

A Strategic Approach to Affordable Housing, Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation on Gabriola Island – A Community-Informed Process



March 26, 2021

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The Gabriola Housing Working Group respectfully acknowledges and recognizes the Coast Salish Nations whose territory we live and work on. In particular, we acknowledge and recognize Gabriola Island as the unceded territory of Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN). We respect the longstanding relationships that Coast Salish and Hul'qumi'num-speaking Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge that the Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854 (Douglas Treaties) was signed with the British Crown and colonial governments and asserts SFN treaty rights and title. We acknowledge and recognize that SFN rights and title is affirmed by Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Acknowledgements

This report reflects the work and support of many individuals and organizations; most of this work was accomplished by volunteers. The following individuals contributed to this process: Kenda Chang-Swanson, Dyan Duns Moor-Farley, Steve Earle, Tobi Elliott, Jennefer Laidley, Katharine Patterson, Angela Pounds, Janice Power, and John Woods. Professional support was provided by Sonja Zupanec (Island Trust Planner), Rob Hellenius (website design), Nola Johnson (graphic design), and Chris Mallison (website hosting).

The *Gabriola Sounder* was an important partner in ensuring that information about the project and surveys was regularly available to Gabriolans. And we thank the Islands Trust for providing funding to advertise the engagement process. A special thanks goes to the Gabriola Island Chamber of Commerce who matched Island Trust funding, which allowed us to engage the professional support necessary to launch the project website. Our thanks also to the Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative for producing the [Gabriola Health Report](#), which served as a foundation document for the substantial background data that was prepared for each survey. The Gabriola Land & Trails Trust (GaLTT) provided a backgrounder on the major conservation threats facing Gabriola and their conservation priorities. Sonja Zupanec of the Islands Trust provided critical support to the project, including providing the information contained in the key policy backgrounders.

Most importantly, we want to acknowledge the hundreds of Gabriolans who participated in this process. We have done our best to ensure their perspectives are reflected in this work.

Executive Summary

This report addresses the question: how do we ensure the availability of affordable housing *and* protect biodiversity and freshwater resources? The report presents community members' attitudes to affordable housing, biodiversity, and freshwater conservation on Gabriola and the actions that could be taken to address all three needs. Three surveys—*Housing Need, Affordability and Diversity of Supply; Biodiversity, Water Conservation and Housing; Managing Growth and Diversity of Housing Supply*—were conducted over a six-week period running from January 20 to March 2, 2021. Each survey gave participants opportunities to respond to multiple-choice questions and give narrative comments. There were 1087 respondents who made 2031 comments. Educational materials relevant to each survey were prepared and made accessible on the website.

Survey 1 respondents supported expanding categories of need, enhancing current multi-dwelling unit evaluation criteria, investigating expanding options for secondary accommodation including lots less than 2 ha, and flexible zoning in residential zones dependent on ensuring ecological and water conservation objectives could be addressed. In Survey 2, respondents gave very strong support for defining biodiversity, all groundwater protection measures and strong support for the implementation of the Douglas-fir protection measures in the CDF Toolkit. In Survey 3, more than half of the respondents supported regulations that would result in a *decrease* in the projected population if fully built out. The remaining respondents were almost evenly divided between maintaining the current regulations and allowing an increase in the population. Respondents were supportive of local government taking more directive action to ensure biodiversity and freshwater conservation objectives are met.

The 28 recommendations in this report are based on these findings. Because protecting the environment while also increasing the supply of affordable housing are interconnected challenges, we have grouped our recommendations under four headings:

- Managing Growth so that it is gradual and targeted
- Protecting Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation to balance human and environmental needs and ensure long-term sustainability
- Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing to ensure a timely supply of affordable housing that meets the needs of Gabriolans with minimal environmental impact, and
- Enhancing Governance and Oversight Capacity through appropriate resourcing and implementation planning, explicitly through the establishment of a staffed Housing Affordability and Managed Growth Planning Commission.

We extend our thanks to the hundreds of Gabriolans who contributed their ideas.

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Introduction

The findings of the *Gabriola Housing Matters* public engagement process, undertaken between January 13 and March 2, 2021, are the subject of this report to the Gabriola Housing Advisory Planning Commission. This report describes the creation of the Gabriola Housing Working Group and its relationship to the Housing Advisory Planning Commission, and the planning context in which the engagement process was conducted. It includes a description of the methodology employed and the results achieved. The information gathered through background research and the surveys of community members is summarized for each of the major topic areas including findings for each of the survey questions. Finally, an overview is provided of the research findings and the recommendations that evolved from them.

History of Gabriola Housing Matters

In 2019, the Gabriola Local Trust Committee (LTC) committed to a multi-year land use planning review project on Gabriola Island called the ‘Housing Options and Impacts Review Project’ (HOIRP). The goal of the project is “to develop new policies and regulations that will promote an increase in housing options on Gabriola Island, coupled with a high level of protection of the island’s groundwater supply, remaining biodiversity and sensitive ecosystems” (HOIRP Engagement Strategy, p.1). To oversee this process the LTC appointed a Housing Advisory Planning Commission (HAPC) to create and implement engagement activities in the community, under the direction of the LTC and coordinated by Islands Trust staff.

The reason for the engagement is “to inform the LTC’s decisions to amend the Gabriola Official Community Plan and/or Land Use Bylaw. In order to make an informed decision, the LTC is committed to consulting with the community to build relationships in the community and involving the stakeholders in order to build the capacity of our community to understand the decision(s)” (HOIRP Engagement Strategy, p. 6).

During a phase called “Laying the Groundwork” that began in summer 2019, the HAPC developed an engagement strategy with a schedule of activities for the community – roundtable discussions, forums, interviews and other face-to-face research methods – under the direction of the LTC and coordinated by Islands Trust staff. The public launch of the project occurred November 4, 2019 at the Haven, with an event called “Stories from Home: Exploring Key Themes to Address Gabriola’s Housing Needs While Protecting the Environment”. Snuneymuxw Knowledge Keeper David Bodaly shared stories of the land, and other community members shared their perspectives on housing challenges, care for the ecosystem, ways that other Gulf Island communities and Nanaimo are addressing housing needs, and climate change.

The HAPC's engagement strategy was endorsed by the LTC in February 2020 with the primary research question being framed:

How might we amend Gabriola's OCP policies and/or LUB regulations to fulfil our obligations to our community and the unique natural ecology in which we all live, by allowing a range of affordable, accessible housing options in accordance with water and climate change imperatives set by Islands Trust?

The second phase of the HOIRP, "Exploring our Options", was to begin in Spring 2020 and was intended "to support a series of comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement opportunities over the course of a year, evaluating specific options to address housing affordability, protection of the natural environment, cultural heritage, and an increase in housing diversity" (HOIRP Engagement Strategy, p.3). However, COVID-gathering restrictions and a severe reduction in Islands Trust staffing and resources to guide the project resulted in an inability to implement the approved engagement plan.

In August 2020, the HAPC was finally able to convene in order to figure out next steps for accomplishing the work, in the likelihood of another wave of COVID and public gathering restrictions. Given these constraints, HAPC members proposed collaborating with other community members as an ad hoc group. This approach meant the group could be more nimble and able to adapt to rapidly changing social conditions in order to execute the engagement work and might expand the base for funding and support to include other key Gabriola organizations. (This idea came from the Lasqueti Community Association model: <https://lasqueti.ca/lca>).

In early November, a small group primarily made up of HAPC members formed the Gabriola Housing Working Group (GHWG) and began to assess what could be done, under current conditions, to fulfill the requirements of the highly engaged consultation process and robust research work that needed to be done. The team chose to build on the highly successful, community dialogue model for respectful, inclusive engagement set up by *Gabriola Talks*, which aimed to "reflect the many different views and ideas that exist in this island community, and to strengthen the capacity of islanders to work together to address difficult issues by building understanding of one another's perspectives and wisdom" (*Gabriola Talks Charter*). Other, non-HAPC members of the community were brought on board to contribute their particular expertise and skills. The GHWG's public engagement process, entitled *Gabriola Housing Matters*, launched on January 13, 2021.

The Approach

The *Gabriola Housing Matters* public engagement project involved the creation of the following tools:

- A research methodology, including survey design and analysis and outreach activities
- A website for public education and survey distribution
- Preparation of supporting background materials on topics relating to housing, biodiversity, freshwater conservation, and growth management
- Large, attractive ads printed in the local newspaper with key background information for each survey, and
- A final report.

The project was managed through a series of interconnected teams with specific responsibilities and links to external community organizations as described below:

Project Coordination and Evaluation

- *Tobi Elliott*: Project coordinator and website management; HAPC member; liaison with renters and community at large
- *Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley*: HAPC member; liaison to Gabriola Health and Wellness Collaborative
- *Steve Earle*: HAPC member, liaison to Sustainable Gabriola, and Transportation Network

Outreach Strategy Team

- *Kenda Chang-Swanson*: Team Lead: HAPC member; liaison to PHC and vulnerable populations
- *Angela Pounds*: HAPC member; liaison to Rural & Remote Division of Family Practice, and vulnerable populations
- *Janice Power*: HAPC Member; liaison to Gabriola Health Auxiliary, general public, and vulnerable populations

Research, Editorial and Analysis Team

- *Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley*: Team Lead: survey design, survey quantitative analysis, and report writing
- *Jennefer Laidley*: social & economic statistics research; backgrounder writing and design; report editing and design
- *Steve Earle*: HAPC member; editorial support
- *Katharine Patterson*: qualitative analysis and editorial support; liaison with GERTIE and *Gabriola Talks*

Engagement Strategy and Communication Team

- *Tobi Elliott*: Team Lead
- *Steve Earle*: Sounder Article lead and liaison
- *John Woods*: HAPC member; liaison with Gabriola Chamber of Commerce; employers, employees in need of sustainable, affordable rental housing

Professional Support Team

- *Sonja Zupanec*: Island Trust Planner; liaison to Gabriola LTC
- *Rob Hellenius*: website design
- *Nola Johnson*: graphic design
- *Chris Mallison*: website hosting

Project Financing

Gabriola Housing Matters was implemented outside of the auspices of the HAPC and was eligible for LTC funding for only direct expenses such as advertising. The LTC provided \$4,000 for advertising and the Gabriola Chamber of Commerce matched the funding, which covered some of the costs of web design, graphic design and web hosting.

The majority of the work was done by volunteers. Over 1000 hours of volunteer time was donated to implement this project, representing between \$44,000 to \$100,000 in value based on professional service rates ranging from \$50/hour to \$100/hour. This is likely a low estimate.

Table 1 shows an estimate of the voluntary hours contributed by team members and their projected actual cost. Note that not all team members are included in this table.

Table 2 below shows the project's funding sources and disbursements.

Team Member	Task	Hours	Total
Kenda Chang-Swanson	Survey interviews and glossary preparation	25	25
Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley	Background documents	30	
	Survey development and revision	105	
	Survey analysis and report drafting	105	
	Final report preparation	50	
	Meetings	50	340
Steve Earle	Meetings	50	
	Writing Sounder articles	75	
	Analysis documents (edits and figures)	30	155

Tobi Elliott	Engagement design	25	
	Website set up	24	
	Website re-writes	30	
	Admin/operations	35	
	Meetings	50	164
Jennefer Laidley	Meetings	40	
	Background documents, research & writing	70	
	Review of survey materials, articles, website copy, etc.	40	
	Final report preparation	50	200
Katharine Patterson	Survey data analysis	45	
	Editorial writing/meetings	12	
	Editing	6	
	Presentation prep	12	
	Meetings	8	83
Rob Hellenius	Additional website work - pro bono	40	40
Total Voluntary Hours Contributed			1007
Billing at \$50/hour			\$50,350
Billing at \$75/hour			\$75,525
Billing at \$100/hour			\$ 100,700
Staff/Planner Time Jan - March (Sonja Zupanec)		56 hours	

Table 2: Revenue and Expenditures	
Revenue	\$
Island Trust Project Funds	3,995.05
Gabriola Chamber of Commerce	4,000.00
Total	\$7,995.05
Expenditures	
Advertising (Sounder)	4,264.49
Survey Monkey license	102.00
Print and logo design	1,000.00
Web design	1,000.00
Domain name	20.89
Hosting set-up and subscription	189.00
Bank charges	13.50
Total	\$6,589.88
Balance Remaining	\$1,405.17

A condition of the Gabriola Chamber of Commerce funding is that the project provide a legacy platform for ongoing community discourse. The Gabriola Housing Matters website has been transitioned to a community Discourse space to provide this ongoing legacy platform (see: <https://gabriolamatters.ca/>). The outstanding balance from the project funding will be used to ensure that the platform can be used to host important community conversations going forward.

Planning Context

The GHWG’s primary consideration for this work is to balance Gabriola’s environmental and human needs – to do this we posed the question: how do we protect biodiversity and freshwater resources while recognizing that “the islands are first of all an existing community of people, and the welfare of those people, and those who join them and come after them, must always be a primary concern of the Trust” (Islands Trust 1974 Policy document)? This imperative is reinforced in the [Trust 2003 Policy Statement](#), which establishes three main goals:

- “...preservation and protection of the Trust Area’s ecosystem
- Ensur[ing] that human activity and the scale, rate and type of development in the Trust areas are compatible with maintenance of the integrity of the Trust Areas ecosystems, and
- Sustain[ing] island character and healthy communities”.

To understand the community’s housing needs, the GHWG drew on the *Gabriola Housing Needs Assessment* (Dillon Consulting, 2018). This report suggests that Gabriola’s projected population growth may require an additional 686 housing units, or 28 units per year, by 2041. Over 42% of these units will need to be “affordable” – to meet this projected need, 12 new affordable housing units would need to be built per year for the next 20 years. The data supporting this projected need identified over 130 vulnerable people who access the grocery program (food bank) and other People for a Healthy Community (PHC) services, as well as the “many illegal and inappropriate housing units including garden sheds, mobile homes, recreational vehicles, and summer cottages that have no heat, are improperly insulated, and have no running water or potable water” (Dillon Consulting, 2018).

Need was identified in the following groups: women and children fleeing violence; seniors; young adults; persons living with mental health and addiction problems; LGBTQ2+ persons; racialized individuals; recent immigrants and refugees; people experiencing homelessness; Indigenous people; people with disabilities; and veterans. These data were reinforced by the 2020 *Gabriola Health Report* that showed high

incidence of low-income households with almost 40% of children living in low income, and very high homelessness rates compared to the rest of BC.

The Dillon report included the following recommendations for Gabriola:

1. “Local not-for-profit organizations can acquire land through donation and apply for funding to construct affordable housing
2. The Local Trust Committee can strengthen their affordable housing policies and direction in the OCP to support various forms of affordable housing; and
3. The Local Trust Committee could consider entering into Housing Agreements with individual owners of housing and not-for-profit organizations to ensure affordable housing stays affordable in the long-term” (p.62).

In addition to the Dillon Report, *Gabriola Housing Matters* also drew on findings and recommendations found in *Protecting the Coastal Douglas-fir Zone & Associated Ecosystems – An Islands Trust Toolkit* (2018), *Gulf Islands Groundwater Protection – A Regulatory Toolkit* (2014); and the *Gabriola Health Report* (2020).

Methodology

Consistent with the HAPC mandate to give Gabriolans “opportunities to learn about and inform policy and regulatory options,” the GHWG implemented a two-pronged engagement design, one focus being education and communication, the other on eliciting Gabriolans’ opinions through three surveys. Between January 20 and March 4, each of the surveys was open for two weeks successively, accessible through the Gabriola Housing Matters website at <http://gabriolahousingmatters.ca/>. Paper copies of each survey were made available at the Gabriola branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library and through the social service agency People for a Healthy Community (PHC), where staff were available to assist those needing help to complete the survey.

In the week prior to the opening of each survey, two half-page advertisements with information about the survey topic and an invitation to participate were placed in the *Gabriola Sounder*. Information and invitations to participate were also sent to a range of organizations for distribution to their memberships and were posted on Facebook.

Draw prizes were donated by local businesses and organizations for every survey and awarded to participants who chose to enter the draw. To encourage sustained engagement with the survey process, an online discussion forum called Pol.is was made available on the website.

The Surveys

The surveys were designed to examine how respondents understood and evaluated policies and approaches to addressing housing affordability within the context of environmental and water conservation challenges and growth pressures.

The survey questions were designed to elicit both quantitative and qualitative data. All questions asked respondents to choose an option closest to their own opinion (e.g., strongly agree; agree; disagree; strongly disagree; not sure; or, yes, no, unsure). These answers are easy to tabulate, express as percentages and illustrate graphically. Respondents were not required to answer all questions, and some questions were targeted at particular groups (e.g., owners of larger lots). Most questions gave respondents an opportunity to comment.

The following table shows the distribution of quantitative and qualitative responses for each of the surveys.

Table 3: Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Responses Across Three Surveys		
Survey	Quantitative Responses	Qualitative Responses
Housing Need, Affordability and Diversity of Supply (Jan 20 - Feb 2)	411	835
Biodiversity, Water Conservation and Housing (Feb 3 - Feb 16)	340	692
Managing Growth and Diversity of Housing Supply (Feb 17 - Mar 2)	336	504
Total Responses	1087	2031

Survey Analytics

Quantitative data was analyzed using the Survey Monkey analysis tool. Each question was assessed for percentage completion and skip rate. Because each survey captured data on respondents’ property status – whether they owned property, rented or were precariously housed – where pertinent, questions were analyzed by two groupings: property owners, and renters/precariously housed individuals. This helped to illuminate whether there were significant differences between those who owned property and those who did not. Where differences existed, the results were noted. Where applicable, results were also compared to existing data (for instance, Census data on core housing need, and proportion of owners to renters).

Comments were analyzed thematically and grouped, the results viewed within the context of the quantitative data for the question, and representative quotations were chosen as illustrations. The qualitative data give a more nuanced view of the survey respondents' take on the issues than the quantitative data alone. Respondents were not required to answer every question in order to move through the survey and some opted to skip questions or parts of questions.

Public Education

To help Gabriolans to learn more about existing policies and regulations as well as housing and environmental concerns, extensive background materials were prepared and presented on the website. Material relevant to each survey could be accessed through a sidebar while answering survey questions or read in advance through the Resources list.

These supporting background documents were:

- Survey 1: *Housing Need on Gabriola; Gabriola Official Community Plan (OCP) Policies Governing Housing*
- Survey 2: *Forest Ecosystems, Protected Land, and Groundwater on Gabriola; GaLTT Conservation Priorities; Key Policies on Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation for Gabriola Island; and CDF Toolkit*
- Survey 3: *Growth on Gabriola; Key Policies on Managing Growth on Gabriola Island; Gabriola Island Development Potential 2021 Draft Map; and Information about the BC Energy Step Code and Universal Access Design.*

A Glossary of terms was also provided for each survey.

The advertisements which appeared in the *Gabriola Sounder* for each of the three surveys drew on these materials.

All of these background resources can be found in the appendices to this report.

Survey Findings

The Gabriola Housing Working Group prepared three surveys to gauge Gabriolans' attitudes in three separate areas: 1) *Housing Need, Affordability and Diversity of Supply*; 2) *Biodiversity, Water Conservation and Housing*; and, 3) *Managing Growth*.

Each of the surveys started with a question about housing / property status – whether respondents own property, rent, are precariously housed, or have unceded treaty rights. This data was used to analyze the responses to questions through the perspectives of two groups: owners; and renters and the precariously housed. The findings for each of the questions note areas of difference between these groups, where a significant difference exists.

Due to the small number of responses from those with unceded treaty rights (one for each of the three surveys) we have not analysed the data through this perspective - given that it is not statistically significant or necessarily representative of all persons who may fit this category. This person's responses were, of course, included in the general findings and qualitative responses. We acknowledge that the issue of unceded treaty rights and their connection to development on Gabriola is significant and look forward to building relationships with those who have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola as we progress with this work.

Both the quantitative and qualitative responses are included in the analysis for each of the questions. Each question is presented as it was posed in the survey followed by presentation of the quantitative and qualitative response data. (Note that some percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.) A conclusion statement is included for each question.

Background information for each survey was provided in a series of backgrounders that included facts and statistics about the issues at hand, current applicable goals, policies and regulations as contained in Gabriola's Official Community Plan, information from other sources as required, and glossaries defining key terms. These backgrounders are all attached in the appendices.

Survey 1 – Summary Report

The first of the surveys, *Housing Need, Affordability and Diversity of Supply*, gave Gabriolans the opportunity to comment on: criteria for affordable housing proposals; categories of housing need; secondary suites on larger lots; and, secondary suites on smaller lots. Each question provided space for comments.

