

Questions on Trust-wide issues:

1. The **Islands Trust mandate** states that “*The object of the Trust is to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally.*”

What do the words “**environment**” and “**unique amenities**” mean to you?

'Environment' to me means the natural environment and all of the services they provide: clean drinking water, stormwater management, carbon sequestration, temperature control, and food. 'Unique amenities' include the natural environment as well as parks, ecological reserves and conservation lands that protect these natural values, as well as the Agricultural Land Reserve that preserves precious food growing lands.

2. Do you support passing the **2026 draft Trust Policy Statement** as it is? Why, or why not?

I have not reviewed this document in detail and if elected, this will be one of my first responsibilities as a Trustee. The TPS establishes the guard rails for our Official Community Plan, which in turn establishes policies that govern environmental protection (e.g., Development Permit Areas) and land use changes, including new housing and other development.

Based on my initial review of the current draft TPS, I have concerns about language that weakens the preserve and protect mandate of the Trust and allows for unconstrained market housing development that the Trust was originally established to prevent.

I will not support amendments to the current TPS that weaken the Trust mandate with respect to preserving and protecting our environment and unique amenities (defined as originally intended by Trust legislation). It is also vitally important that the TPS retain or include policies that ensure new housing is truly affordable (i.e., for low and middle incomes), with priority for residents, and located in or near villages and public transit in order to minimize impacts on our environment and unique amenities.

I believe the Trust does have a responsibility to support the socio-economic needs of our communities, but it is essential, and I believe quite possible to meet these needs within the context of the Preserve and Protect mandate. It is particularly important to ensure that new housing is disconnected from market forces to maximize the benefits of our very limited land base, water and other infrastructure for our residents and ensure affordability in perpetuity. In fact, as an economist, I believe that creation of non-market housing is the only way to address our housing crisis in our province and country.

3. Given the legal authority of the *Islands Trust Act*, what are your thoughts about the **role of elected Trustees**?

The role of the Trustees is to uphold the legislated mandate of the Trust and the Trust Policy Statement and Official Community Plans that implement these policies. These policies should include socio-economic goals, particularly with respect to affordable housing, but subject to the environmental mandate of the Trust. I believe that upholding the Trust mandate and achieving socio-economic goals can be complementary, not conflicting objectives.

4. How do you feel about the various criticisms that have been leveled against the Islands Trust?

While I believe the Trust can and should be more cost-effective and productive (e.g., by prioritizing staff time and expediting proposals such as affordable housing that are consistent with the TPS and our OCP), much of the criticism ignores the challenges that all local governments face, particularly market forces that are the root cause of our housing crisis and the lack of financial capacity (e.g., sole reliance on property taxes) to address the local infrastructure deficit. Again, these are issues that all local government struggle with, not just the Trust.

Overall, the Trust has been an essential governance innovation that has ~~prevented~~ protected the Gulf Islands from the urban sprawl and commercial development that characterize much of southern Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland. As MLA for Saanich and the Islands, I observed how peninsula municipalities dealt with market development pressures. These

communities are still desirable places to live, but if not for the Provincially-imposed ALR in Central and North Saanich, they would look much like Greater Victoria or the Lower Mainland. On the other hand, North Saanich has created virtually no affordable housing at all, despite ample water and sewer capacity. Salt Spring, because of our OCP requirements, has created 150 units of affordable housing in the past two terms, all approved by the Trust despite our very limited water, sewer and other infrastructure. We should and can do more, but compared to many rural communities in BC, SSI has been relatively successful in creating truly affordable housing for its residents.

The Trust has played a key role in preservation of special places on SSI, 25% of which is protected. No other local government in BC provides property tax reductions for land protection (i.e., the NAPTEP program) or includes an institution with the sole mandate of protecting land (i.e., the Trust Conservancy). There are very few local governments in BC that include and use density transfer tools that protect land in more remote areas of the island while shifting the development potential to villages. In addition to affordable housing, we would not have the Burgoyne Community Farm or the Root without the Trust's innovative use of amenity zoning tools that require that most of the benefits of any upzoning accrue to the community. About one third of our workforce are self-employed, in part because our home-based business regulations are among the most generous in BC. In summary, I believe local governments in BC should consider some of the progressive policies and unique approaches applied in the Trust area to their own jurisdictions.

I believe the Trust, as with any local government, can be more effective, and it is also important to ensure that SSI, which contributes roughly 40% of its tax revenue, is getting a fair share of these resources. We also need to join other local governments in demanding greater Provincial financial support for the Trust, either in terms of funding (e.g., to support the Trust Conservancy) or the earmarking or creation of special levies such as the Speculation and Vacancy Tax, or a modest surcharge on ferry fares.

Questions on Salt Spring issues:

5. Specifically, what **policies** would you propose to better protect the natural environment on Salt Spring?

I'm committed to:

- Supporting existing OCP policies that direct new development or transfer existing development potential in or near villages and public transit in order to prevent sprawl
- Prioritizing development of a stock of truly affordable housing for local residents that remains affordable in perpetuity and maximizes the community benefit of our very limited water resource
- Strengthening Development Permit Areas (DPAs) and related enforcement measures to protect our drinking water resources and sensitive marine shorelines
- Reconvening the SSI Water Protection Alliance in collaboration with the CRD, water districts, NGOs, and the Province
- Reconvene a SSI Conservation Partnership in collaboration with other government and non-profit conservation agencies
- Advocate for greater Provincial funding for the Trust Conservancy
- Advocate for legislative change to transfer the regional parkland acquisition function to the Trust Conservancy
- Explore options for protection of lands in the Channel Ridge area in collaboration with the landowner and other agencies

6. The current **Official Community Plan (OCP)** has this policy: “B.2.1.2.1 Zoning changes should be avoided if they would likely result in a larger island population than is expected under the development potential zoned in 2008. Exceptions to this policy are to be few and minor and only to achieve *affordable housing** and other objectives of this Plan.”

As defined by the BC government, the provincial definition of “affordable housing**” is housing that costs no more than 30% of household income.*

Do you support retaining this policy? If not, what policy would you put in its place?

I support this policy which is one of the fundamental building blocks of our OCP. I've elaborated on the rationale for this policy in responses to other questions, including the fact that creation of a larger affordable housing stock disconnected from market forces is the only way to create a diverse, socio-economically diverse community while respecting the Preserve and Protect mandate of the Trust.

A key correction regarding the definition of affordable housing. The relevant definition included in our current OCP:, which is 30% of median individual and family income on SSI guaranteed by a housing agreement that ensures affordability and priority for local residents in perpetuity. If the 30% of income requirement is not tied to median or average income, it is essentially meaningless. Housing that is affordable for high income earners is not affordable in any meaningful sense and does not address affordability for our low and middle income residents who face the most serious housing challenges.

General question

7. Is there anything else you would like to add about your position on issues or actions that you, if elected, would propose?

While it is important for candidates to clarify their positions on issues of importance to our community, it is equally important to consider their experience and track record. None of the other candidates, all of which have impressive credentials, none have any experience in local, regional or Provincial government, while I have served 18 years in such positions. I also believe that my track record as an elected official, ~~but~~ and also as a community activist and conservationist, on issues such as land protection, creation of affordable housing, establishment of important community facilities, and governance should also be taken into account (see gary4trust.org). Thank you for this candidate survey and the work you do in our community.