

**Next Meeting –  
September 24, 2018,  
7:00 pm, Lion’s Hall**  
**Topic: Questions for Candidates in SSI elections**  
**Come lend your voice to this lively conversation!**



**Salt Spring Community Alliance August 2018 Report  
One Year Strong!**

**One Year and Counting**

As we look back at Salt Spring Community Alliance’s (SSCA) first formative year, we can celebrate a number of successes as well as the lessons we have learned as a group. The SSCA has successfully created a way for engaged and caring islanders to work with others to weigh the pros and cons of different options for change. This, in turn, has fostered ongoing outreach to expert community groups and professionals on Salt Spring, initiating a process that can help strengthen communication and exchange among different members of our community.

We must also acknowledge times when we simply could have done better. And so, while still celebrating our successes, we need to explore how to improve our work as the Alliance begins its second year. Committed to seeking information from all perspectives, we must do a better job of vetting what we present to ensure that all perspectives - rather than any individual member’s opinion - are expressed in both our meetings and our written materials. At the same time, we must not shy away from difficult topics and conversations, but, rather, find ways to allow ideas to be presented, challenged, and then worked through objectively to make sure any idea has been fully and carefully considered.

Adamantly non-partisan, we must be aware of inadvertently allowing the appearance of having taken a sides or supporting a preference. Rather than aligning with a single position, the central purpose of the SSCA is consider all options and offer possibilities that are thoroughly analyzed and suited to our island community.

Celebrating a year of respectful and fascinating discussions, we are committed to do even better in our second year. Seeking to find integrated solutions to complex problems, we will pursue our goal of making sure our discussions and written materials present non-partisan ideas that consider all sides of issue. We look forward to engaging the community in the coming year by offering fruitful (and even controversial!) discussions that lead to deep, complex, and integrated solutions.

## August 27, 2018 Infrastructure Meeting Report

The August meeting, hosted by the Infrastructure group, offered some of their initial thoughts about Salt Spring's (SS) infrastructure. This began with a summary of a few projects and some examples of their budgets (Appendix 1).

The second part of the meeting was raised the provocative question: 'What do we want Salt Spring to be/look like in the future?' One aspect of this is how is the population going to change in the future? Is this something that we want to continue unfettered, or do we need to think about what different trajectories of population growth will mean for our existing (and future) infrastructure? Presently, we have a population of 10,557, with an additional estimated 8,500 people passing through as tourists in the summer.

The review of historic population projections, (Coomes 1979<sup>1</sup>) which was used for the present water allocation plan, was based on a slow rate of growth of the island's population – which was viewed as largely a retirement community. Although current population numbers correspond to those projected in this study, there is no clarity about how to encourage or restrict population growth based on the types of infrastructure that would be required (and could be financially supported).

The potential implications of unfettered population growth and the role of the Official Community Plan were raised and led to questions and discussion indicating an interest in how Salt Spring should grow. Three provocative island examples were presented to illustrate the types of issues and challenges that are faced when islands of similar or smaller size must support high densities of residents and tourists, with not insignificant implications for infrastructure<sup>2</sup> (See examples of Trinidad, Somoa, and Malta; Appendix 2).

The presentations raised much discussion about what is sustainable and viable for Salt Spring Island, including whether or not we can reasonably expect to support an agricultural system that contributes to local food sovereignty. The concept of establishing a Trust to support affordable housing was also raised, although many of the comments and questions pertained to what we want for our island, and 'how we can stay SS?' (eg., how do we keep our artistic, environmental, and cultural values?) The contrast between SS and the heavily developed and populated island examples generated discussion about the carrying capacity of our island from a community and environmental perspective.

Although the issue of climate change was not specifically addressed, the fact that past conditions are no longer reflective of future realities was stated. As weather variability and seasonality are changing, the viability of our land and sea environment will be more important than ever if we want to protect the future of our island community. Integrated thinking that considers the various objectives within our community will be needed to define our vision for SS, and how we grow as a community.

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<sup>1</sup> Unable to track down original report, see attached document, Appendix

<sup>2</sup> For example, Malta relies on rainwater and ocean desalination for its water

A final infrastructure point was raised regarding inter-island transportation, and the role it might or might not play on SSI (i.e., increasing inter-island tourism and business opportunities vs increasing infrastructure requirements/costs).

#### Next Steps

1. Introduce and invite an island-wide visioning exercise to engage conversation around what we do and do not want SS to look like in the future;
2. Recruit more people into the Infrastructure working group. (Many different aspects will need to be considered. More help is needed!!)
3. Create a link between the Infrastructure group and the MicroEconomics Working Group of the Community Alliance.
4. Look at infrastructure through the lens of water and climate change for SSI.