



STAFF REPORT

Date: January 7, 2010

File No.: DE/13-1 (Climate Change)

To: Denman Island Local Trust Committee

From: Pamela Shaw
Contract Planner

Re: Implementation of Bill 27

BACKGROUND

Trust Council has identified Climate Change and the implementation of Bill 27 as the top strategic plan priority and the Denman Island LTC has amended its work programs to make “targets and policies for the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions” the Work Program Top Priority.

A special LTC meeting was held on November 4th, 2009 and a Community Meeting was held on November 16th, 2009 on the project. The purpose of this staff report is to present a proposed OCP amendment, developed from the existing Official Community Plan, community comments, and direction provided through the Trust’s “Climate Wise Islands” initiative for the LTC’s consideration, and to provide recommendations for moving the project to completion.

PROPOSED CHANGES and RATIONALE

The Denman Island Official Community Plan, 2008 (OCP) differs from most other Islands Trust official community plans in that it is recently adopted and already contains a section titled *Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation*. As such, the attempt has been made to build on this section and weave the proposed amendment into the text of the OCP.

The first suggested amendment is to the **Vision Statement**, with the addition of “and to substantially reduce our GHG emissions” to the end of the seventh paragraph. Although climate change is certainly addressed in the Vision Statement, the issue of GHG emissions is not. This inclusion emphasizes the importance of reducing GHG emissions on Denman Island.

Vision Statement

Denman Island is a small rural island where individuals, the environment, and the community interact in ways that foster mutual health and vitality. We support the mandate of the Islands Trust.

We accept the challenge of adapting to climate change and will alter our lifestyles to live more lightly on the land.

We respect and conserve the natural environment. We will protect the ecosystems and their rich biodiversity, including that of the coastal waters.

We acknowledge that fresh water is critical to all aspects of life on this island. We will conserve the streams, lakes and wetlands, and encourage the collection and storage of rainwater.

We have a long history of farming. We will grow most of our food and encourage small-scale, rural-compatible activities which contribute towards local employment.

Islanders historically have been an independent, diverse and creative people with a long history of volunteering for the benefit of the natural environment and the human community. We will be supportive, cooperative and respectful in our interactions. We will use innovative options to promote a diversity of age and financial means within the carrying capacity of the island.

Polluting vehicles dominate our thoroughfares. Our roads will increasingly be utilized by pedestrians, bicycles, horses and shared, alternately-powered vehicles moving at an appropriate speed. We will create an extensive network of trails for non-motorised use.

We believe that Denman Island can become a model for sustainability and self-sufficiency. All islanders share the privilege and responsibility for realizing this vision.

The second recommended change is to the guiding principles. One small change is recommended: the addition of a sentence reading: “In support of this principle, we have set targets, policies, and actions for reducing GHG emissions in our OCP” to Guiding Principle 3, which currently states “To recognize that climate change threatens the future of this community, and to implement changes designed to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and to promote adaptation to these impacts.”

The third area proposed for changes is introductory text under the heading of **C.4- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation**. Two paragraphs are added to speak directly to the Bill 27 requirements. This clarifies the reason for the amendments and notes that these proposed amendments are but a first step in an ongoing process of adapting and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

The addition of a target is the next amendment, and is included under the **Guiding Objectives**. The target is:

- To commit to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 15% by 2015 and 85% by 2050.

This target is lower than the provincial target and it has been suggested by Mr. Brodie Porter as a target that could be used in all 19 Islands Trust Official Community Plans. This target offers a smaller initial and larger final target compared to the provincial target of 33% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. A Trust-wide shared target is recommended at the outset of implementing targets in official community plans as the Islands Trust will need to proceed on a Trust-inventory project to fully understand the current level of GHG emissions and to chart progress toward target achievement. A shared target will simplify this process. The development of a specialized target(s) is also an option available to the Denman Island LTC, Islands OCP, but this would require detailed GHG emission data that is not currently available. It is noted that the proposed target is suggested only as the initial target to meet Bill 27 requirements, and this target can certainly be refined and adjusted over time.

Unresolved issues relating to the setting of a target are the implications that may evolve from further provincial initiatives. It is not known if it is better to set an optimistic, far reaching target to indicate a high level of commitment or to set a much more limited target to ensure that the Islands Trust is not caught out by an over-reaching and unachievable target. Specifically, the financial implications relating to the purchase of carbon offsets to achieve stated targets is an issue that must be carefully considered by the Trust. Further research on this is required.

The existing objectives and policies already speak to the issues under consideration and wholesale amendments are not required. Minor wording changes, generally to add “and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions” to key places in this text is recommended.

The final change is the addition of a series of Actions. These are developed from community comments through correspondence and the community meeting. It is hoped that these are viewed as rational, attainable, and representative of Denman Island’s approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

SUGGESTED PROGRAM FOR 2010

The Denman Island LTC will receive proposed OCP amendments at the first available meeting in January 2010.

Should the amendments be found acceptable, staff would be directed to draft the text as a formal bylaw amendment. The LTC could then direct staff either to vet the draft amendment to the public, with possibilities including an open house, community meeting, web-based consultation, or a mailout/newspaper insert) or proceed to 1st and 2nd reading and then a public hearing.

Should the LTC direct staff to hold a public meeting or event, where possible, this meeting will be coordinated with other Islands Trust activities to minimize the number of meetings in the first few months of the New Year. If an event is held, the bylaw (with amendments as recommended by the LTC and the community) would proceed to 1st and 2nd reading and through the formal review process as legislated by the *Local Government Act*.

Following 3rd reading, the amendments would then be referred to the province and could be considered for adoption as soon as confirmation is received from the province. It is anticipated that the Islands Trust Timeframe circulated at the September 2009 Council Meeting will be achieved and all the Northern OCPs will be amended to fully reflect the Trust's commitment to this initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT the Denman Island Local Trust Committee provide direction on the proposed Denman Island Official Community Plan, 2008 amendments.
2. THAT the Denman Island Local Trust Committee provide direction to staff on the public consultation and review process for the proposed Official Community Plan amendments.

Prepared and Submitted by:

Pamela Shaw

Date

Reviewed and concurred by:

Chris Jackson
Regional Planning Manager

January 7, 2010
Date

Attachments:

1. Amended OCP, Climate Change section