

**REPORT TO SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION
MEETING OF THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2025**

SUBJECT SSI Chamber of Commerce Funding Request

ISSUE SUMMARY

To consider a funding request from the SSI Chamber of Commerce to support the SSI Visitor Centre as well as Business Licensing and Business Improvement Area feasibility.

BACKGROUND

A representative from the Salt Spring Island (SSI) Chamber of Commerce attended the SSI Local Community Commission (LCC) to give a presentation on March 13th, 2025, requesting funding in 2025 to support the SSI Visitor Centre and to assess the feasibility of Business Licensing and a Business Improvement Area (BIA) (Appendix A).

SSI Visitor Centre - \$15,000

The LCC through its Economic Development Service provided \$10,000 toward SSI Visitor Centre operations in 2023/2024. Funding for fee-for-service contracts through the Economic Development Service are limited to a maximum of three years.

Business Licensing and BIA Feasibility - \$10,000

The feasibility of business licenses on SSI has been previously considered by the former Economic Development Commission who chose not to pursue due to the costs to administer the program. The LCC has requested staff report back with an updated report on the feasibility and cost to administer business licensing on SSI.

A BIA is a local service area established by bylaw where business and light industry property owners finance activities to promote business through grants and taxes paid by the businesses in the local service area.

Prior to considering adopting a bylaw for a BIA, the proponent and the LCC would need to work together to answer the following:

- Are rural unincorporated areas like Salt Spring Island able to have Business Improvement Areas? If not, what will be involved in amending the Provincial legislation?
- Does the community need a BIA and what would be the geographic service boundaries?
- What specific activities would be undertaken through the BIA?
- What information is already available on matters such as the economic profile of the community, market information and plans for the area?
- How can we reach out to local businesses to gauge their interests?
- Is there general interest in business promotion as a way to grow business activity and the local economy?

Funding a feasibility study for the BIA would likely answer these questions. Further consideration would then need to be given to managing the BIA, business promotion scheme, property owner approval, BIA Bylaw, annual budget, cost recovery and staffing.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission approve a \$10,000 contract with the Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce to support the Salt Spring Island Visitor Centre provided \$10,000 in new grant funding is approved to support the Housing Strategy Initiatives.

Alternative 2

The Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission refer this report back to staff for additional information

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The Economic Development Service has \$101,652 budgeted for project costs and third-party payments in 2025. \$51,652 of this funding was carried forward from 2024 to support LCC housing strategy initiatives. There is \$50,000 remaining to support fee-for-service contracts through the Economic Development Service in 2025.

Table 1: Salt Spring Island 2025 Economic Development Service Summary

2025 Economic Development Service	2024 Carried Forward	2025 Budget	Total 2025 Project Cost	Committed Funds *	Remaining
SSI (\$)	51,652	50,000	101,652	51,652	50,000

** Committed Funds to the LCC Housing Strategy Initiatives*

The LCC funded four fee-for-service contracts through the EDS in 2024 totaling \$62,830:

Table 2: Salt Spring Island 2024 Economic Development Service Spent for 2024

2024 Economic Development Service		
Contract	Description	Amount (\$)
SSI Chamber of Commerce	Visitor Information Centre 2024 Operating Season	10,000
SSI Farmland Trust Society	Farmland Trust Grow Local Food Aggregation	20,000
Southern Gulf Islands Tourism	DMMO Annual Funding	10,000
SIGI Community Resources	Housing NOW Home Share Registry	22,830
Total Spent 2024		\$62,830

The LCC has approved three fee-for-service contracts through the EDS in 2025 totaling \$16,500:

Table 3: Salt Spring Island Economic Development Service Approved for 2025

2025 Economic Development Service		
Contract	Description	Amount (\$)
SSI Farmland Trust Society	Neighborhood Farmer Training Program	7,000
SSI Farmland Trust Society	Abattoir Skills Training	5,000
Tuesday Market Society	Tuesday Farmers Market Advertising and Promotion	4,500
Total Spent 2025		\$16,500

Two additional requests for funding are pending bringing the 2025 total to \$50,224

Table 4: Salt Spring Island Economic Development Service Pending for 2025

2025 Economic Development Service		
Contract	Description	Amount (\$)
SIG Community Resources	Housing NOW Home Share Registry	23,724
Southern Gulf Islands Tourism	DMMO Annual Funding	10,000
Total Pending 2025		\$33,724

Should the LCC want to support the full amount, or a portion of the Chambers funding request additional funding would need to be allocated from the operating reserve, pending requests would need to be denied or reduced or funding to the Housing Needs Strategy would need to be reduced.

Table 5: Post Approval and Pending Funds Remaining

2024 GIA Overall Summary	Core GIA			
	2025 Budget	Spent	Pending	Insufficient Funds
SSI (\$)	50,000	16,500	33,724	224

Economic Development Operating Reserve Balance = \$10,224

CONCLUSION

The Chamber of Commerce is requesting funding in 2025 to support the SSI Visitor Centre and to assess the feasibility of Business Licensing and a BIA on Salt Spring Island. The visitor centre has received funding in previous years and will no longer be eligible for future funding should the LCC approve the request.

Funding to assess the feasibility of business licenses and a BIA has not been included in the 2025 budget and would require the LCC to allocate additional funding, deny other funding requests or reduce the amount of funding approved for current projects.

RECOMMENDATION

The Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission approve a \$10,000 contract with the Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce to support the Salt Spring Island Visitor Centre provided \$10,000 in new grant funding is approved to support the Housing Strategy Initiatives.

Submitted by:	Dan Ovington, BBA, Senior Manager, Salt Spring Island Electoral Area
Concurrence:	Stephen Henderson, BSc, MBA, Senior Manager of Real Estate, Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Local Community Commission

ATTACHMENT(S)

Appendix A: SSI Chamber Funding Request - Dated March 1, 2025