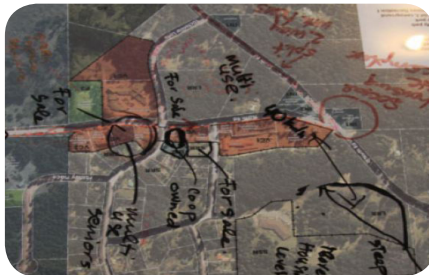


August 22, 2017



Gabriola Village Vision Plan

A Community-Led Planning Process
Envisioning the Future of
Gabriola Island's Village Centre

Final Report

from the Village Vision Planning Committee

village
vision
gabriola island b.c.

For more information on the Village Vision community-led planning project
please go to www.villagevision.ca.

Message from the Village Vision Planning Committee

This report is the culmination of a community-led planning process spanning four years. The volunteer Village Vision Planning Committee formed to support the Local Trust Committee in advancing planning for the Village Core. The initiative was generated from community discussions regarding the importance of having a coherent plan for the village core, informed by and supported by Gabriolans, that could guide decision makers over the next decade.

The planning committee is made up of individuals with ties to a variety of community organizations, however it is important to note that they act as individuals and do not act of behalf of any particular organization. The committee's role was to design and implement a planning process that would provide opportunities for all Gabriolans to have a voice in all aspects of village core planning and to translate that input into recommendations that local government could use in developing policies and plans to ensure a sustainable village core. The project has been volunteer-led and donation-supported.

From the outset, the committee saw its role as creating opportunities to gain and exchange knowledge and to create a space for Gabriolans to influence the future of the village core. In carrying out this work, the committee ensured that local government organizations were kept abreast of the process and the emerging results. We envisioned village core planning as a collaborative process, engaging Gabriolans and local government in co-creating a viable plan for our village core.

This plan is intended to be a catalyst document to inspire and guide future processes and decisions that affect the village centre. We know that the village will continue to evolve, and that change will be shaped by a complex interplay of many social, cultural, economic, environmental, political, and regulatory factors. The Vision Plan is therefore not prescriptive. Rather, the document provides a Guiding Principles framework, which could be used to evaluate future proposals. It suggests some Top Priorities for the near-term. It elaborates with some "Big Ideas" to consider for further planning – distilled from the many ideas suggested throughout the Village Vision process. It also provides Summary Recommendations to our local governments and other stakeholders outlining next steps.

There are many ideas and recommendations in the report; in the short to medium-term, we ask the Local Trust Committee to prioritize five critical issues:

- Implement a plan to increase attainable work-force housing options
- Investigate mechanisms to increase community control over key village properties
- In collaboration with the RDN and MOTI, implement pedestrian improvements
- Develop a plan for a central public gathering place
- Develop a multi-agency formal Village Strategy Plan to guide village core development over the next decade

Although we have completed the task we set out to accomplish, our work does not end with the presentation of this report to the Local Trust Committee, we will also be presenting findings to other government bodies whose mandates affect the village core, specifically the RDN and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. More importantly, we will continue to advocate, encourage and support cross-government, multi-agency planning to create a strategic plan to guide development in the Village Core for the next decade or longer.

This initiative was truly a community effort. We extend our thanks to the hundreds of Gabriolans who participated in planning workshops, the village business community for both input and donations; the many community organizations who enrich the life of our community; local government staff and elected officials for their uncritical willingness to engage in a non-traditional approach to planning; and a special thanks to Vancouver Island University for allowing the 2nd year Master's students to put their skills to use on our behalf.

Respectfully submitted,

Past and current members of the Village Vision Planning Committee:

Michelle Benjamin
Christine Bletcher
Diane Cornish
Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley
Steven Earle
Laura-Jean Kelly
John Peirce
Jim Ramsay
Julie Sperber
Megan Walker

Summarizing a Community-Led Planning Process

Many opinions were expressed about many ideas throughout the Village Vision process. The VVPC has developed this summary to reflect the perspectives of the majority of participants, as we heard them. However, it is important to recognize and include all voices of the discussion, as it has unfolded so far and continues to evolve. We have tried to summarize concerns and alternative points expressed throughout this process in this document; however, being a summary, not all perspectives will be captured here. It is therefore important, particularly for decision-makers, to also review the Appendices, especially the “full results” versions, to hear a fuller range of community voices, and in their original words. We also know that some community members could not or chose not to participate in the Village Vision workshops, surveys, and events. Other voices and perspectives may come forward during possible future follow-up planning processes.

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Part 1 – Introduction

Why village planning?

There is no existing village area plan

Gabriola's village centre has never undergone a comprehensive area planning process led by local government, as many other local and island communities have done for their village centres¹. Instead, it has largely developed incrementally, considered on a parcel by parcel basis. However, there has long been community interest on Gabriola in taking a more proactive, comprehensive approach to planning for the village core, including an effort by the Advisory Planning Commission in the 1980's². In 2011, the Islands Trust held a public engagement event to solicit input on the village core, as part of the Gabriola Island Official Community Plan review process³. Since then, further village planning has been on the Gabriola Local Trust Committee's Project List⁴, with a "Village Core Review" added in 2015, but it has not yet been made a priority project for active effort. In 2014, Village Vision was initiated by community members from Sustainable Gabriola and the Chamber of Commerce, to advance village planning through a volunteer, community-led visioning process.

Desire for an improved planning approach

Throughout the Village Vision process, many community members have expressed concern with how the village form and character has developed under the ad hoc planning process (See Appendix A – Community Discussion Summary, as well as the other engagement summary documents). Some primary themes of the concerns are: lack of pedestrian safety and accessibility; aesthetics and design; a car-oriented, strip mall development pattern; a lack of cohesiveness and continuity; a lack of a clear "heart" and other people-oriented places; uncoordinated infrastructure; inconsistent cooperation between governing agencies; and, traffic flow and parking issues. Many suggested that comprehensive planning could lead to more sustainable, place-making, systems-based thinking, and better address principles such as people places, walkability, ecological carrying capacity, and the local economy.

Coordination between agencies and other stakeholders

Having a comprehensive plan could also help better coordinate between the different private and public stakeholders who shape how the village centre evolves. This is especially relevant on Gabriola, as an un-

1 Examples include Bowen Island's Snug Cove planning, Quadra Island's Quathiaski Cove Village Plan, Salt Spring Island's Ganges village planning, and rural village plans for other Regional District of Nanaimo electoral areas, such as Cedar, Bowser, and Schooner Cove.

2 As referenced by Paul Grignon, <http://paulgrignon.netfirms.com/GabriolaTourMap/LockinvarPlan/map.html>.

3 <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/gabriola/projects-initiatives/gabriola-local-trust-committee-completed-projects/village-core-review/>.

4 <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/gabriola/projects-initiatives/gabriola-local-trust-committee-completed-projects/village-core-review/>.

incorporated Islands Trust area, where there are three primary public agencies with jurisdiction and influence in the village core:

- The Islands Trust, which is responsible for land use planning, but with limited tools and resources, has no ability to own and develop land⁵.
- The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN), which provides other services such as community parks and waste management, and has other capacities, such as the ability to own land, or borrow funds.
- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), a provincial agency which owns and manages Gabriola's roads and approves subdivisions.

Having a comprehensive plan that all agencies support could help better coordinate their actions in a cohesive approach to place-making and sustainability in the village centre area.

Guidance for development

Additionally, there are still some key undeveloped parcels in the village centre area. Other properties are (or may eventually be) planning redevelopment and improvements. New land use and project ideas for the village area were also suggested by the community during the Village Vision process. In a rural community, any such investments are rare opportunities, and cohesive planning can better ensure they are contributions to a whole greater than the sum of its parts. Undertaking a proactive and holistic planning process can also facilitate creative collaborations and synergies between these different projects and stakeholders. It can be a more positive, community-empowered, and coordinated approach to encouraging change the community can support, instead of merely reacting to market-led development.

Purposes of this document

The Village Vision process was launched with all of these purposes in mind. This resulting Vision Plan is not a regulatory document. It is intended to be a catalyst document to inspire and guide future processes and decisions that affect the village centre. We know that



5 Except conservation areas through the Islands Trust Fund.

the village will continue to evolve, and that change will be shaped by a complex interplay of many social, cultural, economic, environmental, political, and regulatory factors. The Vision Plan is therefore not prescriptive. Rather, the document provides a Guiding Principles framework, which could be used to evaluate future proposals. It suggests some Top Priorities for near term further planning effort. It elaborates with some “Big Ideas” to consider for further planning – distilled from the many ideas suggested throughout the Village Vision process. It also provides some Summary Recommendations for next steps to our local governments and other stakeholders.

The Village Vision Design Concepts Questionnaire asked respondents "What would you like this Plan to do?" In order of importance as determined by weighted average of responses⁶:

1. Provide a cohesive vision, so each individual planning or design decision has a framework for how to best contribute to the greater, long-term vision.
2. Provide recommendations to our elected representatives on specific projects and policies to develop.
3. Provide property developers with guidance on community principles and preferences.
4. Provide both graphic and written ideas that can inspire on-going community dialogue.
5. Be a tool for coordinating inter-governmental agency collaboration.
6. Inspire community champions/advocates for key principles.

Project Background and Overview

Project Background

Village Vision is an initiative launched in 2014 by members of Sustainable Gabriola and the Gabriola Chamber of Commerce. It is facilitated by the volunteer Village Vision Planning Committee (VVPC), which also includes members from other community groups and organizations on the island. The committee developed a Terms of Reference for the project, available on the project website (villagevision.ca). The committee's goal was to facilitate a community dialogue, welcoming to all viewpoints, to examine ideas and principles for the future of the village core.

Project Overview

The VVPC hosted five community workshops over the course of 2 years, focused on: 1) Scoping the Project, 2) Land Use, 3) Housing, 4) Water, and 5) Open Space and Connectivity. The workshop format typically consisted of keynote talks from expert guest speakers, then break-out groups to discuss specific

6. Note that not all Gabriolans who participated agreed with undertaking comprehensive planning for the village centre. Some of the reasons expressed included: a concern that it would encourage development; that the village is already built out; that long-range planning is impractical; and that the ideas are infeasible.

issues and ideas. Additional outreach efforts include a “catch-up” evening coffee house session and “pop-up” booths at the summer Saturday Market and special events, where the VVPC collected responses to “provocative questions”. The input is summarized in Appendix A – Community Discussion Summary. Two inter-governmental meetings were also held, with participation from the Islands Trust, the RDN and MoTI, along with VVPC members, to discuss the process and results of the project, and encourage collaborative relationships with local government.

There were other major components to the project. The first was a Rural Village Character Image Preference Questionnaire. This was a 2016 on-line questionnaire asking Gabriolans for feedback on 65 images and how well the land use, character, or idea portrayed in each image fit their vision for the village. The results are summarized in Appendix C – Rural Character Image Preference Survey Results Summary.

The second was a three-day Design Visioning Workshop. Seventeen second-year Vancouver Island University Master of Community Planning students worked in four teams to develop Design Concepts for the future of the village, based on the community feedback to date. Each team also included a member of the VVPC, who provided local expertise and ensured the community workshops’ feedback was incorporated. The Design Visioning Workshop also included three community events – a guest lecture/discussion, an open house to comment and participate in the work in progress, and a final presentation and comment/discussion session. Graphics from the workshop were also posted in the Agricultural Hall for 3 weeks, and staffed by the VVPC during the Saturday Market. The design concepts, site analysis, goals and principles, and common themes are summarized in Appendix D – Design Visioning Workshop Summary Report.

The third was a Design Concepts Questionnaire, an on-line questionnaire asking Gabriolans for feedback on summarized ideas from the four Design Concepts. The results are summarized in Appendix E – Design Concepts Questionnaire Summary Report, and in the “Big Ideas” section of this report.



The final component was a series of stakeholder meetings to present the results to local business/property owners and community groups, and hear their input. Summary notes from these meetings are included in Appendix F.

Part 2 – The Vision

Vision Statement

Based on the community feedback heard throughout the process, the VVPC drafted the following Vision Statement. It is a bold and long-term view, set at a level where most Gabriolans can find common ground.

Gabriola's village is the heart of the island. It is where Gabriolans gather to shop, celebrate, play, exercise, socialize, eat, work and live – a vibrant and walkable village at the center of our larger island community. The compact, mixed-use design enhances connection, vitality, and walkability, and reduces development and habitat fragmentation in the more rural areas of the island. Innovative and sustainable infrastructure ensures development respects the area's carrying capacity. Our streets and walkways are valuable public open space that put pedestrians and cyclists first, creating a welcoming, attractive, and safe environment for alternative transportation, or to "park once then walk". Places and buildings are well designed, human-scale, and use a local and creative vernacular, creating a distinctive and memorable village environment that is compelling for visitors and residents alike. The village is also the center of a strong, locally based economy that supports working families, demographic diversity, and a healthy, sustainable quality of life. Our governing bodies and private development work collaboratively to ensure public and private improvement projects contribute to the greater village context, and make incremental progress towards the community's vision for Gabriola's village core.

Guiding Principles

The VVPC also drafted the following Guiding Principles, based on the community input collected. Guiding principles represent core precepts or values that can provide guidance throughout evolving circumstances, despite changes in opportunities, strategies, or goals. They provide a framework for evaluating the existing village against the vision, and direction for future discussion and decision making as the village evolves.

