying on voluntary action ineffective, the comments tended to look at the question in a more balanced way. Five comments pointed to the inadequacy of the current situation but another five commented that voluntary action is already being taken. Seven commenters feel property owners needed to have a clear understanding of what measures could be taken, including zone-specific measures, for which educational materials are required. Five commenters pointed to incentivization; five want specific restrictions; and three want enforcement of restrictions and repercussions for non-compliance. The following quotes illustrate some of these ideas.

- “Owners need to know what area their property is in (high concern, etc.) and what protective measures” [are necessary].

- “Voluntary measures unlikely observed by developers and speculators.”
- “Demonstrated to be effective by the donations, bequeaths, and conservation easements we have on the island.”
- “Unless the encouragement has some monetary value most would not pay any attention. Perhaps a tax break for those who work with an eye to specific biodiversity.”

Case-by-Case

Two thirds of the respondents feel a case-by-case assessment would be effective, but the comments expressed much less certainty. Eighteen commenters are not against case-by-case assessment specifically, but they see many extenuating factors such as: staff knowledge; increased work for Trust staff; politics; lack of consistency; and, particularly, the influence of money. Seven commenters are concerned about fairness and three anticipated increased litigation or disputation. Five commenters think case-by-case assessment is the process already in place. Ten commenters want to have baseline requirements that would apply in all situations. And six want no development or density increase at all. The following quotes illuminate these points.

- “Case by case may adversely cause litigation.”
- “Depends on too many extenuating factors to be effective: bias or personal views of elected officials at the time, level of knowledge/experience of staff making recommendations, pressure from the public/private sector. Case by case could be effective, but likely would not be over the long term.”
- “Totally depends on baseline requirements. All too often money talks.”
- “Setting different requirements for different applicants may be perceived and may well be unfair.”
- “Although the effectiveness of this has much to do with the personalities involved, some flexibility in rezoning must be available.”
- “This would do nothing to protect or restore land that has already been developed / clear cut. I feel we need to put in place regulations that govern existing properties to the same standards as new developments.”

New Development Permit Area

Overall, the comments are supportive of this approach (8); however, some are concerned about over-regulation and counter-productivity and at least one wants more pro-activity with landowners. Three comments pointed to the lack of enforcement of regulations and three want no more development. The following quotes are examples of these viewpoints.

- “Useful because I think our local government can do this anytime - not just in conjunction with a rezoning application.”
- “This could be counter-productive by creating resistance and needing a lot of resources to police.”

New Regulations Applied to All Property Owners

This approach is strongly supported in the quantitative responses and garnered the most comments. Almost all the comments are directed to tree cutting only. Fifteen commenters are fully in agreement with implementing such a policy. Five want clear directives. Nine commenters feel such a policy would meet with irritation, resistance and lawlessness. Seven said there is currently no legislative authority for such a policy and six commenters are concerned about regulating activity on private land. Five pointed to selective logging and ecoforestry practices already in use and two want grandfathering for current owners. Four commenters pointed to the difficulty of compliance for small property owners in light of hazard mitigation (1), *FireSmart* guidelines (2), and construction requirements (1). Seven commenters see developers as more of a problem than property owners.

- “This is getting to be more like it. Understanding that the evaluation of ‘tree cutting’ or other directives, must be clearly outlined.”
- “If organized and expressed as a simple percentage consistent with international biodiversity objectives i.e. all lots must maintain, conserve or restore at least 30% of their lot as a forest / native species community.”
- “Why is there so much emphasis on tree cutting. I cut down lots of dead, hazardous and other trees for fire smarting purposes. I have also planted dozens of trees on my property. Who are you to tell me which of those trees I cut or planted met your objectives.”
- “Property owners are a small part of the problem. Developers are far more of a(n) issue, in much the same way that only a few corporations on this planet are causing 70% of the GHGs.”

Conclusions: Question 3

Current OCP policies lean towards encouraging certain behaviours and applying more prescriptive strategies (e.g., through rezoning applications or establishing DPAs) in targeted areas. Clearly, there is an appetite among those surveyed to take a more assertive approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity on the island.

Since clear cutting and site clearing on private properties is the major concern, the development of new regulations might begin there, although commenters raised concerns about resistance and litigation by property owners and the difficulty of

enforcing compliance. The implementation of protective and restorative measures in public spaces is also an area of high consensus. A need was also expressed for more educational materials directed to what is possible in each of the specific land use areas and zones.

Question 4: Coastal Douglas-fir Toolkit Policies

Q4: Please rate the degree to which you would support the Local Trust Committee in implementing each of the following activities:

- Establish policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private property
- Establish new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas
- Establish policies to prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems.

The purpose of this question is to gauge support for three key policy streams emerging from the Islands Trust’s *Coastal Douglas-fir Toolkit*. None of the provisions of the CDF Toolkit have yet been implemented on Gabriola.

General Findings

There were 285 responses to this question and 121 comments. 55 people skipped this question (16%).

As Table 9 shows, there is support for all three protection policies. Policies that prioritize parkland received the highest evaluation of *Strongly Support*, at 63% compared to 58% for new Development Permit Areas and 48% for policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private property.

	Strongly Support	Support	Support in Principle but Need More Information	Do Not Support	Not Sure
Develop new policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private properties	48%	21%	22%	7%	2%
Establish new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas of the island	58%	22%	15%	3%	3%
Develop new policies which prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems	63%	19%	13%	3%	3%

As Table 10 below shows, when levels of support (*Strongly Support*, *Support*, and *Support in Principle*) are combined, the rankings are as follows:

- Develop new policies which prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems (82%-95%)
- Establish new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas of the island (80%-94%)
- Develop new policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private properties (63%-91%).

Policy	Strongly Support	Support	Support in Principle but Need More Information
Develop new policies which prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems	63%	19%	13%
Establish new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas of the island	58%	22%	15%
Develop new policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private properties	48%	21%	22%

Qualitative Responses

Question 4 received 121 comments distributed across the three policy options and the category *Other*, as outlined below.

- **Policies and Regulations aimed at Private Property**

Thirty-two comments were submitted on this option, representing 26% of the 121 total comments.

While many respondents are supportive generally, quite a few have concerns similar to those expressed in the previous question, such as the infringement on property rights, small lot compliance, and penalizing those already using good practices. Four commenters want clearly defined and detailed parameters, and one mentioned the need for educational materials that are zone- and site- specific. Four want forest protection first and one wants forest preservation on public lands. The following comments demonstrate these concerns.

- “Even if the Trust cannot do this [clear-cutting regulations], it should never stop trying and advocating for this.”

- “Hard to balance landowner rights and community rights.”
- “No more logging or building of any kind in red zone areas. Protect the Douglas fir areas first and foremost.”

Establish New Development Permit Areas in Priority Zones

Twenty-two comments were submitted on this option, representing 18% of the total comments.

A solid majority of respondents are in favour of this suggestion. Those that did comment are in favour of applying DPAs to larger and/or public tracts of land (5), with one seeing the educational benefits of public visibility. One commenter feels there might be Indigenous resistance. Four commenters rejected more development and two want to see the application be retroactive in the interests of protection and fairness. The following comments illustrate some of these concerns.

- “Any publicly visible restoration projects are an opportunity to educate and engage people. Post-Covid reality is outdoors!”
- “On public land only.”
- “I suspect the Snuneymuxw may not support this for the Crown / treaty lands where most of the contiguous CDF areas remain.”

Subdivision that prioritizes parkland of CDF ecosystem

Thirty-eight comments were submitted on this option, representing 31% of the total comments.

Although there is a more solid majority support for this suggestion in the quantitative responses, it did attract more comments than the previous two questions. Thirteen commenters rejected any more subdivision altogether, no matter what amenity concessions are proposed. Five think we already have regulations of that type and two see such a regulation as being ineffective. One commenter argued for co-management with Indigenous partners. The following comments illustrate some of these concerns.

- “There are legal requirements set by provincial legislation in regards for parkland at the time of subdivision. New policies would be ineffective.”
- “Amenities given shouldn’t be the carrot for developers to have their proposals passed or densities allocated in their favour.”
- “No further development or increased densities. The Trust’s job is to preserve and protect the environment and not be density brokers.”

Other Responses

Twenty-nine comments were submitted on this option, representing 24% of the total comments.

As was the case for responses to this question more generally, the main focus is the rejection of any further subdivision or development (7). Several commenters are concerned about the lack of time to make decisions because too little forest would be left. Two mentioned the need for mapping both buildout and forest preservation priority areas combined. Other suggestions included a native plant nursery, assessment of existing legislation and site-specific guidance. The following comments illustrate some of these concerns.

- “Incentive-based voluntary stewardship delivered by local conservancies and trusts has long been proven to be an effective and expeditious tool over long road to regulation and enforcement. We don’t have that kind of time now!!!!”
- “Finding ways to protect larger areas of land (parks, protected zones, etc.) rather than bits and pieces on people’s small lots would be more effective in actually preserving the CDF forest environment.”
- “Establish programs to support landowners who develop land using environmentally sound methods. Discourage those who clearcut their properties.”

Conclusions: Question 4

Survey respondents are clearly supportive of all measures to protect and enhance Gabriola’s CDF biogeoclimatic zone. But as the qualitative responses above show, there are certain caveats and conditions that survey respondents want to see implemented.

Regulations applicable to existing properties are seen as important but there is also the acknowledgement of the potential for resistance from private property owners. Parkland enhancement is also seen as desirable; however, it is also seen as being too closely tied to development, ecological disturbance and increased density. As in the previous question, the development of educational materials is seen as important.

Question 5: Groundwater Protection Measures

Q5: Please rate your level of support for the Local Trust Committee to explore the following options to identify and protect groundwater quality and quantity on Gabriola Island:

- Develop new regulations that would require rainwater collection and re-use for domestic purposes for new dwellings

- Develop new regulations that would require groundwater monitoring and data collection for new commercial, industrial, institutional or multi-family developments
- Provide educational materials to residents on groundwater quality and quantity protection measures
- Develop new proof of water requirements for subdivision applications that are aligned with local groundwater conditions and the Islands Trust 'preserve and protect' mandate
- Develop policies and regulations that encourage retention of forests and watershed ecosystems to promote groundwater recharge

This question was intended to gather feedback on five broad policy directions to protect and enhance sustainability of groundwater resources.

General Findings

There were 277 responses to this question and 194 comments. 63 people skipped this question (23%). Table 11 below shows all responses to this question.

Table 11: Support for Groundwater Quality and Quantity Protection Options					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Develop new regulations that would require rainwater collection and re-use for domestic purposes for new dwellings	68%	23%	5%	1%	1%
Develop new regulations that would require groundwater monitoring and data collection for new commercial, industrial, institutional or multi-family developments	69%	19%	4%	2%	2%
Provide educational materials to residents on groundwater quality and quantity protection measures	62%	26%	9%	0%	2%
Develop new proof of water requirements for subdivision applications that are aligned with local groundwater conditions and the Islands Trust 'preserve and protect' mandate	70%	19%	4%	2%	1%
Develop policies and regulations that encourage retention of forests and watershed ecosystems to promote groundwater recharge	68%	20%	6%	1%	2%

When the choices *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* are combined, as in Table 12 below, there is very strong support (i.e., above 85%) for implementing all of the policies to protect groundwater quality and quantity on Gabriola. Respondents gave a slightly higher rating to developing new regulations requiring rainwater collection and re-use for domestic purposes for new dwellings.

Table 12: Combined Support for Groundwater Quality and Quantity Protection Options			
Policy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Combined Rating
Develop new regulations that would require rainwater collection and re-use for domestic purposes for new dwellings	68%	24%	92%
Develop new regulations that would require groundwater monitoring and data collection for new commercial, industrial, institutional or multi-family developments	69%	20%	89%
Provide educational materials to residents on groundwater quality and quantity protection measures	62%	26%	88%
Develop new proof of water requirements for subdivision applications that are aligned with local groundwater conditions and the Islands Trust 'preserve and protect' mandate	70%	20%	90%
Develop policies and regulations that encourage retention of forests and watershed ecosystems to promote groundwater recharge	68%	20%	88%

Findings by Housing Status

There is no significant difference between property owners and renters in regard to these measures with one exception: while both groups see education as a useful tool, property owners are more likely to take this position (89%) than renters (75%).

Qualitative Responses

This question received 194 comments distributed across the five policy options and the category *Other*, as outlined below.

a) Require Rainwater Collection for New Dwellings

Forty-seven comments were submitted on this option, representing 24% of the 194 total comments.

This option has the highest level of support in the quantitative responses as well as the highest number of comments. Eighteen commenters support making rainwater catchment mandatory: 13 support mandatory catchment for all new buildings including affordable or multi-units; three support it for all dwellings; and, two for all structures. Two commenters pointed out that such a regulation would be under the

RDN's jurisdiction. Five want either incentives or rebates for cisterns. Two are concerned about construction costs and one about cistern maintenance costs.

The following comments illustrate some of these perspectives.

- “We rely solely on rainwater but to get a mortgage HAD to drill a well.”
- “Affordable and rental housing should not be exempt.”
- “Provide more rebates for people interested in retrofitting older homes with cisterns.”

b) Ground Water Monitoring and Data Collection

Thirty-one comments were submitted on this option, representing 16% of the total comments.

This option also has a high level of support in the quantitative responses. The comments are mainly directed to development. Eight commenters want no development, especially of the listed types but also including multi-unit housing. One commenter proposed no well use at all for all new developments. Three commenters think data collection is useful although one feels that monitoring by itself is insufficient. One commenter wants a groundwater map showing water abundance and quality. The following comments illustrate some of these perspectives:

- “100%, also make it retroactive to existing commercial, industrial, institutional developments.”
- “And not just the volume/GPM of a well. Much of the well water on Gabe is not suitable for potable purposes for many reasons, some of which are very costly and inefficient to mitigate.”
- “Need a groundwater map of high/low or poor quality for island.”
- “Any of the above [structure types] are just not acceptable on the island and would further impact the already distressed island ecology and none of this addresses the threat that any of these developments present to the already endangered groundwater supply via sewage or contaminant incursion.”

c) Groundwater Educational material

Twenty-five comments were submitted for this option, representing 13% of the total comments.

This option also garnered high support in the quantitative responses and has the distinction of being the only question in the survey that did not garner any *Not Sure* responses. Most of the commenters said that education is good but not effective by itself. Five argued that sufficient information is already available but two said area-

specific information would be helpful. Four commenters said that education is effective and necessary. The following comments describe some of these perspectives.

- “Yes, promote an attitude of stewardship instead of exploitation.”
- “I feel we need to compel people to change. The time for education and asking nicely has passed long ago.”
- “Maybe, let people know the geography of this [groundwater] and where shortages have happened, how rectified.”
- “All new owners and renters could be given guidelines for water protection and use. We would all have enough water if we collected”.

d) Subdivision Proof of Water Requirements

Thirty-nine comments were submitted on this option, representing 20% of the total comments.

Many commenters are against any subdivisions. For those who are not, the emphasis is on catchment, not well water use (5). Several feel requirements are already in place while several others feel there are jurisdictional issues. Three commenters are concerned about the unpredictability of climate change effects and several pointed to the difficulty of water adequacy assessments. The following comments illustrate some of these perspectives.

- “I believe any new subdivisions should not be relying on well-water, except as a backup source only.”
- “This sounds like a good idea but determining local groundwater conditions is not easy.”
- “N/a if using more rainwater catchment and well feed into cistern systems. Plus-- it’s next to impossible outside of initial well pump tests to prove long term hydrology predictability. Better to emphasize and require rainwater collection and heavy conservation and ed measures.

e) Forest and Watershed Retention Approach

Twenty-seven comments were submitted for this option, representing 14% of the total comments.

Four commenters think this proposal would be effective but three feel that enforcement, not encouragement, is required. One feels that education before regulation is necessary. Four believe regulations protecting water are already in effect. The following comments describe some of these perspectives.

- “Absolutely, this [forest retention] must be done at a community level, individuals can’t get this done.”
- “We already have riparian area regulations in spite of the fact that a majority of residents opposed it.”

f) Other Responses

Twenty-five comments were submitted for this option, representing 13% of the total comments.

The most common concerns are complaints about the Island Trust (4) and incentivizing programs for cistern installation (4). A suggestion was made to exempt cisterns from lot coverage and setback regulations. Grey water use and composting toilets are also listed as possible solutions. The following comments illustrate some of these perspectives.

- “Provide assistance to existing homeowners to install collection systems.”
- “Remove cisterns from list of structures considered in lot coverage. Also allow them within the setback on small lots.”
- “Create rules around minimum volumes of water storage (tied to building area) in all new builds.”
- “As a fairly new resident 5 years, we didn’t understand that a coastal community would have water issues. It would have been helpful to have a brochure for anyone looking to buy to help deal with the issue and understand the importance.”

Conclusions: Question 5

There is strong support for the entire array of policy options for protecting groundwater on Gabriola. Since water sufficiency appears as a major concern across many survey questions, there is likely to be a consensus for regulations requiring water catchment and storage in new dwellings of all types and support for promoting and assisting residents to develop or enhance water storage systems on existing properties. There is also support for developing and distributing informational materials to all householders and new residents. If forest and site integrity protection can be more explicitly tied to water retention, there may be a greater willingness to consider protective measures.

Survey 3 – Summary Report

The third of the three surveys, *Managing Growth*, posed questions on: increasing housing units on commercial and institutional parcels; flexible zoning for residential properties; managing growth; conserving freshwater; and, adopting more progressive energy and universal design regulations. All but one question provided space for comments.

Background for Survey Three

Background for the third survey was provided in four documents: *Growth on Gabriola* (Appendix 8); *Key Policies on Managing Growth on Gabriola Island* (Appendix 9); a draft build-out map entitled *Gabriola Island Development Potential 2021 DRAFT* (Appendix 10); and, *Information about the BC Energy Step Code and Universal Access Design* (Appendix 11). A glossary of key terms was also provided. In brief:

- Gabriola has a population density of 69.7 persons per square kilometre, making it the second most densely populated of the Gulf Islands. The population of Gabriola according to the 2016 Census was 4,033, and growth was stagnant for the previous two census periods. However, the BC government’s Medical Services Plan health care coverage registrations record 4,415 people on Gabriola in 2020. This is an increase of 382 people, or 9.5%, since 2016.
- Several factors may impact growth: for example, changes to demographic issues like average household size, birth and death rates, and migration to and from Gabriola, as well as physical factors like the availability of lots to build on and the proportion of unoccupied dwellings, as well as how development is regulated through land use planning and development controls.
- Four growth scenarios (see Appendix 8) predict a regular resident population of between 4,631 and 6,632 people in the future. These scenarios are based on the number of lots that are currently undeveloped (490), subdivision potential (158 lots), and secondary suite potential (636). (Note that the scenarios do not take into account the roughly 1000 acres set aside for Treaty negotiations between the Snuneymuxw and the federal and provincial governments.) These scenarios also rely on assumptions about current household size and occupancy patterns. The date at which the population would grow to the numbers projected would be whenever all the potential for development is realized.
- The goals in Gabriola’s Official Community Plan (OCP) only explicitly mention the term “growth” once – stating that “gradual and appropriate” rather than “rapid” growth is to be encouraged. OCP policies and objectives speak to regulating the density that is already permitted through zoning. Anticipating or managing new growth (except for multi-family affordable housing) does not seem

to be contemplated in the OCP, and particularly doing so in ways that would help to meet important social and environmental goals such as the need for affordable housing and the need to protect and preserve our Coastal Douglas-Fir ecosystem and groundwater.

- A variety of new policies or regulations could address the negative impacts of growth on Gabriola and address the need for affordable housing. These include: requiring new rezoning applications that propose an increase in residential density to meet more stringent environmental, building, and design guidelines and contribute to an increase in affordable housing stock; restricting small lot subdivision; requiring rainwater harvesting in new dwelling construction; creating a variety of flexible zoning regulations to increase the availability of affordable rental accommodation; requiring existing rental multi-family dwellings to remain as rental housing; and, allowing more residential density in commercial properties if rental tenure, affordability, and other conditions are met.
- Section 2.5 of the OCP establishes a Density Bank to allow the deposit of densities from lands rezoned as parks or from the voluntary donation of residential densities.

Survey Responses

A total of 338 people responded to this survey, representing one response for every seven Gabriolans aged 19 and over.

In addition to the quantitative data collected, respondents shared 485 comments.

338
respondents
485 comments

Question 1: Housing / Property Status

Q1: Please tell us your current housing / property ownership status on by choosing the category that applies to your situation (check all that apply):

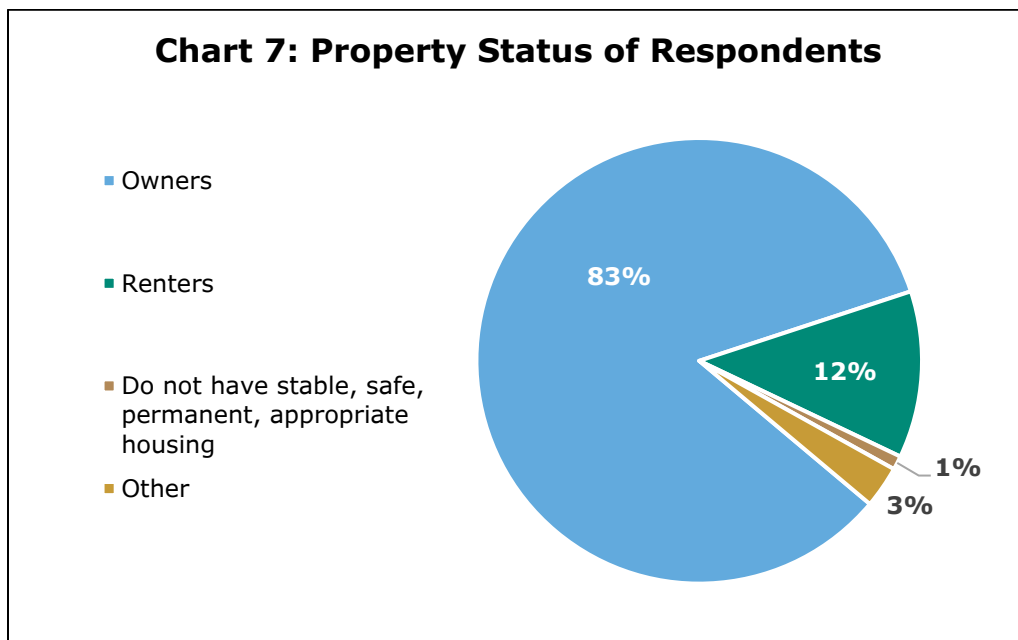
The list of possible responses to this question was the same as for the first question in Survey 1. Respondents were able to check all categories that apply, so, for instance, a person could own property and be in a precarious housing situation.

General Findings

336 respondents provided 336 responses to this question.

Table 13: Respondents by Housing / Property Ownership Status		
Options	Proportion	Number
I own property and reside here full time	77%	260
I own property and reside here part time	4%	13
I own property and visit occasionally	0%	0
I own vacant property	1%	3
I own property which I rent out	1%	3
I am a renter and reside here full time	12%	41
I am a renter and reside here part time	0%	0
I do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing	1%	4
I live elsewhere but I work on Gabriola	0%	0
I have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola	0%	1
I prefer not to answer	1%	4
Other (please specify)	2%	7

Chart 7 outlines the distribution for the three major groups: owners, renters and precariously housed.



This distribution closely resembles the distribution in the 2016 Census (83% owners / 17% renters). Although the 2016 Census provides information on those in core housing need (i.e., that spend over 30% of their income on shelter), it does not provide data on homelessness. The data indicates that just over 1% of respondents are in precarious housing situations. This is consistent with data from Gabriola's 2020 Homelessness count.

Qualitative Responses

The comments on this question tended to clarify the individual's property status (e.g., length of residency, in process of moving from renting to owning) or added a category not included in the list (e.g., living with relatives).

Conclusions: Question 1

The profile of respondents is consistent with the 2016 population distribution.

Questions 2/3: Housing Units in Commercial and Institutional Zones

Current OCP policy (Section 3.1) allows for one single-dwelling residential unit per parcel in any Commercial designation. Questions 2 and 3 explore interest in expanding the number of units allowable in both commercial *and* institutional-zoned properties, and the conditions that would need to be met for such an expansion to be acceptable.

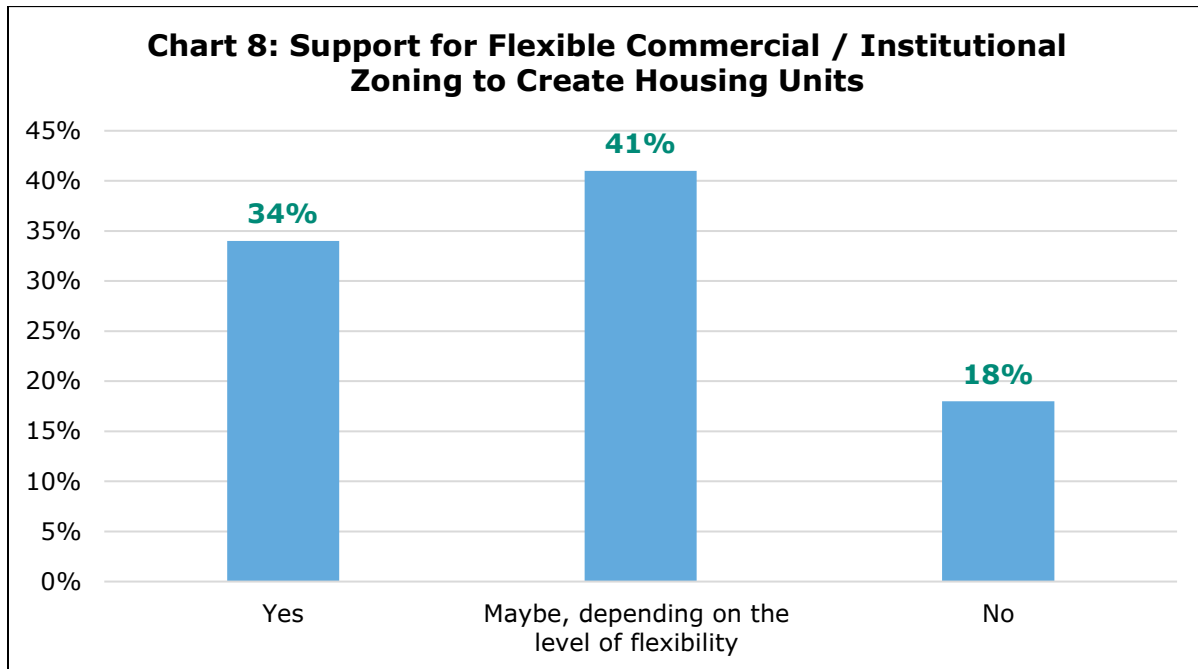
Q2: Would you support more flexible zoning for commercial and institutional parcels in order to incentivize the construction of rental or market housing units during redevelopment?

Respondents were given a choice of *Yes*, *Maybe, depending on the level of flexibility in the zoning*, and *No*, with an opportunity to indicate *Other* followed by comments.

General Findings

There were 311 responses to this question and 23 comments. 27 people (8.7%) skipped this question.

Roughly 75% of respondents are either conditionally supportive (*Maybe* = 41%) or unequivocally supportive (*Yes* = 34%). Although only 18% indicated their lack of support by answering *No*, the qualitative responses from the 7.5% of respondents who chose *Other* are mostly unsupportive of this option. It would therefore be appropriate to categorize all of these together, as 25% who are not in support of this option.



Qualitative Responses

There is not strong support for this proposition in the qualitative responses; support seems to be linked to utilizing flexible zoning only for affordable/rental housing (7). Additional concerns focus on lack of support for density increases (6) and a moratorium on any new building (3), and calls for no commercial/institutional development (2). Two commenters prefer to see more flexibility in allowing secondary suites instead of this option.

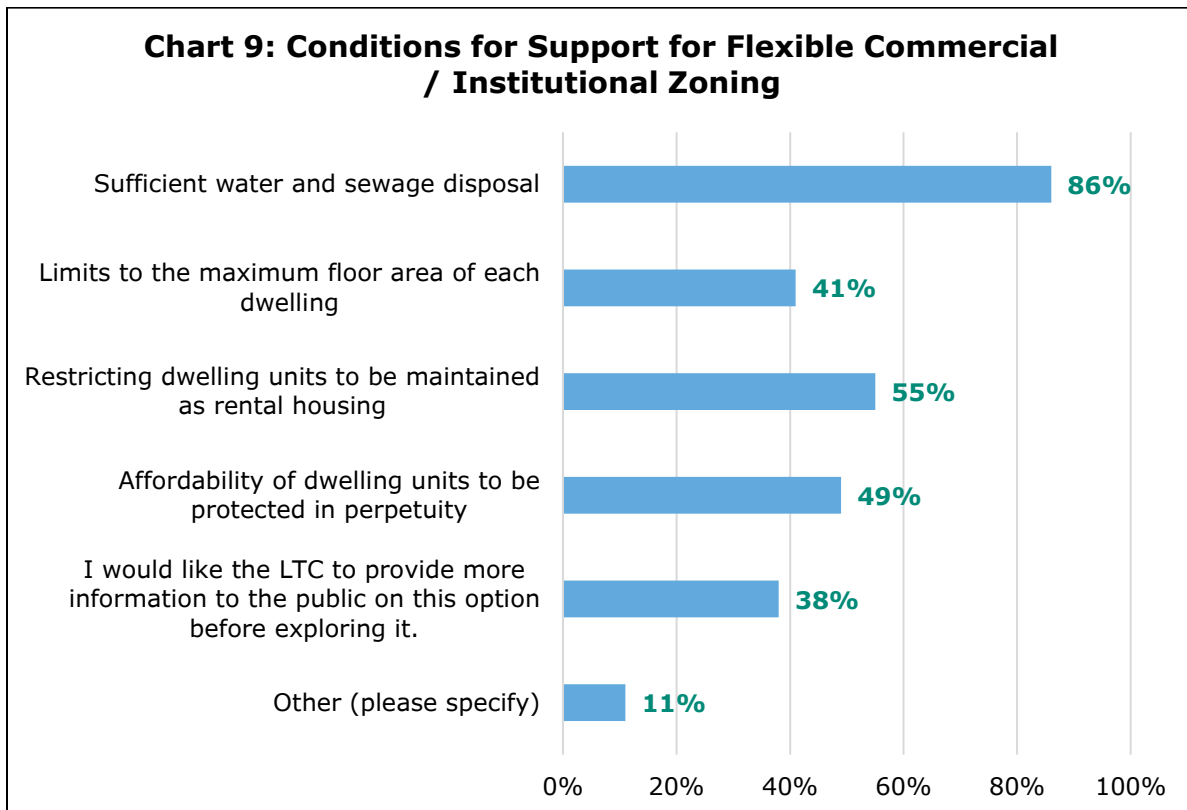
- “Commercial property development cannot be part of a density swap. Residential property should allow secondary suites on existing plans under 5 acres.”
- “The real question is: would such housing be affordable for people working in the commercial premises or would the housing just become ‘high rent’ rental revenue to supplement the revenue of the commercial operation? I’m OK with this as long as the rent is kept [commensurate] with the wages that are being paid on Gabriola, so that new rental units serve Gabriola’s workers.”

Q3: If you answered Yes or Maybe to Question 2, please indicate the conditions under which you would support more flexible zoning for commercial and institutional parcels to allow for more residential units per parcel. Please check all that apply.

Respondents were given six response options: ‘water sufficiency’; limits to floor area; restricting units to rental accommodation; protection of affordability; more information required; and, other.

General Findings

There were 249 responses to this question including 28 comments (11.24%). Eighty-nine people (26.4%) skipped this question. The responses to this question are indicated in Chart 9 below.



Qualitative Responses

The qualitative responses mirror the quantitative data. The majority of respondents expressed strong concerns about ensuring sufficiency of water and sewage disposal and concerns about density increases. The following quotes show the range of concerns:

- “Businesses should be encouraged to build rental units to attract employees.”
- “I do think that rental and affordability are critical but I do not believe that there should be a cap on density--that only forces prices up--density and development should be based on the ability and capability of the land for servicing.”
- “Limit the TOTAL floor area of dwellings (and/or the number of dwellings).”

Conclusions: Questions 2/3

Support for allowing an increased number of residential units in commercial or institutional zoned properties is conditional on water and an assurance that the units will remain as rental units with affordability guaranteed.

Question 4/5: Flexible Zoning in Residential Zones & Conditions

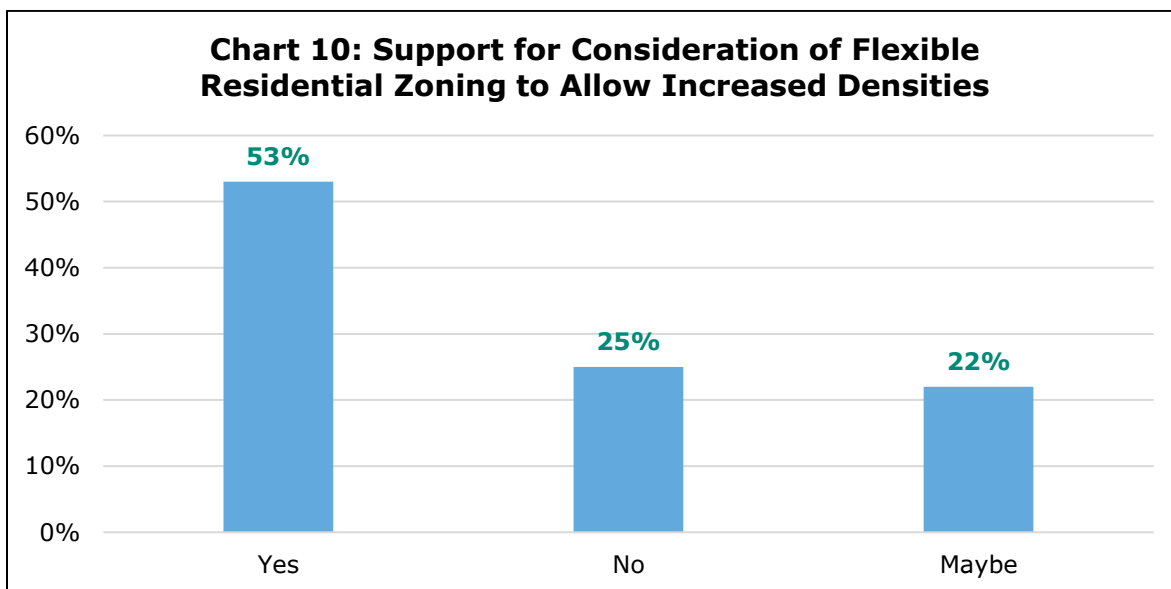
In most residential zones on Gabriola Island, one single family dwelling is permitted per parcel with no floor area maximum; in other words, there are no limits on the size of the dwelling. Questions 4 and 5 examine the potential for more flexible zoning to accommodate changing family needs (e.g., the need for an onsite caregiver, or accommodation for extended family) thereby allowing additional density on a parcel but with restrictions to floor areas and lot coverage being equal to or less than what is allowed for one traditional-sized, single-family dwelling.

Q4: Should the LTC consider looking at more flexible residential zoning regulations to allow for increased densities on a parcel under certain conditions?

General Findings

Three hundred and eleven (311) people responded to this question, which garnered 61 comments. 27 people (8%) skipped this question.

As the chart below indicates, 53% of respondents support this option, 22% are uncertain, and 25% do not support this option.



