

Frequently Asked Questions

This document compiles frequently asked questions heard through the community engagement process to date. The questions are grouped under general themes or categories for ease of reading.

Updated March 28, 2025

Recent Reports for the Savary Island Community Plan

Is the Community Plan Background Report completed?

The background report is complete and available for download here: https://www.qathet.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/168-SavaryIsland-OCP-Background-Report-Final-March-25_2025.pdf. The report provides insights into relevant data and trends for Savary Island that property owners and the qRD should consider as the Savary Island Official Community Plan review and update process moves forward.

When will the new groundwater study be provided to the public?

The new groundwater study is complete and available for download here: <https://www.qathet.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/qRD-Assessment-of-Groundwater-Resources-on-Savary-Island.pdf>. The report presents current groundwater conditions on Savary, including water availability and use, water quality, water vulnerability to hazards related to land use, climate change and sea water intrusion. The findings and recommendations provide an important foundation for future policy directions for land use and groundwater protection in the Savary Island OCP review and update process.

Will the project team be updating the development analysis with the new 2024 tax assessment data provided to the qRD in January?

Yes. The project team will be updating the development analysis contained in the Background Report for the final Savary Island Community Plan.

Tetra Tech Slope Hazard Study

Is the qRD intending to use last years Tetra Tech slope hazard study and the associated set back recommendations in the Savary Island Community Plan?

The qRD has made no decisions on how to use last year’s Tetra Tech slope hazard study and the associated set back recommendations in the Savary Island Community Plan. The study provides information that property owners and the qRD should consider as the Savary Island Community Plan review and update process moves forward.

Based on community feedback received to-date during phases 1 and 2 of the planning process there does not appear to be sufficient citizen support for implementing land use regulations pertaining to slope hazards. Thus, the community plan team will be exploring non-regulatory solutions to addressing the physical limitations on Savary Island.

If the Tetra Tech slope hazard study is included and adopted into the community plan as written, would any future land use regulation be bound by the community plan?

As mentioned above, based on community feedback received to-date during phases 1 and 2 of the planning process there does not appear to be sufficient citizen support for implementing land use regulations pertaining to slope hazards. Thus, the community plan team will be exploring non-regulatory solutions to addressing the physical limitations on Savary Island.

Will the qRD be referencing the Thurber Report which was part of the 2006 OCP?

No. The Thurber Report is outdated and has been replaced by the Tetra Tech slope hazard study.

Would the qRD be willing to explain potential impacts to property owners in each of the three hazard zones if and before it's included in the community plan? This would include how would a property determine their 2100 natural boundary offset.

Yes. The qRD will be sharing information with property owners about slope hazards and seeking feedback on different policy options in future phases of engagement. Based on community feedback to date, the community plan team will be exploring non-regulatory solutions to addressing the physical limitations on Savary Island.

Will property owners be required to have geotechnical analyses performed on their lots?

No decisions have been made by the qRD at the present time. However, it is good practice for property owners to understand the geotechnical conditions on their lots to reduce their risk of property damage. Based on community feedback to date, the community plan team will be exploring non-regulatory solutions to addressing the physical limitations on Savary Island.

Why are we required to consider sea level rising as far in the future as 2100?

A 2011 study commissioned by the Province of BC recommended planning for one meter sea level rise by 2100. In 2018, the Province of BC updated its [Flood Hazard Area Land Use Management Guidelines](#) to incorporate the recommendation to plan for one meter of sea level rise by the year 2100. Local governments in BC are required to consider the provincial "Flood Hazard Area Land Use Management Guidelines" in their planning.

The information referenced can be found in the [BC Ministry of Environment Sea Level Rise Adaptation Primer](#) and the [qRD Coastal Flood Mapping Report Phase 2](#).

Erosion, Water Use, and Fire Hazard

Has the qRD investigated erosion mitigation strategies?

Addressing erosion hazards will be discussed in later phases of the Community Plan review and update. Erosion is a significant topic within the existing OCP. Various policies address preventing erosion, including the Guidelines for Development Assessment Area 1 - Shoreline Areas.

