



File No.: 6500-20
Housing Options Impacts
Review

DATE OF MEETING: May 14, 2020
TO: Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee
FROM: Heather Kauer, Regional Planning Manager
Northern Team
SUBJECT: Report subject: Housing Options and Impacts Review Project Budget and Scope

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee remove items related to the study of groundwater from the “in-scope” section of the Housing Options and Impacts Review project charter;
2. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee remove items related to multi-family, affordable and social needs housing from the “in-scope” section of the Housing Options Impacts Review project charter and add them as distinct, individual projects to the project list; and
3. That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request staff provide a discussion paper on options for narrowing the scope of the Gabriola Housing Options and Impacts Review Project that focuses on the density bank and secondary suites on lots under 2 hectares in size.

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of the scope of the Gabriola Housing Options and Impacts Review Project and make recommendations on narrowing the scope.

REVIEW OF CURRENT SCOPE OF WORK

At their February 27, 2020 regular meeting, the Gabriola LTC endorsed the most current version of the Project Charter for the Housing Options and Impacts Review Project (HOIRP) and the Gabriola Housing Advisory Planning Commission’s draft Engagement Strategy related to the project. The budget anticipated by the endorsed Project Charter included a budget of \$24,000 for fiscal year 2020/21.

On April 15, 2020, staff presented a report to the Trust Council Executive Committee consistent with Trust Council policy 6.5.2 Budget Control and Adjustment Authority which states:

When an actual or anticipated over-expenditure...exceeds \$20,000 for a project or general ledger budget line within an Operational Unit, management must inform the Executive Committee....Upon being informed of over-expenditure, the Executive Committee will decide what initial corrective action will be taken, if any.

The report that was presented to the EC is attachment 1 of this report. As the LTC will note, staff recommended a smaller budget be approved for the project for the following reasons:

1. As the following table from Trust Council’s Draft Budget documents shows, the overall LTC project budget approved by the Trust Council in March for the entire Islands Trust area for fiscal year 2020-2021 is \$71,500. \$15,500 of that overall budget is allocated to projects that are on-going from last year, which leaves \$48,000 to be spread three ways between the three Islands Trust regions. This means that the LTC project budget allocated to the northern region is approximately \$16,000, to be shared by the Denman, Hornby, Lasqueti, Gabriola, Gambier, and Thetis Local Trust Areas.

The \$24,000 requested by the Gabriola Island LTC would be 150% of the entire budget assumed for the northern region of Islands Trust, and if approved, would put the availability of other LTC project funds into question.

ISLANDS TRUST

2020/21 Budget Draft 2, Version 2

Appendix B: List of LTC Projects Funded by the LTC-Project Specific Reserve Fund

Project carry overs currently anticipated:		Amount
Galiano - STVR Review continued	\$	5,000
Mayne Housing Project continued	\$	2,000
Salt Spring Affordable Housing continued	\$	500
Lasqueti OCP/LUB Review continued	\$	3,000
Hornby OCP/LUB Review continued	\$	5,000
Total ongoing projects	\$	15,500
Allowance for upcoming LTC projects <i>(based on \$4,000 per LTC excluding BW)</i>	\$	48,000
First Nations Capacity Funding allowance	\$	8,000
Total LTC Project Budget for FY2020/21	\$	71,500

2. At their March, 2020 quarterly meeting, Trust Council approved \$50,000 in the Islands Trust budget for a northern region groundwater mapping project to be reviewed by the Trust Council Local Planning Committee (LPC) and agreed to fund a full time freshwater specialist. The freshwater work that has been included in the HOIRP is part of the scope of the northern groundwater project. In order to more closely align the budget of the HOIRP project with budget allocations for Islands Trust projects, staff recommends that the freshwater work be removed from the HOIRP project scope.
3. The budget recommended by the Gabriola Housing APC for fiscal year 2020-2021 for public engagement activities is \$9,500. While this amount of project dollars might be accommodated by Islands Trust project or surplus funds, the amount of work involved in staffing all of the proposed public engagement

activities at HAPC recommended levels is not feasible given current and planned staffing levels and work load.

Staff recommended to the LTC that a budget of \$4,000 for the project for fiscal year 2020-2021 was more in line with the overall Islands Trust project budget, per LTC allocation assumptions, and staffing resources. The Executive Committee recommended that staff return to the LTC to discuss this new recommendation.

The \$4,000 recommendation to the Executive Committee was based primarily on an estimate of how many Planner hours could support the various public engagement activities proposed by the HAPC. After hearing from the Executive Committee, staff looked at the scope of the HOIRP project and the assumed deliverables of the HAPC to determine if these assumptions might also be brought more in alignment with budget allocations.

Scope of the HOIR Project

The scope of the HOIRP project charter endorsed by the LTC includes 18 different topic areas:

	Topic Area
1	Review definitions of “affordable” and “attainable” housing.
2	Review OCP policies respecting affordable housing
3	Review OCP policies respecting rental housing
4	Review OCP policies respecting seniors housing
5	Review OCP policies respecting special needs housing
6	Review OCP policies respecting social needs
7	Review OCP policies respecting social well-being
8	Review OCP policies respecting social development
9	Develop a “housing first” policy
10	Review amenity zoning
11	Review housing agreements
12	Review density bank policies
13	Explore opportunities for rental zoning
14	Consider secondary suites on lots smaller than 2 hectares
15	Consider OCP designations for multi-dwelling housing and mixed use housing
16	Consider density provisions for multi-dwelling and mixed-use housing
17	Consider Development permit guidelines for multi-dwelling and mixed-use housing
18	Review and update the Gabriola Island Build-Out Map

The staff work load associated with each of these topic areas could vary. “Review OCP Policies regarding affordable housing” for instance, could just be a report to the LTC on policies that currently exist in the Gabriola

OCP, which would be the least time consuming of work load options associated with this line item. However, if the LTC finds that existing policies are inadequate, developing new policies for affordable housing could be a large-scale, months or years long project all by itself. This is true of most of the topic areas listed in the project charter considered to be “In-Scope.” Even if staff do a minimal amount of research and work on each topic area in the project scope, the project is quite large in scale in terms of workload.

