



Savary Island's vision is to preserve its off-grid island lifestyle, self-sufficiency, and strong sense of community with minimal regulations, while actively protecting the island's vital groundwater resources and sensitive ecosystems. The community continues to celebrate the beauty of the land and ocean, while stewarding natural and cultural heritage resources.

Cover image to be determined by Phase 5 community engagement

Savary Island Official Community Plan

Schedule A to Bylaw No. 607, 2026 (First Reading)

May 26 2026



qathet
REGIONAL DISTRICT

Acknowledgments

This Official Community Plan was developed through a comprehensive five phase planning process working collaboratively with island residents and property owners, inclusive of the Tla'amin Nation.

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**qathet Regional District acknowledges that Savary Island
(qeyε q^wən) is located within the Traditional Territory of the
Tla'amin, Klahoose, and Homalco First Nations.**

**We recognize the significant contributions of
First Nations people who have lived and worked on
this land since time immemorial.**

**We offer our sincere gratitude for their
stewardship of these lands.**

*“qeyε q^wən has always been
vital to our people and will
continue to be for generations,
therefore it should be protected
from harm and it's health
invested in for long term
sustainability.”*

*- Tla'amin community
member quote*

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1 Plan Foundation

1.1 Introduction

The Official Community Plan is a high-level planning document that guides local decision making on land use, development, infrastructure, community services, and environmental stewardship. The Official Community Plan embraces a long-term community vision and sets out specific objectives and policies to achieve that vision.

Legal Context

The Official Community Plan is governed by provisions of the provincial *Local Government Act*. Under Section 471 of the *Local Government Act*, an official community plan is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management, within the area covered by the plan, respecting the purposes of local government.

An official community plan is required by Section 473 of the *Local Government Act* to include statements and map designations for the area covered by the plan respecting the following:

- approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 20 years;
- approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational, and public utility land uses;
- approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction;
- restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development;
- approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems;
- approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks, and waste treatment and disposal sites;
- policies of the local government respecting affordable, rental, and special needs housing; and
- targets and policies for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.



1 Plan Foundation

1.1 Introduction

This Plan acknowledges that Savary Island is an off-grid island comprised largely of recreational properties, unpaved roads, with limited potential for commercial, industrial, institutional, or agricultural development. Savary Island is not identified in the region as having a core housing need, and road, sewer and water systems fall under provincial authority. Therefore, the Plan does not consider:

- anticipated housing needs over 20 years;
- proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, or public utility;
- location and phasing of major road, sewer and water systems;
- proposed public facilities, including schools, and waste treatment and disposal sites; or
- affordable, rental and special needs housing.

The legal effect of an official community plan is set out under Section 478 of the *Local Government Act* as follows:

- an official community plan does not commit or authorize the regional district to proceed with any project that is specified in the plan; and
- all bylaws enacted or works undertaken by the board, after the adoption of an official community plan, must be consistent with the plan.

The policy effect of an official community plan includes:

- establishes a community vision;
- designates future land use patterns;
- coordinates policy to protect features and infrastructure;
- informs financial planning and servicing;
- guides decisions by Regional Board;
- guides decisions by residents and land owners; and
- guides decisions by other levels of government that have jurisdiction within or adjacent to the planning area (provincial agencies, federal agencies, neighbouring municipalities, and First Nations).



Figure 1. Jurisdictional and Electoral Area Boundaries

1.2 Location

Area Covered by the Plan

Savary Island is located within Electoral Area A of the qathet Regional District, off the southern coast of British Columbia, lying within the Georgia Strait between Vancouver Island and the mainland (Figure 1 page 3). The island is positioned approximately 6 kilometers southwest of Lund and 30 kilometers northwest of Powell River.

The Official Community Plan covers all of Savary Island (Figure 2 page 5). Savary Island consists mainly of privately owned residential land, privately owned conservation land, limited public spaces, and no large-scale commercial or industrial development.

Savary Island is located within the traditional territories of the Tla'amin, Klahoose, and Homalco First Nations.

Savary Island is known for its unique geography, featuring extensive sandy beaches, coastal dunes, and diverse ecosystems. The island's natural environment is distinct from much of the south coast of British Columbia, characterized by coastal dunes, dryland forests of Douglas-fir and arbutus, and ecologically sensitive shorelines. Its narrow, crescent-shaped landmass extends approximately eight kilometers in length and varies in width, reaching approximately one kilometer at its widest point.

The island's terrain includes a mix of coastal bluffs, forested areas, wetlands, and grasslands, creating a rich and varied landscape. The localized and limited tidal action accounts for the warm water the island is known for.

The island's low elevation and porous, sandy soils contribute to its distinct environmental characteristics, particularly affecting water retention, vegetation, and groundwater availability.





Figure 2. Savary Island Official Community Plan - Planning Area

1 Plan Foundation

1.2 Location

The island's remote location and limited infrastructure influence its accessibility and development patterns. Most transportation to and from Savary is facilitated through the unincorporated village of Lund, which serves as the primary departure point for water taxis and private boats from the mainland. Travel from Vancouver Island or other areas is also feasible, by boat or float plane. Powell River is the nearest municipality and, located on the mainland, provides a connection to larger regional services, including health care, retail, and transportation links via BC Ferries or Powell River Airport.

Savary Island is primarily a seasonal retreat, attracting visitors with its mild climate, scenic beauty, and recreational opportunities such as beachcombing, hiking, cycling, kayaking, and swimming. While there is a small permanent population, the island's summer population increases significantly, as property owners and visitors occupy seasonal vacation homes.

Savary Island is off-grid. BC Hydro does not serve the island and is generally not desired. The majority of lots on Savary Island are serviced by on-site wells and on-site septic disposal systems, with the exception of lots serviced by Savary Shores Improvement District.



“Protecting the island’s groundwater resources is essential, and this provides an excellent example of the collective and autonomous capacity of the community.”
 - community quote



Figure 3. Tla'amin Nation Place Names

1 Plan Foundation

1.3 Regional Context

First Nations Stewardship

The Official Community Plan recognizes and respects Tla'amin, Klahoose, and Homalco history, culture, connection, and ongoing stewardship on Savary Island.

Savary Island is called q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən (pronounced Qaye q̓wun) by the Tla'amin people and is located within the traditional territories of the Tla'amin, Klahoose, and Homalco First Nations. These First Nations have a common history in the area that dates back over 8,500 years, with numerous archaeological sites that document their history, culture, and presence on the island. The word q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən means freshwater spring. The island has this name because of its three freshwater sources. Other place names (Figure 3 page 7) include ti: ti: may (T'eet'ee may), θateq (Thah teq), and χεχἀjeyis (χε χα jey is).

According to the Tla'amin, q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən (Savary Island) had large village sites, multiple burial sites and was a cultural place for ceremonial and spiritual gatherings for thousands of years. Tla'amin people participate in ceremonies and spiritual gatherings, clam digging, root digging, berry picking, hunting, bark stripping, and collecting herring spawn on q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən (Savary Island) .

In the 1990's and early 2000's, the Tla'amin Nation negotiated a Treaty with the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada. The Treaty has been in effect since April 5, 2016. In March 2025, the Tla'amin Final Agreement was amended to include the title ʔaʔj̓inx̓w̓eg̓əs, meaning 'a good relationship with someone' reflecting the intent to guide ongoing relationships. The Treaty includes self-governance provisions and over 8,000 hectares of land, including two waterfront lots on q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən (Savary Island). The Treaty includes provisions for hunting, fishing, and resource gathering rights on provincial Crown land and foreshore on q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən (Savary Island).

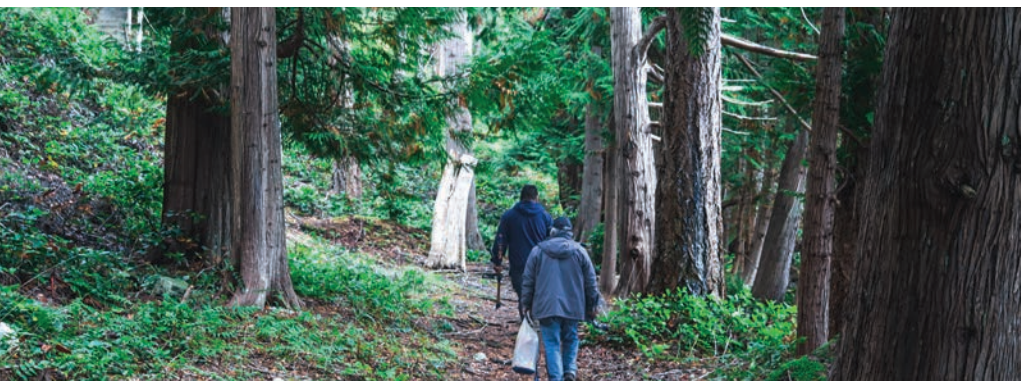


photo credit - Tla'amin Nation

“Our people have lived on these lands since time immemorial. Reserve and ‘community’ living is new to us. After visiting q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən, it was evident that our people used the entirety of the Island.”
 - Tla'amin community member quote



1 Plan Foundation

1.3 Regional Context

Tla'amin is a self-governing Nation working to restore its stewardship role throughout its territory.

The Tla'amin Nation has signed Shared Territory Agreements with both the Klahoose and Homalco First Nations. The Agreements identify q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən (Savary Island) as within the Tla'amin Nation core territory. q̓athet Regional District and the Tla'amin Nation have signed a Protocol Agreement for Communication and Cooperation. The Agreement sets out shared principles and values for working together on a range of interests including land use planning, environmental protection, and cultural and heritage protection.

"I remember paddling out to Savary as a child with my grandmother to go sell her baskets. We would paddle out to mid channel and set our sail and go all the way. We'd go to the beaches and sell her baskets. We'd also go and harvest roots, dig for clams, and we'd hunt deer... We'd stay and camp on Savary and wait for a westward wind to sail back home."

- Tla'amin community member quote

Key Tla'amin stewardship and interests on q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən (Savary Island) include:

- working together to harmonize land use planning in interface areas between Tla'amin Lands and adjacent lands;
- protecting the natural environment and ensuring a sustainable resource base for hunting, fishing and resource gathering for future generations;
- protecting cultural and archaeological resources and expanding the inventory of known sites. These sites are highly valued by the Tla'amin people and are protected under the provincial *Heritage Conservation Act*;
- being recognized and respected as part of the community in government-to-government relationships; and
- educating the general public on Tla'amin history, culture and connection to the lands and waters of the territory.