In 2023 the qRD commissioned the Savary Island Slope Hazard Study and in 2022 the qathet Regional Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy. These reports explore slope hazard, erosion and coastal flooding hazards and set out recommended adaptation options and next steps. Both reports are summarized in the [Community Plan Background Report](#) and provide information that property owners and the qRD should consider as the Savary Island Community Plan review and update process moves forward.

The qRD promotes best practices for mitigating erosion and flooding hazards in this brochure: https://www.qathet.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/qRD_Hazard_Brochure_online_test3.pdf.

How will the OCP address the community's concerns about water usage?

In 2024 the qRD commissioned the Assessment of Groundwater Resources on Savary Island - Qεyε q^wən. The report presents current groundwater conditions on Savary, including water availability and use, water quality, water vulnerability to hazards related to land use, climate change and sea water intrusion. The final report is available here <https://www.qathet.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/qRD-Assessment-of-Groundwater-Resources-on-Savary-Island.pdf>.

Addressing water usage will be discussed in later phases of the Community Plan review and update. The existing OCP addresses water usage in section 7.1 Watershed and Aquifer Stewardship and section 11 Plan Implementation. There are various policies and recommended actions that address this topic.

What plans are in place to address fire hazards on the island?

In 2009 the qRD commissioned the Savary Island Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The plan evaluates considerations for wildland urban interface management on Savary Island. A summary of the plan and relevance to the community plan process is provided in the [Community Plan Background Report](#).

Addressing fire hazards will be discussed in later phases of the Community Plan review and update. The existing OCP addresses fire protection in section 7.4 Fire Protection. It notes that hazard mapping for wildfire has been done across the Island, indicating the west and east portions of the Island have an extreme Interface rating. Various policies address this topic. The Savary Island Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection for the Island.

Building Regulations

Will the new OCP impose stricter building regulations and permitting processes?

The qRD has not adopted a building bylaw and does not operate a building inspection and permitting service for building occurring in Electoral Areas A, B, C, or D. The qRD has no plan to implement building regulations and permitting processes on Savary Island.

Based on community feedback received to-date during phases 1 and 2 of the planning process there does not appear to be sufficient citizen support for implementing building regulations and permitting processes. Thus, the community plan team will be exploring non-regulatory solutions to addressing land use issues on Savary Island.

Land Use Regulations

Is the qRD considering a Land Use Regulation after the community plan and review and update is finalized and adopted? If yes, when would the community see that process start?

Based on community feedback received to-date during phases 1 and 2 of the planning process there does not appear to be sufficient citizen support for implementing land use regulations. Thus, the community plan team will be exploring non-regulatory solutions to addressing land use issues on Savary Island.

If the qRD does not implement land use regulations what rules are in place to control land use and development on Savary Island?

There are provincial and federal regulations that apply on Savary Island. For example: BC Building Code, Drinking Water Protection Regulation, Sewerage System Regulation, and Heritage Conservation Act.

Further information can be found in the [Savary Island Community Plan Background Report](#) as well as provincial and federal websites.

What is the difference between an OCP and the Savary Island Community Plan?

There is no difference. The Savary Island Community Plan is a review and update of the current Savary Island Official Community Plan.

Would a Land Use Regulation supersede an Official Community Plan?

No, an OCP is the highest-level statutory plan, it provides the guiding vision for land use and development and establishes land use designations and policies to support achieving the vision. Land use regulations must be aligned with a community plan.

How will the new Official Community Plan consider immediate community needs such as public toilets, garbage/recycling facilities, barge ramp upgrades, and road upgrades?

If there is clear direction from the community in the OCP process, the new OCP could provide direction to the qRD administration and Board for capital planning and budgeting to implement these types of services.

Roads are outside the scope of local government authority. Roads and road right of ways are under the jurisdiction of the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Transit. The qRD can continue to advocate for better maintenance of the roads on the Island.

Provincial Legislation

Is keeping the old OCP and not implementing a new one a possibility?

The BC Local Government Act states that an official community plan (OCP) should be reviewed and updated every 5-10 years. This review and update cycle makes sense in urban areas and municipalities experiencing high rates of growth and development pressure. However, in more remote and rural areas where growth rates are modest, OCPs are generally reviewed and updated every 15-20 years.

