



GABRIOLA LAND AND TRAILS TRUST

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

February 2020

PREPARED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF WAVE CONSULTING LTD



energy, momentum, direction

Mission/Mandate*

The purpose of the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust is to secure, develop, and sustain a network of parkland and trails on Gabriola Island for the benefit of the public, and to preserve sites of environmental, historical, and social importance.

To achieve this, GaLTT will:

- **Promote preservation and conservation** of representative Gulf Island ecosystems and sites of social and historical significance on Gabriola and other nearby islands.
- **Inform and educate** the community about use and management of public lands for recreation and conservation.
- **Communicate and work cooperatively** with other community groups, First Nations, government authorities, and conservation groups to achieve our mandate.
- **Develop** relationships with private landowners that will encourage the preservation of ecologically valuable land and improve park and neighbourhood connectivity through donations, bequests, covenants, landowner education, and trail licences.
- **Generate** the funds and community support needed to acquire private lands for conservation and trail connections.
- **Acquire the volunteers, funds, and materials** necessary for the development and maintenance of a safe, accessible public trail system and for the control of invasive species on public land.

**The complete Mandate and Purpose Statement from GaLTT's Constitution can be found in Appendix A*

Operating Principles and Values

The following principles and values guide GaLTT:

Environmental Stewardship and Leadership:

In developing trails and acquiring covenants, trail licences and new park land, GaLTT actively pursues activities that encourage low impact outdoor recreation and supports environmental protection and sustainability including the preservation of sensitive ecosystems through monitoring and restoration. GaLTT balances its focus on sustaining the natural environment with public access and safety for trail and park users. GaLTT also supports efforts to restrict or prohibit public access in situations where recreational uses and the protection of sensitive ecosystems are not compatible.

Grounded in Community:

GaLTT sees itself as an active part of the community; seeking input, sharing information and ideas, and connecting parks and neighbourhoods through trail development. GaLTT understands the significance to our community of social and historical sites. Ultimately, we see the work we do in protecting the environment and connecting parks and neighbourhoods as an important component of community health and wellbeing.

An Educational Approach:

GaLTT favours public engagement and education to encourage appropriate trail and park usage and to value and respect the environment. We use a variety of strategies to engage our members and the broader community.

Working Together:

GaLTT values and works actively to develop positive working relationships with all organizations and agencies with overlapping mandates. We work with all levels of government, both at the staff and elected official levels, to achieve our goals. We support the work of NGOs, community organizations, and initiatives where appropriate. In consultation with our members, we carefully consider the positions we put forward.

Knowledge, Best Practices and Technology:

GaLTT is a learning organization: many other conservation organizations have preceded us and we value their experience and knowledge. We build on a foundation of best practices and the strategic use of emerging technology.

Accountability and Transparency:

GaLTT values the contributions of its members and donors and uses the resources at its disposal for the sole purpose of achieving its vision and delivering on the organization's objectives. We commit to sharing with our members and the community how we have used the resources entrusted to us.

Integrity

As a charitable organization, GaLTT serves an important public interest and, in pursuing its mission, acts in accordance with both the letter of the law and spirit of the law. Board members demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness and honesty in all activities in order to inspire confidence and trust in our organization.

Confidentiality

GaLTT respects and protects private or privileged information received in the course of its work, and will not divulge this information to others, including the personal information of our donors and supporters.

Planning Context and Environmental Scan*

GaLTT’s strategic planning process has always endeavored to understand the priorities of its members through an interactive and participatory approach to developing strategic objectives. In the spirit of continued consultation with its membership, a strategic planning workshop was held on November 23rd, 2019 and attended by 17 members and 12 Board members. The non-board participants were invited to share their perspectives on the opportunities and challenges that GaLTT may face in the next five years, and to consider how the organization’s goals might best align with evolving social, environmental, and political contexts over that time frame.

GaLTT is financially viable, has a well-functioning board, an active membership, and strong support from the community. Since its inception in 2004, it has made significant progress in achieving its mandate in a number of areas, most prominently in trail development, maintenance and licensing, negotiation and maintenance of conservation covenants, community engagement, signage, and invasive species management. In the years to come, the organization will continue to make strides in these areas while also addressing specific issues highlighted as priorities by members, including increased emphasis on conservation, improved shore and trail accessibility for users with mobility restrictions, landowner education, use of new technology, and understanding and responding to the implications of climate change.

GaLTT recognizes threats posed by the climate crisis. Engagement in activities to help reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change on coastal ecosystems will be prioritized in the years to come. The organization has made substantial progress in the promotion of trails as safe and sustainable transportation networks on Gabriola Island. As public awareness of climate change increases, alternative means of personal transport such as electric bicycles (e-bikes) are increasing, and a shift in the way some trails are used and managed will be addressed through GaLTT’s Cycling Committee and cooperation with other community groups such as the Gabriola Off-Road Cycling Association (GORCA).

