

REQUEST FOR DECISION

To: Regional Planning Committee **For the Meeting of:** November 3, 2021

From: David Marlor, Director, Local Planning Services **Date Prepared:** November 1, 2021

SUBJECT: Review of Trust Council Policy 5.9.1 Best Management Practices For Delivery of Local Planning Services To Local Trust Committees

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Regional Planning Committee endorse the draft policy “5.9.1 Best Management Practices For Delivery of Local Planning Services to Local Trust Committees” in principle, and forward to Trust Council for comment and feedback.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER COMMENTS: n/a

- 1 **PURPOSE:** To update the Islands Trust policy on delivery of planning services to local trust committees to include a recommended process and format for systematic updates to official community plans and land use bylaws, to provide a framework for allocating planning resources for local trust committees’ land use planning projects.
- 2 **BACKGROUND:** At its regular meeting on August 25, 2021 the Regional Planning Committee passed the following resolution:

RPC-2021-013

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Regional Planning Committee request that Staff draft amendments to Trust Council Policy “5.9.1 Best Management Practices for Delivery of Local Planning Services to Local Trust Committees” to support a strategic approach to official community plan and land use bylaw reviews that:

- *include a robust project definition phase*
- *include a recommended process (timeline and activities) for undertaking review of OCPs and LUBs in three categories*
 - *Major, Minor and Extraordinary;*
 - *define Major as a project that would take about 6-18 months and be undertaken by the Regional Planning Team, and follow a recommended process established in the Policy;*
 - *define Minor as a project that would take six months or less and would be undertaken by the local planning team;*
 - *define extraordinary as a project that requires more time and resources than “major”, and would require external consultants and additional funding considerations;*

- *include a recommended OCP and LUB format that all new OCPs and LUBs would use as a starting point, with local customization to deal with local issues permitted;*
- *include criteria for making recommendations as to which OCPs should receive priority;*
- *limit the number of reviews started to two per 12 month period and staggered to accommodate resource requirements;*
- *include guidelines for a community engagement and communication strategy that considers the IAP2 scale and best practices;*
- *allow for the “Lasqueti community-driven approach”;*
- *standardize the link between the OCP process and LUB process; and*
- *include identification of stakeholders and key partners.*

The draft “5.9.1 Best Management Practices for Delivery of Local Planning Services to Local Trust Committees” has these edits made. Two versions have been provided. One is a clean version and the second shows the marked up edits.

The attachments to this document are also draft and staff do need to do more work to clean them up before they can be considered final. The intent is for the policy to establish recommended processes for undertaking project reviews. These are categorised as minor, major and extraordinary. This will allow staff to better estimate costs and timelines for projects if the recommended process and format are adhered to. This provides certainty and allow for better sequencing and budgeting for projects and updates to official community plans and land use bylaws.

The intent of this policy is to, where possible, harmonize the language, format and processes for official community plans to reduce and improve planning resource efficiency, and reduce complexity for the users of the documents. The policy does allow for local considerations and minor adjustments to account for local preferences.

As this is a change to the way we currently undertake planning projects, Trust Council should have the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the policy before finalising it for consideration of adoption. Therefore, this draft should be endorsed in principle by the Regional Planning Committee and forwarded to Trust Council in December for review and feedback.

3 IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION

Staff would forward to Trust Council for feedback in December, and report back to the Regional Planning committee in February 2022.

ORGANIZATIONAL:

Time on Trust Council agenda for feedback opportunity would be required.

FINANCIAL:

No financial implications.

POLICY:

No policy implications.

IMPLEMENTATION/COMMUNICATIONS:

Communication would be via Trust Council agenda.

FIRST NATIONS:

No First Nations implications.

OTHER:

No other implications.

4 RELEVANT POLICY(S):

5.9.1 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR DELIVERY OF LOCAL PLANNING SERVICES TO LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEES

5 ATTACHMENT(S):

Amended Policy 5.9.1 (item 6.1 in agenda package)

RESPONSE OPTIONS

Recommendation: That the Regional Planning Committee endorse the draft policy “5.9.1 Best Management Practices For Delivery of Local Planning Services to Local Trust Committees” in principle, and forward to Trust Council for comment and feedback.

Alternative: That the Regional Planning Committee amend the draft policy “5.9.1 Best Management Practices For Delivery of Local Planning Services to Local Trust Committees”, endorse it as amended in principle, and forward to Trust Council for comment and feedback.

Prepared By: David Marlor, Director, Local Planning Services

Reviewed By/Date:

Maxine Leichter
Salt Spring Island, BC

October 23, 2021

Islands Trust Regional Planning Committee
Islands Trust Council
Execadmin@islandstrust.bc.ca

Dear Trustees:

This letter forwards to you my review of communities cited in the report presented to the September 2021 Trust Council meeting entitled *"Islands Trust: Residential Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Review Model Bylaw Report March 2021"*. FAR zoning can be used to reduce costs to build affordable housing by allowing increased density on a particular lot while limiting the size of homes.

The appropriateness of the examples in the report is important because their presence in the report may give the impression that that other communities, similar to the Gulf islands are using FAR zoning to support affordable housing. In fact, the examples given do NOT support affordable housing and several (unlike the Gulf Islands) are in areas with community water and sewer that can support dense development.

Please see the attached one-page summary of findings.

Sincerely yours,



Maxine Leichter

Strategies in Residential Floor Area Ratio Report Inappropriate for Affordable Housing in a Rural Community

Prepared by Maxine Leichter October 2021

A report was presented at the Sept 21-23, 2021 Trust Council meeting entitled: “Islands Trust: Residential Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Review Model Bylaw Report March 2021”. By Fraser Simpson Consulting. The report was to explore use of FAR bylaws “to use when developing policies and regulations pertinent to residential housing with a focus on affordability and environmental protection.”

In researching the examples, I found that none were applicable to Islands Trust needs. Indeed, several of the examples are in urban areas with community water and sewer that can support high density. None of the examples were for affordable housing for the general community. The information below came from conversations with owners, residents or city planners.

Three case studies and other examples listed in the report are described below:

Duncan – This is an example of allowing increased density in exchange for affordable housing. The municipality of Duncan is a developed urban area with city water and sewer.

Yarrow Eco Village, City of Chilliwack (Groundswell Co-housing). A resident stated that this development has city water but not city sewer. They have a sewage treatment system that cost “hundreds of thousands” of dollars to install and they are having difficulty finding a place to dispose of sludge cleaned out every two years. This is a market rate housing development, not affordable housing.

Third Street Cottages, Whidbey Island - Linda A. Pruitt (owner/developer) confirmed in an email that all of the cottage communities are on public water and sewer

Rural Comox - Since there is no agency called “rural Comox”, I contacted the Comox Valley Regional District. A planner stated in an email that they do not utilize floor area ratio calculations in their zoning bylaw. He stated, “All residential zones and rural zones only allow for a maximum of two dwellings.” The encourage affordable housing by allowing suites and cottages in residential zones.

Eco Village in Cowichan Valley Regional District – This development was authorized about 20 years ago through a zoning designation specifically for the one site. The zone allows only one dwelling per ha with a total of 25 bedrooms. This is possibly a 4 ha. site. The zoning was to allow no more density than would have been available through subdivision under the previous zoning but allow more living quarters, presumably with shared kitchen facilities. The “village” includes a farm, teaching programs, residents and occasional events. The facility is not served by community water or sewer. The village is owned by a co-op.

Peachland – The District of Peachland utilizes FAR in their zoning bylaw but not for the purpose of incenting affordable housing.