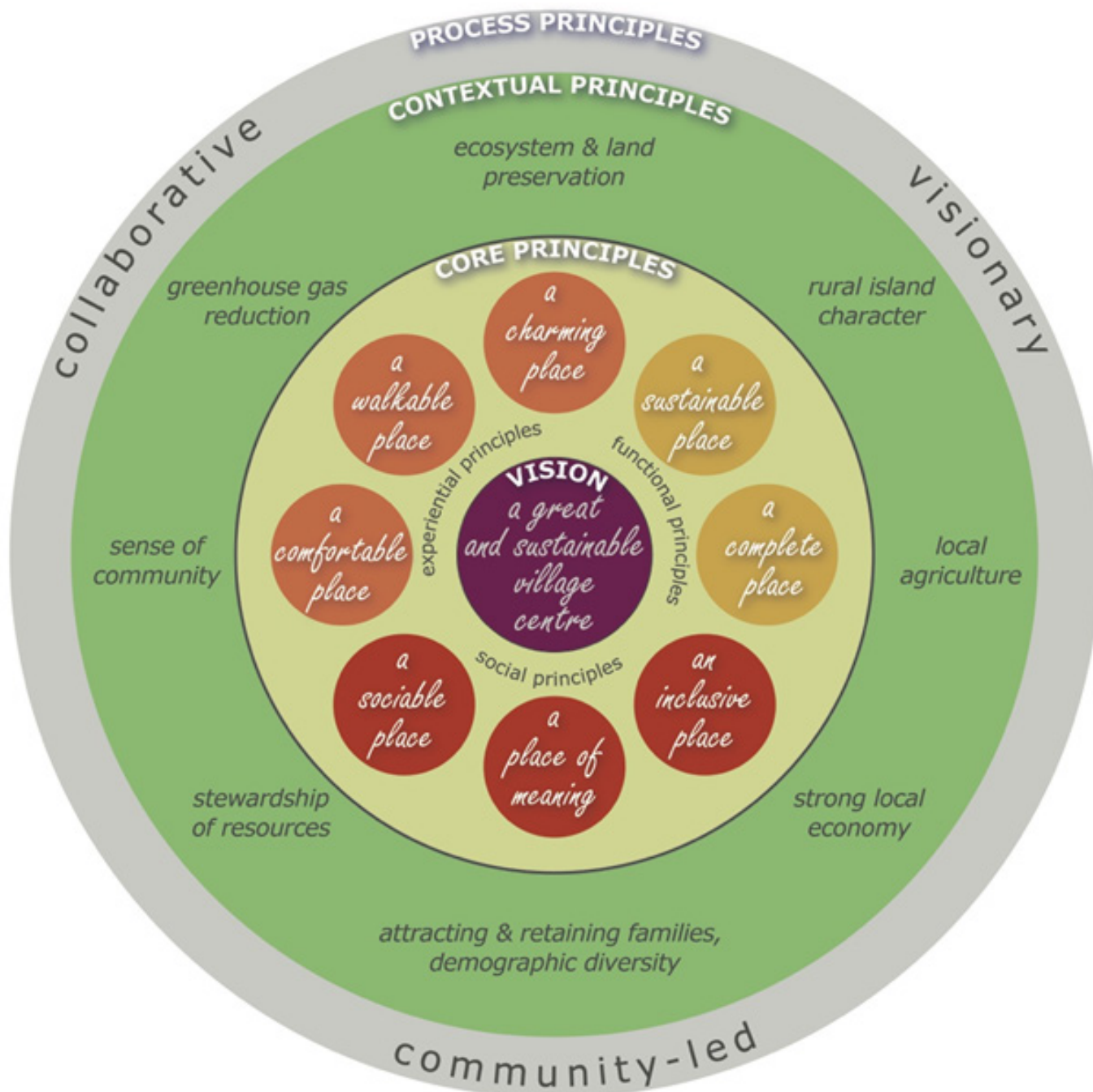


Figure 1. Guiding Principles Framework

The Guiding Principles Framework

Many principles, issues, and ideas were expressed during the Village Vision process that applied to the whole island, not just the village. Also, it is important that decisions for the future of the village area consider impacts not just for an individual property, but also how they would impact the entire village as a cohesive place, and the whole island as a complete community. Therefore, the Guiding Principles Framework includes “levels” of principles. At the core is the Vision – a great, sustainable village place. All future decisions should be supporting this core concept. The next ring is the Core Principles, which offer more specific guidance for decisions and actions in the village core area. The next ring is the Contextual Principles; these are values that apply to the whole island. These include ecosystem health and land preser-

vation, greenhouse gas reduction, sense of community, stewardship of resources, attracting and retaining families (demographic diversity), a strong local economy, local agriculture, and a rural island character. The outer ring is the Process Principles, recognizing that most participating Gabriolans asked for a more proactive and collaborative approach to planning for the village core.

The Core Principles

The Core Principles are grouped in three categories - social, functional, and experiential:

The Social Principles

These principles provide direction on how the village can best contribute to a strong sense of community.

A sociable place - Village place-making should enhance its role as the island's social heart. Key concepts are that it should include high quality gathering places, with variety in size, features and sun exposure. The Village should be pedestrian-oriented, encouraging street activity and spontaneous meetings in public space. It should be vibrant, assuring the presence of people in public at different times of the day and year. And it should be celebratory, able to host special events comfortably and memorably, both indoors and out. It should encourage community facilities to be based in the village core, creating a center of gravity, interdependencies/synergies, collective energy, convenience, and extended hours of activity.

A place of meaning – Village place-making should enhance community pride in the village, and promote a distinct sense of community. Key concepts include preservation and celebration of special features, whether heritage and distinct elements like the Arts and Heritage centre or Folklife Village, or landscape features such as significant trees or The Commons' wetlands. Site planning, building details, materials and landscaping should also reflect and contribute to a local vernacular and thus sense of identity. Community-led initiatives (suggestions have included landscaping or participatory public art projects) build stewardship and pride. Local culture should be showcased, such as artisan craftsmanship or public art elements, highlighting Gabriola as the 'Isle of the Arts'.

An inclusive place – The village should welcome all and support diversity, including housing, services, amenities, and infrastructure for all ages and incomes. All public places, including streets, should meet basic accessibility standards, so anyone, including those with low-mobility, can comfortably and safely move from one place to another without using a car.

The Functional Principles

These principles provide guidance on how the village can best serve the community, in terms of the functions it provides.

A sustainable place – A fundamental principle is that the village area needs to be environmentally and economically sustainable, prerequisites for its role in social sustainability (which is the focus of the social principles). A key concept is that the village's water and sewerage systems must be collectively within the

area's carrying capacity, now, and in anticipation of growing climate change. The village also has a role to play in promoting land conservation and reducing greenhouse gases, via strategies such as encouraging transfers of undeveloped densities from more rural and sensitive areas of the island, to where a walkable island lifestyle is more feasible. Green building and site design strategies should be considered to reduce negative environmental impacts. The village is also an important contributor to the island economy; planning and design decisions should consider how to support local businesses, including how to make the village a more attractive experience for locals and visitors. Improvements must also be fiscally sustainable – with funding strategies that address both capital as well as long-term management costs.

A complete place – The village should contain a mix of uses in order to be a vibrant heart to the island community, including housing, work, shopping, gathering, and amenity opportunities. Important community amenities should be clustered within easy walking distance of each other, creating a vibrant, identifiable hub, and allowing for potential complimentary interdependencies.

Ideas supporting this principle were expressed by the majority of participants in the Village Vision process. However, it should be noted that this proposed principle is probably the most likely to be debated, based on some comments in the surveys, emails from community members, discussion at Village Vision workshops and stakeholder meetings, and known “hot topics” on the island. The primary points of debate include: anything perceived as supporting additional residential densities on the island; carrying capacity concerns for water and septic needs, especially if “compactness” is encouraged; congestion and parking issues with adding additional uses to the village, especially special event spaces; differing opinions on the appropriate rural character for Gabriola's village; and concerns of duplicating services/amenities elsewhere on the island.

The Experiential Principles

These principles provide guidance as to what positively contributes to an individual's physical, psychological, and emotional experience of the village.

A charming place – The village should be appealing and attractive. A key concept is human-scale places and details, including streets, buildings, and gathering places. Component elements should be designed to respond to the context, contribute to overall congruence, create a village that is more than the sum of its parts, and provide a continuously interesting experience for pedestrians. Place design details should also reflect human aesthetic preferences such as harmony, balance, enclosure, rhythm, colour, authenticity, and proportion, and evoke positive emotional experiences such as delight, curiosity, or excitement.

A walkable place – The village should promote walking and physical activity. Walking from place to place encourages social interaction, greater walk-in business, and overall sense of vibrancy, and promotes health. Many factors can contribute to making a place “walkable”, where walking becomes an easy transportation choice, including proximity and density of housing, compactness of amenities, continuity of interest, safe connected pathways, the relationship of buildings to the street, and traffic calming designs.

A comfortable place – The village should feel comfortable and safe. It should promote pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular safety. The layout should be intuitive, where one easily understands how to get from one

place to another, and where the village area amenities begin and end. It should be convenient to access and navigate. Designs should consider human physical needs, such as places to sit both in the shade and

EXPERIENTIAL PRINCIPLES	SOCIAL PRINCIPLES	FUNCTIONAL PRINCIPLES
A charming place Human scale Inviting Authentic Continuity Attractive Fun A comfortable place Safe Legible Comfort Convenient Choice A walkable place Walkable Active	A sociable place Gathering places Pedestrian oriented Vibrant Celebratory An inclusive place Economically diverse Accessible Welcoming A place of meaning Heritage Local culture Optimism Pride Rural Community-led	A sustainable place Land conservation Compact Carrying capacity Green buildings Fiscally sustainable Visitor-friendly A complete place Mixed use Clustered amenities

Table 1 -. Key Attributes of the Core Principles

Part 3 – Ideas and Priority Recommendations

VVPC’s Recommended Top Priorities (by 2022)

The Village Vision Planning Committee developed the following top priorities, based on the community input heard throughout the Village Vision Process. We recommend action on these items by our local governments in the near to mid-term (by 2022).

- 1. Village Strategy Plan** – In response to the significant visioning effort over the past 3 years, we request the Gabriola Local Trust Committee undertake a formal village planning effort, such as a Neighborhood Plan or Strategy, in close collaboration with the RDN and MoTI. This effort could also encompass some or all of the following priorities.
- 2. Increased attainable housing options** – Once 2016 census data has been fully released, the Gabriola Local Trust Committee should undertake an updated Housing Needs Assessment, and then an expanded Housing Options Project, especially to consider options for increasing housing opportunities for workers, family, and seniors within walking distance of the village core. (See Big Ideas 15 and 16).

3. **Community control over key village properties** – initiate through the RDN or a potential community land-trust organization or cooperative, or support efforts by community groups to purchase key village properties to ensure they are developed in the community’s best interest. The Gabriola Local Trust Committee could develop enabling Land Use Designations for the village area to support rezoning applications that align with the ideas and principles of the Vision Plan.
4. **Pedestrian planning and improvements** – collaborate on a cross-agency effort to develop a plan and implementation strategy for developing a safe pedestrian pathway network throughout the village, and ensuring private development contributes to a connected, pedestrian-friendly environment. (See Big Ideas 1, 2, 3, 11, 13, and 14).
5. **A ‘heart’, a focal point public space** — initiate (the RDN) or support efforts by community groups to develop a Feasibility and Needs Study for purchasing and developing a central property for a mixed-use central public space. (See Big Idea 4).

16 Big Ideas

Many great ideas and comments were put forward by the community during the Village Vision workshops. At the 3 day Design Visioning Workshop, student/VVPC teams used these ideas and principles, as well input from the Image Preference Survey, to produce four Design Concepts for the village. The four Concepts were analyzed for common themes and goals (See Appendix D – Design Visioning Workshop Summary Report). These were further distilled into 16 Big Ideas, which were put out for community feedback in the Design Concepts Questionnaire. The following section discusses the feedback on the Big Ideas, related projects, and possible next steps.

Big Idea 1 – North Road and South Road Intersection Improvements

Concept - Redesign the North and South Road intersection to improve pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular safety, and to create a “gateway” to the village.

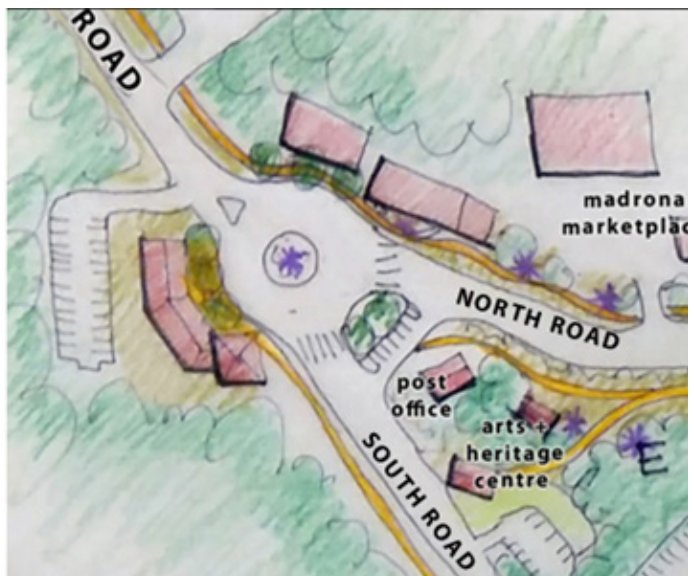


Figure 2 - Two of the Concepts for North/South Roads Intersection Improvements (T-intersection or a Traffic Circle)

Design Considerations – All four Design Visioning Workshop concepts recognized the importance of this intersection as a gateway and way-finding opportunity, as well as being currently dangerous for pedes-

trians, especially during the Saturday Market. Design ideas included a traffic circle, a T-intersection with a parklet, closure and re-routing of a portion of North Road to create a section of pedestrian street, signage, and a major public art piece. Another idea is to paint the whole intersection in an artistic pattern, indicating a broad pedestrian zone and providing a gateway feature. There is excess paving through the intersection, a wide right of way, and an underutilized grassed island on the Post Office property, so there are opportunities for reconfiguration. Additionally the adjacent land owners (post-office, Agricultural Hall Association, and Intrascap Developments) could be approached to negotiate small property line changes if required.