Qualitative Responses

The sentiments expressed in the 61 comments on this question are consistent with the responses to the quantitative questions. Commenters are particularly supportive of uses that accommodate family / relatives (7) and caregivers (5). Legalizing existing secondary suites to rent (6) on all lots is also popular. Water and septic provisions are important to five commenters as is environmental protection more generally (3). Commenters are

supportive depending on lot size (5); dwelling size (3); and neighbourhood density (3). Three commenters would approve only if the rental is restricted to low-income affordability. Thirteen commenters, however, want no density increase whatsoever, although several would approve a suite in a house for a rental or caregiver provided there is no increase in density.

The following quotes illuminate the range of responses to this question:

- “Really depends on the size of the lot and the existing density on surrounding lots.”
- “Secondary suites should be allowed on condition that they are restricted to low-income affordability as the condition for allowing their use.”
- “Perhaps in combination with more restrictive sizes for single family dwellings.”
- “For family or to allow person to age in place.”
- “This is interesting, but I would worry about the amount of density per neighbourhood and the relationship with water.”
- “Not sure how this is a benefit that couldn’t be accomplished by allowing owners to create a legal secondary suite to rent out.”

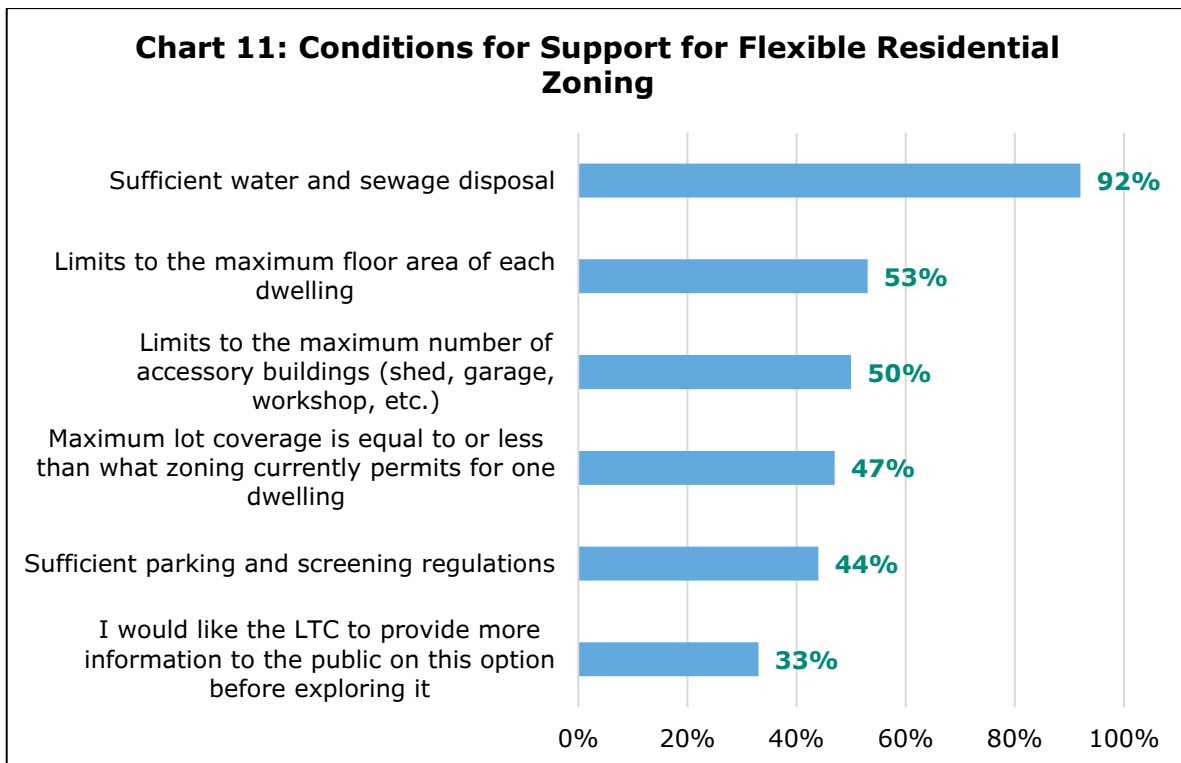
Q5: If you answered Yes or Maybe to Question 4, please indicate the conditions under which you would support more flexible zoning for residential parcels to allow for more residential units per parcel. Please check all that apply.

General Findings

Two hundred and thirty-four people responded to this question. 104 people (44.4%) skipped this question. There were 29 comments.

As shown in Chart 11 below, the dominant concern (92%) is ensuring sufficient water and sewage disposal to support any increase in density. 50% of respondents want limits on the maximum floor area of each dwelling if flexible zoning were to be allowed.

Responses to the other criteria are: putting limits on the number of accessory buildings allowed on a property (50%); ensuring that maximum lot coverage is equal to or less than zoning currently permits (47%); and, putting in place regulations to address sufficiency of parking and screening (44%). Again, it is important to note that one-third of respondents want the LTC to provide more information on this option.



Findings by Housing Status

Owner respondents are more likely than renters to support limits to maximum floor area (56%/40%), limits to the number of accessory buildings (50%/37%), and limits to maximum lot coverage (50%/37%).

Qualitative Responses

The qualitative responses mirrored the quantitative data results. Although only about one quarter of respondents to question 4 indicated they are not supportive of flexible zoning, and although the overall response rate to that question was very high, about one-third of respondents chose to skip this question

Water, as usual, is important to virtually all of the respondents. There is uncertainty about how to limit buildings/lot coverage as well as house size. The commenters put environmental protection, especially that of trees, first (8); water and sewage adequacy are also important (4). Comments on density are varied and include: no rezoning (1); no density increases (2); no subdivisions (1); and, more residential parcels through density transfer only. Two commenters support the idea that higher densities are more sustainable, and one thinks increasing density would be feasible in some zones. One urged the reassessment of secondary suites on ALR land.

The following quotes shine a light on these perspectives:

- “I hope water and sewage in this survey leave open the possibilities of more rainwater harvesting and properly built composting toilets.”
- “Control tree loss where possible.”
- “I think it would be better to see more people living closely on a lot than a massive house with only one couple, etc. in it.”
- “Allow homeowners to manage their own property without interference.”

Conclusions: Questions 4/5

A bare majority of respondents (54%) unconditionally support flexible zoning in residential zones, and an additional 22% are undecided. As with other options a primary concern is water and sewage adequacy and the impact on the environment, especially trees. The size of dwellings/ lots and lot coverage are also important, especially for owners. There appears to have been some confusion as to whether ‘flex’ zoning would result in increased densities.

Question 6: Managing Growth

Q6: Please rate the following options for ensuring managed growth.

This question was intended to examine respondents’ interest in changing policies and regulations to manage growth.

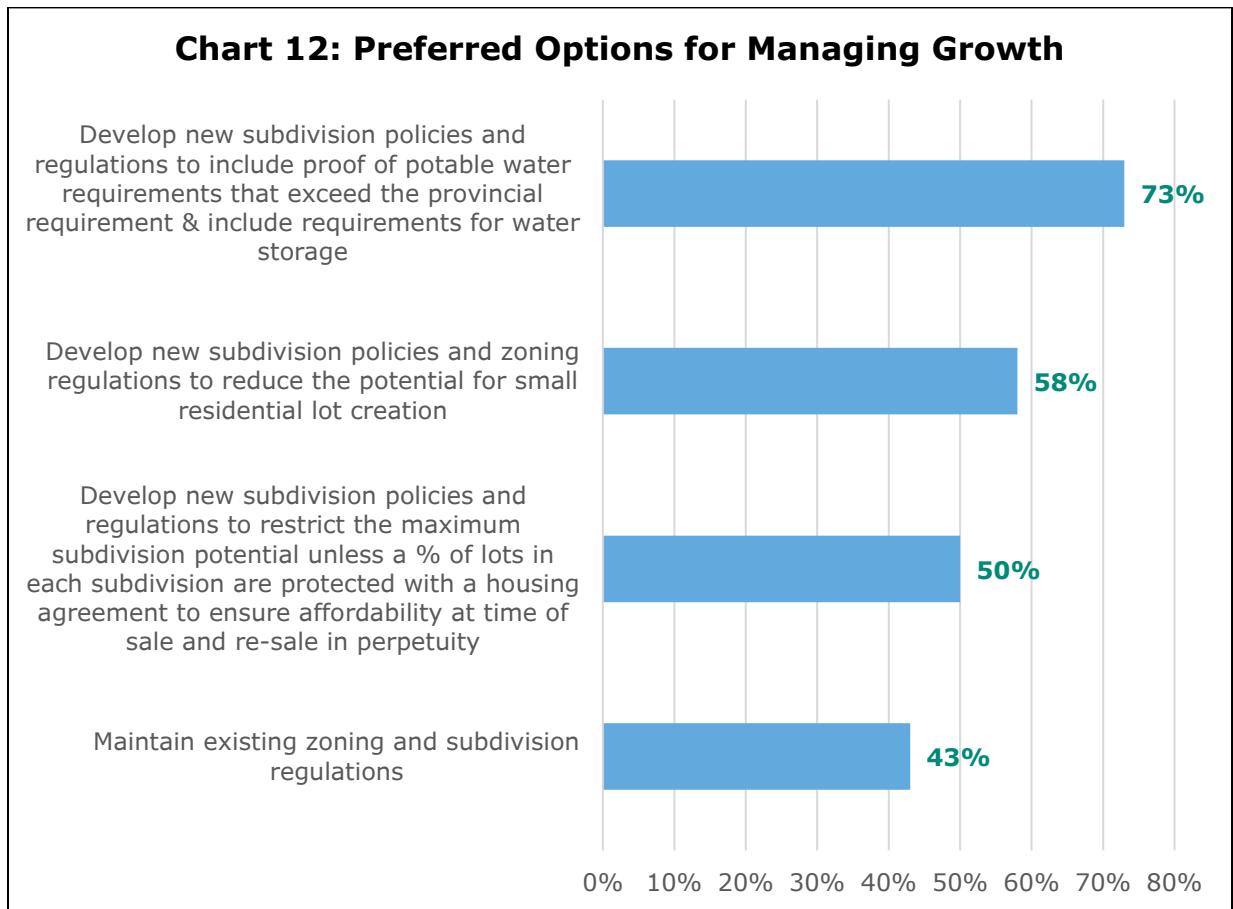
General Findings

There were 281 responses to this question; 57 people (17.1%) skipped. In addition, there were 183 comments. The options and relative weightings are outlined in the table below.

Table 14: Support for Growth Management Options				
Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Maintain existing zoning and subdivision regulations	20%	23%	26%	11%
Develop new subdivision policies and regulations to include proof of potable water requirements that exceed the provincial requirement & include requirements for water storage.	42%	31%	9%	9%
Develop new subdivision policies and zoning regulations to reduce the potential for small residential lot creation	32%	26%	18%	13%
Develop new subdivision policies and regulations to restrict the maximum subdivision potential unless a % of lots in each subdivision are protected with a housing agreement to ensure affordability at time of sale and re-sale in perpetuity.	23%	27%	14%	16%

As shown in Chart 12, when the options *Strongly Support* and *Support* are combined, the option with the highest support is “develop new subdivision policies and regulations to include proof of potable water requirements that exceed the provincial requirement & include requirements for water storage” (73%). This is followed by the option to “develop new subdivision policies and zoning regulations to reduce the potential for small residential lot creation” (58%).

The other two options both scored 50% or under: “require that new subdivision policies and regulations to restrict the maximum subdivision potential unless a percentage of lots in each subdivision are protected with a housing agreement to ensure affordability at time of sale and re-sale in perpetuity” (50%); and, “maintain existing zoning and subdivision regulations” (43%).



Findings by Housing Status

Owners are more likely than renters to support maintaining existing zoning and subdivision regulations (46% compared to 25%), and encouraging the LTC to develop new subdivision polices and zoning regulations to reduce the potential for small residential lots to be created (63% compared to 29% of renters).

Not surprisingly, 73% of renter respondents support new subdivision policies and regulations that could restrict the maximum subdivision potential unless a percentage of lots in each subdivision are protected with a housing agreement to ensure affordability at time of sale and re-sale in perpetuity. Only 46% of property owner respondents support this option.

Qualitative Responses

There were 183 qualitative responses for Question 6.

a) Maintaining existing zoning and subdivision regulations

The 39 qualitative comments on this option mirror the concerns expressed in the quantitative results about juxtaposing density increases and environmental protection with the need for affordable housing. Interestingly three respondents called for the OCP to be “redone”. The comments also mirror the nearly even distribution between those who want no change and those who feel some change is required.

Four commenters want no density increases; two want no subdivisions, and one no rezoning. Three commenters are in favour of strengthening the regulations and/or focusing on environmental protection. On the other hand, seven commenters see a need for flexibility and change and four want change to give priority to affordable or low-income housing.

The quotes below reflect these perspectives:

- “Clearly this is not working. Some change is needed.”
- “Not if they preclude innovative ways to create affordable or supportive housing to provide housing security for current working residents in unstable / insecure / unsafe housing situations.”
- “Any changes should be carefully considered because the potential impacts of allowing increased density could be significant for the environment and island culture. However, specific actions taken to increase rental housing (in perpetuity) would be beneficial. Even if it’s market rate, the creat[ion] of additional spaces will mean rent will decrease.”

b) Increasing proof of water requirements and including water storage requirements

Although this question has the highest number of positive responses and the lowest number of ‘unsure’ responses, the 52 comments made are divided between no change and strong support. Seven commenters want no new densities; three no subdivisions; one each for no building and no rezoning; and two want downzoning.

On the other side, 18 commenters are in favour of requiring rainwater storage for new buildings with encouragement for existing dwellings to add such systems. Seven commenters are either unsure about provincial regulations, or see them as being excessive, especially for small homes with one or two residents. Several commenters see no need to exceed the provincial regulations.

The following quotes illustrate these perspectives:

- “Require ALL properties to install rainwater systems. Phased in over 5-year period with incentives at first and penalties after 5 years for non-compliant houses.”
- “Rainwater harvested for greywater and blackwater usage may greatly reduce our impact on local resources. Who knows, it may even help when the grounds are dry in the summer and people continue discharging used water back to the land through sewage treatment systems.”
- “Water requirements sound high esp. for 1-2 people; definitely require water storage.”

c) Creating new policies and regulations to reduce small residential lot creation

42 comments were received for this option. A small majority of respondents support this option although there is some disagreement about the size of a “small” lot. Four commenters want lots no smaller than 1 acre; one no smaller than .5 hectare; and two no smaller than 1 hectare. Five support an increase with conditions such as: clustering dwellings; with parkland; with shared sewage and water services; for affordable housing; and, to accommodate tiny houses. Eight commenters want no new lots; six want no increase in density; one no subdivisions; and two support downzoning only.

The following quotes illuminate some of these concerns:

- “I think it would be better to do more with what we already have than create more lots. Many spread out small lots, all being developed is not good for the environment. More concentrated development with larger protected areas would be better.”
- “I would love to see increased density with shared sewer and water. Kinda gross the way it is now.”
- “I don’t know if this is likely anymore--and I guess it’s all in the definition of what “small” is. If you mean no further potential for subdivision of lots of any size (even on >5 acre lots) I don’t agree.”

d) Creating new policies and regulations to restrict subdivision potential unless a percentage are protected with a housing agreement to ensure affordability

There were 50 comments for this option. The comments reflect considerable uncertainty about how to respond to this proposition. As in responses to other questions, increased density (10), subdivisions (4), and new housing (4) are all rejected. On the other hand, there is a clear desire to support increasing affordable housing, but uncertainty about the usefulness of this approach to accomplish that objective. Fourteen commenters expressed concern about: the authority of the LTC to ensure conditions are met; legal issues; the feasibility of long-term enforcement of the provisions; and maintenance issues. Three commenters want to reduce regulations for developers, given the cost of building and the required amenity provisions.

The following quotes describe some of these perspectives:

- “[Subdivision] should be restricted AND provide affordable options.”
- “How can you ensure anything in perpetuity?”
- “No. This is a rat hole that is difficult to oversee and sure to be exploited.”
- “The cost of building is [exorbitant] and a housing agreement will not change the cost of building. Have the developer donate 10% of their allowable densities to the Density Bank.”

Conclusions: Question 6

There is comparatively little support for maintaining the status quo policy framework around managing growth. Instead, there is strong support for policies addressing water conservation and protection. As well, there is support for limiting the potential for the creation of small lots through subdivision. And although requiring provision of affordable housing as part of subdivision application received less support than the previous two options, almost 52% of respondents support this option.

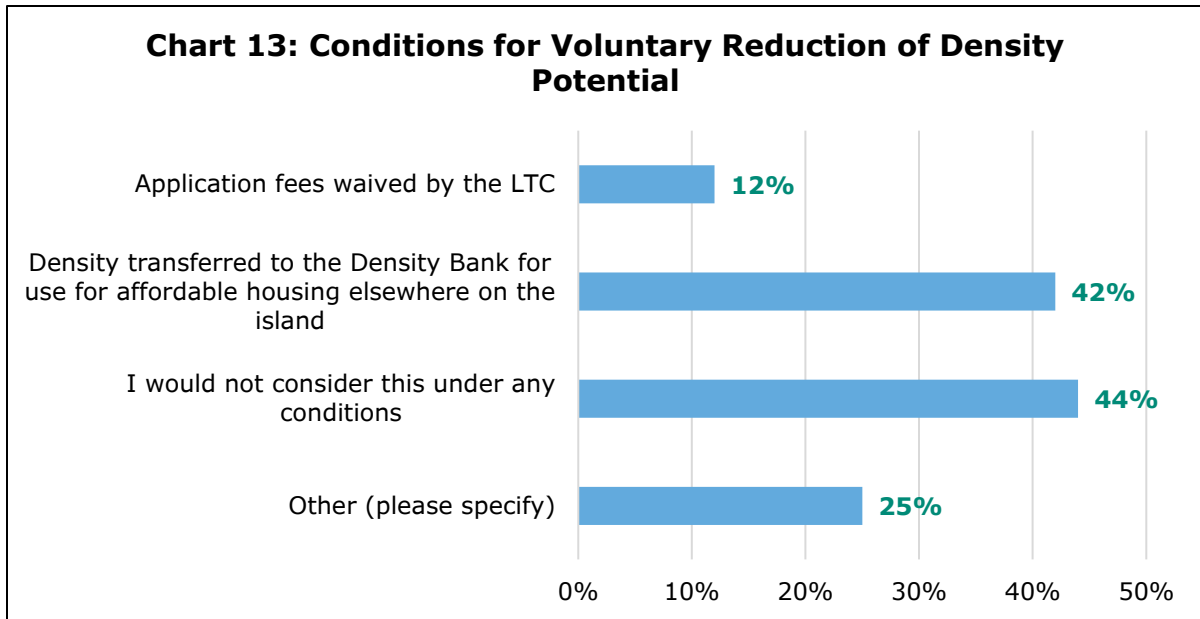
Question 7: Voluntary Density Reduction

This question examines the variety of conditions under which property owners would consider contributing densities to the Density Bank.

Q7: If you own a property with subdivision potential or two adjacent lots, under what conditions would you consider voluntarily reducing the density potential through rezoning or lot consolidation? Please check all that apply.

General Findings

Fifty-two people responded to this question, while 286 (85.1%) skipped.



Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents indicated that they would not consider voluntarily reducing density under any conditions. However, the remaining 56% indicated they would consider voluntarily reducing density if the densities are used for affordable housing elsewhere on the island (42%), or if application fees are waived by the LTC (12%).

Qualitative Responses

Thirteen respondents chose *Other*, which required them to provide a written comment. The preferred option among those who wrote in a response is density transfer, as is the case in the qualitative responses. However, several prefer leaving the adjacent lot undeveloped and the density unused. One commenter who owns 5 adjacent lots pointed out that the financial loss associated with combining lots would be too great. The following comments illustrate these responses.

- “I own a lot and will inherit the lot next door. I intend to keep the inherited lot wild. I do not believe more density is even viable. I will not sell it so someone can build on it.”
- “Only if I could provide an affordable house for renting or purchase.”
- “I would suggest that this consolidation be encouraged, but that the density, although in the Density Bank, remain the property of the original owner and available for sale to owners of lots of sufficient size to be subdividable. This would encourage lot consolidation and reduce lot concentration for the benefit of sewage disposal and access to water.”

Conclusions: Question 7

It appears there is some appetite from over half of the property owners who responded to this question to consider consolidation of adjacent lots under certain conditions and for relinquishing densities if they are used for affordable housing. The waiving of LTC fees did not appear to be a critical consideration.

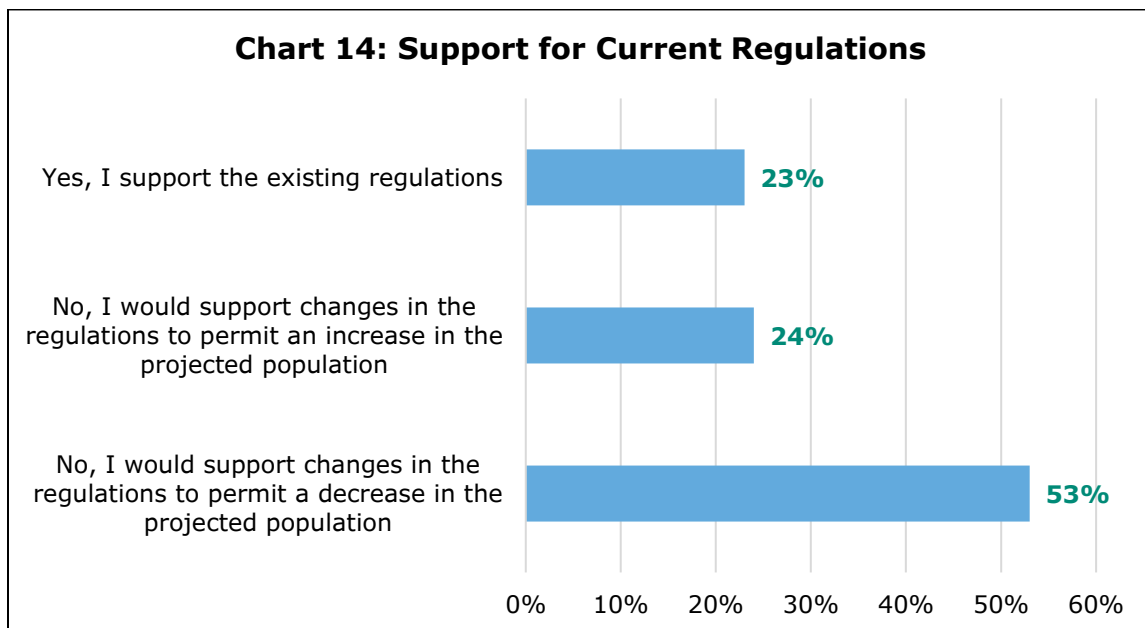
Questions 8/9: Population Growth Attitudes & Management Strategies

The next two questions examine the degree of comfort people have with the status quo policy approach to growth management, or with approaches that would either permit an increase in population or result in a decrease in population, and the regulatory strategies that should be considered to manage growth and its impacts.

Q8: Are you supportive of maintaining the current regulations that could result in maximum build-out?

General Findings

Two hundred and seventy-six people responded to Question 8. Sixty-two people (18.5%) skipped this question.



53% of respondents support changes in regulation that would result in a *decrease* in population. 23% support maintaining the current regulations that could result in full build out. A slightly larger percentage (24%) support changes in regulations to permit an *increase* in the projected population.

Findings by Housing Status

Interestingly, more renters (42%) than owners (22%) support regulatory changes to allow an increase in population, while more owners (56%) than renters (29%) support regulatory changes that would result in a decrease in population.

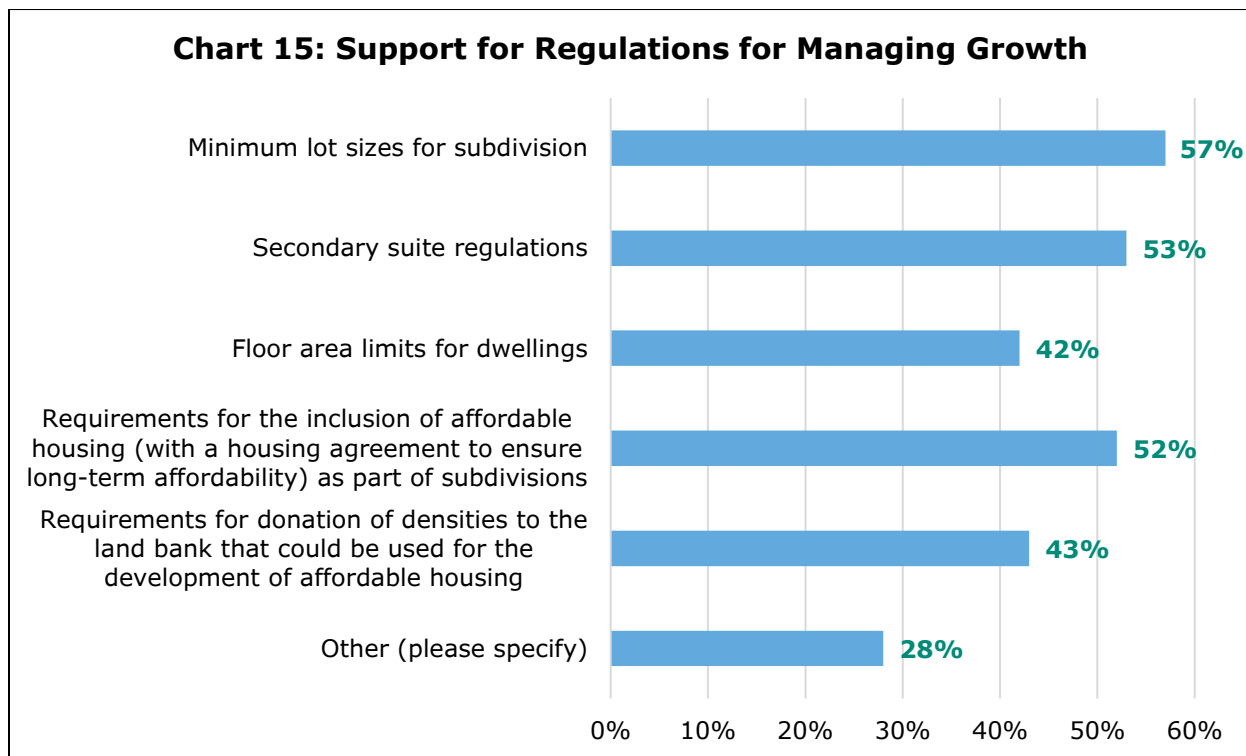
Qualitative Responses

There was no allowance for qualitative responses to this question; however, two comments in the following question regretted that there was no opportunity to comment on this question.

Q9: If you answered No to question 8, what regulations do you recommend the LTC review to manage growth and/or the impacts of growth? Please check all that apply.

General Findings

Two hundred and four people responded to Question 9; 134 (40%) skipped the question. There were 58 responses in the *Other* category.



The three strategies for managing growth that received more than 50% support are: establishing minimum lot sizes for subdivisions (57%); establishing secondary suite regulations (54%); and requiring the inclusion of affordable housing (supported by a housing agreement) as part of subdivisions (52%). Two other options garnered less than

50% support: requiring that donation of densities to the Density Bank be used for the development of affordable housing (43%); and establishing floor area limits for dwellings (42%).

Findings by Housing Status

Owner respondents (59%) are more supportive than renters (43%) for minimum lot sizes for subdivisions. Not surprisingly, renters (91%) are much more supportive than owners (47%) for requirements for affordable housing as part of subdivision, more supportive (66%) than owners (40%) of the idea of requirements of donations of densities to the Density Bank for affordable housing.

Qualitative Responses

Just under one third of respondents chose to comment, and several stated outright that there are no options they could support. There were 18 responses that want to see no more density or development: no increased growth (5); no subdivision (5); no density increase (5); no building (1); and, no (major) development (2). Seven commented on secondary suites, generally advocating for loosened requirements and the renovation of substandard dwellings. Four commenters would agree to an increase in density for affordable housing while two want to see it spread around the island. Two commenters want multi-family units; two support low-rise apartment buildings; two likewise for trailer parks; and, one each for tiny houses and town houses. Several commenters want to see no restrictions on private property (2) or no more regulations (1). The comments below illustrate the range of responses.

- “I don’t believe there is a way to decrease growth, but if there was, I would support it. Gabriola is already the densest of all Gulf Islands. Most of the above suggestions seem to actually be for increasing growth.”
- “Specific affordable housing projects paired with other reduced density bylaws to protect the environment while providing some housing.”
- “Require a minimum percentage of trees to stay on the land for any further private buildings.”
- “Loosen SS regs; reject requirements for affordable housing or donations but both could be encouraged.”

Conclusions: Questions 8/9

As Question 8 responses show, Gabriolans are split on the question of growth. Slightly over half of Gabriolans surveyed are supportive of *degrowth* strategies. Almost half support either the status quo approach (23%) or implementing regulations that would increase growth (24%).

Question 9, rather than focusing of strategies that would reduce growth (e.g., down-zoning of existing lots), focused instead on mitigating the impacts of growth while addressing housing needs. There is qualified support for all the options presented but establishing minimum lot sizes for subdivision, requiring the inclusion of affordable housing (supported by a housing agreement) as part of subdivisions, and regulating secondary suites are the most often chosen options.

Questions 10/11: Sources of Freshwater

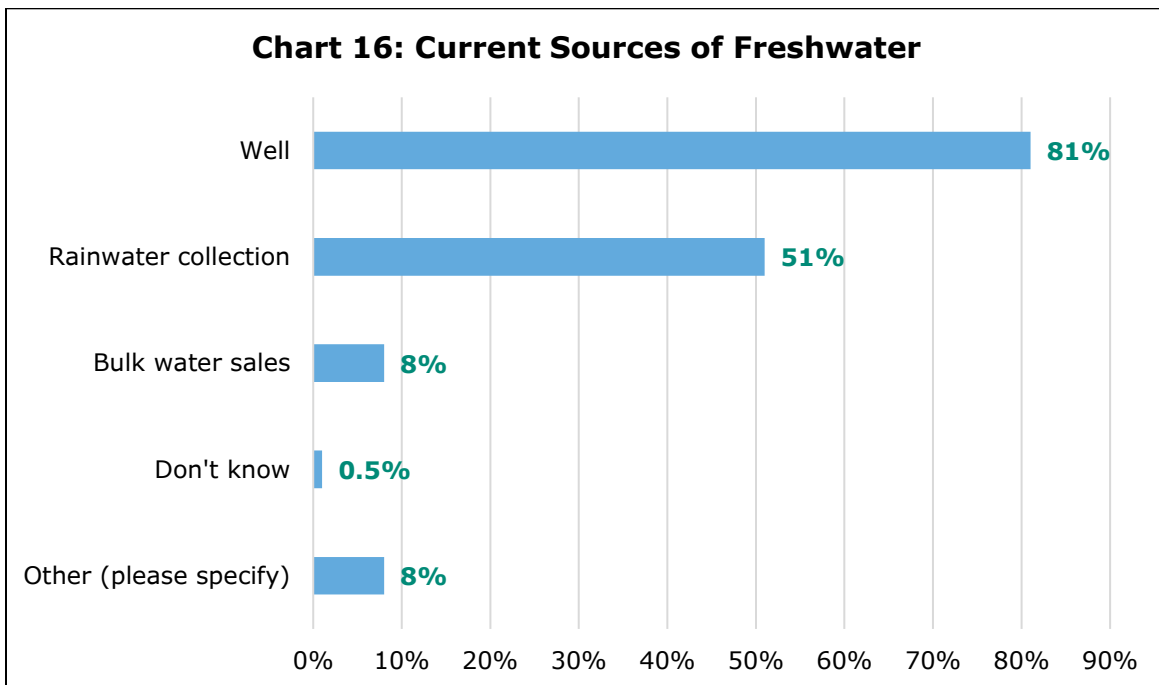
These two questions were aimed at understanding Gabriolans’ freshwater sources.

Q10: What is your current source of freshwater? Please check all that apply.

General Findings

Question 10 was answered by 279 respondents; 59 people (18%) skipped this question. Respondents were asked to check all sources that apply.

Eighty-one percent of respondents (226) indicated that they use well water; 51% (97) use rainwater collection; 8% (14) purchase bulk water; and 0.5% do not know the source of their water.



Qualitative Responses

This question received 16 comments, which tended to highlight the need to purchase potable (drinking water) (4) rather than bulk water use:

- “I still buy my drinking water.”

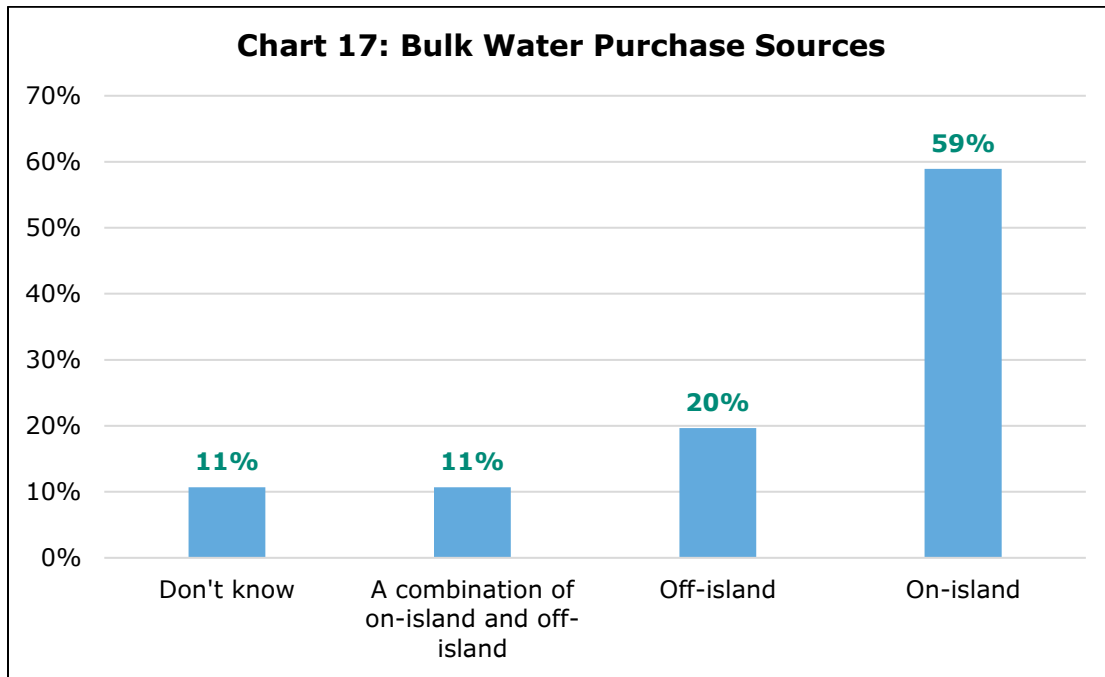
Several commenters indicated they use rainwater for the garden and several indicated they have ample water supplies.

Q11: If you purchase bulk water, do you source your bulk water on island or off-island?

General Findings

Fifty-six people responded to this question; 282 (84%) skipped it.

As the chart below indicates, the majority of those who purchase bulk water source it from on-island (59%) with another 11% using a combination of on- and off-island sources. 20% of respondents use only off-island sources.



