



Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan 2020

**Case Study
Report**



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Land Acknowledgement

This public engagement took place on the traditional and unceded territory of the Cowichan, BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), Halalt, MÁLEXEL (Malahat), Penelakut, SʔÁUTW (Tsawout), Stz'uminus (Chemainus), WJOLELP (Tsartlip), WSIKEM (Tseycum) peoples. We acknowledge and respect the living historical relationship of Indigenous First Peoples to the land, culture, and spirit of this place that continues to this day.

1: Executive Summary



Salt Spring Island, British Columbia was the first community to take part in a pilot project intended to combine the Ethelo decision making platform with micro-targeted public engagement outreach strategies.

Salt Spring has demonstrated leadership in the midst of the global pandemic illustrating that it is still very much possible to engage citizens in meaningful ways even while social distancing. In fact decision makers have expressed that the innovative approach outlined in this report has had various advantages over traditional engagement strategies.

“ At first we postponed our public engagement for the Climate Action Plan as the pandemic unfolded but we stayed in touch with community members and many encouraged us to proceed; I’m glad we did.

GARY HOLMAN,
CRD LOCALLY ELECTED OFFICIAL

FAIRNESS AND ACCURACY

Efforts made to ensure stakeholders and marginalized groups were included are important not only for the fairness of the engagement process but these efforts are in fact critical to ensuring the accuracy of community preferences.

ACTIONABLE RESULTS

Identifying the least polarizing options as well as key points of friction within sub communities can be very helpful for decision makers so that they can prioritize the right mixture of “carrots and sticks” and do so with a sense of what has the social license to proceed. See the recommendations section below for more details.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Providing community members with an opportunity to see the full breadth of options and some clarity about the trade offs and difficulty levels of climate solutions policies can be very helpful for community members to make informed decisions.

“ It’s challenging to engage a representative slice of our island community using traditional public meetings. Generally, the same small group of people attends all the public engagement sessions. It was great to see that a broad cross-section of community members took part in the process and, as a result, this process will be able to help us identify specific policies that can be more widely agreed upon by the community.

LAURA PATRICK, ISLAND TRUST ELECTED OFFICIAL

Across the country, in fact around the world, concerned governments and citizen groups have been, for many years, creating climate action plans. Many jurisdictions have gone so far as to declare climate emergencies yet insufficient progress has been made reducing emissions in most places. Climate change and climate solution policies are some of the most polarizing topics for many communities. The intention of this pilot project on the Ethelo platform has been to find ways to engage a broad cross section of community members in an engagement process that helps to identify common ground and chart a path forward.

One of the first steps is reaching people and helping them to understand what the climate emergency is and how it connects to their lives. Jo (sephine) Citizen is often blissfully unaware of the climate emergency plans in their community or if they are aware, they can be nervous that their opinions might put them in conflict with friends and family.

The divisive lines that are often drawn around this issue can be de-weaponized by identifying the friction points within the community and moving forward first on the least polarizing pieces of the climate puzzle rather than the ones that divide us. By getting specific about climate solutions/policies it's possible to find options that are supported even by those who are the least concerned about climate change.

This Ethelo platform can help participants contrast and compare options and consider the trade-offs and opportunities. In the end, it will help to uncover the least polarizing, most broadly supported strategies within the community overall.

2: Finding a Path Forward in a Polarized World



3: Background



Salt Spring Island is a community of roughly 11,000 people and part of the Capital Regional District, which encompasses the southern tip of Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands of British Columbia. In 2011, Salt Spring created their first Climate Action Plan (CAP). In 2019, after the Capital Regional District (CRD) and the Islands Trust, alongside 1300 other jurisdictions, declared a climate emergency, they realized that an updated plan was necessary if the island was going to reach their 2030 targets.