Community Support - 81% of Design Concept Questionnaire respondents said improvements to this intersection are extremely important (39%), or somewhat important (42%) to realizing the vision of a great, sustainable village. There was a wide variety of comments of support or concern. (See the full results on the Village Vision website for all comments).

Potential Related Projects – This concept is particularly connected to Big Idea 2 – North Road as “Main Street”, Big Idea 3 – Pedestrian Pathway System, Big Idea 6 – Visitor’s Centre at the Agi Hall site, and Big Idea 12 – Public Art Program, and further planning should consider these concepts in concert. Future efforts on the Village Way Trail could also consider if or how to accommodate future intersection improvements.

Possible Next Steps – A Traffic and Design Study would be required to determine the traffic engineering solution best suited for this intersection that also meets community design goals. A coordinated solution will likely require inter-agency coordination between MoTI, the RDN (Village Way Trail), and possibly the Islands Trust as the advocating agency. The Islands Trust could organize an initial workshop session between the three agencies, with senior traffic engineer and urban designer participation. Further detailed study and implementation planning should be added to MoTI project work plans and advocated for by the Islands Trust. Gabriola Land and Trails Trust (GaLTT) may also be interested in advocating for this project as a pedestrian safety improvement. Gabriola Arts Council should be invited to be involved in any associated gateway signage or public art project.

Big Idea 2 – Creating a Village Feel on North Road

Concept – Over time, make the village area portion of North Road more of pedestrian-friendly street, with a village character.



Figure 3 - Student sketch for North Road

Design Considerations – Ideas from the Design Concepts included: pedestrian walkways and crosswalks; traffic calming; street trees and landscaping; on-street parking; buildings that relate to the streetscape, with reduced setbacks, street oriented entries, walkways, landscaping, and seating; parking behind buildings; and special treatments at the intersections with Lochinvar Lane and South Road.

Community Support - 88% of Design Concepts Questionnaire respondents said North Road as “Main Street” improvements are extremely important (63%), or somewhat important (25%) to a great, sustainable village. There was a wide variety of comments with support or concern (see the full results on the Village Vision website for all comments). For some, this is the most important village improvement needed. **Potential Related Projects** – This broad concept relates to many other of the Big Ideas, some of which are more detailed strategies, such as Big Idea 3 – Pedestrian Pathway System, Big Idea 11 – Lighting, Big Idea 13 – Streetscape Landscaping, and Big Idea 14 – Pedestrian Engaging Village Buildings.

Possible Next Steps – Since this is a broad and long-range timeline idea, there are many possible paths for advancement. It would also likely involve efforts from all three of the primary public agencies with jurisdiction in the village core – the Islands Trust, the RDN, and MoTI.

The Islands Trust – The IT could consider hosting a workshop/charrette type process with the other agencies, design consultants, and community stakeholders, perhaps as part of a Village Area Neighbourhood Plan or Strategy, to create a coordinated multi-jurisdictional approach to North Road. Within the IT’s jurisdiction, recent additions to the village area Development Permit guidelines were meant to encourage contributing design strategies in private development. The Islands Trust could analyze the results of applying these to the new Madrona Marketplace West, and consider how the process can be further improved. Aspects of the zoning bylaw could also be considered for adjacent properties, such as reducing front setbacks, or allowing permanent market structures.

MoTI – MoTI could consider reducing speed limits, implementing traffic calming, adding more crosswalks, and creating reduced setback standards for highways in rural villages, and should work with the Islands Trust on developing specific road cross-section standards for village areas within the Islands Trust.

The RDN – The RDN could consider establishing some sort of Village Place-making Service Area, which could work collaboratively with the Islands Trust land use planning and the Chamber of Commerce as the new coordinator of economic development services to provide more comprehensive village place-making planning, implementation, and maintenance.

Next steps for more detailed, related Big Ideas are addressed in following sections.

Big Idea 3 – Pedestrian Pathway System

Concept – Over time, create an interconnected, universally-accessible pedestrian pathway network throughout the village, linking all businesses and services, and extending to the ferry.

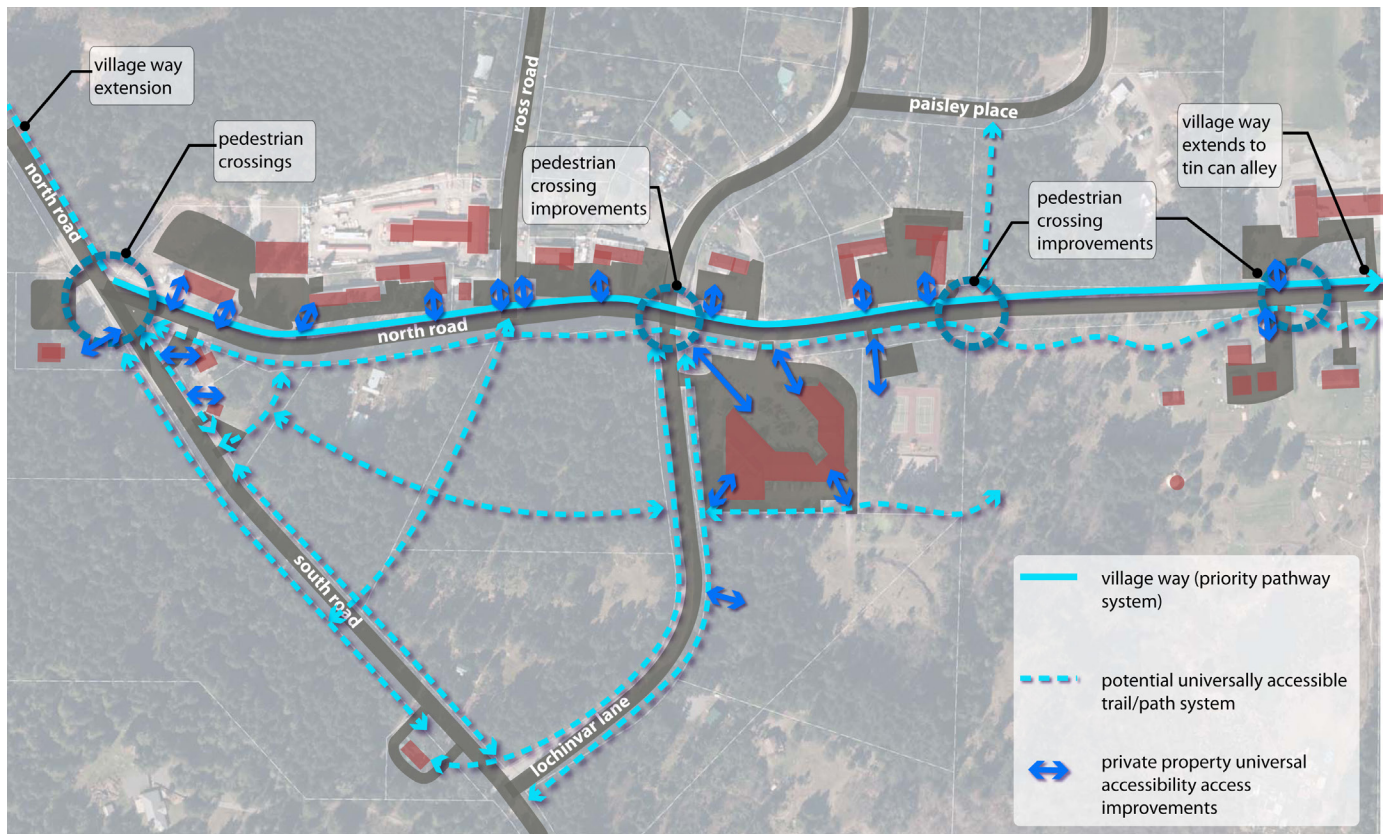


Figure 4 - One possible concept for an accessible pedestrian pathway network

Design Considerations – Some paths could be natural walking trails and others could be designed more as people places, with gathering areas, landscaping, and interaction with storefronts. All should be wheelchair accessible, with gravel or paved surfaces, and ideally graded to 5% slope or less per universal accessibility standards.



Figure 5 - Accessible pathway system

Community Support - 92% of respondents said a village pathway system is extremely important (74%), or somewhat important (18%). This was the most supported Big Idea. There was a wide variety of comments with support or concern.

Potential Related Projects – This concept is associated with other Big Ideas, such as Big Idea 2 – North Road as Main Street. The Village Way trail will be a flagship implementation project, creating the primary spine for the system, and hopefully inspiring future branches and expansions.

Possible Next Steps – It is essential that our governing agencies respond to this community priority and take a more proactive and cooperative approach to facilitating pedestrian friendliness in the village. One suggestion is an interagency effort, facilitated by the Islands Trust and endorsed by MoTI and the RDN, to create a master plan for a village pathway system, perhaps as part of a broader Village Area Neighbourhood Plan or Strategy Plan effort. Standards should be set for universal accessibility. Private properties may provide part of the network. GaLTT could be a key stakeholder, as they may be able to facilitate and license privately owned segments of the system. The RDN could also consider establishing some sort of Village Place-making Service Area, which could work in concert with the Islands Trust land use planning and collaboratively with the new (to be determined) economic development agency, in more comprehensive village place-making planning, implementation, and maintenance.

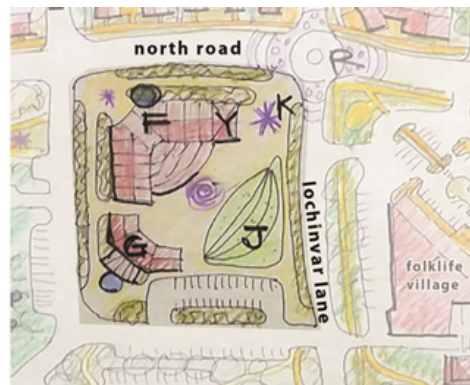
Big Idea 4 – A Village Heart

Concept – Create a park or square that will be a vibrant, attractive, and distinctive public ‘heart’ for the village and the island, which could be used for events, possibly a re-located Farmer’s Market, and daily interactions at all times of the year.



CONCEPT A - THE COMMONS

Relocating the Farmer’s Market and a New Agricultural Hall at The Commons, enhancing it as a central community gathering place.



CONCEPT B - THE VILLAGE SQUARE

Village Square Park at the corner of Lochinvar Lane and North Road, including a Covered Market, a Community Hub (events building), and bandshell / amphitheatre.



CONCEPT C - THE VILLAGE CENTRE

Team C proposed a bold and multi-faceted idea of re-aligning a portion of North Road to create a pedestrian only street near South Road



CONCEPT D - THE MEETING PLACE

A Community Events Building and amphitheatre at the centre of the Lochinvar Triangle, linked by a Market Promenade to the Lochinvar Lane & North Road intersection.

Figure 6 - The four Design Visioning Workshop concepts for a village ‘heart’ gathering place

Design Considerations – Based on community comments (which mirror the recommendations from community and rural design researchers such as Christopher Alexander, Randall Arendt, and Kevin Lynch) these are the qualities that make a great focal gathering place, such as a village square or green:

- Comfortably host community celebration scale events.
- Be a distinct, compact place with a sense of enclosure, with a strong border creating a positive space as a clear centre (an outdoor ‘room’).
- The border should contain adjacent uses that generate lots of daily activity, such as a coffee shop, stores, or community services, activating the central space.
- Be at a visible crossroads in the community with lots of passerby foot traffic, and with attractive uses and elements to easily draw people in on a daily basis.
- Utilizes a durable, wheelchair accessible surface to accommodate and encourage lots of foot traffic.
- Include landscaping and trees, seating, playful elements, and public art.
- Has an event parking strategy.

Each of the four Design Visioning Workshop concepts had a different concept for where the heart could be located, and each also proposed converting some or all the Folklife Village central parking lot to a pedestrian plaza (see Big Idea 5 – Folklife Village Pedestrian Centre). Many of the concepts included an amphitheatre and band shell space. Some of the concepts included a mixed-use community building to help activate the space, possibly including elements such as a small coffee kiosk, a recreation/ gathering/ performance space, indoor-outdoor seating, bathrooms, market storage, or a shared office for island non-profits.

Size - Based on spaces currently used for events on the island (as well as recommendations by community design researchers such as Kevin Lynch and Jan Gehl), the event area of the space should probably be about 1500-2500 m². For comparison, the existing Saturday Market outdoor area (not including parking or the Agricultural Hall) is about 890 m². The Theatre Festival area in the Folklife Village parking lot is about 1200 sm. The central parking lot area of Folklife Village, which has been used for events such as Canada Day, is about 1350 sm. The planned event plaza at Huxley Park is about 310 square meters. The outdoor area used for the Salmon BBQ at the Community Hall is about 2000 square meters. The areas of The Commons used for the Fall Fair is about 2400 sm.

Event parking - An event parking strategy for a ‘heart’ should consider the needs of special events such as the Theatre Festival. The Theatre Festival tent holds ~290 people. Currently attendees park along the road, or in adjacent parking lots such as the elementary school (see Appendix B, Figure 8). If considering ‘Big Idea 6 – Moving the Saturday Market to the Heart’, the current Saturday Market has a ~40 spot parking lot, with additional informal parking along South Road (70+ vendors plus customers) and spill-over in Madrona Marketplace lots. Therefore, 125-150 designated off-road parking spots seems a reasonable number to plan for event parking, depending on the available shoulder parking or off-hours use of adjacent properties’ lots that could be expected for a given site option.

