

GABRIOLA OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW

Discussion Guides *ECONOMY*

What is a Discussion Guide?

The Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee is updating the Official Community Plan (OCP) – which guides development to align with the community’s vision and values on a variety of topics. This guide is designed to provide community members with background needed to provide feedback on policy options related to the economy.

Share your thoughts through focus groups, direct communication with the Local Trust Committee and the Gabriola OCP Review Topic-Focused Engagement online survey (December 2024 - April 2025).

What is an Official Community Plan (OCP) for Gabriola Island?

The OCP implements the community’s vision.

It provides a long-term strategy for land use management, outlining broad objectives and policies to guide future growth and development of the community.

The OCP must align with higher level policies.

These include the Local Government Act, the Islands Trust Act, and the Islands Trust Policy Statement. This ensures that local plans are consistent with regional and provincial directives.

What is NOT part of an Official Community Plan for Gabriola Island?

The OCP is not a zoning bylaw or detailed regulatory document. Specific regulations and enforcement mechanisms are found in the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and must be consistent with the OCP.

The OCP does not include the provision of infrastructure or services. Infrastructure such as sewer, or roads, and community services within the Islands Trust Area are the responsibility of other levels of government.

What does the current OCP say about commercial and industrial areas?

Commercial Areas

OCP objectives focus on recognizing the Village Core as the Island's primary location for commercial activity. The Village Core area is included within a Development Permit Area, to ensure form and character are consistent. Criteria for expansion of the village core includes: adequate parking, integration of design and layout, and main road access. Other commercial areas are identified as secondary.

Only one site, the Twin Beaches Shopping Centre, is designated as District Commercial. Supported uses include retail, restaurants, personal service, offices, building supply sales and servicing and fueling vehicles. Expansion of the shopping centre beyond the existing parcel is not supported.

The Local Commercial designation permits site specific commercial uses to exist within neighbourhoods. These commercial uses are intended to be small-scale, and provide local convenience for a neighbourhood. Sites currently in this designation include the Wheelbarrel Nursery, Wild Rose Garden Centre, the restaurant site on North Road, and the small commercial area adjacent to BC Ferries terminal.

Tourist Commercial is concentrated and includes the Haven by the Sea, Surf Lodge, Dragon's Lodge, Page's Inn, Silva Bay Resort and Page's Resort and Marina. Zoning for campgrounds is permitted, but the OCP does not support timeshare developments.

Home Occupations

Aside from lands specifically designated for commercial and industrial use, the OCP acknowledges home occupations as important to the Gabriola community. Home occupations are to be permitted in all zones where residences are allowed.

The OCP also notes the importance of establishing conditions of use for home occupations in the Land Use Bylaw such as: limiting floor area, creating a maximum number of employees, ensuring adequate parking, and specifying the types of businesses that can be home occupations.

Temporary Use Permits

The OCP permits the use of Temporary Use Permits for the following uses: aggregate processing, barge load out site, log handling site, campground use, limited public markets, water sales, and commercial vacation rentals. Guidelines for each of these uses are included which provide direction to applicants.

Industrial Land Use

The OCP supports small scale, non-polluting light industrial activities that contribute to Gabriola becoming more self-sufficient. Evaluation criteria for light industrial applications is included in the OCP and include limiting the use to non-polluting, ensuring adequate lot servicing, the location being outside of small rural residential areas, and ensuring adequate screening and buffering. The OCP does not support heavy industrial use. One single-dwelling is permitted per parcel designated commercial and industrial.

Exploring resource lands

The OCP identifies three types of resources:

- **Forestry Lands:** Forestry lands are primarily for tree-growing and timber production. These areas aim to support sustainable forestry while preserving environmental and recreational values. The plan supports maintaining large parcels (minimum 60 hectares) and restricts subdivision except for ecological reserves.
- **Agricultural Lands:** Agricultural lands are designated in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and are vital to Gabriola's rural economy and character. Policies aim to preserve large parcels of farmland, limit subdivision, support small-scale agricultural operations, and encourage sustainable farming practices.
- **Aggregate Resources:** Extraction of aggregate resources (e.g., sand and gravel) falls under provincial control, but local government influences the processing activities. There are advocacy policies for limiting environmental impacts and requesting inventory assessments of resources.

Housing on land designated forestry, agriculture and resource lands is limited to one single-dwelling residential unit. Residential density can be transferred within areas designated forestry or resource through a density transfer where the donor parcel becomes conservation land and another parcel accepts the density that was given up (see the Housing discussion guide for additional details).

In addition to land use designation supporting the above, the OCP includes an additional resource designation that is not related to economy. Resource lands within this designation are large undeveloped parcels, typically over eight hectares. This designation encourages preserving rural landscapes and allowing residential density transfers within the Resource zone (see Housing discussion guide).

