

# Reimagining Growth on Gabriola



Conventional RURAL HOUSING  
- (CURRENTLY ALLOWED IN ZONING)



RURAL SUBDIVISION  
(CURRENTLY ALLOWED IN ZONING)



RURAL CLUSTER HOUSING  
(COULD BE ALLOWED IN ZONING)

# Reimagining Growth?

*Reimagining growth means using data and land-use planning tools to reflect community values and address housing need.*



# Where Are We?



We  
Are  
Here

Reimagining Growth



# Why Are We Here?

## Purpose of today:

*Explore how community values, data, and local knowledge can guide decisions about how to address housing need on Gabriola Island.*



# Reimagining Growth?

## *Presentation:*

- *Background (how is growth accommodated now)*
- *Values*
- *Data available (nice maps)*
- *Land use planning tools and options*
- *Process for discussion*



# How Is Growth Accommodated Now

**Subdivision** - 16 residential lots have subdivision potential = 45 new lots/90 new dwellings

**Challenge** = Does not guarantee affordable options. Most impactful type of residential development.

**Rezoning for Special Needs, Seniors and Affordable Housing**

**Challenge** = Limited options for rezoning for housing that is needed but does not fall into these categories.

**Secondary Dwelling on parcels 2.0 Ha or larger (attached or detached)**

**Challenge** = Limited opportunity on smaller lots closer to amenities, limited opportunity for land sharing.



# How Is Growth Accommodated Now

## Illegal housing is increasing



- There is currently a moratorium on bylaw enforcement on housing, but it won't last forever.
- Legal housing is safer, healthier, and more secure for residents.
- Continuing to allow non-compliant housing can lead to:
  - Unsafe or unhealthy living conditions
  - Environmental harm, including groundwater impacts
  - Negative effects on community character

# VALUES - GAB 2050

**Environment:** Preservation, protection and restoration of the natural environment, in a changing climate.

**Housing:** There is a need for affordable and attainable housing on-island.

**Healthy Vibrant and Connected Community:** Gabriola residents want to move freely with ease using all forms of transportation.

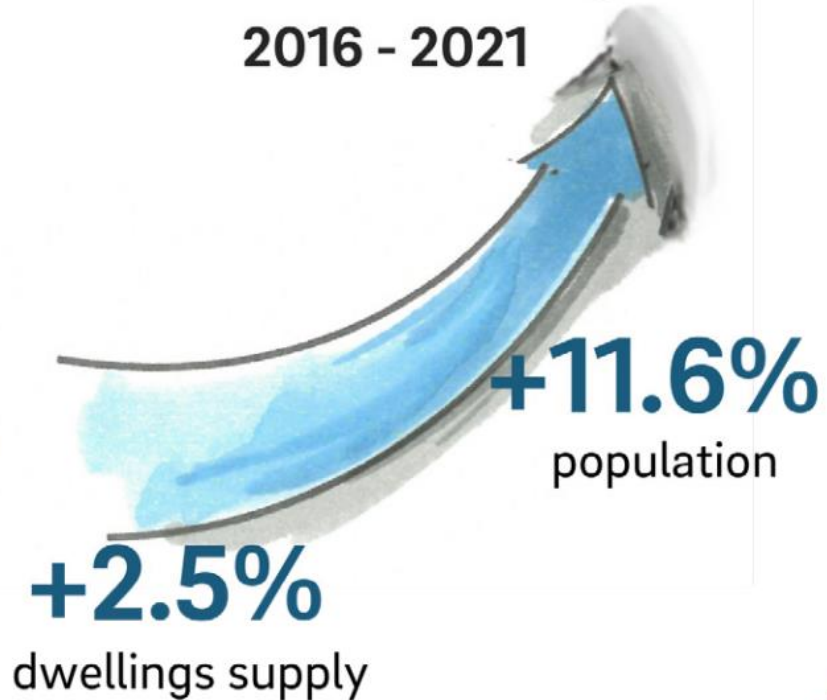
**Reconciliation:** Many places on Gabriola hold importance for First Nations and should be protected. First Nations interests should be supported.



# DATA -Housing Need

## Growth Changes

2016 - 2021



## Housing Needs Projections:

5 Years = ~130-200+ units (TBD)

25 Years = ~725 – 1000+ unit (TBD)

Projections dependent on methodology used.