Community Support - 84% of respondents in the Design Concepts Questionnaire said a village heart is extremely important (45%), or somewhat important (39%) to creating great, sustainable village core.

There was a wide range of comments. Supportive comments focused on the need for the heart to be celebrational, vibrant, social, multi-use, and multi-generational. At the property/business stakeholder meetings, some business owners in Folklife Village particularly appreciated this idea, in part due to the current economic impacts of holding events in the Folklife Village parking lot and Lochinvar Lane. At the community group stakeholder meeting, the Gabriola Arts Council Executive Director also welcomed the idea of holding events in a truly public space. Concerns include redundancy with existing amenities (especially the Commons), supporting new businesses or impacting existing ones, proper scale, keeping a new place energized, parking, funding, and distraction from other priorities. Question 9 of the Design Concepts Questionnaire also asked responders to rank the four Design Visioning Workshop concepts according to which they would be most interested in pursuing. The 'Village Square' option (Concept B in Figure 6 above, the undeveloped private property at Lochinvar Lane and North Road) was the most popular first choice, with nearly twice the selection as the next most popular option. Figure 7 below shows one possible 'heart' concept for this important property¹.



Figure 7 - One possible 'heart' concept at the undeveloped Lochinvar Lane and North Road property

Potential Related Projects – This concept should be considered in conjunction with Big Idea 6 – Moving the Saturday Market to the heart, Big Idea 7 – Community Event Building, and Big Idea 8 – Recreation Centre, because these could be programs to activate the space. Big Idea 5 – Folklife Village Pedestrian

¹ Some of the ideas generated throughout the process by community members involve the use of private land. Decisions about potential future development / redevelopment of private property would be up to private landowners and local government. Concepts presented here are not meant to prejudge or constrict, but to offer ideas.

Centre is associated as it also could play the role of a community heart. Big Idea 9- Visitor's Centre is also related, as sale of the Agricultural Hall site for such a use (or similar) could facilitate funds to contribute to a Market Pavilion for the park/square.

Possible Next Steps - One strategy is for the Islands Trust to undertake broader community consultation, perhaps as part of a Village Area Neighbourhood Plan/Strategy Plan, to further gauge community interest, as well as to disseminate information on how such a project could be achieved. Another option is for the RDN to proactively explore near-term possibilities, such as purchase of the undeveloped site at Lochinvar Lane and North Road. Another option is for Village Vision, another community group, or current property owners to champion the creation of a village heart (or improvements to an existing space such as the Commons), and undertake further study and consultation. A study could include: a needs and feasibility study; a full cost analysis; an exploration of community partnerships (such as with the Agricultural Association to construct Market facilities and manage programming, or with GAC to consider including the Economusée, public art, and festival programming); further public consultation to determine if more detail study/efforts are of interest; and a preliminary concept plan. Having a concept plan for a village square type space strengthens grant applications when opportunities arise ². A Community Land Trust could also be explored for purchasing key properties for the heart and/or affordable housing and other community serving benefits. Potentially, an organization could investigate leveraging existing community property assets to purchase such properties. Potentially, the Gabriola Foundation, currently in formation stages, could also be involved in funding this central community celebration space.

Big Idea 5 – Folklife Village Pedestrian Centre

Concept – to convert some or all of the Folklife Village central parking lot to a pedestrian gathering space.



Figure 8 - Two of the Four Design Visioning Workshop Concepts for a Gathering Place at Folklife Village

Design Considerations – When the Folklife Village began its life as a pavilion at Expo 86, the centre was a gathering area/plaza. It is a naturally ideal central gathering place due to its sense of enclosure and

²
Examples include the B.C. Spirit Squares program, which provided 50% capital funding for outdoor public celebration spaces across B.C. in 2008, or the 2014 grant provided by Island Coastal Economic Trust to Lake Cowichan for their Town Square project. Depending on the included programming, the multi-faceted nature of the concept would likely hold appeal for many types of grants and partnerships, such as economic revitalization, tourism development, public gathering, arts and culture, pedestrian safety, food systems, or public health.

surrounding activating uses; it is what many Gabriolans think of as the current heart of the village – except it is a parking lot. A pedestrian centre here could take the form of a smaller plaza space, with about half of the current parking area converted, or a larger scale concept with alternative consideration of providing low-mobility access. Any parking space conversion will require consideration of ease of access for low-mobility users to the shops and services, and provision of replacement parking nearby.

Community Support - 72% of Design Concept Questionnaire respondents said a gathering place in the centre of Folklife Village was extremely important (40%), or somewhat important (32%) to realizing the vision of a great, sustainable village. Supportive comments included reference to this being a natural gathering area, as well as the need to make it more pedestrian friendly. Concerned comments included the need for sufficient and accessible parking for the businesses and services; the challenges of implementing given that it is privately owned space; and that such a main gathering space should be publicly owned. Folklife Village business owners at the stakeholder meetings also expressed concerns that moving parking would negatively impact the businesses.

Potential Related Projects - Depending on the determined scale of a pedestrian centre, it may serve the need of an island “heart”, and as such should be considered in concert with any further planning of Big Idea 4 – A Village Heart.

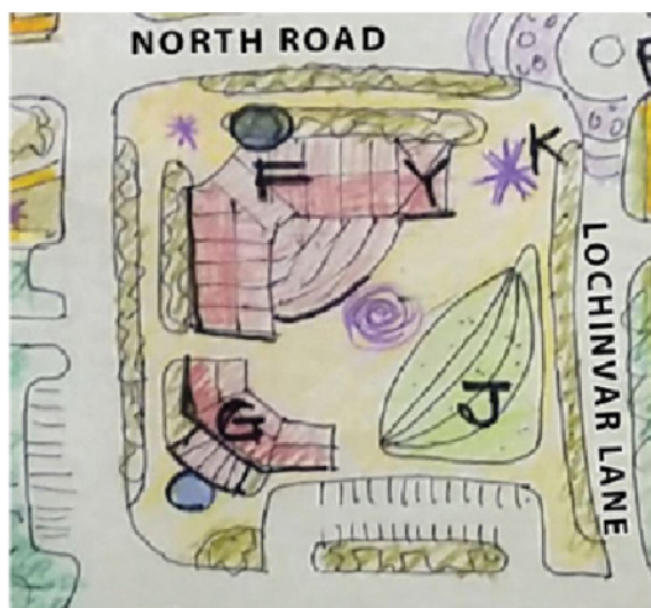
Possible Next Steps - Given that the mall is private property, the owner (the Jim Pattison Group) would likely require incentives/compensation to consider enabling such a public amenity. The Jim Pattison Group also purportedly owns the undeveloped commercially zoned property behind the Folklife Village. Granting additional development potential via a rezoning or amenity zoning application for the undeveloped lot is one possible way to facilitate private sector provision of the pedestrian centre on the Folklife Village property. The Islands Trust could add additional amenity zoning provisions to the Gabriola OCP (such as included in Salt Spring’s OCP). Alternatively, the RDN could provide a grant in aid to a community group willing to negotiate a lease and management with the Pattison Group to implement and maintain a plaza. Further discussion and study would be needed to see if the concerns of retailers and low-mobility access could be addressed through design. One strategy could be a temporary pilot project plaza, using pop-up elements such as planters, movable seating, umbrellas, performance space, and art pieces to test out the impact.

Big Idea 6 – The Market at the Heart

Concept – To relocate the Saturday Market to the new “heart” public gathering space.

Design Considerations – The Saturday Market is a weekly community gathering that also attracts visitors from Vancouver Island and beyond. The existing Agricultural Hall site is prominent, convenient, and helps to activate neighboring businesses, however there is pent-up demand for additional space, safety and capacity issues with parking and circulation, and challenges for accessibility. Despite being part of the gateway area for the village, it is an empty gravel parking lot on most non-market days, even more so once the Agricultural Hall is removed as planned in the next few years. If a new central “heart” public gathering place was created, relocating the Market would help to activate the new space and mark it as

an iconic, feature community place. It would also permit the possibility of converting the current site to a Visitor's Centre or other combination of uses that would mark the entrance to the village at all times of the year. Responses to the Image Preference Survey also supported the idea of a permanent Market Pavilion that would cover the vendors and allow for a longer season (See Appendix C – Image Preference Survey Summary Report). It would also provide a covered gathering space for park visitors during the week. To accommodate an expanded Market, the vendor, circulation, and gathering areas should be about 900-1000 square meters (equivalent to the existing area plus 20 vendors) as a rough guideline. Nearby parking should be provided. The Gabriola Land Use Bylaw requires a minimum of 1 stall per vendor. The Saturday Market coordinator estimates about 150 cars are parked at peak times on the site and nearby streets. Potentially shared parking with nearby sites could be negotiated. The site would also need permanent closed storage, bathrooms (and septic system), water, ideally a small coffee bar type kitchen with power, and a seating and busking/performance area.



Team B - Market Pavilion at the Village Square (F)



Team A - Covered Market and Agricultural Hall at The Commons

Figure 9 - Two of the Concepts for Relocating the Saturday Market to a Village 'Heart' Gathering Space

Design Considerations – The Saturday Market is a weekly community gathering that also attracts visitors from Vancouver Island and beyond. The existing Agricultural Hall site is prominent, convenient, and helps to activate neighboring businesses, however there is pent-up demand for additional space, safety and capacity issues with parking and circulation, and challenges for accessibility. Despite being part of the gateway area for the village, it is an empty gravel parking lot on most non-market days, even more so once the Agricultural Hall is removed as planned in the next few years. If a new central “heart” public gathering place was created, relocating the Market would help to activate the new space and mark it as an iconic, feature community place. It would also permit the possibility of converting the current site to a Visitor's Centre or other combination of uses that would mark the entrance to the village at all times of the year. Responses to the Image Preference Survey also supported the idea of a permanent Market Pavilion that would cover the vendors and allow for a longer season (See Appendix C – Image Preference Survey Summary Report). It would also provide a covered gathering space for park visitors during the week.

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Community Support - 85% of Design Concept Questionnaire respondents said having the Saturday Market at the Heart was extremely important (50%) or somewhat important (35%) to the vision of a great, sustainable village. Supportive comments included preferences for a central, attractive gathering area for the market, support for a covered market area, improved parking and pedestrian safety, and closer proximity to village businesses, or to move to the Commons. Concerns included it being a negative space when not used for the market, parking, and the need to focus on other issues. The Agricultural Hall Association has indicated they are open to the idea.

Potential Related Projects – This idea is connected to Big Idea 4- A Village Heart, as well as Big Idea 9 – Visitor's Centre. Obviously, the Agricultural Hall Association's strategic planning for their current site and building is also directly related.

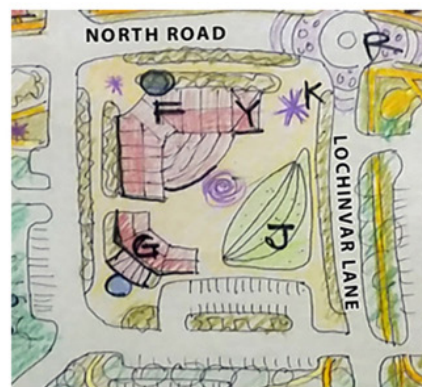
Possible Next Steps – The Agricultural Hall Association is actively considering plans for their existing site. Recently, they determined the existing building no longer serves needs well enough to justify the upgrades and maintenance required. They are open to creative ideas for the Market's future. Ideally, planning for a village heart gathering space with an integrated market will advance before plans are solidified.

Big Idea 7 – A Community Events Building and Big Idea 8 – Recreation Centre

Concepts - Addition of a community gathering building and/or a recreation centre in the village core.



Team A -
Community Centre behind
Folklife Village



Team B -
Community Hub (G) at the
Village Square



Team C -
Community Centre in the
Lochinvar triangle

Figure 10 - Three of the Design Visioning Workshop Concepts for a Community Events Building or Recreation Centre in the Village

Design Considerations – Given that the only larger-scale community gathering building in the village core, the Agricultural Hall, is planned for removal, each of the Design Visioning Workshop Concepts proposed a replacement building somewhere in the village core. Most of the four Design Concepts proposed a community gathering building as well as a recreation centre, and the Design Concepts Questionnaire asked these questions separately. However, the program for such buildings would likely overlap and could be achieved in one centre. The program could include open gathering space, adaptability as a performance space, shared office space for local community groups, indoor recreation program space, public washrooms, a meeting room, or storage for the market (if co-located at the village heart). As the primary community building in the core, it should be an iconic, activating space, with a presence in the village, and including outdoor gathering areas. It will require sufficient parking, but that should not detract from the building's contribution to the vibrancy and pedestrian-friendly nature of the village. It would be beneficial if it was located adjacent or within a village 'heart' central gathering square/green, to optimize vibrancy and allow for indoor/outdoor gathering events.

Community Support - 84% of Design Concept Questionnaire respondents said a Community Event Building in the village was extremely important (45%) or somewhat important (39%). Supportive comments included the need for a village event centre, performance centre, and a multi-use building. 66% said a Recreation Centre in the village was extremely important (30%) or somewhat important (36%). Supportive comments emphasized the need, especially for young families and seniors, and several suggested the EMCON site. Concerns for both buildings include: costs versus need; competition with the Community Hall or the Haven's auditorium; a multi-use building having poor acoustics; parking; scale; and over-developing the village.