Background for Survey One

Background information for the first survey was provided in two documents: *Housing Need on Gabriola* (Appendix 1); and, *Gabriola Official Community Plan (OCP) Policies Governing Housing* (Appendix 2) A glossary of key terms was also provided. In brief:

- **Homelessness:** The rate of homelessness on Gabriola is four times that in Nanaimo and ten times that for all of B.C. Although the total number of people experiencing homelessness on Gabriola (approx. 60) is smaller than in other areas, the proportion is very high.
- **Housing Affordability:** 539 Gabriola households spend more than 30% of their incomes on housing costs, which is the standard measure of affordability. More than half of the 365 renters and one-fifth of the 1,780 homeowners on Gabriola are living in unaffordable housing.
- **Low Income:** Average income on Gabriola is quite low. 25% of Gabriolans get by on less than half the national median income, which is the standard measure of low income, compared to 17% for Nanaimo and 16% for all of BC. Almost 40% of children, 29% of working age adults, and 16% of seniors are in low income.
- **Housing Stock Diversity:** Only 7% of Gabriola's dwellings are apartments, condos or other semi-detached homes, compared with 56% for all of BC. Gabriola is experiencing a significant lack of diversity in its housing stock.
- **Current Policy:** Detailed information about current policy related to housing diversity and affordability is in Appendix B of this report. In general:
 - Affordability is addressed in Gabriola's Official Community Plan (OCP) through policy that supports an increase in residential density on the island, without subdivision and only when it is specifically for affordable housing for special needs residents and seniors.
 - The OCP allows for "multiple-dwelling affordable housing" (defined as three or more affordable units), governed by a housing agreement, that serves the needs of: special needs residents living with physical and/or mental disabilities; seniors 60 years of age or older; and/or low-income families. Approvals of multiple-dwelling affordable housing projects are guided by a

number of criteria as outlined in the OCP with regard to: density; number of units; size of units; location relative to services; major road access; common area amenities; and, water / waste / emissions / energy efficiency.

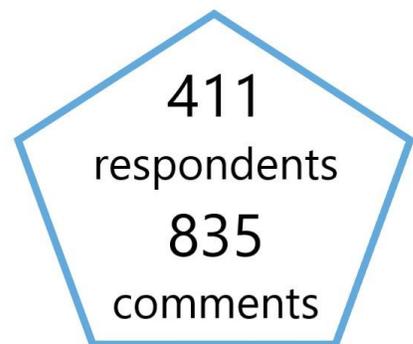
Development project proponents must demonstrate: affordability in perpetuity; type of management and administration; how units will be made available to qualified occupants; and, the mix of rental and ownership units. No market housing is allowed. Densities for the creation of multi-dwelling affordable housing can come only from the Density Bank, but currently there are no banked densities.

- Housing affordability and diversity are also addressed through policy on secondary suites, which are allowed on lots 2 hectares (5 acres) or larger. The policy allows for one suite of up to 968 square feet, either within or attached to the main dwelling, or detached. For lots in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), a secondary suite must be within the main dwelling.
- Affordable housing is defined in the OCP to mean 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 (using Canada Census information).

Survey Responses

A total of 411 people responded to this survey, representing 1 response for every 9 Gabriolans over 19 years of age, based on population data from the 2016 Census. Not every respondent answered all questions.

In addition to the quantitative data collected, respondents shared 835 comments.



Question 1: Housing / Property Status

Q1: Please tell us your current housing / property ownership status on Gabriola by choosing the category that applies to your situation (check all that apply)

- Own and reside here full time
- Own and reside here part time
- Own and visit occasionally
- Own vacant property
- Own and rent out property
- Rent and reside here full time
- Rent and reside here part time
- Do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing
- Live elsewhere but work here
- Have treaty rights to unceded land here
- Prefer not to answer; and,
- Other

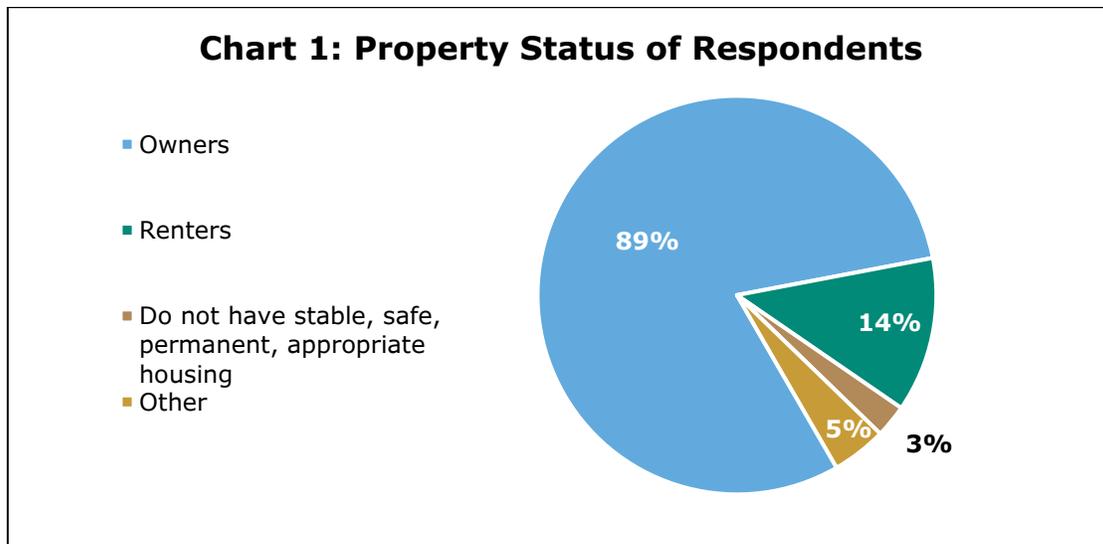
These categories are not mutually exclusive. For instance, a person could own property and be in a precarious housing situation.

General Findings

408 respondents provided 453 responses to this question.

Options	Proportion	Number
I own property and reside here full time	79%	322
I own property and reside here part time	3%	11
I own property and visit occasionally	1%	6
I own vacant property	3%	11
I own property which I rent out	3%	14
I am a renter and reside here full time	14%	57
I am a renter and reside here part time	0%	0
I do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing	3%	12
I live elsewhere but I work on Gabriola	1%	3
I have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola	0%	1
I prefer not to answer	1%	3
Other (please specify)	3%	13

As Chart 1 shows, the majority of the 408 respondents to this question are property owners (89%) with the remainder renting (14%) and precariously housed (3%). *Other* includes all other respondents.



The proportion of owners to renters (including the precariously housed) is consistent with 2016 Census data (which was 83% to 17%).

It should be noted that respondents were asked to identify all the categories that applied to them. For instance, a property owner could indicate that they own and live on the property full-time, and that they own and rent out a property.

Owners

Of the 338 / 83% of respondents who own property:

- The majority occupy the property full time (88%)
- 3% reside here part-time
- 2% occasionally visit
- 3% own vacant property
- 4% own property that they rent out.

Renters & Precariously Housed, and Those with Unceded Treaty Rights

17% of respondents indicated that they either rent, are precariously housed, work on Gabriola and live elsewhere, or have unceded treaty rights. Of those:

- 78% rent and reside on Gabriola full-time
- 17% do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing
- 4% work on Gabriola but live elsewhere
- 1% indicated they have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola.

Qualitative Responses

13 comments were made by respondents that describe their unique housing circumstances – these include housing insecurity, inadequacy, precariousness of tenancy and reliance on family. The comments create a snapshot of some of the multiple challenges that members of the community face and the solutions they adopt:

- “I rent property for my tiny house.”
- “Living out of my car.”
- “Married to land owner with no marital rights to property.”
- “I live in a dwelling that isn’t regulated or technically legal in this community.”

Conclusions: Question 1

Responses to the question about property status generally reflect the proportion of owners to renters as recorded in the 2016 Census.

Question 2: Criteria for Affordable Housing Proposals

Q2: The Gabriola OCP includes several criteria intended to help the Local Trust Committee (LTC) decide whether or not to approve affordable housing proposals. Please tell us how important each of these criteria should be in the LTC's decision making process (see criteria outlined below).

As noted above, the Local Trust Committee's decisions to approve "multi-dwelling affordable housing" development proposals are guided by a number of criteria listed in the OCP. Respondents were asked to rank the importance of these various criteria.

General Findings

There were 340 responses to this question; 70 people skipped it (17%).

The five highest ranked criteria (between 88% and 100%) are:

- Rents geared to an affordability test
- Ensuring affordability in perpetuity
- Specifying how the project would be managed and administered
- Specifying how tenancy decisions would be made
- Having the lowest possible net water, waste, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use

The next four criteria ranked lower than the criteria listed above but all exceed 50% support:

- No more than 12 units per hectare
- Average number of units not to exceed 24
- Average size of dwelling not to exceed 83 square meters (900 square feet)
- Site within 0.5 km of the Village or within 2 km walking distance.

Note that support for the last two criteria is significantly lower and varies depending on the housing status of the respondent:

- The site's main access is off a main road not an existing neighbourhood – Property owners are more likely to attach higher importance to this criterion than renters or those precariously housed
- Common areas such as kitchen and recreation facilities are provided – This criterion is considered less important than all the other criteria. However, renters (54%) are more likely to see it as important than owners (47%) and those precariously housed (17%). Given that 13% of the respondents indicated they are unsure about this criterion, it should be evaluated further before concluding it is unimportant.

A full breakdown of support for the criteria by housing status is below.

Findings by Housing Status

Table 1 below shows those who ranked the various criteria as *Very Important* or *Important* broken down into responses from owners, renters and those precariously housed. The highlighted lines indicate a significant spread in values between owners, renters and the precariously housed.

Property owners are more likely than renters and the precariously housed to support the criterion that ensures access to a housing project be off a main road and not through an existing residential neighbourhood (57% compared to 46% for renters, and 33% for the precariously housed).

The lowest ranking was given to providing common area amenities. Renters, however, see this as more important than owners (54% to 47%). Only 17% of those precariously housed think this is an important consideration. In addition, 13% of respondents indicated that they are *Not Sure*.

Factor	All	Owners	Renters	Precariously Housed
The rents that will be charged meet an affordability test, such as 30% of a household's income	92%	91%	100%	100%
The maximum density doesn't exceed 12 units per hectare	67%	69%	58%	67%
The average number of dwelling units per development is no more than 24 units	89%	73%	65%	58%
The average size of a dwelling unit doesn't exceed 83 square metres (900 sq. ft.)	58%	60%	52%	58%
The site is within 0.5 kilometres of the Village core or within a 2-kilometre walking distance	65%	65%	63%	67%
The site's main access is off a main road and not through an existing residential neighbourhood	55%	57%	46%	33%
Common area amenities such as kitchen and recreation facilities are provided	47%	47%	54%	17%
The proposal ensures affordability in perpetuity	89%	88%	100%	100%
The proposal specifies how the housing project will be managed and administered	91%	92%	96%	90%
The housing proposal specifies how decisions will be made about tenancy approval	92%	92%	98%	83%
The proposal has the lowest possible net water, waste, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use	90%	90%	96%	92%

Qualitative Responses

570 comments were generated for this question. Comments focused on concerns about water sufficiency and wastewater management, and concerns tied closely to density and its implications for pressures on water (48). Few respondents raised concerns about forest protection (3). A number of respondents oppose any type of affordable housing or the creation of any additional housing of any type (33).

Many of the comments emphasize flexibility, noting that requirements might be project specific:

- “I am concerned about differing restrictions that are imposed by financial agencies, especially if LTC requirements may make it impossible to get financing from some or all sources.”

Another commenter is also concerned about financing, saying:

- “Good goal [30%] but need to have an economically viable mix of rents.”

Similarly, when it came to restrictions on site density, number, and size of units, commenters are concerned about environmental impact and project design requirements:

- “Each housing project needs to consider the land and water resources available at the specific location.”
- “Planners need to be given a lot of flexibility so that they can design to achieve a low-cost supply.”

In terms of proximity to the Village or a main road, many commenters see these restrictions as unnecessary or even undesirable:

- “As long as it’s within easy walking distance of a GERTIE stop, affordable housing could be spread throughout the island so it didn’t have to overload ‘downtown.’ This would remove some concerns about stress on the water supply and overload of septic.”
- “Low income people/families should not be treated as unwelcome in existing neighbourhoods. We should be encouraging a diverse and mixed community on Gabriola, where all people have opportunities to get to know each other.”

A not-for-profit model is preferred, especially for multi-unit projects so that affordability can be sustained, the project managed over the long term, and the selection criteria transparent:

- “This [criterion] applies to larger developments. Should be owned by a not-for-profit corp.”

While environmental protection is important when it comes to construction requirements, affordability is also important:

- “Lowest practicable not lowest possible. Affordability is important here and we cannot make the ‘perfect’ the enemy of the ‘good’.”

Conclusions: Question 2

Overall, the highest ranked criteria are all related to administrative guidelines and processes about how proposals would be evaluated and managed, with one exception – the impact on water, waste, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.

The lower ranked criteria are all related to infrastructure, suggesting that with the exception of ecological impact considerations, concerns about infrastructure such as project density, dwelling size, etc. are of less concern than how the project is designed to meet need and managed. Nonetheless all the criteria received more than 50% approval.

Question 3: Categories of Need

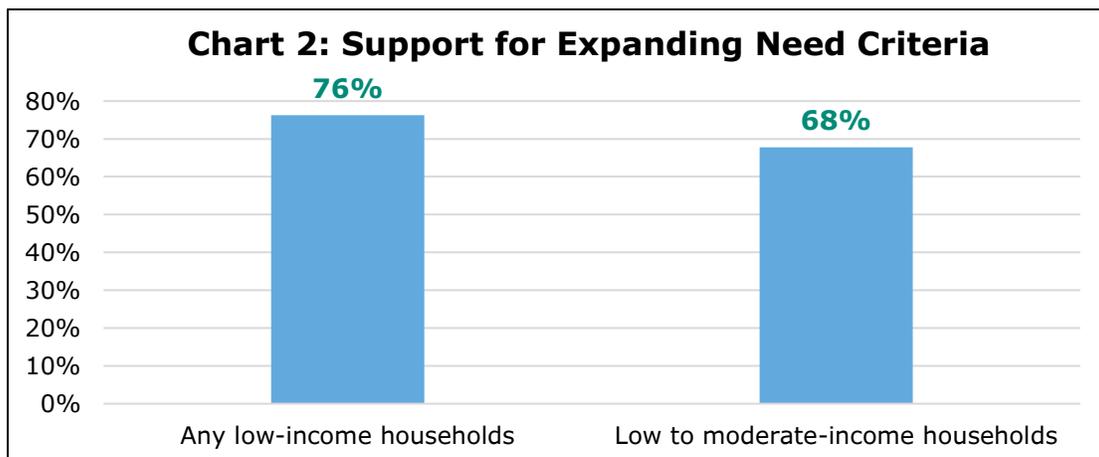
Q3: Would you support expanding the categories of need to include any of the following? Any low-income households; low to moderate income households

As noted above, the OCP currently only permits “multi-dwelling affordable housing” for special needs residents, seniors, and low-income families. Respondents were asked if they would support expanding the categories of need to include *Any Low-Income Households* or *Low to Moderate Income Households*.

General Findings

333 responses were given to this question; 77 people skipped it (19%).

As Chart 2 shows, the majority of respondents support expanding the criteria to include the two additional categories.



Findings by Housing Status

Although owners, renters and the precariously housed all support expanding the criteria (ranging from 64% to 100%), owners are less likely than renters and the precariously housed to support the inclusion of low to moderate-income households (64%).

Qualitative Responses

There were 128 narrative responses to this question. Roughly one-quarter are comments about: the definitions; the criteria that should be considered; the importance of design criteria that reduce stigma and would result in a stable housing community, including the need for a range of income levels; and, the importance of preserving the special rural character, aesthetic, and feel of Gabriola. The remaining 98 comments reflect respondents' ideas about the considerations that should guide decisions about expanding the need criteria.

Commenters have many ideas for criteria expansion although they are concerned to ensure that low income residents receive priority.

- “Higher priority for other groups (seniors/families/special needs) but perhaps a few small apartments to suit single working-aged people.”

Commenters recognize that many Gabriolans face housing challenges:

- “Both low and moderate income households face rental issues here.”

Some see value in a diversity of income levels and housing solutions:

- “A mix would lower stigma and increase options.”
- “If it is a cooperative then it should include higher incomes to help pay the market rents.”

No one model is sufficient:

- “I think we want a range of affordable housing for all people, especially rental housing.”

Conclusions: Question 3

Respondents strongly support expanding the criteria to include any low income households (76%) and to include low to moderate income households (68%).

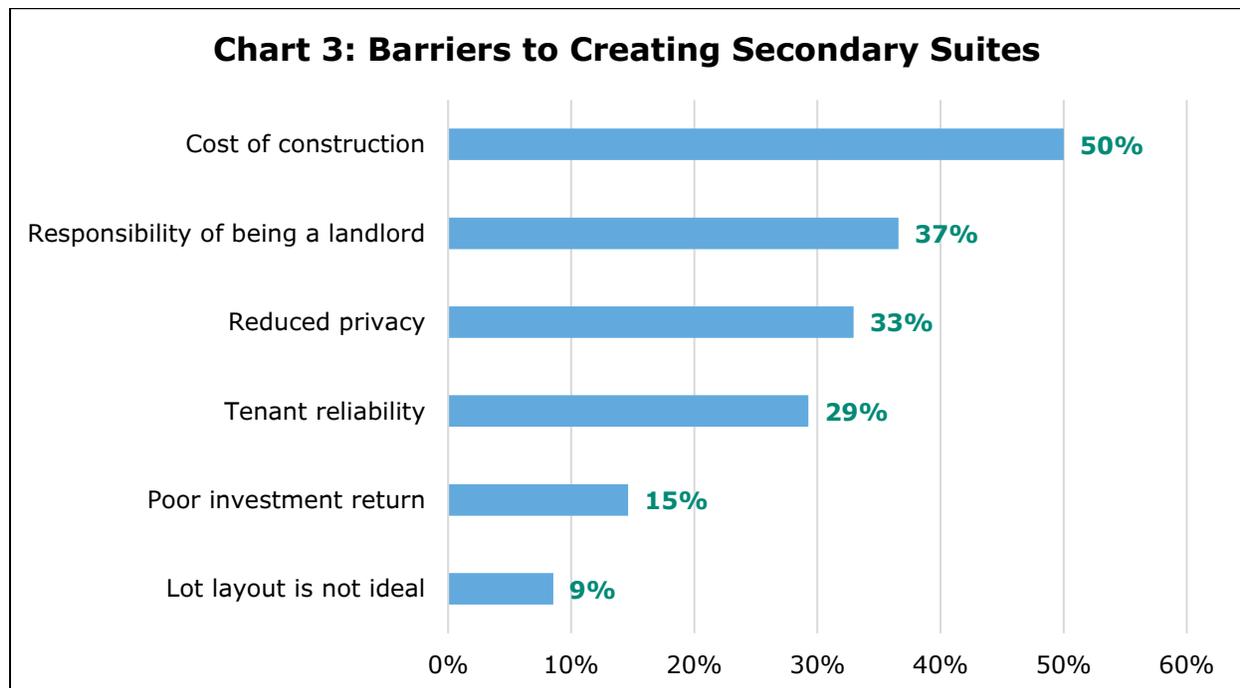
Question 4: Barriers to Creating Secondary Suites on Larger Lots

Q4: If you currently own a property that is 2 hectares / 5 acres or larger without a secondary suite, please describe the barriers to constructing and renting a suite on your property

Gabriola’s OCP currently permits secondary suites on residential lots 2 hectares / 5 acres or larger. Respondents who own these types of properties were asked to describe the barriers to constructing and renting accommodation.

General Findings

82 property owners responded to this question. This represents 21% of this survey’s total respondents who indicated they owned property. 328 people skipped it (79%).



As the chart above indicates, the primary concern for property owners is the cost of construction followed by the responsibility of being a landlord. It would be reasonable to group “responsibility of being a landlord” with “ability to find reliable tenants”. The responses to these two issues grouped together exceed those related to cost concerns (cost = 30%; landlord / tenant issues = 38%). Combining “cost of construction” with “not a sound investment” brings the proportion of respondents concerned about cost issues to 35%, which is still smaller than those concerned about landlord / tenant issues.

Qualitative Responses

There were 31 narrative responses to this question.