# DATA- Build Out Potential

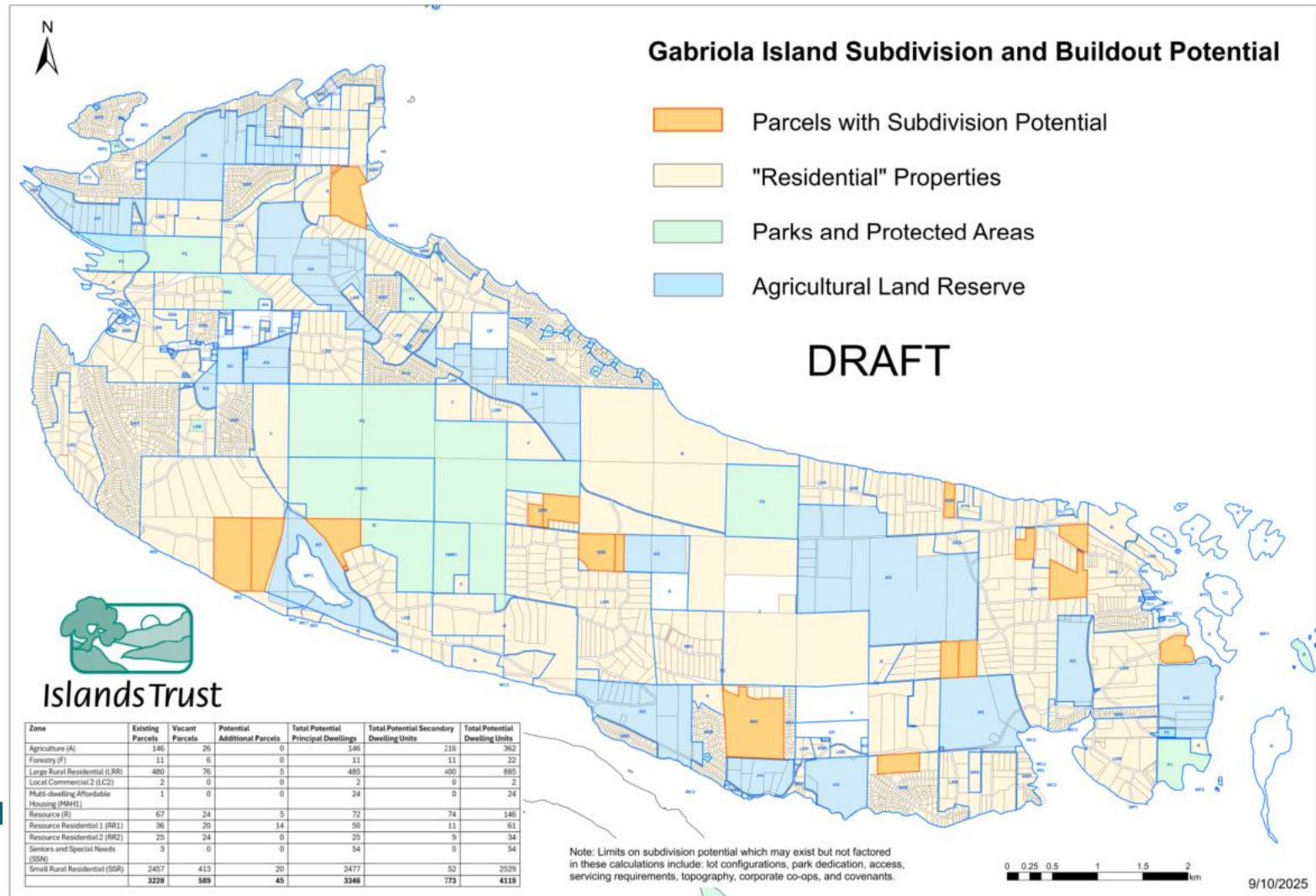
Current OCP assumes that existence of vacant parcels and subdivision/build out potential will accommodate growth needs.