Potential Related Projects – Big Idea 7 and 8 should be considered together. They should also be considered for contribution to Big Idea 2 – North Road as 'Main Street', and Big Idea 4 – A Village Heart.

Possible Next Steps – In 2015, the RDN explored purchasing some of the EMCON properties in the village core for a recreation facility. Although they withdrew from the purchase contract, it indicates local government interest in some form of additional recreation facility in the village. The EMCON properties are in the village area, but are accessed through a residential area and are detached from physical or visual connection to the village core. Moving the EMCON's facilities to their undeveloped properties and constructing a community facility with a presence on North Road would contribute to the vitality, sociability, and connectivity of the village. Alternative sites could also be explored by the RDN that better meet the guiding principles, or explored by the community through a Village Area Neighbourhood Plan or Strategy process led by the Islands Trust. The RDN could undertake a needs assessment and feasibility study for a community event and/or recreation facility in the village.

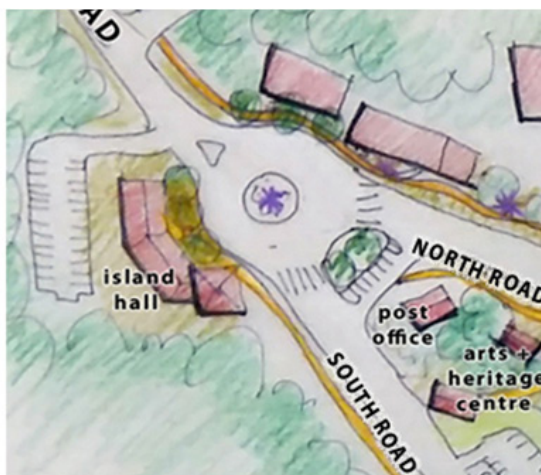
Big Idea 9 – Visitor's Centre and/or Island Hall

Concept – a Visitor's Centre or mixed-use centre near the North and South Roads intersection.

Design Considerations – A Visitor's Centre ideally has a strong presence at the entrance to a community. The current Visitor's Centre does not have an obvious presence and can be difficult to access, es-



Team A -
Visitor's Centre and
Exhibit Hall



Team B -
Island Hall - Visitor's
Centre, Island Trust, &
Eco-education Centre

Figure 11 - Two of the Design Visioning Workshop Concepts for a Visitor's Centre at the Current Agricultural Hall Site

pecially by low-mobility users. Three of the four Design Visioning Workshop concepts showed a Visitor's Centre at the current Agricultural Hall site, assuming the Saturday Market is relocated to a new 'heart' park or square. It should be an iconic, west-coast building that helps create the gateway to the village and gives a taste of Gabriola culture. Some concepts combined the Centre with other uses, such as an Exhibit Hall run by GAC or the museum. One team combined the Visitor's Centre with the Islands Trust/RDN offices and an Eco-Education Centre into a central 'Island Hall' building, informing both visitors and islanders about sustainable life on the islands.

Community Support - 69% of Design Concept Questionnaire respondents said a Visitor's Centre at the Agi Hall site was extremely important (24%), or somewhat important (45%) to realizing the vision of a great, sustainable village. Supportive comments included: the need for a gateway; support for the "Island Hall" idea; improving accessibility; and having the Visitor's Centre on its own site (not favouring one development over another). Concerns included questioning the need for a gateway, duplicating services, architectural style, and maintaining easy access to the Islands Trust from all areas of the island.

Potential Related Projects – Realizing this idea at the Saturday Market site is likely reliant on Big Idea 6 – The Market at the Heart, and therefore Big Idea 4 – A Village Heart. Potentially it could be combined with the Saturday Market at the existing site. Another possible site could be at the 'heart' park/square itself.

Possible Next Steps – This concept would require the coordination of different projects, agencies (Islands Trust/RDN/Economic Development), and community groups (Chamber of Commerce, Agricultural Hall Association, and potentially GAC or the museum). The Chamber of Commerce could take the lead on exploring possibilities, or initiating more active collaboration, especially if the Agricultural Hall Asso-

ciation is interested in either relocating to a 'heart' type place, or partnering on a shared Visitor' Centre / Market building on the current market site.

Big Idea 10 – Integrated Infrastructure Management – Village Area Plan

Concept – Undertake an integrated study looking at all aspects of the water cycle in the village area, including potable water, sewerage, drainage, and potential reclaimed water reuse, as a coordinated, sustainable system.

Design Considerations - Keeping the village area compact is beneficial for walkability, connectivity, and vibrancy. However, it can place stress on groundwater and sewerage carrying capacities. Generally, properties on the island address water, drainage, and sewerage needs and regulations on a site by site basis. There is also little regulatory oversight over on-going maintenance requirements or failing systems. Storm water is only regulated on a site by site basis, and only if a Development Permit is required. In response, several Design Visioning Workshop teams proposed developing an Integrated Infrastructure Management Area Plan for the village. This would look comprehensively at sustainable planning for water, storm water, and sewerage needs in the village. Systems may still be decentralized (site or cluster based), but might utilize a centralized management approach. This would allow for thinking that is more systems-based and area carrying capacity based. It would look for ways to reuse "waste" water or storm water, and better ensure oversight of proper functioning of the sewage systems and their relationship to water supply wells. Ideas explored at the workshop included reservoirs, small water systems, expanded rainwater harvesting, clustered sewage treatment, rain gardens for storm water treatment, reclaimed water reuse for village landscaping, and production of fertilizer for local farms.

Community Support - 93% of Design Questionnaire Respondents said this was extremely important (73%), or somewhat important (19%) to the vision of a great, sustainable village – the second most popular idea. Supporting comments included the importance of this to sustainability, and the necessity of this approach before any further development in the core. Several said this is the most important priority project. Concerns included the potential bureaucracy and funding required, as well as opposition to increasing density in the core.

Potential Related Projects – In some ways this project is independent of the other Big Ideas, but it also could affect them all. It would be an important foundational study to consider as part of any discussion about increasing density in the village area.

Possible Next Steps – The Islands Trust could undertake an Integrated Infrastructure Management Area Plan for the village as a project, working with specialist consultants. The Ministry of Health would be an important stakeholder agency, and potentially could take some sort of partnership role in initiative of such an effort.

Big Idea 11 – Lighting

Concept – To add pedestrian scaled, dark-sky friendly lighting along a pathway system in the village.

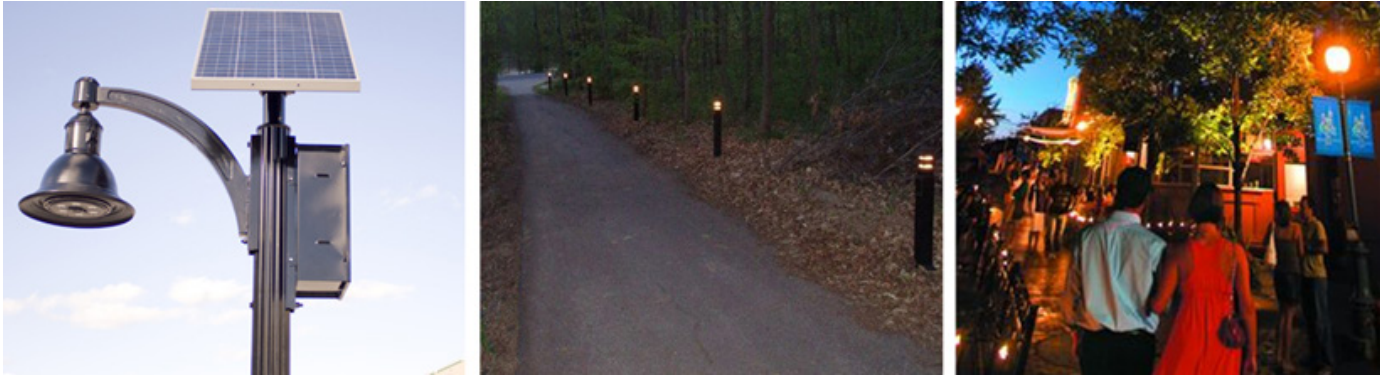
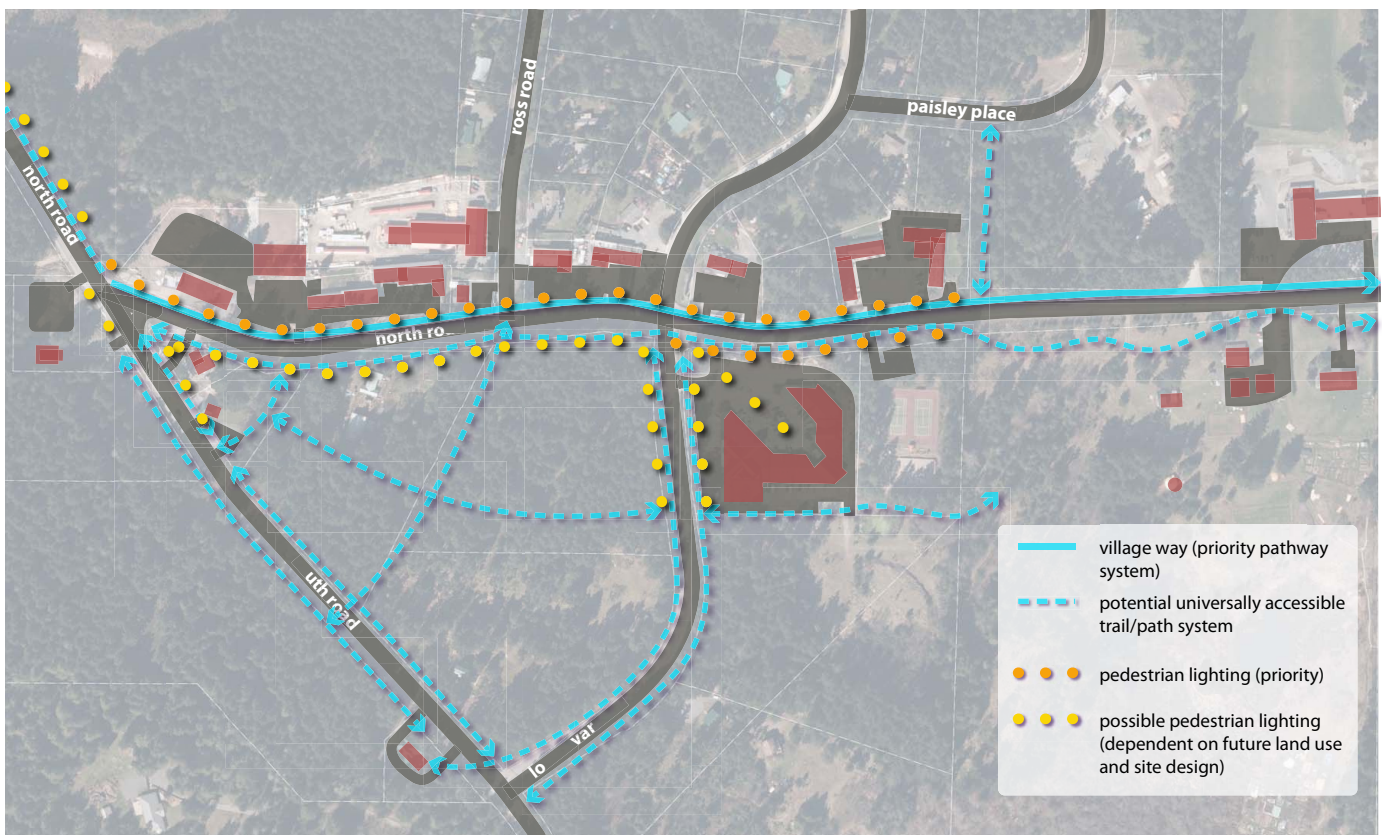


Figure 12 - Pedestrian lighting



Design Considerations – Pedestrian scaled lighting can encourage walking, increase safety and security, add a distinct character, highlight wayfinding, and contribute to evening vibrancy in the village area. It is usually in the form of smaller scale poles (~15 feet), bollards, or ground mounted. In order to protect Gabriola's dark sky and minimize off-site impacts, luminaires should be shielded, with light targeted on pedestrian paths. Simple but attractive fixture design can contribute to the character of an area, highlighting the public realm and the distinctiveness of the village area. The spacing of the luminaires should be enough to create continuity and safety, but not create an over-lit environment for the rural village setting. Energy efficiency of the lamps is another important consideration; solar fixtures are also possible.

Community Support - 83% of Design Concepts Questionnaire respondents said lighting was extremely important (39%) or somewhat important (44%) to realizing the vision of a great, sustainable village. Supportive comments emphasized the safety, dark-sky friendly, walkability and evening vibrancy contributions of lighting. Concerns included light pollution, maintaining a rural character, appropriate aesthetics of fixtures, and questions about the need. In the business and property owner stakeholder meetings, there was also expressed interest in pedestrian lighting, to add to evening vibrancy and support for extended hours.

Potential Related Projects – Pedestrian-scaled lighting is associated with Big Idea 3 – Pedestrian Pathway System, Big Idea 2 – North Road as ‘Main Street’, and should also be considered for a “heart” park/square, to facilitate evening use, safety and security of that primary social space.

Possible Next Steps – It is likely that pathway lighting would need to be planned, implemented, and managed by the RDN as a service area. The RDN currently provides 7 different rural street lighting local service areas throughout the Regional District, as cobra-head street lights attached to BC hydro poles, or as underground wired, free-standing ornamental streetlights. According to an engineering representative at the RDN, a License of Occupation is not required to locate the lights within the MOTI right-of-way. While the Questionnaire response to the concept of pedestrian lighting was largely positive, lighting is a strong trigger in the rural character debate, and broader consultation would be needed to determine if it is something broadly desired to eventually pursue for the village, perhaps best explored as part of a Village Area Plan process.

