

# GREEN CITY SUMMARY

## SALT SPRING ISLAND

### Background

- Salt Spring Island (SSI) is an unincorporated community of 10,000 located within Islands Trust area. Largely rural in nature, with several distinct villages, of which Ganges is largest.
- Unique governance structure. Islands Trust (IT) responsible for land use. Capital Regional District (CRD) & improvement districts for other services.
- Most projects below resulted from collaboration between the Trust, CRD & improvement districts.
- Provincial / federal funding & community involvement (fundraising, volunteers) have been keys to success.

### Official Community Plan

- SSI's current OCP includes:
  - “cap” on zoning unless defined amenities or affordable housing provided (i.e., community captures part of value of new development);
  - density transfer to protect “sending areas” & shift development closer to services (over 220 acres protected so far);
  - policies to keep villages compact (e.g., affordable housing “in or near” villages” & key amenities like library to remain in village core);
  - development permit areas to protect watersheds & community well recharge areas.
- OCP being reviewed to strengthen climate change & other sustainability policies (legalizing suites / cottages for affordable housing, encouraging home-based businesses, protecting drinking watersheds).
- Area Farm Plan now completed; to be integrated into OCP to encourage local food growing.

### Energy

- Energy baseline study & community energy strategy completed in 2004 & updated 2007. SSI was co-winner of BC's Energy Savings Plan Community Challenge. Prize invested in affordable housing energy conservation package.
- SSI received Community Action on Energy Efficiency (CAEE) funding to review regulatory tools to improve building energy performance. Results to be implemented 2008-09.

## **Transportation**

- Priorization of SSI's Community Works (CW) gas tax funding for pedestrian & cycling infrastructure, particularly in & around villages.
- Creation of SSI Transportation Commission to administer public transit, construct pedestrian & cycling infrastructure, regulate parking (with MOT approval) & implement traffic demand management & other strategies to reduce auto dependence.
- Secured Provincial funding for SSI's first public transit system, launched January, 2008. System already exceeding ridership projections.
- Transportation plan for Upper Ganges Village now completed & first project, a 1 km multi-use pathway, ( ½ CW, ½ fundraising) to be completed in 2008.

## **Affordable Housing**

- 110 units of seniors housing completed 2001 - 2004. 30 unit assisted living facility completed in 2006. All of these units required Islands Trust approvals. All within walking distance to Ganges.
- SSI opted into the CRD's Regional Housing Trust Fund (RHTF) established in 2005. SSI one of first communities in CRD to receive funding.
- Murakami Gardens & Grandma's House to be completed in 2008, providing 31 units of family & transitional housing. Both funded by RHTF & located in or near Ganges.

## **Water**

- Established SSI Water Council to coordinate various agencies in protecting water supplies.
- Management plan now complete for the Cusheon Lake drinking watershed, & underway for St. Mary Lake watershed.
- Construction of an aeration system in 2008 for St. Mary Lake to improve water quality. Funded by NSSWD & a Community Works (CW) grant. Required CW eligibility criteria amendment.
- Water Council collaborating with MoE & local water districts in developing monitoring programs for groundwater quality (arsenic) & quantity.
- With federal / provincial infrastructure funding, 6 water districts are upgrading water treatment facilities. Four improvement districts have become CRD entities. CRD now undertaking system study for NSSWD, the single largest water district on SSI.
- Most water districts have progressive water rate structures to encourage water conservation. Both secondary sewage treatment plants also partly recover costs through water consumption charges, another water conservation incentive.
- The BC Building Code requirement for low flush toilets initiated by the CRD. CRD electoral areas included as result of SSI request.

## **Liquid Waste**

- Upgraded / expanded SSI's two secondary sewage treatment facilities to ensure continued, high treatment standard.
- Province funding updated feasibility study for reclaimed water at Ganges plant, to be completed 2008. SSI Water Council, NSSWD & Ganges Sewer Commission also participants.
- CRD 2002 feasibility study indicated that reclaimed water could be sold for 25% of cost of NSSWD water, if users for all reclaimed water could be found. Could displace x,000 gal/yr potable water.
- Pilot composting of septage & sewage sludge at Burgoyne Valley liquid waste site to begin in 2008. Class A compost to be used for non-food purposes on SSI. Main funding source is landfill transport cost savings > \$100,000/yr.

## **Solid Waste / Recycling**

- CRD the only regional district in BC funding recycling programs solely from landfill tipping fees.
- SSI the only community in CRD where garbage collection is entirely user pay, discouraging waste disposal. Also only community where transfer stations licensed, ensuring proper management.
- CRD has initiated household hazardous waste collection. Also created composting bylaw as first step to banning organics from Hartland landfill.
- SSI amending transfer station bylaw to regulate large scale commercial chipping of wood waste. Chips will be used for liquid waste composting, & facilitate ban on large scale burning.

## **Greenspace Protection**

- SSI has protected over 4,000 acres of public greenspace since 1996, which now exceeds our OCP target of 15% of the island. 19% of SSI protected, including conservation covenants.
- Trust's NAPTEP program, (up to 65% reduction in property taxes for conservation covenant), unique in BC. 75% of NAPTEP covenants on SSI, includes property at Maxwell Lake, completing protection of our most pristine drinking water lake.

## **Recreation & Culture**

- Seven acre recreation site purchased within 10 minute walking distance from Ganges. New indoor pool to be opened in 2008, with waste heat recovery ventilation system & UV water treatment to minimize chlorine content.
- Purchased land in 2006 for a new library within Ganges core, consistent with OCP policy. New facility, dependent on infrastructure grant & local referendum, will meet LEED silver standard.