Total Principle = 3300+

Total Secondary = ~750+

Total = ~4000+

Existing Dwellings = 3,062



# Build Out Projects Do Not Address Need

**Land is not truly available** – Many lots are held for investment or seasonal use.

**Land is not affordable** – Market price of lot is out of range for many.

**The cost to build is high** – Construction costs limit who can build

**Assumptions are outdated** – Traditional approaches to land ownership (single family ownership).

**OCP limits more affordable options** – Limited opportunities for land sharing and rental.



# DATA+ VALUES –Suitable Land

**Use available data to determine where housing has the lowest impact:**

## **Suitable Land Analysis:**

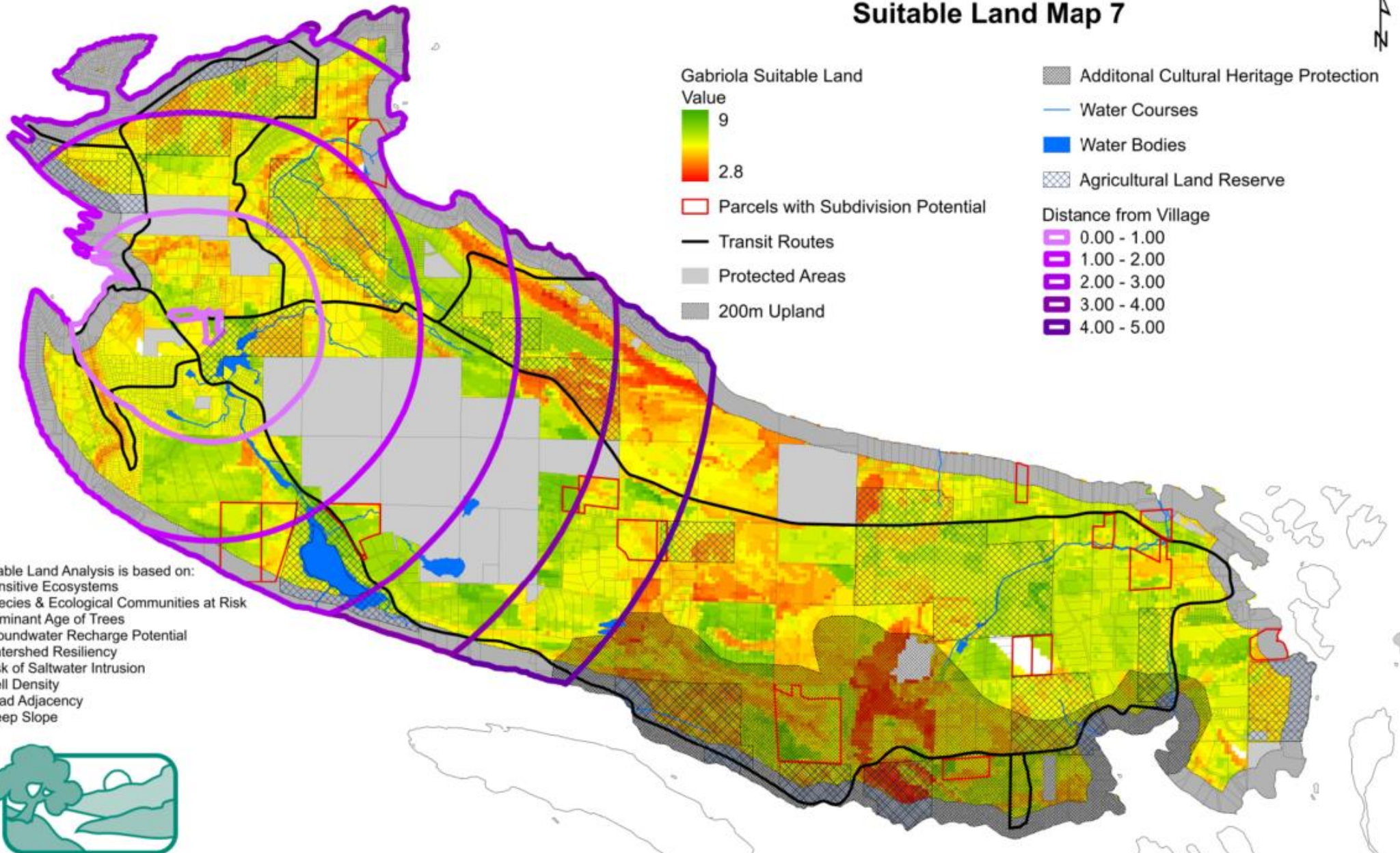
- Ecosystem resiliency
- At risk ecosystems and species
- Dominant age of trees
- Groundwater Vulnerability
- Groundwater Recharge Potential
- Risk of Saltwater Intrusion
- Groundwater Well Density
- Proximity to Village