Big Idea 12 – Public Art Program

Concept – Expand public art presence in the village area.

Design Considerations – Public art can establish landmarks, enhance identity, elicit social engagement, express values, question assumptions, and inspire experiences from shock to delight in the village area landscape – a great place-making tool, especially for an island that promotes itself as the ‘Isle of the Arts’. Concepts from in the Design Visioning Workshop included ideas such as a prominent installation as part of the North and South Road intersection gateway design, art walks, intersection art murals or crosswalks, sculpture gardens, and interactive play installations or community engagement pieces, as both temporary displays or permanent features. Creating good public art is an art in itself. Response to location is critical – a piece should enhance the purpose of a place, whether it is to boldly announce arrival and orient newcomers, encourage interaction among strangers, or inspire intimate contemplation. There should be engagement between the place and the art – a reciprocal conversation of place design and the piece – for example, the place should provide setting, seating, sun, shade, good maintenance, access, or other reasons to be in the space in order for the art to play its role. Art has a major role to play, but it does not create place on its own; it must be part of a holistic place-making strategy. There is a place for curated, commissioned pieces of bold professional artist expression, and there is also a place for community-engaged art, collaborative pieces between professional artists and community. There is also a role for temporary installations that can surprise and energize, as well as permanent features that act as landmarks or postcard moments that reflect a communities’ identity. Practical considerations include safety, durability, maintenance, lighting, and vandalism.

Community Support - 76% of Design Concept Questionnaire respondents said a public art program was extremely important (35%), or somewhat important (41%) to realizing the vision of a great, sustainable village. Supportive comments talked of public art supporting the notion of the Isle of the Arts and adding flair and pride. Other comments supported the idea of interactive and multi-purpose art, art walks, performance-art spaces, and participatory, temporary art. Concerns expressed included: creating community agreement on art; maintenance and management needs; distracting drivers; and the need to focus on other aspects of village planning first.

Potential Related Projects – Public art can be part of most conversations on other Big Ideas – it can have a role to play in circulation, infrastructure, and almost any place design. Gabriola Arts Council (GAC) should be approached to explore possible opportunities whenever feasible.

Possible Next Steps – GAC’s prominent village presence in their new home of the Arts and Heritage historic building is a place enhancing and village gateway opportunity in itself. Next steps in village area public art, whether a formal Public Art Program or more targeted and one-off initiatives could be led by GAC’s strategic planning, but invited, encouraged, and respected by local government (including economic development) and other group’s initiatives. There may be advantages to partnering with the RDN, perhaps via the establishment of a Village Revitalization Service Area, or economic development funding.

Big Idea 13 – Public Realm Landscaping

Concept – To enhance the public realm of the village with landscaping, whether that is preserved natural vegetation, integrated plantings within new developments, or streetscape plantings.



Figure 14 - Public realm landscaping concepts

Design Considerations – Gabriola is blessed with a beautiful natural landscape, which is foundational to the island and village’s sense of identity. However, integration of healthy, verdant, place appropriate landscaping in village area public environments – commercial, community, streets, and institutional places – is currently hit and miss, even in the new developments. Well planned landscaping can offer sun or shade, storm water or septic treatment, space definition, screening or view framing, wayfinding, reflection of the wind and seasons, colour and beauty, safety buffers, and many other benefits in place design. It can help integrate the village area with the natural setting, and it can highlight the village as a distinct, special place within the island environment. It could include landscaping within the parking areas and public spaces or preserved natural spaces of commercial developments, parks and squares, seasonal displays, gate-

way features, or streetscapes. Particularly, in a water conscious community, drought-tolerant species are required; however, allowance should be made for 1-2 years of temporary establishment irrigation of new landscapes, to ensure they develop the root systems to thrive (even native species). Use of native species can contribute to habitat connectivity, sense of place, and low-maintenance needs, although there is a place for appropriate non-native species that meet sustainability criteria but provide a distinct design need – such as a highlighting colour or a particular form. Additionally, commercial, multi-family, and institutional development applications could require professional site surveys with locations of significant trees so site planning can consider preservation of such site features.

Community Support - 87% of Design Concepts Questionnaire respondents said streetscape landscaping was extremely important (53%) or somewhat important (33%) to realizing the vision of a great, sustainable village. Supportive comments included making walking in the village more appealing, increasing a sense of unity, a sense of welcome and attractiveness, the importance of sustainable water use, and using edibles and native plants. Concerns expressed included MoTI regulations, focusing on the natural environment, maintaining rural and undeveloped character, and costs.

Potential Related Projects – The Big Idea of streetscape landscaping should be considered in relation to Big Idea 3 – Pedestrian Pathway Network and Big Idea 2 – North Road as ‘Main Street’. Improved landscaping should also be considered as part of public gathering places, whether publicly owned or private commercial developments. Big Idea 10 – ‘Integrated Infrastructure Management Village Area Plan’ may also offer sustainable solutions for irrigation.

Possible Next Steps – The RDN could consider establishing some sort of Village Place-making Service Area, which could work in concert with the Islands Trust land use planning and the new (to be determined) economic development agency, in more comprehensive village place-making planning, implementation, and maintenance. This could include working with community groups through an “Adopt-A-Garden” type initiative, as some municipalities have done to help create and maintain public landscapes. There are examples of Regional Districts (such as the Cowichan Valley Regional District) installing and maintaining landscaping within the MOTI right-of-way. Development Permit Area guidelines and landscape security bond process could also be improved to encourage better landscaping on commercial or multi-family development sites.

Big Idea 14 – Pedestrian-Engaging Village Buildings

Concept – Improve development approval regulations and process to encourage better building design that contributes to the village vibrancy, pedestrian-friendliness, attractiveness and sustainability.

Design Considerations – Village place-making through development can be a slow evolution, particularly on a Gulf Island, but that makes each development application a precious optimization opportunity. Building and site design is key to creating a pedestrian-engaging environment, and to realize good village place-making principles such as continuity, congruence, enclosure, charm, vernacular, and pedestrian scale. Recent changes to the village area Development Permit guidelines were meant to encourage contributing design strategies in private development. The Islands Trust could analyze the results of applying these to the new Madrona Marketplace West, and consider how the process can be further improved.

This should include considerations of: contextual responsiveness; consideration of height and massing; improved site surveys and landscape feature preservation; vertical or horizontal façade expression; setbacks; site grading, especially to universal accessibility standards (currently under regulated by both the Islands Trust Development Permit process and the RDN’s Building Permit process); energy efficiency; circulation and physical connection to the street; orientation and expression of entries; roof forms; vernacular materials or design details; rhythm and proportions of openings; lot sizes, orientations, and coverages; side yards, and more. Some specific ideas highlighted during the Design Visioning Workshop included reducing setbacks, improved front landscaping, incorporating better public gathering space, eliminating parking between the street and building, better coordination in contributing to a public pathway system, and allowing a pedestrian-engaging presence for home-based businesses within the village area.

Community Support - 89% of Design Concept Questionnaire respondents said this was extremely important (62%) or somewhat important (27%) to realizing the vision of a great, sustainable village. For some, this is the most important village priority. Supportive comments included: the need to think long-term and opportunistically when existing development is improved; hiding parking; avoiding strip mall development; some on-street parking; and improving walkability. Concerns included maintaining easy access of parking to stores, especially for elderly and low-mobility users.

Potential Related Projects – This concept is associated with Big Idea 11 – public realm landscaping, as well as Big Idea 3 – pedestrian pathway system.

Possible Next Steps – The Islands Trust could hold an internal review of recent Form and Character Development Permits and how well the guidelines and approvals process is working to optimize place-making on the Gulf Islands. Updates to the DP guidelines could provide a more robust and useful framework for ensuring high quality place-making. Additionally, for key village development projects it may be worth bringing in an advisory consultant, perhaps contracted for on-call services, to assist in design review and negotiation, or try to ensure there is a planner in the Islands Trust system with such experience who can work with the local Island Planner. Alternatively, the Islands Trust’s Local Planning Services group could focus one or more of their quarterly professional development days on Form and Character Development Permits, where community design consultants could provide additional training.

Revisions to the Land Use Bylaw to reduce front setback requirements are also recommended for consideration, in coordination with encouraging MoTI to reconsider their setback requirements in village settings.

Big Idea 15 – Multi-Family Mixed Use

Concept – Expand the potential for mixed use buildings, with multi-family housing above commercial ground floor uses.

Design Considerations – Many comments throughout the Village Vision process promoted mixed-used buildings (ground floor commercial, second story residential) to provide housing diversity, a more affordable housing option, walkability, and vibrancy. Second story units contribute ‘eyes on the street’ and workforce housing for commercial areas, and commercial uses provide easily accessible amenities for

residents. Current commercial zoning permits mixed use in a limited way (one accessory dwelling per lot). However, most commercial developments have not implemented this housing. Per comments at the property/business owner stakeholder meeting, this is because of the economic infeasibility of the costs of increased building code requirements borne only by one unit, and the challenge of making a sole unit a welcoming environment. Mixed use may be feasible if the single allowed residences from several lots could be pooled or transferred to allow several residences on one lot.

Community Support - 75% of Design Concepts Questionnaire respondents supported the idea of multi-family mixed-use buildings in the village core. 14% supported it only if it did not increase overall density on the island. Supportive comments referred to the contribution of residential density to the vibrancy of the village, and the importance of increasing affordable housing options. Several comments emphasized the need for a sustainable water and wastewater approach for such projects to be supported. Concerns mentioned included the quality of design, parking, water and wastewater management, and avoiding residential in the core.

Potential Related Projects – This concept should be considered in concert with Big Idea 14 – pedestrian engaging village buildings, and Big Idea 16 – village area density.

Possible Next Steps – This would likely be an amendment to the rules associated with commercial zoning. The first questions to explore are ‘if’ or ‘how’ to enable such increases in density within the village core area. This is addressed further in Big Idea 16 – village area density.

Big Idea 16 – Village Area Density

Concept – To increase residential density within the village area.

Planning Considerations - While restricting population via “density” limitations is a hallmark tool that the Islands Trust uses in support of environmental and rural character protection, there was strong community support at the Village Vision workshops and surveys (see Appendix A, C, E) for increasing residential density in the village core. The stated reasons for support include that residential uses intermixed with amenities can enhance vibrancy, sociability, walkability, affordability, public health, and safety, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions when compared to more dispersed housing. It has also been argued that increasing density in the village area allows for the retention of low densities in the more rural parts of the island. Demand is high for more affordable and diverse housing options, particularly in support of social sustainability – providing workforce and family housing.

However, comments also stressed respect for the environmental and rural character carrying capacity of the islands – the primary reasons the Islands Trust was created in the first place. Sustainability of the island’s environments, culture, and character is foundational – many state that additional density could only be supported if it can be met within the island’s carrying capacity. What those carrying capacity limits are is largely based on conceptual science (depending on the resource), or subjective (such as rural character). However, some community members believe the sustainable limits have already been exceeded, or will be at existing build-out levels. Detailed studies and proposals would be needed to better objectively

determine environmental limits at the site level and island level, and additional consultation and qualitative study required to determine appropriate rural character for additional density and housing options in the village area. Some factors to consider in further study are:

- Using a updated Gabriola Housing Needs Assessment Study, explore what types of housing and how many units are needed for long-term social and economic sustainability on the island;
- What requirements for septic and water systems that fit the carrying capacity of the site are technically, legally, and financially feasible at the densities considered. Consider a parallel or fore-runner study of an Integrated Infrastructure Management Village Area Plan.

Community Support – The Design Concepts Questionnaire provided multiple ideas for comment regarding increasing density in the village core:

- No change; retain existing regulations.
- Expanding allowable density bonus potential in exchange for community amenities such as affordable housing or parks.
- Expanding density bonus potential in the village area, up to a set maximum.
- Expanding density transfer options from more sensitive, rural, hazardous, or significant areas of the island.
- Allowing transfers of unused accessory dwelling potential.
- Only for Affordable Housing, as defined in the OCP.
- For mixed income housing, including lower cost ‘attainable’ housing options for those that may not meet the OCP’s Affordable housing requirements.
- Adding incentives or otherwise promoting the existing Density Bank.

In the Design Concepts Questionnaire responses, generally speaking, options for increasing density in the village core were preferred over the “no change, retain existing regulations” option (see Appendix E, or the full results version available on the project website). Several comments stated the need for more residential in the village to support its vibrancy. The option of expanding density transfer from more sensitive, rural, hazardous, or culturally / environmentally significant areas of the island to the village received the highest weighting. There was stronger support for adding mixed income housing, compared to Affordable Housing (as defined by the OCP) only. Some comments reinforced this point. Please see the full results for all comments, available on the project website.

Potential Related Projects – In many ways, most other Big Ideas could be related to the concept of adding additional density in the village core. For example, increased residences within walking distance of the core would compound the need for improved pedestrian safety, and thus for a pathway system and, potentially, pedestrian lighting.

Possible Next Steps – A potential future phase of the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee’s Housing Options project could consider options for increasing attainable and diverse housing options on the island, once 2016 census data is released and a Housing Needs Assessment is completed.