Conclusions: Questions 10/11

The predominant source of water is wells followed by rainwater. Bulk water sales do not appear to be a significant source of water. What these data do not tell us is what combination of resources individual households use (e.g., only wells, or wells and rainwater collection). It appears that most people who bought water in bulk do so from on-island sources although it is not clear whether people are also including large refillable bottles of drinking water in the bulk water category, especially in question 11, given that about double the number of respondents answered question 11 than did those who indicated they purchased bulk water in question 10.

Questions 12/13: Rainwater Collection and Storage

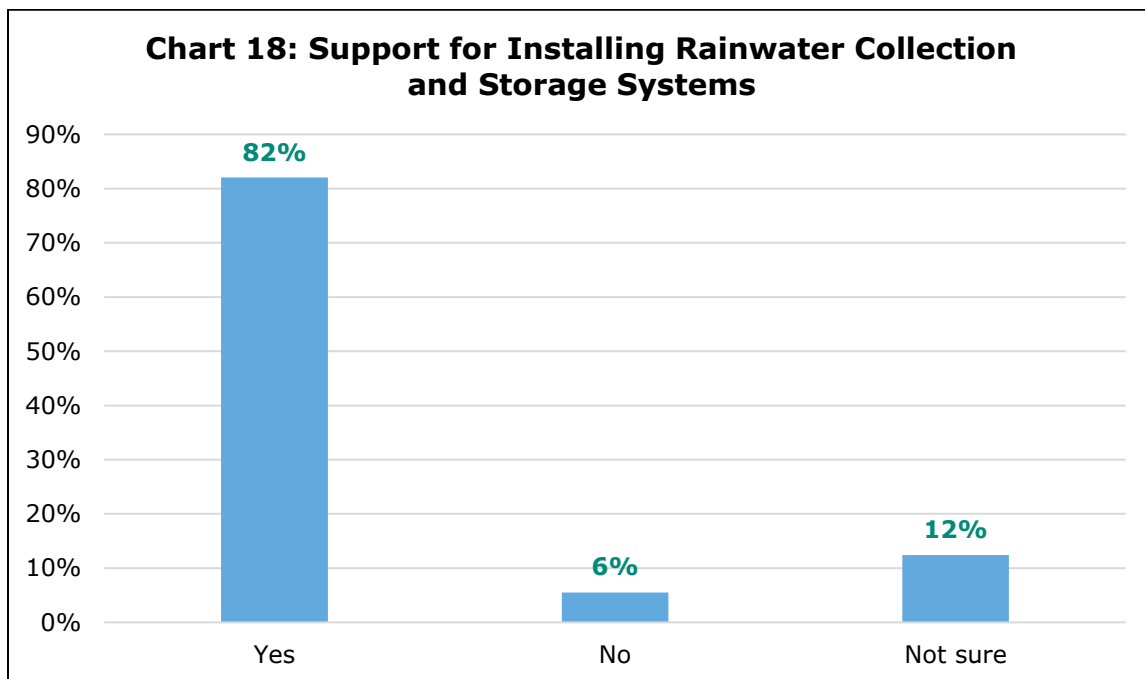
These two questions were aimed at understanding Gabriolans’ attitudes to rainwater harvesting and their intended uses for collected rainwater.

Q12: Would you consider installing a rainwater collection and storage system?

General Findings

Question 12 was answered by 217 people; 121 skipped (36.2%) the question.

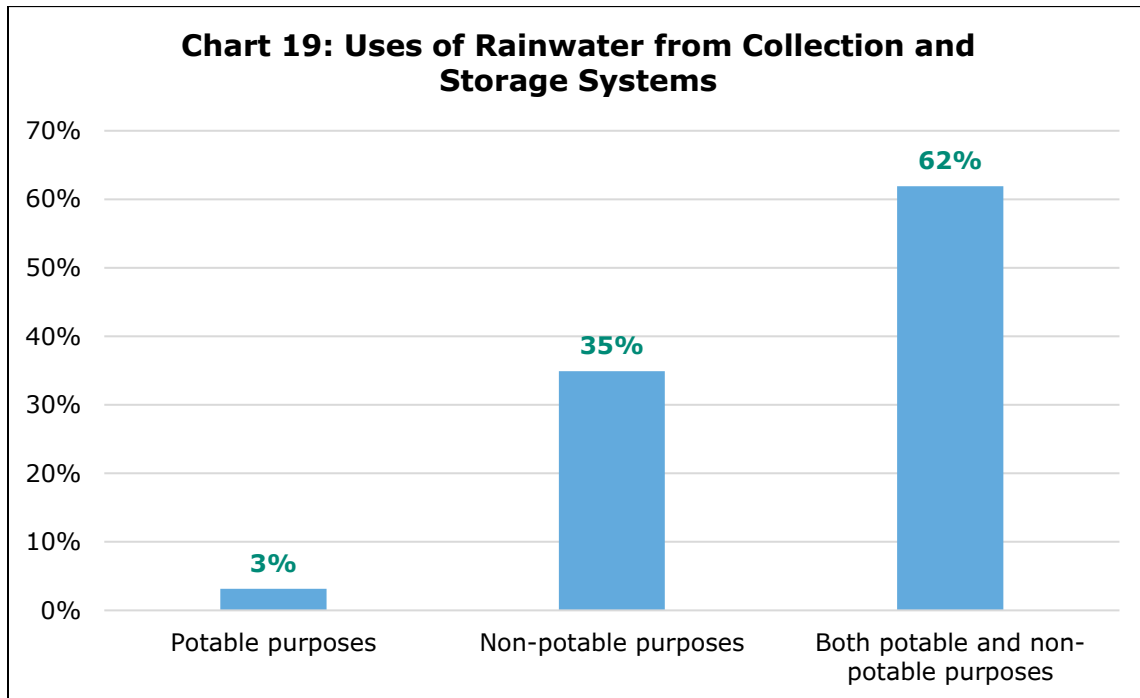
A high percentage of respondents indicated that they would consider installing a rainwater collection and storage system (82%). An additional 12% are unsure and only 6% said they would not consider a rainwater system.



Q13: If you use or would consider using a rainwater collection and storage system, what do/would you use it for?

There were 252 responses to Question 13 and 86 skips (25.5%).

Over 60% of respondents indicated they would/do use rainwater for both potable and non-potable uses, followed by 35% who would/do only use it for non-potable purposes and 3% who would/do use rainwater for potable purposes.



Qualitative Responses

There were 19 comments to this question. Most commenters use rainwater for non-potable purposes; several commented on the expense and difficulty of maintaining and monitoring treatments for potability. Several commenters pointed out that there was no option to indicate current use of a rainwater collection system.

- “Forcing people to collect/store rainwater will make houses cost more, not less.”
- “Would like to see reasonably priced set up and maintenance options, especially for older and disabled persons.”

Conclusions: Questions 12/13

Freshwater conservation has been a constant theme throughout the three surveys and a majority of Gabriolans depend on well water or a combination of well water, rainwater collection and bulk water purchases for both potable and non-potable needs. It is important to note that over 80% of respondents indicated they would consider installing a rainwater collection and storage system.

Question 14: Energy Step Code & Universal Access Design

The BC Energy Step Code will result in homes that use “net-zero energy”. The Code is voluntary but local governments may use it, if they wish, to incentivize or require a level of energy efficiency in new construction that goes beyond the requirements of the BC Building Code.

Q14: To what degree would you support regulations that would require new dwellings (approved through a rezoning) to be constructed to meet BC Energy Step Code requirements and Universal Access Design requirements?

This question was used to gauge respondents’ support for increasing energy efficiency and accessibility requirements in new residential construction.

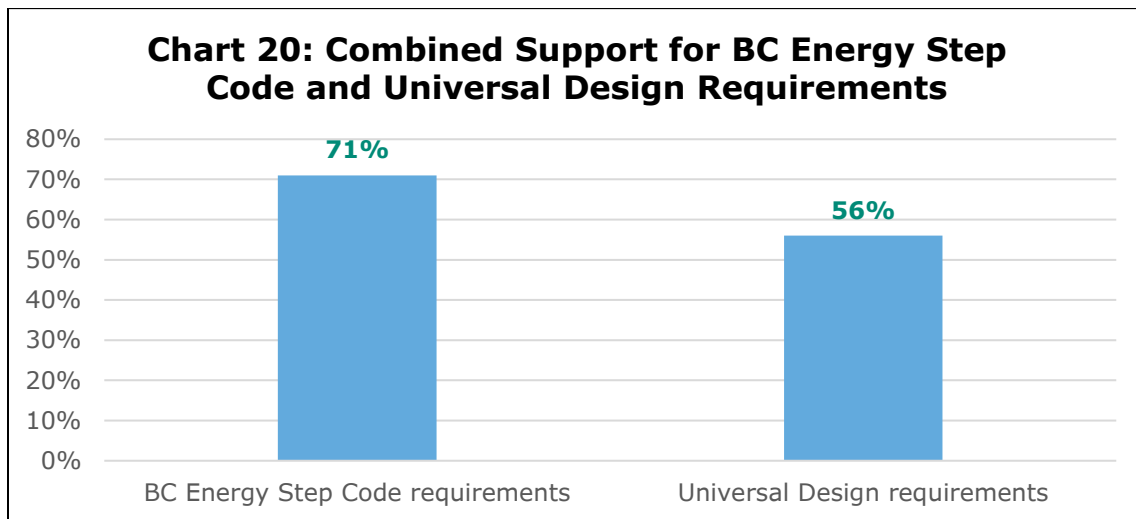
General Findings

There were 273 responses to this question, 65 skips (19.4%) and 67 comments.

The table below shows all responses to this question.

Table 15: Support for BC Energy Step Code and Universal Design Requirements					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
BC Energy Step Code requirements	41%	30%	8%	6%	15%
Universal Design requirements	25%	31%	12%	9%	23%

Over 70% of respondents indicated they *Strongly Agree* (41%) or *Agree* (30%) that new dwelling approved through a rezoning should be constructed to meet BC Energy Step Code requirements. Although only 14% of respondents indicated they *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree* with this policy, 15% indicated they are *Not Sure*.



The question of implementing Universal Access Design requirements received less enthusiastic support with 56% indicating they *Strongly Agree* (25%) or *Agree* (31%), and 21% respondents indicating they *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree* with this policy. Almost one-quarter (23 %) indicated they are *Not sure*.

Qualitative Responses

There were 67 comments to this question: 33 for the Energy Code, and 34 for Universal Access Design. Many of the comments focused on the increased cost of building to the energy code requirements (11), some remarking that the impacts of the increased cost would have a particular effect on the affordability of housing. Some feel the current BC Building Code requirements are sufficient. Commenters noted that Universal Access requirements would also result in cost increases (5) and that current requirements are sufficient (3). There is also some opposition to making both BC Building Code and Universal Access requirements mandatory (9). The comments below reflect the responses:

- “Agree in principle but don’t think it should be mandatory.”
- “I agree in principle, but I also know this item can cause building to be more expensive (even modeling/proofing etc.) This needs to be balanced with the encouragement for building secondary suites, etc.”
- “The building code disables people from building something more affordable. Also, a sustainable dwelling needs an engineer and how can this make housing affordable.”

Conclusions: Question 14

There is stronger support for the early implementation of the BC Energy Step Code than for the Universal Access requirements. Concerns arose primarily around the cost implications for new construction.

Overview of Findings

The findings from the survey responses form the basis for the recommendations that follow. They are organized by three themes: managing growth, conserving biodiversity and freshwater, and creating affordable housing.

Managing Growth

Current projections suggest that the population could grow from the current 4425 to 6,632 if all vacant lots, lots with potential for secondary suites, and subdividable lots on Gabriola were built-out and occupied. This projection also assumes full year occupancy compared to the current year-round occupancy rate of 72%. This projection excludes the lands set aside for Treaty because there is no way of knowing the subdivision potential at this time.

The goals in the Gabriola Official Community Plan (1997) only explicitly mention the term “growth” once – in which “gradual and appropriate” rather than “rapid” growth is to be encouraged. The other policies and objectives speak to regulating the density that is already permitted through zoning. Anticipating or managing new growth (except for multi-family affordable housing) does not seem to be contemplated in the OCP.

Survey 3 (Q8) asked respondents whether they wanted to *maintain* the current regulations that could result in maximum build-out or wanted to see regulations that would permit an *increase* in the projected population, or a *decrease*. The majority of Gabriolans surveyed want regulations that would result in a population decrease (53%) or maintained at its current trajectory (23%). One-quarter (24%) wish to see regulations that would result in an increase in population.

Respondents were also asked to rate policies to manage growth (Survey 3 Q6). There is comparatively little support for maintaining the status quo. Instead, there is strong support for policies addressing water conservation and protection, as well as support for limiting the potential for the creation of small lots through subdivision. Almost 52% of respondents support requiring provision of affordable housing as part of a subdivision application.

In Survey 3 Question 9, respondents were asked about a variety of regulations that could be implemented to manage growth or mitigate its impact. There is qualified support for all the options presented but establishing minimum lot sizes for subdivision, requiring the inclusion of affordable housing (supported by a housing agreement) as part of subdivisions, and regulating secondary suites were the most often chosen options and received more than 50% support.

Over half of property owners with subdividable or adjacent lots indicated that they would voluntarily reduce their density potential through rezoning or lot consolidation

(Survey 3 Q7) on the condition that the densities be used for affordable housing elsewhere on the island.

Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation

The responses to Survey 2 Q2 show clear support among respondents for incorporating the concept of biodiversity into the Official Community Plan. Although only a small number of respondents propose using the term biocultural diversity, this term is being proposed in academic journals as a more robust way of understanding the relationship between human culture and nature (for example see [British Ecological Society](#)). This suggests that the concept itself needs to be clearly articulated – for instance, delineating the difference between *biodiversity* or *biocultural diversity*, which incorporates the role of human activity.

Survey 2 (Q 3) examined attitudes towards policies that *encouraged* actions versus policies that *required* actions. Current OCP policies lean towards encouraging certain behaviours and applying more prescriptive strategies (e.g., through rezoning applications or establishing DPAs) in targeted areas. There is a clear desire among those surveyed to take a more assertive approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity on the island including: establishing regulations that would apply to all property owners; and, establishing DPA to address priority conservation objectives. A need was also expressed for more educational materials directed to increase understanding of what is possible in each of the specific land use areas and zones.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of support for specific policies in the Coastal Douglas Fir Toolkit (Survey 2 Q4). There is clear support for all measures to protect and enhance Gabriola's CDF biogeoclimatic zone. There is strong support for developing new policies which prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems (95%), establishing new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas of the island (94%), and developing new policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private properties (91%).

Survey 2 (Q 5) addressed freshwater conservation. There is strong support for the entire array of policy options for protecting groundwater on Gabriola. There is also support for developing and distributing informational materials to all householders and new residents. Freshwater conservation was a constant theme throughout all three surveys and a majority of respondents indicate that they depend on well water or a combination of well water, rainwater collection and bulk water purchases for both potable and non-potable needs. Over 80% of respondents (Survey 3 Q13) indicate they would consider installing a rainwater collection and storage system.

The early implementation of the BC Energy Step Code received stronger support than the Universal Access requirements (Survey 3 Q14). Concerns are primarily around the cost implications for new construction arising from these changes.

Affordable Housing

In Survey 1 (Q2) respondents were asked to rate the current criteria for evaluating multi-dwelling affordable housing development proposals. Overall, the highest ranked criteria are all related to administrative guidelines and processes as to how proposals would be evaluated and managed, with one exception – the impact on water, waste, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.

The lower ranked criteria are all related to infrastructure, suggesting that with the exception of the ecological impact considerations, concerns about infrastructure such as project density, dwelling size, etc. are of less concern than how the project was designed to meet need and managed. Nonetheless all the criteria received more than 50% approval.

Respondents give strong to moderate support for expanding the categories of housing need (Survey 1 Q3) to include any low-income households (76%) and to include low to moderate income households (68%).

Survey 1 (Q4, 5 &6) explored secondary suite policies and challenges to increasing stock. Currently, secondary suites are allowed on properties larger than 2 ha. Opportunities exist to expand this policy to include properties smaller than 2 ha, and to introduce a new policy allowing a flex zoning approach targeted to specific needs for all residential properties. However, expanding the potential to create secondary suites in all residential zones may not be the best tool to address housing affordability given that survey responses show that property owners perceive some serious barriers to providing secondary accommodation. Survey 1 Q4 asked those with these properties what the barriers are to building a secondary suite on their property but did not ask them *whether* they would consider doing so. The main barriers to construction of secondary suites on properties over 2 hectares / 5 acres are financial cost, responsibility of being a landlord, and the risk of reduced privacy.

Fewer than one-third of respondents supported allowing secondary suites on properties smaller than 2 hectares / 5 acres (Survey 1 Q5 & 6). Forty-six percent (46%) felt it would be appropriate, but their support came with significant caveats regarding ecological protection, limiting floor area and lot coverage, specifying a minimum lot size, requiring rent limits to ensure affordability, and requiring higher construction standards.

A bare majority of respondents (54%) unconditionally supported flexible zoning in residential zones, and an additional 22% were undecided but not opposed. As with other options, a primary concern was water and the impact on the environment. There



appears to have been some confusion as to whether or not ‘flex’ zoning would result in increased densities.

Survey respondents (Survey 3 Q2 & 3) were asked whether they supported more flexible zoning for commercial and institutional parcels in order to incentivize the construction of rental or market housing units during redevelopment. There is qualified interest in this option. The support for allowing an increased number of residential units in commercial or institutional zoned properties is conditional on water and an assurance that the units would remain as rental units with affordability guaranteed.

Recommendations

These recommendations place Gabriolans’ social needs – in this case, for affordable housing – within the context of protecting Gabriola’s unique ecology. These recommendations do not follow the same order as the survey analysis; instead, we have pulled together lessons from the survey findings to address one question: how do we protect biodiversity and freshwater resources while recognizing that “the islands are first of all an existing community of people, and the welfare of those people, and those who join them and come after them, must always be a primary concern of the Trust” (Islands Trust 1974 Policy document)?

The recommendations that follow are interconnected, focusing on managing growth, and conserving biodiversity and water through policies broadly applied across the island, and affordable housing policies focused on approaches that produce the greatest number of housing units with the least impact on the environment and groundwater resources. These recommendations represent actions that received strong support in the surveys. We conclude with recommendations that address how all of this work can be accomplished.

Growth Management Strategy

Objective: To ensure that growth on Gabriola is managed and gradual, balancing human and environmental needs to ensure long-term sustainability

Although limited, the LTC has some tools to limit the creation of new densities and/or to ensure any densities created support either social or biodiversity objectives or both. It is important to note that only the Province has authority to approve subdivisions, however the LTC can establish regulations regarding the rezoning of properties. Managing growth must ensure the needs of the human community are understood and addressed in the context of ensuring biocultural diversity.

To accomplish this, we ask the HAPC to recommend that the Local Trust Committee establish a growth management strategy.

This strategy should focus on articulating a clear understanding of what appropriate growth would entail and implementing necessary actions to curtail the negative impacts of unmanaged growth. These actions include the following:

- Clearly define what the OCP terms ‘gradual’ and ‘appropriate’ growth mean
- Implement a policy requiring all subdivision/rezoning applications contribute to an increase in affordable housing stock

- Establish a new regulation to be applied to rezoning applications to permit an increase or transfer of density only if a percentage of lots in each subdivision is protected with a housing agreement to ensure affordability as rental units or at time of sale and re-sale in perpetuity
- Establish regulations that set a minimum lot size requirement (e.g., 2 ha) for subdivision rezoning applications, and
- Implement policies to facilitate willing owners of subdividable or adjacent lots to voluntarily reduce their density potential through rezoning or lot consolidation, under the condition that those densities would be deposited in the Density Bank for creating affordable housing elsewhere on the island.

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

Objective: To ensure the recovery and long-term sustainability of our endangered Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem

Survey respondents expressed strong concerns about protecting the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem. However, there is currently no definition of the concept of biodiversity in the Official Community Plan. Effectively addressing this pressing concern will require taking community-wide action. The strategies recommended below are aimed at achieving island-wide impacts rather than relying on case-by-case applications and a piecemeal approach and were identified as the most effective approaches by survey respondents.

We request that the HAPC recommend a biodiversity strategy to the LTC with the following elements:

- Clearly define the concept of biodiversity in the OCP, for instance, the difference between biodiversity or biocultural diversity which incorporates the role of human activity.
- Implement more results-oriented regulations to protect biodiversity including:
 - Developing new policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private properties (e.g., restrictions on tree cutting)
 - Establishing new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas of the island
 - Developing new policies which prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision, if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems

- Collaborate with the RDN and other partners to:
 - Advocate that the Regional District of Nanaimo parks department prioritize parkland dedication (when it is triggered at the time of subdivision) to protect CDF ecosystems
 - Advocate that the RDN ensure management planning and implementation of existing and new parklands prioritizes the protection of CDF
 - Require new dwellings, approved through rezoning, to be constructed to meet BC Energy Step Code Requirements, and to consider extending this requirement to all new construction, including commercial, institutional and multi-family developments, and
 - Develop a public education program to encourage homebuilders and owners to apply Universal Design principles when designing new homes.

Freshwater Conservation Strategy

Objective: To ensure the protection and sustainable management of freshwater resources

Freshwater conservation was a constant theme throughout all three surveys. There was strong support from survey respondents for the entire array of water policy options.

We ask the HAPC to recommend an aggressive groundwater protection strategy to the LTC, with the following components:

- Implement new policies requiring that subdivisions and redevelopment of residential properties meet higher water conservation standards by:
 - Establishing new proof of water regulations requiring that new subdivisions exceed the provincial minimum standard
 - Establishing new regulations requiring rainwater collection and storage for new residential development
- Establish new regulations that would require groundwater monitoring and data collection for new commercial, industrial, institutional and multi-family developments
- Advocate to the RDN to increase the capacity of the current *Rainwater Harvesting Rebate* program to meet demand
- Develop policies and regulations that require retention of forests and watershed ecosystems to promote groundwater recharge, and,

- Develop and distribute informational materials to all householders and new residents regarding water conservation activities that individual households can undertake, (for instance, see the Salt Spring Island Water Stewardship initiative <https://saltspringcommunityalliance.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1953e744e01bd7cb2f320440c&id=a218ee1760&e=1f0b9beedb>)

Affordable Housing Strategy

Objective: To ensure a timely supply of affordable, appropriate housing that meets the needs of Gabriolans in a way that minimizes impacts on biodiversity and freshwater sustainability

Ensuring a supply of affordable, appropriate housing will require a strategy that provides the required number of units in a way that has the least impact on biodiversity and water. To do this we recommend an affordable housing strategy that prioritizes multi-unit projects appropriately sited and located, along with targeted activities for dispersed accommodation to address specific needs (e.g., elder care, extended family accommodation).

We ask the HAPC to recommend the following actions to the LTC to achieve housing, biodiversity and water objectives:

- Set housing targets and timelines by identifying the number and proportion of units to be achieved through multi-unit projects and through targeted dispersed initiatives such as secondary suites, mixed commercial/residential and flex zoning (implementation is addressed in the *Governance* section following)

Strengthen multi-dwelling proposal criteria. The following actions should be taken to ensure that the criteria for assessing multi-dwelling proposals meets the needs of low to moderate income households, is effectively and fairly managed, and has the lowest possible impact on the environment and water.

To achieve this, we ask the HAPC to recommend to the LTC, the following actions:

- Expand the housing need criteria to include any low-income households and low to moderate income households by adjusting the affordability definition as necessary
- Retain current requirements for housing agreements for affordable housing
- Add a provision to allow a mix of affordable and market options to ensure project viability

- Review the literature regarding the provision of common areas such as kitchen and recreation facilities in multi-dwelling projects and include in multi-dwelling proposal criteria and in housing agreement requirements, if warranted
- Remove the requirement that multi-dwelling affordable housing for low-income families are to come *only from banked densities* (see recommendations for Managing Growth above).

Revise secondary suite policies to target housing that addresses specific needs (e.g. distributed housing, worker housing, caregiver housing). Currently efforts to ensure rental housing rely on the regulation allowing secondary suites on properties of 2 ha or larger. If all parcels were developed with secondary suites, it would increase the rental housing stock but would not guarantee affordability. Therefore, creating policies to allow secondary suites on properties smaller than 2 ha, and to allow flex zoning for all residential properties must be considered carefully. There are three issues that must be addressed. First, survey responses showed that property owners perceived some serious barriers to offering secondary accommodation; therefore, there is no way to guarantee that property owners will create the necessary stock, nor that it will be affordable. Second, expanding the potential to create additional secondary accommodation on properties smaller than 2 hectares may create an increased environmental burden on biodiversity and water conservation. Finally, allowing flexible zoning to meet household needs (such as the need for caregiver, or family member accommodation) will be difficult to oversee.

In consideration of these challenges, we ask the HAPC to recommend to the LTC, the following actions:

- Retain the current policies regarding secondary suites on properties 2 ha or larger but explore the implications of reducing the upper limit to allow secondary suites on properties of 1 ha to 1.99 ha. To address ecosystem and freshwater conservation conditions, all building permit applications must meet water, sewage and energy conservation objectives
- Given property owners concerns about the responsibilities of being a landlord, advocate with the RDN (responsible for affordable housing within the RDN) to create or build on existing tenant/landlord support programs which may encourage more property owners to create secondary accommodation
- Replace the term “secondary suite” with “secondary accommodation” to more accurately reflect the full range of secondary accommodation options (e.g., suite, detached cottage, etc.)
- Explore flexible zoning to meet targeted housing needs in residential zones. Flex zoning could be a way of creating increased capacity to provide caregiver and family member housing and had strong conditional support in the survey. The

challenge with this option is to ensure that the accommodation is used for the intended purpose (e.g., caregiver, family member) rather than becoming part of the existing illegal accommodation stock. To address this, we recommend that flexible zoning in residential zones be conditional on having a mechanism in place to ensure the prescribed usage (e.g., Temporary Use Permit).

Increase housing units in commercial and institutional zoned properties. Currently, only one housing unit is permitted per commercial parcel and no units are allowed in institutionally- zoned properties. Increasing housing availability in existing and new developments may address the needs of workers, and one and two person households.

We ask the HAPC to recommend the following actions to the LTC:

- Explore options to increase the number of residential units for commercial zoned properties including transferring densities and increasing densities contingent on water, sewage and environmental considerations and that units would remain as rental units (rather than strata title market units)
- Extend the policy to include institutional zoned properties
- Require the property owner to sign a housing agreement assuring that units will remain as rental units with a mix of affordability guaranteed.

Governance, Oversight and Public Education

The Local Trust Committee can implement policies and regulations to address managed growth, biodiversity and water conservation objectives but it has no mandate or capacity to oversee the implementation of an environmentally responsible affordable housing plan. Implementing these strategies will require the time of Trust planners as well as the capacity to undertake public engagement activities, monitor the impacts of policy changes, track progress and recommend course corrections. These latter activities are outside the scope of the planners' duties. Accomplishing the objectives outlined above will require funding and the governance capacity to oversee this project.

As mentioned earlier in this report, this public engagement process would have cost over \$70,000 to conduct had the individuals on the committee, the majority of whom worked for free, billed for their time. If the Islands Trust is truly committed to protecting biodiversity, conserving freshwater and addressing affordable housing, it will need to commit multiyear funding to ensure the important objectives outlined above are met. This is not a burden that falls solely on the Trust, but the Trust must exercise leadership in getting other partners to the table to contribute their fair share.

The success of the implementation of the growth management, biodiversity, water conservation and affordable housing strategies will require resources, governance, oversight, and evaluation.

To achieve this, we ask the HAPC to recommend the following actions to the LTC:

- Establish a Housing Affordability and Managed Growth Planning Commission made up of volunteer commissioners appointed by the LTC and supported by a paid consultant and LTC staff. The Commission would be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the four strategies (growth management, biodiversity, freshwater conservation, and housing affordability) and ensuring the work is aligned with the ongoing work on reconciliation and climate change. Its responsibilities would include:
 - Planning and administering different aspects of the strategies (for instance, if there are housing agreements that need to be monitored, how would that occur)
 - Setting targets and timelines in consultation with the LTC
 - Evaluating progress so the LTC will know when the strategic objectives have been achieved and to what degree (e.g., hectares of CDF ecosystem protected, units of housing created)
 - Providing ongoing public information to increase public knowledge
 - Implementing public engagement activities as the strategies are developed and rolled out.
- Provide appropriate funding to support the implementation of affordable housing, biodiversity and water conservation strategies by:
 - Establishing an appropriate budget to support the implementation of the strategies
 - Committing appropriate Island Trust funding,
 - Working in collaboration with the RDN (the body responsible for the regional housing strategy) and other community partners to acquire the necessary resources to staff this initiative
 - Exploring the option of a tax requisition to finance this initiative (through both the Local Trust and RDN).

Proposed Policy & Regulation Potential Impact Table

The table below evaluates the potential impact of each of the major policy and regulatory actions outlined in the strategies above. The ratings (H=High; M=Medium; L=Low; NA=Not Applicable) refer to each initiative’s likelihood of achieving the desired strategy objectives.

Table 16: Proposed Policy and Regulation Potential Impact			
Recommended Policy/Regulation	Impact Areas		
	Biodiversity Conservation	Freshwater Conservation	Increased Affordable Housing
Managing Growth			
Policy requiring new subdivisions to contribute to affordable housing	H	H	H
Set minimum lot sizes for subdivisions	H	H	NA
Voluntary density reduction program	H	H	NA
Biodiversity & Water Conservation			
CDF policies applied to private properties	H	H	NA
New DPAs for CDF priority areas	H	H	NA
Prioritize parkland dedication that protects CDF forests	H	M	N/A
Increase subdivision & residential redevelopment proof of water requirements	NA	H	NA
Rainwater collection requirement for new construction	NA	H	NA
Groundwater monitoring – commercial, institution, multi-family	NA	M	NA
Forest/watershed retention policies and regulations	H	H	NA
Water Conservation Public Education	L	M	NA
BC Energy Code requirement for new construction as part of a rezoning	M	M	NA
Housing			
Set affordable housing targets	NA	NA	H
Strengthen multi-dwelling proposal criteria	NA	NA	H
Focus secondary suite regulations on targeted need	L	M	H
Flex zoning for targeted need	NA	NA	M
Increase housing units on commercial/institutional-zoned lots	NA	NA	M

Housing Need on Gabriola

This backgrounder looks at housing need on Gabriola by presenting information about:

1. Homelessness
2. “Core Housing Need”
 - Adequacy
 - Affordability
 - Suitability
3. More on Affordability
 - Median Household Total Income
 - Median One Person Total Income
 - Low Income
 - Median Monthly Shelter Costs
 - Average House Prices
4. Housing Diversity
5. Renters and Owners
6. Housing Mobility
7. Housing Occupancy
8. Household Makeup
9. Family Makeup
10. Median Age & Distribution

The statistics below are from the 2016 Canadian Census of Population^{1,2} unless noted otherwise. Most of the graphics below are from the Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative’s 2020 Gabriola Health Report³ but some were created for this document. The Health Report compared Gabriola with Bowen Island, Nanaimo and British Columbia, which we are also doing here.

Other recent reports that look at housing need on Gabriola include the 2018 “Housing Needs Assessment” report⁴, and the 2012 “Affordable Housing Strategy”⁵. (See the endnotes for links.)

1. Homelessness

Gabriola has a high rate of homelessness. In 2019, 62 Gabriolans were identified as being homeless. This means that one of every 65 Gabriola residents is homeless, compared with the Nanaimo rate of one in 270 and the provincial rate of one in 653.



These numbers include people with no current home, those living in a car or couch surfing, or those who have a home that does not have a bathroom and/or a kitchen.

2. Core Housing Need

Housing need is often defined by whether a household’s housing is:

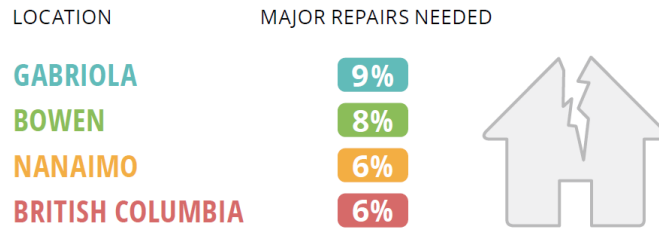
- **Adequate** – not requiring major repairs
- **Affordable** – costs less than 30% of total before-tax household income
- **Suitable** – has enough bedrooms for the size and makeup of the household.

A household is said to be in “core housing need” if its housing falls below at least one of the standards above **AND** “would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing” that does meet all three standards.⁶

We don’t know how many households on Gabriola are officially defined as being in core housing need but we can look at what we do know about adequacy, affordability, and suitability to tell us something about the level of housing need on Gabriola.

- **Housing Adequacy**

The 2016 Census shows that 9% of the housing on Gabriola needs major repairs.⁷ This is more than in other comparison communities.

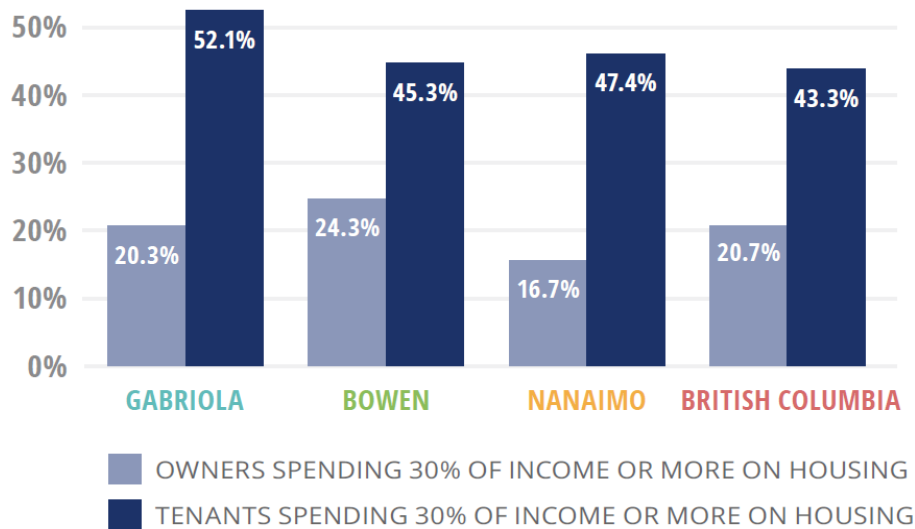


Gabriola residents may also face other issues with housing – like not having potable water or having poorly functioning septic fields, etc.

- **Housing Affordability**

Housing is typically thought to be unaffordable if a person or household spends more than 30% of their monthly total income (i.e., before taxes⁸) on their housing (rent / mortgage / lease and related costs like heat, water, electricity, etc.).^{9,10}

By this standard, more than half of Gabriolans who rent and about 20% of Gabriolans who own their own homes were living in unaffordable housing in 2016.



- **Housing Suitability**

Housing is said to be suitable if it has enough bedrooms for the size and makeup of the household. According to the 2016 Census, Gabriola has a very high rate of housing suitability, higher than that of other comparison communities.

	GABRIOLA	BOWEN	NANAIMO	BRITISH COLUMBIA
Suitable	98.6%	96.7%	97.0%	94.7%
Unsuitable	1.4%	3.3%	3.0%	5.3%

It's important to note that Gabriola has a lot of households made up of only one or two people (see Household Makeup below). And, the vast majority of housing stock on Gabriola is made up of single-family dwellings (see Housing Diversity below). The combination of small household size and the makeup of Gabriola's housing stock may account for the high rate of housing suitability, which may not show whether there is enough housing on Gabriola that is suitable for larger households.