1.3 Regional Context

Regional Sustainability Charter

The Official Community Plan supports and aligns with the Regional Sustainability Charter, signed in July 2010 by the Regional Board, the City of Powell River Council and the Tla'amin Nation Council.

Charter Principles

- recognize and respect Tla'amin rights, title and cultural history;
- recognize ecological limits;
- take a long view;
- promote self-reliance;
- integrate environment, society and economy;
- work together;
- learn continuously;
- strive for equity;
- manage uncertainty; and
- consider local and global sustainability.

Sustainability Principles

The Official Community Plan embraces the four principles of sustainability set out in the qathet Regional District Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027, adopted in 2023 by the Regional Board.

Environmental Sustainability

Ensure the resiliency, conservation and protection of the natural environment.

Economic Sustainability

Provide and support ongoing economic benefits for the community.

Cultural Sustainability

Provide and promote respect for diversity and heritage.

Social Sustainability

Provide access, support, and advocacy for a safe, secure and inclusive community.



1 Plan Foundation

1.4 Population

Area A Population

Population data for Savary Island is not available as the island is not separated out in the Federal Census. This is due to the fact that the island is comprised largely of recreational properties that are occupied seasonally and there are few permanent residents. Due to the lack of population data for the island, the official community plan considers population data and trends for Electoral Area A which includes Savary Island.

Population data from Statistics Canada 2021 Census indicates the Electoral Area A population at approximately 1,250 people. The population of Electoral Area A constitutes 5.8 percent of the overall qathet Regional District population of 21,496 people.

Anecdotal information suggests there are approximately 100+ permanent residents on Savary Island. The permanent residents of Savary Island constitute a small proportion of the overall Electoral Area A population of 1,250 people, approximately 8 percent.

Population data from Statistics Canada indicates the Electoral Area A population is growing. As shown in Table 1, between 2001 and 2016 the populations of Electoral Area A and qathet Regional District (qRD) remained fairly constant with modest growth. Then between 2016 and 2021 Electoral Area A saw unprecedented growth with a percentage change in population on par with that experienced for the province of British Columbia.

Table 1. Population Change 2001 – 2021

	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	Total Pop. Change 2001-2021	% Change 2001-2021
Electoral Area A	988	914	1,008	1,105	1,250	262	27%
qRD	19,765	19,599	19,906	20,070	21,496	1,731	9%
British Columbia	3,907,738	4,113,487	4,400,057	4,648,055	5,000,879	1,093,141	28%

Source: Statistics Canada

1 Plan Foundation

1.4 Population

While there is no quantifiable evidence for why this occurred, it is considered reasonable that the increased growth occurred during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic when people were migrating from urban areas to rural areas, and many property owners were taking up permanent residence in their recreational homes. It is unclear whether these people will remain as permanent residents or if the 2026 Census will demonstrate a decrease in population as people migrate back to urban areas (qRD Housing Needs Report Electoral Areas A, B, C and D, 2024).

Housing data from Statistics Canada indicates a large number of housing units in Electoral Area A are not lived in by the usual residents, implying either seasonal residency or short-term vacation rentals (qRD Housing Needs Report Electoral Areas A, B, C and D, 2024).

Demographic data from Statistics Canada indicates the Electoral Area A population is aging. As shown in Table 2, between 2001 and 2021 the population of Electoral Area A experienced a decrease in the number of school aged children and an increase in the number of residents in the 65 to 84 age cohort.

Table 2. Electoral Area A Population Change 2001 – 2021 by Age Groupings

Age Group	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	Pop. Change 2001-2021 ²	% Change 2001 - 2021
0-19	180	140	135	160	160	-20	-11%
20-44	265	170	185	210	270	5	2%
45-64	400	440	475	420	420	20	5%
65-84	130	160	200	320	390	260	200%
85+ ¹	0	5	5	5	5	5	500%
Total ¹	975	915	1,000	1,115	1,245	270	28%

Source: Statistics Canada

¹ Statistics Canada is committed to protect the privacy of all Canadians and the confidentiality of the data they provide to us. As part of this commitment some population counts of geographic areas are adjusted in order to ensure confidentiality. Counts of the total population are rounded to a base of 5 for any dissemination block having a population of less than 15.

² Sub-groups differ due to rounding

1

Plan Foundation



1.4 Population

Population Projections

BC Stats has provided 20-year population projections for Electoral Area A from 2021 to 2046. BC Stats uses demographic data accessed through Medical Services Plan BC and Statistics Canada, and applies the component/cohort-survival method to forecast the population. This method grows the population from the latest base year estimate by forecasting births, deaths and migration by age. The risk of error is increased for smaller areas.

As shown in Table 3, BC Stats 20-year population projections for Electoral Area A indicate a percent change in line with the percent change experienced between 2016 and 2021. BC Stats made no interpretation of the unprecedented increase in population in Area A between 2016 and 2021, but carried that growth forward in the forecasted populations.

As noted earlier, it is anticipated that much of this growth was seasonal property owners moving to their recreational homes during COVID-19, and it is not known whether they will remain permanent residents.

Figure 4 (page 14) shows the historical and forecasted population for Electoral Area A from 2001 to 2046. As noted by BC Stats, the further out the projection, the less confidence in the projections, as there could be many things that occur that cannot be predicted and that could change the growth of an area.

Table 3. Electoral Area A Forecasted Population Change 2021 – 2046

	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	% Change 2021 - 2046
Electoral Area A	1,250	1,282	1,357	1,435	1,528	1,625	23%
qRD	21,496	22,356	22,225	22,621	23,295	24,091	11%
British Columbia	5,000,879	5,707,994	6,023,005	6,351,531	6,647,539	6,915,064	28%

Source: Source BC Stats/ 2023 qathet Regional Housing Needs Report

1 Plan Foundation

1.4 Population

Planning Implications

Based on the projected population growth in Electoral Area A to 1,625 people by 2046, it is anticipated that the population of Savary Island will also increase over the next 20 years.

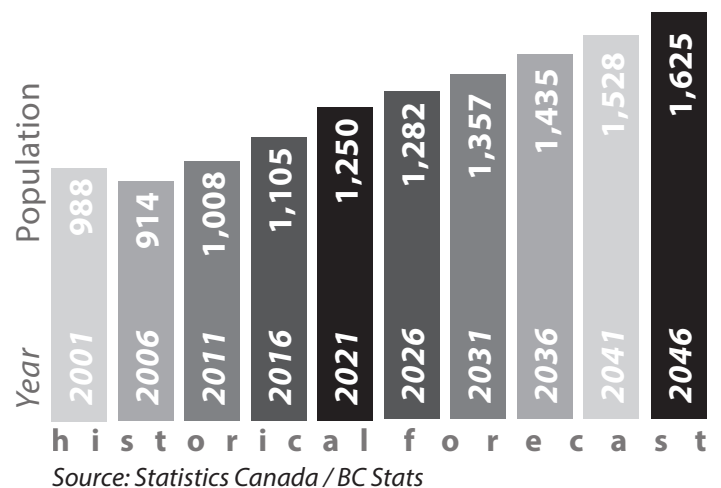
It is anticipated that the future population of Savary Island will continue to be comprised largely of seasonal residents with a small population of permanent residents. As noted earlier, anecdotal information suggests there are currently 100+ permanent residents on the island. While the population of permanent residents may increase in the future, it will likely remain a very small proportion of the overall Electoral A population due to the island's remote location and limited infrastructure.

The 2025 BC Assessment Roll shows a total of 520 vacant residential parcels of land on Savary Island. Fifty of the vacant residential parcels are located within the boundaries of the Savary Shores Improvement District, and 470 of the parcels are located outside of the Savary Shores Improvement District.

Development potential of vacant land on the island is constrained by topography and how the land will be serviced with potable water and septic disposal that meets provincial standards.

It is anticipated that the current vacant residential land inventory will meet the demand for those seeking a remote and self-sufficient island lifestyle well beyond the life of this official community plan.

Figure 4. Electoral Area A
Population Change 2001 - 2046





1 Plan Foundation

1.5 Community Planning Process

The Official Community Plan (OCP) for Savary Island was prepared through a comprehensive five-phase planning process working in collaboration with island residents and property owners.

Phase 1 was the “Project Initiation” phase of the process and focused on laying the foundation for the Plan. Key activities included background research, island tours for project team members, an on-island open house event, and on-island community market event. This phase concluded with establishment of the Savary Island Community Plan Advisory Committee and completion of the Phase 1 Engagement Report.

Phase 2 was the “Community Exploration & Visioning” phase. Key activities included development of a background report, an online visioning survey, and a series of online engagement sessions aimed at identifying community values, priorities and aspirations. This phase also marked the first meeting of the Savary Island Community Plan Advisory Committee. This phase concluded with completion of the Background Report and Phase 2 Engagement Reports.

Phase 3 was the “Key Directions” phase and focused on development of a discussion book that summarized information learned through previous phases of the planning process and posed questions about potential policy directions for the official community plan. Activities in this phase included on-island and online workshops to discuss the key directions, and an online survey to gather feedback from the community on policy directions for the Plan. This phase concluded with completion of the Phase 3 Engagement Report.

Phase 4 was the “Official Community Plan Preparation” phase. Key activities included preparing a draft Plan and working with the Planning Advisory Committee to ensure the Plan was reader-friendly and reflective of community and key interest holder feedback.

Phase 5 was the “Approval Process” phase and marked the final phase of the planning process. Key activities included on-island community engagement events, and an online survey to gather feedback on the draft Plan. The Plan was refined based on feedback, and considered at a public hearing prior to final adoption of the bylaw by the Regional Board. Implementation of the Plan is dependent upon the decisions and actions of the community (residents, property owners, and key interest holders), qathet Regional District and other levels of government.