Other Big Ideas

Many other ideas, big and small, for realizing the vision of a great and sustainable village have been captured in the summary reports of the Village Vision efforts. Here are some next step thoughts for a few of these:

Seniors progressive care housing – there are some strong voices advocating for housing and services to be hosted on Gabriola to aid in aging-in-place, within walking distance of village amenities, the clinic, and the ferry (see Appendix A – Community Discussion Summary) (also discussed at the March 4, 2017 Sustainable Gabriola Forum). This includes options from down-scaled homes through to assisted living, extended and respite care, and a hospice. Gabriolan physicians are in support of such services/facility, and community members who helped raise funds and coordinate the Medical Clinic construction are also interested. Potential community groups such as the Gabriola Health Care Foundation, the Gabriola Health and Wellness organization, or other community group could help facilitate the creation of a community owned facility, with medical staff provided by Island Health. There is a precedent model for a small hospice in Port Alberni, in a donated house, built with community raised funds, and staffed by Island Health (www.albernihospice.ca).

The importance of the Lochinvar Triangle – All of the Design Visioning Workshop concepts, as well as other community member concept plans³, recognize the Lochinvar Triangle as a potential natural centre of the village. The central triangle between the post office, Arts and Heritage Hall, the museum, and Folklife Village is predominately zoned Large Rural Residential. The Islands Trust could explore proactively rezoning these parcels, as part of a Village Area Neighborhood Plan or Strategy. Another possibility to ensure that any future proposed rezoning is in the community's best interest is to secure some or all of the parcels under some form of community ownership, either by the RDN, or a collective model such as a Land Trust, or perhaps a partnership arrangement that might include other community groups or property owners. This could remove the land of these key village parcels from the imperatives of the capital market and place community-serving interests at the forefront.

Realignment of Ferry Queue to North Road – In 2016, the Gabriola Ferry Advisory Committee proposed a realignment of the ferry queue from Taylor Bay Road to up the hill of North Road. The proposal is primarily due to safety concerns but would also bring economic stimulus and vitality to the village. MoTI or BC ferries would need to undertake a traffic study to determine viability.

Ferry Hill Pathway – Notwithstanding the current issues between RDN and MOTI on implementing the Village Way trail, the eventual extension to the ferry terminal should undergo preliminary planning to optimize and inform interim projects along the route. The RDN and MOTI should collaborate on a preliminary plan, considering the existing road location within the right of way, drainage, topography, pedestrian road crossings and safety, rock outcroppings, tree locations, connections to the Village Way Trail and the ferry terminal. This effort could also be addressed in a Islands Trust, RDN, MOTI workshop about the village area section of North Road.

3 <http://paulgrignon.netfirms.com/GabriolaTourMap/LockinvarPlan/map.html>

Gateways – In addition to the North/South Road intersection, other points noted as gateways are the ferry terminal, and North Road at the Commons and Tin Can Alley. Further consideration at the ferry will require continued advocacy of the Ferry Advisory Committee. Other points along North Road could be considered as part of the Village Way trail project or a broader study of the road as 'Main Street'.

Housing options – In the workshops, and the Image Preference Survey, there were many comments in support of expanding housing options beyond only single family residential, including cohousing, co-ops, clustered housing, townhomes, eco-villages, tiny homes, and mixed-use. The Local Trust Committee will need to consider the appropriateness of expanding housing options, as well as how to facilitate provision, in Phase II of their Housing Options project. The People for Healthy Communities community group is also helping to build capacity with the Gabriola Housing Society, to help realize affordable housing projects on the island.

A new entity – There have been many suggestions throughout the Village Vision project for forming a Community Foundation, Land Trust, Village Association or similar entity which could build on the Village Vision effort. Conversations are already underway for a Community Fund, a endowment foundation that could fund village projects, and a new Co-op Society, which is exploring leveraging existing community owned assets, such as the Commons, to facilitate community projects.

Economic Development – There are great opportunities for the Chamber of Commerce (and/or the eventually decided long-term economic development service provider) to promote economic sustainability on the island through place-making efforts in the village. The Chamber is developing plans for building on the Economic Readiness Project and the current Commercial Demand Forecast, with ideas to promote local businesses and Gabriola tourism.

Prioritizing the Big Ideas

Conceptualizing a prioritization strategy is challenging because of the complexity of factors, such as potential time-sensitive land purchase opportunities, level of community and political support, capacity of responsible parties, potential symbiotic correlation with other projects, other island priorities, or funding grant criteria. The final questions of the Design Concepts Questionnaire asked the community for general prioritization feedback, based on how important each theme (circulation, parks, community buildings, housing, etc.) was to the core principle categories (functional, experiential, and social). Circulation, parks/gathering places, and infrastructure improvements were the seen as most important overall (see Appendix E – Design Concepts Questionnaire Summary Report). This largely corresponds with the 'Big Ideas' seen as most important to realizing the vision of a great, sustainable village. In the Tables below, each Big Idea is given a priority rating based on the above criteria and community input, but this is a general guideline only, and should be adjusted as opportunities arise and circumstances change.

Table 1 - Big Idea Summary Ranking

Big Idea Summary Ranking

- Priority 1:
- Big Idea #2 – North Road as “Main Street” – more village quality
 - Big Idea #3 – Pedestrian Pathway System
 - Big Idea #4 – A Village Heart
 - Big Idea #10 – Integrated Infrastructure and Village Area Plan
 - Big Idea #16 – Village Area Density
- Priority #2:
- Big Idea #1 – Improve intersection of North & South Road
 - Big Idea #6 – The Market at the Heart
 - Big Ideas #7 & #8 – Community Events Building and/or Recreation Centre
 - Big Idea #11 – Pedestrian Lighting
 - Big Idea #13 – Public Realm Landscaping
 - Big Idea #14 – Village Buildings That Engage Pedestrians
 - Big Idea # 15 –Multi-Family Mixed Use
- Priority #3:
- Big Idea #5 – Folklife Village Pedestrian Centre
 - Big Idea #9 – Visitor Centre and Island Hall
 - Big Idea #12 Public Art Program

Big Idea Summary Table

Design or Policy Idea	Priority (1-3)	Responsible Jurisdictions & Related Groups	Associations	Possible Next Steps
Big Idea 1 North and South Road Intersection Improvements	2	Islands Trust MoTI RDN GaLTT, GAC, Agi Hall Assoc.	Big Idea 2 Big Idea 3 Big Idea 12 Village Way Trail	Interagency Workshop Traffic & Design Intersection Study
Big Idea 2 North Road as 'Main Street'	1	Islands Trust MoTI RDN Property owners	Big Idea 3 Big Idea 11 Big Idea 13 Big idea 14 Village Way Trail	DP guidelines and process review LUB amendments Interagency workshop Village Area Neighbourhood Plan or Strategy Village Place-making Service Area
Big Idea 3 Pedestrian Pathway System	1	Islands Trust MoTI RDN GaLTT, property owners	Big Idea 2 Big Idea 11 Big Idea 13 Village Way Trail	Interagency coordination on pathway Master Plan Village Area Neighbourhood Plan or Strategy DP guidelines Village Place-making Service Area

Design or Policy Idea	Priority (1-3)	Responsible Jurisdictions & Related Groups	Associations	Possible Next Steps
Big Idea 4 A Village Heart Timing should consider potential sale/development of Lochnivar triangle parcels.	1	RDN Islands Trust Village Vision or other new champion community group, Agi Hall Assoc.	Big Idea 6 Big Idea 7 Big Idea 5 Big Idea 9	Village Area Neighbourhood Plan or Strategy RDN studies
Big Idea 5 Folklife Village Pedestrian Centre	3	Islands Trust RDN Village Vision or other new champion community group. Property owner.	Big Idea 4	Amenity zoning provisions RDN studies for a "Heart"
Big Idea 6 The Market at the Heart	2	RDN Islands Trust Agi Hall Assoc., The Commons, Village Vision or other new champion community group	Big Idea 4 Big Idea 9 Agi Hall site planning Islands Trust office location planning	RDN studies for a "Heart" Agi Hall Assoc. strategic planning
Big Idea 7 & 8 Community Events Building and/or Recreation Centre	2	RDN Islands Trust	Big Idea 2 Big Idea 4	RDN studies Village Area Neighbourhood Plan or Strategy
Big Idea 9 Visitor's Centre and Island Hall	3	Islands Trust RDN Agi Hall Assoc., Chamber of Commerce	Big Idea 6 Big Idea 4	Agi. Hall Assoc. strategic planning Chamber of Commerce studies
Big Idea 10 Integrated Infrastructure Management Village Area Plan	1	Islands Trust RDN MoTI	Related to most other ideas	Local Trust Committee project
Big Idea 11 Pedestrian lighting	2	RDN MoTI	Big Idea 2 Big Idea 3	RDN study Village Place-making Service Area
Big Idea 12 Public Art Program	3	GAC RDN		GAC strategic planning
Big Idea 13 Public Realm Landscaping	2	RDN Islands Trust MoTI Gabriola Garden Club or new group	Big Idea 3 Big Idea 2 Big Idea 10	Village Place-making Service Area Improve DP guidelines

Design or Policy Idea	Priority (1-3)	Responsible Jurisdictions & Related Groups	Associations	Possible Next Steps
Big Idea 14 Pedestrian engaging village buildings	2	Islands Trust Property owners	Big Idea 3 Big Idea 11	DP guidelines and process review LUB bylaw review
Big Idea 15 Multi-Family Mixed Use	2	Islands Trust	Big Idea 14 Big Idea 16	Islands Trust Housing Options Phase II studies
Big Idea 16 Village Area Density	1	Islands Trust Gabriola Housing Society, People for a Healthy Community	Indirectly or directly affects most other ideas	Islands Trust Housing Options Phase II studies

Part 4 – Conclusions and Next Steps

The sixteen big ideas encompass the gist of our recommendations. Figure 16 lays those out in order of priority as based on community feedback. Figure 17 lays those out in numerical order with an indication of which agencies/organizations are affected the most. Appendix 1 below spells out some recommendations sorted by agency/organization.

In reality, much of the responsibility for picking up these ideas lies with the Islands Trust. It is imperative that the Local Trust Committee pick up these recommendations, discuss them and promote them. The current trustees are coming to the end of their term. If they can frame some of the ideas in this report in a way that becomes the subject of discussion during the upcoming election campaign, that would be a great service to the community. After the election, then it is incumbent on the next Local Trust Committee to make comprehensive village planning the priority topic for next term. Pushing such an agenda forward will require pushing inter-agency cooperation between the Islands Trust, the RDN and MoTI.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Village Vision Planning Committee
(in alphabetical order)

Dianne Cornish

Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley

Steven Earle

John Peirce

Jim Ramsay

Megan Walker

and past members Michelle Benjamin, Christine Bletcher, Julie Sperber and Laura-Jean Kelly

Appendix 1 – Recommendations by Agency & Community Group

Islands Trust

Recommended Strategic Directions and Policies

- 1) Acknowledge and respond to the community interest and efforts in the Village Vision process, and the village's importance to the Policy Statement goal of sustaining healthy communities, by taking a stronger advocacy and leadership role in elevating sustainable place-making and community design values when considering village area issues. Trustee candidates for the 2018 election should state their position on this issue as part of their campaign platform.
- 2) Consider undertaking a Village Area Neighborhood Plan process to produce a Plan that can be adopted as a Schedule to the OCP. Alternatively, undertake this process as a Village Plan Strategy, which would not need to be adopted in the OCP, but could be endorsed by the agencies as guidance for follow-up efforts (such as OCP amendments). A Village Area Neighborhood Plan or Strategy could address such topics as:
 - a) Improved inter-agency collaboration
 - b) Further exploration of the Village Vision "Big Ideas", including confirmation of levels of community support, prioritization, and identification of implementation or enabling strategies.
 - c) Explore potential proactive or enabling of rezoning of key village area properties, in light of the upcoming (June 2017) results of the Chamber of Commerce's current Commercial Demand Forecast study, and any Village Area Plan recommendations for strengthening the village's community design and land use structure.
 - d) Follow-up or parallel efforts of the Housing Options Review Project, if the upcoming Housing Needs Assessment study determines that additional housing options are needed and are best targeted in the village core.
 - e) Examine if expansion of the amenity zoning provisions of the OCP would benefit the community and be practical to implement.
 - f) Consider options for improving the Form and Character Development Permit processes (see below).
 - g) Consider coordinating an inter-agency planning effort for the village area portion of North Road, to develop a coordinated approach to enhancing the streetscape as the village "main street". This could include:
 - i. The North/South Road intersection
 - ii. Developing a collaborative solution for the Village Way trail, as part of a rural complete street.
 - iii. A master plan for the Village Way extension connecting the village and the ferry.
 - iv. Consider reducing the existing 6m front setback requirement of the village's commercial zones, to create a more pedestrian-oriented streetscape. This could also include negotiation with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to reduce their required 4.5m setback within the village area.
 - v. And potentially, a village-wide pedestrian pathway system master plan

- 3) As an alternative to a Neighborhood Plan/Strategy, or as a phased approach, consider individual projects addressing the points listed under the Village Area Plan above.
- 4) Consider review and improvements to the Form and Character Development Permit processes, to result in more attractive, safe, environmentally responsible, accessible and enduring designs that contribute to sustainable village place-making.
 - a) Consider what improvements to the processes could be done on an Islands Trust wide basis, such as building staff/organizational technical skills in form and character design review and negotiation.
 - b) Consider clarifying, with more specific metrics, what is meant by rural character statements, such as “scale and character... is in keeping with the rural character of the island,” reducing subjectivity in decision making, improving design, and providing developers with clearer standards.
 - c) Consider expanding form and character development permit guidelines to better clarify required qualified professional expertise and site drawing submittal requirements. Improve landscape, building, site layout, and grading and drainage design metrics and standards. Consider specifics on details such as massing and modulation, fenestration, density of planting, landscaping standards and care, pedestrian connectivity and contextual responsiveness, solar orientation, activation of the street and public spaces, corner lot circumstances, universal accessibility standards and site grading, and weather protection for pedestrians. This exercise might benefit from professional community design consultant expertise.
 - d) Consider contracting with a community design consultant to create a supplementary “Pattern Book” of community design guidelines. This would lend an additional level of designer expertise to the Development Permit system. The Pattern Book could potentially be an Islands Trust wide tool.
 - e) Consider retaining a community design firm for as-needed development review services, to increase the level of expertise (and reduce the subjectivity) undertaking the review and thereby increasing the integrity of design.
 - f) Additionally, consider delegation of approval authority to a qualified Islands Trust planner, who would coordinate and apply the advice of the community design firm on retainer. This would reduce further reduce the political subjectivity of design approvals.
 - g) Improve regulatory oversight of site drainage design and site grading design for accessibility (to BC Building standards at a minimum), as this is currently not regulated by the RDN building permit process.
- 5) Consider undertaking an Age-Friendly Community Study, or review applicable precedent studies (such as Pender Island’s) for specific policies and projects to study.
- 6) Consider Senior’s Supportive Housing needs in the upcoming Needs Assessment, and if OCP policies can better facilitate such projects if there is a proven need and demand. Consider the full spectrum from smaller scaled homes, assisted living, extended care, and hospice care.
- 7) Review the Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw for policies that may be acting as barriers to the principles and vision statement proposed in the Village Vision Plan. These might include:
 - a) OCP Section B.3.3.1 (b) – regarding the presence of home occupations in the village area.
There may be certain parcels where home-based businesses could contribute to a more vibrant, activated village streetscape if encouraged to have a positive street presence.

