



Discovery Islands & Mainland Inlets Official Community Plan

What We Heard: Aquaculture, Agriculture, and Economic Development Community Discussion

Area C OCP Project | May 13th, 2026 at Quadra Island Community Centre

The Strathcona Regional District would like to thank the 25 (approximate) community members who attended the discussion on Aquaculture, Agriculture, Tourism, and Economic Development. Your many thoughtful comments have been consolidated.

This session was opened with a question for the group; “How many are employed in aquaculture, agriculture, or tourism, or own their own business?”

- One in Aquaculture,
- At least four in Agriculture
- Several (five+) tourism and business owners

Planning staff opened the floor to the community to start the conversation and recorded the following notes from the discussion:

This list is a short-hand transcription of comments made, as captured during the session. Though not a verbatim account, staff have tried to use the terms that were spoken and to capture the intent of statements made. These comments will be organized and refined into policy statements for further discussion, especially on matters where the community is divided.

Tourism

- REDIP Economic diversification plan – actively engaged in the community. Producing a sustainable tourism plan.
 - o Last tourism plan in 2008 – still online (a lot of it hasn’t changed) consistent vision from 2008 to now.
- Challenges for companies based on Quadra?
 - o Staff housing
 - o Seasonal limitations
 - o Zoning to have the lens of the needs of staff housing
 - o Flatten the curve or extend seasons to it’s not so volatile throughout the year
- What’s working?
 - o People visit and love it on Quadra and have a great time
- Opportunities?
 - o Off-season events
 - o Shoulder season extension
 - o More safe walking and biking

- What do you like about tourism here?
 - o Helps keep great businesses here
 - o Brings new people in from around the world
- What are we missing?
 - o Island transportation shuttle,
 - o No good ways to get around, bike paths
 - o Staff housing
 - o Community support – always going to be different values and views
 - o Don't want to negatively impact anyone's lifestyle
 - o BC ferries challenges ? – pricing structure is penalizing for trailers and boats for taking up the space of a car
 - o Staff housing challenge applies to all housing – Tenancy Act to be more balanced
 - o Tourist bureau? Visitor centre? Information centres – hard to staff, usually by volunteers. An organization has to be there to staff it and organize
 - o Wayfinding – Discovery Island Chamber to work on that. ICET funding. App for Quadra Island? Include hiking trails and accommodation, biology
 - Nature Alive (has Elk Falls) Quadra Alive. Artisans to be included.
 - Downloadable maps do not need Wi-Fi
 - Live kiosk – with a touch screen for tourist to use. Have hydro power and a roof, in between q cove and heriot bay.
- What's changed?
 - o The hotel tax MRDT – allow for some funds for fixed roof accommodation
 - o Build out shoulder season accommodation
 - o Educating the tourists, pack it in and pack it out, safety.
 - How we want tourists to visit quadra, needs public educational component.
 - o What needs to be addressed - What challenges does tourism bring?
 - o Safe active transportation and transportation
 - o Lack of a multi-use trail connecting the cove and Heriot Bay.
 - o Consistent pinch points – education on how to safely respectfully interact with the community. What areas do we not want people to go to? Move away from promoting tourism to Environmentally Sensitive Areas, culturally sensitive areas, etc
 - o Types of tourists to encourage – tents not RVs, not a lot of campsites. City of Nelson owns a downtown campsite. Welcoming space for the tourists they want to attract. An SRD publicly owned park for tent camping?

Aquaculture

- What's working?
 - o Shellfish and seaweed cultivation
 - o Created lots of jobs, food for locals and elsewhere
- Opportunities?
- Tourism related to shellfish and seaweed - What has changed over time?
 - o Walcan – many iterations of aquaculture over the years. Gaps in salmon farming will have ripple effects. 20 year return on investment (ROI). Hard to get investment into infrastructure. If there is going to be more finfish, it will have to change.

- Oysters, scallops, mussels, shellfish in the last 5 years have improved
- Seaweed and kelp – becoming economically viable.
- High value geoduck. Might see more of that.
- What needs to be addressed?
 - Waste. Black plastic forms from oyster farms. Trays end up on beaches, the beach cleanup crew cleans up a lot of them. Not all from Quadra. Some locals upcycle them in the garden.
 - Marine debris collection is a source of a lot of waste. Aquaculture industry waste. Recycling and diversion supported.
 - Encourage wild salmon and healthy ecosystems. Sustainable ecosystems.