1

Plan Foundation

1. Project Initiation

technical background review

introductory community open houses

5. Approval Process

public hearing

adopt the OCP

establish advisory committee

refine the OCP

2. Exploration & Visioning

focused community outreach

identify community priorities

identify community vision

**ENGAGEMENT
COMMUNITY**

4. Plan Preparation

present draft OCP

refine objectives & policies

3. Key Directions

identify key policy directions

focused community outreach

Engagement Timeline

M E T H O D S
2 0 2 4
E N G A G E M E N T
2 0 2 5
C O M M U N I T Y
2 0 2 6

Phase 1. Project Initiation

- Aug 26** on-island community open house (50 participants)
- Aug 27** on-island farmers market event (30 participants)
- Sep 11** online community Groundwater Study webinar with Q&A (47 registrants)
- Sep 12** online community Groundwater Study survey (59 participants)

Outcomes

- project communications and engagement plan
- project webpage
- phase 1 engagement report
- establish Savary Island Community Plan Advisory Committee

Phase 2. Visioning

- Nov 12** Savary Island Community Plan Advisory Committee meeting
- Oct 17** online community visioning survey (575 participants)
- Dec 5** online community webinar with Q&A (158 registrants)
- Jan 21** community mail out (1100+ addresses)
- Feb 18-20** three online small group community sessions (102 registrants)
- Apr 14** Savary Island Community Plan Advisory Committee meeting

Outcomes

- phase 2 engagement report
- project background report

Phase 3. Key Directions

- Jul 10** Savary Island Community Plan Advisory Committee meeting
- Jul 17** community mail out (1100+ addresses)
- Jul 28** on-island community open house (82 participants)
- Jul 29** on-island farmers market event (29 participants)
- Aug 5** online engagement webinar (70 registrants)
- Jul 28** online survey (497 participants)
- Oct 8** Savary Island Community Plan Advisory Committee meeting

Outcomes

- key directions discussion book
- phase 3 engagement report

Phase 4. Plan Preparation

- Oct 28** online Savary Groundwater Study technical webinar (100+ registrants)
- Oct 30** online Savary Slope Hazard Study technical webinar (100+ registrants)
- Jan-Apr** Savary Island Community Plan Advisory Committee meetings (4 meetings)

Outcome

- draft official community plan

Phase 5. Approval Process

- TBD* newsletter mail out
- TBD* on-island engagement events & online survey
- TBD* public hearing

Outcome

- adopt Savary Island Official Community Plan Bylaw

* to be updated before bylaw adoption

1 Plan Foundation

1.6 Vision for the Future

Community Vision

“Savary Island’s vision is to preserve its off-grid island lifestyle, self-sufficiency, and strong sense of community with minimal regulations, while actively protecting the island’s vital groundwater resources and sensitive ecosystems. The community continues to celebrate the beauty of the land and ocean, while stewarding natural and cultural heritage resources.”

Community Goals



Preserve Community

To preserve the sense of community, tranquility, peacefulness and neighbourliness on Savary Island.



Safeguard Water

To safeguard the island’s groundwater supply for future generations.



Mindful Development

To support a level of residential development which is mindful of the island’s water and septic servicing capacity, sensitive ecosystem, and cultural heritage resources.



Steward Natural Areas

To protect natural areas, the island’s ecological integrity, and cultural heritage resources.



Alternative Transportation

To promote alternative transportation modes to alleviate road and parking conflicts.



Sustain Services

To provide a level of community services at a scale appropriate for an off-grid island community.



Support Rural Business

To support small-scale businesses that are consistent with the island’s rural lifestyle and resource carrying capacity.

The community vision statement was developed through the community engagement process

COMMUNITY VISION

Savary Island's vision is to preserve its off-grid island lifestyle, self-sufficiency, and strong sense of community with minimal regulations, while actively protecting the island's vital groundwater resources and sensitive ecosystems. The community continues to celebrate the beauty of the land and ocean, while stewarding natural and cultural heritage resources.

SUSTAINABILITY



Environmental Sustainability
Ensure the resiliency, conservation and protection of the natural environment.



Economic Sustainability
Provide and support ongoing economic benefits for the community.

PRINCIPLES



Social Sustainability
Provide access, support and advocacy for a safe, secure and inclusive community.



Cultural Sustainability
Provide and promote respect for diversity and heritage.

This plan embraces the principles of sustainability adopted by the Regional Board

COMMUNITY GOALS



Preserve Community



Safeguard Water



Mindful Development



Steward Natural Areas



Alternative Transportation



Sustain Services



Support Rural Business

The community goals emerged through the community engagement process

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.1 Introduction

Official Community Plan Objectives and Policies support the Community Vision and Community Goals set out on page 19 of this Plan. The objectives are broad statements of intent and are supported by specific policies and actions intended to guide future land use decisions by the community (individuals, businesses, developers), qathet Regional District, and other levels of government.

For matters outside the jurisdiction of the Regional Board, the Official Community Plan states broad community objectives and advocacy policies. Advocacy policies are intended to guide decisions by other levels of government that have jurisdiction within or adjacent to the planning area (i.e., provincial, federal, and First Nations). The Official Community Plan does not represent a commitment from other government agencies to act according to community objectives and policies.

"It's this unique blend of simplicity, respect, and natural beauty that makes Savary Island truly special."
- community quote



How to Read the Plan



Community Goals are listed on the left hand side of each Plan Objective & Policy section. Community Goals that are supported by the Objectives & Policies are highlighted, and Community Goals that are not applicable are translucent.

Objectives & Policies provide direction to guide decision making and help achieve the Community Vision and Community Goals.

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.2 Land Use & Development

Savary Island's land use and development pattern is largely based on a subdivision plan approved by the Province of British Columbia in 1910. Savary Island is approximately 400 hectares in size, and this historical subdivision created a grid network of streets with approximately 1,700 residential parcels, while also establishing provincial ministry right-of-ways around much of the island. Today, many of the surveyed road right-of-ways remain undeveloped, and due mostly to lot consolidation, there are approximately 1,400 parcels over the entirety of the island.

In more recent years, the community has collaborated with the Savary Island Land Trust and the Nature Trust of British Columbia to successfully acquire land for conservation purposes. Today, approximately 150 hectares—nearly one-third of the island—is protected.

The Official Community Plan objectives and policies support this established development pattern. They reinforce the community's vision to protect the island's vital groundwater resources and sensitive ecosystems while preserving its unique off-grid, rural character.

*For the purposes of this Plan, **rural character** is defined as a pattern of land use in which the natural landscape and vegetation predominate over the built environment.*

*The majority of **residential parcels** on Savary Island measure 50 x 150 feet (0.17 acres or 0.07 hectares), which is equivalent in size to the small city lots found in the Townsite neighbourhood of Powell River.*



2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.2 Land Use & Development

Preserve Community

General Objectives

To retain and enhance the rural character and natural environment of Savary Island.

Safeguard Water

To retain in a natural state, areas where development may prove hazardous to public health or safety.

Mindful Development

To promote collaborative relationships with the Tla'amin Nation.

Steward Natural Areas

To promote collaborative relationships with provincial and federal agencies.

Alternative Transportation

To encourage lot consolidation as means to reduce the number of lots, decrease the number of new homes developed on the island, and protect vital groundwater resources.

Sustain Services

Support Rural Business

General Policies

- a. **Support** proof of potable water and septic servicing prior to development.
- b. **Encourage** lot consolidation to reduce the number of lots on the island.
- c. **Encourage** development to locate away from sensitive environmental areas.
- d. **Encourage** property owners to obtain a site-level assessment by a Qualified Professional prior to any proposed development to ensure safe development practices.
- e. **Recognize** First Nation history in the planning area and support the protection of archaeological resources under the provincial *Heritage Conservation Act*.
- f. **Require** applicants to provide cash in lieu of land, when land is being subdivided and parkland dedication is required under the *Local Government Act*, unless the subject property contains land identified as an area of park or trail interest.

Lot consolidation means the process of combining two or more adjacent commonly owned parcels of land into one larger parcel.

2.3 Land Use Designations

The Official Community Plan establishes four land use designations as illustrated on Map No. 1 Land Use Designations (page 64). Each designation is supported by a set of specific objectives and policies set out on the following pages:

Land Use Designation	Page
Rural Residential	26
Conservation	28
Institutional	29
Commercial	30



"The freedom to build an abode that best suits our family and financial situation."
- community quote



"A pristine natural environment, with robust conservation efforts that protect its unique ecosystems"
- community quote



"Public access to the ocean, green space/trails, slow pace of life."
- community quote



"Individuals with small businesses getting supported by the community on island."
- community quote

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.3.1 Rural Residential

Preserve Community

The Rural Residential land use designation identified on Map No. 1 of the Plan (page 64) provides for residential use that is compatible with the rural character of Savary Island.

Safeguard Water

Objectives

Mindful Development

To support single-family residential development in keeping with the rural character and off-grid island lifestyle.

Steward Natural Areas

To support home-based business in keeping with the rural character and off-grid island lifestyle.

Alternative Transportation

To encourage responsible development compliant with provincial regulations as means to protect vital groundwater resources, sensitive ecosystems and cultural heritage resources.

Sustain Services

Support Rural Business

Policies

a. **Recommended Primary Use**
Single-family dwelling.

b. **Recommended Accessory Use**
Home-based business.

c. **Recommended Density**
One single-family dwelling or serviced building per parcel up to 2 hectares, and one additional single-family dwelling or serviced building for each additional 2 hectares.

d. **Minimum Parcel Size for Subdivision**
4.027 hectares (10 acres) in accordance with the *Community Planning Area 24 Gulf Islands Subdivision Regulation*.

e. **Promote** "Best Practices for Mindful Development" (page 27).

Single-family dwelling means a building used as a residence, containing rooms for food preparation and eating, sleeping and living areas. A detached sleeping unit, bunkie, sleeping cabin, or studio that is not serviced (no water or septic) is not a dwelling.

Home-based business means a business that is accessory to the occupancy of a dwelling and is carried out by the resident(s) of the dwelling.

Best Practices for Mindful Development



Mindful development on Savary Island means integrating environmental sustainability principles into your development plans. Property owners are encouraged to consult with a qualified professional to inform decisions about potential development.

Property owners are advised to follow provincial and federal law, including, but not limited to the protection of:

- a. archaeological and heritage sites;
- b. foreshore and marine ecosystem;
- c. raptors and trees with raptor nests;
- d. species-at-risk; and
- e. trees with nesting birds.