The 2007 Savary Island OCP is almost 20 years old and there have been many changes on the island over the past years. It will be determined through the planning process how much of the existing OCP will be retained and how much will be updated. At a minimum, mapping changes will be required to reflect changes in land use over the last 20 years. Policy changes may also be required to better reflect the vision, values and aspirations of the Savary Island community today.

What is the purpose of the legislative language in the OCP?

The Local Government Act of BC sets out the following required content for an official community plan. An OCP must have statements and map designations for:

- Residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs
- Present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses

- Present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites
- Sand & gravel deposits mapping
- Phasing of any major road, sewer and water system
- Restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development.
- Housing policies for affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing, and
- Targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and policies and actions of the local government proposed to achieve those targets

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/local-government-planning/official-community-plans>

What new Provincial legislation needs to be included in the updated OCP, and where can residents find this legislation?

Most of the new legislative requirements announced by the province relate to assessing long term housing needs and planning for how to meet long term housing needs. All OCP requirements, including the new housing related requirements, are set out under the BC Local Government Act, Part 14, Division 4 available here: https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/r15001_14#division_d0e43604

Concerns about Potential Overdevelopment and Services

Is the qRD proposing to change zoning bylaws to allow for more development and higher density?

The qRD has not adopted a zoning bylaw to regulate land use or density on Savary Island.

Based on community feedback received to-date during phases 1 and 2 of the planning process there does not appear to be sufficient citizen support for regulating land use or density. Thus, the community plan team will be exploring

non-regulatory solutions to addressing development and density issues on Savary Island.

Will the OCP address concerns about potential overdevelopment and the preservation of Savary Island's rural character?

Based on community feedback received to-date during phases 1 and 2 of the planning process there does not appear to be sufficient citizen support for regulating land use or development. Thus, the community plan team will be exploring non-regulatory solutions to addressing concerns with overdevelopment and protecting the rural character of Savary Island.

What plans are in place to address the potential impact of increased traffic, garbage, and sewage on the island?

There are no current plans to address impacts of increased traffic, garbage, and sewage on the island. Roads and traffic are outside the scope of local government authority. Roads are under the authority of the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT).

The qRD does not operate a sewer system on Savary Island and on-site septic servicing is outside the scope of local government authority. Under provincial regulations, on-site septic systems must be installed by a Registered On-Site Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) and septic filings submitted to Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH).

What are the garbage disposal options for Savary Island residents?

The qRD is responsible for long-term planning and management of solid waste for the entire regional district. “Working Towards Zero Waste” is the philosophy held by qathet Regional District that informs its initiatives and programs.

Electoral Areas, including Savary Island (in Electoral Area A) do not have public garbage or recycling collection service at this time, but residents can bring items to the Resource Recovery Centre for drop off. The qRD also operates a residential recycling depot in Lund.

What is the qRD's emergency evacuation plan for Savary Island?

The qRD has developed eight community evacuation guides as a result of the communities' input at our Community Evacuation Planning meetings held in spring and summer of 2019. These guides will help you prepare your own household emergency plan. The Savary Island Community Evacuation Guide is available here: https://www.qathet.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/qRD_EVAC_brochure-Savary1.pdf

What do Savary Island property owners get from their property taxes to the qRD?

The qRD relies on the BC Surveyor of Taxes to collect Rural Property Taxes. Each service offered by the qRD operates independently with its own dedicated budget. Services are supported through taxes by the areas that benefit from each service.

Information on property taxes in the qRD is available here: <https://www.qathet.ca/about/finance/property-taxes/>

Communication and Engagement

Does the qRD post on the Savary Island message boards?

No. The qRD does not post on the Savary Island message boards on Facebook.

The qRD does post on the qRD Facebook page and these posts can be shared by community members on Savary Island message boards.

What are the timelines and the processes for the community engagement?

A communications and engagement strategy was developed at the beginning of the project that considers the seasonal nature of the community and includes both in-person and online engagement. If all engagement events were in-person, the costs would increase significantly and a large proportion of the community would not be able to participate. Online engagement allows for greater participation by Savary Island property owners.

A Project Timeline identifying the 5 phases in the planning process and the different community engagement activities planned for each phase is available on the project webpage here: qathet.ca/savaryocp.