As the LTC is aware, in the near future the Local Planning Services division of Islands Trust will be reorganizing to include a Policy Planning team. This Policy Planning Team will shift the duties of one Island Planner from each region to work exclusively on large scale OCP and LUB projects across Islands Trust. If the Gabriola LTC decided to keep the scope of the HOIRP at its current levels, staff would assume that the project would be assigned to this group as northern region staffing resources would not be adequate to staff it. Staff estimates that this could delay the project indefinitely as the initial mandate of the Policy Planning team would be to prioritize and choose the sequence of working on large scale OCP projects that have been pending with other LTCs.

However, northern region staff resources could be allocated to the project and work could continue in the short term if the scale and scope were more narrowly focused. Staff’s recommendation reflects a scaled-down project.

From the topic areas listed in the scope of the project, assuming the freshwater work is shifted to a separate LPC project, staff have identified four different topic categories that could be broken down into manageable phases of the overall project or be separated out as individual projects:

1. Review / Consideration of the Gabriola Density Bank
2. Review / Consideration of Secondary Suites on lots smaller than 2 ha in size
3. Review / Consideration of land use designations and DPAs for multi-family housing
4. Review / Consideration of affordable housing and social needs OCP policies

If the LTC wishes to have the most impact in the near term on affordable housing on Gabriola, staff recommend that the LTC consider prioritizing a review of the Gabriola density bank or secondary dwellings on lots smaller than 2 hectares. Staff further recommends that multi-family housing, affordable and social needs housing be added as distinct projects to the projects list. This option is reflected in the recommendation on page one of this report.

However the LTC wishes to proceed, staff recommend that a housing topic area be prioritized and scope of the newly defined priority project be identified before any public engagement activities occur.

At their February 20, 2020 regular meeting, the LTC endorsed the HAPC draft engagement strategy which is included in attachment 1. The deliverables identified by that engagement strategy reflect an assumption that the HOIRP will be a large-scale project addressing multiple aspects of housing on Gabriola as the project scope has reflected to this point. The engagement strategy also proposes the use of multiple engagement methodologies with varying costs. If the LTC narrows the scope of the overall project, the assumed deliverables of the engagement strategy would need to be amended. The method or methods of public engagement should also be chosen based on the priority topic to be addressed and associated budget.

Also to consider with public engagement are the current limitations on public gathering. The ability to implement various types of engagement methodologies in the current fiscal year will be impacted by social distancing recommendations.

Rationale for recommendation

A review of budget and staffing constraints as well as the ability of the organization to initiate public engagement strategies that include public gathering in this fiscal year lead staff to recommend narrowing the scope of the HOIRP by:

- 1) removing the groundwater aspects of the HOIRP from the scope of the project as the work and budget will be covered by the LPC's Northern Region Groundwater mapping project;
- 2) prioritizing a review of the Gabriola density bank or secondary suites as an initial housing project; and
- 3) moving other housing topics currently identified in the scope of the project to the Gabriola LTC projects list as their own distinct projects.

Once a priority topic area is chosen, staff further recommends that the HAPC engagement strategy be amended to reflect the more narrow scope of work.

To provide information on which housing topic to prioritize first, staff recommend that we be requested to provide a discussion paper analyzing the Gabriola density bank and regulations for secondary suites on lots under 2 hectares.

ALTERNATIVES

The LTC may consider the following alternatives to the staff recommendation:

1. Retain the current scope of work and shift responsibility to the Policy Planning team

The LTC may wish to retain the current scope of the project and forward the Project Charter to the Policy Planning Team once it is formed. In this case the recommended resolution could be:

That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee request staff forward the Housing Options Impacts Review Project Charter v. 4, dated February 27, 2020, to the Director of Local Planning Services for assignment to the Policy Planning Team.

2. Choose a priority topic area other than the density bank or secondary suites

The LTC may decide to narrow the scope of the Gabriola Housing Options Impacts Review project by prioritizing a housing topic area that is not the density bank or secondary suites. The motion for this option would be:

That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee amend the scope of the Housing Impacts Options Review Project Charter by prioritizing review of.....

3. Ask staff for more information

Alternatively the LTC could ask staff to report back with more detailed information on one or more of the above options prior to finalizing the project scope. The motion would be:

That the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee ask staff to provide more information about....

NEXT STEPS

If the LTC accepts the recommendation, staff will remove groundwater review from the project charter, move the recommended topics from the scope of the project to the projects list, and bring a discussion paper back to the LTC for analysis of the density bank and secondary suites for prioritization.

Submitted By:	Heather Kauer, RPP, MCIP, AICP Regional Planning Manager	May 5, 2020
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ATTACHMENTS

1. Request for Decision report to the Islands Trust Executive Committee with attachments, dated April 15, 2020.