## **Other Data:**

- 200m buffer from the sea (addresses erosion, saltwater intrusion, cultural heritage protection)
- Distance from Village (connectivity)
- Distance from Gertie Bus Route
- Archeological data



# Suitable Land Map 7



Gabriola Suitable Land Value



Parcels with Subdivision Potential

Transit Routes

Protected Areas

200m Upland

Additional Cultural Heritage Protection

Water Courses

Water Bodies

Agricultural Land Reserve

Distance from Village

0.00 - 1.00

1.00 - 2.00

2.00 - 3.00

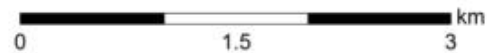
3.00 - 4.00

4.00 - 5.00

- Suitable Land Analysis is based on:
- Sensitive Ecosystems
  - Species & Ecological Communities at Risk
  - Dominant Age of Trees
  - Groundwater Recharge Potential
  - Watershed Resiliency
  - Risk of Saltwater Intrusion
  - Well Density
  - Road Adjacency
  - Steep Slope



Islands Trust



Date: 9/10/2025

# PLANNING TOOLS AND OPTIONS

## Rethink approach to:

- Subdivision
- Secondary Units
- Rezoning for Multiple Units

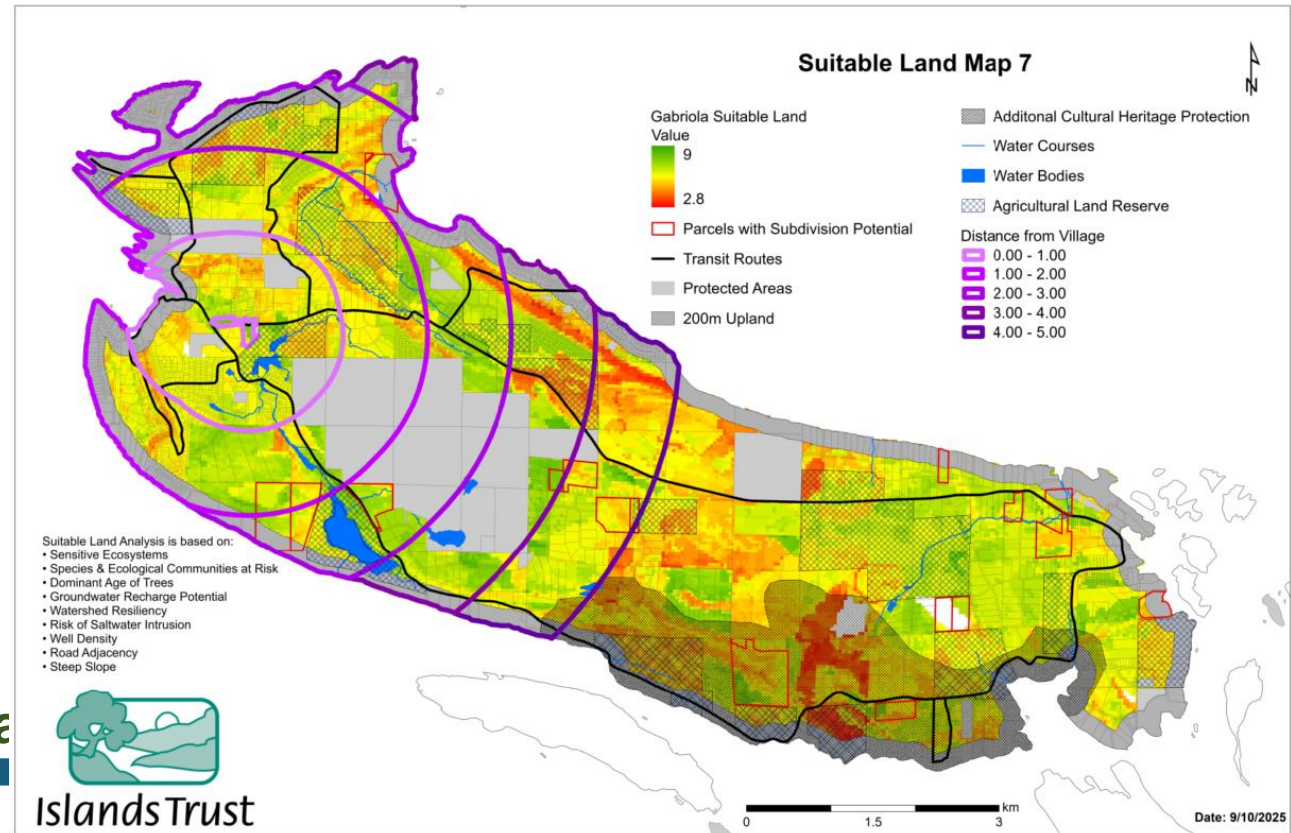


# TOOL/OPTIONS - Subdivision Approach

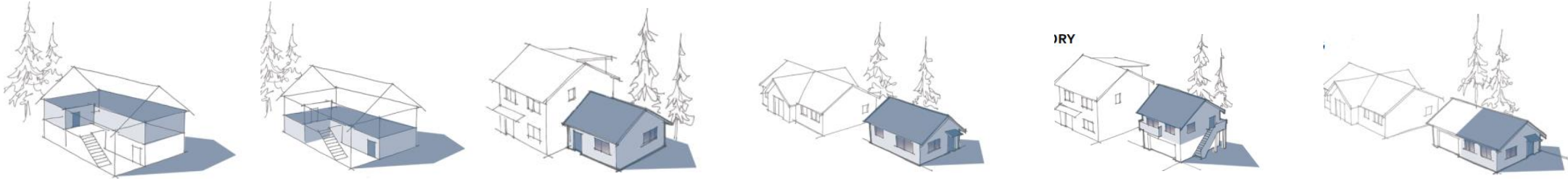
Option: Only allow subdivision in suitable areas or remove potential (except for affordable/attainable, special needs)

- Not within 200m from sea (high arch potential)
- Not in sensitive enviro or arch areas
- Not in in critical aquifers
- Not in areas where impact on water is highest
- Close to amenities, trails and transportation

There are currently **90** potential additional units of housing in unused subdivision potential



# TOOL - Secondary Dwelling Permission



## What is a secondary dwelling unit?

A secondary dwelling unit is a small, self-contained home with its own kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping area, located on the same property as the primary house or commercial use. These can include:

- **Secondary suites** – units inside the main house (e.g., basement or in-law suites)
- **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)**– stand-alone units like garden suites, tiny homes on wheels, cob houses, or modular homes
- **Accessory residential unit (ARU)** – either a detached building or within a portion of a building, on the same lot as a non-residential principal use