If you find bones, shells, artifacts, or other signs of archaeological remains on your property, cease all land-altering activities immediately and contact the provincial Archaeology Branch or Tla'amin Nation.

Prior to development property owners are encouraged to consider the following best practices:

- Hire a Land Surveyor to establish property boundaries;
- Review the land title for any restrictive covenants;
- Hire a licensed builder for construction and renovation;
- Contact the qRD Planning Department to learn about technical studies that may relate to your property (environmentally sensitive areas, slope hazards, wildfire hazards or coastal flood risks);
- Conduct a site inventory to understand how existing natural features could affect your use of the property;
- Hire a certified arborist to determine if there are any danger trees on your property; and
- Hire a qualified professional(s) to assess and make recommendations on:
 - i. How development can prevent or minimize adverse impacts to the natural environment,
 - ii. How development can prevent or minimize disturbance of cultural or archaeological sites; and,
 - iii. How the development complies with all applicable laws and regulations.

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.3.2 Conservation

Preserve Community

The Conservation land use designation identified on Map No. 1 of the Plan (page 64) applies to provincial Crown land, and land owned by the Nature Trust of British Columbia, and Savary Island Land Trust.

Safeguard Water

Mindful Development

Steward Natural Areas

Alternative Transportation

Sustain Services

Support Rural Business

Objectives

To support land conservation that protects vital groundwater resources, sensitive ecosystems, and cultural heritage resources.

To promote acquisition of more Conservation land.

Policies

- a. **Encourage** Conservation land to be kept in a natural state to protect groundwater, sensitive ecosystems, and cultural heritage resources.
- b. **Advocate** provincial agencies maintain provincial Crown land as nature reserves in perpetuity.
- c. **Encourage** collaboration with other levels of government, Tla'amin Nation, conservation organizations, and community members to increase the amount of Conservation land.
- d. **New Conservation** land may be located in any land use designation identified in this Plan without requiring an amendment.
- e. **Support** respectful public use of Conservation land.

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.3.3 Institutional

Preserve Community

The Institutional land use designation identified on Map No. 1 of the Plan (page 64) applies to public facilities within the planning area. Public facilities operated by the qathet Regional District include: Savary Island wharf, parking lot (Lot 40), barge landing site, boat launch at  at q (thah teq), east firehall (Rogers Hall), west firehall, and main firehall (No.1 Hall).

Safeguard Water

Objectives

Policies

Mindful Development

To maintain and enhance existing public facilities.

a. Recommended Density

One serviced building per parcel up to 2 hectares in area.

Steward Natural Areas

b. **Manage** public facilities with an integrated approach to ensure responsible operation, maintenance, replacement, and disposal to ensure sustainable service delivery, to adhere to regulatory requirements, and to meet the needs and expectations of the community.

Alternative Transportation

Sustain Services

c. **Investigate** the feasibility of providing public washrooms in existing public facilities on the island.

Support Rural Business

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.3.4 Commercial

Preserve Community

The Commercial land use designation identified on Map No. 1 of the Plan (page 64) applies to land with existing commercial uses that provide essential goods and services on the island and contribute to the local economy.

Safeguard Water

Objectives

Mindful Development

To support commercial uses in keeping with the rural character and off-grid island lifestyle.

Steward Natural Areas

To encourage responsible development compliant with provincial regulations as means to protect groundwater resources, sensitive ecosystems and cultural heritage resources.

Alternative Transportation

Sustain Services

Support Rural Business

Policies

a. Recommended Primary Use

Single-family dwelling and/or island-scale commercial uses including but not limited to: grocery, restaurants, auto-repair, taxi, fuel handling and sales, marine supply, building supply storage and sales, and personal service.

b. Recommended Density

One single-family dwelling or serviced building per parcel up to 2 hectares.

c. Encourage businesses to provide adequate on-site parking for vehicles and bicycles.

d. Encourage businesses to ensure any potential contaminants associated with commercial activity are securely contained to prevent contamination.

e. New commercial uses are encouraged to:

- i. be island-scale and intended to provide a local convenience;
- ii. capable of accommodating on-site parking of vehicles and bicycles;
- iii. support water and septic servicing that meets provincial standards;
- iv. be mindful of groundwater resources and not use large volumes of water; and
- v. respect the rural character and surrounding residential uses by not generating excessive noise or traffic.

Island-scale describes Savary Island's rural character and off-grid island lifestyle.

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.4 Infrastructure & Community Services

Preserve Community

qathet Regional District services on the island include regional parks services, fire protection services, and marine services. A strong network of volunteers on the island delivers fire suppression and medical first responder services. Figure 5 below illustrates the general location of community services and infrastructure on Savary Island.

Safeguard Water

The provincial Ministry of Transportation and Transit oversees the maintenance of rural roads and Crown rights-of-way on the island.

Mindful Development

Steward Natural Areas

Alternative Transportation

Sustain Services

Support Rural Business



Figure 5. Infrastructure & Community Services on Savary Island

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.4.1 Water Servicing

There is no qathet Regional District water system on Savary Island. Savary Shores Improvement District was incorporated in 1980 to deliver drinking water to residents of Savary Shores. Residents pay for the water service, and for the infrastructure, operations, and administration, in annual tax levies issued by Savary Shores Improvement District, in accordance with provincial regulations.

Residents and businesses located outside of Savary Shores Improvement District obtain their water from private on-site wells, or small, private water supply systems. The regulation of water supply systems and water quality monitoring is under the jurisdiction of Vancouver Coastal Health and the Province.

See Section 2.7.1 Groundwater for broader groundwater policy.

Objectives

To support access to safe, clean drinking water for all residents.

To promote well protection and maintenance of private wells.

To promote water conservation.

To encourage well monitoring and data collection.

To encourage collaboration with provincial and local agencies to foster regulatory compliance.

Policies

- a. **Advocate** for regular maintenance of private wells and water supply systems to ensure compliance with provincial legislation and regulation.
- b. **Promote** education on proper well maintenance practices, focusing on sealing and protecting wells to prevent contamination and seawater intrusion.
- c. **Promote** education on the importance of water conservation and reducing water use, especially during summer months, and encourage the adoption of water-saving technologies.
- d. **Advocate** the Province provide education on well maintenance.
- e. **Promote** "Best Practices for Groundwater and Domestic Septic Systems" (page 33).

Best Practices for Groundwater & Domestic Septic Systems



Well Location and Construction

Ensure wells are located at least 30 meters from potential contamination sources like septic systems. Use proper construction techniques, including the installation of secure well caps and surface seals to prevent contamination.

Regular Testing and Maintenance

Test groundwater quality regularly for contaminants such as bacteria, nitrates, and other potential pollutants. Maintain wells by repairing surface seals, and ensuring foreign matter, including vehicle parking and contaminants are kept away from the well.

Septic System Design

Install septic systems with adequate drainage fields that are appropriately sized based on local soils and the number of household occupants. Complete regular septic system maintenance including pumping out of solids.

Sewage Management

Avoid disposing harsh chemicals, fats, or non-biodegradable items in the septic system. Periodically pump out the septic tank to prevent overflow and system failure.

Public Education

Educate homeowners and developers about groundwater protection and the importance of regular maintenance of wells and septic systems.

Water Conservation

Adopt water-saving appliances and practices to reduce the stress on groundwater resources and the septic system.

Monitoring and Regulation

Ensure compliance with provincial regulations concerning water quality and waste disposal, including the registration and proper decommissioning of wells.

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.4.2 Septic Servicing

There is no qathet Regional District sewer servicing on Savary Island. Sewage waste on the island is disposed of by private, on-site septic systems, or provincially recognized alternatives. All septic systems must be designed and installed by a Registered On-site Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) and filed with the local health authority.

Since groundwater is the main source of drinking water on Savary Island, it is essential that pathogenic material from septic disposal systems does not contaminate the aquifer.

Objectives

To promote the installation of septic systems by a Registered On-site Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP).

To promote adherence to provincial sewage regulations, including provincially recognized alternatives.

To preserve the environmental integrity of the aquifer.

Policies

- a. **Advocate** for regular maintenance of septic systems to ensure compliance with provincial legislation and regulation.
- b. **Advocate** the Province provide education on septic system maintenance.
- b. **Promote** "Best Practices for Groundwater and Domestic Septic Systems" (page 33).

*"I wish for the island to remain off grid, unpaved, unregulated (with exceptions for water and septic) which are already in place."
- community quote*

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.4.3 Fire Protection Service

Savary Island is currently served by three fire halls strategically located across the island. These facilities are operated by the Savary Island Volunteer Fire Department, which delivers both fire suppression and medical first responder services. The department is staffed entirely by dedicated volunteers who form the backbone of the community's emergency response system.

To meet these challenges and build community resilience, the Savary Island Volunteer Fire Department continues to actively recruit and train volunteer firefighters and medical first responders, enhancing its capacity to respond to emergencies effectively.

Objectives

To promote fire-safe practices among all Savary Island residents and visitors.

To support the provision of adequate firefighting and emergency medical response capabilities across Savary Island.

*"Fire halls, fire prevention, training of volunteer firefighters and first responders are all excellent - keep up the good work."
- community quote*

Policies

- a. **Promote** collaboration between fire departments throughout the region for firefighter training and effective and efficient service coordination.
- b. **Encourage** the use of FireSmart building techniques in new developments and maintenance of existing structures.
- c. **Encourage** the creation and maintenance of defensible space around properties to reduce wildfire risk.
- d. **Educate** residents and visitors about fire prevention including structural and wildfires.
- e. **Support** the Savary Island Volunteer Fire Department in implementing fire protection measures including burning and campfire bans.

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.4.4 Regional Parks

qathet Regional District oversees a diverse network of 11 regional parks, 22 beach access trails, and several small recreation facilities across the Regional District. Funded through regional taxes, regional parks and trails, including the Julian Road beach access on Savary Island, provide vital community connections to nature.

In 2023, the Regional Board adopted a 10-year strategy to manage and grow the qathet Regional District parks and trails system. During community outreach, Savary Island residents shared a clear desire for beach access trails and stronger partnerships with conservation groups to safeguard the island's natural environment for future generations.

Objectives

To maintain and enhance beach access trails.