GaLTT will strive to increase efforts to protect and restore natural ecosystems through invasive species management and conservation activities to protect vulnerable flora and fauna from the impacts of human activity. Cooperation with interested community groups, government agencies, landowners, and First Nations will be integral to achieving these goals.

GaLTT acknowledges the need for nimble, responsive, collaborative leadership in the years ahead as “unknown unknowns” arise. For example, the demographic composition of the community is changing as the population increases, though the specifics of this change are currently unknown. Once the 2020 census results are available, the additional context will be used to inform engagement and education initiatives.

During the last five years, GaLTT donated funds for the purchase of parkland by the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) on Mudge Island and advocated for the acquisition of parkland through the density transfer provisions of the Gabriola Island Official Community Plan. Land acquisition (whether through purchase or advocacy) remains an important part of GaLTT’s mandate, along with a complement of activities that promote conservation of sensitive, under-protected ecosystems. Since GaLTT’s inception, protected land on Gabriola has increased from 2% to 12% but this is still below the federal target of 17%. GaLTT recognizes the need for focused planning of fundraising activities targeting specific acquisition projects and for continued advocacy to reach the federal target.

GaLTT has built positive relationships with the Local Trust Committee, the RDN, the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC), and BC Parks, as well as with other community organizations with related objectives such as Streamkeepers and Shorekeepers. GaLTT also supported the work of the local From Truth to Reconciliation Committee and has initiated a relationship with the Snunéymux^w First Nation. Of note is that management plans for the three provincial parks on Gabriola Island are currently significantly out of date. Moreover, several management plans for RDN community and regional parks and the management plan for Elder Cedar Nature Reserve (owned by the ITC) will be due for review during the next five years. Given the success of previous collaborations with these agencies, most recently regarding accessibility of Gabriola Sands Provincial Park, re-design of the wayfinding system in the 707 Community Park and Cox Community Park, and boardwalk installation and invasives work in Elder Cedar, there may be opportunities for GaLTT to support the work of updating and implementing the management plans for Gabriola’s parks.

As a well-established organization, GaLTT has the capacity to welcome groups with similar aims and interests into its fold. To that end, there are opportunities to engage new demographic groups with fresh and complementary perspectives by positioning GaLTT as a “connector” organization. Relationships with the Snunéymux^w First Nation will continue to be nurtured, with the intention of cooperative engagement in the spirit of partnership and learning.

Finally, GaLTT is increasingly visible in the community through attendance at the Farmers’ Market and seasonal fairs, hosted trail walks and educational events. Public engagement and education will continue to help spread awareness of GaLTT and its mandate, with additional focus on the use of technology and social media.

**Also see Environmental Scan in Appendix B*

Strategic Directions

The GaLTT board identified six strategic directions in the following areas to guide the organization over the next five years:

1. mandate and scope
2. organizational capacity
3. conservation and ecosystem protection
4. trail planning, development and maintenance
5. intergovernmental and community relations
6. community engagement.

The following pages set out these Strategic Directions and Appendix C assigns committee responsibilities for the various initiatives, and their suggested timelines for action.

Strategic Direction 1—

Mandate and Scope

GaLTT was founded to address the needs for parkland and trails on Gabriola Island and surrounding islands (including Mudge and Decourcy). During the previous strategic planning timeframe, GaLTT extended financial support to Mudge Island to help them establish a community park. All the Trust islands share the same sensitive ecological characteristics and are part of the Coastal Douglas-fir Zone, the smallest of the 14 ecological zones listed in the province's Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification system. To that end, the scope of GaLTT's work may include conservation, restoration, and preservation activities in collaboration with other islands in the Gabriola Island Local Trust Area, when opportunities for active involvement or advocacy arise.

Gabriola's geographic location leads to questions regarding GaLTT's relationship to the marine environment, particularly in regard to the interface between land and sea. While the scope of GaLTT's work does not include the marine environment, we recognize the importance of consultation and coordination with stakeholder groups who are leading conservation and protection of sensitive marine and shoreline ecosystems. As an established organization, GaLTT has built positive, supportive relationships with a number of local organizations with mandates that include environmental restoration and protection.

It is important to periodically review GaLTT's Mission/Mandate statement to ensure its scope continues to be appropriate. For example, the current Mission/Mandate statement indicates that GaLTT will work to "preserve sites of environmental, historical, and social importance". Given GaLTT's focus on environmental preservation, do sites of historical and social importance continue to be an appropriate part of GaLTT's Mission?

There have been changes in transportation technology, such as the emergence of e-bikes, which were not envisioned when GaLTT's bylaws were drafted. With an aging population, the use of

motorized wheelchairs and mobility scooters is increasing as well. There has also been a growing interest in the use of trails, or a combination of trails and roads, for moving around the island without the use of motor vehicles. It will be important for GaLTT to consider its constitution, bylaws and policies in light of these changes.