One respondent noted confusion about the term ‘secondary suite’ which seems to imply attachment to an existing dwelling. ‘Secondary suite’ is the terminology used in the OCP (section 2.6.1a). A review of the *Housing Issues* Facebook page revealed a thread dealing with this issue, which proposed that the terminology be changed to ‘secondary accommodation’ to account for the variety of allowed approaches (e.g., separate cottage, suite in house, suite over garage, etc.).

Conclusions: Question 4

The main barriers to construction of secondary suites on properties over 2 hectares / 5 acres are financial cost, responsibility of being a landlord, and the risk of reduced privacy.

The question asked those with these properties what the barriers are to building a secondary suite on their property, but did not ask them *whether* they would consider doing so. We can’t assume that these 77 property owners would build secondary accommodation even if there were no barriers. It appears from the data that even if financial considerations are not a factor, a major stumbling block is the responsibility associated with finding and keeping reliable tenants.

Question 5: Creating Secondary Suites on Smaller Lots

Q5: Would you support a re-write of policies and regulations to enable secondary suites to be constructed on Gabriola Island on residential parcels that are smaller than 2 hectares / 5 acres?

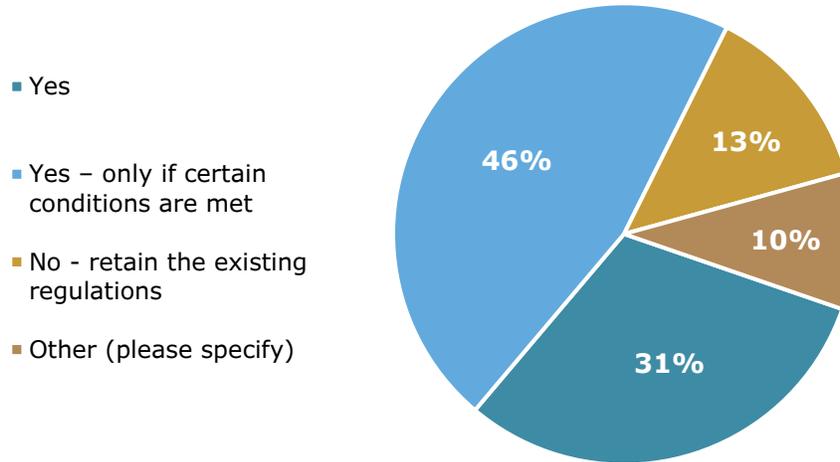
Respondents were asked whether they would support secondary suites on smaller lots.

General Findings

314 respondents answered this question, and 96 people skipped it (23%). There were 30 narrative comments.

Of the respondents, one-third support allowing secondary suites on smaller residential properties unconditionally, 46% are supportive but with conditions, and 13% do not support the change.

Chart 4: Support for Secondary Suites on Smaller Lots



Findings by Housing Status

Property owners are more likely to say *Yes – only if certain conditions are met* (54% compared to 46% of the total respondents).

Conclusions: Question 5

The vast majority (77%) of respondents support allowing secondary suites on smaller lots, but the majority of those would require some form of conditionality (as explored in Question 6).

The difference in responses by housing status may reflect concerns that property owners have about the responsibilities associated with being a landlord compared with the attraction of this option for renters faced with housing challenges.

Question 6: Criteria for Secondary Suites on Smaller Lots

Q6: If the LTC was to consider allowing secondary suites on properties less than 2 hectares / 5 acres, please rate the importance of the following conditions

- A minimum lot size is established
- Limits are set on rental rates to ensure affordability
- Ecological protection measures are required on the lot
- Higher construction standards are required for new buildings
- Limits are set for maximum floor area / lot coverage for the principle dwelling AND secondary suite

General Findings

There were 312 responses and 63 comments. 98 people skipped this question (24%).

Of the 312 responses:

- 91% rate ecological protection measures as essential or desirable
- 80% rate setting limits on floor area/lot coverage as essential or desirable
- 71% rate establishing a minimum lot size as essential or desirable
- 69% rate setting rent limits as essential or desirable
- 61% rate requiring higher construction standards as essential or desirable.

Findings by Housing Status

There is very little difference in responses between property owners, renters and the precariously housed with two exceptions. First, renters and those who are precariously housed are much more likely to support setting limits on rental rates to ensure affordability (92%) compared to owners at (64%). Second, renters are more likely to support higher construction standards for new buildings (71%) than owners or the precariously housed (~ 59%).

Qualitative Responses

Although 31% of respondents support allowing secondary suites on properties under 2 hectares / 5 acres and 46% support this option with specific conditions, a variety of issues were raised in the comments, some of which were not addressed in the options listed above.

The dominant issues relate to: the existence of illegal and substandard rental accommodation (including unpermitted AirBnBs; 10) and the lack of regulation of this existing stock and the inherent enforcement challenges (7); the costs and unintended impact of meeting the standards in the existing building code (13); the feasibility of setting limits on rental rates without the authority to regulate (3); and, the importance of ensuring sufficient water and appropriate septic (17).

Two respondents noted that if a decision is made to allow secondary suites on smaller lots, it should be *instead* of multiple family housing developments, not in addition. And two respondents noted the challenges of aging in place and the need for someone to live onsite to provide supports.

These excerpts from the 63 narrative responses shine a light on some of the concerns:

- “Until we can find a way to monitor and improve or shut down secondary suites that are substandard, this option should not be expanded. No matter how many

‘good places’ are built, new people will still arrive and move into the sub-standard units, which simply increases the island population without improving the results of the survey. Until this gap is addressed, we will not be able to fix the problem of poor living conditions. I think it is important not to demonize the owners who are providing these suites but help them do it correctly. For many, that is how they are managing to live affordably in an ownership-dominant region.”

- “Yes - On our <1 acre lot, we have a 1 bedroom cabin that has its own driveway, its own septic system, shares water from our water system (well + 3 cisterns), and we're close to the village. Under the current bylaws, we are not allowed to legally rent it out even though we know there's a shortage of housing on the island. This actually is very, very disappointing.”
- “For me this is a water issue. The point as I understand it is that we want to spread out the number of households/people drawing on the restricted water supply. Allowing secondary suites on smaller properties implies densification, which our water resources cannot support and will be decreasingly available as the climate crisis intensifies.”
- “Conditions should include adequate water provision including rainwater harvesting and a sufficient[ly] robust waste system. Such properties and applications would have to meet current septic regulations (post-2007) which are much more rigorous than the earlier regs, so many existing septic systems may not be able to handle the increased load.”
- “Sometimes strict adherence to building codes means that people who are poor or choose to live in a different way are harassed or made homeless. I am against forcing people out of their homes or dwelling just because they don't adhere to codes.”
- “I could agree with expanding the secondary suites category to 1 ha or 2.5 acre lots only. Densification beyond that would be far too much for Gabriola to bear. I think that the IT has to address the large number of illegal secondary suites currently on much smaller properties. I know there are many people who rely on illegal suite income to survive and many people rent those suites because it is the only way to find a place to rent here. However, all efforts to plan and manage density are a sham without more directly and proactively addressing the illegal secondary suites.”
- “Even if people are home owners, many of us already need or will need the extra income that rental housing on our properties would give us. Plus, as we age, having the ability to have some younger folk on the property to help out with things would make a huge difference! The current bylaws that prohibit secondary

dwellings on lots smaller than five acres is harming islanders and I wish that was discussed more.”

- “I am totally against secondary suites on [G]abriola. We don't need more people moving here because we do not have the infrastructure. One grocery store that is already too busy especially in summer months, won't cut it with an increased population. The problem with housing affordability is that the prices are too high to be[gin] with, so many if not most people now can't afford to buy. Homeowners should not rely on secondary suite income to make more money or pay off their mortgage faster when others can't afford to buy. The main issue is that our ferry wait times are already really long, our roads aren't in great shape, we only have one grocery store. There is simply not enough services in this rural community to grow the population.... This is a rural area and a protected area. It is not meant to have a high population.”

Conclusions: Question 6

Fewer than one-third of respondents support allowing secondary suites on properties smaller than 2 hectares / 5 acres. 46% feel it would be appropriate, but their support comes with significant caveats regarding ecological protection, limiting floor area and lot coverage, specifying a minimum lot size, requiring rent limits to ensure affordability, and requiring higher construction standards.

Survey 2 – Summary Report

The second of the three surveys, *Biodiversity, Water Conservation and Housing*, gave Gabriolans the opportunity to comment on: including the concept of biodiversity in the Official Community Plan; the effectiveness of various biodiversity policy options; the value of implementing actions outlined in the Coastal Douglas-fir Toolkit; and the importance of various measures to protect groundwater. Each question provided space for respondents to make comments in their own words.

While there were six questions in this survey, we have not included a discussion of Question 6 in the findings below. This question asked respondents to suggest particular issues they wanted to have addressed in regard to managing growth. The 63 responses informed the development of Survey 3 questions, which focused on managing growth and housing diversity. The findings from Survey 3 are reported on later in this report.

Background for Survey Two

Background information for the second survey was provided in three documents: *Forest Ecosystems, Protected Land, and Groundwater on Gabriola* (see Appendix 4); *Key Policies on Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation for Gabriola Island* (Appendix 5); and, *GaLTT Major Conservation Threats and Priorities* (Appendix 6). A glossary of key terms was also provided. In brief:

- **Unique Ecosystems:** Gabriola Island lies within the Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) Biogeoclimatic Zone, which is the smallest of BC's 16 major ecosystem zones. The ecosystems found within it are rare and highly endangered and include Douglas-fir forests, as well as Garry Oak woodlands, wetlands, estuaries, and other unique communities of plant, animal, and fungi found nowhere else in the world.
- **Conservation Threats:** According to the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust, apart from climate change, most conservation threats on Gabriola result from population growth and related development, which lead to:
 - Tree cutting
 - Stress on ground water
 - Fragmentation of natural habitat
 - Disturbance of sensitive ecosystems and rare species
 - Increase in invasive species.
- **Groundwater Resources:** Gabriola's primary source of water for household consumption and irrigation is groundwater stored in aquifers, which are recharged from rainwater. 57% of rainwater comes in November through February and only 13% in May through August. Gabriola thus has a freshwater storage problem, not a supply problem. While a lot of water is stored in the

ground, accessing it can be difficult. Increased development and climate change will put pressure on Gabriola’s groundwater resources.

- **Current Policy:** Detailed information about current policy related to biodiversity and groundwater protection is in Appendix D of this report. In brief:
 - The term biodiversity is not used in the current Official Community Plan (1997); however, the OCP does state that “This Plan attempts to preserve the unique environment of the Gabriola Planning Area for future generations through its established goals, which speak to the protection of the natural environment and its sensitive ecosystems.”
 - The OCP includes a number of goals, policies and objectives related to the natural environment and its protection, including groundwater resources.
 - There is currently no overarching strategy in the OCP to identify biodiversity and freshwater conservation priorities and ensure that effective objectives and policies are both in place and regulated.
 - Many of the OCP’s policies and regulations use ‘soft’ language like ‘encourage’ rather setting a requirement. Currently, requirements are expressly stated only in regard to environmentally sensitive area designations, marine resource areas, and specific development permit areas.
 - In 2018, the Islands Trust published a toolkit for protecting the Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) ecosystem. The document includes maps showing areas needing protection along with guidance on a number of regulatory tools that Local Trust Committees can use to help preserve this unique ecosystem. None of the CDF Toolkit recommendations have yet been incorporated into the Gabriola OCP and Land Use Bylaw.
 - The Islands Trust’s *Groundwater Protection Toolkit* provides guidance on various regulatory tools that can be used to protect groundwater resources. Only one of the Groundwater Protection Toolkit recommendations has been incorporated into the Gabriola OCP and Land Use Bylaw so far.

Survey Responses

A total of 340 people responded to this survey, representing 1 response for every 11 Gabriolans over 19 years of age, based on population data from the 2016 Census. This is a slightly lower response rate than for the first survey. Not every respondent answered all questions.

In addition to the quantitative data collected, respondents shared 692 comments.



Question 1: Housing / Property Status

Q1: Please tell us your current housing / property ownership status on Gabriola by choosing the category that applies to your situation (check all that apply)

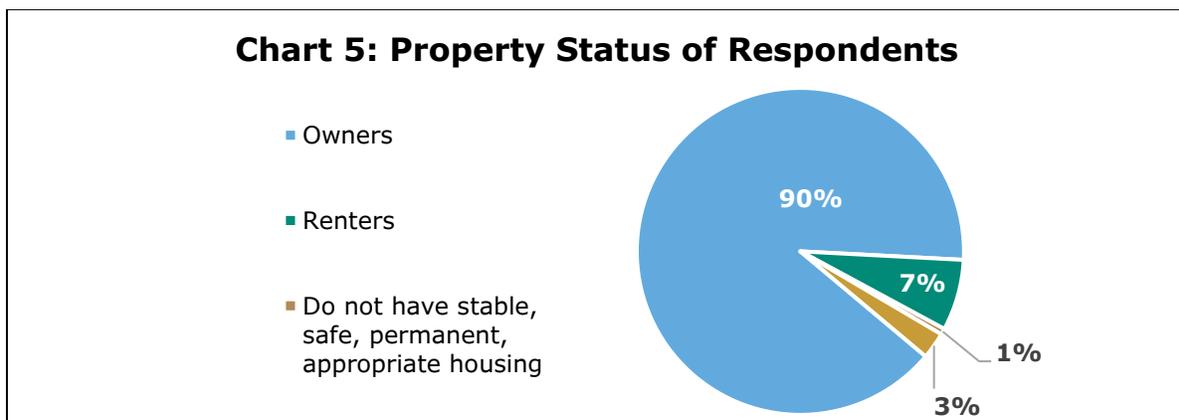
The list of possible responses to this question is the same as for Question 1 in Survey 1.

General Findings

332 respondents provided 340 responses to this question.

Options	Proportion	Number
I own property and reside here full time	83%	281
I own property and reside here part time	4%	14
I own property and visit occasionally	1%	3
I own vacant property	1%	3
I own property which I rent out	1%	4
I am a renter and reside here full time	7%	23
I am a renter and reside here part time	0%	1
I do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing	1%	2
I live elsewhere but I work on Gabriola	0%	0
I have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola	0%	1
I prefer not to answer	1%	2
Other (please specify)	2%	6

As Chart 5 shows, most of the 332 respondents are property owners (90%) with the rest renting (7%) and precariously housed (1%). *Other* includes all other respondents.



It should be noted that respondents were asked to identify all the categories that applied to them. For instance, a property owner could indicate that they owned and lived on the property full-time, and that they owned and rented out a property.

Owners

Of the survey respondents who owned property:

- The majority occupied the property full time (92%)
- 4.5% resided here part-time
- 1% occasionally visit
- 1% owned vacant property
- 1.5% owned property that they rent out.

Renters & Precariously Housed, and Those with Unceded Treaty Rights

Renters, the precariously housed, and those that have unceded treaty rights represented 8.5% of the responses. Of those:

- 88% rent
- 8% do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing
- 4% indicated they have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola.

Qualitative Responses

Five of the six respondents who defined themselves as *Other* identified themselves as renters, and two as long-time Gabriola residents of 20 years or more. They focused on the insecurity of their housing, a situation made worse by the lack of available, affordable rental housing.

- “I am a renter who resides here full time for the past 25 years. My rental is going on the market, so I also consider my family in unstable housing with zero rental availability.”
- “I am a full-time rental resident (for 3 years) and do not have safe, affordable and stable housing.”

Conclusions: Question 1

The majority of responses are from property owners (92%). This is a higher proportion of owners to renters than in the first survey and is higher than the distribution of owners to renters in the 2016 Census.

No effort was made to weight the responses to balance the perspectives between owners and renters; however, each question was evaluated to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in responses between owners and renters.

Question 2: Inclusion of Biodiversity in the OCP

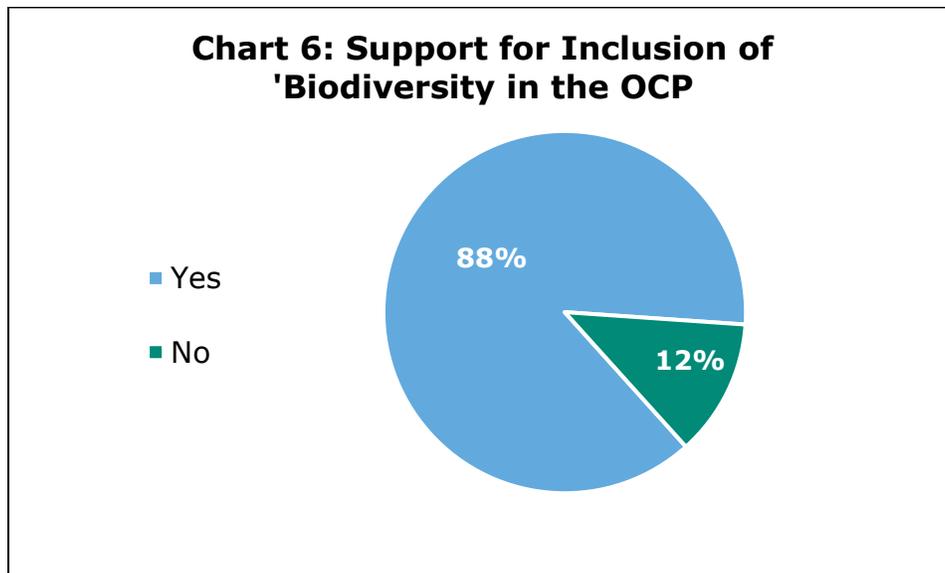
Q2: Should the Local Trust Committee draft new policies to specifically address protection of biodiversity and restoration of the natural environment on the island?

This question was asked to gauge support for more specific policies than the current OCP general statements about “preserving and protecting” Gabriola’s unique natural environment and its sensitive ecosystems.

General Findings

There were 286 responses to this question and 74 comments. 54 people skipped this question (16%).

As Chart 6 below indicates, respondents indicated strong support for the inclusion of policies that explicitly address biodiversity in the Official Community Plan (88%).



Findings by Housing Status

87% of owners support new policies around biodiversity, compared to 100% of renters.

Qualitative Responses

Seventy-four comments were received on this topic.

A majority of the comments are about the sufficiency of the current OCP: 11 feel there is no need to change the current situation, although they are not explicitly opposed to adding 'biodiversity.' Four commenters want to amend 'biodiversity' to 'biocultural diversity' recognizing that human activity is an essential element and in recognition of the need for social justice and fairness. Several stressed the need for an educational component.

Six commenters deemed the current plan inadequate. Of particular concern is the clear-cutting of lots (6) although 3 commenters recognized the difficulties of balancing property rights with forest protection. Seven commenters called for new policies that are clear and have measurable and actionable policies. Two commenters want policy specificity by zone and the protection of farmland. Three commenters want no new development or growth.

The following quotes show the range of these perspectives.

- “Our ecosystem is under pressure from a variety of external forces, including climate change and increased rates of development. The status quo is not adequate to protect it.”
- “The challenge is to extend reasonable regulation over private land to put some limits on the rights to cut trees. Too many lots are being clearcut. Striking a balance between property rights and protection will be hard and legally difficult.”
- “Yes, but biodiversity should not be compartmentalized on its own. A better more inclusive term that considers environment and culture is biocultural diversity, biocultural diversity as a framework better recognizes both nature and culture as interconnected.”

Conclusions: Question 2

The responses to this question show clear support among respondents for incorporating the concept of biodiversity into the Official Community Plan. However, the concept itself needs to be clearly articulated – for instance, delineating the difference between *biodiversity* or *biocultural diversity*, which incorporates the role of human activity.

Question 3: Effectiveness of Biodiversity Policy Options

Q3: Please rate how effective you think the following options would be in protecting biodiversity:

- Encouraging property owners to voluntarily take protective measures
- Setting requirements on a case-by-case basis for each new rezoning application
- Establishing new Development Permit Areas to regulate development and protect biodiversity
- Establishing new regulations for specific conservation objectives (e.g., reducing tree cutting) that would apply to all property owners

Question 3 allows respondents to evaluate the effectiveness of various policy options to protecting biodiversity, ranging from the current ‘soft’ language in the OCP to ‘harder’ approaches such as more specific requirements that would apply to all property owners.

General Findings

There were 297 responses to this question and 234 comments. 43 People skipped this question (13%). As Table 7 shows, respondents rated the effectiveness of each of the policy options depending on the relative effectiveness of the requirements.

Policy Option	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Neither Effective nor Ineffective	Somewhat Ineffective	Very Ineffective	Not Sure
Encourage property owners to take protective measures	6%%	25%	13%	19%%	35%	2%
Set requirements on a case by case basis for each new rezoning application	25%	40%	8%	12%	10%	5%
Establish new Development Permit Areas to regulate development to protect biodiversity	45%	36%	6%	5%	4%	5%
Establish new regulations for specific conservation objectives that would apply to all property owners	50%	26%	7%	4%	7%	6%

When *Very Effective* and *Somewhat Effective* responses are combined, respondents ranked the approaches in the order shown in the table below.

