

**REPORT TO SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION
MEETING OF THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026**

SUBJECT Baker Public Beach Access Information Panels

ISSUE SUMMARY

For the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission (LCC) to review a proposal for permanent interpretive panels installed at two Capital Regional District (CRD) operated public beach access (PBA).

BACKGROUND

An interest group for Baker Beach attended the Salt Spring Island LCC meeting on September 18, 2025 to propose the installation of an interpretive panel at the Baker Beach PBA and Quarry Park Trail PBA. The panel would be intended to highlight the flora and fauna of the intertidal area on Baker Beach for education of visitors, and care of the environment.

At the September 18, 2025 meeting of the SSI LCC the following motion was passed.

“That the proposal of an interpretive panel at Baker Beach accesses be referred to staff to report back to the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission.”

Baker Beach is located on the north shoreline of Booth Canal inlet on Salt Spring Island. The Beach is publicly accessed via the Baker Beach access and the Quarry Park Trail both operated by the CRD and located within residential areas. The beach features a mix of sandy and rocky shoreline, tidal pools, and coastal forest. The site is valued by residents and visitors for its views and biodiversity. It is also recognized as a sensitive intertidal zone, home to a variety of marine life and native plant species.

The first location is a PBA at the end of Baker Road that the CRD has a license of occupation to operate a small parking area and a metal staircase down to the beach. The other proposed location is Quarry Park Trail which acts as a PBA to Baker Beach. This small park is operated by the CRD and located in the 200 block of Quarry Drive. The park features a winding trail through the forest down to a beach access. This trail is part of a larger trail loop system that connects with another CRD operated trail, extending from the end of Quarry Drive to the Baker Road PBA. The two trails can be linked by walking along the beach.

The proposed project would be supported by grant funding from the interest group and their partnership with Transition Salt Spring Marine Stewardship division. The initiative would include interpretive panels at both access locations, that would contain information regarding the ecological features of Baker Beach and use on Salt Spring Island.

A petition has been filed in B.C. Supreme Court by three property owners on Baker Beach challenging the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee's (LTC) decision to deny a permit for a shoreline project. The homeowners argue that the LTC relied on Development Permit Area 3 (Shoreline) guidelines in the Official Community Plan, which extend into the intertidal zone, and that these guidelines exceed the LTC's legal authority.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission postpone consideration of Baker Beach Access Information Panels Project until the legal dispute has been resolved.

Alternative 2

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission approve the installation of permanent interpretive panels at Baker Beach Access on Baker Road and the bottom of Quarry Park Trail through a volunteer agreement with Baker Beach Interest Group.

Alternative 3

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

This project is contingent on the Baker Beach Interest Group securing grant funding to support assessments, creative concepts, design and construction of the two signs. In addition, funding will be required for CRD staff to administer this project and oversee project volunteers. The total project budget is yet to be determined.

First Nations Implications

The proposed locations are not situated within an area of high potential or a registered archaeological site. Due to the potential for unrecorded cultural materials, a Chance Find Protocol must be implemented during all ground-disturbing activities. If there is chance find, additional cost might accrue.

Service Delivery Implications

The Baker Beach interest group has volunteered to design and install the signs. A volunteer agreement would need to be arranged ahead of time to proceed. Staff would be required to supervise volunteer activities.

Social Implications

Proceeding with the project before the court has ruled on the petition could be interpreted as taking a position in an active legal dispute, potentially undermining the expectation that public bodies remain impartial during judicial processes. Moving ahead at this stage may give the impression that the CRD accepts or supports one party's view, even if that is not the intention, which could erode trust in the CRD's commitment to fairness and due process. By acting before the court provides clarity, the organization risks appearing to prejudge the outcome, rather than maintaining a neutral stance while the matter is properly considered by the courts.

CONCLUSION

On September 18, 2025, the Salt Spring Island LCC received a proposal from the Baker Beach Interest Group to install two interpretive panels at CRD-operated beach access points. The signs would educate visitors about local intertidal ecology. The project is proposed to be grant-funded with volunteer support.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission postpone consideration of Baker Beach Access Information Panels Project until the legal dispute has been resolved.

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