Goals and Objectives:

1. To ensure the constitution, bylaws and mandate enable GaLTT to address contemporary issues **GaLTT will:**
 - a. Review the Mission/Mandate to determine whether the current statement continues to be relevant.
 - b. Review Bylaw in Part 13(3a), referencing non-motorized vehicles in light of the increasing use of e-bikes and other motorized transportation devices on trails.
2. To formalize relationships with interested community groups who have complementary aims and request a supportive liaison with GaLTT, **GaLTT will:**
 - a. **Respond** to interested groups using existing policies, to determine appropriate relationships, referring to the partnership with Streamkeepers as a guiding example.

Outcomes:

- GaLTT’s Mission/Mandate statement will accurately reflect the organization’s purposes.
- GaLTT’s bylaws will reflect contemporary usage considerations.
- GaLTT will have appropriate supportive relationships with other community groups and leverage complementary activities.

Leadership for Strategic Direction 1: Executive Committee and Cycling Committee

Strategic Direction 2—

Organizational Capacity

Since its inception, GaLTT has established a strong, positive reputation through active relationship-building and community involvement such as: hosting frequent trail work parties, trail walks, cycling events, and public education sessions; producing newspaper articles, brochures, and trail maps; organizing frequent invasive species removal sessions; engaging youth through Scouts and Camp Miriam work parties; staffing a booth at the Farmers’ Market during the summer and participating in special events such as the Commons Fall Fair. GaLTT collects membership fees and donations, maintains an up-to-date membership list, keeps members informed through newsletters and emails, efficiently manages its finances and investments, and creates and maintains a website and system for safe and efficient electronic storage and retrieval of information. GaLTT also develops proposals and grant applications for specific projects, seeks opportunities for land conservation and trail connections, enters into trail licence agreements with private landowners, monitors existing conservation covenants, and liaises with other government and community organizations. GaLTT’s formalized relationship with Streamkeepers has helped to protect sensitive ecosystems and educate children and families.

All of these activities are organized and conducted by board members and volunteers. It is worth noting that GaLTT has been particularly successful at maintaining a well-functioning board and in attracting knowledgeable, competent and committed board members. However, it has been recognized that the “working board” model may not be able to sustain the current level of activity and meet future needs. GaLTT is continuing to explore the possibility of compensated staff support positions for specific projects, and to assess the implications of a staffed approach.

Ensuring sufficient funds are available for current and future activities is an on-going responsibility. Additional funds will be required if staff are engaged or land acquisition is pursued.

Goals and Objectives:

1. To ensure GaLTT has the appropriate human resources to deliver its programs, **GaLTT will:**
 - a. **Evaluate** the organization’s capacity to deliver its mandate on an annual basis.
 - b. **Identify** programs and initiatives that might be more effectively delivered by staff and investigate possible funding options (see 2a below).
 - c. **Implement** a recruitment/succession plan that ensures the sustainability of the board and committees.
 - d. **Ensure** new board members are provided with appropriate and timely orientation materials and support.
 - e. **Reach out** to GaLTT members to support and participate in specific projects and committees.
2. To ensure GaLTT has the financial resources to support core programs and priorities, **GaLTT will:**

- a. **Develop** and implement a funding plan to ensure long-term financial stability to support key activities, and increase project specific funding, including seeking grants and partnerships to fund special projects and land acquisition.
- b. **Approve** annual budgets that align expenditures to support current needs and priorities.

Outcomes:

- GaLTT will understand its capacity and have a detailed plan to address recruitment, succession, and potential staff requirements.
- The board executive functions and committee leads will have knowledgeable back up people identified who can step into the positions should the need arise.
- All new board members will receive an orientation within one month of joining the board.
- Committees will include non-board GaLTT members.
- GaLTT will be financially solvent and able to meet its strategic objectives using the funding plan and budgets as guiding documents.

Leadership for Strategic Direction 2: Executive Committee and Finance Committee

Strategic Direction 3—

Conservation and Ecosystem Protection

Land conservation is an important part of GaLTT’s mandate, but its conservation efforts are currently overshadowed by its trail-building accomplishments. GaLTT is committed to placing greater emphasis on land conservation issues during the life of this strategic plan.

The southern Gulf Islands are entirely within the Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) Biogeoclimatic Zone – by far the smallest and rarest of the 14 ecological zones in BC. The CDF zone includes much more than just Douglas-fir forests. It hosts a wide variety of ecosystems including Garry Oak meadows, rocky outcrops, wetlands and shorelines. The CDF is home to the highest number of species and ecosystems at risk in the province and, as such, has a very high conservation priority. GaLTT has joined with many other government and non-government organizations in working collaboratively with the Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership to protect CDF habitat.

