



STAFF REPORT

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To Gambier Island Local Trust Committee
From Aleksandra Brzozowski
Island Planner
Northern Office
Re Drafting of Project Charter for Foreshore Protection project

PURPOSE:

At its January 31, 2012 regular business meeting, the Gambier Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) passed a resolution placing Foreshore Protection, including the implementation of development permit areas and development approval information bylaws, as Number 3 on the Top Priorities Work Program. While work has moved forward on this item over the last two years, a Project Charter has not yet been created to guide and scope this work.

Staff seeks direction from the LTC specifically on scope and desired outcomes in order to prepare a Project Charter and work plan for Foreshore Protection. This Project Charter and Work Plan will cover the remainder of the 2013/2014 fiscal, as well as the first half of the 2014/2015 fiscal year.

BACKGROUND:

The Foreshore Protection project description tasks the LTC to investigate and recommend options for protection/stewardship within the Local Trust Area through the use of existing land use planning tools. This project is consistent and supported by the following policies noted in the Islands Trust Policy Statement, the Islands Trust Strategic Plan, and the Gambier Island OCP:

Islands Trust Policy Statement

Local trust committees are clearly directed to protect the shorelines in the Trust Area, including protection of sensitive marine habitats, intertidal habitats, riparian habitats, water quality, and natural coastal processes.

In its section on Ecosystem Preservation and Protection, the Islands Trust Policy Statement makes the following commitment regarding ecosystems, including coastal ecosystems:

Trust Council holds that:

- *proactive land use planning is essential for the protection of Trust Area ecosystems*
- *protection must be given to the natural processes, habitats and species of the Trust Area, including those of the old forests, Coastal Douglas-fir forests, Coastal Western Hemlock, Garry Oak/Arbutus forests, wetlands, open coastal grasslands, the vegetation of dry rocky areas, lakes, streams, estuaries, tidal flats, salt water marshes, drift sectors, lagoons, and kelp and eel grass beds.*

In the Policy Statement, there is also a directive policy that:

Local trust committees shall in their Official Community Plans and regulatory bylaws, address:

- *the protection of sensitive coastal areas;*

- *the planning for and regulation of development in coastal regions to protect natural coastal processes;*
- *opportunities for the sharing of facilities such as docks, wharves, floats, jetties, boat houses, board walks and causeways; and*
- *the compatibility of the location, size and nature of marinas with the ecosystems and character of their local planning area.*

Islands Trust Strategic Plan

Trust Council's current Strategic Plan identifies the following current priorities relevant to shoreline protection:

- *To advance the stewardship of coastal areas and marine shore lands*
- *Provide stewardship information about waterfront lands to community members*
- *Develop and implement new land use planning tools for shoreline and marine protection*

Gambier Island Official Community Plan

The Gambier Island Official Community Plan features the following policies on foreshore protection:

- Policy 3.7 The zoning regulations should establish setbacks for buildings and structures, in accordance with good planning practices, from the sea to protect buildings and structures from floodwaters or coastal erosion; to protect marine and riparian habitat and water quality; and to maintain a view of the coastline that is rural in character and relatively pristine in appearance.*
- Policy 7.41 Natural coastal processes should be left undisturbed to the maximum extent possible.*
- Policy 7.42 All property owners are encouraged to retain natural vegetation on any land sloping towards the shoreline.*
- Policy 9.19 Wharves, docks, floats, barge loading ramps and boat launch ramps should be sited to minimize their impact on the natural environment and allow public access to the foreshore.*
- Policy 9.20 Property owners are encouraged to share the use of docks and wharves with one or more of their neighbours through joint ownership or rental agreements and through the use of easements or other forms of agreed upon access to the facilities rather than erecting individual private docks or wharves.*

Schedule G (Qualitative criteria for environmentally sensitive areas) and Schedule H (Principles of sustainability of environmental features) also outline development approval criteria that consider the environmental impacts of coastal development.

Keats Island Official Community Plan

The Keats Island Official Community Plan features the following policies on foreshore protection:

- P 3.19 In order to protect the island's foreshore and beaches from pollution, environmental degradation, and inappropriate development or use, zoning regulations for coastal areas should be designed to ensure protection of natural coastal processes and features.*
- P 4.21 The location of new buildings and structures should be regulated so as to protect public access to, from and along the marine shoreline and to minimize negative impacts on sensitive coastal environments.*
- P 4.22 Foreshore and adjacent coastal water area land use regulations should place emphasis on retaining natural characteristics.*

P 4.20 *The integrity of foreshore features, shoreline features, and intertidal processes should be maintained by discouraging uses that disrupt natural features and processes, and encouraging owners of shoreline properties to retain, wherever possible, natural vegetation and natural features on areas sloping towards the foreshore.*