Table 8: Ranked Combined Effectiveness Ratings			
Policy Option	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Combined Rating
Establish new Development Permit Areas to regulate development to protect biodiversity	45%	36%	81%
Establish new regulations for specific conservation objectives that would apply to all property owners	50%	26%	76%
Set requirements on a case by case basis for each new rezoning application	25%	40%	65%
Encourage property owners to take protective measures	6%	25%	31%

The last (*Encourage Property Owners to Take Proactive Measures*) is clearly seen as the least effective policy tool with 54% of respondents seeing it as either *Very Ineffective* (35%) or *Somewhat Ineffective* (19%).

Findings by Housing Status

Renters are much more likely to see the *Encourage Property Owners to Take Protective Measures* option as ineffective than property owners.

Qualitative Responses

Of the 234 comments received, 20% are aimed at the voluntary option, 28% for the case-by-case option, 20% for the DPA option, and 31% for regulations that would apply to all property owners.

a) Voluntary Compliance

Although a clear majority of quantitative question respondents found relying on voluntary action ineffective, the comments tended to look at the question in a more balanced way. Five comments pointed to the inadequacy of the current situation but another five commented that voluntary action is already being taken. Seven commenters feel property owners needed to have a clear understanding of what measures could be taken, including zone-specific measures, for which educational materials are required. Five commenters pointed to incentivization; five want specific restrictions; and three want enforcement of restrictions and repercussions for non-compliance. The following quotes illustrate some of these ideas.

- “Owners need to know what area their property is in (high concern, etc.) and what protective measures” [are necessary].

- “Voluntary measures unlikely observed by developers and speculators.”
- “Demonstrated to be effective by the donations, bequeaths, and conservation easements we have on the island.”
- “Unless the encouragement has some monetary value most would not pay any attention. Perhaps a tax break for those who work with an eye to specific biodiversity.”

b) Case-by-Case

Two thirds of the respondents feel a case-by-case assessment would be effective, but the comments expressed much less certainty. Eighteen commenters are not against case-by-case assessment specifically, but they see many extenuating factors such as: staff knowledge; increased work for Trust staff; politics; lack of consistency; and, particularly, the influence of money. Seven commenters are concerned about fairness and three anticipated increased litigation or disputation. Five commenters think case-by-case assessment is the process already in place. Ten commenters want to have baseline requirements that would apply in all situations. And six want no development or density increase at all. The following quotes illuminate these points.

- “Case by case may adversely cause litigation.”
- “Depends on too many extenuating factors to be effective: bias or personal views of elected officials at the time, level of knowledge/experience of staff making recommendations, pressure from the public/private sector. Case by case could be effective, but likely would not be over the long term.”
- “Totally depends on baseline requirements. All too often money talks.”
- “Setting different requirements for different applicants may be perceived and may well be unfair.”
- “Although the effectiveness of this has much to do with the personalities involved, some flexibility in rezoning must be available.”
- “This would do nothing to protect or restore land that has already been developed / clear cut. I feel we need to put in place regulations that govern existing properties to the same standards as new developments.”

c) New Development Permit Area

Overall, the comments are supportive of this approach (8); however, some are concerned about over-regulation and counter-productivity and at least one wants more pro-activity with landowners. Three comments pointed to the lack of enforcement of regulations and three want no more development. The following quotes are examples of these viewpoints.

- “Useful because I think our local government can do this anytime - not just in conjunction with a rezoning application.”
- “This could be counter-productive by creating resistance and needing a lot of resources to police.”

d) New Regulations Applied to All Property Owners

This approach is strongly supported in the quantitative responses and garnered the most comments. Almost all the comments are directed to tree cutting only. Fifteen commenters are fully in agreement with implementing such a policy. Five want clear directives. Nine commenters feel such a policy would meet with irritation, resistance and lawlessness. Seven said there is currently no legislative authority for such a policy and six commenters are concerned about regulating activity on private land. Five pointed to selective logging and ecoforestry practices already in use and two want grandfathering for current owners. Four commenters pointed to the difficulty of compliance for small property owners in light of hazard mitigation (1), *FireSmart* guidelines (2), and construction requirements (1). Seven commenters see developers as more of a problem than property owners.

- “This is getting to be more like it. Understanding that the evaluation of ‘tree cutting’ or other directives, must be clearly outlined.”
- “If organized and expressed as a simple percentage consistent with international biodiversity objectives i.e. all lots must maintain, conserve or restore at least 30% of their lot as a forest / native species community.”
- “Why is there so much emphasis on tree cutting. I cut down lots of dead, hazardous and other trees for fire smarting purposes. I have also planted dozens of trees on my property. Who are you to tell me which of those trees I cut or planted met your objectives.”
- “Property owners are a small part of the problem. Developers are far more of a(n) issue, in much the same way that only a few corporations on this planet are causing 70% of the GHGs.”

Conclusions: Question 3

Current OCP policies lean towards encouraging certain behaviours and applying more prescriptive strategies (e.g., through rezoning applications or establishing DPAs) in targeted areas. Clearly, there is an appetite among those surveyed to take a more assertive approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity on the island.

Since clear cutting and site clearing on private properties is the major concern, the development of new regulations might begin there, although commenters raised concerns about resistance and litigation by property owners and the difficulty of

enforcing compliance. The implementation of protective and restorative measures in public spaces is also an area of high consensus. A need was also expressed for more educational materials directed to what is possible in each of the specific land use areas and zones.

Question 4: Coastal Douglas-fir Toolkit Policies

Q4: Please rate the degree to which you would support the Local Trust Committee in implementing each of the following activities:

- Establish policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private property
- Establish new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas
- Establish policies to prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems.

The purpose of this question is to gauge support for three key policy streams emerging from the Islands Trust’s *Coastal Douglas-fir Toolkit*. None of the provisions of the CDF Toolkit have yet been implemented on Gabriola.

General Findings

There were 285 responses to this question and 121 comments. 55 people skipped this question (16%).

As Table 9 shows, there is support for all three protection policies. Policies that prioritize parkland received the highest evaluation of *Strongly Support*, at 63% compared to 58% for new Development Permit Areas and 48% for policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private property.

	Strongly Support	Support	Support in Principle but Need More Information	Do Not Support	Not Sure
Develop new policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private properties	48%	21%	22%	7%	2%
Establish new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas of the island	58%	22%	15%	3%	3%
Develop new policies which prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems	63%	19%	13%	3%	3%

As Table 10 below shows, when levels of support (*Strongly Support*, *Support*, and *Support in Principle*) are combined, the rankings are as follows:

- Develop new policies which prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems (82%-95%)
- Establish new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas of the island (80%-94%)
- Develop new policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private properties (63%-91%).

Policy	Strongly Support	Support	Support in Principle but Need More Information
Develop new policies which prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems	63%	19%	13%
Establish new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas of the island	58%	22%	15%
Develop new policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private properties	48%	21%	22%

Qualitative Responses

Question 4 received 121 comments distributed across the three policy options and the category *Other*, as outlined below.

a) Policies and Regulations Aimed at Private Property

Thirty-two comments were submitted on this option, representing 26% of the 121 total comments.

While many respondents are supportive generally, quite a few have concerns similar to those expressed in the previous question, such as the infringement on property rights, small lot compliance, and penalizing those already using good practices. Four commenters want clearly defined and detailed parameters, and one mentioned the need for educational materials that are zone- and site- specific. Four want forest protection first and one wants forest preservation on public lands. The following comments demonstrate these concerns.

- “Even if the Trust cannot do this [clear-cutting regulations], it should never stop trying and advocating for this.”

- “Hard to balance landowner rights and community rights.”
- “No more logging or building of any kind in red zone areas. Protect the Douglas fir areas first and foremost.”

b) Establish New Development Permit Areas in Priority Zones

Twenty-two comments were submitted on this option, representing 18% of the total comments.

A solid majority of respondents are in favour of this suggestion. Those that did comment are in favour of applying DPAs to larger and/or public tracts of land (5), with one seeing the educational benefits of public visibility. One commenter feels there might be Indigenous resistance. Four commenters rejected more development and two want to see the application be retroactive in the interests of protection and fairness. The following comments illustrate some of these concerns.

- “Any publicly visible restoration projects are an opportunity to educate and engage people. Post-Covid reality is outdoors!”
- “On public land only.”
- “I suspect the Snuneymuxw may not support this for the Crown / treaty lands where most of the contiguous CDF areas remain.”

c) Subdivision That Prioritizes Parkland of CDF Ecosystem

Thirty-eight comments were submitted on this option, representing 31% of the total comments.

Although there is a more solid majority support for this suggestion in the quantitative responses, it did attract more comments than the previous two questions. Thirteen commenters rejected any more subdivision altogether, no matter what amenity concessions are proposed. Five think we already have regulations of that type and two see such a regulation as being ineffective. One commenter argued for co-management with Indigenous partners. The following comments illustrate some of these concerns.

- “There are legal requirements set by provincial legislation in regards for parkland at the time of subdivision. New policies would be ineffective.”
- “Amenities given shouldn’t be the carrot for developers to have their proposals passed or densities allocated in their favour.”
- “No further development or increased densities. The Trust’s job is to preserve and protect the environment and not be density brokers.”

d) Other Responses

Twenty-nine comments were submitted on this option, representing 24% of the total comments.

As was the case for responses to this question more generally, the main focus is the rejection of any further subdivision or development (7). Several commenters are concerned about the lack of time to make decisions because too little forest would be left. Two mentioned the need for mapping both buildout and forest preservation priority areas combined. Other suggestions included a native plant nursery, assessment of existing legislation and site-specific guidance. The following comments illustrate some of these concerns.

- “Incentive-based voluntary stewardship delivered by local conservancies and trusts has long been proven to be an effective and expeditious tool over long road to regulation and enforcement. We don’t have that kind of time now!!!!”
- “Finding ways to protect larger areas of land (parks, protected zones, etc.) rather than bits and pieces on people’s small lots would be more effective in actually preserving the CDF forest environment.”
- “Establish programs to support landowners who develop land using environmentally sound methods. Discourage those who clearcut their properties.”

Conclusions: Question 4

Survey respondents are clearly supportive of all measures to protect and enhance Gabriola’s CDF biogeoclimatic zone. But as the qualitative responses above show, there are certain caveats and conditions that survey respondents want to see implemented.

Regulations applicable to existing properties are seen as important but there is also the acknowledgement of the potential for resistance from private property owners. Parkland enhancement is also seen as desirable; however, it is also seen as being too closely tied to development, ecological disturbance and increased density. As in the previous question, the development of educational materials is seen as important.

Question 5: Groundwater Protection Measures

Q5: Please rate your level of support for the Local Trust Committee to explore the following options to identify and protect groundwater quality and quantity on Gabriola Island:

- Develop new regulations that would require rainwater collection and re-use for domestic purposes for new dwellings

- Develop new regulations that would require groundwater monitoring and data collection for new commercial, industrial, institutional or multi-family developments
- Provide educational materials to residents on groundwater quality and quantity protection measures
- Develop new proof of water requirements for subdivision applications that are aligned with local groundwater conditions and the Islands Trust 'preserve and protect' mandate
- Develop policies and regulations that encourage retention of forests and watershed ecosystems to promote groundwater recharge

This question was intended to gather feedback on five broad policy directions to protect and enhance sustainability of groundwater resources.

General Findings

There were 277 responses to this question and 194 comments. 63 people skipped this question (23%). Table 11 below shows all responses to this question.

Table 11: Support for Groundwater Quality and Quantity Protection Options					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Develop new regulations that would require rainwater collection and re-use for domestic purposes for new dwellings	68%	23%	5%	1%	1%
Develop new regulations that would require groundwater monitoring and data collection for new commercial, industrial, institutional or multi-family developments	69%	19%	4%	2%	2%
Provide educational materials to residents on groundwater quality and quantity protection measures	62%	26%	9%	0%	2%
Develop new proof of water requirements for subdivision applications that are aligned with local groundwater conditions and the Islands Trust 'preserve and protect' mandate	70%	19%	4%	2%	1%
Develop policies and regulations that encourage retention of forests and watershed ecosystems to promote groundwater recharge	68%	20%	6%	1%	2%

When the choices *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* are combined, as in Table 12 below, there is very strong support (i.e., above 85%) for implementing all of the policies to protect groundwater quality and quantity on Gabriola. Respondents gave a slightly higher rating to developing new regulations requiring rainwater collection and re-use for domestic purposes for new dwellings.

Table 12: Combined Support for Groundwater Quality and Quantity Protection Options			
Policy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Combined Rating
Develop new regulations that would require rainwater collection and re-use for domestic purposes for new dwellings	68%	24%	92%
Develop new regulations that would require groundwater monitoring and data collection for new commercial, industrial, institutional or multi-family developments	69%	20%	89%
Provide educational materials to residents on groundwater quality and quantity protection measures	62%	26%	88%
Develop new proof of water requirements for subdivision applications that are aligned with local groundwater conditions and the Islands Trust 'preserve and protect' mandate	70%	20%	90%
Develop policies and regulations that encourage retention of forests and watershed ecosystems to promote groundwater recharge	68%	20%	88%

Findings by Housing Status

There is no significant difference between property owners and renters in regard to these measures with one exception: while both groups see education as a useful tool, property owners are more likely to take this position (89%) than renters (75%).

Qualitative Responses

This question received 194 comments distributed across the five policy options and the category *Other*, as outlined below.

a) Require Rainwater Collection for New Dwellings

Forty-seven comments were submitted on this option, representing 24% of the 194 total comments.

This option has the highest level of support in the quantitative responses as well as the highest number of comments. Eighteen commenters support making rainwater catchment mandatory: 13 support mandatory catchment for all new buildings including affordable or multi-units; three support it for all dwellings; and, two for all structures. Two commenters pointed out that such a regulation would be under the

RDN's jurisdiction. Five want either incentives or rebates for cisterns. Two are concerned about construction costs and one about cistern maintenance costs.

The following comments illustrate some of these perspectives.

- “We rely solely on rainwater but to get a mortgage HAD to drill a well.”
- “Affordable and rental housing should not be exempt.”
- “Provide more rebates for people interested in retrofitting older homes with cisterns.”

b) Ground Water Monitoring and Data Collection

Thirty-one comments were submitted on this option, representing 16% of the total comments.

This option also has a high level of support in the quantitative responses. The comments are mainly directed to development. Eight commenters want no development, especially of the listed types but also including multi-unit housing. One commenter proposed no well use at all for all new developments. Three commenters think data collection is useful although one feels that monitoring by itself is insufficient. One commenter wants a groundwater map showing water abundance and quality. The following comments illustrate some of these perspectives:

- “100%, also make it retroactive to existing commercial, industrial, institutional developments.”
- “And not just the volume/GPM of a well. Much of the well water on Gabe is not suitable for potable purposes for many reasons, some of which are very costly and inefficient to mitigate.”
- “Need a groundwater map of high/low or poor quality for island.”
- “Any of the above [structure types] are just not acceptable on the island and would further impact the already distressed island ecology and none of this addresses the threat that any of these developments present to the already endangered groundwater supply via sewage or contaminant incursion.”

c) Groundwater Educational Material

Twenty-five comments were submitted for this option, representing 13% of the total comments.

This option also garnered high support in the quantitative responses and has the distinction of being the only question in the survey that did not garner any *Not Sure* responses. Most of the commenters said that education is good but not effective by itself. Five argued that sufficient information is already available but two said area-

specific information would be helpful. Four commenters said that education is effective and necessary. The following comments describe some of these perspectives.

- “Yes, promote an attitude of stewardship instead of exploitation.”
- “I feel we need to compel people to change. The time for education and asking nicely has passed long ago.”
- “Maybe, let people know the geography of this [groundwater] and where shortages have happened, how rectified.”
- “All new owners and renters could be given guidelines for water protection and use. We would all have enough water if we collected”.

d) Subdivision Proof of Water Requirements

Thirty-nine comments were submitted on this option, representing 20% of the total comments.

Many commenters are against any subdivisions. For those who are not, the emphasis is on catchment, not well water use (5). Several feel requirements are already in place while several others feel there are jurisdictional issues. Three commenters are concerned about the unpredictability of climate change effects and several pointed to the difficulty of water adequacy assessments. The following comments illustrate some of these perspectives.

- “I believe any new subdivisions should not be relying on well-water, except as a backup source only.”
- “This sounds like a good idea but determining local groundwater conditions is not easy.”
- “N/a if using more rainwater catchment and well feed into cistern systems. Plus-- it’s next to impossible outside of initial well pump tests to prove long term hydrology predictability. Better to emphasize and require rainwater collection and heavy conservation and ed measures.

e) Forest and Watershed Retention Approach

Twenty-seven comments were submitted for this option, representing 14% of the total comments.

Four commenters think this proposal would be effective but three feel that enforcement, not encouragement, is required. One feels that education before regulation is necessary. Four believe regulations protecting water are already in effect. The following comments describe some of these perspectives.

- “Absolutely, this [forest retention] must be done at a community level, individuals can’t get this done.”
- “We already have riparian area regulations in spite of the fact that a majority of residents opposed it.”

f) Other Responses

Twenty-five comments were submitted for this option, representing 13% of the total comments.

The most common concerns are complaints about the Island Trust (4) and incentivizing programs for cistern installation (4). A suggestion was made to exempt cisterns from lot coverage and setback regulations. Grey water use and composting toilets are also listed as possible solutions. The following comments illustrate some of these perspectives.

- “Provide assistance to existing homeowners to install collection systems.”
- “Remove cisterns from list of structures considered in lot coverage. Also allow them within the setback on small lots.”
- “Create rules around minimum volumes of water storage (tied to building area) in all new builds.”
- “As a fairly new resident 5 years, we didn’t understand that a coastal community would have water issues. It would have been helpful to have a brochure for anyone looking to buy to help deal with the issue and understand the importance.”

Conclusions: Question 5

There is strong support for the entire array of policy options for protecting groundwater on Gabriola. Since water sufficiency appears as a major concern across many survey questions, there is likely to be a consensus for regulations requiring water catchment and storage in new dwellings of all types and support for promoting and assisting residents to develop or enhance water storage systems on existing properties. There is also support for developing and distributing informational materials to all householders and new residents. If forest and site integrity protection can be more explicitly tied to water retention, there may be a greater willingness to consider protective measures.

Survey 3 – Summary Report

The third of the three surveys, *Managing Growth*, posed questions on: increasing housing units on commercial and institutional parcels; flexible zoning for residential properties; managing growth; conserving freshwater; and, adopting more progressive energy and universal design regulations. All but one question provided space for comments.

Background for Survey Three

Background for the third survey was provided in four documents: *Growth on Gabriola* (Appendix 8); *Key Policies on Managing Growth on Gabriola Island* (Appendix 9); a draft build-out map entitled *Gabriola Island Development Potential 2021 DRAFT* (Appendix 10); and, *Information about the BC Energy Step Code and Universal Access Design* (Appendix 11). A glossary of key terms was also provided. In brief:

- Gabriola has a population density of 69.7 persons per square kilometre, making it the second most densely populated of the Gulf Islands. The population of Gabriola according to the 2016 Census was 4,033, and growth was stagnant for the previous two census periods. However, the BC government’s Medical Services Plan health care coverage registrations record 4,415 people on Gabriola in 2020. This is an increase of 382 people, or 9.5%, since 2016.
- Several factors may impact growth: for example, changes to demographic issues like average household size, birth and death rates, and migration to and from Gabriola, as well as physical factors like the availability of lots to build on and the proportion of unoccupied dwellings, as well as how development is regulated through land use planning and development controls.
- Four growth scenarios (see Appendix 8) predict a regular resident population of between 4,631 and 6,632 people in the future. These scenarios are based on the number of lots that are currently undeveloped (490), subdivision potential (158 lots), and secondary suite potential (636). (Note that the scenarios do not take into account the roughly 1000 acres set aside for Treaty negotiations between the Snuneymuxw and the federal and provincial governments.) These scenarios also rely on assumptions about current household size and occupancy patterns. The date at which the population would grow to the numbers projected would be whenever all the potential for development is realized.
- The goals in Gabriola’s Official Community Plan (OCP) only explicitly mention the term “growth” once – stating that “gradual and appropriate” rather than “rapid” growth is to be encouraged. OCP policies and objectives speak to regulating the density that is already permitted through zoning. Anticipating or managing new growth (except for multi-family affordable housing) does not seem

to be contemplated in the OCP, and particularly doing so in ways that would help to meet important social and environmental goals such as the need for affordable housing and the need to protect and preserve our Coastal Douglas-Fir ecosystem and groundwater.