To date, GaLTT has protected CDF ecosystems through a variety of strategies, including the use of conservation covenants, the removal of invasive species, and activities that increase public education and awareness. GaLTT has contributed significant funds to assist the RDN with the purchase of parkland on Mudge Island and has advocated strongly for the acquisition of new parkland on Gabriola Island. GaLTT has also voiced support for the creation of new Ecological Protection Zoning by the Islands Trust for the protection of sensitive ecosystems within the local trust area.

Although no lands have been directly acquired by GaLTT to date, land acquisition for conservation purposes remains a high priority. GaLTT has developed policy and assessment tools for prioritization of future land acquisition and conservation covenant opportunities.

In an effort to boost the amount of protected land and protect habitat for the recovery of species at risk, the Federal government recently unveiled a commitment to provide \$4.5 million annually over four years (until March 31, 2023) to support Canadian land trusts in acquiring private lands and establishing conservation covenants through the Land Trust Conservation Fund. GaLTT is well positioned to apply for funding, given that CDF ecosystems are ranked highly for protection.

Goals and Objectives:

1. To increase the amount of protected CDF ecosystems, GaLTT will:
 - a. **Assess** currently protected land in terms of representational ecosystems and identify priority ecosystems for protection.
 - b. **Engage** in discussions with landowners to inform and educate regarding conservation covenants, preservation of natural habitat, and acquisition as appropriate.
 - c. **Identify** opportunities for restoration of CDF ecosystems.
 - d. **Investigate** grants and other funding opportunities for conserving CDF ecosystems.
 - e. **Increase** the use of conservation covenants as a tool for protecting CDF ecosystems and

maintain current covenants.

- f. **Maintain** a Stewardship Fund to provide funds for the maintenance of covenants and the legal defense of covenants if necessary, at contribution levels consistent with established policy.
 - g. **Investigate** the federal Land Trust Conservation Fund as a potential funding source for conservation initiatives.
2. To protect ecosystems through removal of invasive species and habitat restoration, GaLTT will:
- a. **Establish** an Invasives Committee, the focus of which will be to take a leadership role in a collaborative effort to preserve native ecosystems and to eradicate, limit, or prevent the establishment of invasive species.
 - b. **Investigate** and adopt best practices for the removal and disposal of a variety of invasive species, and habitat restoration, in the CDF zone.
 - c. **Expand** volunteer involvement with invasive species work.
 - d. **Develop** and implement initiatives to educate Gabriola residents and landowners about appropriate methods for: removing and disposing of invasive plants; preventing their introduction and spread; and restoring native habitats.

Outcomes:

- There will be a year over year increase in the amount of protected land on Gabriola Island and/or surrounding islands.
- Landowners on Gabriola will be more informed about conservation options for their property.
- Current covenants will be maintained and safeguarded.
- GaLTT Board’s expertise in land conservation will be strengthened.
- Invasive plant species will be reduced or eliminated.

Leadership for Strategic Direction 3: Acquisition, Covenants, and Trail Licences Committee, Invasives Committee, Communications Committee, Community Engagement, and Executive Committee

Strategic Direction 4—

Trail Planning, Development and Maintenance

GaLTT has successfully developed a large network of recreational trails using parkland, Crown land, undeveloped right-of-ways, and trail licence agreements with private landowners. GaLTT's expanding trail system has prioritized park and neighbourhood connectivity, and has supported the physical benefits of both recreation for all trail users, and active transportation (i.e., human-powered travel). GaLTT's vigorous advocacy for inclusion of dedicated trail connections to the Village centre as part of a recent property development proposal was in alignment with the Local Trust plan for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. There are still several opportunities to address the needs of active transportation users through new trail connections and upgrades to existing trails (i.e., widening, re-surfacing). There is also potential for further improving park and neighbourhood connectivity and for identifying trail connections that would create more walking, horseback riding and cycling loops.

GaLTT is keenly aware that all trails inevitably cause some disruption to the natural environment. Therefore, the potential impacts of trail-building on sensitive ecosystems and natural habitat are always considered when potential new trails are investigated. Trail routes and infrastructure (e.g., boardwalks) are planned to minimize the effects of foot traffic, bicycles, and horses on soils, streams, and native vegetation. In future, the effects of e-bikes on trail conditions and surrounding habitat will need to be closely monitored.

Members feel that strategies to mitigate confusion and potential trail user conflict should be prioritized in planning and signage discussions. Trail use restrictions have been identified as requiring clarification, for example, as have the impacts of parking in neighbourhoods abutting parks and trails. Trail use etiquette and safety on mixed-use trails has been identified as an important issue that will require focused planning and education.