3. More on Affordability

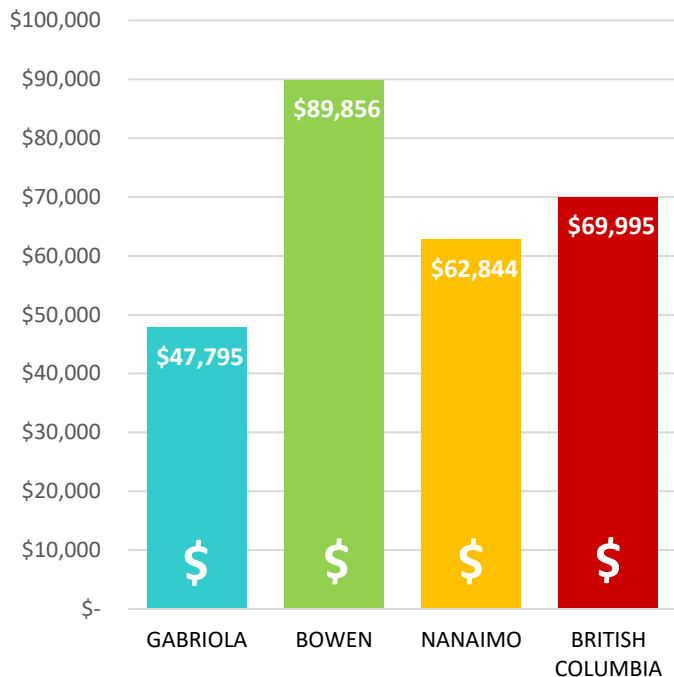
- **Median total income of all households**

The median total income of all households on Gabriola was \$47,795 in 2015, according to the 2016 Census.^{11,12}

Median income is the amount at the halfway point between the highest and lowest incomes. Half of people's incomes are higher than the median and half are lower.

Gabriola's median income is much lower than that in comparison communities.

Median total household income is used in the calculation of housing affordability (see above).

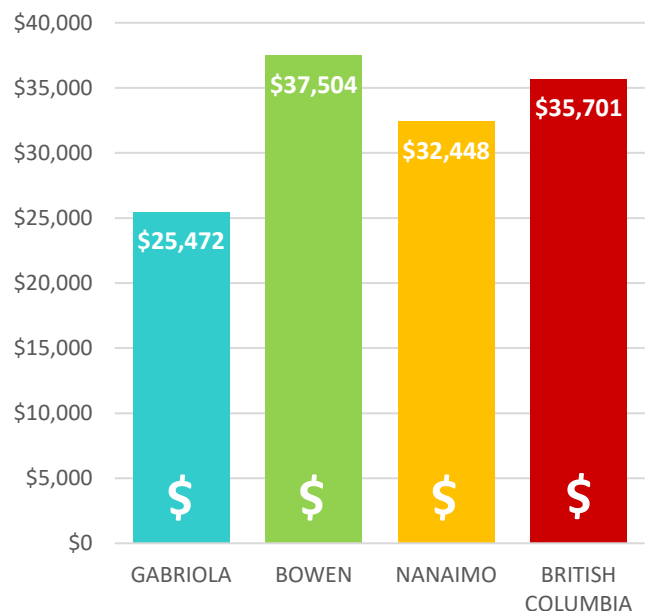


- **Median total income of one-person households**

The median total income of one-person households on Gabriola was \$25,472 in 2015.

Median income is the amount at the halfway point between the highest and lowest incomes. Half of people's incomes are higher than the median and half are lower.

36.4% – or more than one-third – of households on Gabriola are made up of one person (see Household Makeup below).

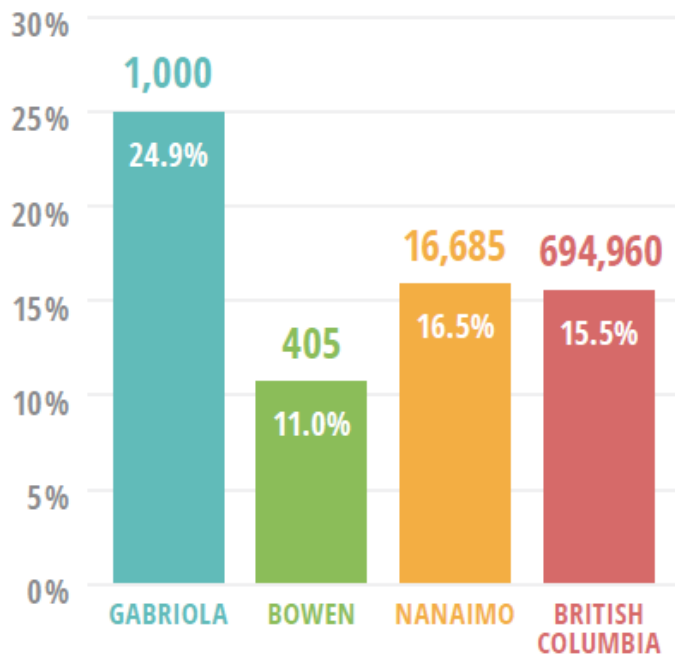


- **Low income**

Gabriola also has a high percentage of people living on low incomes – nearly 25% were in low income in 2015, according to the 2016 Census.

Low income is defined as 50% or less of the national median household income.¹³

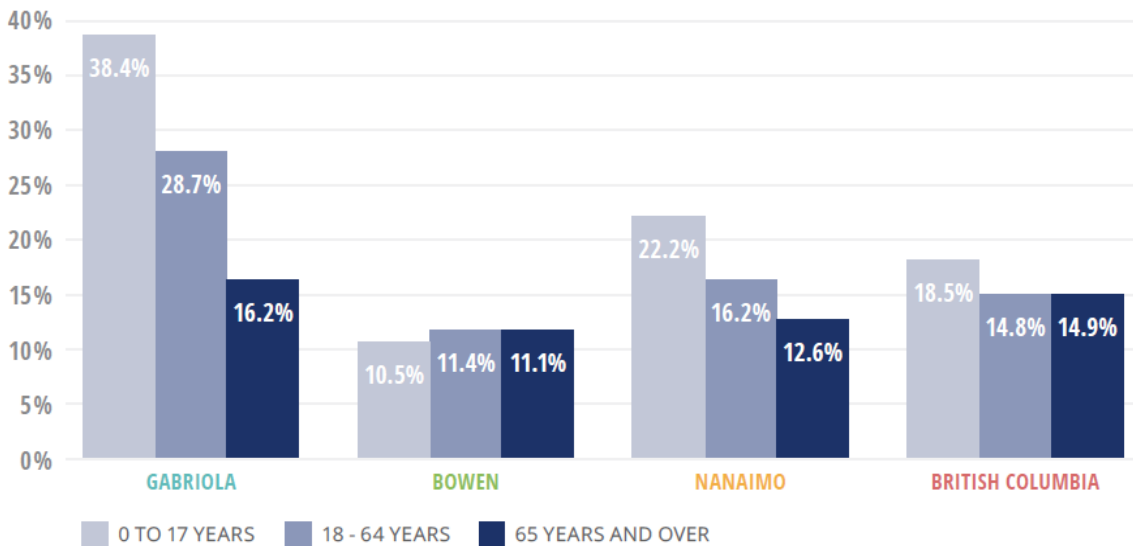
Gabriola’s low income rate is very high compared to comparator communities, and represents about 1,000 people.



As well, Gabriola has a high percentage of children living in low income – nearly 40% – which of course means their families are living in low income.

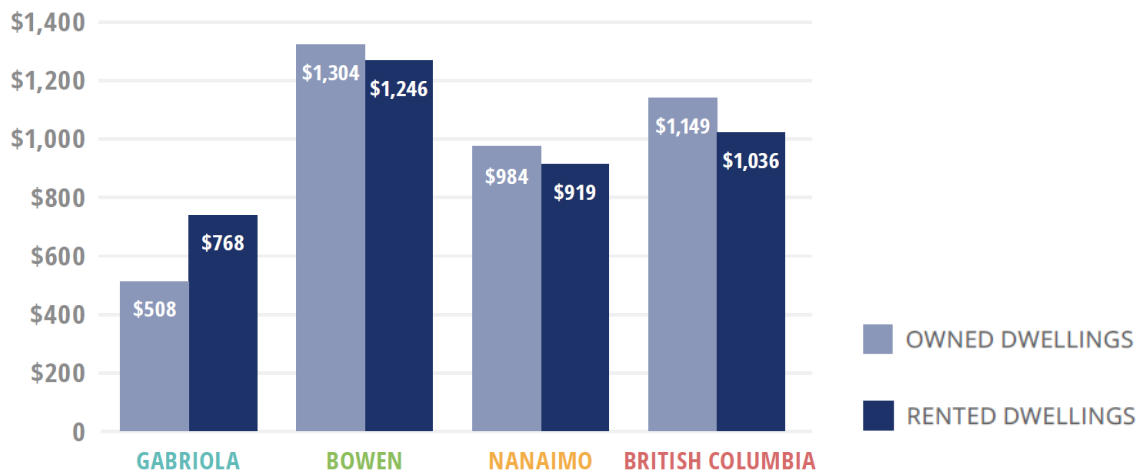
Gabriolans of all ages have a higher rate of low income than those in comparison communities.

PEOPLE IN LOW INCOME BY AGE



- **Median monthly shelter costs**

Median monthly shelter costs on Gabriola were low relative to comparison communities when the Census was taken in 2016. The median is the halfway point, which means half of shelter costs were higher and half were lower than the median.



The population on Gabriola is generally older (the median age in 2016 was 61 – see age data below) so it could be that most people have paid off all or most of their mortgage. This would mean lower housing costs for owners and lower amounts that owners charge in monthly rent.

These housing costs may also reflect lower taxes on Gabriola than in other municipalities.

We don't know how much housing costs – especially rents – have increased since 2016.

- **Average house prices**

Between December 2019 and November 2020, the average selling price of a “typical” single-family home on Gabriola – which does not include homes with acreage (i.e., 5 acres or more) or those on a waterfront lot – was \$467,017.¹⁴ (If acreage and waterfront homes are included, the average selling price was \$639,513.)

To afford this “typical” home, an individual or family would need to have an income of between \$82,900 (for a 20% down payment) and \$108,264 (for a 5% down payment). Monthly mortgage payments would be between \$1,345 and \$1,886.¹⁵

Can Gabriola households afford to buy homes on Gabriola?

- The median total income of households on Gabriola in 2015 was \$47,795 (see above).
- A Gabriola household's income would have to have increased by between 73% and 127% between 2015 and 2020 in order to afford to purchase the typical single-family home.

Can Gabriola individuals afford to buy Gabriola houses?

- The median total income of one-person Gabriola households in 2015 was \$25,472 (see above).
- A one-person Gabriola household’s income would have to have increased by between 225% and 325% between 2015 and 2020 in order to afford to purchase the typical single-family home.

The average selling price for a “typical” home in 2015 was \$266,571, which means the average price increased by 75% between 2015 and 2020.

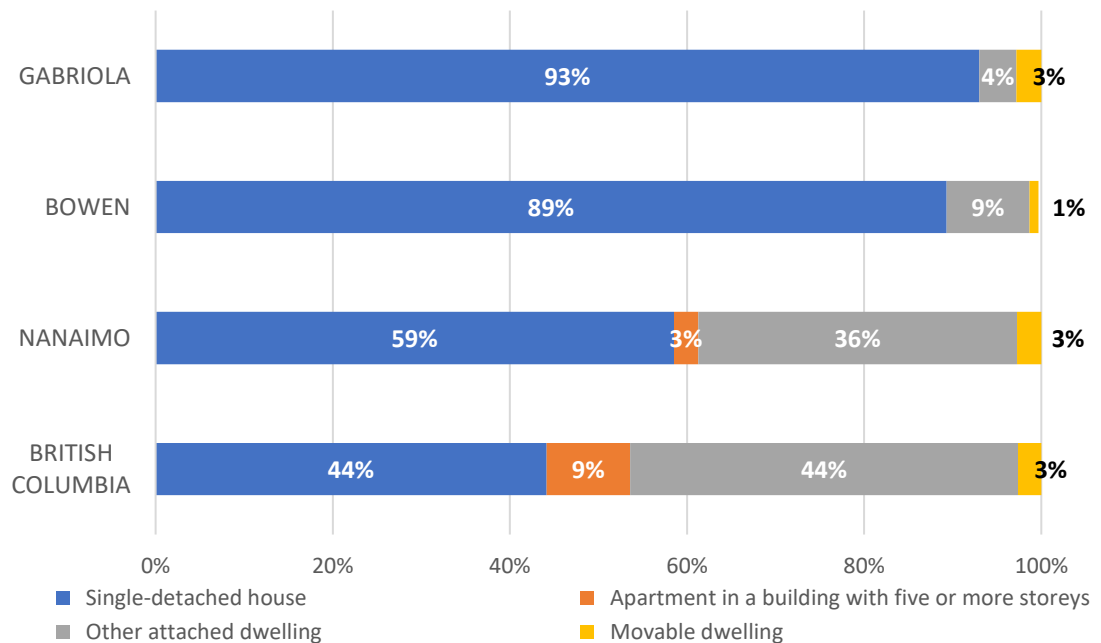
Between December 2019 and November 2020, twenty-three typical single-family homes sold for less than the average home price of \$467,017.¹⁶ 45 homes in this same category sold in this period, meaning that about 51% sold for under the average price.

A recent report from the Regional District of Nanaimo says that “Low income households [on Gabriola] would be challenged to afford a rental unit within 30% of their monthly income, and home ownership is out-of-reach for the majority of the households, including couples families.”¹⁷

4. Housing Diversity

About 93% of the housing stock on Gabriola is single-detached houses. Only 4% is “other attached dwellings” and 3% is movable dwellings.

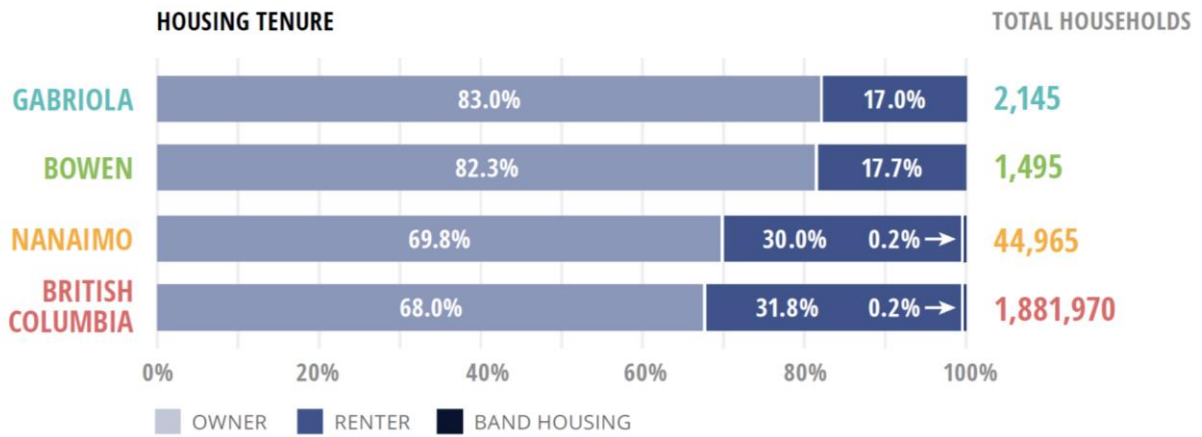
“Other attached” includes semi-detached houses; row houses; apartments in a duplex; apartments in a building with fewer than five storeys, and other single-attached houses.



Gabriola’s housing stock is much less diverse than that of comparison communities. The lack of diversity in the housing stock limits options for those who are not able to or don’t want to purchase this style of home. It may also contribute to affordability issues.

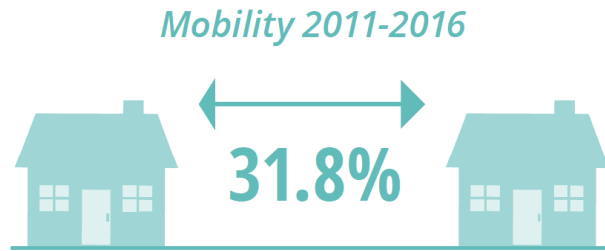
5. Renters and Owners

More than 80% of households on Gabriola own their home, according to the 2016 Census, while 17% rent. There are 2,145 households on Gabriola, so about 1,780 own their home and about 365 rent.



6. Housing Mobility

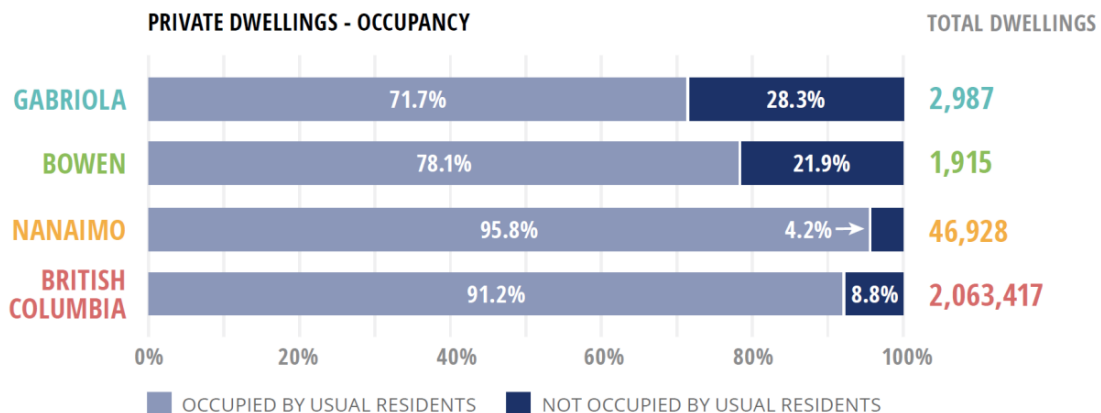
Nearly 1/3 of the people who had moved to the home they were living in on Gabriola when the 2016 Census was taken had moved there from another location on Gabriola.



We don't know how many of these people who move are renters and how many are owners. However, given that more than half of renters are spending more than 30% of their income on rent (see Housing Affordability above), this rate of mobility – which may indicate the need to move to find better quality, more secure, suitable, more secure or affordable housing – could indicate problems with Gabriola's rental housing stock.

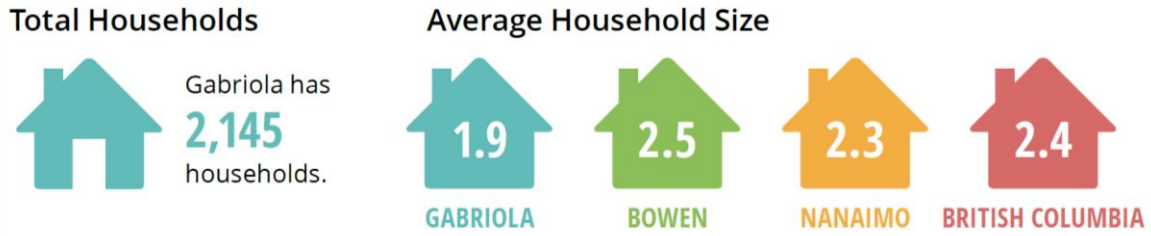
7. Housing Occupancy

More than 70% of the private dwellings on Gabriola were occupied by usual residents in the 2016 census.¹⁸ Nearly 30% (or 845 homes) were not, but we don't know how many of those are unoccupied, used for personal seasonal usage, or are available for seasonal rentals or full-year, full-time residency.

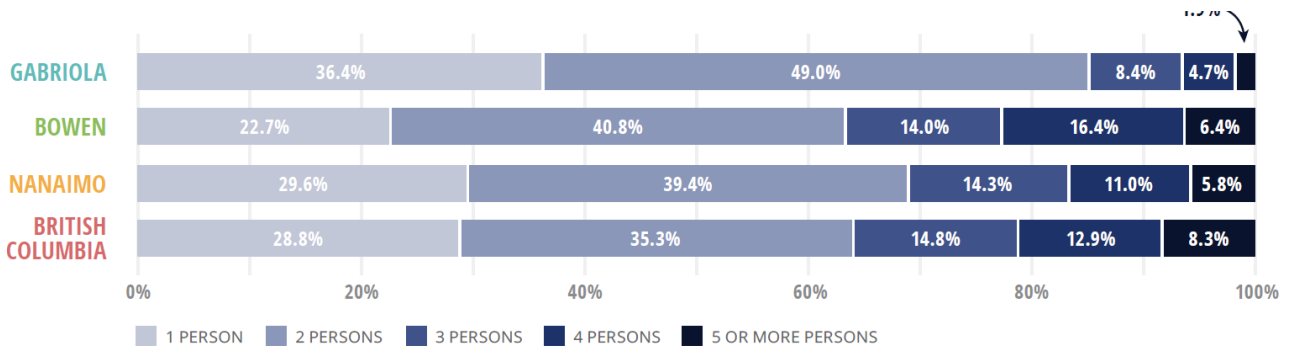


8. Household Makeup

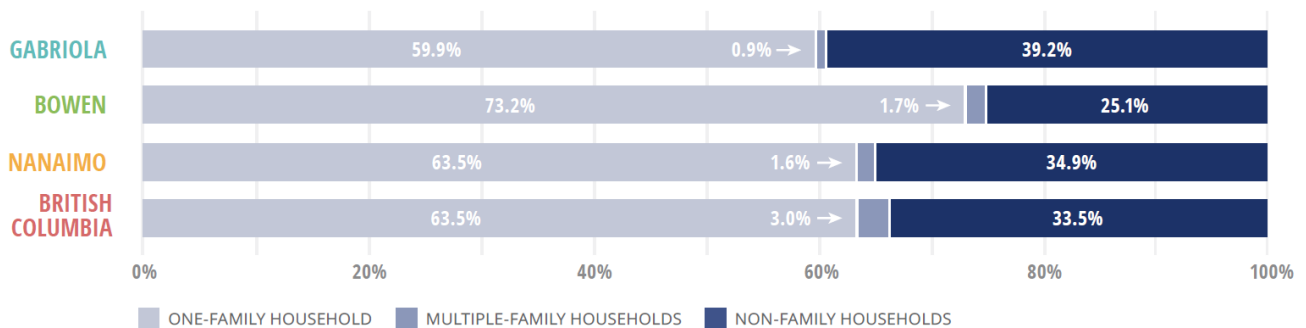
In 2016 there were 2,145 households on Gabriola, with an average household size of just under two people.



Of the 2,145 households on Gabriola, the vast majority – 85.4% or 1,832 households – are made up of either a single person (781) or two people (1,051). 15% of households (or about 322) are made up of three or more people.



As well, nearly 60% of the 2,145 households on Gabriola are single family households – that is, one group of people who are all related. Almost 40% are non-family households. A non-family household is either a single person living alone or two or more unrelated people living together.

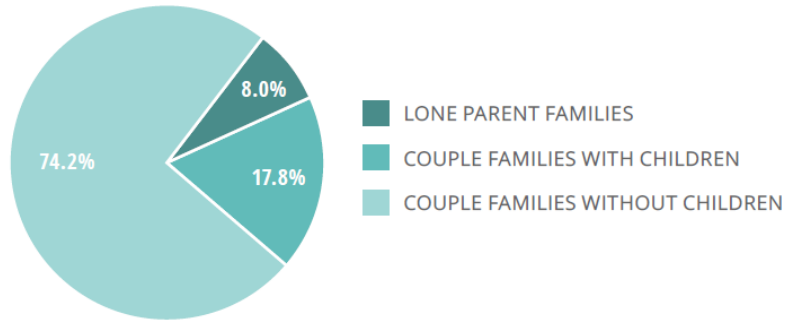


Given that singles make up about 781 households (from the data above), this means there are about 59 households are made up of roommates or other non-family arrangements.

9. Family Composition

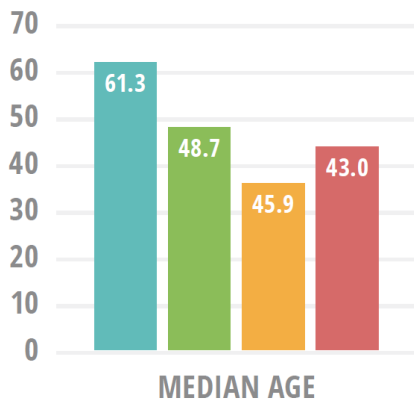
Most of the families on Gabriola – about 979 or nearly 75% - are couples without children.

However, 235 Gabriola families are couples with children, and about 106 are lone parent families. To ensure housing suitability, these families will need housing that has two or more bedrooms.

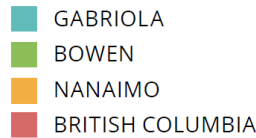


10. Median Age & Distribution

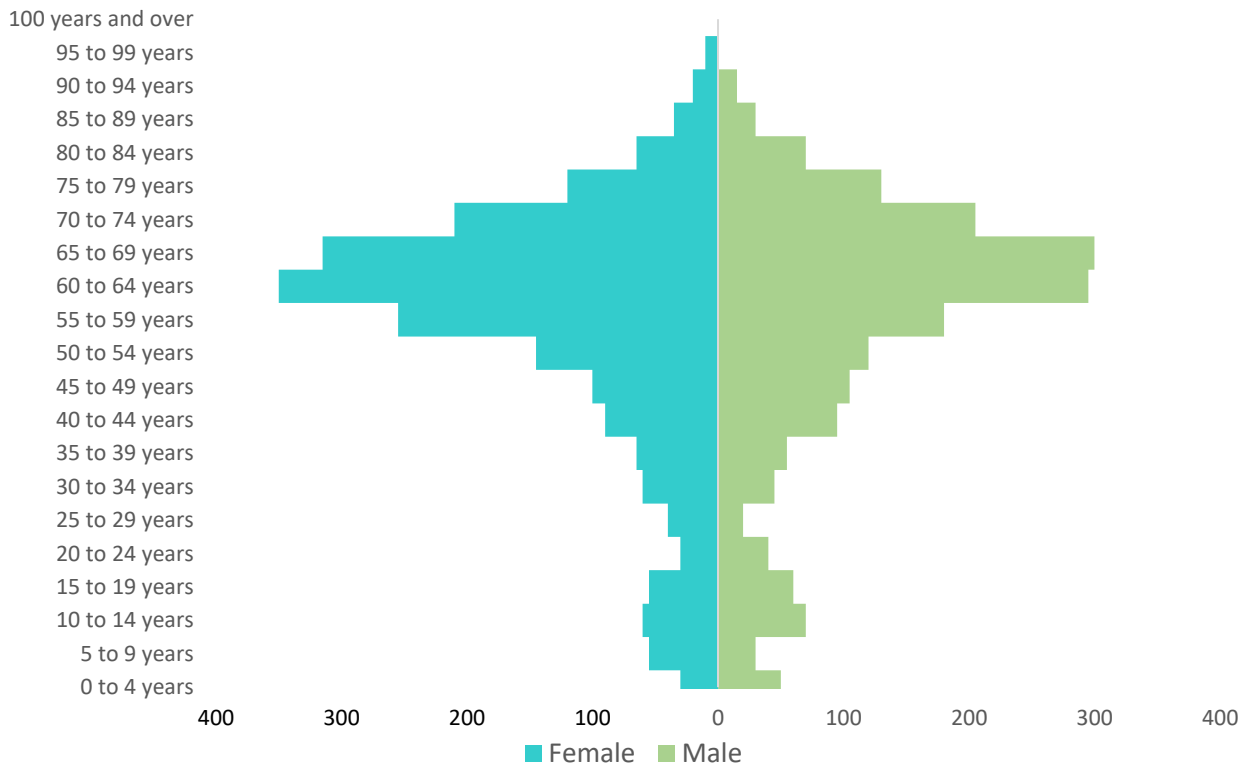
The median age of the population on Gabriola in 2016 was just over 61 years.



“Median age” means that half of the population is under the median and the other half is over.



The age distribution on Gabriola in 2016, by gender, is shown in the chart below.



Some Take-Aways about Housing Need on Gabriola

- **Homelessness**
 - A number of Gabriolans are homeless. Note that homelessness in this instance includes people whose housing doesn't have a bathroom and/or kitchen, which may speak to the issue of housing adequacy on Gabriola. People who are homeless may have particular housing needs and may need housing-related supports.
- **Housing Adequacy**
 - 9% of housing on Gabriola – or about 193 dwellings – need major repairs. As noted above, this may not include other housing-related issues that people on Gabriola face, like problems with septic fields, etc.
- **Housing Affordability**
 - According to the 2016 Census, about 365 households on Gabriola are renters. More than half of renters are paying more than 30% of their incomes for housing, so we know that about 183 Gabriola households are particularly impacted by the lack of affordable housing.
 - One-fifth of owners are paying more than 30% of their incomes for housing, so we know that about 356 owner households are having difficulty with housing affordability.
 - Housing affordability is a serious issue on Gabriola, especially for people who rent.
 - About one-quarter of Gabriolans are living on low incomes. They may be younger people who are working for low pay, those who rely on benefits from income support programs, or older people living on fixed incomes. As well, nearly 40% of children are living in low income families and nearly 30% of working-age adults are low income.
 - Monthly housing costs for both owners and renters appear to be low, but we don't know how much these costs have increased since the 2016 Census.
 - Increases in income levels on Gabriola since 2015 may not have kept pace with increases in house prices, which might have an impact on whether Gabriolans can afford to purchase a "typical" house on the island. However, the Regional District of Nanaimo says that "Low income households [on Gabriola] would be challenged to afford a rental unit within 30% of their monthly income, and home ownership is out-of-reach for the majority of the households, including couples families."¹⁹
 - House prices – and associated mortgage costs – may have an impact on rents, given that owners may charge enough rent to at least cover their mortgage.
- **Housing Suitability**
 - Housing suitability on Gabriola – i.e., whether housing has enough bedrooms for the size and makeup of the household – is very high. This isn't a surprise given that most households are made up of one or two people and the vast majority of housing stock is single family dwellings. However, 15% of households on Gabriola – or about 322 – are

made up of three people or more. We don't know how many of those households have access to housing with enough bedrooms for the number of people in their family.

- **Housing Diversity**

- The vast majority of housing stock on Gabriola – about 93% – is single-detached houses. The lack of diversity in housing stock limits options for those who are not able to or don't want to purchase this style of home.

- **Housing Availability**

- Nearly 845 homes – or 30% – were not occupied by usual residents when the 2016 Census was taken. We don't know how many of those are unoccupied, are used for personal seasonal usage, or are available for seasonal rentals or full-year, full-time residency.

References

- ¹ Gabriola Island Trust Area 2016 Census Profile: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=DPL&Code1=590003&Geo2=PR&Code2=59&SearchText=Gabriola%20Island%20Trust%20Area&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=590003&TABID=1&type=0>.
- ² The next Census of Population will be conducted by Statistics Canada in May 2021. For more information see: <https://census.gc.ca/index-eng.htm>.
- ³ 2020 Gabriola Health Report: <https://www.ghcs.ca/2020-Gabriola-Health-Report.pdf>.
- ⁴ Housing Needs Assessment, Northern Region of Islands Trust, Dillon Consulting, 2018: http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346025/lpc_2018-06-21_northern_hna.pdf
- ⁵ An Affordable Housing Strategy for Gabriola Island, People for a Healthy Community, 2012: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/339419/03-phc-gabriola-island-affordable-housing-strategy-oct-2012.pdf>
- ⁶ See the definition of Core Housing Need in the Dictionary of the 2016 Census of Population: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage037-eng.cfm>
- ⁷ Statistics Canada’s says that this includes: “dwellings with defective plumbing or electrical wiring, and dwellings needing structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings”. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/dwelling-logements003-eng.cfm>.
- ⁸ Total income is defined here: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop123-eng.cfm>.
- ⁹ Statistics Canada, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and the provinces agree on this definition. See <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/pUtil.pl?Function=getNote&Id=299278&NT=01>.
- ¹⁰ For further information on the definition of shelter costs, see: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage033-eng.cfm>
- ¹¹ Census income data reflects the total annual income of the previous year (i.e., 2015).
- ¹² Total income does not include amounts paid in taxes. See the definition in endnote 6 above.
- ¹³ Low income is measured using the Low-Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT), which marks 50 percent of the national household median income adjusted for household size. Those with incomes under this threshold are said to be in low income. More information about the LIM-AT is here: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/fam021-eng.cfm>. In 2018, the federal government adopted the Market Basket Measure (MBM) as Canada’s official measure of poverty. The MBM represents the cost of a number of food, clothing, shelter, transportation and other items deemed to represent a “modest, basic standard of living”. Those people with incomes lower than the MBM threshold are considered to be living in poverty. The 2016 Census did not computer low income / poverty using the MBM. More information about the MBM is here: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/75f0002m2019009-eng.htm>.
- ¹⁴ Selling price data for 2015 and 2020, total household affordability calculations, and mortgage calculations were provided by John Woods of the The Mortgage Centre, Fitzwilliam Mortgage. One-person household affordability calculations were done by the document author.
- ¹⁵ Income of \$82,900 and monthly mortgage payments of \$1,345 are based on a 20% down payment. Income of \$108,264 and monthly mortgage payments of \$1,886 are based on a 5% down payment. These calculations assume amortization over 30 years, with no other debts.
- ¹⁶ This data was provided by Tina and Guy Team via John Woods.
- ¹⁷ Regional Housing Needs Report. Regional District of Nanaimo. June 2020, p.73: <https://www.rdn.bc.ca/housing-needs-report>
- ¹⁸ The definition of “usual place of residence” is complex. See the definition here: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop126-eng.cfm>.
- ¹⁹ Regional Housing Needs Report. Regional District of Nanaimo. June 2020, p.73. See endnote 17 above.

This document was prepared by the Research Team of the Gabriola Housing Working Group, January 2021

GABRIOLA OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (OCP) POLICIES GOVERNING HOUSING

This page provides information on the major policies and planning tools in the Gabriola Official Community Plan (OCP) that govern housing options on Gabriola. It covers the following:

1. definitions of affordability and attainability
2. parameters to guide the consideration of affordable housing proposals
3. housing standards
4. types of housing
5. planning tools to address need and diversity, and,
6. regulatory requirements for different types of housing.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The development of affordable housing on Gabriola is governed by a complex set of policies and bylaws. The Gabriola Official Community Plan governs land use decisions, while decisions about the types of housing are regulated by other authorities. The Gabriola Official Community Plan includes policies governing affordable housing proposals and secondary suites but there is no comprehensive strategy to address a full range of housing options.

WHAT DOES THE GABRIOLA OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (1997) SAY ABOUT “HOUSING AFFORDABILITY” OR “ATTAINABILITY”?

Affordability is addressed in the OCP through policy that supports an increase in residential density on the island, without subdivision, and only when it is specifically for affordable housing for special needs residents and seniors (Section 2.k).

The OCP contains a general residential policy to support a mix of housing types which includes:

1. affordable and market housing in appropriate locations. (Section 2.1(5))
2. "multiple-dwelling affordable housing" is defined as three or more residential dwelling units on a parcel restricted to affordable housing as defined by this Plan and governed by a housing agreement.
3. "Multi-dwelling residential use" is intended to be reserved for affordable housing units only which includes the following categories:
 - Special Needs residents living with physical and / or mental disabilities;
 - Seniors 60 years of age or older; and
 - Low-income families.