To encourage partnerships that expand parkland on Savary Island.

Policies

- Support** ongoing maintenance of the Julian Road beach access trail.
- Explore** the feasibility of developing additional beach access trails on Savary Island.
- Collaborate** with conservation organizations, other levels of government, the Tla'amin Nation, and community members to protect environmentally sensitive lands and acquire parkland on Savary Island.



“Well-maintained trails and paths for hiking and biking, making outdoor activities accessible for all ages.”
- community quote

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.4.5 Regional Emergency Program

qathet Regional District coordinates emergency planning, preparedness, training, response, and recovery for all areas within qathet Regional District, including the City of Powell River and in collaboration with Tla'amin Nation. The program works with emergency responders, government staff, volunteers, partner agencies, and the public throughout the region, including Savary Island. Key programs include the Regional FireSmart Program, that promotes wildfire mitigation and property protection, and the Community Notification System.

qathet Regional District provides comprehensive emergency preparedness information to help residents safeguard themselves and their communities. Key regional risks include coastal hazards, earthquakes, extreme heat, and extreme cold. Among the resources available is a community evacuation guide specifically designed for Savary Island.

Objectives

To mitigate emergency concerns and build better community resilience to emergencies across the region.

To increase public awareness, reduce risks, and cultivate a culture of resilience.

To support emergency preparedness among residents of Savary Island.

"recognize that fire prevention is a top priority for Savary islanders, and that we are all responsible to follow proactive fire-smart measures on our own properties"

- community quote

Policies

- a. **Promote** education on emergency preparedness.
- b. **Encourage** residents and businesses to have their driveways clearly marked with their house number.
- c. **Promote** the implementation of the Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan in collaboration with the Savary Island Volunteer Fire Department.
- d. **Promote** the community evacuation plan.
- e. **Encourage** residents and businesses to participate in FireSmart and Emergency Preparedness workshops and educational forums.

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.4.6 Regional Solid Waste & Recycling

qathet Regional District coordinates solid waste management services across the region, including within the City of Powell River and the Tla'amin Nation. The regional district does not provide curbside collection services for garbage or recycling in any electoral area, including Savary Island. Residents and private operators are responsible for transporting all solid waste—including hazardous materials—to designated disposal and recycling facilities.

qathet Regional District operates a community recycling depot in Lund, located at 9642 Larson Road within the Northside Community Hall parking area. The nearest full-service waste management facility is the Resource Recovery Centre, located at 4924 Marine Avenue, in the City of Powell River.

The Resource Recovery Centre provides a range of waste diversion and recycling services, including reuse opportunities and specialized programs for beach clean-ups and invasive plant management.

Objectives

To support environmentally responsible management of solid waste.

To reduce the quantity of waste sent to landfill.

To promote shared responsibility for waste management among everyone in the region.

Policies

- a. **Coordinate** solid waste management services in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Plan.
- b. **Promote** waste reduction and diversion through education, programming, and initiatives that advance the goal of “working toward zero waste”.
- c. **Regulate** the use of regional district solid waste facilities, accepted materials, and applicable fees in accordance with applicable Solid Waste Regulation and Tipping Fee bylaws.

*“People can be responsible for their own garbage and recycling. We have to bring it all on, so we can bring it off.”
- community quote*

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.5 Transportation

Preserve Community

As Savary Island's seasonal population grows, so do the pressures on its transportation networks. There are on-going community wide conversations about how to manage and advocate for the island's transportation networks. Balancing convenience and conservation means looking beyond simple road use to how people travel to and across the island.

Safeguard Water

By developing integrated transportation systems, the community can ensure future infrastructure reflects its core values and addresses community needs.

Mindful Development

General Objectives

Steward Natural Areas

To support sustainable, low-impact transportation systems for Savary Island while preserving the island's rural character throughout seasonal population changes.

Alternative Transportation

To advocate with relevant government bodies on transportation matters.

Sustain Services

Support Rural Business



2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.5.1 Marine Transportation

Access to Savary Island primarily relies on water taxis and private vessels. Several operators provide year-round scheduled and charter services, connecting the island to Lund, Comox, and Campbell River. These services are essential for daily commuters, including local contractors and service workers. Private boaters also frequent the island, with moorage in surrounding waters becoming particularly dense during the summer population surge. These navigable waters and moorage areas fall under federal and provincial jurisdiction.

qathet Regional District provides marine services and infrastructure that includes the Savary Island wharf, barge landing, boat launch at ̑at̑ (Thah teq), and the Lot 40 parking area near the wharf. The Savary Island Marine Advisory Committee provides advice to the Regional Board that supports the ongoing management of marine services on Savary Island.

Policies

- a. **Support** ongoing maintenance of Savary Island marine services due to importance for community access, egress, and emergency evacuation.
- b. **Support** the policies, procedures, and regulations regarding wharf use and operations.
- c. **Explore** the feasibility of identifying alternative barge landing sites and/or other actions to manage barges.
- d. **Continue** to administer the barge site management plan to balance the interests of the barge operators and the property owners in the vicinity of the landing site.
- e. **Encourage** residents and visitors to follow federal and provincial boating regulations that govern navigable waters and protect local waters and shorelines.
- f. **Promote** marine transportation that minimizes environmental impacts.

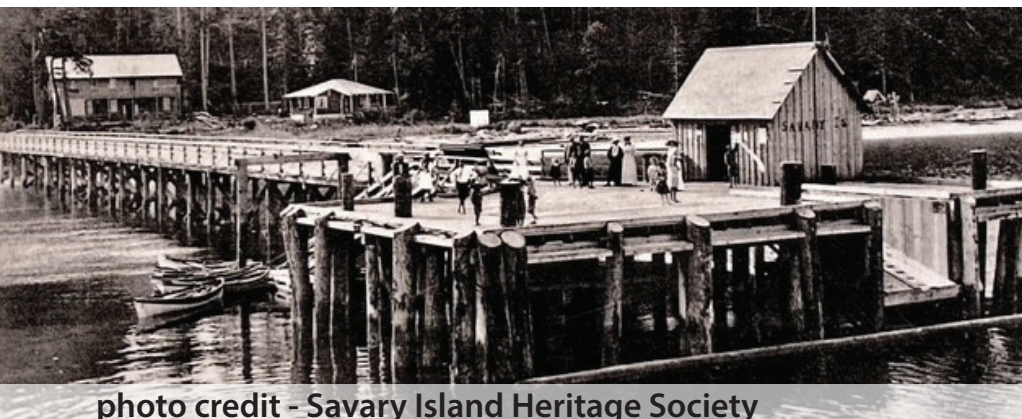


photo credit - Savary Island Heritage Society

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Plan Objectives & Policies



2.5.2 Road Transportation

Savary Island's road transportation system is under provincial jurisdiction, and the qathet Regional District continues to advocate for better road maintenance and parking management near the wharf. Despite these efforts, the island is experiencing a seasonal increase in traffic, particularly during the summer that results in traffic congestion and dust from the wharf to the Savary Island Road hill. In response, the community is exploring strategies to reduce traffic volume and preserve the island's rural character.

Policies

- a. **Continue** to advocate to the Ministry of Transportation and Transit for regular road maintenance, upgrades, and parking management near the wharf. Priority for road upgrades are those roads which could significantly improve fire control / response and increase public safety.
- b. **Advocate** to the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to investigate an alternative route between the wharf and the main road to relieve traffic pressures on the Savary Island Road hill and address local safety concerns.
- c. **Encourage** residents and visitors to consider alternative means of transportation such as car share, taxis, walking, and biking to alleviate traffic and parking conflicts.
- d. **Collaborate** with provincial agencies and the community to investigate the feasibility of creating a segregated "greenway" or active transportation path for walking and cycling within the existing road right of way and running the length of the island.
- e. **Promote** roadside brushing be limited to what is essential for improving road safety and mitigating fire risk. All vegetation brushing should be conducted using manual or mechanical methods only, herbicide use is strongly discouraged.

"Due to the isolation of the island without ferry service, road maintenance is limited during the summer and there is no winter maintenance."

- BC Ministry of Transportation & Transit



2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.6 Heritage & Culture

Preserve Community

q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən (Savary Island) holds deep ancestral, cultural, and spiritual meaning for the Tla'amin, Klahoose and Homalco peoples. Rather than a mere recreational destination, q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən is recognized as a living cultural landscape. For thousands of years, the island has supported village life, resource harvesting, ceremony, and stewardship. This foundational relationship continues to this day.

Safeguard Water

Mindful Development

The island contains a rich array of archaeological sites that hold immense historic and scientific value. These sites are protected under the provincial *Heritage Conservation Act* which prohibits disturbance or alteration without proper authorization. Significant archaeological sites on the island include remnants of ancient villages, as well as locations used for food gathering and processing.

Steward Natural Areas

Alternative Transportation

Many Tla'amin, Klahoose, and Homalco peoples hold deep personal and family ties to q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən, rooted in memories of travel, hunting, fishing, shellfish harvesting, and traditional land-based teaching passed down through generations. While some feel a limited connection today, there is a strong and growing interest in reconnecting. Returning to the island and participating in cultural practices strengthens these vital relationships with the land and ancestors. For the Tla'amin people, presence on the land is essential for cultural continuity. Time spent on q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən strengthens the understanding of its role in their history.

Sustain Services

Support Rural Business



photo credit - Tla'amin Nation

"After visiting q̓ey̓e q̓w̓ən, I feel more connected to my čič̓y̓e (Grandmother) and my ancestors. I learned how to harvest cedar roots the way that she and her čič̓y̓e would have done as well."

- Tla'amin community member quote

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.6 Heritage & Culture

General Objectives

To recognize the importance of heritage and culture to the community.

To encourage and facilitate the identification and conservation of historical and archaeological sites within the planning area.

To foster awareness and understanding of the Tla'amin people's unique relationship with q̓ey̓ q̓w̓ən (Savary Island).