- A variety of new policies or regulations could address the negative impacts of growth on Gabriola and address the need for affordable housing. These include: requiring new rezoning applications that propose an increase in residential density to meet more stringent environmental, building, and design guidelines and contribute to an increase in affordable housing stock; restricting small lot subdivision; requiring rainwater harvesting in new dwelling construction; creating a variety of flexible zoning regulations to increase the availability of affordable rental accommodation; requiring existing rental multi-family dwellings to remain as rental housing; and, allowing more residential density in commercial properties if rental tenure, affordability, and other conditions are met.
- Section 2.5 of the OCP establishes a Density Bank to allow the deposit of densities from lands rezoned as parks or from the voluntary donation of residential densities.

Survey Responses

A total of 336 people responded to this survey, representing one response for every 11 Gabriolans over 19 years of age, based on population data from the 2016 Census. This is again a slightly lower response rate than for the first and second surveys. Not every respondent answered all the questions.

In addition to the quantitative data collected, respondents shared 504 comments.



Question 1: Housing / Property Status

Q1: Please tell us your current housing / property ownership status on by choosing the category that applies to your situation (check all that apply):

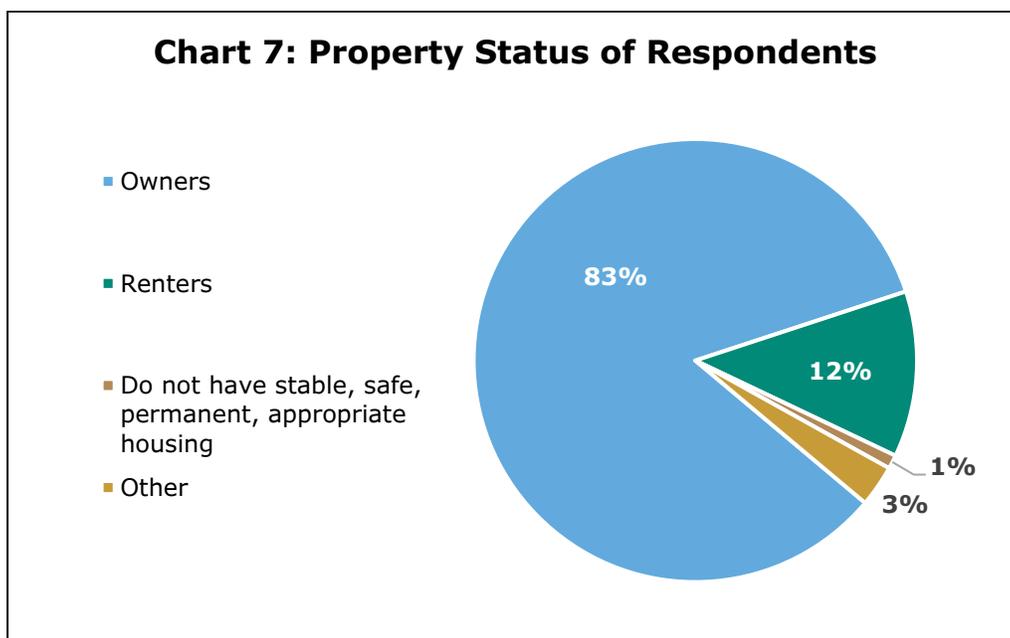
The list of possible responses to this question was the same as for the first question in Survey 1. Respondents were able to check all categories that apply, so, for instance, a person could own property and be in a precarious housing situation.

General Findings

336 respondents provided 336 responses to this question.

Table 13: Respondents by Housing / Property Ownership Status		
Options	Proportion	Number
I own property and reside here full time	77%	260
I own property and reside here part time	4%	13
I own property and visit occasionally	0%	0
I own vacant property	1%	3
I own property which I rent out	1%	3
I am a renter and reside here full time	12%	41
I am a renter and reside here part time	0%	0
I do not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing	1%	4
I live elsewhere but I work on Gabriola	0%	0
I have treaty rights to unceded land on Gabriola	0%	1
I prefer not to answer	1%	4
Other (please specify)	2%	7

Chart 7 outlines the distribution for the three major groups: owners, renters and precariously housed.



This distribution closely resembles the distribution in the 2016 Census (83% owners / 17% renters). Although the 2016 Census provides information on those in core housing need (i.e., that spend over 30% of their income on shelter), it does not provide data on homelessness. The data indicates that just over 1% of respondents are in precarious housing situations. This is consistent with data from Gabriola's 2020 Homelessness count.

Qualitative Responses

The comments on this question tended to clarify the individual's property status (e.g., length of residency, in process of moving from renting to owning) or added a category not included in the list (e.g., living with relatives).

Conclusions: Question 1

The profile of respondents is consistent with the 2016 population distribution.

Questions 2/3: Housing Units in Commercial and Institutional Zones

Current OCP policy (Section 3.1) allows for one single-dwelling residential unit per parcel in any Commercial designation. Questions 2 and 3 explore interest in expanding the number of units allowable in both commercial *and* institutional-zoned properties, and the conditions that would need to be met for such an expansion to be acceptable.

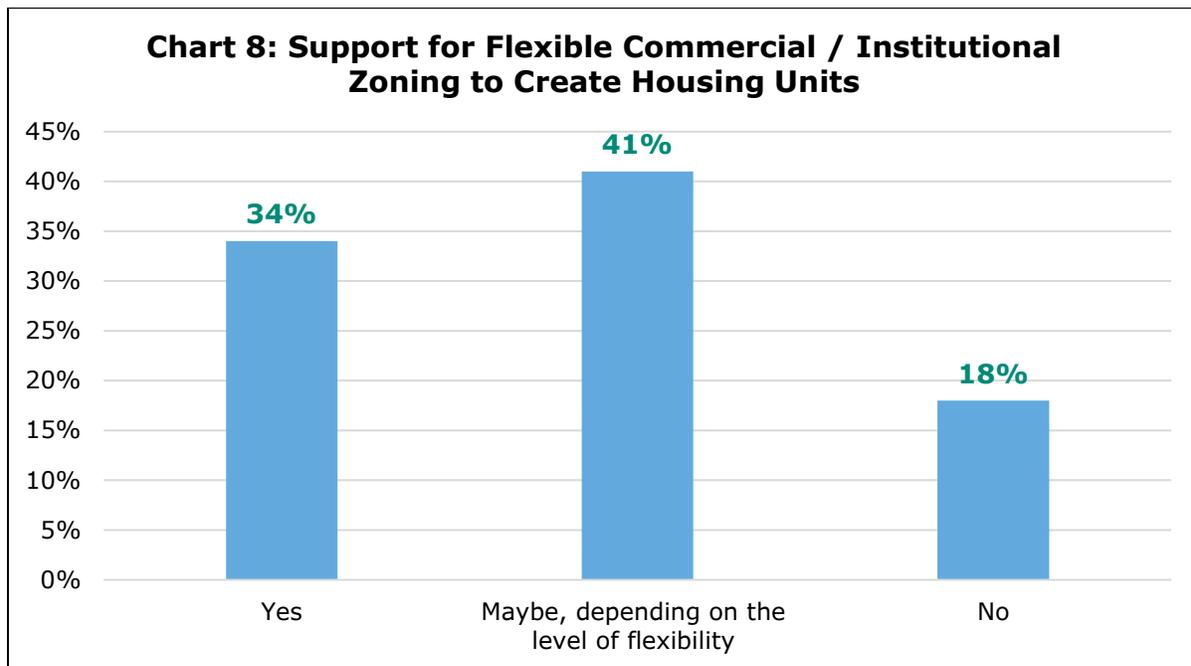
Q2: Would you support more flexible zoning for commercial and institutional parcels in order to incentivize the construction of rental or market housing units during redevelopment?

Respondents were given a choice of *Yes*, *Maybe, depending on the level of flexibility in the zoning*, and *No*, with an opportunity to indicate *Other* followed by comments.

General Findings

There were 311 responses to this question and 23 comments. 27 people (8.7%) skipped this question.

Roughly 75% of respondents are either conditionally supportive (*Maybe* = 41%) or unequivocally supportive (*Yes* = 34%). Although only 18% indicated their lack of support by answering *No*, the qualitative responses from the 7.5% of respondents who chose *Other* are mostly unsupportive of this option. It would therefore be appropriate to categorize all of these together, as 25% who are not in support of this option.



Qualitative Responses

There is not strong support for this proposition in the qualitative responses; support seems to be linked to utilizing flexible zoning only for affordable/rental housing (7). Additional concerns focus on lack of support for density increases (6) and a moratorium on any new building (3), and calls for no commercial/institutional development (2). Two commenters prefer to see more flexibility in allowing secondary suites instead of this option.

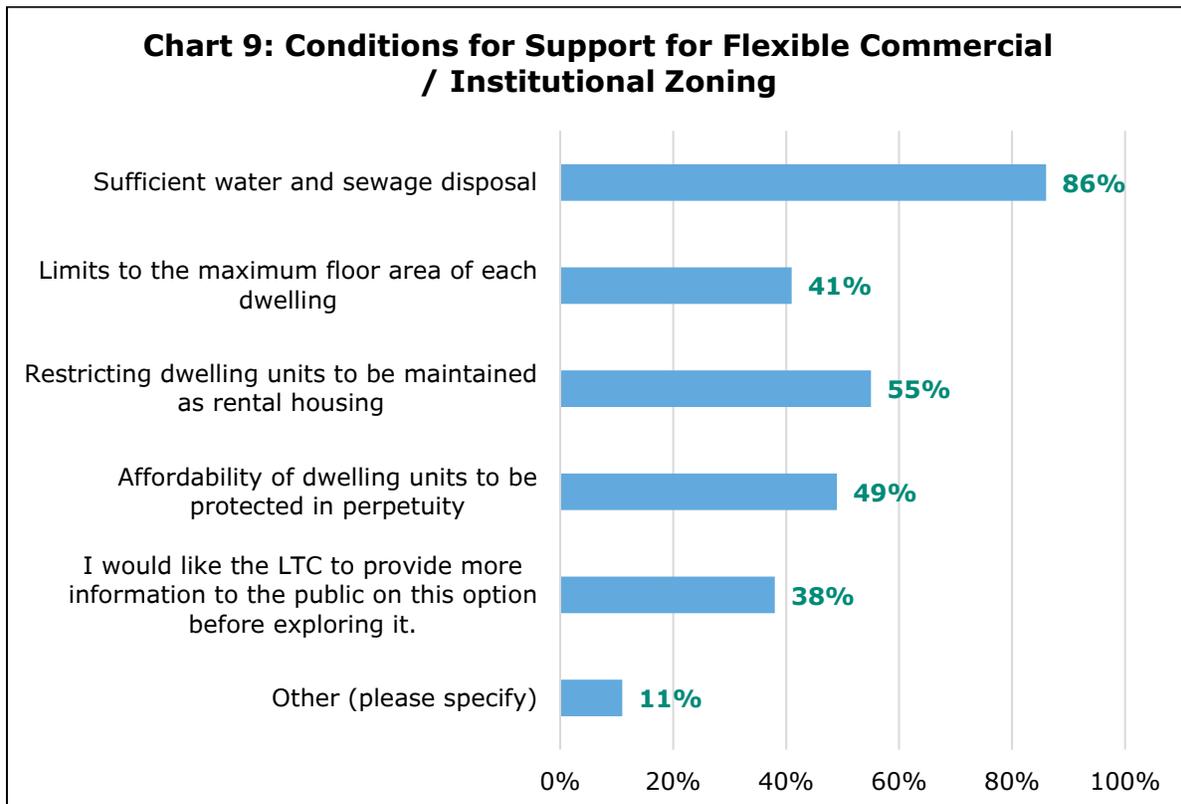
- “Commercial property development cannot be part of a density swap. Residential property should allow secondary suites on existing plans under 5 acres.”
- “The real question is: would such housing be affordable for people working in the commercial premises or would the housing just become ‘high rent’ rental revenue to supplement the revenue of the commercial operation? I’m OK with this as long as the rent is kept [commensurate] with the wages that are being paid on Gabriola, so that new rental units serve Gabriola’s workers.”

Q3: If you answered Yes or Maybe to Question 2, please indicate the conditions under which you would support more flexible zoning for commercial and institutional parcels to allow for more residential units per parcel. Please check all that apply.

Respondents were given six response options: ‘water sufficiency’; limits to floor area; restricting units to rental accommodation; protection of affordability; more information required; and, other.

General Findings

There were 249 responses to this question including 28 comments (11.24%). Eighty-nine people (26.4%) skipped this question. The responses to this question are indicated in Chart 9 below.



Qualitative Responses

The qualitative responses mirror the quantitative data. The majority of respondents expressed strong concerns about ensuring sufficiency of water and sewage disposal and concerns about density increases. The following quotes show the range of concerns:

- “Businesses should be encouraged to build rental units to attract employees.”
- “I do think that rental and affordability are critical but I do not believe that there should be a cap on density--that only forces prices up--density and development should be based on the ability and capability of the land for servicing.”
- “Limit the TOTAL floor area of dwellings (and/or the number of dwellings).”

Conclusions: Questions 2/3

Support for allowing an increased number of residential units in commercial or institutional zoned properties is conditional on water and an assurance that the units will remain as rental units with affordability guaranteed.

Question 4/5: Flexible Zoning in Residential Zones & Conditions

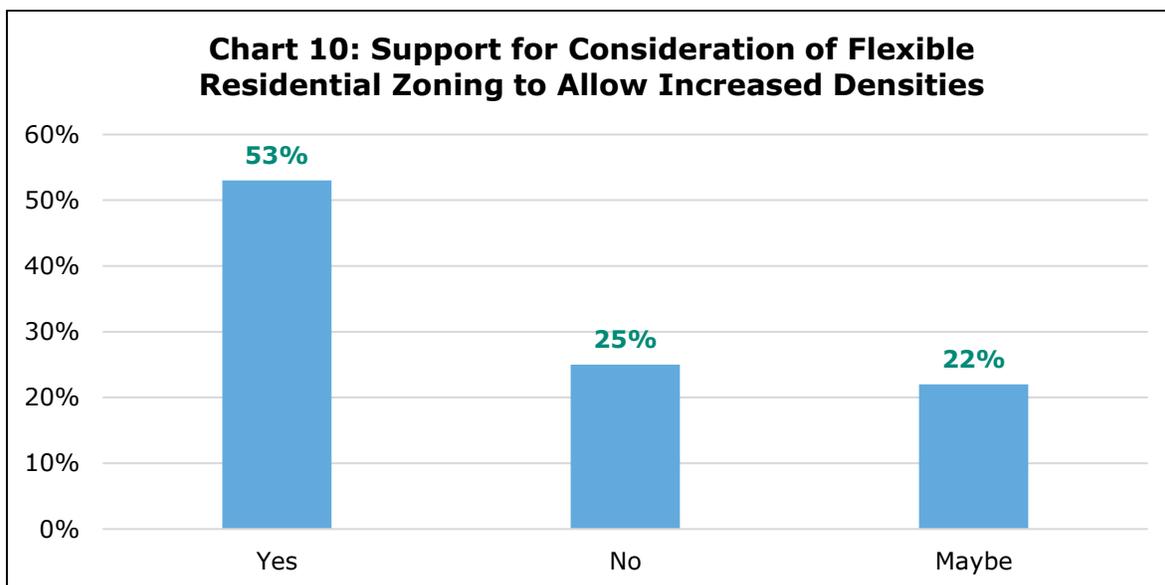
In most residential zones on Gabriola Island, one single family dwelling is permitted per parcel with no floor area maximum; in other words, there are no limits on the size of the dwelling. Questions 4 and 5 examine the potential for more flexible zoning to accommodate changing family needs (e.g., the need for an onsite caregiver, or accommodation for extended family) thereby allowing additional density on a parcel but with restrictions to floor areas and lot coverage being equal to or less than what is allowed for one traditional-sized, single-family dwelling.

Q4: Should the LTC consider looking at more flexible residential zoning regulations to allow for increased densities on a parcel under certain conditions?

General Findings

Three hundred and eleven (311) people responded to this question, which garnered 61 comments. 27 people (8%) skipped this question.

As the chart below indicates, 53% of respondents support this option, 22% are uncertain, and 25% do not support this option.



Qualitative Responses

The sentiments expressed in the 61 comments on this question are consistent with the responses to the quantitative questions. Commenters are particularly supportive of uses that accommodate family / relatives (7) and caregivers (5). Legalizing existing secondary suites to rent (6) on all lots is also popular. Water and septic provisions are important to five commenters as is environmental protection more generally (3). Commenters are

supportive depending on lot size (5); dwelling size (3); and neighbourhood density (3). Three commenters would approve only if the rental is restricted to low-income affordability. Thirteen commenters, however, want no density increase whatsoever, although several would approve a suite in a house for a rental or caregiver provided there is no increase in density.

The following quotes illuminate the range of responses to this question:

- “Really depends on the size of the lot and the existing density on surrounding lots.”
- “Secondary suites should be allowed on condition that they are restricted to low-income affordability as the condition for allowing their use.”
- “Perhaps in combination with more restrictive sizes for single family dwellings.”
- “For family or to allow person to age in place.”
- “This is interesting, but I would worry about the amount of density per neighbourhood and the relationship with water.”
- “Not sure how this is a benefit that couldn’t be accomplished by allowing owners to create a legal secondary suite to rent out.”

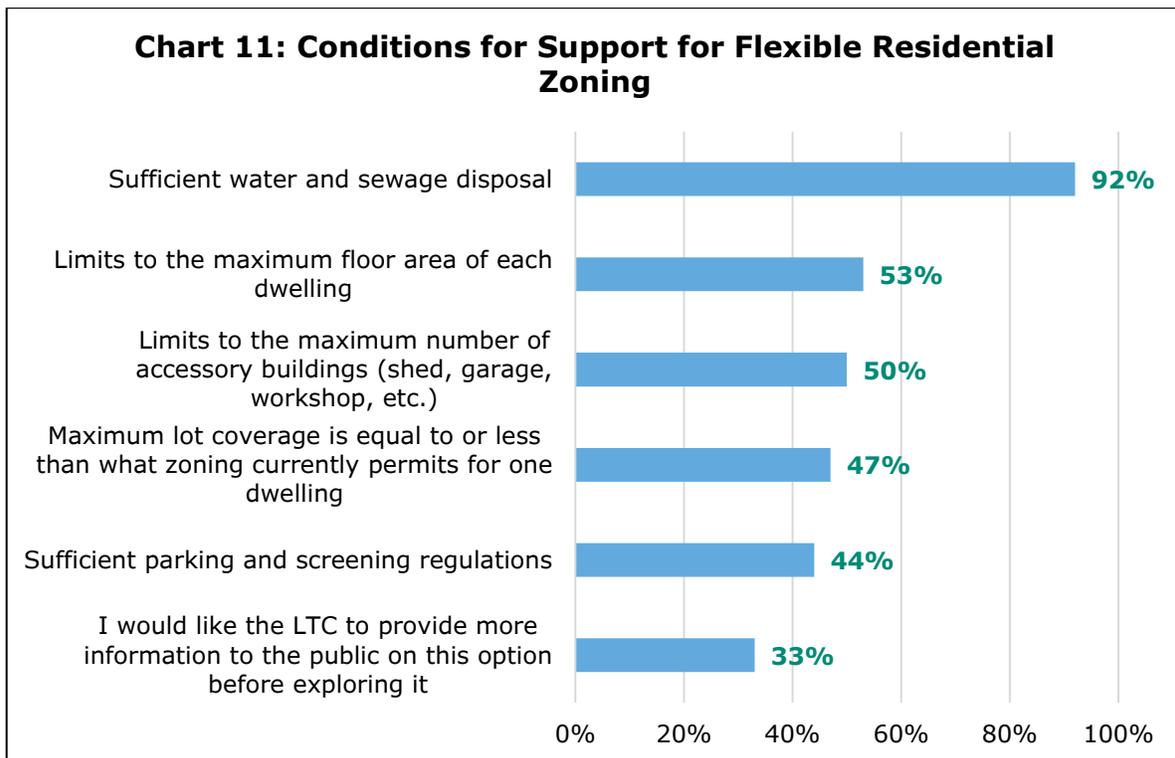
Q5: If you answered Yes or Maybe to Question 4, please indicate the conditions under which you would support more flexible zoning for residential parcels to allow for more residential units per parcel. Please check all that apply.

