



Discovery Islands & Mainland Inlets Official Community Plan

What We Heard: Local Economy Community Discussion

Area C OCP Project | May 7th 2026 @ Surge Narrows Pavillion (The Zone)

The Strathcona Regional District would like to thank the community members who attended the discussion on local economy, including agriculture. Your many thoughtful comments have been consolidated.

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 by the note-taker 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.

Challenges:

- Industry deciding to live here – the internet provides connection – its entrepreneurial and has to be figured out by individuals when they arrive here– how can this be supported.
 - o Star link – connected coast is cheaper – needs power and doesn't work without power. Star Link is expensive but a game changer
 - o Redundancy is great. There's no distribution for power. How can this be improved?
- Trenching road for infrastructure and costs associated are high.
- A short amount of time – new people. Over a longer period of time – there was less for services
- Access to affordable land is a barrier to people coming to provide services. Housing.
- Used to be lots of work, fishing, gypsum ops. Now people come with wealth vs folks with families want to age in place – what can we do to
- Large tracts of land not available
- Co-op could develop within a standard or a guide for opportunities.
 - o Read Island may support
- Settlement pattern can encourage' – various places – opportunities for future land use decisions.
- OCPs as a living document can be amended with support from leadership.
- Procurement
 - o Priority bidding on local projects – by locals. Government bidding process – economic benefits to community.
- If subdivision, parking, boating, roads, etc increase of traffic. The infrastructure is not enough – 60 parking spots for all the island – another 10 created by Wei Wai Kai – more people

- If more people are adding their voices when more come to island. Capacity issue.

Opportunities:

- Settlement – differing views. Where would the village be? – narrowed down to the SRD lot. Happier with a bigger village.
 - Rendezvous – roads, water, firewood – draw on resources highly seasonal
- Infrastructure prior to all the paving, dock, etc., others have moved in to build the first float. Surge road improvements are taking place over time. It's due to people moving here. Public doesn't have money spent on the roads. More people are moving to the island.
 - Some additional people mean more infrastructure
 - Generational living
- More housing needed to support nurses living in and frequently working in community
- Busby Island
 - Open market
- Infrastructure – onus on the developer. If a need is there.
- Septic and OCP – outhouses not permitted *** advocate for alternatives
- Review and revise the ZB to allow for more intensive home occupations that support entrepreneurial activities and commercial opportunities
- Commercial zoning – sewage goes into ocean- need technical advances
- Encourage economic creativity
- Small sawmills needed for personal use and sales to locals (not off island)
- Small industry on lots
 - Tour operations
 - Home occupation
- Identify/define sound issues –don't want it to be too restrictive, but respectful
- Environmentally friendly occupations
- Helicopter landing – don't close off
- On crown land – lease is through province
- QI Visitor Tax – the MRDT
- Encourage cottage / artisanal businesses
 - Don't have barriers
- Explore ways to have product moved from island
- Increase access to markets – exports/display
- Work / construction handyperson work is a need
- Support Local market through incentives / festivals
- New dock at Owen Bay (supported)
 - More services – roads crew like Cortes has
 - Health clinic (needed / supported)
 - Creative – Surge Currents, marketing locally
 - Promote entrepreneurs
- Advocate for building social circles, volunteerism, remote working
 - Creative Economy by/for locals
 - Log salvaging by locals
 - Advocate for local hires on public projects

- Forestry – not locally owned wood lots – where could a community forest occur?
Community access to resources. Partnership
- SRD purchasing policy supports local (*qualified). Remove barriers to hiring local
- Aquaculture, historically home based
- Licenses – local seaweed (not fin fish) shellfish
- Nature based retreats – what are thresholds of small scale? “hollyhock” “silent ground”
- Tourist use of resources (whale watching boats) - how can they give back?
 - Reciprocity to local community - ‘non-local” day parking fee.
- Kayaking / tourism (supported – needs educational outreach)
- Tourism / Airbnb (supported – needs educational outreach)
- Industry should contribute to smaller affordable housing – OCP can’t scale costs, but can indicate smaller properties are ok.
- Local co-op businesses supported
- Small lots <2 acres supported in Owen Bay
- Support initiatives for affordable housing projects on small lots
- Economy that supports families to stay on the Island and age in place