A ‘Steering Committee’ of citizen volunteers along with expert advisors and elected officials began working with the non-profit ‘Transition Salt Spring’ to identify both mitigation and adaptation strategies. A public engagement strategy for the new CAP was developed with the steering committee and the non-profits eDemocracy Solutions and Elephant in the Room Communications.

“ The online public engagement was very effective. The eDemocracy team made the set up and execution of the process easy and efficient. We learned a lot about the priorities of our particular community, and gained further understanding of our citizenry through the 233 pages of comments the survey garnered. There would be great value in running a similar exercise within a year to assess the effectiveness of our planned outreach and education programs.

DARRYL J MARTIN, CHAIR, CLIMATE ACTION PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

4.1: GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS

Following the United Nations recommendations, the CAP steering committee settled on a goal of reducing Salt Spring Island's greenhouse gas emissions by 50% from 2020 levels by 2030. The target is focused on local emissions as opposed to "life cycle" emissions although information about interconnected issues and broader implications were also considered. An additional goal of the engagement was to produce a plan that would be actionable, which meant that community members would have to prioritize which options they preferred and limit their options within a maximum difficulty level.

4.2: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GOALS

It was important that the engagement reflect the views of not just the "usual suspects" but of all the people of Salt Spring Island.

“ Too often, the same voices are heard and the same message is received; often, the loudest voices in the room. By missing all the other opinions and ideas; all of the voices of the under represented and the unengaged; we become ever more polarized in the 'us versus them' debates. It needed to be fair and for everyone to have an opportunity to be heard.

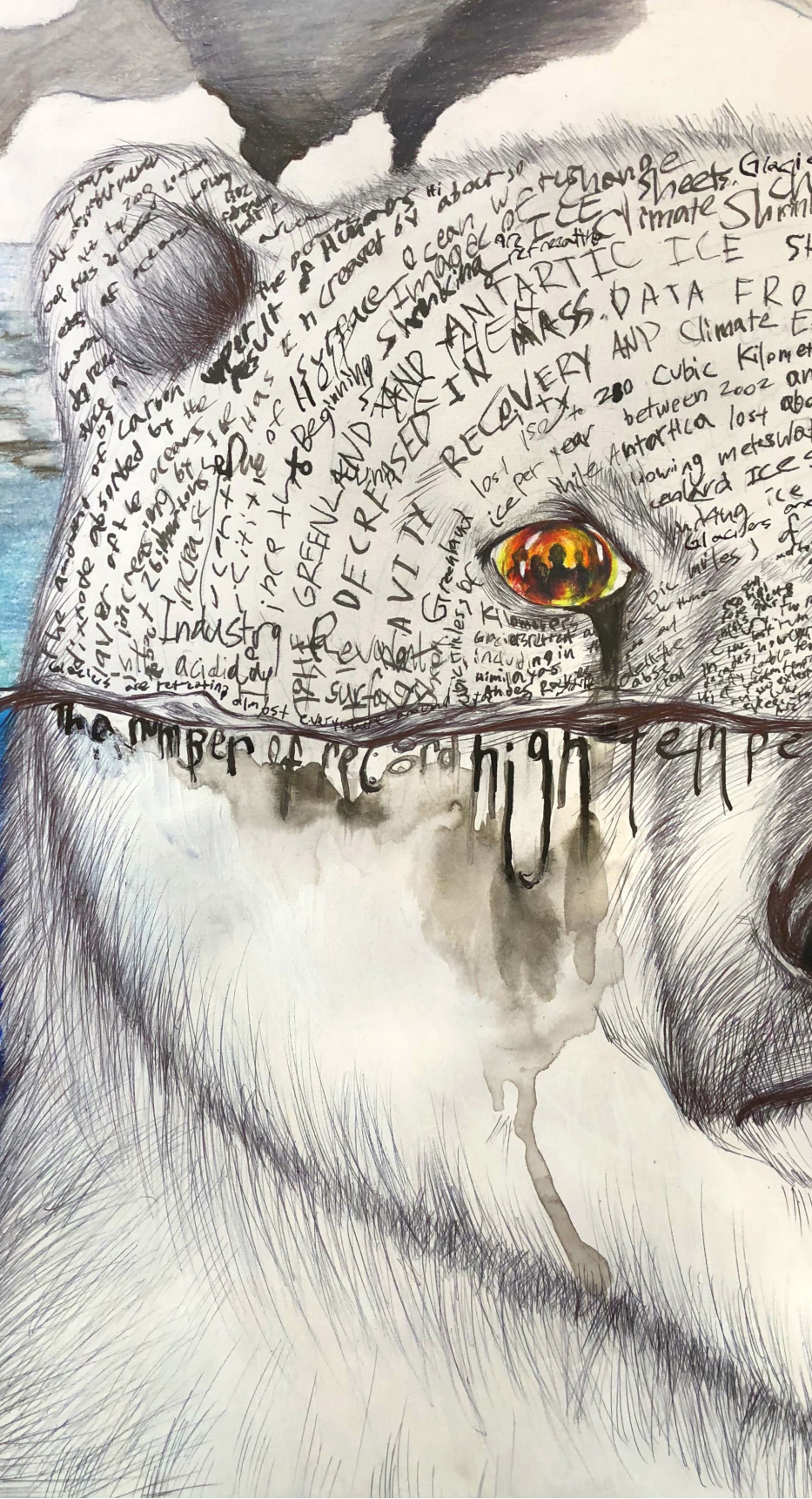
TARAH STAFFORD, ENGAGEMENT PROJECT LEAD,
ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM COMMUNICATIONS
& SALT SPRING ISLAND RESIDENT