Affordable housing is defined in the OCP to mean housing that costs no more than 30% of a household's gross income applied to those households with incomes at or below 60% of the median household income for Gabriola Island (using Canada Census information). The OCP states that affordable housing should be in a location which is accessible to appropriate services and acceptable to the overall community without compromising protection of the natural environment and while minimizing greenhouse gas emissions.

Densities for the creation of Multi-dwelling Affordable Housing for low-income families are to come *only from banked densities* as noted in Appendix 2 (Density Bank) of the Plan.



We will be asking for your opinions on this topic in the survey

Multi-dwelling Affordable Housing developments with mixes of special needs residents, seniors and low-income families are encouraged. **No market housing** is included in this mix for multi-dwelling developments. It is now understood that the mix of affordable and market options may be required by funders and may be necessary to the financial viability of the project.

 We will be asking for your opinions on this topic in the survey

The term 'attainability' is not captured in the 1997 Gabriola OCP and was not commonly understood at that time; however, the term 'attainable housing' is used to describe the ability of households to choose to enter, and graduate to higher levels of, the local housing market. Attainability is the idea that a range of housing options (type, size, tenure, cost) exists in the local market. Households at various income levels can find and secure (attain) suitable housing and can ultimately advance to a different level if they choose (Source: [Belleville Report](#)).

SPECIFIC PARAMETERS IN THE OCP INTENDED TO GUIDE CONSIDERATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPOSALS

The following conditions guide the Local Trust Committee's consideration of affordable housing proposals:

 We will be asking for your opinions on this topic in the survey

1. the maximum density shall not exceed 12 units per hectare.
2. the maximum number of dwelling units per development shall not exceed 24.
3. the average size of a dwelling unit shall be not greater than 83 square metres (900 sq.ft).
4. the site shall be within 0.5 kilometres of the Village Core bounded by North, South, and Lockinvar Roads or a 2 kilometre walking distance from the Village Core along public access routes only, and shall provide access to any existing adjacent pedestrian and cycling pathways to the village and ferry services.
5. where practical, in the opinion of the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee, the site's main access shall be off a main road and not through an existing residential neighbourhood.
6. common area amenities, such as kitchen and recreation facilities, shall be provided for prior to occupancy.
7. the proponent:
 - can ensure the maintenance and stability of affordability in perpetuity.
 - specifies how the housing project will be managed and administered including, if deemed applicable, that it be operated on a not-for-profit basis.
 - specifies the manner in which the housing units will be made available to the identified class of persons at the time the housing units are first occupied and with respect to subsequent occupancy; and
 - specifies the mix of rental and ownership housing units permitted.
8. The OCP specifies that multi-dwelling Affordable Housing applications must demonstrate the lowest possible net water, waste, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.
9. The Density Bank¹ in this Plan shall be amended from time to time such that any unused residential densities that result from rezoning for parks are added to the Density Bank for use as Multi-dwelling Affordable Housing for low-income families.

¹ The density bank policy will be examined in Topic 3 to be posted on February 17th.

POLICIES GOVERNING SECONDARY SUITES

Affordability is also addressed through policy on the use of secondary suites. Currently on Gabriola, secondary suites are allowed on parcels 2.0 hectares or larger. This is considered a means of addressing the islands' need for diversity in housing options (providing rental housing) and affordability in a rural, low density context (see Gabriola Official Community Plan Policy 2.6.1a). The policy allows for a suite up to 968 sqft.

 We will be asking for your opinions on this topic in the survey

HOUSING STANDARDS THAT CURRENTLY APPLY TO HOUSING ON GABRIOLA


The following housing standards must be met to comply with the provincial building code (or equivalent):

1. All residential dwellings built on Gabriola must meet or exceed the BC Building Code standards; OR the CSA manufactured home standards, including seismic standards for anchoring/foundations.
2. A travel trailer, recreational vehicle or tiny home on wheels can only be used temporarily while constructing a permanent dwelling under a RDN Building Permit, and it must be connected to an approved sewage disposal system. The current limit is 2 years, but it can be extended by the Building Inspector (RDN).

TYPES OF HOUSING POSSIBLE UNDER CURRENT OCP/LUB

The following types of housing are permissible under the current OCP and Land Use Bylaw (LUB):

1. Single family dwelling (can be micro home or standard size - no minimum or maximum floor areas)
2. On a residential lot 2ha (5 acres) or larger, one single family dwelling with a secondary suite (either attached, within or detached up to a max 968sqft)
3. Multiple Family dwelling (three or more units) for seniors/special needs/low income in site specific zones
4. In commercial zones, one single family dwelling on a lot with a business (can be above, attached, or detached, no limit to maximum floor area)
5. Manufactured homes (previously called mobile homes) which are CSA approved, and secured to a permanent or semi-permanent foundation. They can be micro or as large as can be constructed to meet the CSA standards.
6. Temporary housing on Gabriola includes permission to use of a recreational vehicle, tiny home on wheels for up to 2yrs while constructing a permanent dwelling on the property with a valid building permit. It must be connected to an approved sewage disposal field.
7. Tents/camping on a vacant lot for up to 90 days/year.

 We will be asking for your opinions on this topic in the survey

PLANNING TOOLS AVAILABLE TO ADDRESS NEED AND DIVERSITY

Local governments are responsible for ensuring a suitable supply of housing, in a range of types and locations, to meet community needs now and in the future. Communities accomplish this goal through the land use planning process by ensuring an adequate supply of suitably zoned land, through the regulatory process, and through servicing and other activities. An Official Community Plan (OCP) -- a statement of objectives and policies -- guides decisions on planning, land use management, and development. *Since 1992, policies on affordable, rental and special needs housing must be included in official community plans in BC.*

For Gabriola Island the following tools are currently used to address need and diversity:

1. OCP Land Use Policies and design guidelines (1997)
2. LUB Regulations pertaining to secondary suites (updated 2018)

The following tools are available in BC but *have not yet been used* on Gabriola Island to address housing need and diversity:

1. Updating OCP with Gabriola Housing Needs Assessment findings and possible recommendations (2018)
2. Updating OCP with Affordable and Attainable Housing Policies relevant to current market conditions and housing projections for the region
3. Rental Tenure Housing zoning (to protect rental housing from being converted to owned housing).
4. Provision for mixed use affordable/market housing developments (not strictly just affordable/seniors/special needs)
5. Flexible zoning that strictly controls density, floor area of dwellings, water consumption and energy conservation, and how much of the lot is covered by buildings and structures (lot coverage). Flexible zoning might be created to permit either one large single-family dwelling or two or three small dwellings on a lot built to BC Energy Step Code standard with strict controls on water conservation standards, how much of the lot can be developed or other parameters.

 We will be asking for your opinions on this topic in the survey

SUMMARY OF HOUSING TYPES AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Approval for various types of housing is not solely the responsibility of local government. For instance, housing must meet specific requirements as set out in the BC Building Code and the Canadian Standards Association for Manufactured Homes. The following table describes the types of housing and the regulatory requirements for each type.

Housing Type	Building/Construction Standard in Effect	Permitted on Gabriola Island as a Permanent Dwelling	Permitted on Gabriola Island as a temporary dwelling (up to 2yrs while constructing a permanent dwelling)
<p>Conventional Framing constructed on site Can include structurally insulated panels; wood/timber frame; cob; panels; wood/timber frame; cob; rammed earth; steel; strawbale BUT is built to BCBC standards on permanent foundation</p>	BC Building Code	YES	YES
<p>Manufactured home constructed in a factory under CSA Standards and transported to site; placed on semi-permanent or permanent foundation</p>	CSA – Canadian Standards Association for Manufactured Homes	YES	YES
<p>Modular/pre-fab home sections/walls are built offsite in a factory and transported to site then assembled on site placed on approved foundation</p>	CSA – Canadian Standards Association for prefabricated buildings, modules and panels AND BC Building Code for seismic foundation	YES	YES
<p>Micro Homes (approximately 100- 500sqft) built either offsite or onsite. Anchored to an approved foundation</p>	BC Building Code	YES	YES
<p>Recreational Vehicles (RVs, motorhomes, fifth wheels, travel trailer, park model trailers)</p>	CSA – Canadian Standards Association for recreational vehicles	NO - Building Inspector will not permit occupancy under provincial regulations (BCBC)	YES – must be connected to approved sewage disposal system

Housing Type	Building/Construction Standard in Effect	Permitted on Gabriola Island as a Permanent Dwelling	Permitted on Gabriola Island as a temporary dwelling (up to 2yrs while constructing a permanent dwelling)
Tiny Homes on wheels/trailer/chassis	Some tiny home companies offer certain types of certification similar to CSA standard for RVs.	NO – unless dwelling portion can be constructed to meet BC Building Code/CSA and anchored to approved foundation Building Inspector may not permit occupancy under provincial regulations (BCBC)	Possibly – must be connected to approved sewage disposal system Could have issue with using as temporary residence since Building Inspector may not permit occupancy under provincial regulations (BCBC)
Yurt, canvas tents	N/A	NO	Possibly – must be connected to approved sewage disposal system Could have issue with using as temporary residence since Building Inspector may not permit occupancy under provincial regulations (BCBC)

Glossary: OCP Policies

This glossary provides definitions for terms used in the [Gabriola Official Community Plan \(OCP\) Policies Governing Housing](#) resource document.

1. Attached Dwelling

An attached dwelling is one that is attached onto the main dwelling or building in some way - for example, a separate suite that shares a wall with a single-family dwelling.

2. BC Building Code

The BC Building Code (BCBC) is a provincial regulation that governs how new construction, building alterations, repairs and demolitions are completed. This code establishes minimum requirements for safety, health, accessibility, fire and structural protection of buildings and energy and water efficiency.

Retrieved from: <http://www.bccodes.ca/building-code.html>

3. BC Energy Step Code

The BC Energy Step Code is an optional way for local governments to encourage or require a level of energy efficiency in new construction that goes above and beyond the requirements of the BC Building Code. Builders may voluntarily use the BC Energy Step Code to meet the energy-efficiency requirements of the BC Building Code.

Retrieved from: <https://energystepcode.ca>

4. Bylaws

Bylaws are the rules made by local governments (municipalities, regional districts, etc.) that regulate activities in their areas of jurisdiction.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/governance-powers/bylaws>

5. Canadian Standards Association (CSA)

CSA is an organization that offers expert testing, inspection, and certification services that allow manufacturers to show that their products comply with applicable safety, environmental, and operating performance standards for markets around the world. In this context, they maintain the standard for manufactured homes, modular/pre-fabricated homes, and recreational vehicles.

For more information: <https://www.csagroup.org/about-csa-group/>

6. Commercial Zone

Zoning bylaws regulate how land, buildings, and other structures may be used.

Different areas of land on Gabriola are designated as different zones - such as residential, resource, recreational and institutional, or commercial and light industrial zones (Gabriola Island Land Use Bylaw, 1999, p. 42). These can be seen on the Gabriola zoning maps.

Commercial areas are designed for more business purposes than residential; for instance, the Village commercial zones in the downtown core.

Gabriola's zoning maps:

- North area: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346969/lub-north-nov2018.pdf>
- South area: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342214/lub-soutsheet-oct-2016.pdf>

For more information about zoning bylaws:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/planning-land-use-regulation/zoning-bylaws>

For the Gabriola Land Use Bylaw: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342215/blgb177-lub-consolidated-february-7-2017.pdf>.

7. Density Bank

According to Gabriola's OCP, density banking refers to a process wherein unused residential densities are held by the Local Trust Committee for an unlimited time and for the purpose of enabling affordable multi-dwelling housing for low-income families and without any net increase to the allowed density on Gabriola Island. The deposit of one or more densities to the density bank takes place through bylaw amendments resulting from the rezoning of the property from which the density was removed for deposit into the density bank. Withdrawal of one or more densities from the density bank requires a similar amending bylaw and rezoning process.

For more information see Section 2.5 of the Gabriola Official Community Plan:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/344745/blgb166-ocp-consolidated-november-2-2017.pdf>

8. Detached Dwelling

A detached dwelling is one that is a separate, stand-alone building from the main dwelling or building - for example, a separate small cottage on a property with another, main house.

9. Funders

Funding of affordable housing developments can come from a variety of sources both public (government) and private. A key public funder in B.C. for affordable housing projects is B.C. Housing, which is a government mandated body that develops, manages and administers a wide range of subsidized housing options across the province.

For more information: <https://www.bchousing.org/about/our-organization>

10. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gases warm the earth but because they're trapped in the atmosphere they prevent the warmth from escaping into space. We need greenhouse gases to keep the earth warm enough to live. However, activities like burning fossil fuels produce excess greenhouse gases that warm the earth too much. This is leading to climate change.

Greenhouse gases are: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride.

For more information: <https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/greenhouse-gases/>

11. Land Use Bylaws (LUBs)

Land Use Bylaws contain all the rules and regulations that govern the use and allowable density of the land, as well as setbacks of buildings to property lines, height restrictions, parking requirements, signage restrictions, drainage restrictions and subdivision servicing.

Land Use Bylaws are adopted and administered by each Island's Local Trust Committee.

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/land-use-planning/>

12. Local Governments

Local governments - municipalities and regional government bodies - provide local residents with essential services like clean water, sewer systems, parks and recreation, and fire protection. Local governments also plan and shape their communities, and exercise their vision through the adoption of bylaws. Local governments often work closely with higher levels of government such as the provincial and federal governments. Their focus, however, is on their local geographic areas and local issues.

For Gabriola, our local governments are the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) and the Islands Trust.

For more information about local governments in BC:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments>

See *Regional District of Nanaimo* and *Local Trust Committee / Islands Trust* definitions below for more information.

13. Local Trust Committee / Islands Trust

Gabriola and the other Gulf Islands that are under the jurisdiction of the [Islands Trust](#) each have a Local Trust Committee (LTC). These LTCs are made up of people elected by local residents. They are responsible for land use planning and regulation for their respective area of jurisdiction.

LTCs are required to prepare and adopt Official Community Plans, Land Use Bylaws, and zoning and subdivision bylaws, regulate soil removal and deposit, and authorize permits under Part 14 of the [Local Government Act](#).

Two local trustees are elected for each group of islands designated as a local trust area or island municipality. The two local trustees, together with an appointed chair from the Executive Committee, form the Local Trust Committee, or LTC.

The Islands Trust is responsible for leading the preservation and protection of the [Trust Area](#). The Islands Trust cooperates with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.

The Islands Trust [Policy Statement](#) sets out three main goals:

- Foster the preservation and protection of the Trust Area's ecosystems
- Ensure that human activity and the scale, rate and type of development in the Trust Area are compatible with maintenance of the integrity of Trust Area ecosystems
- Sustain island character and healthy communities.

For more information on Local Trust Committees:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/>

For more information on Gabriola's Local Trust Committee:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/gabriola/>

For more information on the Islands Trust Policy Statement:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/governance/policy-statement/>

14. Market Conditions

Market conditions are the factors that influence the housing market in a particular area, such as cost of living, demographics, supply and demand, [mortgage rates](#) and more.

For more information: <https://www.bankrate.com/glossary/m/market-conditions/#:~:text=Market%20conditions%20are%20the%20factors,demand%2C%20mortgage%20rates%20and%20more>

15. Market Housing

Housing that is privately owned by an individual (or a company) who generally does not receive direct subsidies to purchase or maintain it. Prices are set by the private market. About 95% of households in the province live in market housing, either rental market housing or home ownership.

Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/affordable-and-social-housing/housing-glossary>

16. Official Community Plans (OCPs)

Official Community Plans contain the broad goals and policies that help guide the preservation and development of an Island. Official Community Plans are developed with substantial input from the community, other government agencies and First Nations.

Official Community Plans are adopted and administered by each Island's Local Trust Committee.

Retrieved from: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/land-use-planning>

Gabriola Official Community Plan (Gabriola Island Official Community Plan, 1997)

The Official Community Plan was adopted in 1997 and has had some amendments over the years. It offers a vision of the future community on Gabriola. The Plan sets out the community's goals, objectives and policies regarding land-use, future development as well as social and environmental considerations applicable in the planning area. The purpose of the Plan is to provide direction to government agencies, businesses, land owners and residents concerning future land use and the provision of services.

Retrieved from: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/344745/blgb166-ocp-consolidated-november-2-2017.pdf>

17. Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN)

The Regional District of Nanaimo provides regional governance and services throughout Vancouver Island's central east coast. Communities within the RDN include the municipalities of Nanaimo, Lantzville, Parksville, and Qualicum Beach, as well as seven unincorporated Electoral Areas. Gabriola is within RDN Area B.

For more information: <https://www.rdn.bc.ca/>

18. Residential Density

Residential density refers to the average number of people living on any given area of land. High residential density is often the result of the construction of multi-family dwellings such as apartment or condo buildings. Rural areas like Gabriola are often characterized by low residential density.

19. Secondary Suites

According to Gabriola's OCP, a secondary suite is an up to 2-bedroom suite, either within a dwelling or an accessory building (maximum of 986 ft).

One secondary suite is permitted on lots of two hectares (4.94 acres) or larger and only in the Small Rural Residential (SRR), Large Rural Residential (LRR), Forestry (F), Resource (R), Resource Residential (RR1), or Agriculture (AG) zones.

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346026/gabriola-secondary-suites-final1.pdf>

Forest Ecosystems, Protected Land, and Groundwater on Gabriola

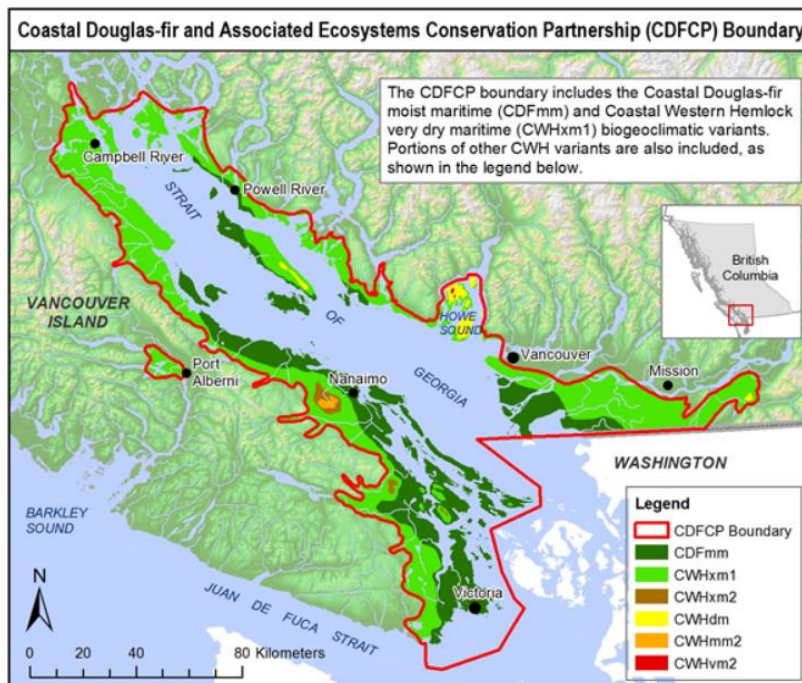
This document provides information about:

1. The Coastal Douglas-Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone
 - Forests and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
2. Land Protected from Development
3. Groundwater Issues
 - Rainfall
 - Groundwater Levels
 - Water Storage
 - Groundwater and Forest Cover

1. The Coastal Douglas-Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone

Gabriola Island lies within the Coastal Douglas Fir (CDF) Biogeoclimatic Zone. According to the Coastal Douglas-Fir Conservation Partnership (CDFCP), this zone is:

“the smallest of B.C.’s 16 major ecosystems covering about 252,000 hectares. The CDF covers part of the lower Fraser Valley (including some of Metro Vancouver), portions of the Sunshine Coast, the southeast coast of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands south of Cortes Island. The CDF generally only occurs below 150 metres in elevation.”¹



The Islands Trust notes that:

“The Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) zone describes a unique set of ecosystems found only on southeast Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and the southwest coast of BC. 100% of Gabriola is within the CDF zone. CDF ecosystems are rare and highly endangered. These ecosystems include Douglas-fir forests, as well as Garry oak woodlands, wetlands, estuaries, and other unique communities of plant, animal, and fungi found nowhere else in the world.”²

The Trust also notes that CDF ecosystems have:

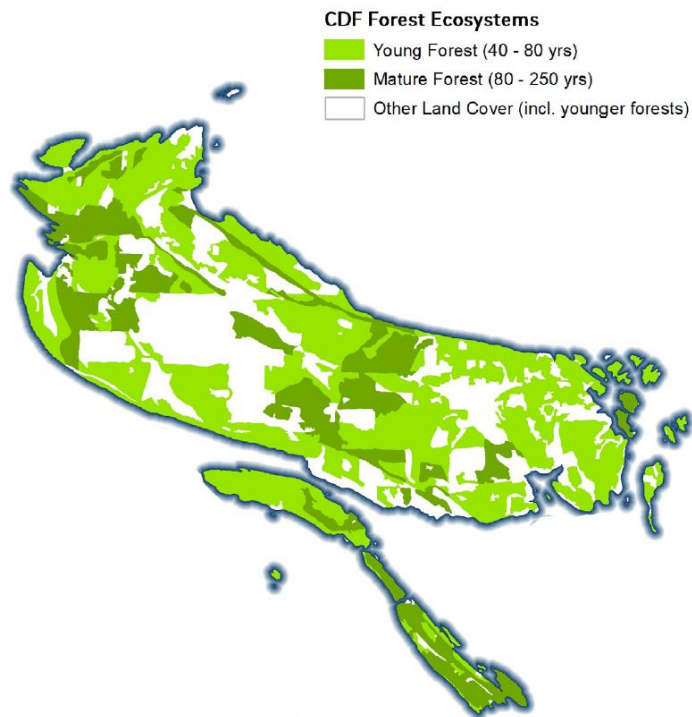
- the highest diversity of plant species in BC
- the highest diversity of overwintering bird species in Canada
- the highest density of species at risk in BC, including 24 globally imperiled species.³

The CDFCP notes that this rare ecosystem is increasingly threatened by

“human pressures, including development, industrial landscape use, increasing numbers and frequency of invasive species, and increased recreational use. Some of the ecosystems associated with the CDFCP Region, such as Coastal Bluffs, Garry Oak ecosystems, and wetland ecosystems, have lost well over 75% of their former area.”⁴

As well, CDF ecosystems are threatened by climate change:

“Climate change will have significant impacts on CDF forests as intensifying summer droughts stress trees. Islander observations indicate that climate change has already impacted western redcedar and other species. It is likely that drought is the primary cause of increased stress, but work needs to be done to understand these changes and adapt conservation of CDF habitats.”⁵



According to the CDFCP:

- Many of the at-risk species and ecosystems in the CDF zone are globally ranked as imperiled or critically imperiled
- The global range of the CDF lies almost entirely within BC, underscoring both its global uniqueness and BC’s responsibility for its conservation
- Less than 1% of the CDF remains in old growth forests and 49% of the land base has been permanently converted by human activities
- Deforestation and urbanization in the CDF zone has resulted in a natural area that is now highly fragmented with continuing threats to remaining natural systems
- Approximately 9% of the CDF zone is protected in conservation areas
- The extent of disturbance combined with the low level of protection places the ecological integrity of the CDF zone at high risk.⁶

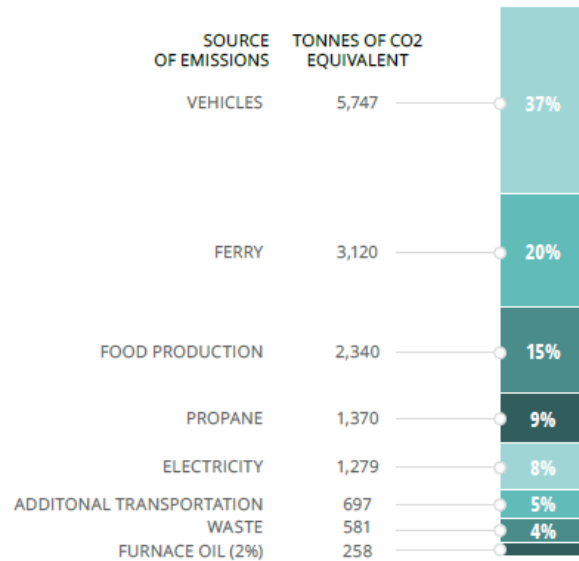
- **Forests and Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Forest ecosystems play an important role in sequestering the carbon that is such a large part of greenhouse gas emissions. The Coastal Douglas-Fir zone of which Gabriola is part has the highest rate of carbon sequestration of all biogeoclimate zones in BC.

A 2008 Island Futures report found that greenhouse gas emissions on Gabriola totalled 15,392 tonnes from all sources.⁷

Ensuring that forested lands on Gabriola are protected can help reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions, in addition to the many other important roles that forests play here as well as for the region and beyond.

GHG EMISSIONS BY SOURCE (GABRIOLA 2008)

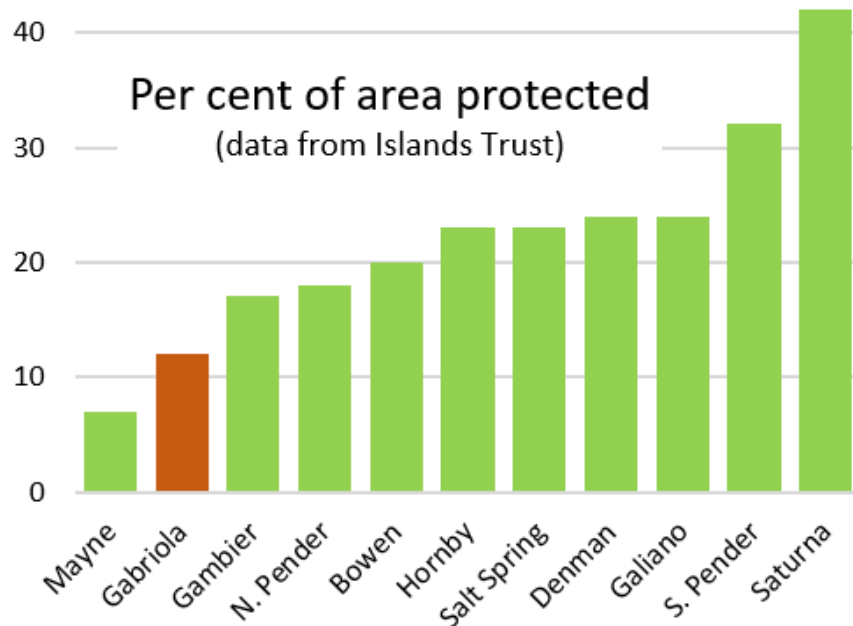


2. Land Protected from Development

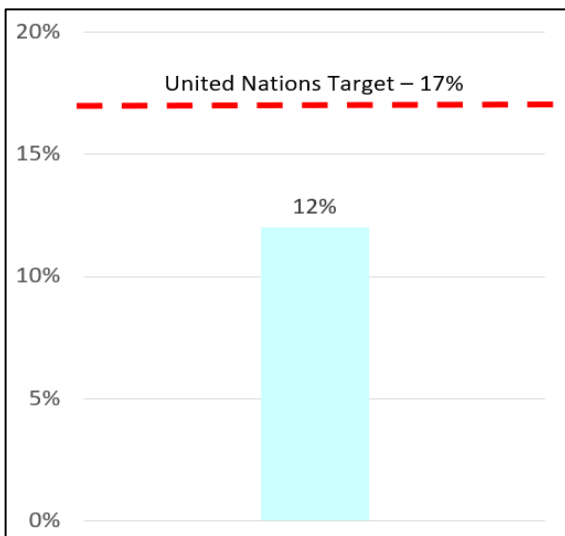
Protected lands can include national parks, provincial parks, regional parks, conservation covenants and nature reserves.

Gabriola is behind most of the other Gulf Islands in terms of the percentage of land that is protected.

As of 2019/20, only about 12% of Gabriola's land is protected.^{8,9}



The United Nations has set a target to improve biodiversity globally by conserving 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas “through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.”¹⁰



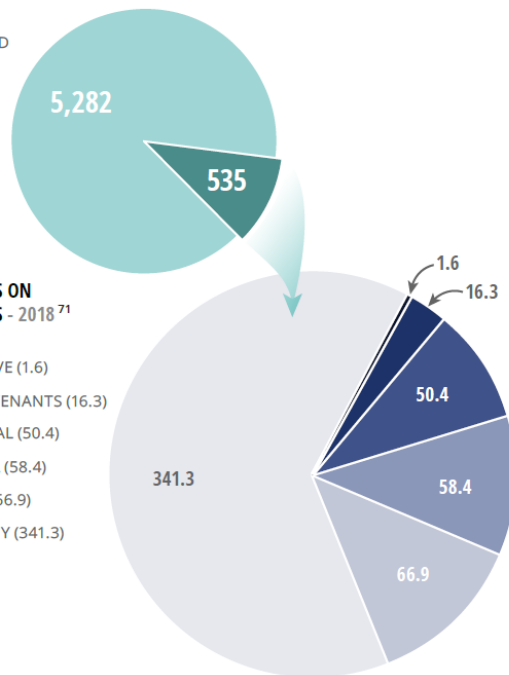
To meet the UN target, an additional 454 hectares (or 1,122 acres) would have to be protected on Gabriola.¹¹

Protection could be achieved through subdivision-related parkland dedication, voluntary donation to parks or nature reserves by individual landowners or non-profits, or through the purchase of ecologically-significant parcels by local governments or conservancies.

Of the 535 hectares of protected land on Gabriola, most is in parks and nature reserves.¹²

PROTECTED AND UNPROTECTED LAND ON GABRIOLA, IN HECTARES - 2018

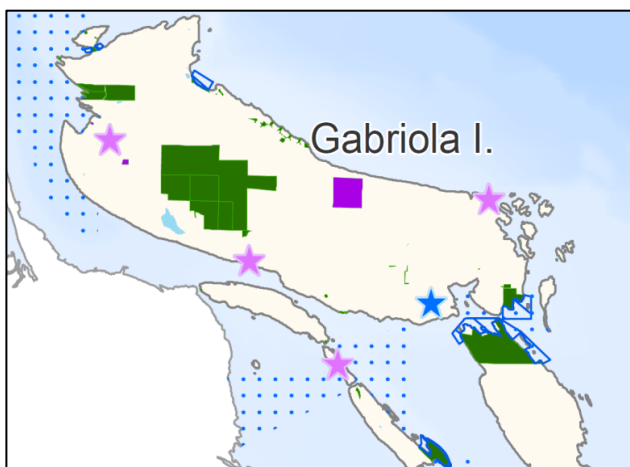
- TOTAL UNPROTECTED
- TOTAL PROTECTED



PROTECTED LAND AREAS ON GABRIOLA, IN HECTARES - 2018⁷¹

- ECOLOGICAL RESERVE (1.6)
- CONSERVATION COVENANTS (16.3)
- PARKS — PROVINCIAL (50.4)
- PARKS — REGIONAL (58.4)
- NATURE RESERVES (66.9)
- PARK — COMMUNITY (341.3)

The map below shows the location of protected lands on Gabriola.¹³



- ★ Islands Trust Conservancy Covenants
- ★ Other Conservation Covenants
- Islands Trust Conservancy Nature Reserves
- Other Parks & Nature Reserves
- Coastal Douglas Fir Protected Area
- Community Forest
- Watershed Management Areas
- ▨ Marine Protected Areas
- ⋯ Rockfish Conservation Area
- Glass Sponge Reef Conservation Areas

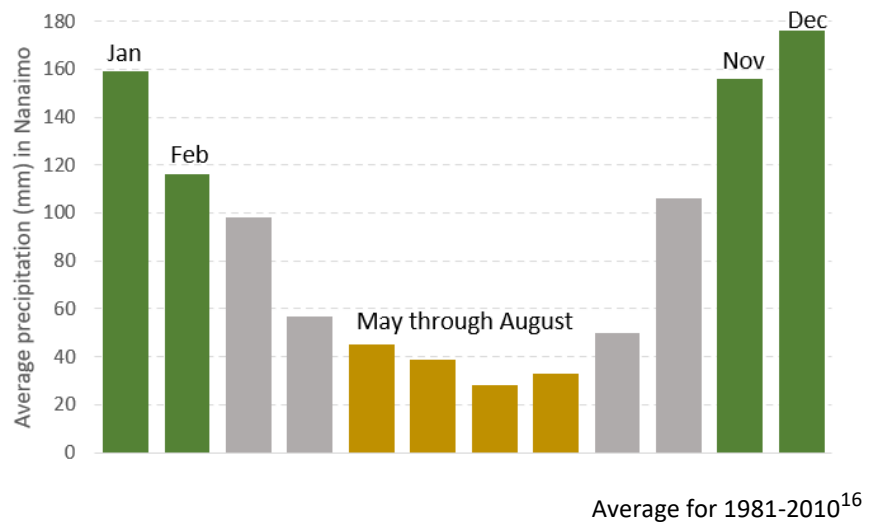
3. Groundwater Issues

Groundwater is “the water found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand and rock. It is stored in and moves slowly through geologic formations of soil, sand and rocks called aquifers.”^{14,15} Most of Gabriola relies on groundwater as the primary source for household consumption and irrigation. Groundwater in Gabriola’s aquifers is recharged from rainwater. Increased development and climate change can put pressure on our groundwater resources.

- **Rainfall and Groundwater Recharge**

57% of Gabriola’s rain falls between November and February. Only 13% falls between May and August.

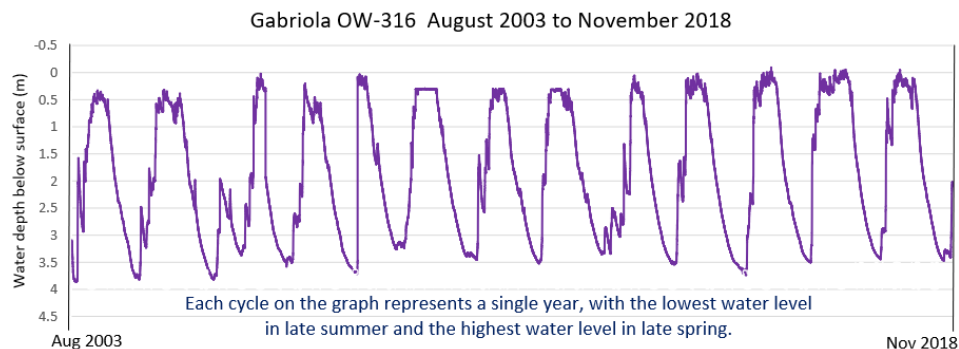
A 2016 report prepared for the Regional District of Nanaimo shows that the amount of groundwater on Gabriola declines between April and September but is recharged between October and January.



The report also shows that a warming climate will increase water evaporation in the summer months, resulting in even drier summers, and increase precipitation in winter, resulting in more overland water flow.¹⁷

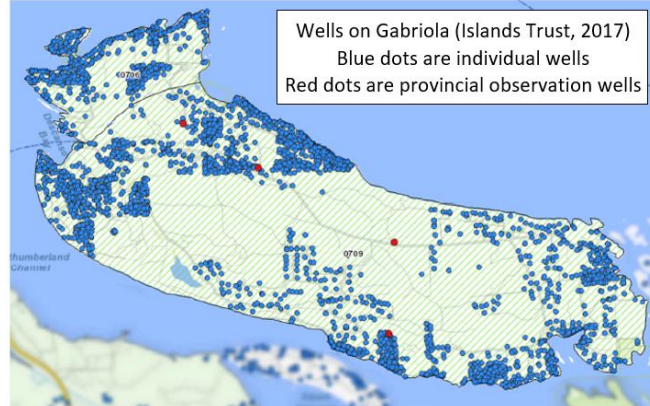
- **Groundwater Levels**

Data from the BC Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change Strategy¹⁸ show that water levels in the four observation wells on Gabriola (OW-196, 197, 316 and 385) have either been stable or have increased slightly over the past decade. As one example, water levels in OW-316 between May 2003 and November 2018 are shown in the graph below.