- b) OCP Section B.5.3.1 – to consider parking options that can act as buffers to pedestrian pathways, in coordination with MOTI requirements.
- c) OCP Section B.5.4.3 – to more strongly discourage parking within the setback, to avoid a strip retail form of development.
- d) OCP Section B.5.4.1 – to consider expanding possibilities for shared parking between parcels.
- e) OCP Section 6.2.3 – to consider allowing well-designed, permanent structures for public markets.
- f) Review if the OCP's definition of affordable housing as "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" is appropriate. Given Gabriola's high population of retirees with relatively lower incomes, but significant assets such as mortgage free properties at retirement community market prices, this may be setting the income bar very low compared to land prices, making affordable housing projects financially infeasible to develop, and inaccessible to certain demographics in need.
- g) Review if the area scope identified in the OCP for potential rezoning applications for multi-dwelling affordable housing is in alignment with the Village Vision Plan's vision and principles. (see Appendix B, Figure 3 and 7).
- h) Reconsider OCP policies limiting density increases,
 - i. in light of the community feedback received in the Village Vision process (as well as the 2017 Sustainable Gabriola forum, and the LTC's Housing Options Review projects)
 - ii. In light of the LTC's Housing Options Review's upcoming Needs Assessment and further policy development.
 - iii. In light of potential upcoming revisions to Ministry of Health standards that would allow rainwater harvesting to be approved for multi-family and commercial potable use.
 - iv. Simplify the prescriptive policy language to a level appropriate for an OCP.
 - v. Consider having BC Housing do a policy review to consider if existing OCP policies are barriers to feasible affordable housing projects, and provide recommendations on how they might be revised to facilitate implemented projects, given the current government subsidy environment.
 - vi. Consider if increased amenity zoning provisions would benefit the community.
 - vii. Consider community input from the Village Vision process, academic research, and B.C. Non-Profit Housing Association's advice that affordable housing projects, especially in small communities, are best targeted to diverse demographics, including market rate units to subsidize affordable units.
 - viii. Explore expansion of Density Transfer and Density Bank policies. This could include:
 - (1) The possibility of transferring accessory residential dwelling potential;
 - (2) Mapping a boundary for a village development potential receiving area
 - (3) The ability for "donor" property owners to receive compensation or incentives for transferring development potential via rezoning or deposit into a Density Bank.
 - (4) Expanding the zones eligible for density transfer applications

Operational

- 1) Consider the future of the Islands Trust office location, in light of the Village Vision Plan's "Big Idea 9" – creating an "Island Hall" on the current Agricultural Hall site.
- 2) Consider placing a hold on receiving new development approval applications in the village area until the Village Vision recommendations have been reviewed, and next steps have been determined.

Advocacy

- 1) Consider working with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to amend the Letter of Agreement with the Islands Trust to include specific standards for village area streetscapes as rural "complete streets", that include safe, accessible routes for pedestrians as a priority, and consider enabling possible other improvements as discussed in the Village Vision Plan (such as landscaping, pedestrian lighting, site furnishings, or public art).
- 2) Consider further efforts to acquire the ability to implement a development cost charge bylaw for park purposes to generate funds for parkland acquisition and improvements.
- 3) Consider how to facilitate acquisition, rezoning, and/or improvements for a 'heart' – a focal, celebrational public space such as a village square or green (Big Idea 4)
- 4) Advocate for facilitating standards that would allow for safe rainwater harvesting for potable use in multi-family, commercial, and institutional settings.

Regional District of Nanaimo

Recommended Strategic Directions and Policies

1. Acknowledge and respond to the community interest and efforts in the Village Vision process, by taking a stronger advocacy and leadership role in elevating sustainable place-making and community design values, when considering village area issues that are within the existing or potential purview of the Regional District.
2. Consider a leadership or partnership role in purchasing, facilitating financing or insurance, and/or developing key properties in the village area, so they are re/developed in the community's best interest, not just per market forces.
3. Ensure existing and future improvement plans, such as the Village Way and Huxley Park improvements, consider how to respond to the vision statement, principles, and implementation ideas of the Village Vision Plan.
4. Consider the RDN's role in supporting, partnering, facilitating, or undertaking additional community consultation, feasibility studies, funding, implementation, or management of the Village Vision Plan's Big Ideas, including:
 - a) North and South Rd. intersection improvements (Big Idea 1)
 - b) North Rd. as "main street" (Big Idea 2)
 - c) Village pedestrian pathway system (Big Idea 3)
 - d) A village heart (Big Idea 4)
 - e) Folklife Village pedestrian centre (Big Idea 5)
 - f) The Saturday Market at the heart (Big Idea 6)
 - g) Community Events Building / Recreation Centre (Big Idea 7 and 8)
 - h) Integrated Infrastructure Management Village Area Plan (Big Idea 10)

- i) Pedestrian lighting (Big Idea 11)
- j) Public Art Program (Big Idea 12)
- 5. Consider establishment of a Village Service Area, which could flexibly address various desired community improvements in the village.
- 6. Consider undertaking an inter-agency (Islands Trust, RDN, and MOTI) Charrette and Master Plan to develop a coordinated approach to enhancing village streetscapes and pedestrian-friendliness. Topics could include:
 - a) North Road as the village “Main Street” (including a collaboratively developed solution for the Village Way trail as part of a rural complete street).
 - b) Improvements to the North/South Road intersection,
 - c) A village-wide pedestrian pathway system master plan
 - d) A master plan for the Village Way extension to the ferry, based on a site survey.
 - e) Improvements to the Letter of Agreement between the Islands Trust and MoTI, to address the complete street needs of village area streetscapes.
- 7. Consider negotiating for a right of first refusal, to facilitate public or community group ownership, for key village area properties.
- 8. Consider developing a Parks, Trails, and/or Recreation Services Master Plan for Gabriola, in collaboration with the Islands Trust and key stakeholders such as GaLTT and the Gabriola Recreation Society, to set goals, objectives, priorities, and strategic initiatives, including for desired spaces such as a village ‘heart’ (Big Idea 4).

Operational

- 1. Discuss with the Islands Trust on how best to regulate site grading/accessibility design for commercial, institutional, and multi-family developments, seemingly a current gap between the Development Permit and Building Permit processes.
- 2. Consider creating a Partnerships Policy to clarify what types of partnerships are beneficial and approvable, as well as the evaluation, approval, and monitoring process.

Advocacy

- 1. Continue to advocate for facilitating standards that would allow for safe rainwater harvesting for potable use in multi-family, commercial, and institutional settings.

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

- 1. Develop a plan of response to the community’s number one Village Vision priority of increasing pedestrian friendliness and safety in the village and down to the ferry. Recommendations:
 - a) Develop street standards that reflect the pedestrian safety and place-making needs of rural villages. Work with the Islands Trust to incorporate this into the Letter of Agreement between MoTI and the Islands Trust.
 - b) Develop standards, processes, and shared funding programs that allow for rural community Regional Districts to more efficiently and successfully collaborate with MoTI on rural village complete street improvements.

- c) Work with other agencies and stakeholders on a Master Plan for pedestrian/ place-making/ complete street improvements in the village and down to the ferry, so repairs and other investments are optimized.
- d) Consider next steps for Big Ideas 1, 2, and 3.

Community Groups

Village Vision Planning Committee

1. Investigate and support the formation of an appropriate organization to facilitate further investigation and implementation of the Village Vision Plan's ideas, advance village planning, promote the village, provide review comments to the LTC on village area development proposals, and coordinate future collective action. This group should include village area stakeholders such as business and property owners, residents, and community group leaders.

Gabriola Chamber of Commerce

1. The most urgent priority for Gabriola businesses is the lack of available housing for younger people who staff the shops and restaurants. The Chamber must continue to drive this message forward to the elected officials, particularly the Islands Trust.
2. The Community would do well to have a larger and more visible Visitor's Centre in a place of prominence in the village. The most likely locations would be on the site of the current Agi Hall or in the new "Village Heart" development. The Chamber cannot drive these location developments, but they need to be ready to become an active participant in the discussions when they begin.
3. The recently completed Commercial Demand Forecast study shows that Gabriola's retail space available is in relatively good balance with models of expected demand for our population. The Chamber needs to make sure that these data are available for anyone considering new development proposals so that the supply of retail space can be tuned to the perceived demand.
4. The RDN is working with the Chamber to develop a new Economic Development Advisory Group to encourage and nurture a robust economy on Gabriola. This work will be contracted through the Chamber, but the effort will encompass the entire business community, not just those who are members of the Chamber. This new group will play a critical role in facilitating discussion on economic priorities between the RDN and other agencies., particularly the Islands Trust.

Gabriola Land and Trails Trust

1. Consider expanding the GaLTT mandate to include advocacy, licensing, planning or other actions on pedestrian improvements in the village area, such as traffic calming, pathways, or crosswalks.
2. Continue to push for neighbourhood connectivity in the island but most particularly in the village area.

Gabriola Arts Council

1. Consider the gateway and other public art concepts raised by the Village Vision process and how GAC could be further involved in facilitating village place-making.
2. Consider continued advocacy and exploration of potential partnerships that would facilitate place-making in the village.

3. Consider continued advocacy for a public celebrational space such as the village 'heart', that could better accommodate and showcase the Theatre Festival and other GAC organized events.

Agricultural Hall Association

1. Consider continual exploration and potentially advocacy for the creation of a village 'heart' (Big Ideas 4 and 6) if it could better accommodate the Saturday Market and advance the organization's mission.
2. Continue to consider ways pedestrian accessibility and traffic safety can be improved for the existing Saturday Market site.
3. Continue to consider ways the current site can be enhanced as a gateway to Gabriola's village area, and be an attractive, activated space throughout the week and year.
4. Continue to explore potential partnerships and grants as ways to advance the organization's mission.
5. Explore the creation of a covered pavilion to extend the market season (consider grants, or sale of the current site for funding sources).

Village Area Property and Business Owners

Make reasonable efforts to comply with the Village Vision recommendations when planning further developments in the village area. Some examples of this might include:

1. Provide input on the proposal to give North Road a "main street" feel (Big Idea 2) in terms of how that might affect business operations.
2. Make physical connections to parts of the proposed pedestrian pathway system as they are constructed (Big Idea 3).
3. Take steps towards combining densities to create mixed-use (residential/commercial) developments in the village area (Big Idea 15)

Gabriola Housing Society

The lack of available housing at reasonable cost is driving young families off the island. The Housing Society needs to continue its pressure on the Islands Trust planners and Local Trust Committee for real solutions to this issue. This is one group that can keep the housing issue front and centre during the discussions in the next election.

Gabriola Foundation / Community Fund

This group is just getting started under the auspices of the Nanaimo Foundation. One area that it could explore is whether there is a role to play in funding a body to hold land (e.g., parcels in the Lochinvar triangle) for the benefit of future community development.

Gabriola co-op organization

An organization focussed on promoting co-operatives is currently in formation on Gabriola. It is hoped that this group will take the relevant Village Vision recommendations into consideration when discussing co-operative ventures that will have a footprint in the village.

Gabriola Ferry Advisory Committee

The Ferry Advisory Committee is recommending relocation of the ferry vehicle line-up from its current location on Taylor Bay Road to North Road and South Road. Any such plans should be consistent with

Village Vision recommendations, including the gateway proposal (Big Idea 1), the pedestrian pathway system (Big Idea 3), the Visitor Centre at the current AGI site (Big Idea 9).

Appendices

(These are separate documents which can be found on the Village Vision website)

Appendix A – Community Discussion Summary

Appendix B – Site Analysis Summary

Appendix C – Image Preference Survey Summary Report (Full Results version also available on the project website with all community comments)

Appendix D – Design Visioning Workshop Summary Report

Appendix E – Design Concepts Questionnaire Summary Report (Full Results version also available on the project website with all community comments)

Appendix F – Stakeholder Meetings Summary