

PART A - OVERALL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A.1 THE ISLANDS TRUST

In recognition of the unique amenities and environment of the Gulf Islands, the province passed the Islands Trust Act in 1974 which established the Islands Trust with a mandate, embodied in the “object” of the Islands Trust:

“The object of the trust is to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.”

The Islands Trust Area encompasses the Gulf Islands and water areas stretching from Denman Island in the north to the US border in the south, and from the foreshore of Vancouver Island to the Mainland. As part of the Islands Trust Area, planning for Salt Spring Island must consider and address the unique mandate of the Islands Trust. The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area is one of 12 local trust areas and one Island Municipality within the Islands Trust Area. Each Local Trust Committee has been provided with most of the land use planning authority of a regional district board.

A.2 THE SALT SPRING ISLAND OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

A.2.1 This Official Community Plan provides a community vision for Salt Spring Island and defines the land use objectives, policies and actions that could achieve this vision. It acts as a guide for future decisions of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee (“the Local Trust Committee”), community members, other levels of government and service providers.

A.2.2 The Plan explains the way in which the *Islands Trust Policy Statement* can be put into effect on Salt Spring Island.

Note: As a plan created under both the Islands Trust Act and Local Government Act this Plan must be and is guided by that Statement.

A.3 VISION

We live in a place of extraordinary beauty, great environmental significance, and rare biological diversity. We appreciate and accept our responsibility to be the stewards of our island home, to honour its past, care for its present, and protect its future. We know that it is more important to leave a legacy than to leave an impact.

We also respect our island’s human heritage – the First Nations peoples who lived in harmony with the land and sea, and whose traditional territory we inhabit, and the early Hawaiian, black and Japanese pioneers who landed on these shores with little more than their cultures and their determination and turned them into a way of life. And we acknowledge the old island families, with their diverse origins, whose generations have served our community and moulded past into present.

Today, we know that our island and its people face many challenges. Some of these are global, such as climate change and diminishing fossil fuel supplies, both of which pose particular problems for island communities. Others are more local, like our aging population and the loss of socioeconomic diversity. The availability of housing to meet a wide variety of needs, and the supply of safe, potable water are also issues that must be addressed. There are many others.

With our Official Community Plan, we lay out a vision focussed on a set of objectives and based on a commitment to honour the natural integrity of the island, while striving to meet the basic needs of its inhabitants. We commit ourselves to leave the next generation with an environment and with opportunities at least as secure as those that we ourselves have enjoyed.

We understand that social and economic development must be in harmony with our mandate. We accept that there are limits to growth, limits to resources, and limits to the ability of our environment to absorb continued development. We recognize human impacts and understand that healthy societies depend on healthy ecosystems, and we will work to minimize our impacts and restore the land. Our need to protect the land must also ensure its agricultural future, not only because agriculture is a traditional way of island life, but also because in a changing world it is imperative that we enhance the security of our supply of food.

We also look to secure the future of our community, to ensure that it remains rural and resident-centred, with economic opportunities to support a broad range of people. We appreciate the extraordinary artistic and creative talents among our residents. And we hope that the children who grow up here will not only find it a place to remember but will always be proud to call it home.

We are an active, engaged, vibrant community, increasingly confident that through careful planning and the self-reliance and ingenuity of our population, we can solve many of our own problems. In an age of climate change and carbon footprints, we must also learn to adapt and tread with small feet.

The Official Community Plan that follows begins with a wide range of community objectives. These are the overriding principles that give us guidance and direction. As a whole, this Plan offers a vision, charts a course, and aims high. It is as full of hope and aspiration as it is of limits and restraint. In it there is a path to follow that can lead us where we want to be.