Agriculture

- What's working?
 - Smaller lots need to be farming too
 - Great farmland on the south end. Outside of the ALR.
 - Producing food is encouraged - anyone can grow food.
- What are the opportunities?
 - Farm gate sales supported.
 - 5-10 acres or smaller is enough space for farming.
 - Do we want farm gate sales everywhere? Development permit areas for agriculture? Buffers, ALR guide for living near farms
 - Community garden in Heriot Bay has 65 plots. It's a big success and people enjoy it. The community centre property could have a community garden. Funding to encourage it.
 - Support self-sufficiency with farms
- Issues and challenges?
 - Strain on the wells, collect rainwater to supplement use. The water supply is important. Agriculture takes a lot of water. Little effort to be proactive in reducing water consumption. We all share the aquifers, need to think ahead about water sustainability.
 - Food production and self-sufficiency are critical, especially on an island – global and government geopolitics and uncertainty. Quadra needs to feed itself.
 - Over regulated: water, animals, neighbour complaints. We have great farmland on Quadra. The zoning bylaw should enable food production, farm gate sales, not restricting uses.
 - House insurance can be a barrier against farming
 - Home occupations on all sizes of land. Eg) a sourdough stand, not just farm products.
 - Logistics are challenging. Orchards, vineyards, farms need inputs. Not all from the island. Net benefit to grow inputs here too.
 - Logistics - the burden is on the growers –Consider central shipping location.
 - Shared asset for bringing stuff in.

- BC Ferries is in the logistics chain. Partnerships to lower the burden for farmers. Feed for animals is complicated. Hay is complicated.
- What needs to be addressed?
 - Stronger protection for the land used for agriculture so it doesn't get lost to residential development
 - Right to Farm Act and the ICSP support protecting agriculture as it relates to the rural character
 - Lots of land on Quadra that is not in the ALR but has farm status and is being farmed. Could be identified in the OCP for its agricultural potential.
 - Need to identify sand and gravel pits
 - What size of property can do agriculture and farm gate sales? 0.99 of an acre can be used for agriculture. Current is 10 ac min which needs to be addressed.
 - There are many existing small RU-1 lots supposed to be 10 acres or more.
 - 1 – 5 acre lots need to grow food too. Make it explicitly permitted/ encouraged.
 - Consider expanding the permitted uses for RU-2.
 - Home based businesses – to be able to grow and support often need more than 2 employees outside your family.
 - A lot of unused ALR capacity. Encourage food sovereignty all around.
 - Farm stands – Buffers and screens. Encourages use of the land.
 - Water – when you export veggies you export water. Drip irrigation.
 - Support public education around farming and agriculture.

Agri-tourism

- Accommodation needed to support farming (for tourists? Farm workers?)
- Economic benefits from agro-tourism, eg. Farm tours.
- Not much in terms of agriculture that is not supported. Little to no regulation over agriculture is preferred.

General economic development

- What's working?
 - Small businesses, can do attitude
- Opportunities?
 - Community campground, low cost, tent only, money goes back to the community. Supporting diversification
- How are businesses supported?
 - REDIP economic diversification plan
 - Endorses small business
- Issues/ challenges?
 - High demand for volunteerism
 - Vibrant and sustainable community vision, self-sufficient
 - Support ways in which rural residents make a living for themselves

- Sawmills for personal use are widely supported. Timber from Quadra and harvested by locals should stay on the island for economic benefit. Keep the local economy strong.
- There's a lot of seasonal work here. Seasonal workers often camp or seek affordable temporary residences.
- Parking challenges particularly in the Cove due to the ferry traffic. The farmers market and other events draw more visitors. Seasonal transportation solutions needed (a shuttle bus to and from campgrounds? Resorts?)
 - The school provides a well-used community space and parking
- Support bike infrastructure. Sidewalks, need for off road paths. Make it safer for people to use bikes.
- The Cove and Heriot Bay should consider reduced speeds to improve safety
- Support walking on the ferry
- Don't encourage big businesses and chains. Support locally owned and run businesses.