The engagement sought to reach a representative sample of the population with a goal of 500 - 1000 participants or roughly 5-10% of the island's total population. The most important factor for Salt Spring was making sure that community members were involved in determining how the Island would reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

4: Goal Setting



5: Preparations



5.1: GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS INVENTORY AND POLICY PRIORITIES

The CAP steering committee updated the GHG inventory for the five key sectors with opportunities for greenhouse gas reductions on the island: Transportation, Housing and Infrastructure (including waste reduction), Food and Agriculture, Land Use and Forests.

“ GHG data has long been a challenge at the small community level.

PETER LAMB, SALT SPRING STEERING COMMITTEE ADVISOR

Sub committees were struck to work on each section. Salt Spring Island benefitted from the expertise of a number of highly qualified volunteers and advisors who populated the CAP steering committee and whose work helped inform the inventory and policy options that were incorporated into the engagement platform.

In addition to estimating how much a particular action might reduce greenhouse gas emissions, these options were also rated according to difficulty in terms of cost, convenience, and capacity. To cut emissions by 50% by 2030 the plan would have to be realistic, ie: easy enough to do that it could get done without sacrificing anything in the way of GHG reductions (a 50% reduction was estimated at approximately 35,000 metric tons).

Local knowledge was especially important in rating the difficulty of options. For example initially expanding cycling infrastructure was rated as one of the easier objectives to achieve, but through further discussion with local cycling advocates, it was revealed that there had been serious challenges in past efforts to expand cycling infrastructure. It was not simply a matter of spending money and time on cycling infrastructure, as narrow roads and private land that encroached on roads meant that there were limited opportunities to add new cycling paths. Consequently, the difficulty rating for the cycling infrastructure option was increased.