What we heard

The Gabriola community engaged in a community visioning process from September 2023 to April 2024. Resource stewardship emerged as a key principle. This speaks to managing land and water resources responsibly to ensure their sustainability for future generations, protecting ecosystems, promoting sustainable practices, and engaging in conservation efforts.

There was limited feedback focussing on the economy in general. A number of community members identified the connection between having accessible housing for workers supporting local businesses and service.

For details on community visioning and resulting goals and principle see: <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/document/gabriola-visioning-2050-what-we-heard-report/>

How do you feel about commercial and industrial areas and resource lands as they relate to the OCP?

We want to hear from you!

The survey is open to all Gabriola residents! Answer the survey to tell us what you think about the economy and resources, or any of the other topics that Gabriola residents told us is important during the last round of engagement. Complete the survey online, or contact Islands Trust to complete a paper version of the survey.

Stay up to date by subscribing to updates or following along on the project page: islandstrust.bc.ca/island-planning/gabriola/projects/gabriola-ocpreview

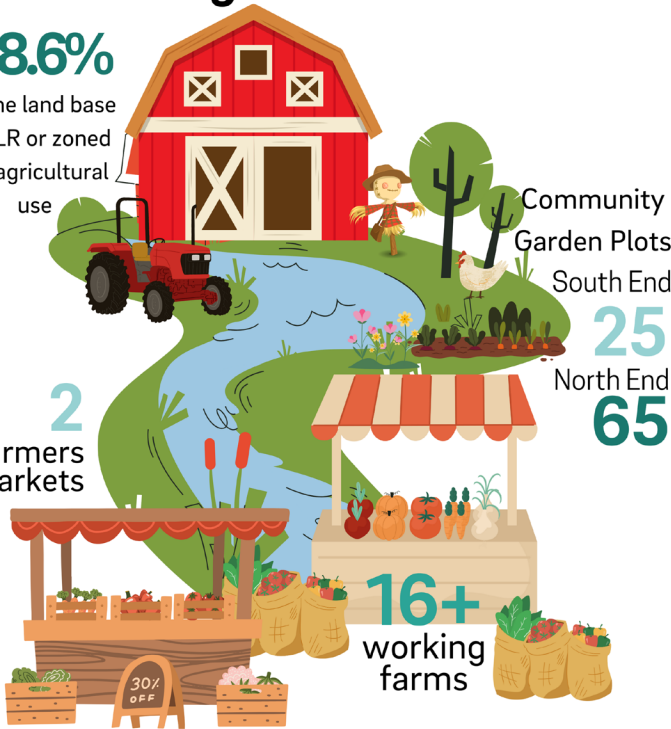
GABRIOLA ISLAND community snapshot ECONOMY



Agriculture

18.6%
of the land base
is ALR or zoned
for agricultural
use

2
farmers
markets



Community
Garden Plots
South End **25**
North End **65**

16+
working
farms

Forestry

0.15% **350.95**
of land parcels hectares of land
are zoned for zoned for Forestry
Forestry

that is roughly equivalent to:
501 soccer fields (0.7 ha each)
Slightly larger than Central Park, NY (341 ha)

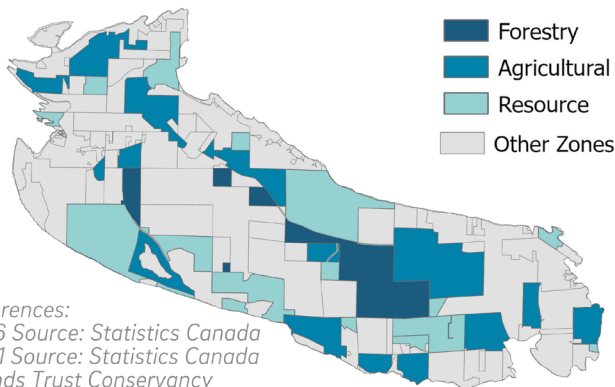
Did you know...

Just 10% of the Vancouver Coastal
region's food is produced locally.
Gabriola Island and the Regional
District of Nanaimo are at 19%



Resource Lands

*As Zoned in 2024



References:
2016 Source: Statistics Canada
2021 Source: Statistics Canada
Islands Trust Conservancy
2024 GaLTT
2024 Sustainable Gabriola
2024 Gabriola Health and Wellness Report

Resource lands include natural resources (i.e. aggregate, agriculture and forestry), forestry resource land, agricultural land and environmental protection areas.

Some of the ways they can benefit the community include:

- Supporting food security by allowing space on the island to produce its own food and reducing reliance on outside sources
- Maintaining agricultural and forestry areas can help mitigate climate impacts by enhancing carbon sequestration and protecting ecosystems that buffer against extreme weather events
- Enhancing the island's local economic viability and diversity

Learn more about
next steps in
the OCP review
process



Participate in the
topic-focused
survey