Shore and trail accessibility issues have also been identified as priorities for this planning period, with areas for potential improvement highlighted through the 2019 community Accessibility Survey. Survey respondents identified fear of falling and insufficient access due to mobility restrictions as major barriers to trail and shoreline use. Improved beach access, safety railings, flat or low-incline trails, and short trail loops were identified as top priorities for improvement by respondents with mobility restrictions. In order to plan accessibility projects appropriately, there is a need to balance the needs of people with mobility restrictions with the desires of other trail users. GaLTT will form an *ad hoc* Accessibility Committee to prioritize and take action on accessibility projects in partnership with appropriate government agencies.

Goals and Objectives:

1. To ensure the trail system serves a variety of different users, increases connectivity, and enables trail users to experience a range of representative environments, landscapes, and ecosystems, GaLTT will:
 - a. **Identify** users' needs and analyze the existing trail inventory to determine how best to meet those needs and develop additional trails to address unmet needs where appropriate.
 - b. **Identify** existing trails for active transportation use and propose upgrading where necessary.

- c. **Maintain** and expand the system of trail licence agreements with private landowners.
2. To minimize the negative impacts of trails and trail use on the natural environment, GaLTT will:
 - a. **Ensure** that new trails are located and maintained in ways that minimize disturbance to soils, streams, native vegetation, and sensitive ecosystems.
3. To assess the needs and perspectives of trail use interest groups, reduce the potential for conflict, and proactively establish safe trail conditions, GaLTT will:
 - a. **Work** across jurisdictions to assist with the development and coordination of policies to address emerging uses such as e-bikes and active transportation routes/corridors.
 - b. **Identify** high-traffic, multi-use trails and propose and take actions to improve safety and reduce conflict.
 - c. **Ensure** trail users understand different trail uses: mixed-use (e.g., walkers, cyclists, and horse riders); restricted use (e.g., no horses or cyclists, dogs on leash); special use (e.g., users with mobility restrictions).
4. To address the need to improve access to trails and shoreline, especially for people with mobility restrictions, GaLTT will:
 - a. **Review** results of the 2019 Accessibility Survey and identify specific projects, key deliverables, and timelines that address priority issues.
 - b. **Engage** in collaborative discussions with appropriate governmental agencies (Regional District of Nanaimo, BC Parks, Islands Trust Conservancy) to advance accessibility priorities.
 - c. **Seek** funding for priority projects.
 - d. **Develop** project plans and successfully complete at least two accessibility projects by 2025.
5. To enhance the quality and availability of information about trails, GaLTT will:
 - a. **Create** updated route information (e.g., access, length, difficulty, natural and cultural features and history) for trail users.
 - b. **Identify digital** technologies that may be useful and explore the potential for their application by GaLTT.
6. To continue ongoing trail development and maintenance, GaLTT will:
 - a. **Host** bi-weekly trail development and maintenance work parties.

Outcomes:

- Trails will continue to meet a variety of user needs.
- There will be an increased number of neighbourhood connections and loops across the trail network.
- There will be increased use of trails as regular transportation corridors.
- Trails will be located and maintained to minimize impacts on the natural environment.

- GaLTT will make decisions informed by understanding of both existing and emergent user groups' needs.
- User accessibility to trails and shoreline, including those users with mobility restrictions, will be enhanced.
- Reports of trail use conflicts will be rare.
- The community will have access to comprehensive digital information about Gabriola trails.
- Users will be able to make informed decisions about the routes that best fit their needs and interests.

Leadership for Strategic Direction 4: Trail Operations Committee, Acquisitions, Covenants and Trail Licences Committee, Cycling Committee, and Communications Committee

Strategic Direction 5—

Intergovernmental & Community Relations

GaLTT has worked diligently to build excellent relationships with local and provincial government bodies and other community organizations. GaLTT’s extensive volunteer efforts and proposals in support of park management and conservation goals are highly valued and respected by the RDN, BC Parks, and Islands Trust Conservancy. Recognizing that government priorities shift and evolve, GaLTT will continue to communicate with government liaisons regarding work plans, policy updates, and projects that might impact GaLTT’s activities and interests. GaLTT will also seek opportunities to participate in and comment on, updates to park management plans, and will continue to advocate for, and collaborate on, actions and projects that align with GaLTT’s mandate. For example, GaLTT will likely seek future collaboration with one or more of these government bodies on projects targeted toward improving trail and shoreline accessibility.

The federal and provincial governments have set aside lands for treaty negotiations, lands which include a network of trails used by islanders currently and historically. GaLTT seeks opportunities to engage the Snunéymux^w First Nation in the spirit of co-learning and allied commitment to the preservation and stewardship of CDF ecosystems. This will also help GaLTT clarify the practical and legal implications of trails on Treaty lands, which can be clearly communicated to members and the community as a whole.