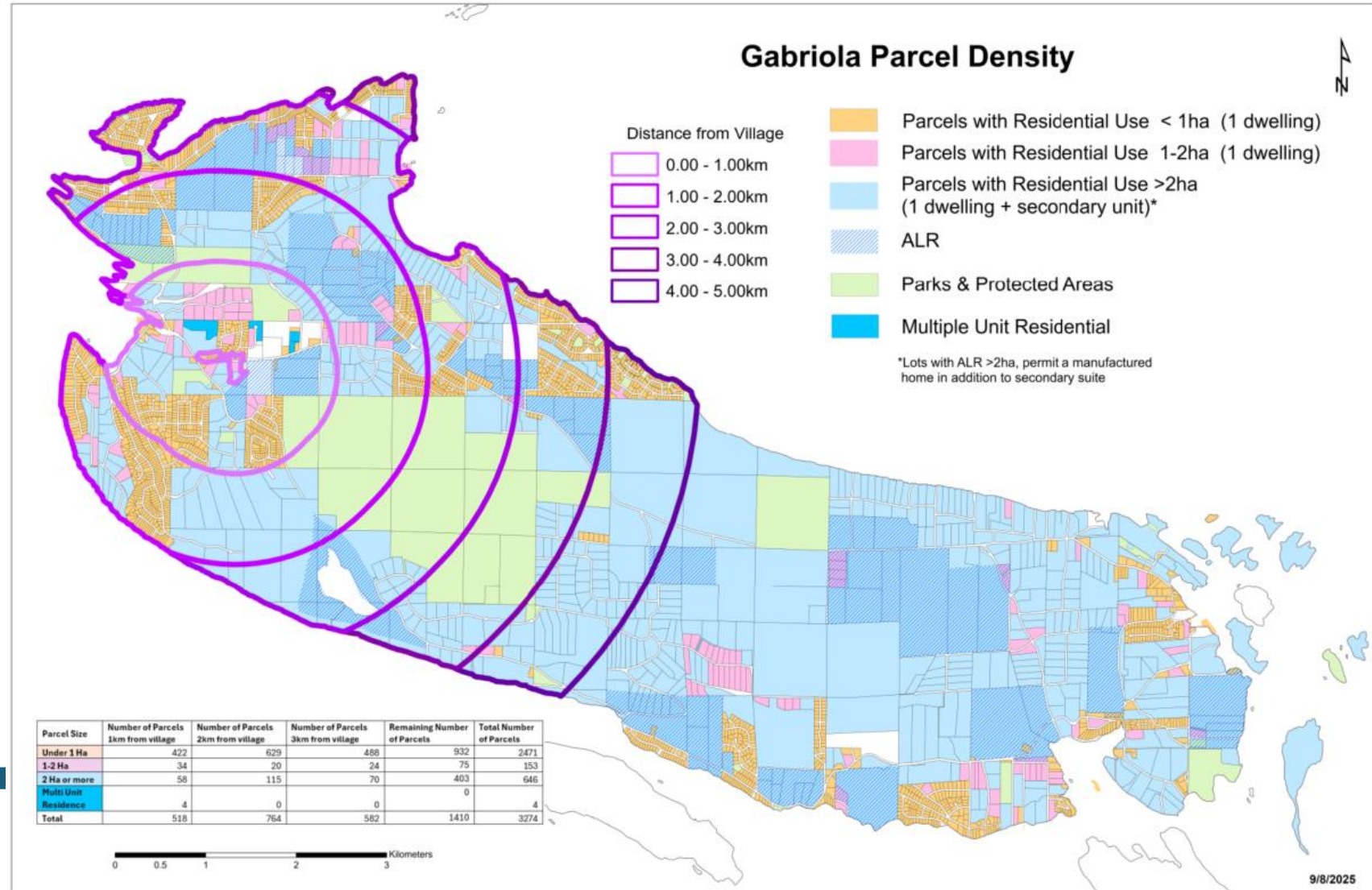


# OPTION -Expanding Secondary Dwellings

**Currently Permitted** = Secondary Dwelling on parcels 2.0 Ha or larger (attached or detached)

**Challenge** = limited opportunity on smaller lots closer to amenities, limited opportunity for land sharing

**Opportunity** = Increase opportunity for secondary dwellings in suitable areas



# TOOL - Rezoning

## Key Considerations for Rezoning for Additional Density

**Community Need-** Expand beyond seniors/special needs/affordable housing to include attainable housing for low–moderate incomes as well as alternative forms of housing (eg. mobile units).

**Land Suitability-** Assess potential impacts on Indigenous cultural sites, sensitive ecosystems, groundwater, sewage, and service access.

**Building Size & Siting-** Revisit policies to reflect community values.

**Water-** Require cisterns for all new builds to protect limited groundwater.



# OPTIONS –Rezoning Alternative

**Cluster Housing** – Small homes on one lot (no subdivision); efficient land & infrastructure use; may need housing agreements & floor area limits.

**Small Unit Cluster Housing** – Clustered tiny homes/manufactured/mobile units with shared facilities (e.g., laundry, common rooms).

**Flexible Housing** – Multiple dwellings allowed per lot, within a total floor area cap; no housing agreements required.

**Density Bonus for Conservation** – Extra units granted if land conservation criteria are met.



RURAL CLUSTER HOUSING  
(COULD BE ALLOWED IN ZONING) -



# Reimagining Growth?

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# Reimagining Growth?

Considering community values to address addressing housing needs includes considering :

## Lower Impact Development

- Redistribution of existing density
- Reducing development impact in more sensitive areas
- Increasing development potential in areas of less negative impact

## Values based decision making supported with data

- Consideration of type of additional density supported (subdivision focus on affordable/attainable)
- Suitable land/location (secondary dwellings/rezoning)

## On site environmental protection

- Cistern requirements, siting and size of dwellings



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# Warm Up Question

***What do you most value about living on Gabriola?***

***When you think about housing on Gabriola — whether your own experience or others' — what comes to mind?***



# Group Question – Round One

***What community values or priorities should guide us when we think about growth pressures, change, and housing need?***

***How should these values guide decisions about where and how to accommodate housing need?***



## Group Question – Round Two

***What opportunities do you see for supporting new approaches to housing (cluster housing, flexible housing, secondary units) in certain areas?***

***What concerns should the Local Trust Committee keep in mind?***

***Do the maps reflect your understanding of Gabriola? Are there areas where they miss something important, or where local knowledge suggests a different story?***