Policies

- a. **Encourage** the preservation of artifacts and archival materials that illustrate the history of Savary Island.
- b. **Support** community efforts to inventory and protect historical sites and heritage resources.
- c. **Work** with Tla'amin Nation to identify and protect traditional use areas and culturally significant sites.
- d. **Work** with Tla'amin Nation to develop strategies to monitor and protect culturally significant sites for the continued practice of traditional use activities.
- e. **Work** with Tla'amin Nation and other government agencies to ensure that recreation activities be directed away from particularly important or vulnerable cultural sites.
- f. **Support** Tla'amin Nation efforts to inventory and protect heritage resources and culturally significant sites.
- g. **Promote** compliance with the provincial *Heritage Conservation Act* to protect archaeological sites on Savary Island.
- h. **Recommend** residents and builders contact the provincial Archaeology Branch and the Tla'amin Nation before clearing land and building to find out if property may contain an archaeological site.

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7 Environmental Protection

Preserve Community Savary Island is home to some of the most ecologically unique landscapes on the British Columbia coast. The island features the country's best-preserved sand dunes within the rare Coastal Douglas-Fir bio-geoclimatic zone. These dunes form a critical ecosystem that supports diverse native plant and animal species while maintaining coastal stability and protecting the island's essential groundwater aquifer.

Safeguard Water

General Objectives

Mindful Development **To protect** the integrity and function of the natural environment on Savary Island.

Steward Natural Areas **To minimize** the impact of human development and land use on Savary Island ecological systems.

Alternative Transportation

Sustain Services

Support Rural Business

"I think that it is wonderful people want to enjoy the island - education on the island and how to enjoy safely and respectfully to the ecology and spirit of the island itself."

- community quote

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.1 Groundwater

The 2025 study, “Assessment of Groundwater Resources on Savary Island – Qayɛ qʷən” by GW Solutions, offers critical insights into the island’s most vital resource, potable water. While the study confirms that groundwater generally meets federal drinking water standards, it highlights significant vulnerabilities. Because Savary Island relies on sand-based aquifers, the water supply is highly susceptible to saltwater intrusion and contamination from poorly maintained septic systems.

As the sole water source for all residents, including those in the Savary Shores Improvement District, any contamination or overuse during peak summer months could negatively impact the community’s access to safe drinking water. To safeguard this resource, the report recommends continuous water quality monitoring and community-wide education focusing on water conservation, well maintenance, and septic system maintenance. While groundwater management is under provincial authority, the Plan includes policies that support the protection of groundwater into the future, and encourages collaboration with provincial agencies like Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and Vancouver Coastal Health. Figure 6 below shows well and aquifer information derived from the groundwater study.

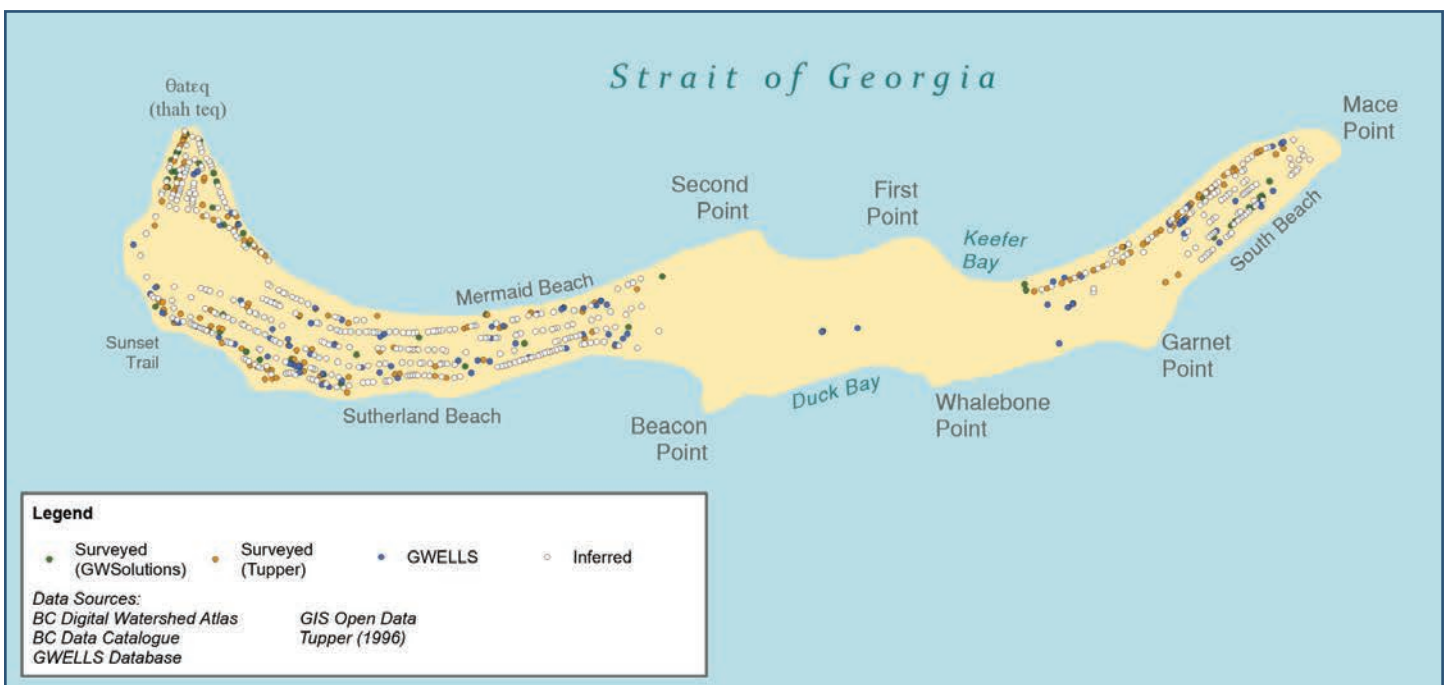


Figure 6. Well Locations

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Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.1 Groundwater

Objectives

To support the protection of groundwater resources on Savary Island.

Policies

- a. **Advocate** the Province continue long term monitoring of provincial Observation Wells and expand groundwater data collection through volunteer well networks.
- b. **Request** the Ministry of Environment to designate Savary Island as a Groundwater Management Area under a local board that would maintain the collection and analysis of data on groundwater use and supply.
- c. **Collaborate** with provincial agencies to ensure adherence to water protection and water authorization regulations and promote responsible water management practices.
- d. **Advocate** the Province support education initiatives to inform well owners about best practices for well maintenance to prevent groundwater contamination and seawater intrusion.
- e. **Promote** the development of rainwater harvesting systems and other non-traditional water sources to augment groundwater supplies, such as in areas of higher seawater intrusion hazard.
- f. **Support** the use of low-impact wastewater solutions, such as composting toilets and urine diversion systems, to reduce potential groundwater contamination.
- g. **Discourage** the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, to reduce potential groundwater contamination.
- h. **Promote** "Best Practices for Groundwater and Domestic Septic Systems" (page 33).



photo credit - Tla'amin Nation

"The word qeyε q^wən means 'freshwater spring'. The island has this name because of the three freshwater sources on the island. The springs on the island also carry the name qeyε q^wən."

- Tla'amin Nation Lands and Resources Department and Culture, Language & Heritage Department

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.2 Sensitive Ecosystems

Sensitive Ecosystems on Savary Island have been identified and studied by numerous partnerships and government initiatives. More recently, in 2026, the Coastal Douglas-Fir Conservation Partnership and UBC Botanical Gardens mapped sensitive ecosystems within the Sunshine Coast's bio-geoclimatic region, including qathet Regional District. This research shows sensitive ecosystems on Savary Island such as marine shorelands, foreshores, bluffs, dunes, upland meadows, and forest areas (Figure 7 below).

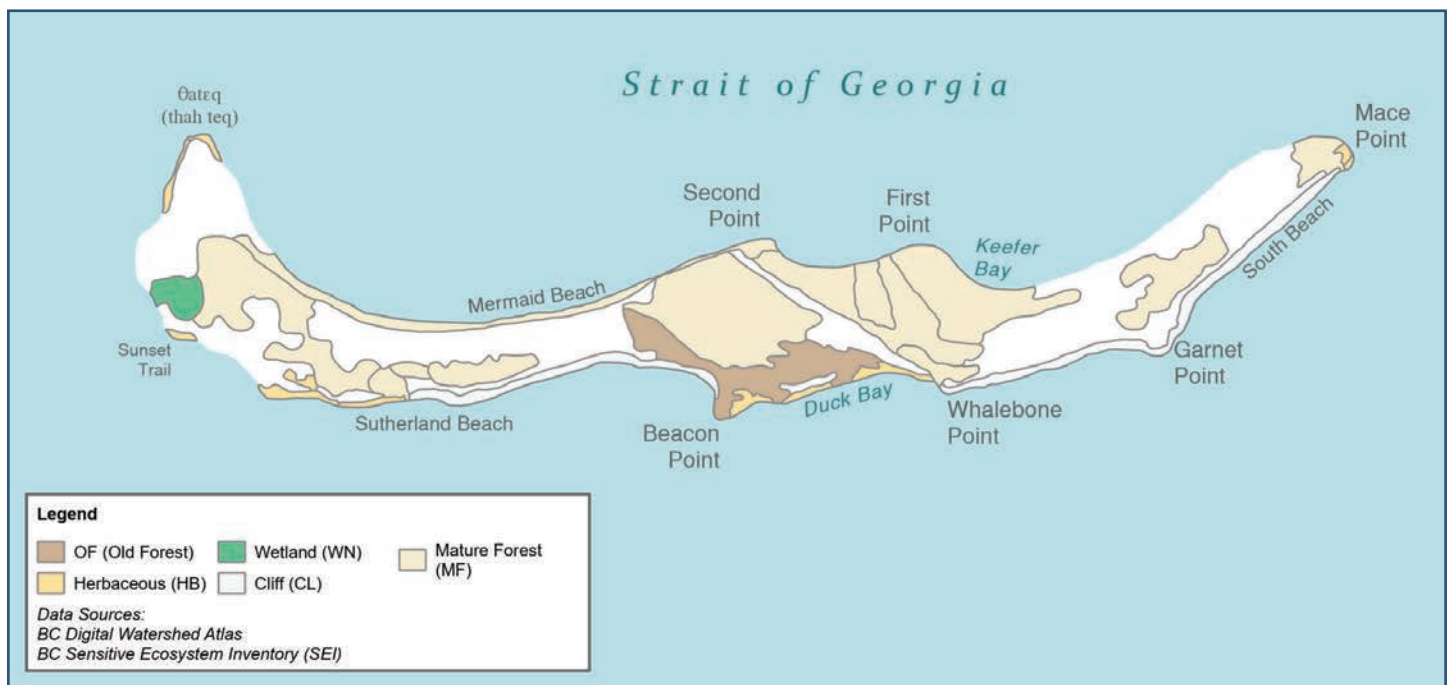


Figure 7. Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory

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Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.2 Sensitive Ecosystems

As a member of the Coastal Douglas-Fir Conservation Partnership, qathet Regional District promotes the protection of the Coastal Douglas-Fir forest and its associated ecosystems, biodiversity and cultural values. The Coastal Douglas-Fir bio-geoclimatic zone, which encompasses Savary Island, hosts the highest number of species and ecosystems at risk in British Columbia. Species and ecosystems at risk face numerous threats including large-scale habitat loss and competition from invasive species. Savary Island beach and dune areas were specifically identified as sensitive ecosystems with important habitat for several at risk plant and animal species¹ (Figure 8 below).