A focus on community relations is integral to GaLTT achieving its broader objectives. GaLTT plays a role in encouraging the public to get out and enjoy the natural environment by providing opportunities to learn and explore. By providing these opportunities, natural allies are developed who will promote conservation objectives in the community. In this way, GaLTT can achieve a balanced mandate, promoting recreation trail use while engaging users as stewards and partners in advocating for the protection of this beautiful island. Partnerships with aligned interest groups (e.g., other land trust organizations, Gabriola Historical and Museum Society, the Gabriola Commons, Garden Club, Gabriola Lions, Walking Group, Streamkeepers, Shorekeepers, Gabriola Off-road Cycling Association (GORCA), youth groups, and Gabriola Horse Group) is also an important way that GaLTT maintains its community profile and promotes increased public awareness of its mandate.

Goals and Objectives:

1. To maintain and enhance relationships with government agencies, First Nations, community groups and other land trust organizations to support GaLTT’s objectives, **GaLTT will:**
 - a. **Connect** with Snunéymux^w First Nation and/or the Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group stakeholders to identify areas of potential common interest (e.g., protection of culturally sensitive areas, invasive species management, conservation) and establish action plans as appropriate.
 - b. **Communicate** any agreements and/or changes resulting from the Treaty process that impact trail use to members and the community as a whole.
 - c. **Engage** government liaisons to ensure they are aware of GaLTT’s mandate and current strategic objectives and actions.

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- d. **Collaborate** with the RDN to determine how to best align activities and objectives in RDN 2020-2030 strategic plans for mutual benefit.
 - e. **Advocate** and collaborate with BC Parks, BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Islands Trust, Islands Trust Conservancy, the RDN, and POSAC on conservation and ecosystem protection.
 - f. **Partner** with and leverage resources of aligned interest groups, particularly in educational and conservation activities (e.g., other land trust organizations, Gabriola Historical and Museum Society, the Gabriola Commons, Garden Club, Gabriola Lions, Walking Group, Streamkeepers, Shorekeepers, GORCA, and Gabriola Horse Group).

Outcomes:

- GaLTT will have established stronger connections with local First Nations.
- GaLTT will be able to use understanding of the Snunéymux^w Treaty process to educate the community regarding trail use implications, if appropriate.
- There will be increased knowledge and understanding in the community about GaLTT and its mandate.
- Local, regional and provincial government representatives will know about GaLTT and support its mandate.
- New strategic relationships with other community organizations will be in place.

Leadership for Strategic Direction 5: Executive Committee, Community Engagement Committee, and Communications Committee

Strategic Direction 6 – Community Engagement

Part of GaLTT’s mandate is to “inform and educate the community about use and management of public lands for recreation and conservation”. This work is increasingly important given that the population of Gabriola Island has increased over the past five years, with new residential developments planned. Once the 2020 census results are available, GaLTT will gain a more detailed understanding of what changes have taken place. From there, it will be possible for GaLTT to analyze and respond to demographic changes.

GaLTT’s success in trail expansion and maintenance has increased Gabriolans’ awareness of the organization but there are opportunities to engage a wider range of trail users, e.g., youth, cyclists, commuters. The recent addition of a cycling committee to GaLTT’s organizational structure will hopefully help connect with these user groups. Educational initiatives that address potential issues such as trail use conflict and safety will be an important area of public engagement.

It is also critical that Gabriolans understand the importance of conservation and protection and the active role residents can take in environmental stewardship. Members have expressed concern with current lot clearing associated with property development. GaLTT could engage with local realtors and landowners about clearing practices to preserve native trees and plants when possible. Owners of larger acreages could be encouraged to consider placing conservation covenants on portions of their property.

The education of children and youth on issues related to environmental stewardship is critical to developing an informed community. GaLTT will nurture previously established educational initiatives with elementary school students, Scouts, and Camp Miriam summer campers and seek new opportunities to engage children and youth in volunteer work. With GaLTT’s conservation mandate, it is well positioned to participate in the Gabriola Elementary School’s (GES) Land-based Learning for Reconciliation Project with Simon Fraser University and the Snunéymux^w First Nation.

By engaging with newcomers to Gabriola, GaLTT could benefit from the skills, energy, and enthusiasm that new residents bring with them. Providing opportunities for people to participate in scheduled volunteer work parties to maintain and build trails and to remove Scotch broom has proven to be an effective way to engage community members in GaLTT’s work. The recent creation of a new Invasives Committee will provide more opportunities for community involvement in managing invasive species.

Goals and Objectives:

1. To increase understanding of GaLTT’s mandate and participation in GaLTT’s activities, and to promote the role individuals can play in environmental stewardship, **GaLTT will:**
 - a. **Develop** new targeted outreach activities to increase participation and membership, including engagement with newcomers.
 - b. **Continue** to participate in the GES Land-based Learning and Reconciliation Project and

support other child and youth educational initiatives where appropriate.