General Findings

Two hundred and thirty-four people responded to this question. 104 people (44.4%) skipped this question. There were 29 comments.

As shown in Chart 11 below, the dominant concern (92%) is ensuring sufficient water and sewage disposal to support any increase in density. 50% of respondents want limits on the maximum floor area of each dwelling if flexible zoning were to be allowed.

Responses to the other criteria are: putting limits on the number of accessory buildings allowed on a property (50%); ensuring that maximum lot coverage is equal to or less than zoning currently permits (47%); and, putting in place regulations to address sufficiency of parking and screening (44%). Again, it is important to note that one-third of respondents want the LTC to provide more information on this option.



Findings by Housing Status

Owner respondents are more likely than renters to support limits to maximum floor area (56%/40%), limits to the number of accessory buildings (50%/37%), and limits to maximum lot coverage (50%/37%).

Qualitative Responses

The qualitative responses mirrored the quantitative data results. Although only about one quarter of respondents to question 4 indicated they are not supportive of flexible zoning, and although the overall response rate to that question was very high, about one-third of respondents chose to skip this question

Water, as usual, is important to virtually all of the respondents. There is uncertainty about how to limit buildings/lot coverage as well as house size. The commenters put environmental protection, especially that of trees, first (8); water and sewage adequacy are also important (4). Comments on density are varied and include: no rezoning (1); no density increases (2); no subdivisions (1); and, more residential parcels through density transfer only. Two commenters support the idea that higher densities are more sustainable, and one thinks increasing density would be feasible in some zones. One urged the reassessment of secondary suites on ALR land.

The following quotes shine a light on these perspectives:

- “I hope water and sewage in this survey leave open the possibilities of more rainwater harvesting and properly built composting toilets.”
- “Control tree loss where possible.”
- “I think it would be better to see more people living closely on a lot than a massive house with only one couple, etc. in it.”
- “Allow homeowners to manage their own property without interference.”

Conclusions: Questions 4/5

A bare majority of respondents (54%) unconditionally support flexible zoning in residential zones, and an additional 22% are undecided. As with other options a primary concern is water and sewage adequacy and the impact on the environment, especially trees. The size of dwellings/ lots and lot coverage are also important, especially for owners. There appears to have been some confusion as to whether ‘flex’ zoning would result in increased densities.

Question 6: Managing Growth

Q6: Please rate the following options for ensuring managed growth.

This question was intended to examine respondents’ interest in changing policies and regulations to manage growth.

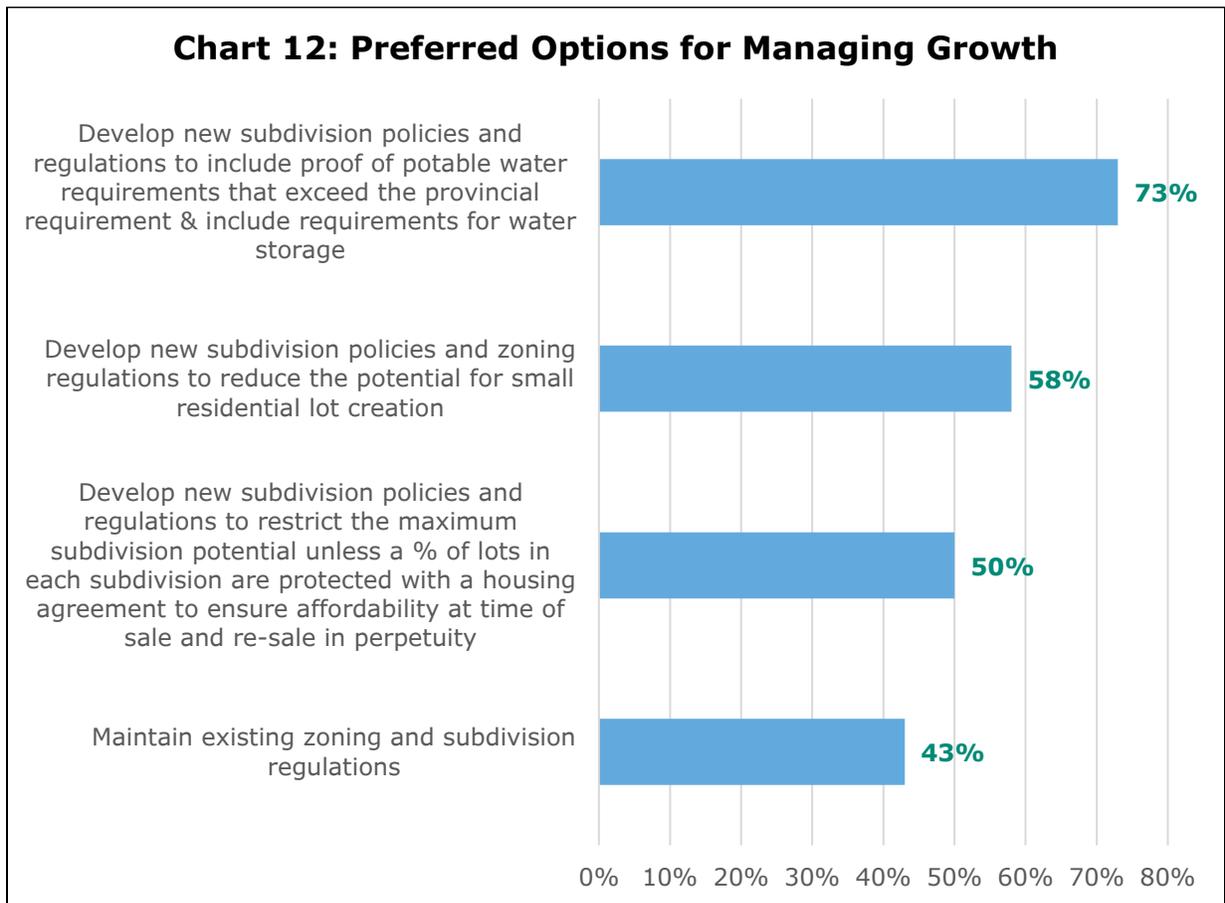
General Findings

There were 281 responses to this question; 57 people (17.1%) skipped. In addition, there were 183 comments. The options and relative weightings are outlined in the table below.

Table 14: Support for Growth Management Options				
Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Maintain existing zoning and subdivision regulations	20%	23%	26%	11%
Develop new subdivision policies and regulations to include proof of potable water requirements that exceed the provincial requirement & include requirements for water storage.	42%	31%	9%	9%
Develop new subdivision policies and zoning regulations to reduce the potential for small residential lot creation	32%	26%	18%	13%
Develop new subdivision policies and regulations to restrict the maximum subdivision potential unless a % of lots in each subdivision are protected with a housing agreement to ensure affordability at time of sale and re-sale in perpetuity.	23%	27%	14%	16%

As shown in Chart 12, when the options *Strongly Support* and *Support* are combined, the option with the highest support is “develop new subdivision policies and regulations to include proof of potable water requirements that exceed the provincial requirement & include requirements for water storage” (73%). This is followed by the option to “develop new subdivision policies and zoning regulations to reduce the potential for small residential lot creation” (58%).

The other two options both scored 50% or under: “require that new subdivision policies and regulations to restrict the maximum subdivision potential unless a percentage of lots in each subdivision are protected with a housing agreement to ensure affordability at time of sale and re-sale in perpetuity” (50%); and, “maintain existing zoning and subdivision regulations” (43%).



Findings by Housing Status

Owners are more likely than renters to support maintaining existing zoning and subdivision regulations (46% compared to 25%), and encouraging the LTC to develop new subdivision polices and zoning regulations to reduce the potential for small residential lots to be created (63% compared to 29% of renters).

Not surprisingly, 73% of renter respondents support new subdivision policies and regulations that could restrict the maximum subdivision potential unless a percentage of lots in each subdivision are protected with a housing agreement to ensure affordability at time of sale and re-sale in perpetuity. Only 46% of property owner respondents support this option.

Qualitative Responses

There were 183 qualitative responses for Question 6.

a) Maintaining Existing Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

The 39 qualitative comments on this option mirror the concerns expressed in the quantitative results about juxtaposing density increases and environmental protection with the need for affordable housing. Interestingly three respondents called for the OCP to be “redone”. The comments also mirror the nearly even distribution between those who want no change and those who feel some change is required.

Four commenters want no density increases; two want no subdivisions, and one no rezoning. Three commenters are in favour of strengthening the regulations and/or focusing on environmental protection. On the other hand, seven commenters see a need for flexibility and change and four want change to give priority to affordable or low-income housing.

The quotes below reflect these perspectives:

- “Clearly this is not working. Some change is needed.”
- “Not if they preclude innovative ways to create affordable or supportive housing to provide housing security for current working residents in unstable / insecure / unsafe housing situations.”
- “Any changes should be carefully considered because the potential impacts of allowing increased density could be significant for the environment and island culture. However, specific actions taken to increase rental housing (in perpetuity) would be beneficial. Even if it’s market rate, the creat[ion] of additional spaces will mean rent will decrease.”

b) Increasing Proof of Water Requirements and Including Water Storage Requirements

Although this question has the highest number of positive responses and the lowest number of ‘unsure’ responses, the 52 comments made are divided between no change and strong support. Seven commenters want no new densities; three no subdivisions; one each for no building and no rezoning; and two want downzoning.

On the other side, 18 commenters are in favour of requiring rainwater storage for new buildings with encouragement for existing dwellings to add such systems. Seven commenters are either unsure about provincial regulations, or see them as being excessive, especially for small homes with one or two residents. Several commenters see no need to exceed the provincial regulations.

The following quotes illustrate these perspectives:

- “Require ALL properties to install rainwater systems. Phased in over 5-year period with incentives at first and penalties after 5 years for non-compliant houses.”
- “Rainwater harvested for greywater and blackwater usage may greatly reduce our impact on local resources. Who knows, it may even help when the grounds are dry in the summer and people continue discharging used water back to the land through sewage treatment systems.”
- “Water requirements sound high esp. for 1-2 people; definitely require water storage.”

c) Creating New Policies and Regulations to Reduce Small Residential Lot Creation

42 comments were received for this option. A small majority of respondents support this option although there is some disagreement about the size of a “small” lot. Four commenters want lots no smaller than 1 acre; one no smaller than .5 hectare; and two no smaller than 1 hectare. Five support an increase with conditions such as: clustering dwellings; with parkland; with shared sewage and water services; for affordable housing; and, to accommodate tiny houses. Eight commenters want no new lots; six want no increase in density; one no subdivisions; and two support downzoning only.

The following quotes illuminate some of these concerns:

- “I think it would be better to do more with what we already have than create more lots. Many spread out small lots, all being developed is not good for the environment. More concentrated development with larger protected areas would be better.”
- “I would love to see increased density with shared sewer and water. Kinda gross the way it is now.”
- “I don’t know if this is likely anymore--and I guess it’s all in the definition of what “small” is. If you mean no further potential for subdivision of lots of any size (even on >5 acre lots) I don’t agree.”

d) Creating New Policies and Regulations to Restrict Subdivision Potential Unless a Percentage are Protected with a Housing Agreement to Ensure Affordability

There were 50 comments for this option. The comments reflect considerable uncertainty about how to respond to this proposition. As in responses to other questions, increased density (10), subdivisions (4), and new housing (4) are all rejected. On the other hand, there is a clear desire to support increasing affordable housing, but uncertainty about the usefulness of this approach to accomplish that objective. Fourteen commenters expressed concern about: the authority of the LTC to ensure conditions are met; legal issues; the feasibility of long-term enforcement of the provisions; and maintenance issues. Three commenters want to reduce regulations for developers, given the cost of building and the required amenity provisions.

The following quotes describe some of these perspectives:

- “[Subdivision] should be restricted AND provide affordable options.”
- “How can you ensure anything in perpetuity?”
- “No. This is a rat hole that is difficult to oversee and sure to be exploited.”
- “The cost of building is [exorbitant] and a housing agreement will not change the cost of building. Have the developer donate 10% of their allowable densities to the Density Bank.”

Conclusions: Question 6

There is comparatively little support for maintaining the status quo policy framework around managing growth. Instead, there is strong support for policies addressing water conservation and protection. As well, there is support for limiting the potential for the creation of small lots through subdivision. And although requiring provision of affordable housing as part of subdivision application received less support than the previous two options, almost 52% of respondents support this option.

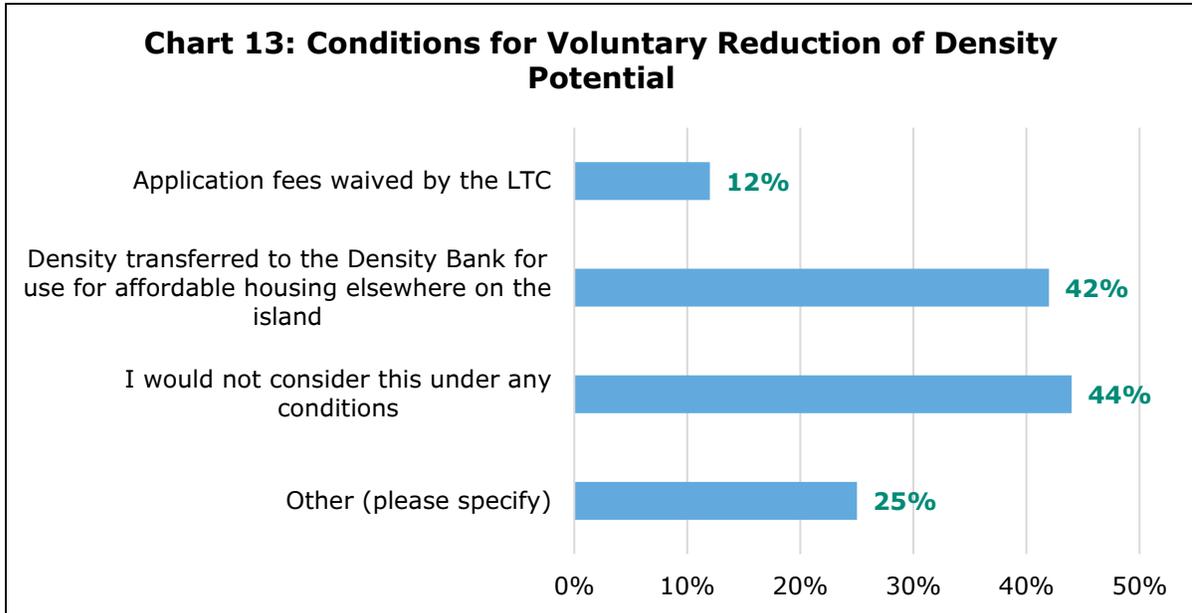
Question 7: Voluntary Density Reduction

This question examines the variety of conditions under which property owners would consider contributing densities to the Density Bank.

Q7: If you own a property with subdivision potential or two adjacent lots, under what conditions would you consider voluntarily reducing the density potential through rezoning or lot consolidation? Please check all that apply.

General Findings

Fifty-two people responded to this question, while 286 (85.1%) skipped.



Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents indicated that they would not consider voluntarily reducing density under any conditions. However, the remaining 56% indicated they would consider voluntarily reducing density if the densities are used for affordable housing elsewhere on the island (42%), or if application fees are waived by the LTC (12%).

Qualitative Responses

Thirteen respondents chose *Other*, which required them to provide a written comment. The preferred option among those who wrote in a response is density transfer, as is the case in the qualitative responses. However, several prefer leaving the adjacent lot undeveloped and the density unused. One commenter who owns 5 adjacent lots pointed out that the financial loss associated with combining lots would be too great. The following comments illustrate these responses.

- “I own a lot and will inherit the lot next door. I intend to keep the inherited lot wild. I do not believe more density is even viable. I will not sell it so someone can build on it.”
- “Only if I could provide an affordable house for renting or purchase.”
- “I would suggest that this consolidation be encouraged, but that the density, although in the Density Bank, remain the property of the original owner and available for sale to owners of lots of sufficient size to be subdividable. This would encourage lot consolidation and reduce lot concentration for the benefit of sewage disposal and access to water.”

Conclusions: Question 7

It appears there is some appetite from over half of the property owners who responded to this question to consider consolidation of adjacent lots under certain conditions and for relinquishing densities if they are used for affordable housing. The waiving of LTC fees did not appear to be a critical consideration.

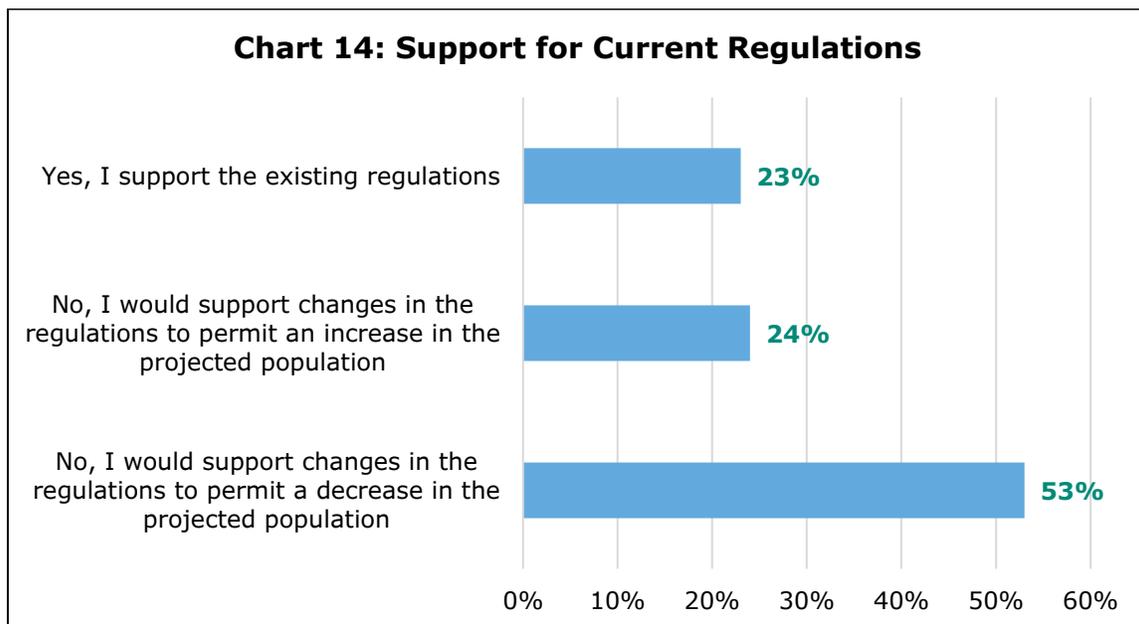
Questions 8/9: Population Growth Attitudes & Management Strategies

The next two questions examine the degree of comfort people have with the status quo policy approach to growth management, or with approaches that would either permit an increase in population or result in a decrease in population, and the regulatory strategies that should be considered to manage growth and its impacts.

Q8: Are you supportive of maintaining the current regulations that could result in maximum build-out?

General Findings

Two hundred and seventy-six people responded to Question 8. Sixty-two people (18.5%) skipped this question.



53% of respondents support changes in regulation that would result in a *decrease* in population. 23% support maintaining the current regulations that could result in full build out. A slightly larger percentage (24%) support changes in regulations to permit an *increase* in the projected population.

Findings by Housing Status

Interestingly, more renters (42%) than owners (22%) support regulatory changes to allow an increase in population, while more owners (56%) than renters (29%) support regulatory changes that would result in a decrease in population.