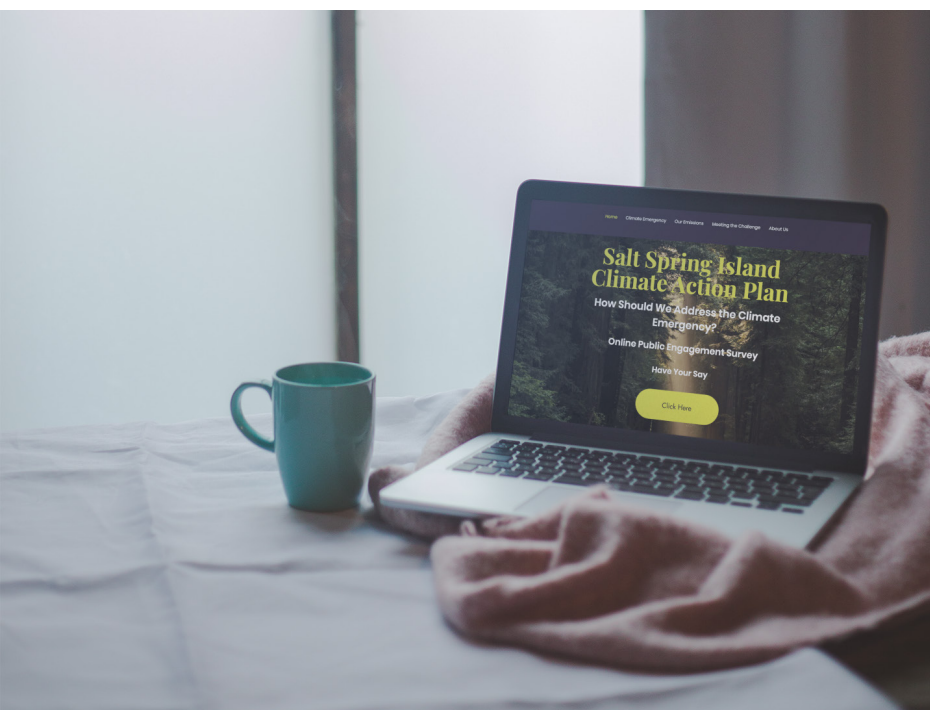
5.2: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Pre-pandemic, organizing efforts involved posterizing, creation of a website and the CAP engagement committee hosting a brunch that attracted several hundred community members who signed up to get more involved and to help ‘spread the word’ to their friends and neighbours as the climate action plan progressed. The event featured a climate trivia game, food, prizes and art projects for younger participants. An early email list emerged from the event as well a number of new volunteers and a better understanding of the island demographics.

Identifying different demographic groups on the island was the first step in being able to reach out beyond the choir. Connecting with those groups, learning where their more obvious concerns and interests intersected with the climate plan and inviting them to participate in various ways allowed for a unique and authentic process to be created; a process that felt local, because it was local. Peer to peer. Neighbour to neighbour.

“ In an age of algorithms being weaponized by tech platforms such as Facebook, this is an example of how technology can be used instead to help people find common ground. It almost seems impossible these days but actually it’s not, and given the urgency of the climate emergency, it’s more important than ever”.

BEN WEST, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
EDEMOCRACY SOLUTIONS



Two main types of content were produced to reach more people within the identified groups on the island: fact based “explainers” and shareable quote memes from community stakeholders and opinion leaders. The look and feel of all these targeted social media ads were made to match a series of posters, emails, web content, postcards and local newspaper ads as well as the content on the engagement platform itself.



Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan
June 8 · 🌐

Did You Know:

Last year we sent 3,800 tonnes of garbage to Hartland landfill. About 1/4 of that could have been composted instead of decomposing and emitting methane, which is roughly 34 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

All that discarded organic material could be composted and become fertile soil. The organic matter is invaluable as there is no other way to replace topsoil and many other agricultural amendments. Topsoil levels around the world are dangerously low du... [See More](#)

[Click Here](#)

Have Your Say on
Waste Reduction Policy

Salt Spring
Climate Action Plan

SALTSRINGCLIMATE.ETHELO.NET
Climate Action Plan

The explainer or “Did You Know?” posts presented compelling facts about climate change as it related to Salt Spring Island. These pieces were snippets of content directly from the Climate Action Plan engagement platform. This content is intended to “meet them where they are at” by focusing on specific elements of day to day life on the island.