What is the rationale for the Official Community Plan timeline and why is it shorter than Texada Island's OCP?

The average length of time required for an OCP review and update is one year. One year is a realistic timeframe for completing the Savary Island OCP review and update based on the resources allocated to support the project.

The Texada Island OCP review and update took almost two years to complete. The longer timeline was the result of 3 significant differences between the Texada Island and the Savary Island planning processes. Firstly, there was no consultant support contracted for the Texada OCP. The work load for the project was completed by qRD Planning staff, a challenging task with only two staff. Secondly, there were no online engagement tools or capacity to deliver them at the time. The Texada OCP review and update was a few years prior to Covid when social networking platforms like Zoom and Teams really took off. Thirdly, there were shíshálh Nation interests that had to be addressed prior to project completion.

Are property owners directly mailed about the slope studies and land use regulations?

The qRD has never provided public mail outs for any of the slope hazard studies or coastal flood mapping reports completed in the region.

All slope hazard studies and coastal flood mapping reports have been presented and considered at open meetings of the qRD Regional Board. In addition, all slope hazard studies and coastal flood mapping reports are freely accessible to the public on the qRD website.

All slope hazard studies can be found on our [Development Resources](#) page. Coastal flood mapping reports for the mainland and the islands can be found on our [Coastal Risks](#) page.

Will the qRD offer facilitated workshops to discuss important topics like carrying capacity, transportation, and water?

The qRD hosted three online workshops and small group discussions via Zoom on February 18, 19 and 20, 2025. The purpose of the workshops was to dig deeper into key outcomes from the citizen survey. The workshops provided property owners an opportunity to discuss key values, key aspirations and solutions to the Island's challenges, including carrying capacity/overdevelopment, transportation/traffic and groundwater protection. A what we heard report will be available soon on the project webpage here: qathet.ca/savaryocp.

How will the feedback collected from the community be used to inform the OCP?

Each phase of engagement in the planning process will have a What We Heard Report to transparently provide information on community input, statistics on who engaged, outcome highlights, analysis, and next steps in the process.

If there are topics that are not within the scope of the OCP but high on the list of issues, concerns or desires for the Savary Island community, those will be reported and flagged for the qRD or jurisdiction responsible for the topic. The development of the OCP will reflect the direction from the community engagement outcomes.

Will the feedback be weighted to reflect the diverse perspectives of the community, including full-time residents, seasonal residents, and First Nations?

Feedback will not be weighted or prioritized based on permanent or seasonal residency. All current landowners, including Tla'amin people that have occupied qeyε qʷəŋ since time immemorial, will have a say in the OCP.

qRD Vision Survey

What guidelines and criteria were used to develop the survey questions? Does the OCP survey accurately reflect the community's vision?

The demographic questions were outlined in the communications and engagement strategy accepted by the qRD Board prior to the engagement beginning. Tracking demographic information is an established practice in community engagement processes to understand who is participating.

The survey questions were designed to test the vision (principle aim) and goals from the existing 2007 Savary Island Official Community Plan (OCP) to see if they still resonate with people today. This was the first touchpoint with the community, not the only engagement. If the survey results show that a new community vision and goals are required, creating a new community vision and goals will be part of the process. The Vision Survey Engagement Summary Report is available on the project webpage here: qathet.ca/savaryocp.

Why were survey questions so focused on groundwater and erosion?

The survey questions were designed to test the vision (principle aim) and goals from the existing 2007 Savary Island Official Community Plan (OCP). At that time, groundwater and erosion issues were a high priority of the community.

Why didn't the survey offer a "Does Not Apply" option for self-identification categories?

That was an error on our part and we sincerely apologize. In future surveys, a 'Does Not Apply' option will be included.

How does the qRD plan to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the survey results?

The Vision Survey was designed as an initial check in with the community to understand if the existing Vision and Goals are still relevant for the Savary Island community today. The qRD has confidence in the survey platform used for this survey and, based on the results, there is no evidence of survey spamming or

attempts to influence results. The community has acted in good faith and provided their insights through this first touchpoint with the community. The project team will investigate future restrictions if required.