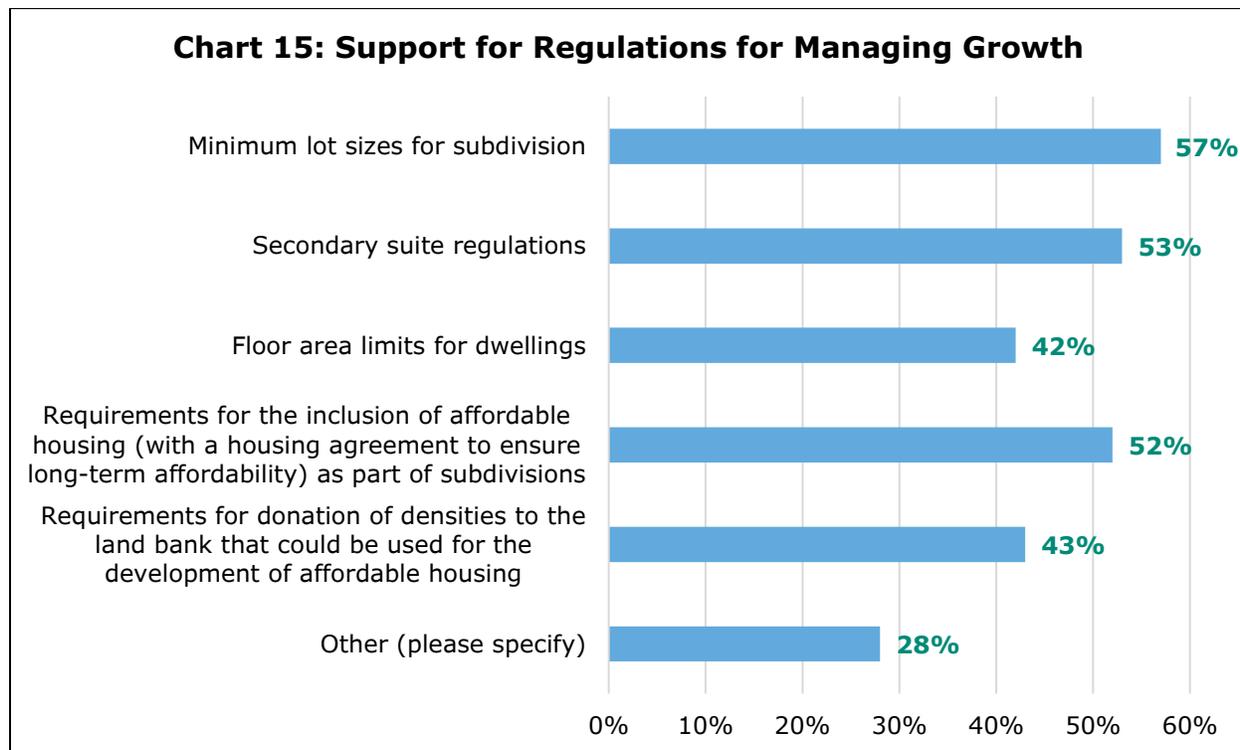
Qualitative Responses

There was no allowance for qualitative responses to this question; however, two comments in the following question regretted that there was no opportunity to comment on this question.

Q9: If you answered No to question 8, what regulations do you recommend the LTC review to manage growth and/or the impacts of growth? Please check all that apply.

General Findings

Two hundred and four people responded to Question 9; 134 (40%) skipped the question. There were 58 responses in the *Other* category.



The three strategies for managing growth that received more than 50% support are: establishing minimum lot sizes for subdivisions (57%); establishing secondary suite regulations (54%); and requiring the inclusion of affordable housing (supported by a housing agreement) as part of subdivisions (52%). Two other options garnered less than

50% support: requiring that donation of densities to the Density Bank be used for the development of affordable housing (43%); and establishing floor area limits for dwellings (42%).

Findings by Housing Status

Owner respondents (59%) are more supportive than renters (43%) for minimum lot sizes for subdivisions. Not surprisingly, renters (91%) are much more supportive than owners (47%) for requirements for affordable housing as part of subdivision, more supportive (66%) than owners (40%) of the idea of requirements of donations of densities to the Density Bank for affordable housing.

Qualitative Responses

Just under one third of respondents chose to comment, and several stated outright that there are no options they could support. There were 18 responses that want to see no more density or development: no increased growth (5); no subdivision (5); no density increase (5); no building (1); and, no (major) development (2). Seven commented on secondary suites, generally advocating for loosened requirements and the renovation of substandard dwellings. Four commenters would agree to an increase in density for affordable housing while two want to see it spread around the island. Two commenters want multi-family units; two support low-rise apartment buildings; two likewise for trailer parks; and, one each for tiny houses and town houses. Several commenters want to see no restrictions on private property (2) or no more regulations (1). The comments below illustrate the range of responses.

- “I don’t believe there is a way to decrease growth, but if there was, I would support it. Gabriola is already the densest of all Gulf Islands. Most of the above suggestions seem to actually be for increasing growth.”
- “Specific affordable housing projects paired with other reduced density bylaws to protect the environment while providing some housing.”
- “Require a minimum percentage of trees to stay on the land for any further private buildings.”
- “Loosen SS regs; reject requirements for affordable housing or donations but both could be encouraged.”

Conclusions: Questions 8/9

As Question 8 responses show, Gabriolans are split on the question of growth. Slightly over half of Gabriolans surveyed are supportive of *degrowth* strategies. Almost half support either the status quo approach (23%) or implementing regulations that would increase growth (24%).

Question 9, rather than focusing of strategies that would reduce growth (e.g., down-zoning of existing lots), focused instead on mitigating the impacts of growth while addressing housing needs. There is qualified support for all the options presented but establishing minimum lot sizes for subdivision, requiring the inclusion of affordable housing (supported by a housing agreement) as part of subdivisions, and regulating secondary suites are the most often chosen options.

Questions 10/11: Sources of Freshwater

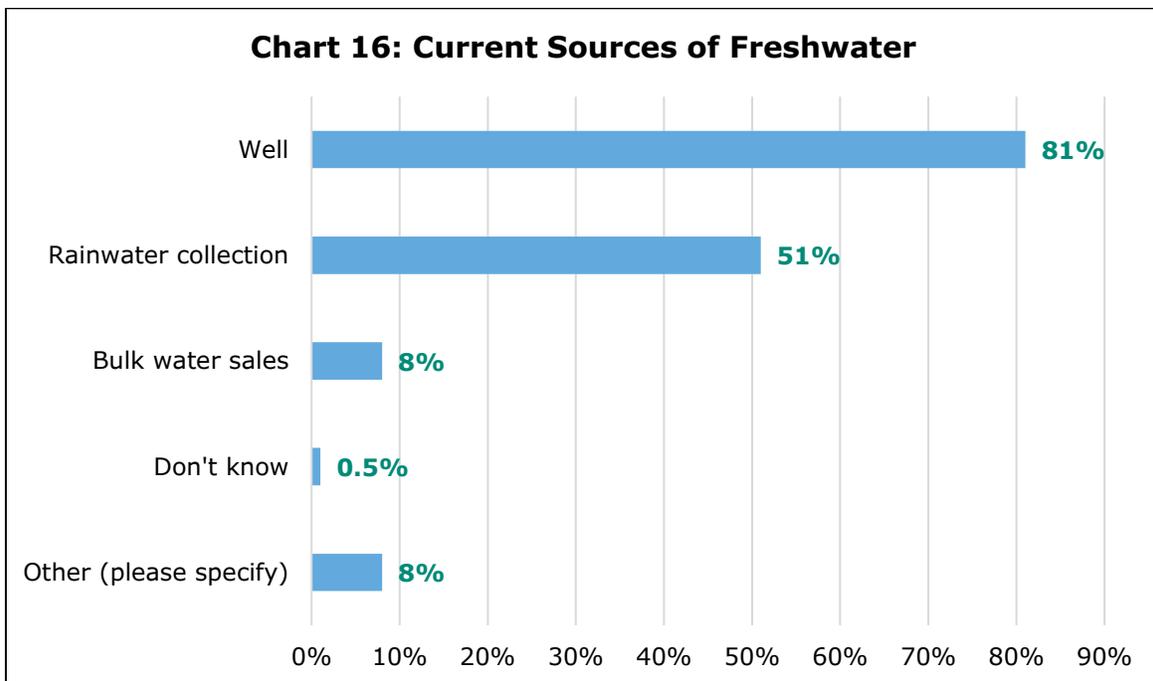
These two questions were aimed at understanding Gabriolans’ freshwater sources.

Q10: What is your current source of freshwater? Please check all that apply.

General Findings

Question 10 was answered by 279 respondents; 59 people (18%) skipped this question. Respondents were asked to check all sources that apply.

Eighty-one percent of respondents (226) indicated that they use well water; 51% (97) use rainwater collection; 8% (14) purchase bulk water; and 0.5% do not know the source of their water.



Qualitative Responses

This question received 16 comments, which tended to highlight the need to purchase potable (drinking water) (4) rather than bulk water use:

- “I still buy my drinking water.”

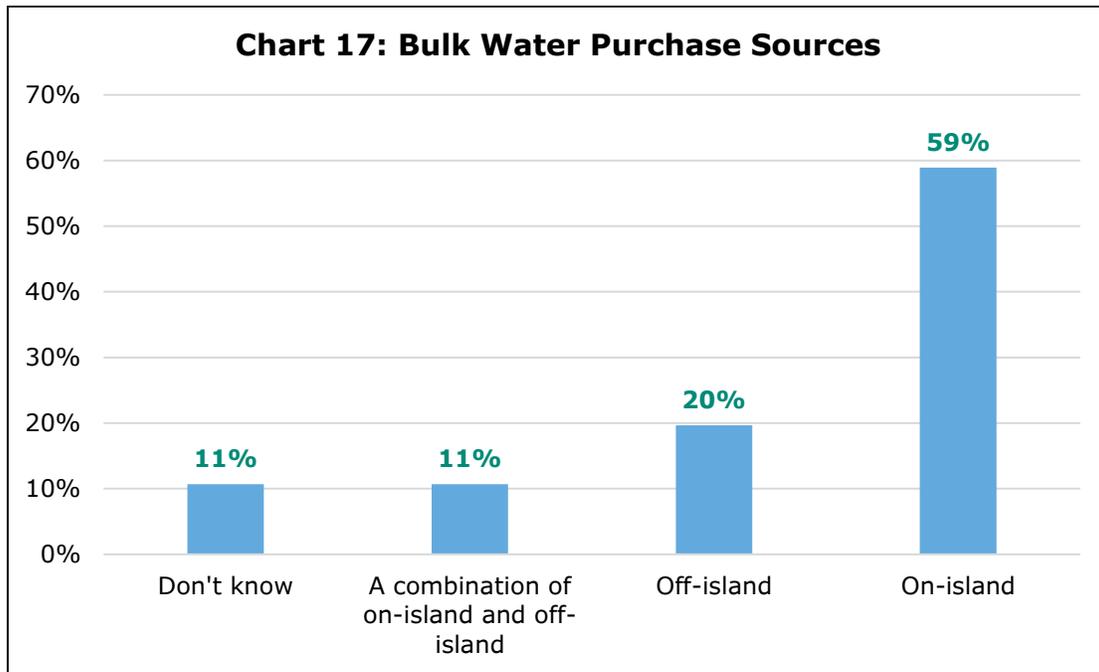
Several commenters indicated they use rainwater for the garden and several indicated they have ample water supplies.

Q11: If you purchase bulk water, do you source your bulk water on island or off-island?

General Findings

Fifty-six people responded to this question; 282 (84%) skipped it.

As the chart below indicates, the majority of those who purchase bulk water source it from on-island (59%) with another 11% using a combination of on- and off-island sources. 20% of respondents use only off-island sources.



Conclusions: Questions 10/11

The predominant source of water is wells followed by rainwater. Bulk water sales do not appear to be a significant source of water. What these data do not tell us is what combination of resources individual households use (e.g., only wells, or wells and rainwater collection). It appears that most people who bought water in bulk do so from on-island sources although it is not clear whether people are also including large refillable bottles of drinking water in the bulk water category, especially in question 11, given that about double the number of respondents answered question 11 than did those who indicated they purchased bulk water in question 10.

Questions 12/13: Rainwater Collection and Storage

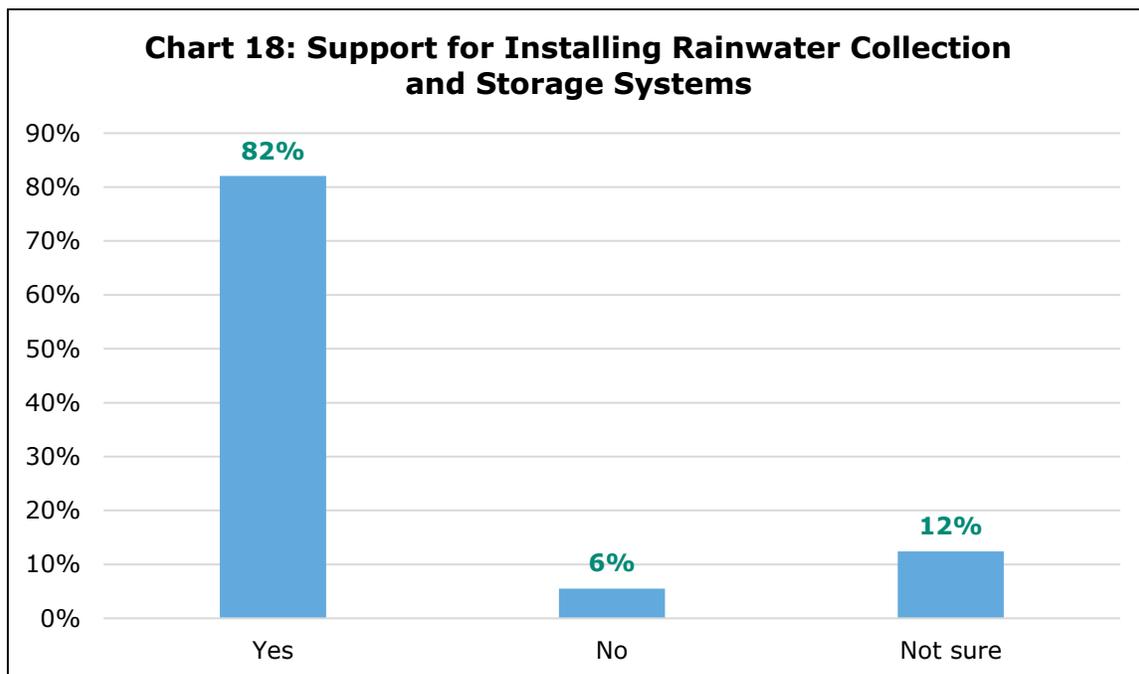
These two questions were aimed at understanding Gabriolans’ attitudes to rainwater harvesting and their intended uses for collected rainwater.

Q12: Would you consider installing a rainwater collection and storage system?

General Findings

Question 12 was answered by 217 people; 121 skipped (36.2%) the question.

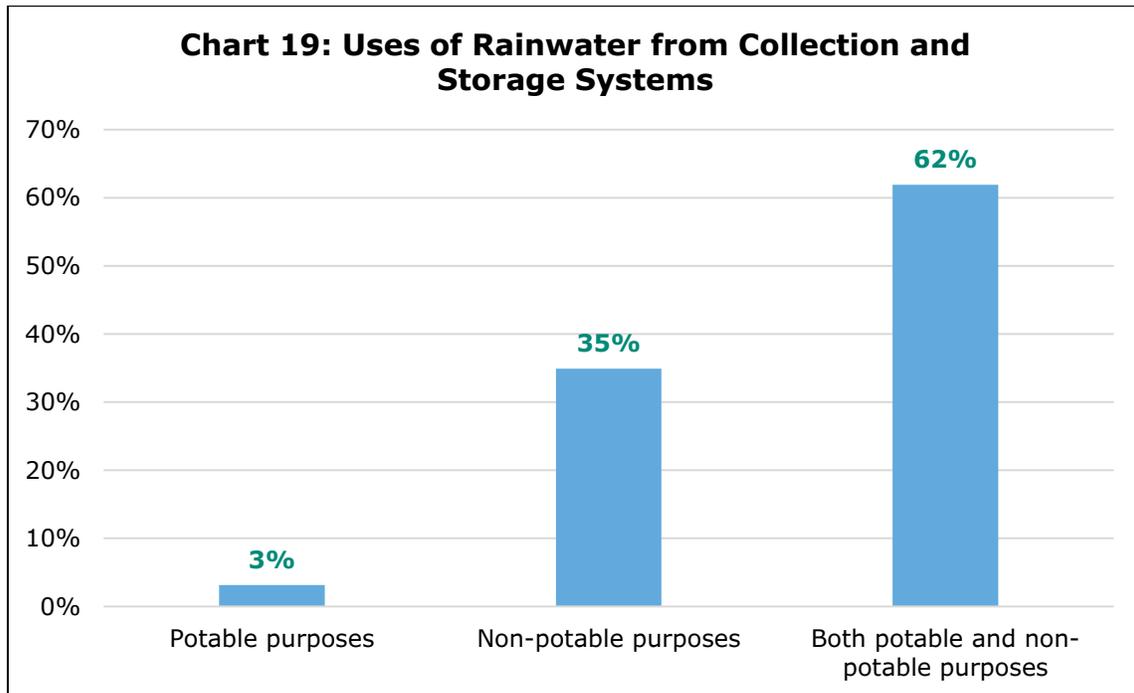
A high percentage of respondents indicated that they would consider installing a rainwater collection and storage system (82%). An additional 12% are unsure and only 6% said they would not consider a rainwater system.



Q13: If you use or would consider using a rainwater collection and storage system, what do/would you use it for?

There were 252 responses to Question 13 and 86 skips (25.5%).

Over 60% of respondents indicated they would/do use rainwater for both potable and non-potable uses, followed by 35% who would/do only use it for non-potable purposes and 3% who would/do use rainwater for potable purposes.



Qualitative Responses

There were 19 comments to this question. Most commenters use rainwater for non-potable purposes; several commented on the expense and difficulty of maintaining and monitoring treatments for potability. Several commenters pointed out that there was no option to indicate current use of a rainwater collection system.

- “Forcing people to collect/store rainwater will make houses cost more, not less.”
- “Would like to see reasonably priced set up and maintenance options, especially for older and disabled persons.”

Conclusions: Questions 12/13

Freshwater conservation has been a constant theme throughout the three surveys and a majority of Gabriolans depend on well water or a combination of well water, rainwater collection and bulk water purchases for both potable and non-potable needs. It is important to note that over 80% of respondents indicated they would consider installing a rainwater collection and storage system.

Question 14: Energy Step Code & Universal Access Design

The BC Energy Step Code will result in homes that use “net-zero energy”. The Code is voluntary but local governments may use it, if they wish, to incentivize or require a level of energy efficiency in new construction that goes beyond the requirements of the BC Building Code.

Q14: To what degree would you support regulations that would require new dwellings (approved through a rezoning) to be constructed to meet BC Energy Step Code requirements and Universal Access Design requirements?

This question was used to gauge respondents’ support for increasing energy efficiency and accessibility requirements in new residential construction.

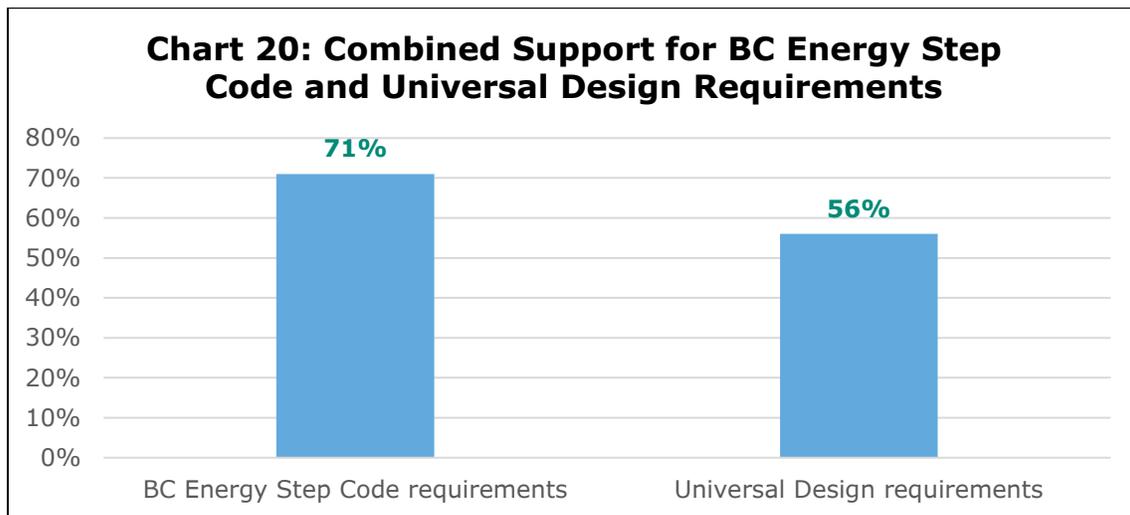
General Findings

There were 273 responses to this question, 65 skips (19.4%) and 67 comments.

The table below shows all responses to this question.

Table 15: Support for BC Energy Step Code and Universal Design Requirements					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
BC Energy Step Code requirements	41%	30%	8%	6%	15%
Universal Design requirements	25%	31%	12%	9%	23%

Over 70% of respondents indicated they *Strongly Agree* (41%) or *Agree* (30%) that new dwelling approved through a rezoning should be constructed to meet BC Energy Step Code requirements. Although only 14% of respondents indicated they *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree* with this policy, 15% indicated they are *Not Sure*.



The question of implementing Universal Access Design requirements received less enthusiastic support with 56% indicating they *Strongly Agree* (25%) or *Agree* (31%), and 21% respondents indicating they *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree* with this policy. Almost one-quarter (23 %) indicated they are *Not sure*.

