



Discovery Islands & Mainland Inlets Official Community Plan

What We Heard: Energy & Forestry Community Discussion

Area C OCP Project | July 8th, 2026 at Surge Narrows Pavillion (The Zone)

The Strathcona Regional District would like to thank the 25 (approximate) community members who attended the discussion on Energy, Industrial Uses, and Silviculture/ Forestry. Your many thoughtful comments have been consolidated. This session also featured a general OCP discussion with some community members who had not attended previous sessions.

Planning staff opened this session with a question for the group; “how do you power and heat your home?”. The responses of participants in the group indicated that most Outer Island community members have a combination of several systems. Everyone must have a “back up plan for their back up plan.” As an off-grid community, everyone makes use of wood stoves for heat, solar panels, propane appliances, cold rooms/ cellars, and gas or diesel generators. Several people indicated they use small hydro on their own property (such as from a creek or holding pond), and several people indicated they use heat pumps. Many people indicated they heat their water either by wood stove or on-demand systems. Participants discussed the importance of battery choice (ie. lithium vs acid) and challenges regarding recycling batteries as well as accessing firewood.

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.

- The Outer Discovery Islands (ODI) are proudly off-grid communities and wish to remain off-grid. It takes resourcefulness and a solid understanding of one's own energy use to live in the ODI, and this is a source of community pride. Self-sufficiency is a key feature of the culture.
- Wood stoves and fire for home heating are key to the lifestyle of the ODI.
- Accumulating dead batteries was a challenge for some residents, neighbours informed each other of different options for a pallet of batteries to be picked up by a barge due to their high recycle value.
- Several wells are gravity fed to avoid the need for a pump, several people have backup power supplied for their well pumps
- Some residents have built their own water heating systems using either heat from the sun or a wood stove to heat their water
- Several residents have either propane refrigerators or have a cold room. Cold rooms do not freeze in winter, but rather they provide refrigeration without the need for external energy

- As technology has advanced, there are now fridges that use very little power
- To support aging in place many neighbours help each other by making sure seniors have adequate firewood prepared to heat their homes
- Finding firewood can be a challenge when there is no waste wood from active logging on Read Island, as such some residents use wood out of the ocean but some residents avoid this due to the corrosive effect on their wood stove
- Some residents purchase brickettes for wood stove heating while in town and bring them back to their homes. They are energy efficient and provide stable heat form a wood stove. Some residents expressed interest in having a barge bring a large quantity over.
- Community forests were of high interest to the community, either as parks for public use or for conservation of forested areas.
- Several residents expressed the need for personal mills on their property to produce lumber for their own personal use. This is distinctly different from a large commercial sawmill. Some neighbors may sell to each other in relatively small quantities, but most of the group agreed that no wood should be sold off island (Read Island in this case).
- Salvaging waste wood from logging was the primary source of firewood on Read Island
- Some wood is obtained from the clearing of new building sites when development occurs
- There are two large woodlots on Read Island, one of them is for sale.
- Through a partnership with Homalco Nation and Wilderness International there is Crown Land being purchased for community use and stewardship
- Lot 302 and 309 are within the “heart of Read Island”
 - o They may be used as a food forest
- Value added forestry provides work for locals, especially working age residents
- Consider the value of conservation
- The soon-to-be owners of a large woodlot on Read Island are open to community-informed subdivision (former homestead sites)
 - o Accessible land with good drainage, not cliffs
- Settlement areas shall have a wooded buffer around the perimeter
- Village idea for “Surge Narrows” (boundary to be considered)
 - o Smaller than 10 acre lots
 - o Community buildings
 - o Barge landing
 - o No fuels sales/ commercial uses at this time with the exception of the store building
- Barge landing at the log dump (lot 162) could potentially consider a workshop and fuel sales (with community consultation)
 - o Possible dumpster and recycling site?
- Bulk water extraction, processing and sales are not supported.
- Airports and air strips are not supported
- Data centres of any size are not supported
- BC Ferries terminals and BC Hydro infrastructure are not supported
- Sawmill potential with Read Island Co-op (community sawmill co-op)
- Parking challenges at the surge dock on busy days such as grocery delivery day
- More visitors means more wildfire risk
- Livestock including roosters supported on all properties

- Support communication efforts for farming programs (Slaughter Safe, Butcher licenses) for local food production
- Commercial grade kitchen supported within community public amenity buildings
- Challenges with too many derelict boats at public wharves
 - o Explore an annual registration system (maybe a sticker on vessels to show registration?)
- Solid waste, pack it in pack it out is still supported.
- Plans to remove excessive large waste from lot 309, explore possible annual barge to remove derelict vehicles and large appliances