- c. **Continue** to engage the public through activities and offerings such as volunteer work parties, the market booth, trail walks, brochures, and maps.
- d. **Continue** to play an important role in community health and well-being by creating and maintaining trails and encouraging their use, e.g., by hosting guided trail walks.
- e. **Educate** the community about the roles of different government bodies (e.g., Islands Trust Conservancy, RDN, provincial government, federal government) in managing and regulating the use of public lands on Gabriola Island.

Outcomes:

- GaLTT will have an enhanced understanding of the current demographics on Gabriola.
- A broader cross-section of the population will participate in GaLTT activities.
- GaLTT is effective at communicating with people who have a diversity of interests and needs.
- Private landowners will be engaged and make informed choices regarding stewardship of natural landscapes.
- Volunteer involvement in GaLTT's activities will be expanded.
- Communications result in increased awareness of:
 - trail etiquette;
 - conservation objectives and strategies;
 - the overall benefits of trails and parks to community well-being; and
 - the roles and responsibility of different land authorities.

Leadership for Strategic Direction 6: Community Engagement Committee, Communications Committee, Trail Operations Committee, and Invasives Committee

Appendix A – GaLTT Mission and Purposes

The purpose of the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust is to secure, develop and sustain a network of parkland and trails on Gabriola Island for the benefit of the public, and to preserve sites of environmental, historical, and social importance.

To achieve the purpose the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust will:

- (a) Plan, promote and develop a network of trails that provide routes for non-motorized users to connect island neighbourhoods, parks, beach accesses and services;
- (b) Promote the preservation of representative examples of gulf island ecosystems and landforms by working with interested landowners and community groups to provide options and solutions;
- (c) Promote the conservation of sites of particular historical or social interest by working with interested landowners and community groups to provide options and solutions;
- (d) Promote such charitable activities or endeavours, including the acquisition, management and disposal of land and interests in land, as may, in the opinion of the Gabriola Land and Trail Trust board of directors, appear to contribute to the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust’s general purposes and which, to the best extent possible, represents the variety of natural occurring habitat on Gabriola Island;
- (e) Raise money, acquire funds and other assistance necessary to own, acquire and take by purchase, donations, devise or otherwise, land or personal property and expend, sell, exchange, mortgage, lease, let, improve or develop same for the purposes of the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust;
- (f) Work closely with the community, First Nations, the Regional District of Nanaimo, the Islands Trust, and other land trusts and conservation groups to acquire, develop, and sustain such properties as meet the general purposes of the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust and support the objectives and policies of the Gabriola Island Official Community Plan;
- (g) Inform and educate the community about use and management of public lands for recreation and conservation; and
- (h) Undertake everything necessary to promote and attain Gabriola Land and Trail Trust’s purposes and periodically re-assess these purposes.

Appendix B—Environmental Scan

As part of the 2020 strategic planning process, GaLTT board and members were invited to reflect on what has changed both internally and externally in the past five years in light of the organization’s perceived strengths and weaknesses, and to imagine the challenges and opportunities these changes might represent for GaLTT.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met objectives to increase trail development through creation of new connecting trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbalanced mandate: focus has been on trails -emphasis needs to go to conservation as well
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased covenant capacity and trail connectivity 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive relationships with local and provincial governments and community organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GaLTT mandate may seem fragmented with finite resources to create and sustain organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support and high awareness in community 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy bank balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough in investments to purchase lands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing volunteer enthusiasm and engagement 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics: older adults make up most of volunteer base
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged active board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small population makes board recruitment and succession planning difficult • ‘Working board’ model may not be sustainable

<u>Challenges</u>	<u>Opportunities</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased invasive species - new and existing. • Climate change may impact the spread of invasives and harm native species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GaLTT can identify, prioritize and target specific areas for invasives management • GaLTT can target specific activities to vulnerable areas to mitigate the impacts of climate change on sensitive ecosystems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land prices have increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GaLTT can pursue land acquisition through grants and targeted fundraising as conservation leader in the region • Recognition that all land on Gabriola is considered sensitive ecosystem - could qualify for eco-gifts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal gov’t has increased conservation targets to 17%; Gabriola is currently at 12% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal targets may help GaLTT obtain grant funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several local organizations with similar aims/interests may compete for public support and/or volunteer resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization may be able to serve as “connector” organization to identify and coordinate issues and interests of groups with similar aims (e.g., conservation)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal government’s “2 billion trees” commitment: how might we engage this program to ameliorate climate damage and preserve/clean up vegetation. Can we replace trees, and what can we replace with?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of e-bikes and other motorized transport on trails may increase potential for conflict between trail users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GaLTT can amend its mandate and policies to reflect implications of changing trail usage (i.e., increased adoption of e-bikes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest and enthusiasm about particular topics shift and are variable - focus should be member-driven 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to promote activities based on public and member interests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change: fire concerns have increased and conflicts have already arisen regarding safety and habitat protection Land development: more lots are being cleared with no restrictions on clearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for increased advocacy, landowner education Opportunity to educate through realtors around impact on ecosystems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population “boom” has meant new builds, new influx of people - this may impact conservation priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2020 census presents an opportunity to understand Gabriola’s changing demographics and how they may impact GaLTT priorities and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology and social media are continually evolving and changing – hard to keep up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to assess GaLTT’s tech readiness for enhanced social media presence and/or app development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDN is doing strategic planning for parks and trails for the next 10 years; their process is just starting. Opportunity for input
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusion about Treaty lands vis a vis signage, accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconciliation: increased public awareness and interest in building relationships with local First Nation Opportunity for GaLTT to liaise with Snunéymux^w to establish understanding re: Treaty lands