Did You Know:

Although cycling, and creating the infrastructure for it, doesn't seem like it is a huge GHG emissions killer it can replace a significant amount of trips taken by car overall if people feel safe and comfortable. It also has co-benefits that lead to better health and often, a better sense of well-being.

On Salt Spring, our personal vehicles, work vehicles and the deliveries that we receive from off-island are responsible for close to 30,000 tonnes

Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan
June 5 · 🌐

Did You Know:

Salt Spring Island (as part of the CRD and the Islands Trust) has declared a climate emergency.

We are joining over 1300 other communities around the world who have declared climate emergencies. ... [See More](#)

[Click Here](#)

Have Your Say on
Cycling Policies

Salt Spring
Climate Action Plan

SALTSRINGCLIMATE.ETHELO.NET
Climate Action Plan

[click here](#)

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

SALT SPRING ISLAND
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2.0

SALTSRINGCLIMATE.ETHELO.NET
Climate Action Plan

Amplifying the voices of community leaders is an effective way to reach stakeholders that might not otherwise have participated. Steering committee members coordinated with local thought leaders to develop quotes based on the question “what do you think we should prioritize and why is it important to participate”. This text was turned into online and offline content for multiple formats.

All of the advertisements were written in a personal voice, featured images of local people, plants and locations, and highlighted some of the local risks like forest fires as well as win win opportunities where doing the right thing for climate change would also improve the quality of life on Salt Spring Island.

"...But that's not all: With careful management, farms and gardens can increase the amount of carbon held in the soil and reduce the amount of fossil fuels used to produce and transport our food. Using locally recycled waste, eliminating packaging, providing a livelihood for growers and recreation for gardeners, all while putting delicious, fresh and healthy food on our tables--growing our own food is a win-win strategy for addressing climate change.

For a chance to be heard ... [See more](#)

SALT SPRING CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

"GROWING FOOD LOCALLY MAKES OUR COMMUNITY FOOD SUPPLY MORE SECURE FROM THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE (AND PANDEMICS)!"

LINDA SILBERSON, PhD
AUTHOR & MASTER GARDENER

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPEN NOW!

Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan
June 27 at 4:57 PM · 🌐

"... Learning about climate action can be abstract and complicated and as parents making the time for change can be difficult and overwhelming. But taking the Salt Spring Climate Action Survey with the kids helped us identify what small grassroots steps we could take as a family and as a community to work towards reducing emissions. We have a big challenge ahead of us, but also a huge opportunity. What we do now can make the crucial difference for future generations." – Nata... [See More](#)

SALT SPRING CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

"IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO ME AS A PARENT THAT WE BRING OUR CHILDREN INTO THE CONVERSATION REGARDING CLIMATE ACTION."

NATASHA KONG

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPEN NOW!

SALTSPRINGCLIMATE.ETHELO.NET

Have You & Your Family Participated Yet? [Learn More](#)

Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan
June 29 at 9:23 AM · 🌐

"Healthy humans rely on resilient ecosystems and infrastructure. Our current reality and climate predictions over the next ten years require Salt Spring islanders to problem-solve using innovation and creativity. This isn't just a survey, it's an information-packed document that will educate and collect vital information on how we can respond innovatively, driven by our thriving community! I sincerely hope you take the time to "Have Your Say!"

Public Engagement Now Open.
Have ... [See More](#)

SALT SPRING CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

"HEALTHY HUMANS RELY ON RESILIENT ECOSYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE. OUR CURRENT REALITY AND CLIMATE PREDICTIONS REQUIRE US TO PROBLEM-SOLVE USING INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY."

SERAPHINA CAPRANOS
HERBALIST & HOMEOPATH

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPEN NOW!

Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan
June 29 at 3:10 PM · 🌐

Have Your Say! 🙌 [SaltSpringClimateActionPlan.com](#)
Please help spread the word and share this post.

SALT SPRING CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ENDS TOMORROW!