WORK TO DATE:

Since the project was first put on the Top Priorities list on January 31, 2012, the LTC has pursued a number of related activities on the subject of foreshore protection:

March 2012	LTC directed staff to pursue including Gambier Island as part of the Integrated Shoreline and Watershed Mapping project spearheaded by the trust-wide Local Planning Committee.
July 2012	LTC released funds to include Keats and the Thormanby Islands as part of the Integrated Shoreline and Watershed Mapping project.
August – September 2012	Eelgrass mapping was conducted for Gambier Island.
October 2012	Gambier LTC was invited to coordinate a funded Greenshores outreach event. LTC and staff began planning an event for March 2013.
March 2013	A webinar was held on March 20 to present the results of the Integrated Shoreline and Watershed Mapping project and to introduce the Green Shores for Homes program.
April 2013	Feedback following the Green Shores webinar indicated that there is appetite for incorporating best LUB practices and regulations on shorelines into existing bylaws, provided necessary resources and support were developed as well.
July 2013	LTC released funds to map eelgrass on the Associated Islands in the Gambier Local Trust Area.
July 2013	Ramona de Graaf gave a presentation on marine habitats and forage fish ecology to public/shoreline property owners on Keats Island.
July 2013	LTC advised the Local Planning Committee to provide proactive educational support regarding unlawful structures on the foreshore in the Gambier Island Local Trust Area.
July 2013	LTC expressed interest in seeing the Green Shores for Homes credit rating system when the draft is available.
August - September 2013	Planning staff researched publications and posters on shoreline protection to be modified for the Gambier Local Trust Area.
October 2013	Planning staff presented the new Caring for My Shoreline webpages to be posted on islandstrust.bc.ca.

STAFF COMMENTS:

In discussion of this topic over the last several LTC meetings, a number of tasks on foreshore protection education have been requested of staff. Over this time, it has become clear that establishing a clear vision of the goals and scope of the work to complete by November 2014 would significantly improve efficient expenditure of budget and staff work hours.

Looking forward, a number of activity options are available to the LTC on this topic, listed below along with attending considerations for each option. The LTC has a budget of \$5,000 for the 2013/2014 fiscal year and has requested \$3,000 for the 2014/2015 fiscal. The necessary staff work hours will need to also be taken into account.

Printed Publications: Publications could be produced for the Local Trust Area, either as modifications of other LTC projects, or as original work. If considered a priority activity, staff would seek direction on the scope and messaging to be put forward in such publications to ensure that any publication speaks directly to desired messaging.

Web-oriented Information: Expansion of the *Care for My Shoreline* webpages is a possible activity. If considered a priority activity, staff would seek direction on the scope of outstanding information to be drafted and added to the website.

Speakers evening and education sessions: Information to property owners could be provided through interactive information sessions with experts in the field. Such sessions could be held face-to-face or as a webinar. If considered a priority activity, staff would seek direction on the scope and messaging to be conveyed, so to ensure that the speaker(s) invited ties in directly with desired messaging and education.

Drafting shoreline management regulations: Research could begin on shoreline management best practices to help inform either new regulations or modifications of existing regulations, with the aim to more proactively protect the foreshore. Regulatory measures could either come in the form of zoning regulation amendments, amendments to the Development Procedures bylaw, or the implementation of Development Permit Areas and Development Approval Information bylaws. If considered a priority activity, staff would seek direction on goals and scope, to ensure that the most appropriate regulatory methods are chosen.

Collaboration with agencies and stakeholders: The LTC could embark on stakeholder engagement with other agencies (Regional Districts, FLNRO, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, etc) and perhaps the development community (contractors, excavators, real estate agents, etc) to establish agreed-upon guidelines for foreshore protection. If chosen as a priority activity, realistic expectations would need to be set regarding the long timeline required for such an activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT the Local Trust Committee provide Staff with desired outcomes and direction for the Foreshore Protection Priority work item;

THAT the Local Trust Committee pursue an expansion of the *Caring for My Shoreline* webpages to provide further information to property owners on foreshore development best practices;

THAT the Local Trust Committee host an information session in the Gambier Local Trust Area on a specific desired topic related to foreshore protection, to be held in the summer of 2014; and,

THAT the Local Trust Committee direct staff to research regulatory practices related to foreshore protection.

Prepared and Submitted by:

Aleksandra Brzozowski

November 18, 2013

Aleksandra Brzozowski
Island Planner

Date

Concurred in by:

Courtney Simpson

November 18, 2013

Courtney Simpson, RPP, MCIP
Regional Planning Manager

Date