Appendix C—GaLTT Specific Goals and Leadership

<u>STRATEGIC DIRECTION</u>	<u>COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP</u>
<p><u>Strategic direction 1</u></p> <p>SD1–1a: Review mandate SD1–1b: Review Bylaw in Part 13 (3a)</p> <p>SD1–2a: Respond to interested groups</p>	<p>Executive Executive Executive</p>
<p><u>Strategic direction 2</u></p> <p>SD2–1a: Organizational capacity SD2–1b: Staffing options SD2–1c: Recruitment/succession plan SD2–1d: Board orientation SD2–1e: Committee recruitment</p> <p>SD2–2a: Funding plan SD2–2b: Annual budgeting</p>	<p>Executive Executive Executive Executive Executive Executive Executive</p>
<p><u>Strategic direction 3</u></p> <p>SD3–1a: Assess protected land & conservation priorities SD3–1b: Discussions with landowners SD3–1c: Restoration planning SD3–1d: Investigate grant opportunities plan SD3–1e: Conservation covenants SD3–1f: Maintain Stewardship fund SD3–1g: Investigate Land Trust Conservation Fund</p> <p>SD3–2a: Establish Invasives committee SD3–2b: Establish invasives protocols SD3–2c: Expand volunteer involvement SD3–2d: Invasives education</p>	<p>ACTL ACTL & Executive ACTL & Invasives ACTL & Executive ACTL & Executive ACTL & Executive ACTL & Executive Invasives & Executive Invasives Invasives Invasives</p>

<u>STRATEGIC DIRECTION</u>	<u>COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP</u>
<p><u>Strategic direction 4</u></p> <p>SD4–1a: Identify user needs SD4–1b: Identify active transportation trails SD4–1c: Trail licenses</p> <p>SD4–2a: Locate and maintain trails to minimize disturbance</p> <p>SD4–3a: Develop policies to address emerging issues (e.g., e-bikes) SD4–3b: Actions to improve safety & reduce conflict SD4–3c: Understand different trail uses</p> <p>SD4–4a: Accessibility survey priorities SD4–4b: Engage with partners SD4–4c: Funding for priority projects SD4–4d: Project plans</p> <p>SD4–5a: Detailed trail information SD4–5b: Digital technologies</p> <p>SD4–6a: Bi-weekly trail parties</p>	<p>Trail Operations & Cycling Cycling & Trail Operations</p> <p>ACTL & Trail Operations</p> <p>Trail Operations</p> <p>Cycling & Executive</p> <p>Cycling & Communications</p> <p>Trail Operations & Communications</p> <p>Accessibility Accessibility & Executive Accessibility & Executive Accessibility</p> <p>ACTL & Trail Operations ACTL</p> <p>Trail Operations & Communications</p>
<p><u>Strategic direction 5</u></p> <p>SD5–1a: Connect with First Nations SD5–1b: Communicate implications of treaty process to members SD5–1c: Engage local government liaisons SD5–1d: Collaborate with RDN (2020-2030 strategic plans) SD5–1e: Advocate for conservation and ecosystem protection and collaborate with government partners SD5–1f: Partnership with aligned interest groups</p>	<p>Executive & ACTL Communications</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Trail Operations & Executive ACTL & Executive</p> <p>Community Engagement & Executive</p>

<u>STRATEGIC DIRECTION</u>	<u>COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP</u>
<p><u>Strategic direction 6</u></p> <p>SD6–1a: Targeted outreach to increase participation and membership</p> <p>SD6–1b: Child and youth initiatives</p> <p>SD6–1c: Public engagement activities: market booth, brochures, trail guide, etc.)</p> <p>SD6–1d: Community outdoor education/awareness (guided trail walks)</p> <p>SD6–1e: Community education re: management of public lands (e.g., Islands Trust Fund, RDN, provincial government, federal government)</p>	<p>Community Engagement & Communications</p>