¹ *Sunshine Coast Pilot Mapping: For Conservation & Climate Resilience Planning, August 26, 2024, CDFCP - UBC Botanical Gardens Action for Adaptation Project*



Figure 8. Species & Ecosystems at Risk - Ecosystem Type

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.2 Sensitive Ecosystems

According to the BC Conservation Data Centre, species and ecological communities are categorized by status: red-listed indicates those that are locally extinct (extripated), endangered, or threatened. On Savary Island, four ecological communities are currently red listed (Figure 9 below) including: (1) dune wildrye - beach pea; (2) grand fir / dull oregon-grape; (3) large-headed sedge herbaceous vegetation; and (4) northern wormwood - red fescue / grey rock-moss. These ecologically rare communities are located on the northern side of the island, from Mace Point to First Point, Mermaid Beach, the western side of ̑ateq (Thah teq); and on the south side of the island at Sunset trail and Sutherland Beach, Beacon Point, and sections of Duck Bay to Whalebone Point.

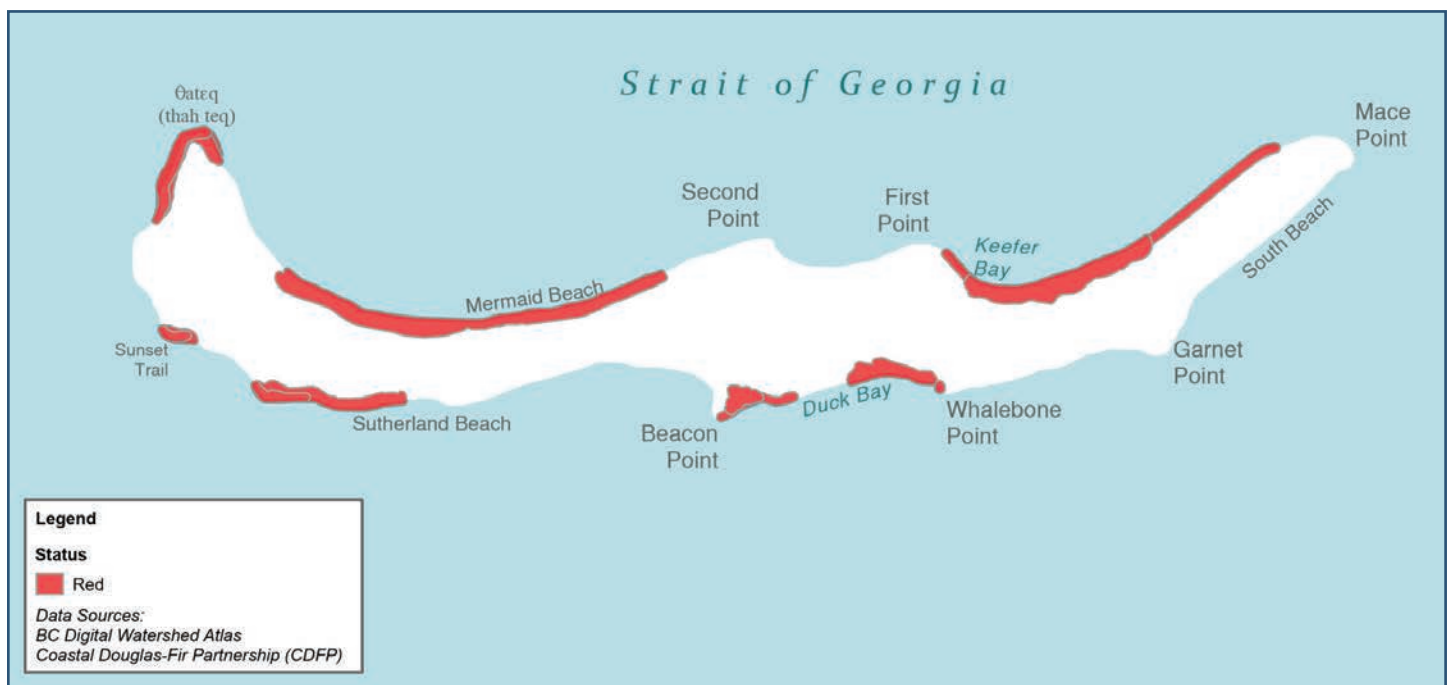


Figure 9. Species & Ecosystems at Risk - Status

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.2 Sensitive Ecosystems

Objective

To support the protection of sensitive ecosystems and species at risk on Savary Island.

Policies

- a. **Encourage** the preservation of sensitive ecosystems and the consideration of sensitive ecosystems inventory data in land use planning.
- b. **Support** open space, conservation, or low-impact recreational uses on lands identified as environmentally sensitive areas.
- c. **Promote** respectful public use of Provincial Ministry right-of-ways on lands identified as environmentally sensitive areas.
- d. **Encourage** the preservation of the existing tree canopy in ecologically sensitive areas.
- e. **Discourage** the removal of mature trees to reduce habitat fragmentation.
- f. **Encourage** property owners to obtain a site-level assessment by a qualified professional for proposed developments identified as sensitive ecosystems prior to land clearing and construction.
- g. **Support** the efforts of the Coastal Invasive Plant Committee to educate the public on the impacts of invasive plants on the natural environment and native species.
- h. **Promote** "Best Practices for Mindful Development" (page 27).



*"Protecting biodiversity will require ongoing efforts and community engagement."
- community quote*

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.3 Natural Hazard Areas

Natural hazard areas are lands that may be environmentally sensitive lands that can pose significant risk to development. On Savary Island, natural hazard areas include steep slopes prone to rock-fall or landslide and low-lying coastal areas vulnerable to erosion and flooding.

To inform the Official Community Plan, the Regional District completed a high-level natural hazard assessment to identify potential natural hazard areas on Savary Island. Due to the island's unique geology characterized by sandy soils and steep inclines, these areas are highly susceptible to instability due to geology, slope, sandy soils, and dynamic physical forces such as wind, waves, and changing water levels.

Building on unstable terrain can lead to structural settling, shifting, and slipping which could result in costly property damage and ongoing maintenance. Furthermore, improperly placed septic systems can destabilize soils and cause hazardous seepage.

"New, creative solutions should always be sought out as a priority to help not only Savary but any coastal area dealing with erosion."

- community quote



2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.3 Natural Hazard Areas

Objective

To promote site-level geotechnical assessments that establish safe building sites to minimize risk from hazardous conditions.

Policies

- a. **Recommend** completion of site-level geotechnical assessment by a qualified professional prior to clearing or developing any land identified with natural hazard potential on Map No. 2 of the Plan (page 66).
- b. **Promote** conservation of natural vegetation and tree cover on steep slopes as established trees and native vegetation play an important role in stabilizing soils on slopes.



photo credit - Bud Graham

*“Rising sea levels, increased storm intensity, and changing weather patterns could threaten the island’s ecosystems and infrastructure.”
- community quote*

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.4 Coastal Areas

Coastal areas are one of the most productive ecological zones on earth, providing vital habitat for a range of species including shellfish and shorebirds. While these areas are highly desirable places to live and recreate, they are also vulnerable to coastal flooding and erosion caused by dynamic forces such as wind, waves and shifting water levels. The majority of the coastal areas around the island are dedicated Provincial Ministry right-of-ways. Managing coastal landscapes is a complex task involving overlapping levels of jurisdiction as illustrated in Figure 10 below.

Objective

To preserve the integrity of coastal processes, maintain habitat diversity and function, and reduce cumulative impacts to the coastal environment.

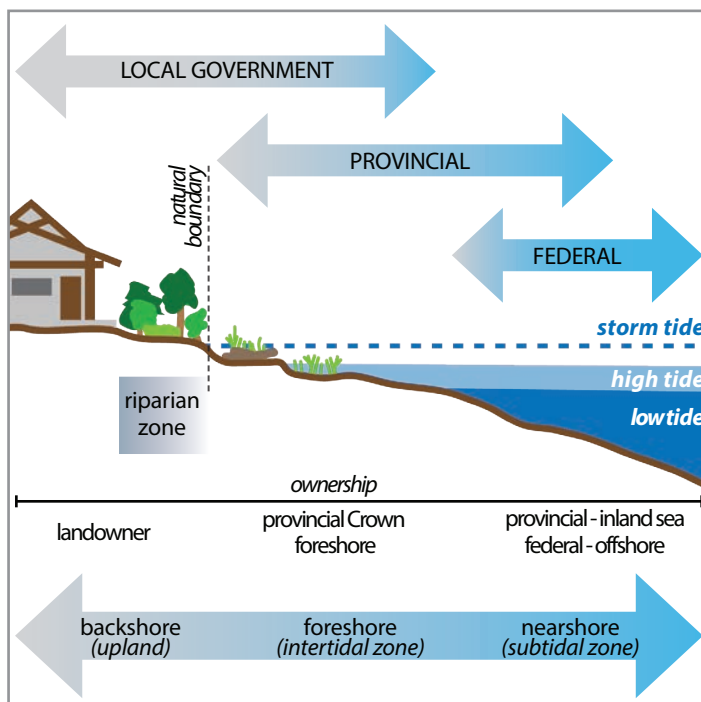


Figure 10. Coastal Foreshore Jurisdiction

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.4 Coastal Areas

Policies

- a. **Recommend** completion of site-level assessment by a qualified professional prior to clearing or developing land in coastal areas to ensure safe flood construction levels and setbacks from the sea.
- b. **Promote** conservation of natural vegetation and tree cover within 30 metres of the natural boundary of the sea to stabilize shorelines and minimize degradation of the marine environment.
- c. **Advocate** provincial and federal agencies ensure development in coastal areas meet environmental standards and comply with provincial and federal legislation and regulations.
- d. **Support** the access of coastal areas for cultural use.
- e. **Advocate** provincial and federal agencies monitor and protect the island's wild shellfish stocks, and promote and fund restoration projects that will enhance wild finfish and shellfish resources.
- f. **Encourage** residents and users of the foreshore to minimize the disturbance or pollution of coastal areas and refrain from littering.
- g. **Promote** respectful public use of Provincial Ministry right-of-ways in the coastal foreshores areas.
- h. **Encourage** a Green Shores approach to shoreline stabilization.
- i. **Promote** "Best Practices for Mindful Development" (page 27).



photo credit - Tla'amin Nation

2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.5 Climate Change

Sustainable off-grid living on Savary Island is rooted in a culture of self-sufficiency. Residents actively minimize waste and energy consumption by embracing alternative energy, composting, and intentional living to reduce reliance on external systems.

