



Hornby Island Local Trust Committee

Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: February 7, 2025
Location: Electronic Meeting

Members Present: Timothy Peterson, Chair
 Alex Allen, Local Trustee
 Grant Scott, Local Trustee

Staff Present: Sonja Zupanec, Planner
 Narissa Chadwick, Planner
 William Shulba, Senior Freshwater Specialist
 Landen Matechuk, GIS Consultant and Researcher
 Lisa Millard, Meeting Administrator
 Carly Bilney, Recorder

Others Present: There was 1 member of the public in attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Peterson acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The following addition to the agenda was presented for consideration:

- Add 4.2 Discussion of Next Steps

By general consent the agenda was adopted as amended.

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

4.1 Suitable Land Analysis Review Presentation

The Senior Freshwater Specialist presented the Suitable Land Analysis – the first presentation of the tool made to a Local Trust Committee. Landen Matechuk introduced himself as the GIS Consultant and Researcher contributing to the work.

The Senior Freshwater Specialist made the following comments:

- The Suitable Land Analysis is a preserve and protect tool that aims to:
 - Identify suitable lands as a tool in the Islands Trust Housing Toolkit;

ADOPTED

- Balance the preserve and protect mandate of the Islands Trust;
- Consider unique amenities and the environment;
- Be used with other agencies as a cooperative tool;
- Prioritize areas across the Islands Trust for sustainable development while emphasizing conservation and a resilient community;
- Identify areas for additional residential density, support land use decision-making, and integrate ecological, social and economic themes; and
- Integrate several themes – ecological sensitivity, freshwater sustainability, transportation and infrastructure – to inform land use decisions and address opportunities for suitable development.
- The Suitable Land Analysis uses third-party information as well as primary data created by the Islands Trust
- There is a lot more work we can do around this by collaborating with First Nations and local interest groups

The following comments were made about the Suitable Land Analysis methodology:

- The analysis involved collating and processing datasets (e.g. data on saltwater intrusion from the Province) and using existing maps and spatial information (no data was generated specifically for the project)
- The tool looks at two main themes of freshwater and environment, and how they align with sustainable infrastructure to find areas suitable for potential increased density
- The analysis uses ArcGIS Pro's Suitability Modeler Tool to weigh values using a multiple-criteria decision analysis
- Layers used in the mapping were chosen as the most applicable to the five islands currently engaged in projects that seek increased housing opportunities
- The layers include: Marine Shore Adjacency, Sensitive Ecosystems, At Risk Ecological Communities, Dominant Age of Forests, Groundwater Recharge, Groundwater Well Density, Watershed Resiliency, Saltwater Intrusion Risk, Road Access, and Steep Slopes and Geohazards
- Each layer has been weighted equally, but the weighting of each value can be changed
- Local Trust Committees can work with planning staff and communities to adjudicate the weighting and determine whether these are appropriate layers for the suitability analysis
- The tool was created primarily to focus on areas of high suitability for increased density rather than low suitability; information based on lived experience is needed to better understand areas of vulnerability

A question was raised about the expansion of vulnerable aquifer stations and how people feel there is a lack of related data that speaks to situations where residents are running out of water. The Senior Freshwater Specialist commented that the information in this meeting can likely be used in that discussion. He referred to a case study on Gabriola, *Freshwater Footprint*, that aims to blend the technical aspects of existing data with social sciences (e.g. survey,

community engagement, etc.), and added that while the Suitable Land Analysis provides scientific, technical data, it is not informed by qualitative, on-the-ground information.

A map was shared to show attendees the various colour-coded layers encompassed by the Suitable Land Analysis, and where areas of high, low and moderate suitability exist on the island. The following comments were made:

- The Agricultural Land Reserve is a big hindrance to a lot of the suitability;
- A hazard of the mapping is that you may have a property that shows very high suitability adjacent to a property that has low suitability;
- The shoreline is mostly unsuitable for development;
- When development happens in the Islands Trust area there is going to be an impact to groundwater resources in some way;
- The map shows registered wells that have active status; there is a limitation to the data in that there may be wells that are registered and have active status but are not active; and,
- Since well registry became regulated under the Water Sustainability Act, the Province continues to refine the data.

The GIS Consultant spoke to a mapping layer called Watershed Resiliency and made the following comments:

- The Capital Regional District is acquiring a new watershed and possibly using it to contribute to the freshwater supply; they wanted to quantify the resilience of their system (the ecosystem's ability to withstand, recover and respond to natural and human-caused disturbances);
- This has been included in the mapping through various characteristics (e.g. amount and diversity of species in an area, structural diversity of an area, and the variability of one area and its characteristics compared to its neighbours); and,
- This creates a mapping layer that indicates areas of high resiliency, which have a low suitability for development.

Following the presentation, discussion ensued and the following comments were made:

- There is not a layer that shows current zoning of land, but it will be added;
- The planning role of the Suitable Land Analysis in policy integration is to support land-use planning and evidence-based decision-making;
- By enhancing access to data and increasing transparency, the data presented can inform decision-making and result in greater community engagement;
- There is a strong desire throughout the Trust area for science-backed decisions about land use;
- Challenges with the tool include: data availability and accuracy and complex interactions among interdependent ecosystems;
- The tool is a decision-making aid; communities still need to plan;

- A lot of data has been processed and can now be readily used; and,
- The tool presents increased opportunity for collaboration with First Nations.

4.2 Discussion of Next Steps

Planners Chadwick and Zupanec outlined next steps and made the following comments:

- Various islands are undergoing Official Community Plan and housing reviews and, in all of the discussions, a key question is how to create affordable housing that is attainable to people who are lower or middle income?
- Options are limited, from a land-use perspective, to support flexibility within regulations that allow for additional smaller units
- The data gives a sense of whether there are better places on each island for more people to be living
- This data could inform how the Local Trust Committee interprets the recommendations of staff and the Advisory Planning Commission around permitting additional dwelling units on small lots across every residential zone on Hornby Island
- K'ómoks First Nation specifically asked to review this data prior to completing a referral response back to the Local Trust Committee; they would like to see the maps before setting a date to meet with staff
- Recommendations from the Vancouver Island Healthy Authority are quite specific and the Local Trust Committee needs to take them into account in its decision-making
- Today's presentation was to ensure that Trustees have access to the information before the March Local Trust Committee meeting at which staff will provide a report with recommendations regarding next steps
- Trustees will consider additional referral responses and recommendations from the Advisory Planning Commission at the March meeting
- The hope is to make the Suitable Land Analysis a tool that can be accessed by community members going forward, so they can look at a certain parcel or area and view the weighting given to it by the Local Trust Committee
- It would be great to have the information presented today using ArcGIS Pro easily accessible online
- The Local Trust Committee and the community has the opportunity to change the suitability weightings to balance the values of the community, and next steps can include community engagement
- If a Local Trust Committee would like to change the weighting of values, the turnaround time to amend layers would be about 3-5 business days
- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation will be provided to Trustees; and, as requested, a paper copy of the presentation will be provided to Trustee Scott

5. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

Tim Peterson, Chair

Certified Correct:

Carly Bilney, Recorder