"I believe all Salt Springers who already own an EV or are interested in EV's should participate in the Climate Action Plan process." – Jim Standen

Public Engagement Now Open.
Have Your Say! 🙌 [SaltSpringClimateActionPlan.com](#)

SALT SPRING CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

"DRIVING AN ELECTRIC CAR IS THE EASIEST WAY FOR SOMEONE WHO DRIVES TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THEIR OVERALL ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT."

JIM STANDEN
TEAM LEAD, TRANSITION SALT SPRING EV GROUP

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPEN NOW!

SALTSPRINGCLIMATE.ETHELO.NET

Jim Standen – Electric Vehicles – Have your Say! [Learn More](#)

6: The Platform



Community members reached the Climate Budget platform, located at saltspringclimate.ethelo.net through an outreach combining digital ads, direct email, a postal drop, posters and local advertising in both online and traditional community newspapers. While submissions are closed at that link, readers can visit an interactive copy at carbonbudgetdemo.ethelo.net.

The platform consisted of a combination of text, images, survey questions and voting tools distributed across 19 pages. The average time to complete was 22 minutes.

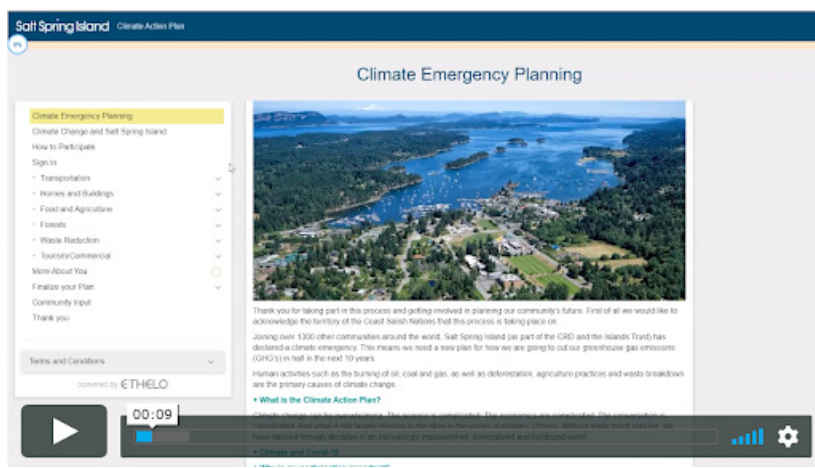
GOAL OF PARTICIPANTS

The Welcome page explained that the purpose of each person's participation was to "create a personalized Salt Spring Island Plan to reduce our Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) by at least 50% over the next 10 years—without exceeding a maximum level of difficulty."

The key question for each participant was: what do you think we can and should prioritize in the next 10 years to reach our goals?

[try the carbon budget platform](#)

A short video explaining the process was provided to participants.



PRIVACY AND ANONYMITY

People were asked to register with their name and email before proceeding, so that they had the ability to return to complete or edit their answers. They were assured that all personal information would be held anonymous, and their information would only be seen in combination with other participants.

CLIMATE EDUCATION

In order to have the best possible results, it was critical that community members be on as much of an equal footing as was possible in a small space with respect to background information around climate change and its impacts on Salt Spring. More than 6,000 words of educational material was presented in a conversational tone over the platform pages, through accessible snippets such as drop down windows along with images. That information was organized into an introduction and six major sections:

- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Homes and Buildings
- ▶ Food and Agriculture
- ▶ Forests
- ▶ Waste Reduction
- ▶ Tourism/Commercial

FEEDBACK: PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Each of the six sections was presented over two pages; the first dedicated to personal action relevant to the section, and the second to collective action.

For example, in the Transportation and You section, the personal action page presented information and questions focused on opportunities for individual contributions to GHG reduction around transportation, such as how they preferred to travel, and whether they would consider converting to an electric vehicle or taking the bus.