The water level in this well changes significantly within each year, but both the winter high levels and summer low levels have become higher over the time period shown. In other words, there is no evidence—from this well—that the amount of water stored on Gabriola is decreasing in this recent time period. That could change in future.

These data do confirm, however, that Gabriola experiences big seasonal changes in groundwater levels, as noted in the rainfall data above. Across the 15-year time period, the water table is consistently three to four metres lower in summer than in winter, and this signals a need to consider how to ensure sufficient water resources in the drier months.



- **Water Storage**

It is not currently known how much water storage capacity exists on Gabriola in the form of cisterns (whether the water comes from rainwater harvesting or from wells). We also don't know how many residents rely on rainwater harvesting or only groundwater, or some combination of the two, for their daily water needs. Further, we don't know how many residents rely on purchased bulk water supplies – which typically come from freshwater sources in Nanaimo – for at least part of their annual water needs.

Currently there is only one zone on Gabriola Island that requires rainwater collection for new residential dwellings – the Rural Residential 2 (RR2) zone. This map shows lands zoned as RR2 (which are only in the north end of the island):

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346969/lub-north-nov2018.pdf>

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN)'s Rainwater Harvesting Rebate Program is intended to encourage the purchase and use of cisterns. However, as of January 25, their 2021 budget for Area B (Gabriola Island) had already been allocated and applications from Gabriola were no longer being accepted.¹⁹

- **Groundwater and Forest Cover**

Groundwater availability and healthy forest ecosystems are interconnected and support each other. As the Islands Trust's Coastal Douglas-Fir Toolkit notes,

“Water availability directly influences watershed ecological function and sustains healthy forests as a whole. Forests are a mosaic landscape of ecology and geology that maintains water storage and contributes to water quality by filtering through forest soils and biomass. Through capillary processes, nutrient rich water moves from the soil, through roots of trees, and is carried up the tree's trunk to the leaves to contribute to the process of photosynthesis. Tree canopies collect rainfall, releasing it slowly into forest floor that contributes to the health of the forest ecosystems and contribute significantly to sustained groundwater recharge.”²⁰

References

- ¹ Coastal Douglas-Fir Conservation Partnership website: “About the CDFCP”. Accessed 18 January 2021: <http://www.cdfcp.ca/index.php/about-the-cdfcp/faq>.
- ² Gabriola Island Local Trust Area Coastal Douglas-fir Forests. June 2020. Available at: http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/350087/itc_cdf_gabriola_web.pdf.
- ³ *ibid.*
- ⁴ Coastal Douglas-Fir Conservation Partnership website: “Why is the CDF at risk”. Accessed 20 January 2021: <http://www.cdfcp.ca/index.php/about/why-is-the-cdf-at-risk>.
- ⁵ These data and the map are from Gabriola Island Local Trust Area Coastal Douglas-fir Forests. June 2020 (see note 2 above).
- ⁶ Coastal Douglas-Fir Conservation Partnership website: “Why is the CDF at risk” (see note 4 above).
- ⁷ Data from Weller, Fay. 2010. GHG Emissions Gabriola 2008 Report. Gabriola Island: Island Futures. p.14. Available at: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342721/gabrielaghgemissions2008.pdf>. The graph is from the Gabriola Health & Wellness Collaborative 2020 Gabriola Health Report (see note 11 below). Island Futures intends to update this data soon.
- ⁸ Annual Report 2019/20. Islands Trust Conservancy. p.109. Available at: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/349929/islandstrust-2020-annual-report-web.pdf>.
- ⁹ Approximately 88% of the land base of Gabriola Island is not within a protected status such as parkland or nature reserve. Note that this figure includes federal crown lands set aside for treaty.
- ¹⁰ United Nations Environmental Programme. 2010. Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Target 11. Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/sp/>.
- ¹¹ Gabriola Health Report. 2020. Gabriola Health & Wellness Collaborative. p.30. Available at: <https://www.ghcs.ca/2020-Gabriola-Health-Report.pdf>.
- ¹² Data is from Regional Conservation Plan, 2018-2027. 2018. Islands Trust Conservancy. p.67. Available at: http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/media/84821/itc_2018-11_rcp-2018-2027-web_final.pdf. The figures are from Gabriola Health Report. 2020 (see note 11 above).
- ¹³ Annual Report 2019/20. Islands Trust Conservancy. p.111 (see note 8 above).
- ¹⁴ Groundwater Foundation website “What is Groundwater?”. Accessed 28 January 2021: <https://www.groundwater.org/get-informed/basics/groundwater.html>.
- ¹⁵ More information about groundwater can be found on the Islands Trust “Wells and Our Groundwater” page at <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/projects/water-resource-information-for-islanders/wells-and-groundwater/> and the Waterscape Canada website at <https://www.cgenarchive.org/gulf-islands-underground.html>.
- ¹⁶ Canadian Climate Normals 1981-2010 Nanaimo A Station Data. Accessed 24 January 2021: https://climate.weather.gc.ca/climate_normals/results_1981_2010_e.html?stnID=192&autofwd=1.
- ¹⁷ Burgess, R. and D.M. Allen. 2016. Groundwater Recharge Model for Gabriola Island. Available at: <https://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms/wpattachments/wpID3175atID8124.pdf>
- ¹⁸ BC Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change Strategy: Groundwater Observation Wells in the West Coast Region. Accessed 24 January 2021: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/groundwater-wells-aquifers/groundwater-observation-well-network/active-wells/west-coast-region>.
- ¹⁹ Regional District of Nanaimo: Rainwater Harvesting. Accessed 25 January 2021: <https://www.rdn.bc.ca/rainwater-harvesting>.
- ²⁰ Protecting the Coastal Douglas-Fir Zone. 2018. Islands’ Trust. p.13. Available at: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346674/cdf-toolkit-final-web.pdf>

Note: the “Wells on Gabriola” map on page 6 is available on the Islands Trust website: www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/projects/water-resource-information-for-islanders/wells-and-groundwater/

This document was prepared by the Research Team of the Gabriola Housing Working Group, January 2021

KEY POLICIES ON BIODIVERSITY AND FRESHWATER CONSERVATION FOR GABRIOLA ISLAND

This page provides information on the major policies and planning tools contained in the Gabriola Official Community Plan (OCP), the Islands Trust’s Coastal Douglas-fir Ecosystem Protection Toolkit and Gulf Islands Groundwater Protection Toolkit that address environmental issues generally and speak to the protection and promotion of biodiversity and the conservation of the island’s freshwater resources. It covers:

1. the OCP’s general statements about environmental preservation
2. specific environment-related goals in the OCP
3. various OCP objectives and policies relevant to biodiversity and freshwater conservation
4. the OCP’s specific objectives and policies about groundwater protection
5. current relevant Development Permit Areas on Gabriola
6. key policies in the Islands Trust’s Coastal Douglas-fir Toolkit
7. key policies in the Islands Trust’s Groundwater Protection Toolkit.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Gabriola’s Official Community Plan speaks to the protection of the environment in both general and specific ways. It includes a number of objectives and policies related to the natural environment. There is currently no overarching strategy to identify biodiversity and freshwater conservation priorities and ensure that effective objectives and policies are both in place and regulated in order to achieve them.

The Islands Trust’s Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) Toolkit provides specific guidance on regulatory tools that Local Trust Committees can use to protect our important biogeoclimatic zone. Similarly, the Islands Trust’s Groundwater Protection Toolkit provides guidance on regulatory tools that can be used to protect groundwater resources. None of the CDF Toolkit recommendations and only one of the Groundwater Protection Toolkit recommendations have been incorporated into the Gabriola OCP and Land Use Bylaw.

WHAT DOES THE GABRIOLA OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (1997) SAY ABOUT SUSTAINING OR PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY?

The Gabriola Official Community Plan (1997) doesn’t specifically address the need to actively sustain, protect or encourage biodiversity. It does state that:

“This Plan attempts to preserve the unique environment of the Gabriola Planning Area for future generations through its established goals, which speak to the protection of the natural environment and its sensitive ecosystems...” and that “future land use and development decisions must consider the anticipated impacts of proposed development on the environment and community resources.” (s.2.0.m)

The OCP's environmental goals (s.1.3) are:

1. To preserve the unique natural environment of land, water and air and the life it supports.
2. To preserve the natural beauty of the Gabriola Planning Area and recognize that areas of sensitivity or unique value require special protective measures.
3. To encourage the removal of existing sources of pollution and discourage activities or projects inside or outside the Gabriola Planning Area, which would reduce the health, quiet, natural and aesthetic values of the Area.
4. To encourage only the selective and careful use of renewable natural resources in ways consistent with the goals and policies of the Plan.
5. To recognize the provincial and national significance of the unique social and physical diversities of the Plan Area.
6. To encourage good stewardship practices and the voluntary placement of land under protective covenants.
7. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

The OCP also includes several objectives and policies that have general application to the natural environment:

2.0 General Land Use Objectives:

2.2 To promote the preservation of land that has social, environmental and cultural significance;

2.3. To ensure development is undertaken in a manner which minimizes negative community and environmental impact

**** These objectives speak to preservation and minimization of impact We'd like to hear from you on whether these objectives are enough to address protection of the natural environment and biodiversity.***

4.2 Parks and Outdoor Recreation Objectives:

4.2.2. To acquire parkland that is representative of the bioregion (i.e. wetlands, first growth forest);

4.2 e) A community trails network shall be encouraged to be established incorporating existing public trails. Effort should be made to maintain the contiguous nature of existing, established traditional trails. Such initiative is subject to the consent of the private property owners affected and the provision of appropriate signage being provided to indicate where a trail crosses private property.

5.2 Forestry Objectives:

5.2.1) To preserve large contiguous areas of forested land;

5.2.2) To support forestry practices which are compatible with and complementary to the values of conservation and sustainability;

5.2.3) To support timber production while retaining the environmental and recreational values of forested land;

5.2.4) To protect the groundwater resource and recharge areas; and

5.2.5) To encourage the use of forested land for purposes of recreation, wildlife habitat and maintaining the island's biological diversity.

6.1 Environmentally Sensitive Area Objectives

6.1.1. To ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive areas on Gabriola;

6.1.2. To protect important habitat and water resources areas through vegetation retention and building setbacks;

6.1.3. To encourage retention of the natural tree cover along the shoreline and to discourage tree removal to minimal selective cutting;

6.1.4. To encourage owners of property which is environmentally sensitive to work co-operatively with conservation-based groups in defining means of providing for the protection of important sites; and

6.1.5. To consider the goals and objectives of the Regional Conservation Plan when making land-use decisions.

**** These objectives speak to the importance of protecting environmentally sensitive areas We'd like to hear from you on how private property owners can protect environmentally sensitive areas.***

6.1 Environmentally Sensitive Area Policies

6.1a) Development within environmentally sensitive areas may be regulated through the use of development permits. ***(Note more information on Development Permit Areas below)***

6.1b) With respect to an area identified as being environmentally sensitive, the registration of a natural state or environmental covenant and/or the use of a development permit shall be required as a condition of rezoning so as to ensure the long term protection of environmental features.

6.1c) Voluntary covenants or easements to protect natural features and donation or sale of sensitive areas to a conservation agency shall be encouraged.

6.1d) In order to protect area watercourses, rezoning adjacent to a watercourse shall be conditional upon the establishment of a protective setback area. The Ministry of Environment - Federal Fisheries report titled: Stream Stewardship - A Guide for Planners & Developers and Land Development Guidelines for the Aquatic Habitat shall be used as a guideline in determining how land is to be developed adjacent a watercourse (including a lake and wetland).

6.1e) To protect against hazardous conditions and to protect environmentally sensitive areas a setback shall apply from the high water mark of the sea. In the case where a bluff or large land ridge is the prominent upland feature adjacent the sea, a setback from the upper edge of the bluff or ridge shall be applicable.

6.1f) The sandstone and conglomerate banks along Gabriola's shoreline shall be protected against the accelerated effects of erosion resulting from human activity by requiring the setback of buildings or structures and control of storm water runoff.

6.1g) Trees bearing the nests of great blue heron, bald eagle, osprey and other raptors shall not be cut in accordance with provincial legislation. The zoning bylaw shall set standards and regulate the provision of screening for preserving and protecting trees bearing such nests. Such condition shall be applicable with respect to the rezoning of any site containing such a feature.

6.1h) Fresh water features which have special biological significance to the local environment, such as Hoggan Lake, shall be protected through zoning and shall be designated as a development permit area.

6.1i) So as to ensure the Island's environmental resource sites are protected, owners (and potential developers) of property located within an environmental sensitive area shall be encouraged to work with recognized conservancy organizations early on in the development process to ensure steps are taken to protect the environmentally sensitive site.

6.2 Marine Resources Objectives

6.2.1. To manage coastal marine resources in keeping with the Islands Trust preserve and protect mandate;

6.2.2. To preserve and protect unique, rare, or representative marine plant and animal communities in their natural habitats;

6.2.3. To protect the natural and scenic values of the coastline which provide the Island with its rural marine character;

Policy 6.2.c) A marine protection zone shall also be established in the zoning bylaw for the protection of significant marine and foreshore areas. The Gabriola Pass Marine Protection Area and foreshore waters in the vicinity of the Flat Top Islands shall be zoned marine protection.

7.1 Land Transportation Policies

f) New roads, and modifications to existing roads, should not fragment agricultural land or environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands.

8. Climate Change Adaptation and Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Policies

8b) The Local Trust Committee should consider the development of new criteria for assessing official community plan or land use bylaw amendment applications from the perspective of climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas emission reduction.

8c) The Local Trust Committee should consider new development permit area guidelines that promote low impact land uses, alternative transportation, energy conservation, water conservation, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

8h) The Local Trust Committee should consider amending the Land Use Bylaw to measure the footprint of buildings and structures from the interior walls instead of the outer perimeter of the foundation of the building, so increased insulation is encouraged.

8e) The Local Trust Committee should identify significant unfragmented forest ecosystems within the planning area and ensure that these areas are noted on mapping both for their environmental values as well as carbon sequestration areas.

WHAT DOES THE OCP SAY ABOUT GROUNDWATER PROTECTION?

In addition to the general objectives and policies listed above that may be useful for groundwater protection, the OCP includes specific objectives and policies related to Gabriola's water supply.

7.4 Water Supply Objectives

1. To manage the island's groundwater resources on a sustainable basis
2. To protect the groundwater resource from contamination
3. To promote water resource conservation strategies and to reduce water demand as much as possible
4. To undertake a program to monitor the quality and quantity of the groundwater aquifers on Gabriola, and,
5. To discourage non-essential large scale use of domestic water (such as lawn sprinkling and swimming pool filling) during periods of low water supply.

7.4 Water Supply Policies

- a) Methods of water conservation such as low water use fixtures, retention of rainwater and runoff in cisterns and ponds and other means shall be encouraged.
- b) The use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides shall be discouraged in order to protect water sources.
- c) No piping of water from a source outside the Plan Area shall be permitted.
- d) In considering the approval of a community water system, consideration shall be given to the results of a water management review, prepared by a Professional Engineer which examines:
 - i. the potential impact on existing water users in the immediate area;
 - ii. the recharge capability of the water source relative to anticipated maximum water demand of the proposed system;
 - iii. ownership and management of the system; and,
 - iv. remedies available in the event of a water system failure.
- e) Abandoned wells must be properly capped so as to avoid contamination of the aquifer.
- f) Industrial or recreational uses which are consumptive of large quantities of water shall be discouraged.

HOW ARE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREAS USED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ON GABRIOLA?

As noted above, Environmental Policy 6.1a) allows for the regulation of environmentally sensitive areas through the use of development permits. Development permits are used in situations where particular areas of land are designated for specific uses of importance to the community. A development permit must be obtained from the Local Trust Committee for any construction, structural alteration, or building additions to take place in those areas, as well as for subdivision or land alteration.

Section 9 of the OCP designates a number of development permit areas, some of which are used for environmental protection.

Gabriola currently has five Development Permit Areas designated for the protection of the natural environment:

1. The Tunnel
2. Lock Bay
3. Riparian Areas (fish supporting creeks and streams)
4. Flat Top Islands
5. Gabriola Pass

Maps of these DPAs are here:

- North island: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342211/ocp-d-dp-north-oct-2016.pdf>
- South island <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342212/ocp-d-dp-south-oct-2016.pdf>

Specific guidelines regulating activity in these areas are contained in the Land Use Bylaw: http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/347100/gb_bl177_lub_base_a_cons_2018_11_04.pdf.

**** We'd like to hear from you on whether the existing DPAs are sufficient to protect environmentally sensitive areas on Gabriola Island or if you'd like the LTC to explore more protection through the use of Development Permit Areas.***

WHAT ARE THE KEY POLICIES IN THE ISLANDS TRUST'S COASTAL DOUGLAS-FIR TOOLKIT?

The Islands Trust's "Protecting the Coastal Douglas-Fir Zone" toolkit (2018) describes the CDF zone and its threats, and explores the various regulatory tools that Local Trust Committees can use to preserve and protect the zone.

A key message of the Toolkit is that:

"The Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) Biogeoclimatic Zone is found nowhere else in Canada. It includes a unique set of ecosystems that occur along the edge of south-east Vancouver Island, across the Gulf Islands, and along the southwest coast of Vancouver Island. The Islands Trust Area is entirely within the CDF zone." (p.8)

The Toolkit describes the importance of CDF conservation:

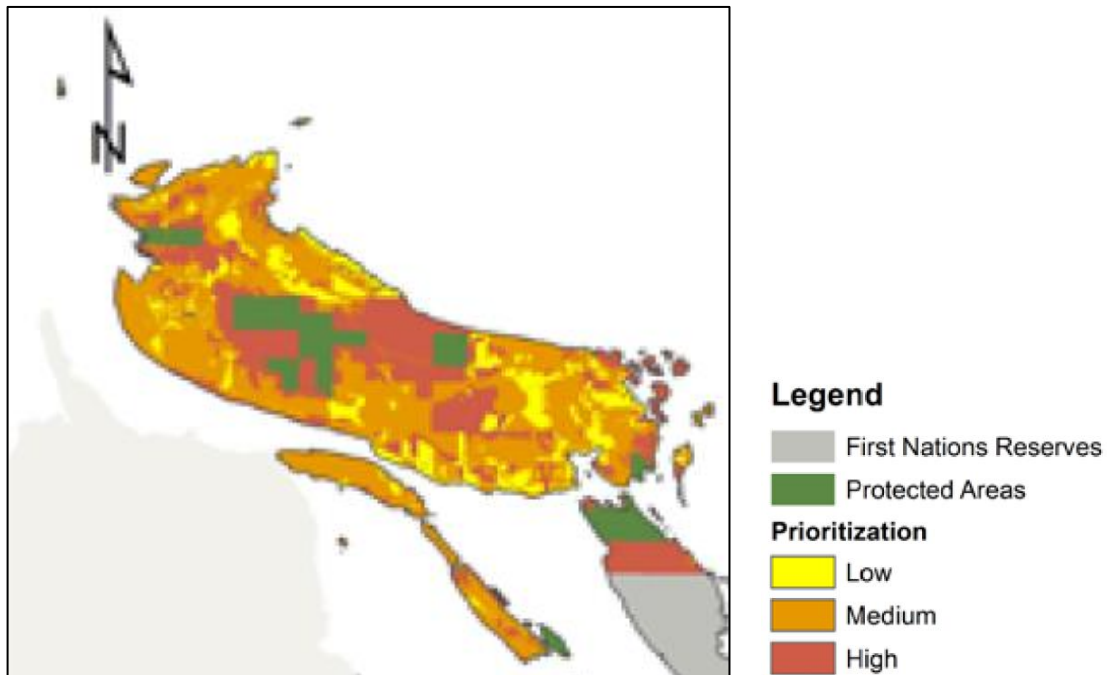
"There is significant concern for the conservation of the CDF zone. The Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership has emphasized the importance of the CDF zone as being biologically rich and containing globally imperiled and provincially identified species at risk, as well as containing ecosystems at risk. CDF ecosystems clean our air and water, absorb carbon from the atmosphere, provide climate change mitigation and adaptation, and contribute to food resilience by providing habitat for pollinators and insectivores. CDF forests are important for people's mental health and wellbeing, and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people to learn about the significance, ecology, and cultural importance of these special coastal rainforests. The CDF zone can also add to property values. Individual properties that are in the vicinity of natural areas and parkland can increase property values by 3–6% (or more)." (p.8)

The Toolkit describes the threat to the Coastal Douglas-fir Zone in this way (p.12):

“Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems are under threat from human pressures. Of all the zones in the province, the CDF has been most altered by human activities:

- Almost half of the CDF lands have been converted for human use (urban, roads, agriculture, mining, industrial, etc.).
- 75% of the human population of BC lives in the CDF, including the major centres of Vancouver, Victoria, and Nanaimo where population growth is expected to continue.
- The CDF has the highest road density of any biogeoclimatic zone in BC. The trend of deforestation and residential sprawl continues. Even in the Islands Trust Area, many local trust committees have not reduced the subdivision potential inherited by the zoning that was already in place when the Islands Trust was created in 1974. The continued parcelization and subdivision of land causes fragmentation and perpetuates the incremental loss of contiguous forest cover, threatening the remaining natural systems.”

The Toolkit includes a map of priority conservation areas on Gabriola. Mudge and DeCourcy (p.10):



The Toolkit also provides the following summary of the key regulatory tools that Local Trust Committees can use to protect the CDF zone in their jurisdiction:

“To advance protection of the Coastal Douglas-fir zone, official community plans should specifically set goals, objectives, and policies that support CDF retention and protection. Each OCP (Official Community Plan) should also be amended to:

- Include strong language directing protection of the CDF zone.
- Implement the Islands Trust Conservancy Regional Conservation Plan.
- Include specific policies supporting park dedication that protects CDF forests (see the section on park dedication below).

- Include Development Permit Areas for the protection of the environment, specifically the Coastal Douglas-fir zone and associated ecosystems.
- Include “urban” containment boundaries achieved through Land designations and land use policies that preserve large lot areas outside of the villages, and that direct density to specific areas of the islands zoned for mixed use commercial/residential, smaller lots, and areas that can be serviced by adequate water supplies.
- Identify protection of the CDF zone as an amenity that can be provided at the time of rezoning. Establish the nexus between development impacts and ecological services.
- Include enabling policies for conservation subdivisions, amenity zoning, density transfers, and density bonusing.
- Include language and policies that reference and honour the cultural heritage of Coast Salish stewardship, including the protection of culturally important places, and archaeological sites.” (p.17-18)

The CDF Toolkit is here: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346674/cdf-toolkit-final-web.pdf>.

WHAT ARE THE KEY POLICIES IN THE ISLANDS TRUST’S GULF ISLANDS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION TOOLKIT?

The Islands Trust’s “Gulf Islands Groundwater Protection” toolkit (2014) reviews the types of aquifers that Gulf Islands residents rely on, identifies development pressures as a concern, and reviews the information available to understand groundwater issues.

The Toolkit also enumerates the variety of regulatory tools that Local Trust Committees can use to protect groundwater resources, such as policy and regulatory changes that can be made to Official Community Plans (OCPs) and Land Use Planning Bylaws, including the establishment of development permit areas, the creation of subdivision servicing bylaws, and bylaw enforcement.

The Toolkit gives several examples of effective OCP policies for aquifer and groundwater protection (p.7):

- Protect aquifers by establishing development permit areas that require buffer zones [around water-sensitive areas].
- Designate aquifer protection zone(s) and development permit areas for which studies may be required.
- Commit the Local Trust Committee (LTC) to an integrated water management planning approach that will coordinate action on the community water supply, rainwater management, green infrastructure and government regulations
- Encourage cluster development that minimizes impervious surfaces and other impacts across the landscape.
- Direct LTCs to encourage communities to practice water conservation and protection.

It also provides examples of effective Land Use Bylaw measures (p.7):

- Regulate use and density of property to direct development away from groundwater-limited or aquifer recharge areas
- Limit lot sizes to reduce density in groundwater scarce areas

- Prohibit potentially polluting uses in areas where aquifers must be protected
- Set standards on aspects of development that will have an impact on the water resources on the site or in an area (e.g., setbacks from riparian areas)
- Encourage groundwater sensitive development by clustering development through rezoning and possibly utilizing density bonus provisions.
- Leverage habitat protection or water-efficient amenities when rezoning.

As well, the Toolkit provides these examples of water-related Development Permit Area guidelines (p.9):

- Mandate replanting and rehabilitation of disturbed areas
- Erosion and sediment control (site specific plan)
- Environmental impact assessments/hydrologic studies to satisfaction of the Local Trust Committee
- Consistency between pre- and post-development hydrology
- Vegetation as per landscape plan
- Incorporate standards from other levels of government (e.g. Riparian Areas Regulation)
- Limits as to the amount of impermeable surfaces
- Specify areas that must remain clear of development.

The Toolkit provides example guidelines for rainwater harvesting in a sample Development Permit Area bylaw appendix (p.20-21):

- Dwelling units should be sited to allow for the optimal placement of a gravity fed rainwater collection tank which collects rainwater from the roof leaders of the dwelling unit which capture the majority of the rainwater flows
- Dwelling units should be designed to maximize opportunities for rainwater catchment from all roof surfaces
- Impervious surfaces should be minimized. The use of impervious paved driveways shall be discouraged
- The LTC may require that all new dwelling units include an external rainwater harvesting system such which includes the following:
 - i. External equipment for collecting and distributing rainwater from the dwelling unit roof
 - ii. A storage tank(s) with a minimum storage capacity of 18,000 litres which is designed for rainwater collection and is rated for potable use
 - iii. A pumping system
 - iv. An overflow handling system
- All external pipe, plumbing fixtures, and hose bibs where rainwater is used shall be clearly marked with “Non-Potable Water Do Not Drink”
- Where external rainwater harvesting equipment is required as a condition of the permit, the LTC shall encourage the applicant to install dedicated plumbing lines within proposed dwelling units to make use of stored rainwater for flushing toilets and other non-potable uses.

The Toolkit also discusses the creation of Subdivision Servicing Bylaws which can

- establish standards for the subdivision of land that maximize infiltration of water and minimize impervious surfaces and evaluate the sustainability of new groundwater withdrawal from a specific aquifer
- set the standards by which works and services must be constructed when land is divided into new parcels
- set standards that support groundwater quality and supply
- require that each proposed lot has a reliable source of potable water, and establish infiltration, drainage and permeability standards
- direct development to mimic natural hydrology by requiring rainwater infiltration and limiting impervious surfaces
- incorporate any existing wellhead protection area(s) that are regulated by zoning or a development permit area. (p.11-12)

Further, the Toolkit says, land development approvals that are typically based on “proof of water” evaluations “generally do not give consideration to long-term ground water consideration such as impacts of future development or cumulative impacts of developments over time in a watershed” and focus on “yield and quality of each well and not the sustainability and protection of the aquifer system as a whole.”

Currently the Gabriola Land Use Bylaw does not have proof of water requirements for subdivision applications, so an owner applying to subdivide land must meet the provincial requirements for proof of water. If an owner of land is applying to rezone a property to a different use or density, the Local Trust Committee can require the applicant to submit a hydrology report. This information is reviewed by Trust staff, and would need to demonstrate sufficient water to support the development and no impact on adjacent wells resulting from the development.

The Toolkit is here: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/259555/groundwater-toolkit.pdf>.

**** We would like to hear from you about which Groundwater Protection Toolkit guidelines the Local Trust Committee should focus on including in the OCP and LUB.***

Major Conservation Threats / Priorities for Gabriola

Provided by the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust (GaLTT)

January 2021

This document looks at conservation issues as they relate to the land-base of Gabriola Island, not the foreshore nor marine environment. They are also recognized as being viewed from a settler perspective.

1. Population Growth and Development

Under “Threats to Ecosystems related to Gabriola Island”, the Islands Trust Conservancy Regional Conservation Plan 2018-2027 states in part,

“In particular, the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area is vulnerable to loss of natural ecosystems to residential and associated uses. Gabriola Island itself is a short ferry ride from Nanaimo and saw higher than average ecosystem disturbance between 2004-2014 compared with other islands in the Islands Trust Area. Most of this disturbance was deforestation for roads and rural development.” (p.70)

Gabriola is the second most densely populated island in the Islands Trust, next to Bowen Island. Outside of climate change, this points to the root of most of the conservation threats to Gabriola – population growth and development.

“Once land is converted to human use, that land is less available to nature. As land conversion reaches or goes above a 30-40% threshold, the number of species in a given habitat decline more rapidly.” (from Conservation Status of Gabriola Island Local Trust Area (GILTA), Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC)).

The ITC calculates that approximately 28% of the GILTA has been converted to human use.

Conservation issues related to development include:

- Tree cutting – there is a lack of restrictions on tree cutting on private lots on Gabriola
- Stress on ground water
- Fragmentation of natural habitat
- Disturbance of sensitive ecosystems and rare species
- Increase in invasive species, especially plant species that crowd out native species. Key invasives include Scotch Broom, Daphne or spurge laurel, English ivy, Tansy ragwort and Yellow flag iris.

2. Climate Change

Some of the realities of climate change that we are already experiencing include: warmer and wetter winters; drier summers; changes in the timing of seasons; and more weather extremes.

Conservation issues related to climate change include:

- Summer drought stressing ecosystems, e.g., dying western redcedar
- Higher fire risk
- Heavy rainfall events, soil compaction, erosion, increased run-off
- Impacts from changes in timing of seasons
- Sea level rise.

3. GaLTT Conservation Priorities for Gabriola

- Increase the amount of protected land – as of March 31, 2020 the ITC lists Gabriola as having 12.13% of the local trust area protected, the 4th lowest of the 14 islands listed (<http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/i-am-a/local-government/Ita-protected-areas/>), and less than the current federal goal of 17%. Protection priorities include: older mature forests (150-250 years old) as there is very little older forest on Gabriola; wetlands and riparian ecosystems; Garry Oak ecosystems
- Develop regulations/restrictions to reduce and manage tree-cutting, often clear-cutting, of residential properties on Gabriola. Keeping trees alive has many benefits. The many leaves of living trees actively remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis, create more tree biomass and add organic matter to the soil. Keep living trees before planting new ones as they are performing climate change roles now when we need them to. New trees will also remove and store carbon but at low overall rates until they get much older. Cutting trees also exposes the soil and leads to carbon loss as well as providing a seed bed for invasive plants, fragments habitats, etc.
- Educate landholders on ways they can help protect and enhance natural habitats on their property
- Accurate identification and mapping of sensitive ecosystems
- Develop policies to create ecological protection zones
- Develop policy and practices that allow public facilities to harvest and use rainwater
- Require water storage to be built for new construction
- Remove invasive plant species and prevent/contain/control their introduction. Dealing with invasives is huge; much better to prevent their introduction and spread
- Work across governments and agencies to develop policies and procedures to deal with invasive plants comprehensively (i.e., disposal of invasive plants is currently very difficult)
- Reconcile contradictions in policy affecting conservation issues between different regulatory agencies and their goals, e.g., Firesmart, invasive plants
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, e.g., build infrastructure and encourage more green and active transportation, (e.g., bikes, e-bikes, GERTIE) in ways that do not degrade parks and trails.

Suggested References

- Islands Trust Conservancy Regional Conservation Plan 2018-2017:
http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/media/84821/itc_2018-11_rcp-2018-2027-web_final.pdf
- Islands Trust Conservancy – Land Use Planning Tools and Practices for Sensitive Ecosystems:
<http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/i-am-a/local-government/seplanning/>
- A Sensitive Ecosystem Guide for Islands Trust Area Property Owners:
<http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/media/9590/itf-sembrochure-final-jan25.pdf>
- Coastal Douglas Fir Ecosystems:
http://www.cdfcp.ca/images/CDFCP_Coastal.Douglas-fir.Ecosystems_Brochure_WEB.pdf
- Gabriola Island Local Trust Area Coastal Douglas-fir Forests brochure:
http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/350087/itc_cdf_gabriola_web.pdf

Glossary: Key Policies on Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation for Gabriola Island

This glossary provides definitions for terms used in the “Key Policies on Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation for Gabriola Island” resource document.

Aquifer

An underground formation of permeable rock or loose material which can produce useful quantities of water when tapped by a well. Aquifers come in all sizes and their origin and composition is varied. They may be small, only a few hectares in area, or very large, underlying thousands of square kilometres of the earth's surface. They may be only a few metres thick, or they may measure hundreds of metres from top to bottom.

Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/water-overview/sources/groundwater.html#sub1>

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the range of variation found among microorganisms, plants, fungi, and animals, and the richness of species of living organisms. Usually three levels of biodiversity are discussed—genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity.

- **Genetic diversity** is all the different genes contained in all individual plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms. It occurs within a species as well as between species.
- **Species diversity** is all the differences within and between populations of species, as well as between different species.
- **Ecosystem diversity** is all the different habitats, biological communities, and ecological processes, as well as variation within individual ecosystems.

Adapted from : <https://www.esa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/biodiversity.pdf>

Biogeoclimatic zone

A biogeoclimatic zone is a geographical area with a relatively uniform macroclimate, characterized by a mosaic of vegetation, soils and, to a lesser extent, animal life reflecting that climate.

Retrieved from: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/biogeoclimatic-zone>

Bioregion

A bioregion is a geographic region whose limits are naturally defined by topographic and biological features (such as mountain ranges and ecosystems).

Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bioregion>

Carbon Sequestration

Carbon dioxide is the most commonly produced greenhouse gas. Carbon sequestration is the process of capturing and storing carbon dioxide that is in the atmosphere. It is one method of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere with the goal of reducing global climate change.

Retrieved from: https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-carbon-sequestration?qt-news_science_products=0#qt-news_science_products

Islands Trust Area forests sequesters 190,506 tonnes of carbon per year, which equates to emissions from 40,240 passenger vehicles per year. If forests in the region are maintained, the Islands Trust Area has the capacity to be a major sink for carbon produced in the region.

Retrieved from: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/projects/climate-change>

Climate Change

Climate change is a long-term shift in global or regional climate patterns. Often climate change refers specifically to the rise in global temperatures from the mid-20th century to present.

Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/climate-change/#:~:text=Climate%20change%20is%20the%20long,the%20planet%20as%20a%20whole>

Within the Islands Trust Area, climate change is having noticeable impacts, including:

- More extreme winter and summer temperatures;
- More extreme dry spells that result in drought and watershed concerns;
- Warmer ocean temperatures which can result in species migration changes, and shellfish safety warnings;
- More extreme weather events that result in flooding, wind damage, and erosion; and
- Sea level rise that may result in erosion and damage to archaeological sites and structures.

Retrieved from: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/projects/climate-change>

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Climate change mitigation means avoiding and reducing emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere to prevent the planet from warming to more extreme temperatures.

Climate change adaptation means altering our behavior, systems, and—in some cases—ways of life to protect our families, our economies, and the environment in which we live from the impacts of climate change. The more we reduce emissions right now, the easier it will be to adapt to the changes we can no longer avoid.