Qualitative Responses

There were 67 comments to this question: 33 for the Energy Code, and 34 for Universal Access Design. Many of the comments focused on the increased cost of building to the energy code requirements (11), some remarking that the impacts of the increased cost would have a particular effect on the affordability of housing. Some feel the current BC Building Code requirements are sufficient. Commenters noted that Universal Access requirements would also result in cost increases (5) and that current requirements are sufficient (3). There is also some opposition to making both BC Building Code and Universal Access requirements mandatory (9). The comments below reflect the responses:

- “Agree in principle but don’t think it should be mandatory.”
- “I agree in principle, but I also know this item can cause building to be more expensive (even modeling/proofing etc.) This needs to be balanced with the encouragement for building secondary suites, etc.”
- “The building code disables people from building something more affordable. Also, a sustainable dwelling needs an engineer and how can this make housing affordable.”

Conclusions: Question 14

There is stronger support for the early implementation of the BC Energy Step Code than for the Universal Access requirements. Concerns arose primarily around the cost implications for new construction.

Overview of Findings

The findings from the survey responses form the basis for the recommendations that follow. They are organized by three themes: managing growth, conserving biodiversity and freshwater, and creating affordable housing.

Managing Growth

Current projections suggest that the population could grow from the current 4425 to 6,632 if all vacant lots, lots with potential for secondary suites, and subdividable lots on Gabriola were built-out and occupied. This projection also assumes full year occupancy compared to the current year-round occupancy rate of 72%. This projection excludes the lands set aside for Treaty because there is no way of knowing the subdivision potential at this time.

The goals in the Gabriola Official Community Plan (1997) only explicitly mention the term “growth” once – in which “gradual and appropriate” rather than “rapid” growth is to be encouraged. The other policies and objectives speak to regulating the density that is already permitted through zoning. Anticipating or managing new growth (except for multi-family affordable housing) does not seem to be contemplated in the OCP.

Survey 3 (Q8) asked respondents whether they wanted to *maintain* the current regulations that could result in maximum build-out or wanted to see regulations that would permit an *increase* in the projected population, or a *decrease*. The majority of Gabriolans surveyed want regulations that would result in a population decrease (53%) or maintained at its current trajectory (23%). One-quarter (24%) wish to see regulations that would result in an increase in population.

Respondents were also asked to rate policies to manage growth (Survey 3 Q6). There is comparatively little support for maintaining the status quo. Instead, there is strong support for policies addressing water conservation and protection, as well as support for limiting the potential for the creation of small lots through subdivision. Almost 52% of respondents support requiring provision of affordable housing as part of a subdivision application.

In Survey 3 Question 9, respondents were asked about for a variety of regulations that could be implemented to manage growth or mitigate its impact. There is qualified support for all the options presented but establishing minimum lot sizes for subdivision, requiring the inclusion of affordable housing (supported by a housing agreement) as part of subdivisions, and regulating secondary suites were the most often chosen options and received more than 50% support.

Over half of property owners with subdividable or adjacent lots indicated that they would voluntarily reduce their density potential through rezoning or lot consolidation

(Survey 3 Q7) on the condition that the densities be used for affordable housing elsewhere on the island.

Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation

The responses to Survey 2 Q2 show clear support among respondents for incorporating the concept of biodiversity into the Official Community Plan. Although only a small number of respondents propose using the term biocultural diversity, this term is being proposed in academic journals as a more robust way of understanding the relationship between human culture and nature (for example see [British Ecological Society](#)). This suggests that the concept itself needs to be clearly articulated – for instance, delineating the difference between *biodiversity* or *biocultural diversity*, which incorporates the role of human activity.

Survey 2 (Q 3) examined attitudes towards policies that *encouraged* actions versus policies that *required* actions. Current OCP policies lean towards encouraging certain behaviours and applying more prescriptive strategies (e.g., through rezoning applications or establishing DPAs) in targeted areas. There is a clear desire among those surveyed to take a more assertive approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity on the island including: establishing regulations that would apply to all property owners; and, establishing DPA to address priority conservation objectives. A need was also expressed for more educational materials directed to increase understanding of what is possible in each of the specific land use areas and zones.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of support for specific policies in the Coastal Douglas-fir Toolkit (Survey 2 Q4). There is clear support for all measures to protect and enhance Gabriola's CDF biogeoclimatic zone. There is strong support for developing new policies which prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems (95%), establishing new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas of the island (94%), and developing new policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private properties (91%).

Survey 2 (Q 5) addressed freshwater conservation. There is strong support for the entire array of policy options for protecting groundwater on Gabriola. There is also support for developing and distributing informational materials to all householders and new residents. Freshwater conservation was a constant theme throughout all three surveys and a majority of respondents indicate that they depend on well water or a combination of well water, rainwater collection and bulk water purchases for both potable and non-potable needs. Over 80% of respondents (Survey 3 Q13) indicate they would consider installing a rainwater collection and storage system.

The early implementation of the BC Energy Step Code received stronger support than the Universal Access Design requirements (Survey 3 Q14). Concerns are primarily around the cost implications for new construction arising from these changes.

Affordable Housing

In Survey 1 (Q2) respondents were asked to rate the current criteria for evaluating multi-dwelling affordable housing development proposals. Overall, the highest ranked criteria are all related to administrative guidelines and processes as to how proposals would be evaluated and managed, with one exception – the impact on water, waste, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.

The lower ranked criteria are all related to infrastructure, suggesting that with the exception of the ecological impact considerations, concerns about infrastructure such as project density, dwelling size, etc. are of less concern than how the project was designed to meet need and managed. Nonetheless all the criteria received more than 50% approval.

Respondents give strong to moderate support for expanding the categories of housing need (Survey 1 Q3) to include any low-income households (76%) and to include low to moderate income households (68%).

Survey 1 (Q4, 5 & 6) explored secondary suite policies and challenges to increasing stock. Currently, secondary suites are allowed on properties larger than 2 hectares / 5 acres. Opportunities exist to expand this policy to include properties smaller than 2 hectares / 5 acres, and to introduce a new policy allowing a flex zoning approach targeted to specific needs for all residential properties. However, expanding the potential to create secondary suites in all residential zones may not be the best tool to address housing affordability given that survey responses show that property owners perceive some serious barriers to providing secondary accommodation. Survey 1 Q4 asked those with these properties what the barriers are to building a secondary suite on their property but did not ask them *whether* they would consider doing so. The main barriers to construction of secondary suites on properties over 2 hectares / 5 acres are financial cost, responsibility of being a landlord, and the risk of reduced privacy.

Fewer than one-third of respondents supported allowing secondary suites on properties smaller than 2 hectares / 5 acres (Survey 1 Q5 & 6). Forty-six percent (46%) felt it would be appropriate, but their support came with significant caveats regarding ecological protection, limiting floor area and lot coverage, specifying a minimum lot size, requiring rent limits to ensure affordability, and requiring higher construction standards.

A bare majority of respondents (54%) unconditionally supported flexible zoning in residential zones, and an additional 22% were undecided but not opposed. As with other options, a primary concern was water and the impact on the environment. There

appears to have been some confusion as to whether or not ‘flex’ zoning would result in increased densities.

Survey respondents (Survey 3 Q2 & 3) were asked whether they supported more flexible zoning for commercial and institutional parcels in order to incentivize the construction of rental or market housing units during redevelopment. There is qualified interest in this option. The support for allowing an increased number of residential units in commercial or institutional zoned properties is conditional on water and an assurance that the units would remain as rental units with affordability guaranteed.

Recommendations

These recommendations place Gabriolans’ social needs – in this case, for affordable housing – within the context of protecting Gabriola’s unique ecology. These recommendations do not follow the same order as the survey analysis; instead, we have pulled together lessons from the survey findings to address one question: how do we protect biodiversity and freshwater resources while recognizing that “the islands are first of all an existing community of people, and the welfare of those people, and those who join them and come after them, must always be a primary concern of the Trust” (Islands Trust 1974 Policy document)?

The recommendations that follow are interconnected, focusing on managing growth, and conserving biodiversity and water through policies broadly applied across the island, and affordable housing policies focused on approaches that produce the greatest number of housing units with the least impact on the environment and groundwater resources. These recommendations represent actions that received strong support in the surveys. We conclude with recommendations that address how all of this work can be accomplished.

Growth Management Strategy

Objective: To ensure that growth on Gabriola is managed and gradual, balancing human and environmental needs to ensure long-term sustainability

Although limited, the LTC has some tools to limit the creation of new densities and/or to ensure any densities created support either social or biodiversity objectives or both. It is important to note that only the Province has authority to approve subdivisions, however the LTC can establish regulations regarding the rezoning of properties. Managing growth must ensure the needs of the human community are understood and addressed in the context of ensuring biocultural diversity.

To accomplish this, we ask the HAPC to recommend that the Local Trust Committee establish a growth management strategy.

This strategy should focus on articulating a clear understanding of what appropriate growth would entail and implementing necessary actions to curtail the negative impacts of unmanaged growth. These actions include the following:

- Clearly define what the OCP terms ‘gradual’ and ‘appropriate’ growth mean
- Implement a policy requiring all subdivision/rezoning applications contribute to an increase in affordable housing stock

- Establish a new regulation to be applied to rezoning applications to permit an increase or transfer of density only if a percentage of lots in each subdivision is protected with a housing agreement to ensure affordability as rental units or at time of sale and re-sale in perpetuity
- Establish regulations that set a minimum lot size requirement (e.g., 2 hectares) for subdivision rezoning applications, and
- Implement policies to facilitate willing owners of subdividable or adjacent lots to voluntarily reduce their density potential through rezoning or lot consolidation, under the condition that those densities would be deposited in the Density Bank for creating affordable housing elsewhere on the island.

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

Objective: To ensure the recovery and long-term sustainability of our endangered Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem

Survey respondents expressed strong concerns about protecting the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem. However, there is currently no definition of the concept of biodiversity in the Official Community Plan. Effectively addressing this pressing concern will require taking community-wide action. The strategies recommended below are aimed at achieving island-wide impacts rather than relying on case-by-case applications and a piecemeal approach and were identified as the most effective approaches by survey respondents.

We request that the HAPC recommend a biodiversity strategy to the LTC with the following elements:

- Clearly define the concept of biodiversity in the OCP, for instance, the difference between biodiversity or biocultural diversity which incorporates the role of human activity.
- Implement more results-oriented regulations to protect biodiversity including:
 - Developing new policies and regulations to protect and restore CDF ecosystems on private properties (e.g., restrictions on tree cutting)
 - Establishing new Development Permit Areas to protect and restore CDF ecosystems in high priority areas of the island
 - Developing new policies which prioritize parkland dedication at the time of subdivision, if it results in protection of CDF ecosystems

- Collaborate with the RDN and other partners to:
 - Advocate that the Regional District of Nanaimo parks department prioritize parkland dedication (when it is triggered at the time of subdivision) to protect CDF ecosystems
 - Advocate that the RDN ensure management planning and implementation of existing and new parklands prioritizes the protection of CDF
 - Require new dwellings, approved through rezoning, to be constructed to meet BC Energy Step Code Requirements, and to consider extending this requirement to all new construction, including commercial, institutional and multi-family developments, and
 - Develop a public education program to encourage homebuilders and owners to apply Universal Design principles when designing new homes.

Freshwater Conservation Strategy

Objective: To ensure the protection and sustainable management of freshwater resources

Freshwater conservation was a constant theme throughout all three surveys. There was strong support from survey respondents for the entire array of water policy options.

We ask the HAPC to recommend an aggressive groundwater protection strategy to the LTC, with the following components:

- Implement new policies requiring that subdivisions and redevelopment of residential properties meet higher water conservation standards by:
 - Establishing new proof of water regulations requiring that new subdivisions exceed the provincial minimum standard
 - Establishing new regulations requiring rainwater collection and storage for new residential development
- Establish new regulations that would require groundwater monitoring and data collection for new commercial, industrial, institutional and multi-family developments
- Advocate to the RDN to increase the capacity of the current *Rainwater Harvesting Rebate* program to meet demand
- Develop policies and regulations that require retention of forests and watershed ecosystems to promote groundwater recharge, and,

- Develop and distribute informational materials to all householders and new residents regarding water conservation activities that individual households can undertake, (for instance, see the Salt Spring Island Water Stewardship initiative <https://saltspringcommunityalliance.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1953e744e01bd7cb2f320440c&id=a218ee1760&e=1f0b9beedb>).

Affordable Housing Strategy

Objective: To ensure a timely supply of affordable, appropriate housing that meets the needs of Gabriolans in a way that minimizes impacts on biodiversity and freshwater sustainability

Ensuring a supply of affordable, appropriate housing will require a strategy that provides the required number of units in a way that has the least impact on biodiversity and water. To do this we recommend an affordable housing strategy that prioritizes multi-unit projects appropriately sited and located, along with targeted activities for dispersed accommodation to address specific needs (e.g., elder care, extended family accommodation).

We ask the HAPC to recommend the following actions to the LTC to achieve housing, biodiversity and water objectives:

- Set housing targets and timelines by identifying the number and proportion of units to be achieved through multi-unit projects and through targeted dispersed initiatives such as secondary suites, mixed commercial/residential and flex zoning (implementation is addressed in the *Governance* section following).

Strengthen multi-dwelling proposal criteria. The following actions should be taken to ensure that the criteria for assessing multi-dwelling proposals meets the needs of low to moderate income households, is effectively and fairly managed, and has the lowest possible impact on the environment and water.

To achieve this, we ask the HAPC to recommend to the LTC, the following actions:

- Expand the housing need criteria to include any low-income households and low to moderate income households by adjusting the affordability definition as necessary
- Retain current requirements for housing agreements for affordable housing
- Add a provision to allow a mix of affordable and market options to ensure project viability

- Review the literature regarding the provision of common areas such as kitchen and recreation facilities in multi-dwelling projects and include in multi-dwelling proposal criteria and in housing agreement requirements, if warranted
- Remove the requirement that multi-dwelling affordable housing for low-income families are to come *only from banked densities* (see recommendations for Managing Growth above).

Revise secondary suite policies to target housing that addresses specific needs (e.g. distributed housing, worker housing, caregiver housing). Currently efforts to ensure rental housing rely on the regulation allowing secondary suites on properties of 2 hectares or larger. If all parcels were developed with secondary suites, it would increase the rental housing stock but would not guarantee affordability. Therefore, creating policies to allow secondary suites on properties smaller than 2 hectares, and to allow flex zoning for all residential properties must be considered carefully. There are three issues that must be addressed. First, survey responses showed that property owners perceived some serious barriers to offering secondary accommodation; therefore, there is no way to guarantee that property owners will create the necessary stock, nor that it will be affordable. Second, expanding the potential to create additional secondary accommodation on properties smaller than 2 hectares may create an increased environmental burden on biodiversity and water conservation. Finally, allowing flexible zoning to meet household needs (such as the need for caregiver, or family member accommodation) will be difficult to oversee.

In consideration of these challenges, we ask the HAPC to recommend to the LTC, the following actions:

- Retain the current policies regarding secondary suites on properties 2 hectares or larger but explore the implications of reducing the upper limit to allow secondary suites on properties of 1 hectares to 1.99 hectares. To address ecosystem and freshwater conservation conditions, all building permit applications must meet water, sewage and energy conservation objectives
- Given property owners concerns about the responsibilities of being a landlord, advocate with the RDN (responsible for affordable housing within the RDN) to create or build on existing tenant/landlord support programs which may encourage more property owners to create secondary accommodation
- Replace the term “secondary suite” with “secondary accommodation” to more accurately reflect the full range of secondary accommodation options (e.g., suite, detached cottage, etc.)
- Explore flexible zoning to meet targeted housing needs in residential zones. Flex zoning could be a way of creating increased capacity to provide caregiver and family member housing and had strong conditional support in the survey. The

challenge with this option is to ensure that the accommodation is used for the intended purpose (e.g., caregiver, family member) rather than becoming part of the existing illegal accommodation stock. To address this, we recommend that flexible zoning in residential zones be conditional on having a mechanism in place to ensure the prescribed usage (e.g., Temporary Use Permit).

Increase housing units in commercial and institutional zoned properties.

Currently, only one housing unit is permitted per commercial parcel and no units are allowed in institutionally- zoned properties. Increasing housing availability in existing and new developments may address the needs of workers, and one and two person households.

We ask the HAPC to recommend the following actions to the LTC:

- Explore options to increase the number of residential units for commercial zoned properties including transferring densities and increasing densities contingent on water, sewage and environmental considerations and that units would remain as rental units (rather than strata title market units)
- Extend the policy to include institutional zoned properties
- Require the property owner to sign a housing agreement assuring that units will remain as rental units with a mix of affordability guaranteed.

Governance, Oversight and Public Education

The Local Trust Committee can implement policies and regulations to address managed growth, biodiversity and water conservation objectives but it has no mandate or capacity to oversee the implementation of an environmentally responsible affordable housing plan. Implementing these strategies will require the time of Trust planners as well as the capacity to undertake public engagement activities, monitor the impacts of policy changes, track progress and recommend course corrections. These latter activities are outside the scope of the planners' duties. Accomplishing the objectives outlined above will require funding and the governance capacity to oversee this project.

As mentioned earlier in this report, this public engagement process would have cost over \$70,000 to conduct had the individuals on the committee, the majority of whom worked for free, billed for their time. If the Islands Trust is truly committed to protecting biodiversity, conserving freshwater and addressing affordable housing, it will need to commit multiyear funding to ensure the important objectives outlined above are met. This is not a burden that falls solely on the Trust, but the Trust must exercise leadership in getting other partners to the table to contribute their fair share.

The success of the implementation of the growth management, biodiversity, water conservation and affordable housing strategies will require resources, governance, oversight, and evaluation.

To achieve this, we ask the HAPC to recommend the following actions to the LTC:

- Establish a Housing Affordability and Managed Growth Planning Commission made up of volunteer commissioners appointed by the LTC and supported by a paid consultant and LTC staff. The Commission would be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the four strategies (growth management, biodiversity, freshwater conservation, and housing affordability) and ensuring the work is aligned with the ongoing work on reconciliation and climate change. Its responsibilities would include:
 - Planning and administering different aspects of the strategies (for instance, if there are housing agreements that need to be monitored, how would that occur)
 - Setting targets and timelines in consultation with the LTC
 - Evaluating progress so the LTC will know when the strategic objectives have been achieved and to what degree (e.g., hectares of CDF ecosystem protected, units of housing created)
 - Providing ongoing public information to increase public knowledge
 - Implementing public engagement activities as the strategies are developed and rolled out.
- Provide appropriate funding to support the implementation of affordable housing, biodiversity and water conservation strategies by:
 - Establishing an appropriate budget to support the implementation of the strategies
 - Committing appropriate Island Trust funding,
 - Working in collaboration with the RDN (the body responsible for the regional housing strategy) and other community partners to acquire the necessary resources to staff this initiative
 - Exploring the option of a tax requisition to finance this initiative (through both the Local Trust and RDN).

Proposed Policy & Regulation Potential Impact Table

The table below evaluates the potential impact of each of the major policy and regulatory actions outlined in the strategies above. The ratings (H=High; M=Medium; L=Low; NA=Not Applicable) refer to each initiative’s likelihood of achieving the desired strategy objectives.

Table 16: Proposed Policy and Regulation Potential Impact			
Recommended Policy/Regulation	Impact Areas		
	Biodiversity Conservation	Freshwater Conservation	Increased Affordable Housing
Managing Growth			
Policy requiring new subdivisions to contribute to affordable housing	H	H	H
Set minimum lot sizes for subdivisions	H	H	NA
Voluntary density reduction program	H	H	NA
Biodiversity & Water Conservation			
CDF policies applied to private properties	H	H	NA
New DPAs for CDF priority areas	H	H	NA
Prioritize parkland dedication that protects CDF forests	H	M	N/A
Increase subdivision & residential redevelopment proof of water requirements	NA	H	NA
Rainwater collection requirement for new construction	NA	H	NA
Groundwater monitoring – commercial, institution, multi-family	NA	M	NA
Forest/watershed retention policies and regulations	H	H	NA
Water Conservation Public Education	L	M	NA
BC Energy Code requirement for new construction as part of a rezoning	M	M	NA
Housing			
Set affordable housing targets	NA	NA	H
Strengthen multi-dwelling proposal criteria	NA	NA	H
Focus secondary suite regulations on targeted need	L	M	H
Flex zoning for targeted need	NA	NA	M
Increase housing units on commercial/institutional-zoned lots	NA	NA	M