

No Real Consultation, No Real Plan or A Dangerous Blueprint for All Trust Islands Planning

By Jennifer Margison
Gulf Islands Driftwood
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Friends of the Gulf Islands Society wishes to express our deep concern regarding the inadequate community consultation process currently underway for the review of Salt Spring Island's Official Community Plan (OCP).

To begin with, it appears to be a significant misuse of Islands Trust resources to initiate an OCP review while the Trust Policy Statement (TPS) is also under review. The TPS is the foundational document of the Islands Trust, establishing the minimum standards for all OCPs and other land use bylaws across the Trust area. How can an OCP be effectively reviewed and redrafted without first understanding the requirements of the revised TPS?

We understand that no in-person community meetings have been held as part of the consultation. Instead, input is being collected via a poorly designed survey and by consultants approaching individuals in grocery stores and other public locations. These methods do not allow for meaningful community engagement, such as being told the benefits and drawbacks of various policies, the opportunity to participate in discussions, or learn from fellow residents.

We are particularly concerned that this flawed process may be presented as a "model" for OCP reviews on other islands—especially troubling given that one of Salt Spring's trustees who are driving this process also serves as Chair of the Islands Trust Council and Chair of the Executive Committee. Salt Spring, with the largest population among the Trust islands and a range of complex land use challenges, deserves a more robust and transparent public consultation process.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Margison, Chair
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