Retrieved from: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/what-s-the-difference-between-climate-change-mitigation-and-adaptation>

Community Water System

A system of waterworks which serves five connections or more and which is owned, operated and maintained by an improvement district under the Water Act or the Local Government Act, or a Regional District, or which is regulated under the Public Utilities Act or Health Act. An example of a community water system could be one well providing potable water to several dwellings.

Adapted from definitions in the OCP: <http://www.islandtrust.bc.ca/media/350052/blgb166-ocp-consolidated-sept-2-2019.pdf>

Contiguous

Being in actual contact: touching along a boundary or at a point.

Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/contiguous>

Density Bonus

Density bonusing is a practice through which local governments offer developers additional residential density (or development rights) in return for providing affordable housing.

Retrieved and modified from: <http://inclusionaryhousing.ca/2016/04/26/density-bonusing>

The Islands Trust can award density bonuses for the provision of affordable housing (or other community amenities). Local governments in BC, including the Trust, have been granted legislative authority for this task.

A very low cost alternative [for the provision of affordable housing], this option could be implemented by Local Trust Committees on a case by case basis. It also serves to provide developers with additional revenue through increased density, thus providing its own incentive and not requiring additional tax breaks. Its one major drawback, however, is the localized nature of the resulting increase in density.

Retrieved and modified from:

<http://www.islandtrust.bc.ca/media/223639/Options%20for%20Affordable%20Housing%20New%20Solutions%20to%20the%20Housing%20Crisis.pdf>

Development Permit

British Columbia's Local Government Act enables communities to designate parts of their planning area as Development Permit Areas so they can set objectives and guidelines for development within those areas. No building construction, demolition, land alteration, or subdivision of land may occur in a Development Permit Area without a Development Permit.

Retrieved from: <http://www.islandtrust.bc.ca/media/342629/03dpapplicationguide.pdf>

Information about Development Permit Areas on Gabriola and how they work is here:

<http://www.islandtrust.bc.ca/media/218578/gbdpafactsheetfeb2012.pdf>

Information about Development Permit Areas and how they can be used for environmental protection is here: <https://www.toolkit.bc.ca/dpa>

Easement

The right to cross or use someone's land for a particular purpose.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/easement#:~:text=%2F%CB%88i%CB%90zm%2F,%2F%CB%88i%CB%90zm%2F,feeling%20of%20peace%20or%20happiness>

Environmental Covenant (Conservation Covenant)

A conservation covenant is an agreement entered into between a landowner and a covenant holder, the purpose of which is to conserve certain lands and/or buildings in their current state in perpetuity for environmental or historic reasons.

Retrieved from: <https://galtt.ca/covenant.html>

Environmental Impact Assessment

An environmental assessment is a process to identify, predict and evaluate the potential environmental effects of a proposed development project. This process happens before decisions about a proposed project are made.

For more information: <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessments/basics-environmental-assessment.html>

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally sensitive areas include marine foreshores, lakes, watercourses, wetlands and a variety of woodland ecosystems. These areas are noted for their high biotic capability for flora and fauna and are particularly vulnerable to indiscriminate forms of development.

Retrieved from: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/350052/blgb166-ocp-consolidated-sept-2-2019.pdf> (see page 43)

Erosion and Sediment Control

Erosion control is a practice whereby specific steps are taken to minimize the potential for soil or rock to be moved from one location to another, and especially into bodies of water where aquatic ecosystems can be negatively impacted.

Sediment control is the process whereby steps are taken to minimize the potential for eroded soil being moved and/or deposited beyond the limits of a construction site.

For more information:

<http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/Content/docType372/Production/7ErosSediCntrlMthds.pdf>

Also: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erosion_control

Food Resilience

A *resilient food system* is able to withstand and recover from disruptions in a way that ensures a sufficient supply of acceptable and accessible food for all.

Retrieved from: <https://clf/jhsph.edu/projects/food-system-resilience>

Gabriola Official Community Plan (Gabriola Island Official Community Plan, 1997)

The Official Community Plan was adopted in 1997 and has had some amendments over the years. It offers a vision of the future community on Gabriola. The Plan sets out the community's goals, objectives and policies regarding land-use, future development as well as social and environmental considerations applicable in the planning area. The purpose of the Plan is to provide direction to government agencies, businesses, land owners and residents concerning future land use and the provision of services.

Retrieved from: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/344745/blgb166-ocp-consolidated-november-2-2017.pdf>

Gabriola Planning Area

The Gabriola Planning Area includes Gabriola Island and surrounding islands such as DeCourcy Island, Mudge Island, and additional smaller islands.

To see the full list of associated islands: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/gabriola/associated-islands/>

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/gabriola/>

Globally Imperiled

There are global ranks of conservation status. One of those ranks is "imperiled" which means at high risk of extinction or elimination due to restricted range, few populations or occurrences, steep declines, severe threats, or other factors.

For more information:

[https://help.natureserve.org/biotics/content/record_management/Element_Files/Element_Tracking/ET_RACK_Definitions_of_Heritage_Conservation_Status_Ranks.htm#:~:text=Global%20\(G\)%20Conservation%20Status%20Ranks,-RANK&text=Presumed%20Extinct%20\(species\)%20%E2%80%94%20Not,virtually%20no%20likelihood%20of%20rediscovery.&text=Imperiled%20%E2%80%94%20At%20high%20risk%20of,severe%20threats%20C%20or%20other%20factors](https://help.natureserve.org/biotics/content/record_management/Element_Files/Element_Tracking/ET_RACK_Definitions_of_Heritage_Conservation_Status_Ranks.htm#:~:text=Global%20(G)%20Conservation%20Status%20Ranks,-RANK&text=Presumed%20Extinct%20(species)%20%E2%80%94%20Not,virtually%20no%20likelihood%20of%20rediscovery.&text=Imperiled%20%E2%80%94%20At%20high%20risk%20of,severe%20threats%20C%20or%20other%20factors)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gases warm the earth but because they trap infrared light radiated from the Earth's surface in the atmosphere, they prevent heat from escaping into space. We need greenhouse gases to keep the earth warm enough to live. However, activities like burning fossil fuels produce excess greenhouse gases that warm the earth too much. This is leading to climate change. Greenhouse gases are: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride.

For more information: <https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/greenhouse-gases>

Groundwater

Groundwater is the water found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand and rock. It is stored in and moves slowly through geologic formations of soil, sand and rocks called aquifers.

Retrieved from: <https://www.groundwater.org/get-informed/basics/groundwater.html>.

Gulf Islands Groundwater Protection Toolkit

The Islands Trust's "Gulf Islands Groundwater Protection" toolkit (2014) reviews the types of aquifers that Gulf Islands residents rely on, identifies development pressures as a concern, and reviews the information available to understand groundwater issues.

The Toolkit also enumerates the variety of regulatory tools that Local Trust Committees can use to protect groundwater resources, such as policy and regulatory changes that can be made to Official Community Plans (OCPs) and Land Use Planning Bylaws, including the establishment of development permit areas, the creation of subdivision servicing bylaws, and bylaw enforcement.

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/259555/groundwater-toolkit.pdf>.

Habitat

A habitat is a place where an organism makes its home. A habitat meets all the environmental conditions an organism needs to survive.

Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/habitat/>

Hydrology

A science dealing with the properties, distribution, and circulation of water on and below the earth's surface and in the atmosphere.

Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hydrology>

Impervious

If something is impervious it means it does not allow penetration, for instance by water, light, or gas.

Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/impervious>

Islands Trust's Coastal Douglas-fir Ecosystem Protection Toolkit

The Islands Trust's "Protecting the Coastal Douglas-Fir Zone" toolkit (2018) describes the CDF zone and its threats, and explores the various regulatory tools that Local Trust Committees can use to preserve and protect the zone.

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346674/cdf-toolkit-final-web.pdf>.

Islands Trust Regional Conservation Plan

To protect and restore endangered species and ecosystems, the Conservancy has prepared a science-based Regional Conservation Plan that sets out our strategies for the next ten years.

The full Plan is available at: www.islandstrustconservancy.ca

Land Designations and Land Use Policies

See Zoning and Land Use Bylaws

Land Use Bylaws (LUBs)

Land Use Bylaws contain all the rules and regulations that govern the use and allowable density of the land, as well as setbacks of buildings to property lines, height restrictions, parking requirements, signage restrictions, drainage restrictions and subdivision servicing. Land Use Bylaws are adopted and administered by each Island's Local Trust Committee.

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/land-use-planning/>

Local Trust Committee / Islands Trust

Gabriola and the other Gulf Islands that are under the jurisdiction of the Islands Trust each have a Local Trust Committee (LTC). These LTCs are made up of people elected by local residents. They are responsible for land use planning and regulation for their respective area of jurisdiction.

LTCs are required to prepare and adopt Official Community Plans, Land Use Bylaws, and zoning and subdivision bylaws, regulate soil removal and deposit, and authorize permits under Part 14 of the Local Government Act.

Two local trustees are elected for each group of islands designated as a local trust area or island municipality. The two local trustees, together with an appointed chair from the Executive Committee, form the Local Trust Committee, or LTC.

The Islands Trust is responsible for leading the preservation and protection of the Trust Area. The Islands Trust cooperates with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.

The Islands Trust Policy Statement sets out three main goals:

- Foster the preservation and protection of the Trust Area's ecosystems
- Ensure that human activity and the scale, rate and type of development in the Trust Area are compatible with maintenance of the integrity of Trust Area ecosystems
- Sustain island character and healthy communities.

For more information on Local Trust Committees: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/>

For more information on Gabriola's Local Trust Committee: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/gabriola/>

For more information on the Islands Trust Policy Statement: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/governance/policy-statement/>

Marine Protection Zone

In a Marine Protection Zone in the Gabriola Land Use Bylaw, no buildings or structures are permitted and the residential use of a watercraft of any kind, whether temporary or permanent, is prohibited.

Retrieved from: http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/347223/bylaw-no-127_lub_consolidated_feb-7-19.pdf

Potable Water

Water that is potable is safe to drink and fit for domestic purposes without further treatment, as defined by the British Columbia Drinking Water Protection Act.

Retrieved from:

http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/media/39066/guide_for_regulating_rainwater_harvesting_systems.pdf

Setback Area

A setback is the horizontal distance that a building or structure must be sited from a specified lot line, building, structure or other permanent landscape feature or point (such as a high-water mark or steep slope). The setback area may be established for several purposes including establishing fire separation between buildings, privacy, screening or to establish an ecologically protected area where no land alterations or construction should occur. This area can also be referred to as a 'buffer area', or 'enhancement area' if ecological protection or restoration works are required.

Adapted from Gabriola Land Use Bylaw definitions:

http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/347100/gb_bl177_lub_base_a_cons_2018_11_04.pdf

Provincially Identified Species at Risk

At the provincial level, there are different species identified as at risk of disappearing, or becoming extinct, in British Columbia.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/conservation-data-centre/explore-cdc-data/species-and-ecosystems-explorer>

Rainwater Harvesting

Rainwater harvesting is the process of collecting and storing rainwater for use, rather than having it run off into the ground. Typically, this means using a variety of technologies including a guttering system on the roof, piping, cistern(s), fittings, pumps and other plumbing requirements. In the BC Building Code, this is defined as a type of private water supply system.

Retrieved and adapted from:

http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/media/39066/guide_for_regulating_rainwater_harvesting_systems.pdf

Regional District of Nanaimo Rainwater Harvesting Best Practices Guidebook:

https://rdn.bc.ca/sites/default/files/legacy_asp/events/attachments/evID6235evattID1344.pdf

Recharge Areas

An area where water flows into the Earth to resupply a water body or an aquifer.

Retrieved from: https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/E1327343-09F0-03FF-AA9032F47AD1EB9C/aquifers_recharge.pdf

Recharge Capability

Ground water recharge includes recharge as a natural part of the hydrologic cycle and human-induced recharge, either directly through spreading basins or injection wells, or as a consequence of human activities such as irrigation and waste disposal.

Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/agricultural-and-biological-sciences/groundwater-recharge>

Renewable Natural Resources

Renewable natural resources are natural resources that, after exploitation, can return to their previous stock levels by natural processes of growth or replenishment

Retrieved from:

<https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=2290#:~:text=Renewable%20natural%20resources%20are%20natural,which%20regeneration%20will%20become%20impossible.>

Rezoning

Rezoning property requires an application to change or amend a land use bylaw and, in some cases, the official community plan. An amendment to either of these bylaws must be consistent with the Islands Trust Policy Statement, which includes direction and advice for local trust committees when amending official community plans and land use bylaws.

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/348078/06rzapplicationguide.pdf>

Riparian Areas Regulation

Riparian areas link water to land. They border streams, lakes, and wetlands. The blend of streambed, water, trees, shrubs and grasses in a riparian area provides fish habitat, and directly influences it. There is regulation in place to protect riparian areas.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/fish/aquatic-habitat-management/riparian-areas-regulation>

Subdivision Servicing Bylaws

A subdivision servicing bylaw regulates and sets out the requirements for the provision of works and services that are needed as part of the subdivision of land.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/land-use-regulation/subdivision-approval-servicing-bylaws>

Urban Containment Boundaries

An Urban Containment Boundary sets aside land to be protected from most forms of development. Usually an UCB will delineate the edge of town and the beginning of rural areas.

Retrieved from: <https://www.toolkit.bc.ca/tool/urban-containment-boundary#:~:text=An%20Urban%20Containment%20Boundary%20sets,the%20beginning%20of%20rural%20areas.>

Water Demand

Water demand is defined as the volume of water requested by users to satisfy their needs.

Retrieved from: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/help/glossary/eea-glossary/water-demand#:~:text=Water%20demand%20is%20defined%20as,users%20to%20satisfy%20their%20needs.>

Water Resource Conservation Strategies

Water resource conservation can take on many forms, such as rainwater harvesting or protection of freshwater networks.

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/projects/water-resource-information-for-islanders/>

Zoning Bylaws

Zoning bylaws regulate how land, buildings, and other structures may be used.

Different areas of land on Gabriola are designated as different zones – such as residential, resource, recreational and institutional, or commercial and light industrial zones (Gabriola Island Land Use Bylaw, 1999, p. 42). These can be seen on the Gabriola zoning maps.

Gabriola's zoning maps:

- North area: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346969/lub-north-nov2018.pdf>
- South area: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342214/lub-southsheet-oct-2016.pdf>

For more information about zoning bylaws:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/planning-land-use-regulation/zoning-bylaws>

For the Gabriola Land Use Bylaw: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342215/blgb177-lub-consolidated-february-7-2017.pdf>

Growth on Gabriola

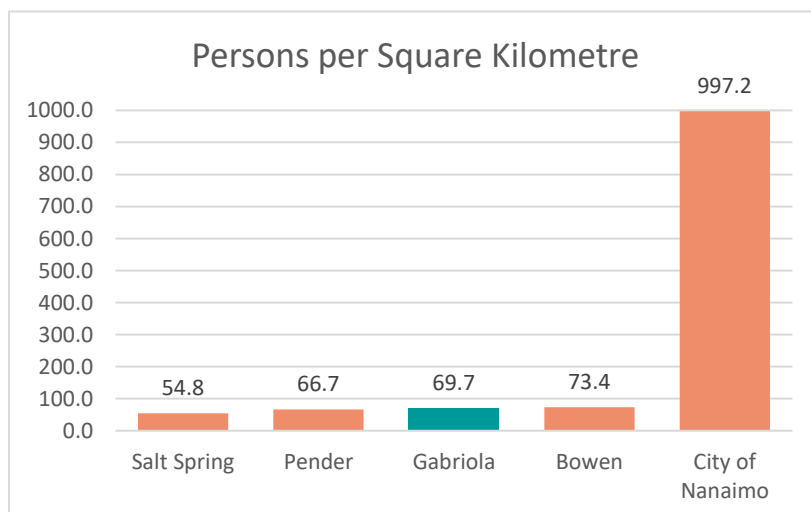
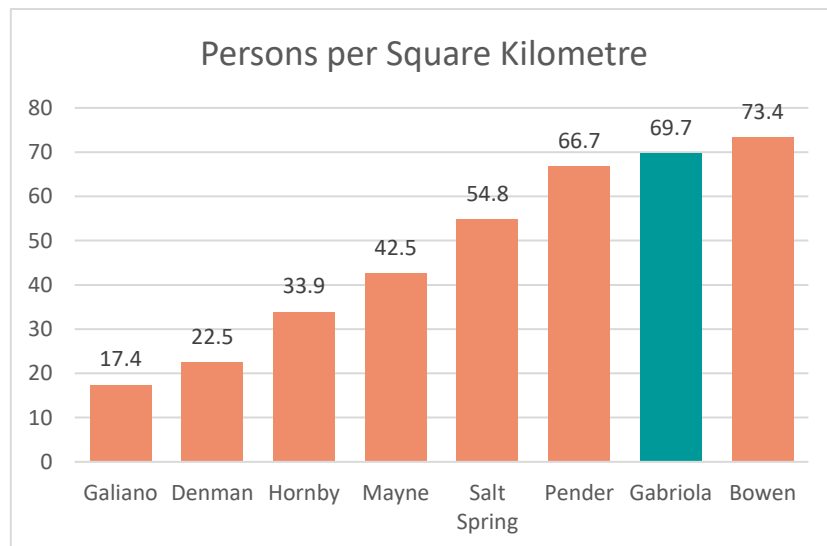
This document provides information about:

- how Gabriola's current population density compares with other islands and areas
- population growth
- factors that moderate growth
- two population projections
- four growth scenarios.

1. Population Density

Gabriola has a population density of 69.7 persons per square kilometre, making it the second most densely populated of the Gulf Islands. Only Bowen has a higher population density.

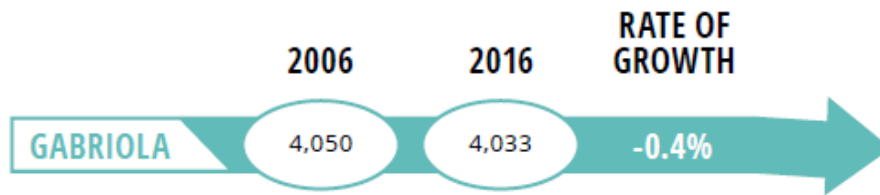
This first bar graph shows population densities for many of the major islands of the Salish Sea.¹ Our high population density relative to these other islands may be because of our close proximity to the major centre of Nanaimo and the more regular ferry service we enjoy compared to some other islands.



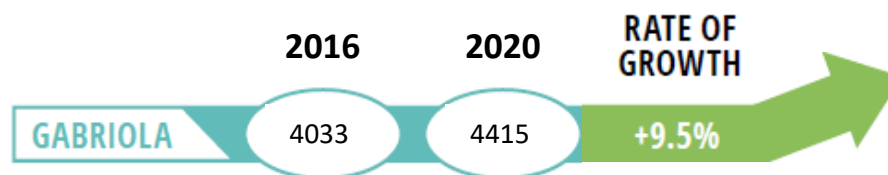
This second bar graph compares Gabriola's population density (and that of some of the other major islands) to the Nanaimo Census Agglomeration (which includes the City of Nanaimo as well as surrounding rural areas) and to the City of Nanaimo.²

2. Population and Growth

The population of Gabriola according to the 2016 Census was 4,033. Before that, growth was stagnant for the previous two census periods.



However, we know that our population has grown since 2016 because the BC government's Medical Services Plan health care coverage registrations record 4,415 people on Gabriola in 2020. This is an increase of 382 people, or 9.5%, in the past four years.



3. Moderating Factors to Growth

Several factors may impact growth: for example, changes to demographic issues like average household size, birth and death rates, and migration to and from Gabriola, as well as physical factors like the availability of lots to build on and the proportion of unoccupied dwellings, as well as how development is regulated through land use planning and development controls.

Of course, demographic issues can't be addressed through planning and development controls. So, for example, we can't change the Official Community Plan or Land Use Bylaw to restrict people from moving to Gabriola to occupy available lots, or from having large families. We can, however, change the OCP or LUB to modify things like how lots are zoned and developed and how much density is allowed on private land.

- **Average Household Size**

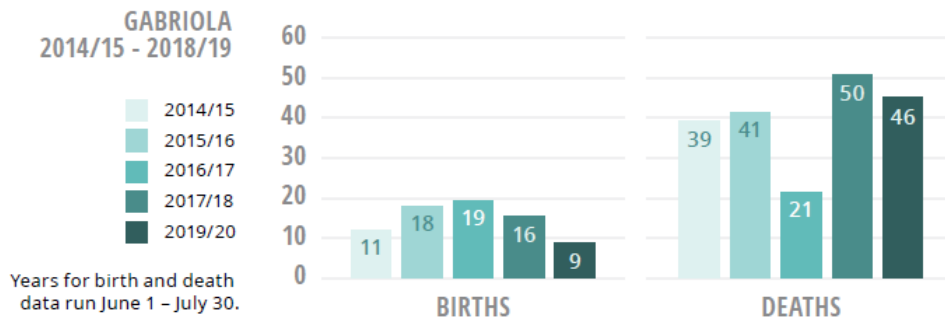
The average household size on Gabriola is 1.9 people per household, as reported in the 2016 Census.³

The average household size has stayed nearly the same over the past ten years. It was 1.9 in the 2011 Census and 2.0 in the 2006 Census.



- **Births and Deaths**

Over the last five years, Gabriola has had an average of 14 births per year and 39 deaths per year.⁴



In other words, people on Gabriola are dying at a faster rate than they are being born.

- **In-migration**

The rate at which people come to Gabriola from other places compared to the rate people leave Gabriola to live elsewhere has an impact on the growth rate.

We know from the 2016 Census that 1,250 people living on Gabriola on the date the Census was taken had moved between 2011 and 2016 and that, of those, about 68% (845) moved to their residence on Gabriola from another community.⁵

In that same five year period, however, Gabriola’s population declined from 4,045 to 4,033. As a result, the change in our population must have come from some combination of more people dying than being born on Gabriola (which we know from the data above) and more people leaving to live elsewhere than moving here. (Unfortunately, the Census does not tell us the exact number of Gabriolans who left the island between 2011 and 2016.)

- **Unoccupied and Under-occupied Properties**

The 2016 Census indicates that 845 dwellings on Gabriola were not occupied by the usual resident (i.e., they were vacant, or either rented seasonally or used by their owner seasonally). This represents 28% of the dwellings on Gabriola.⁶ This means that 72% of the dwellings on Gabriola are currently occupied full-time.

- **Build-out Potential**

Undeveloped Lots: There are 490 vacant (or undeveloped) private lots on Gabriola as of February 2021.

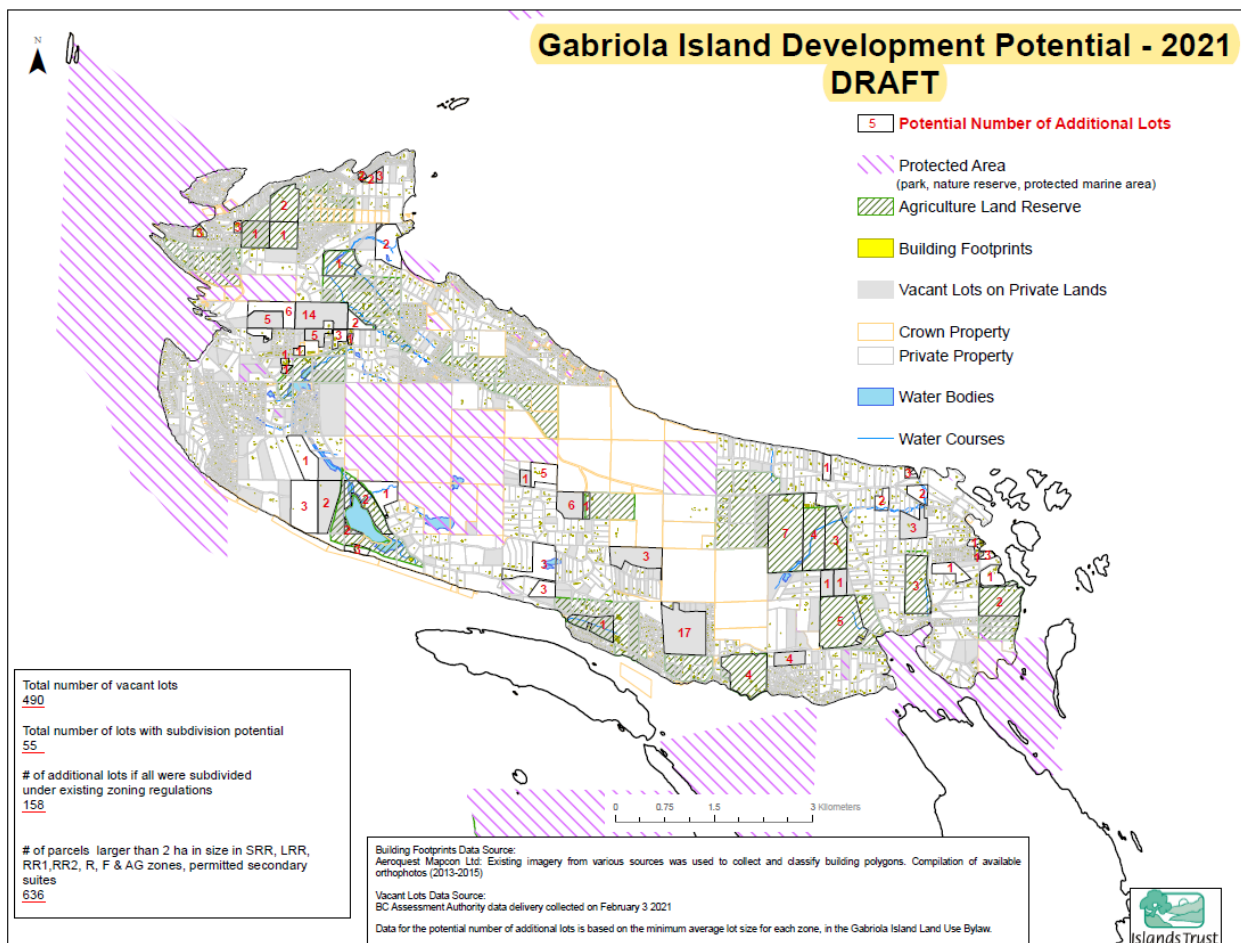
Secondary Suites: Current planning rules allow for secondary suites to be built on lots that are over 2 hectares in size and within specific zones (for more information see the Key Policies backgrounder and the Draft Development Potential map). The Islands Trust says that there are currently 636 lots that meet this criteria. Some of these secondary

suites may have already been built (and the Islands Trust is working to identify how many) but the number is likely to be small.

Subdivision Potential: Current planning rules allow for subdivision of certain existing lots into smaller lots, as long as they meet minimum lot size criteria for the planning zone they're in (as well as other criteria - for more information see the Key Policies backgrounder and the Draft Development Potential map below).

The Islands Trust has identified that there are 55 lots with subdivision potential under existing regulations, which would result in an additional 158 lots.

The map below shows the development potential under all of these situations. It is available as a separate PDF (that can be enlarged) on the Housing Matters website.



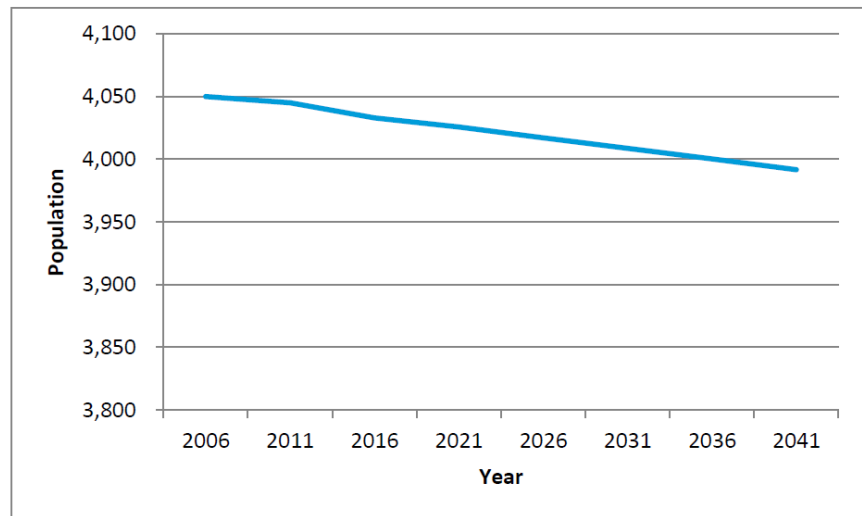
4. Population Projections

Two projections for how many people might live on Gabriola in the future predict that the population could decline to 3,990 people or increase to 5,295 people between now and the year 2041. These projections are models based on historical population data and don't take the moderating factors to growth (see above) into account.

i. Population Projection 1: Straight Line Projection

A projection based on ten years of population figures from the 2006, 2011 and 2016 Census years shows a steady decline in population, from 4,050 in 2006 to **3,990** in 2041.⁷ This represents a decline of about 1.5%.

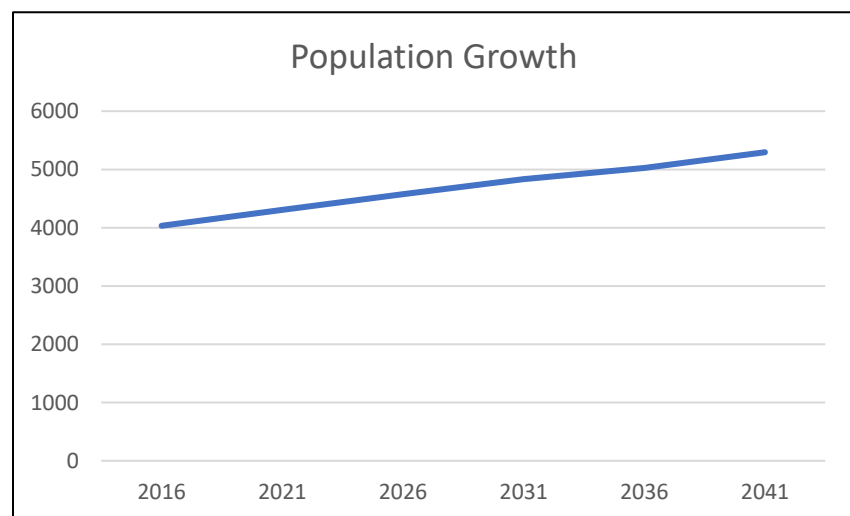
Given that the population of Gabriola appears to have already increased by 9.5% since the 2016 Census (see above), this projection may not be based on accurate assumptions.



ii. Population Projection 1: Nanaimo Projection

A second projection assumes Gabriola will grow at the same rate as the Nanaimo Local Health Area over the next 25 years. In this scenario, the population would increase by about 30%, from 4,033 in 2006 to **5,295** in 2041.⁸

This projection is based on changes in population in a much more urban environment than Gabriola, and that has distinct differences in current land use planning and servicing.



Population Projections	Population by 2041
Projection 1: Straight Line population prediction based on historical data	3,990
Projection 2: Parallel growth with Nanaimo	5,295

5. Growth Scenarios

Four growth scenarios predict a regular resident population of between 4,631 and 6,632 people in the future. These scenarios are based on information about how many lots on Gabriola are currently undeveloped, how much subdivision potential exists, and how many secondary suites are currently allowed.

These scenarios also rely on assumptions about current household size and patterns of occupancy (as per the moderating factors to growth above).

However, in each scenario, two population numbers are projected:

- one based on the current proportion of dwellings that are occupied full-time (i.e., 72% full-time occupancy, see above)
- one that would occur if all the potential dwellings were occupied full-time (i.e., 100% full-time occupancy). This somewhat mirrors the population increases experienced during the summers.

These scenarios show the potential growth possible within existing land use policies around development of existing lots, subdivision, and secondary suite development. The date at which the population would grow to the numbers projected would be whenever all the potential for development is realized.

Because of certain limitations in the data around secondary suites (see below), the numbers may be slightly overinflated.

i. Growth Scenario 1: Build Out of All Existing Vacant Lots

In this projection we start from our current Medical Services Plan registration population of 4,415 and we assume that:

- it's possible to build on all 490 undeveloped lots
- current occupancy patterns stay the same – so 28% of dwellings are un- or under-occupied and 72% are occupied full-time
- the current average household size of 1.9 applies to all occupied dwellings on developed lots.

Given that we're interested in knowing how much the regular resident population of Gabriola would increase, we would multiply the number of fully occupied lots by the average household size.

If all 490 lots are developed and 72% are occupied full time, at an average household size of 1.9, the regular resident population would increase by 670 people, to **5,085**.

If, however, occupancy patterns changed such that 100% of the dwellings were occupied full-time, the regular residential population would increase by 931 people, to **5,346**.

ii. Growth Scenario 2: Build Out of All Allowable Secondary Suites

In this scenario we start again from the current Medical Services Plan registration population of 4,415 and look at what happens if secondary suites are built on all 636 lots that are allowed to have one.

In this scenario, Gabriola's regular resident population would increase by the number of fully occupied secondary suites multiplied by the average household size.

In other words, 636 suites with an average household size of 1.9 would mean an additional 870 people at the current occupancy level of 72%. The resulting population would be **5,285**.

If 100% of these secondary suites were occupied, the population would increase by 1,208 people, to **5,623**.

(As noted above, some of these secondary suites may have already been built, so the numbers being projected here may be slightly overinflated.)

iii. Growth Scenario 3: Build Out of All Potential Subdividable Lots

In this projection we start again from the Medical Services Plan registration population of 4,415 and look at what happens if all 158 lots resulting from possible subdivisions are built out.

At an average household size of 1.9 people per household, dwellings on the 158 lots would result in a regular resident population increase of 216 people, at the current occupancy level of 72%, to **4,631**.

If occupancy levels rose to 100%, the resident population would increase by 300 people, to **4,715**.

iv. Growth Scenario 4: Comprehensive Build Out (combination of 1, 2, and 3)

This is a combination of all three scenarios above and would result in a population increase of 1,768 people at current occupancy levels, to a total resident population of **6,183**. If occupancy levels increased to 100%, the population would increase by 2,447 people, to **6,632**.

Growth Scenarios	Total population within current use patterns	Total population assuming full year occupancy
Scenario 1: Build Out of Vacant Lots	5,085	5,346
Scenario 2: Build Out of Secondary Suites	5,285	5,623
Scenario 3: Build Out of Subdividable Lots	4,631	4,715
Scenario 4: Comprehensive Build Out (combination of 1, 2 and 3)	6,183	6,632

References

- ¹ Taken from each island's 2016 Census Community Profile (<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>) except Pender which was calculated based on population and size data in its Wikipedia entry (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pender_Island).
- ² Taken from each location's 2016 Census Community Profile (<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>).
- ³ See "Average Household Size" data at Gabriola Island Trust Area 2016 Census Profile: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=DPL&Code1=590003&Geo2=PR&Code2=59&SearchText=Gabriola%20Island%20Trust%20Area&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=590003&TABID=1&type=0>.
- ⁴ Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative. 2020. Gabriola Health Report. Page 2. Available at: <https://www.ghcs.ca/2020-Gabriola-Health-Report.pdf>.
- ⁵ See "Mobility" data at Gabriola Island Trust Area 2016 Census Profile. See link in Note 3 above.
- ⁶ See "Private dwellings occupied by usual residents" data at Gabriola Island Trust Area 2016 Census Profile. See link in Note 3 above.
- ⁷ Dillon Consulting. *Housing Needs Assessment, Northern Region of Islands Trust*. 2018. Page 11. Available at: http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346025/lpc_2018-06-21_northern_hna.pdf.
- ⁸ Line graph derived from data provided in Dillon Consulting. *Housing Needs Assessment, Northern Region of Islands Trust*. 2018. Page 12. Available at: http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346025/lpc_2018-06-21_northern_hna.pdf.