The qathet Regional District supports these efforts by prioritizing climate change in its strategic planning. Key regional goals include lowering the local carbon footprint, working towards zero waste, and mitigating environmental impacts.

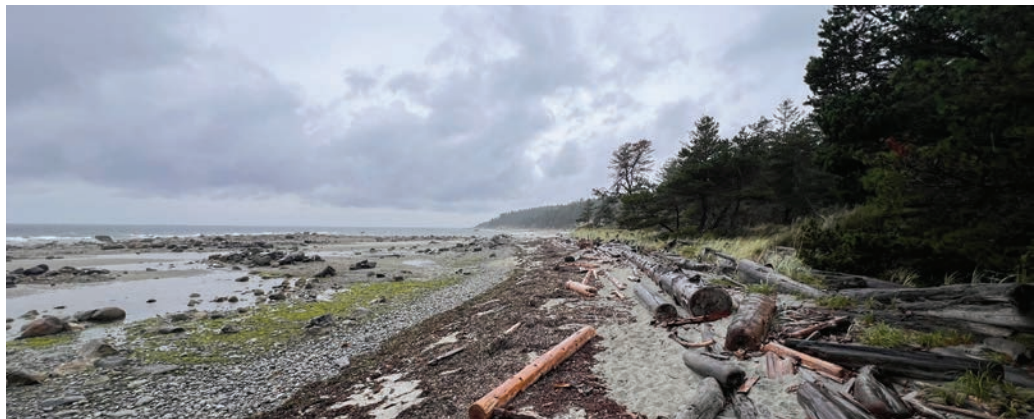
As climate change introduces risks such as sea level rise, wildfires, and extreme weather, mindful land use and development choices become essential for long-term resilience. By aligning local emission targets with provincial standards and making adaptive decisions today, the community can reduce vulnerabilities and better prepare for future environmental changes.

Objectives

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions through reduced fossil fuel consumption and shifts to alternative forms of energy.

To implement proactive measures that mitigate the environmental impacts of climate change.

"The current state of Savary is majestic and the ruggedness of the island makes all of those who come to the island wish they could stay longer."
- community quote



2

Plan Objectives & Policies



2.7.5 Climate Change

Policies

- a. **Promote** the use of alternative transportation options such as walking and biking.
- b. **Promote** public awareness about climate adaptation practices, like water conservation, wildfire preparedness, shoreline protection, and alternative energy sources.
- c. **Ensure** climate adaptation and emergency preparedness information is locally accessible and relevant to seasonal residents.
- d. **Collaborate** with senior levels of government to track local climate vulnerabilities, such as drought frequency, wildfire risk, erosion, and infrastructure exposure, and to monitor community energy resiliency to inform adaptive planning and emergency management plans.
- e. **Collaborate** with key interest holders and senior levels of government to advance energy-efficient practices by promoting a reduction on the dependency of gasoline, diesel, and propane and promote renewable alternatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- f. **Promote** the preservation and enhancement of native trees and vegetation to stabilize soils and buffer against storm surges and flooding, while enhancing biodiversity and carbon storage.
- g. **Encourage** island-scale food systems and production such as shared gardens, harvest surplus swaps, or community orchards using drought-tolerant and native-adapted species.



3 Plan Implementation



3.1 Implementation

The Official Community Plan provides a policy framework to achieve the community's longterm vision, goals and objectives. It identifies existing and future land use opportunities and challenges, guides responsible development, protects environmental features, fosters long-term heritage and cultural stewardship, and informs infrastructure investments and financial planning across the planning area.

The Official Community Plan is a high-level planning document to guide local decision making on land use, development, infrastructure, community services, and environmental stewardship. Its effectiveness relies on the shared commitment and coordinated efforts of individual property owners, the qathet Regional District, and other authorities with jurisdiction within or adjacent to the area.

"A place where residents and visitors alike can connect with nature, each other, and the unique spirit of the island."

- community quote



3 Plan Implementation



3.2 Review & Amendments

To retain its relevance and effectiveness as a guiding document, it is essential that the Official Community Plan be regularly reassessed and updated.

An Official Community Plan is a “living” document. Emerging community issues, new technical studies, or legislative changes may initiate amendments to the Plan. In addition to tracking progress toward long-term goals and objectives, the amendment process offers an opportunity to incorporate public input, analyze emerging trends, and align strategies with current best practices in sustainable development and land use planning.



*“Savary should continue to be a small island that people stumble across randomly.”
- community quote*

3 Plan Implementation



3.3 Relationships with Other Government Agencies

There are various federal and provincial agencies, First Nations, and local improvement district with decision making authority on Savary Island (Figure 11 page 60). Other levels of government have an impact on the realization of the Official Community Plan.

qathet Regional District recognizes the authority and interests of other levels of government and First Nations, and encourages coordination and cooperation in the implementation of the Official Community Plan.

"Savary is a place where generations come together. Our kids grew up on island and I hope our kids have a chance to raise their kids in the same way."

- community quote





Figure 11. Decision Making Authority on Savary Island

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Plan Maps



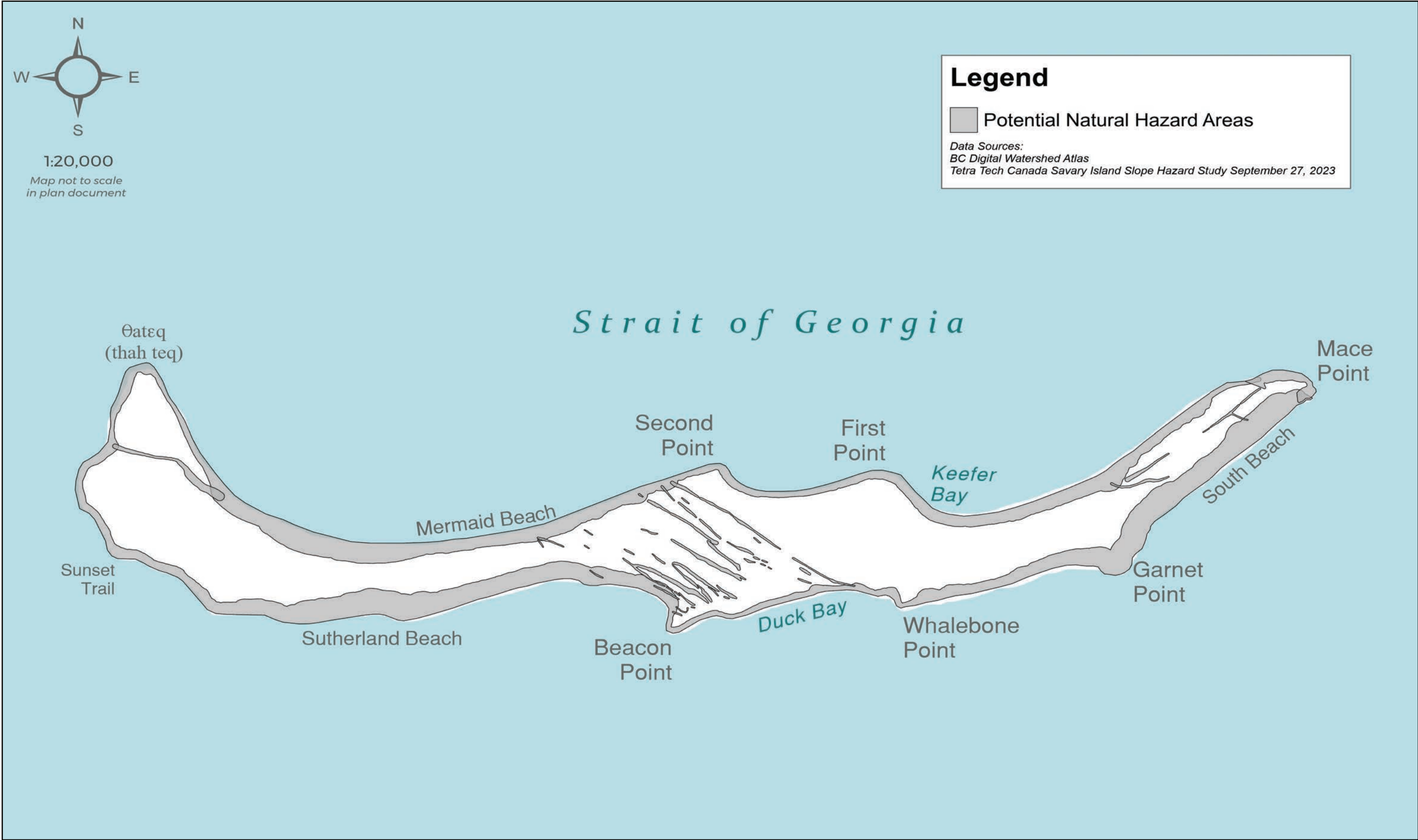
4.0 Plan Maps

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Map No. 1 Land Use Designations



Map No. 2 Potential Natural Hazard Areas





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Questions about the plan?

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