KEY POLICIES ON MANAGING GROWTH ON GABRIOLA ISLAND

This page provides information on the major policies and planning tools in the Gabriola Official Community Plan (OCP) that address issues of growth and its management. It covers:

1. the OCP's goals and policies related to managing growth
2. OCP policies that govern density
3. examples of new policies that could mitigate the negative impacts of growth on Gabriola.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Gabriola's Official Community Plan speaks to growth largely in relation to limiting additional density rather than managing growth in ways that would help to meet important social and environmental goals, such as the need for affordable housing and the need to protect and preserve our Coastal Douglas-Fir ecosystem and groundwater.

WHAT DOES THE GABRIOLA OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (1997) SAY ABOUT "MANAGING GROWTH" ON GABRIOLA ISLAND?

The goals contained in the Gabriola Official Community Plan (1997) only explicitly mention the term "growth" once – in which "gradual and appropriate" rather than "rapid" growth is to be encouraged. The other policies and objectives speak to regulating the density that is already permitted through zoning. Anticipating or managing new growth (except for multi-family affordable housing) does not seem to be contemplated in the OCP.

The OCP's social goals (s.1.3) are:

1. To preserve the rural character and atmosphere of the Gabriola Planning Area and ensure that the community remains a viable, healthful place in which to live, providing for a variety of lifestyles in harmony with the natural environment.
2. To ensure that access and opportunity, now and in the future, are provided for the public to enjoy and appreciate the Gabriola Planning Area in harmony with the natural environment and existing communities.
3. To ensure that options for future generations to make land use decisions are not jeopardized.
4. To encourage gradual and appropriate, rather than rapid, change and growth.
5. To co-operate and communicate with other government agencies, other agencies and First Nations, and to involve the public in the decision-making process to fulfill these goals.
6. To encourage local food systems and community food security.
7. To recognize that small, locally owned and home-based businesses contribute significantly to the character and sustainability of island life.

Section 2.0 General Land Use Policies:

- k) This Plan only supports the realization of additional residential density without subdivision when used for Affordable Housing for Special Needs residents and Seniors.

WHICH OCP POLICIES GOVERN DENSITY ON GABRIOLA ISLAND?

In addition to the general objectives and policies listed above, the OCP includes objectives and policies related to density.

Section 2.1 General Residential Land Use Objectives/Policies:

1. To ensure that subdivision design is consistent with the rural character of Gabriola
5. To support a mix of housing types which includes affordable and market housing in appropriate locations

Policy b) With the exception of affordable housing, no provision shall be made for multi-dwelling residential use in the Planning Area.

Policy c) No provision shall be made for mobile home parks in the planning area.

Policy g) On parcels 2.0 hectares (4.94 acres) or larger, one secondary suite shall be permitted per parcel, accessory to a principal single family dwelling.

Section 2.2 Small Rural Residential Objectives/Policies

1. To encourage the consolidation of parcels designated Small Rural Residential.
 - a) The principal use shall be residential.
 - b) One single-dwelling residential unit shall be permitted per parcel.
 - c) The minimum parcel size in the Small Rural Residential designation shall be 0.5 hectares (1.235 acres) and the average parcel size shall be 2.0 hectares (4.94 acres).
Policy
 - d) In order to satisfy the Ministry of Health's land area requirements regarding sewage disposal, the consolidation of small parcels shall be encouraged.

Section 2.3 Large Rural Residential Objective/Policies

1. To permit a range of uses that will support the retention of unsubdivided land.

Policy a) The principal use shall be residential.

Policy b) One single-dwelling residential unit shall be permitted per parcel.

Policy c) The minimum parcel size shall be 2 hectares (4.94 acres) and the average parcel size shall be 4 hectares (9.88 acres).

Section 2.5 Gabriola Island Density Bank

1. To identify and deposit unused residential densities into the Density Bank based upon the following eligibility criteria:
 - i. from the lands that are rezoned as parks; and
 - ii. from the voluntary donation of residential densities.
2. To consider applications for the withdrawal of banked densities in accordance with the rezoning requirements in Section 2.4 provided that a Housing Agreement is in place to ensure affordability is maintained over time.

Section 3.1 General Commercial Objectives/Policies

- d) One single-dwelling residential unit per parcel may be permitted in any Commercial designation.

Section 5.1 Resource Lands Objectives/Policies

In keeping with the objective of maintaining a rural landscape in the planning area the intent is to retain much of the land in this designation in large parcels. Yet, as provided for in the policies below, residential density allowed on a parcel in the Resource zone may be transferred to another parcel in the Resource zone.

Resource Objectives

1. To preserve large parcels of land in a largely unsubdivided state;
2. To maintain representative areas of rural landscape on Gabriola; and
3. To provide transitional areas between the residential and forestry and agricultural parts of the community.

Section 5.2 Forestry Policies

- b) The minimum and average parcel size in the Forestry zone shall be 60 hectares (148.2 acres).
- c) The subdivision of land, in the Forestry zone, shall not be supported, except for purposes of creating an ecological reserve.

Section 5.3 Agriculture Policies

- b) The approval of subdivisions of land in the ALR, where such subdivision would reduce the long term viability of the parcel for farm use is not supported.
- d) The minimum and average parcel size in the Agriculture zone shall be 8 hectares (19.76 acres).

WHAT ARE THE RULES AROUND SUBDIVISION ON GABRIOLA?

The Gabriola Island Land Use Bylaw sets out zoning regulations for each parcel of land on the island. Within each zone there is an established minimum lot size to guide subdivision of a lot into one or more lots.

All subdivisions are approved by the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Provincial Approving Officer cannot approve a subdivision that is not consistent with the Gabriola Land Use Bylaw.

Besides minimum lot size requirements, there are several conditions that must be met for a subdivision to be approved although most of these are not regulated by the Gabriola Land Use Bylaw but by the province (proof of potable water requirements; sewage disposal requirements; minimum road construction standards; parkland dedication and several others).

WHAT ARE THE RULES AROUND SECONDARY SUITES ON GABRIOLA?

The Gabriola Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw set out the criteria for secondary suites on Gabriola Island.

Currently, one secondary suite is permitted on a lot that is 2 hectares or larger in size in the SRR, LRR, R, RR1, RR2, F, AG zones. Maps that show these zones are here:

- North: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346969/lub-north-nov2018.pdf>
- South: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342214/lub-soutsheet-oct-2016.pdf>

The LUB contains regulations governing the construction of a secondary suite, such as maximum floor area and height.

WHAT KINDS OF NEW POLICIES OR REGULATIONS COULD ADDRESS THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF GROWTH ON GABRIOLA?

1. New rezoning applications proposing an increase in residential density could be required to ensure all new dwellings are constructed using less water, energy and meet the [BC Energy Step Code](#); requirements (which will be mandated across BC by 2032); and include [universal access](#) design principles.
2. Require any new dwelling to be constructed with a connected rainwater harvesting system for household re-use.
3. Establish more flexible zoning regulations for larger parcels allowing an increase in density (without subdivision) but decrease maximum lot coverage and total allowable build out (restrict floor area for each dwelling, restrict number of accessory buildings, require rainwater harvesting and re-use etc)
4. Establish rental tenure housing for existing rental multi-family dwellings that requires the rental units to remain as rental housing
5. Allow commercial properties to have an increase in residential densities if they remain rental units; affordable; meet Step Code requirements etc.
6. Restrict further small lot subdivision (lots less than 1 ha) but encourage more mixed use (residential/commercial) on commercial zoned lots.

Gabriola Island Development Potential - 2021

DRAFT



5 Potential Number of Additional Lots

Protected Area
(park, nature reserve, protected marine area)

Agriculture Land Reserve

Building Footprints

Vacant Lots on Private Lands

Crown Property

Private Property

Water Bodies

Water Courses

Total number of vacant lots
490

Total number of lots with subdivision potential
55

of additional lots if all were subdivided under existing zoning regulations
158

of parcels larger than 2 ha in size in SRR, LRR, RR1, RR2, R, F & AG zones, permitted secondary suites
636

Building Footprints Data Source:
Aeroquest Mapcon Ltd: Existing imagery from various sources was used to collect and classify building polygons. Compilation of available orthophotos (2013-2015)

Vacant Lots Data Source:
BC Assessment Authority data delivery collected on February 3 2021

Data for the potential number of additional lots is based on the minimum average lot size for each zone, in the Gabriola Island Land Use Bylaw.



Information about the BC Energy Step Code and Universal Access Design

1. BC Energy Step Code

New home construction on the island is an opportunity to ensure Gabriola's housing stock is highly energy efficient and designed to meet the diverse and changing needs of the occupants.

Currently in British Columbia, all new dwellings must be constructed to meet the requirements of the BC Building Code, and manufactured homes must meet the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) requirements. In 2032, the province will be introducing new mandatory regulations to ensure all new dwellings also comply with the "[BC Energy Step Code](#)" which will result in homes that use "net-zero energy".

Net-zero energy buildings produce as much clean energy as they consume. They are up to 80 percent more energy efficient than a typical new building, and they use on-site (or near-site) renewable energy systems to produce the remaining energy they need.

A net-zero energy ready building is one that has been designed and built to a level of performance such that it could, with the addition of solar panels or other renewable energy technologies, achieve net-zero energy performance.

The BC Energy Step Code is currently voluntary but local governments may use it, if they wish, to incentivize or require a level of energy efficiency in new construction that goes above and beyond the requirements of the BC Building Code.

2. Universal Access Design

Universal access design (or "adaptable housing") means designing a home in an adaptable way to make future renovations easier and less costly. Changes to a home may be needed if your mobility changes through illness, injury or due to aging, or if your family size grows. The median age on Gabriola Island in the 2016 Census was 61 (which means half the population was over the age of 61 and the other half was under).

Currently in BC the BC Building Code has accessibility requirements for public buildings, but not for private homes. A local government could require that any rezoning that would result in new dwellings, include universal access design elements to ensure the new housing stock is more adaptable to meet the changing needs of occupants.

Universal Access Design:

- Helps people stay in their own homes through illness, injury or aging
- Provides housing options for accessibility for people with disabilities
- Reduces the cost of future renovations to accommodate people whose abilities change or whose family size increases.

Design and construction can include:

- Corridors, doorways, bathrooms and kitchens that are easier for people with disabilities to use
- Features like approachable and reachable electrical outlets and switches
- Building in a way that allows for future installation of items such as grab bars in bathrooms
- Building in a way that “roughs in” a secondary suite contemplates an addition, where zoning permits.

Glossary: Key Policies on Managing Growth

This glossary provides definitions for terms used in the “Key Policies on Managing Growth on Gabriola Island” resource document.

1. Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is commonly defined as adequate, suitable housing, typically costing less than 30% of household income.

Retrieved from:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/208240/Affordable%20Housing%20Guide-%20Final-letter%20size.pdf>

2. BC Energy Step Code

The BC Energy Step Code is an optional way for local governments to encourage or require a level of energy efficiency in new construction that goes above and beyond the requirements of the BC Building Code. Builders may voluntarily use the BC Energy Step Code to meet the energy-efficiency requirements of the BC Building Code.

Retrieved from: <https://energystepcode.ca>

3. Build Out

Development of land to its full potential or theoretical capacity as permitted under current or proposed planning or zoning designations.

Retrieved from: https://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2010_-_landuseglossary.pdf

4. Commercial

Commercial development can include the selling, storing or servicing of goods and commodities. For more information on commercial zones on Gabriola, see “zoning”.

Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/crown-land-water/crown-land/crown-land-uses/commercial-uses/general-commercial>

5. Density Bank

According to Gabriola’s Official Community Plan, density banking refers to a process wherein unused residential densities are held by the Local Trust Committee for an unlimited time and for the purpose of enabling affordable multi-dwelling housing for low-income families and without any net increase to the allowed density on Gabriola Island. The deposit of one or more densities to the density bank takes place through bylaw amendments resulting from the rezoning of the property from which the density was removed for deposit

into the density bank. Withdrawal of one or more densities from the density bank requires a similar amending bylaw and rezoning process.

For more information see Section 2.5 of the Gabriola Official Community Plan:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/344745/blgb166-ocp-consolidated-november-2-2017.pdf>

6. First Nations

British Columbia is home to 198 First Nations, about one third of all First Nations in Canada. The First Nations of BC have rich and varied cultures, histories and traditions.

Retrieved from: <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100021009/1314809450456>

Gabriola is in Snuneymuxw Nation territory, who are Coast Salish people. For more information: <https://www.snuneymuxw.ca/>

7. Food Security

The state of having reliable access to enough healthy food that you can afford

Retrieved: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/food-security#:~:text=%2F%CB%8Cfu%CB%90d%20s%C9%AA%CB%88kj%CA%8Ar%C9%99ti%2F,food%20that%20you%20can%20afford>

8. Gabriola Official Community Plan (Gabriola Island Official Community Plan, 1997)

The Official Community Plan was adopted in 1997 and has had some amendments over the years. It offers a vision of the future community on Gabriola. The Plan sets out the community's goals, objectives and policies regarding land-use, future development as well as social and environmental considerations applicable in the planning area. The purpose of the Plan is to provide direction to government agencies, businesses, land owners and residents concerning future land use and the provision of services.

9. Gabriola Planning Area

The Gabriola Planning Area includes Gabriola Island and surrounding islands such as DeCourcy Island, Mudge Island, and additional smaller islands.

To see the full list of associated islands: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/gabriola/associated-islands/>

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/gabriola/>

10. Groundwater

Groundwater is the water found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand and rock. It is stored in and moves slowly through geologic formations of soil, sand and rocks called aquifers.

Retrieved from: <https://www.groundwater.org/get-informed/basics/groundwater.html>.

11. Housing Agreements

A housing agreement is a legal contract entered into by the property owner and the Local Trust Committee to ensure affordable housing. In the agreement the owner, usually an organization or society, agrees to specific terms such as rental or leasehold rates, allowable amounts for rate increases, or the amount for which a unit may be sold. Housing agreements can also stipulate tenant or owner eligibility based on income or other criteria. These terms can vary between different agreements.

Retrieved from: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/projects/housing/#:~:text=Housing%20Agreements,Committee%20to%20ensure%20affordable%20housing.&text=Housing%20agreements%20can%20also%20stipulate,can%20vary%20between%20different%20agreements>

12. Home-Based Business

A home-based business is a commercial use in a residential property on a lot.

Adapted from: http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/348834/bl-355_lub_2019-06.pdf

13. Islands Trust's Coastal Douglas-fir Ecosystem Protection Toolkit

The Islands Trust's "Protecting the Coastal Douglas-Fir Zone" toolkit (2018) describes the Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) zone and its threats, and explores the various regulatory tools that Local Trust Committees can use to preserve and protect the zone.

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346674/cdf-toolkit-final-web.pdf>

14. Land Use Bylaws (LUBs)

Land Use Bylaws contain all the rules and regulations that govern the use and allowable density of the land, as well as setbacks of buildings to property lines, height restrictions, parking requirements, signage restrictions, drainage restrictions and subdivision servicing. Land Use Bylaws are adopted and administered by each Island's Local Trust Committee.

For more information: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/land-use-planning/>

15. Local Food System

A food system is a complex web of activities involving the production, processing, transport, and consumption, and when it is localized this refers to these activities happening within a local community.

Retrieved from: <https://www.futureoffood.ox.ac.uk/what-food-system>

16. Local Trust Committee / Islands Trust

Gabriola and the other Gulf Islands that are under the jurisdiction of the Islands Trust each have a Local Trust Committee (LTC). These LTCs are made up of people elected by local residents. They are responsible for land use planning and regulation for their respective area of jurisdiction.

LTCs are required to prepare and adopt Official Community Plans, Land Use Bylaws, and zoning and subdivision bylaws, regulate soil removal and deposit, and authorize permits under Part 14 of the Local Government Act.

Two local trustees are elected for each group of islands designated as a local trust area or island municipality. The two local trustees, together with an appointed chair from the Executive Committee, form the Local Trust Committee, or LTC.

Islands Trust

The Islands Trust is responsible for leading the preservation and protection of the Trust Area. The Islands Trust cooperates with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.

The Islands Trust Policy Statement sets out three main goals:

- Foster the preservation and protection of the Trust Area's ecosystems
- Ensure that human activity and the scale, rate and type of development in the Trust Area are compatible with maintenance of the integrity of Trust Area ecosystems
- Sustain island character and healthy communities.

For more information on Local Trust Committees:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/>

For more information on Gabriola's Local Trust Committee:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/gabriola/>

For more information on the Islands Trust Policy Statement:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/governance/policy-statement/>

17. Market Housing

Housing that is privately owned by an individual (or a company) who generally does not receive direct subsidies to purchase or maintain it. Prices are set by the private market. About 95% of households in the province live in market housing, either rental market housing or home ownership.

Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/affordable-and-social-housing/housing-glossary>

18. Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health has overall responsibility for ensuring that quality, appropriate, cost effective and timely health services are available for all British Columbians.

Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/health>

19. Rainwater Harvesting

Rainwater harvesting is the process of collecting and storing rainwater for use, rather than having it run off into the ground. Typically, this means using a variety of technologies including a guttering system on the roof, piping, cistern(s), fittings, pumps and other plumbing requirements. In the BC Building Code, this is defined as a type of private water supply system.

Retrieved and adapted from:

http://www.islandstrustconservancy.ca/media/39066/guide_for_regulating_rainwater_harvesting_systems.pdf

Regional District of Nanaimo Rainwater Harvesting Best Practices Guidebook:

https://rdn.bc.ca/sites/default/files/legacy_asp/events/attachments/evID6235evattID1344.pdf

20. (Residential) Rental Tenure Housing

In July 2018, the Province enacted a new authority that empowers local governments to apply residential rental tenure zoning to protect rental units in existing and future apartment buildings, to increase the overall supply of rental housing in their communities. It can be applied to an area, a building, or units within a building which have a residential use. It does not apply to commercial buildings/ units. The zoning restricts the form of tenure (i.e. occupancy of the unit) to rental only.

Retrieved from: https://www.newwestcity.ca/housing/renovictions-tenant-protection-and-resources/sb_expander_articles/1563.php

21. Residential

There are different zoned areas within the Islands Trust for different uses of land. Those zoned residential are for dwellings meant for residing in, as opposed to commercial uses for instance. For more information see “zoning”.

22. Residential Density

Residential density refers to the average number of people living on any given area of land. High residential density is often the result of the construction of multi-family dwellings such as apartment or condo buildings. Rural areas like Gabriola are often characterized by low residential density.

23. Subdivision

Legally any proposed changes to a lot line are a form of subdivision regardless if additional lots are created. While most subdivisions need to go through an approval process some types of subdivision can be done by the Registrar at the Land Title and Survey Authority, such as the consolidation of adjacent lots.

Retrieved from: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/274863/subdivision-faqs.pdf>

24. Universal Access Design Principles

Universal design creates housing that can work for everyone. It makes housing accessible to those with disabilities. It also lets people stay in their homes as their circumstances change, without expensive renovations.

Retrieved from: <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/developing-and-renovating/accessible-adaptable-housing/universal-design-in-new-housing>

25. Zoning

Zoning bylaws regulate how land, buildings, and other structures may be used.

Different areas of land on Gabriola are designated as different zones – such as residential, resource, recreational and institutional, or commercial and light industrial zones (Gabriola Island Land Use Bylaw, 1999, p. 42). These can be seen on the Gabriola zoning maps:

- North area: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/346969/lub-north-nov2018.pdf>
- South area: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342214/lub-soutsheet-oct-2016.pdf>

For more information about zoning bylaws:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/planning-land-use-regulation/zoning-bylaws>

For the Gabriola Land Use Bylaw: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/342215/blgb177-lub-consolidated-february-7-2017.pdf>



Housing affordability and diversity on Gabriola

Is there homelessness on Gabriola?



If you don't have a home, you're couch surfing or living in your car, or if you don't have access to a bathroom or a kitchen, you're considered homeless. The rate of homelessness on Gabriola is four times that in Nanaimo; ten times that for all of B.C. Although the total number of people experiencing homelessness on Gabriola (approx. 60 people) is smaller than in other areas, the proportion is very high.

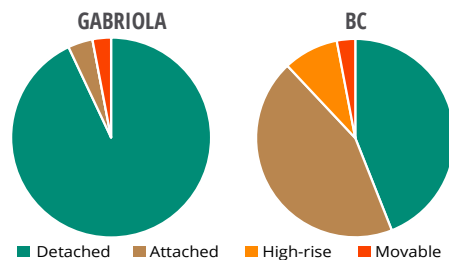
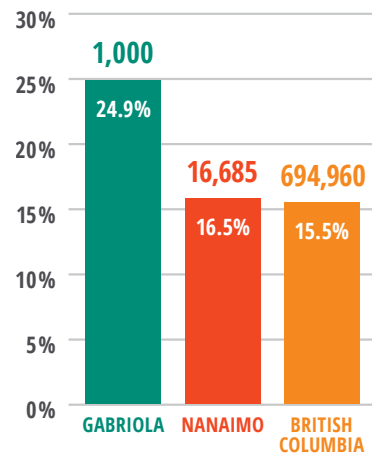
Is housing affordability a problem on Gabriola?

A standard definition is that if housing costs more than 30% of your income, it's not affordable. More than half of the 365 renters on Gabriola are in this situation. Owners struggle too: one-fifth of our 1780 homeowners spend over 30% of their incomes on housing.

A total of 539 Gabriola households struggle to afford their housing.

A 2020 RDN report states: "Low-income households [on Gabriola] would be challenged to afford a rental unit within 30% of their monthly income, and home ownership is out-of-reach for the majority of the households, including couples and families."

One reason for the high rate of housing unaffordability is that our average income is quite low. The 2016 census shows 25% of Gabriolans get by on less than half of the national median income. This compares with nearly 17% for Nanaimo and 16% for all of BC.



Is there enough housing diversity on Gabriola?

In all of BC 56% of dwellings are apartments, condos or other semi-detached homes. On Gabriola it is only 7%. This lack of diversity in housing stock seriously limits options for Gabriolans without sufficient income to purchase or rent a detached home.

To fill in the survey, visit gabriolahousingmatters.ca

Does the OCP allow for more affordable housing?

Gabriola's Official Community Plan allows for "multiple-dwelling affordable housing" (defined as 3 or more affordable units), governed by a housing agreement, that serves the needs of:

- special needs residents living with physical and/or mental disabilities,
- seniors 60 years of age or older, and/or
- low-income families.

The OCP states that these affordable housing units should be relatively small (average 900 sq. ft.), must be energy- and water-efficient, and should be situated within 500 m of the Village.

Densities for the creation of multi-dwelling affordable housing can come only from the density bank. Gabriola has no banked densities, so that solution is not currently available to us.

The OCP also recognizes that building secondary suites on existing lots is a way to provide affordable housing.

Your voice matters!

We want to know what you think about the housing situation on Gabriola.

Go to gabriolahousingmatters.ca to learn more about the current housing context, and to participate in a brief, anonymous survey. Not everyone loves online surveys. If you don't, please drop into the library. They'll provide you with a paper copy (or let you do the survey online right there).

Other "Housing Matters" surveys on **Protecting Biodiversity and Water** and on **Managing Growth** are coming in the next few weeks.

Name and phone or email:

Q The very last word in the survey is a number. What is it?

A _____

Participation Draw

After completing the survey fill out the card to the left and drop it into the Gabriola Housing Matters box, either at the Library or the Sounder. You could win some great prizes from local merchants, like a \$100 gift card to the Gabriola Gym, courtesy of the Gabriola Recreation Society.

3 surveys = 3 chances to win!



To fill in the survey, visit gabriolahousingmatters.ca

Who are we?

We are the Gabriola Housing Working Group, an offshoot of the Gabriola Local Trust Committee's Housing Advisory Planning Commission.

What is this about?

We are doing this work for the Local Trust Committee (LTC) so that they know what matters to Gabriolans when it comes to drafting bylaws for affordable housing.

When?

Over the next 6 weeks we will explore 3 major topics, each with an introduction like this in the Sounder, more background information on the website, and a short survey. The topics are: **Housing Affordability and Diversity, Preserving Biodiversity and Water, and Managing Growth**. We will then summarize what we've heard in a report to the LTC.

Why?

Because we know you care about the future of this island, looking after the people who live and work here, and preserving the ecosystems and water. And because there are prizes! There's a place to the left to answer a question (but you'll need to do the survey first). Every 2 weeks we'll draw from the correct answers, and the winners will receive great prizes!



YOUR VOICE MATTERS YOUR VOICE MATTERS YOUR VOICE MATTERS YOUR VOICE MATTERS



Preserving biodiversity and water on Gabriola

Preserve and Protect!

The mandate of the Islands 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...”. **We want your ideas** on how Trustees can ensure that the environment is protected while addressing the lack of affordable housing.

What’s at risk when we develop land?

According to the conservation group Gabriola Land and Trails Trust, apart from climate change, most conservation threats result from population growth and related development, which lead to:

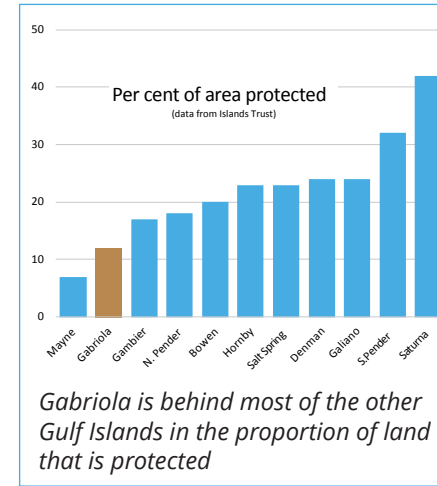
- tree cutting,
- stress on ground water,
- fragmentation of natural habitat,
- disturbance of sensitive ecosystems and rare species, and
- increase in invasive species.

Gabriola’s Official Community Plan (OCP) includes the following objectives for environmentally sensitive areas: **limit tree removal to minimal selective cutting, protect important habitat and water resources through vegetation retention and building setbacks, and encourage landowners to work with conservation groups to protect environmentally sensitive areas.** These are all objectives, not rules.

In 2018 the Islands Trust published a toolkit for protecting the Coastal Douglas Fir (CDF) ecosystem. The document includes maps showing areas needing protection, along with ideas on how communities can help to preserve this unique ecosystem, including:

- evaluating and mapping sensitive areas,
- ensuring that the OCP has strong language to protect CDF areas,
- allowing density bonuses on properties in exchange for protection of ecosystems, and
- creating Development Permit Areas (DPA) that will allow development, but only under specific conditions (e.g. a DPA might include limits on cutting trees).

There is a copy of the CDF Toolkit on our website.



Is there enough water?

Gabriola gets enough rain to supply everyone with water, but 57% of it comes in November through February and only 13% in May through August. That means we have a storage problem, not a water supply problem, and while a lot of water is stored in the ground, accessing it can be difficult.

Climate change could make things worse. Although we can expect more rain in the future, the 2016 RDN/Island Trust report on groundwater shows that there will also be more evaporation, especially in summer when we need water the most.

It is important to ensure that development doesn’t affect the water supplies needed by people and ecosystems. The Islands Trust has a toolkit for that too, and it suggests: **establishing DPAs that require buffer zones in water-sensitive areas (some exist already on Gabriola), mandating rainwater collection and storage in new buildings, designating aquifer protection zones, and committing to a planning approach that coordinates action on community water supply and rainwater management.**

Your voice matters!

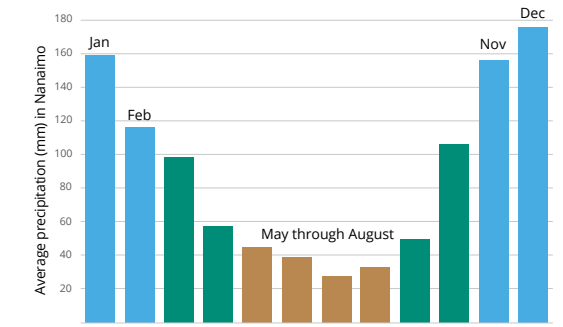
We want to know what you think about maintaining biodiversity and preserving water in the context of affordable housing on Gabriola. Go to gabriolahousingmatters.ca to learn more about these issues, and to participate in a brief, anonymous survey. Don’t love online surveys, or can’t get online? The library will provide you with a paper copy (or let you do the survey online there).

The survey on preserving biodiversity and water closes on Feb 16th. One more survey, on **Managing Growth**, is coming on Feb. 17th.

Name and phone or email:

Q What percentage of Gabriola Island is within the Coastal Douglas fir ecosystem?

A _____



Participation Draw

After completing the survey fill out the card to the left and drop it into the Gabriola Housing Matters box, either at the Library or the *Sounder*. This week there is an exciting prize from GaLTT and the Gabriola Museum.

3 surveys = 3 chances to win!



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When?

Every 2 weeks from late January to early March. The first survey was on **Housing Affordability and Diversity**, this time **Preserving Biodiversity and Water**, next **Managing Growth**. We will summarize what we’ve heard in a report to the LTC.

Why?

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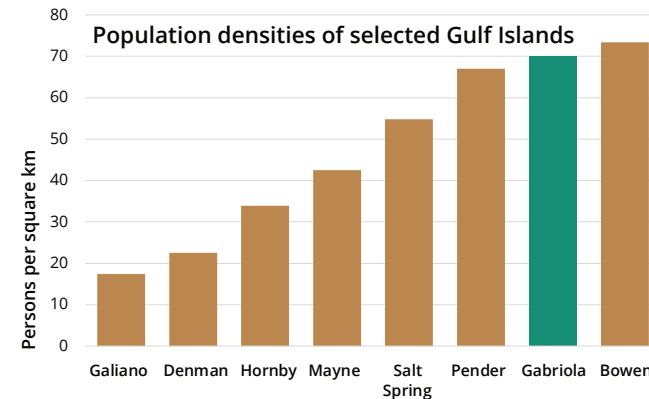
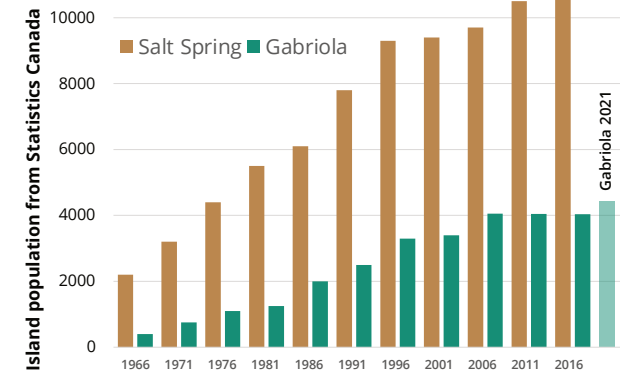
Hey Gabriolans!

We want to know what you think about population growth on Gabriola Island, as this is an issue that must be considered in the context of affordable housing. Please look at the information here, then go to the website for a short survey.

Population growth on Gabriola

Current Density

Although Gabriola has a rural feel, it is one of the most densely populated of the Salish Sea islands, with nearly 70 residents per square km. While that's tiny compared to a typical city (Nanaimo has almost 1000/km²) it is still something to think about when we consider the need for more affordable housing on the island.



How fast are we growing?

In 1966 the population of Gabriola was only 18% as high as Salt Spring's (which is a much larger island) but now it is 38%. Our population grew quickly from the 1970s to 1990s but remained steady from 2006 to 2016. New data from MSP registrations shows that it has increased by about 9% in the past 5 years (light green bar on graph).

In addition to the 490 vacant lots, existing zoning already permits a higher density—for example for secondary suites or cottages—on just over 500 developed lots. Of course we don't know how many of those suites might be built and made available for permanent housing.

There are also approximately 800 dwellings on Gabriola that are only occupied part of each year.

Your voice matters!

We want to know what you think about the potential for population growth in the context of affordable housing on Gabriola. Go to gabriolahousingmatters.ca to learn more about these issues, and to participate in a brief anonymous survey. If you don't want to or can't access the survey on line, the library will happily provide you with a paper copy (or let you do the survey on line there).

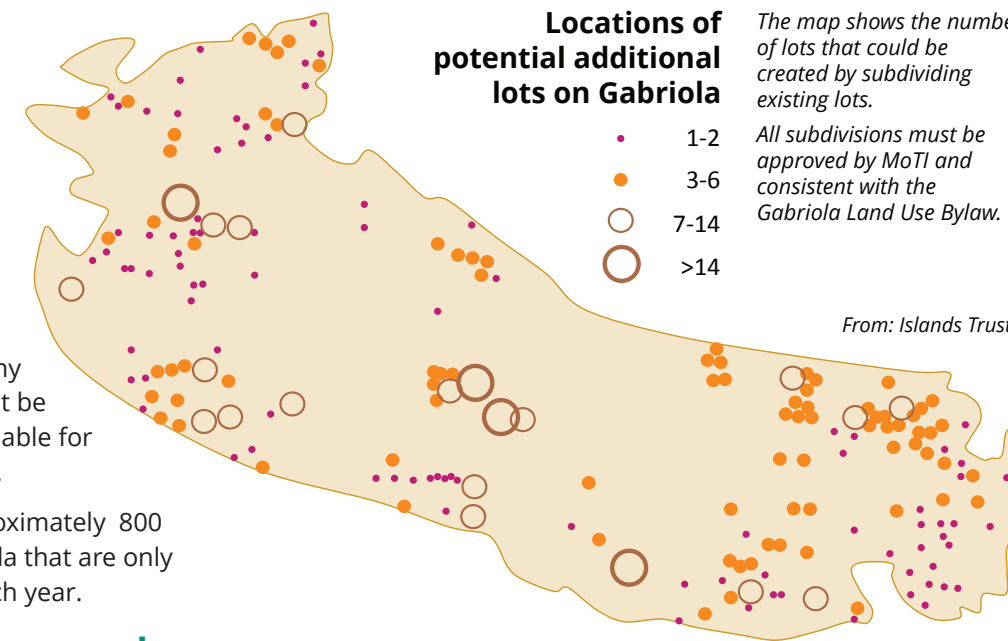
Name and phone or email:

Q What is the average number of births per year on Gabriola over the past 5 years?

A

Locations of potential additional lots on Gabriola

- 1-2
- 3-6
- 7-14
- >14



The map shows the number of lots that could be created by subdividing existing lots.

All subdivisions must be approved by MoTI and consistent with the Gabriola Land Use Bylaw.

From: Islands Trust

What is the growth potential?

Recent mapping analysis by the Islands Trust shows that there are 490 vacant lots on Gabriola. At the current ratio of 1.9 people per dwelling, those 490 lots could represent 931 additional residents, although that assumes that all lots are buildable and it doesn't account for the small natural decrease in Gabriola's population because there are more deaths than births every year. The distribution of the 490 vacant lots is shown on the map. They are relatively evenly distributed around the island. Most of them are on parcels within the "resource" category, and so can only be subdivided into lots larger than 2 hectares. Some of the undeveloped parcels are zoned "small rural residential" and could be divided into lots as small as 0.5 hectares. All subdivision applications must be approved by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and be consistent with the Gabriola Land Use Bylaw.

Participation Draw

After completing the survey fill out the card below and drop it into the Gabriola Housing Matters box, at the Library or the *Sounder*. This week's prize includes a \$100 gift card to Roberts Restaurant, courtesy of The Mortgage Centre.

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