The second, collective action page for each section was dedicated to developing a strategy for reducing GHGs for the community as a whole. For example, on the Transportation - Community Plan page, each participant could use slider tools to determine how much GHG emissions should be reduced in 6 main potential areas, each presented in its own panel;

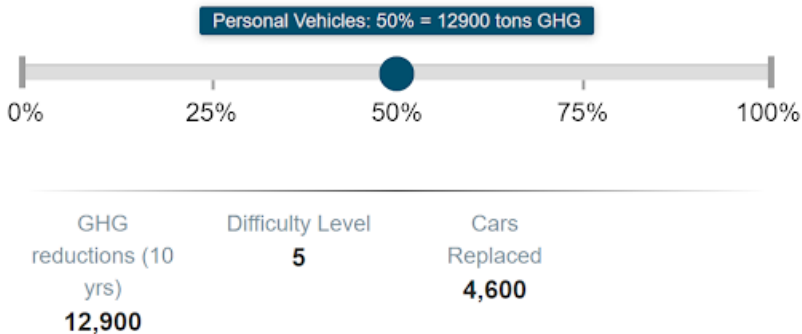
PERSONAL VEHICLES

- ▶ Bus routes
- ▶ Electric Buses
- ▶ Electric School Buses
- ▶ Biking Infrastructure
- ▶ Electric Ferries

For example, in the Personal Vehicles panel participants could move sliders to learn the impacts of 5 different degrees of GHG reduction, from 0% to 100%. Each of those

degrees corresponded to a total GHG impact, as well as a number of gas vehicles replaced and a difficulty level.

How many gas vehicles do you think we can and should replace with electric vehicles in the next 10 years?



A key element of this process was establishing a correlation between degrees of GHG reduction in a given area, and the difficulty of that reduction. Participants learned that it was much easier to reduce GHGs in some areas than others. An explanation of how difficulty was assessed was provided for each of the 13 panels spread over the six sections.

+ How Difficult is This?

With quick charging times, lower prices and an ever-expanding network of charging stations, significant incentives and great performance, EV's are starting to fly off the shelf: up 63% in 2019 from 2018.

Based on this information we have estimated that this option has a difficulty score ranging from 4 to 10 out of 10.

BUILDING A PERSONAL CLIMATE PLAN

As community members voted on different degrees of GHG reduction in each of the panels, the platform displayed a running total of the GHGs their personal plan would reduce over a 10 year period - and the total difficulty.

The platform took a gamification approach. Each participant had to develop a plan that would eliminate at least 35,000 tons of GHG within 10 years (the local objective) while staying within a difficulty limit of 5. This constraint was created to model the cost/impact tradeoffs that must be made for a good climate plan. The balance bars gave them real-time feedback to show how far over - or under - they were on each objective.

ABOUT YOU

At the end of the 6 sections, participants filled out a survey providing demographic information such as "your age". This was key to ensuring we had reached a broad cross section of community members. We also surveyed participants on their personal views on general climate issues, such as how we should pay for GHG reductions, and what impacts of climate change concerned them the most.

FINALIZING THEIR PLAN

Once participants had completed the above, they could Submit their personal climate plan to the group results. However, plans that fell short of the GHG target, or were too difficult, could not be submitted.

Participants with incomplete plans had two choices; they could go back and adjust their slider votes to hit the GHG or difficult target, or they could use the "Help" function. The Help function invoked the Ethelo algorithm to make micro-adjustments to their plan to make sure it hit the GHG reduction target while staying below the difficulty threshold. The Help function made the smallest adjustments necessary to stay as close as possible to each participant's preferences.

Once they had submitted their climate plan successfully, participants could see the Community Consensus.

COMMUNITY CONSENSUS

The key advantage of the Ethelo platform for this process was its ability to combine the submissions of all the participants and identify a climate action plan with the broadest possible support.

Climate planning, with so many interdependent variables, is highly complex. Combining 13 areas of potential GHG reduction, each with 5 different levels of implementation, leads to millions of potential climate plans - even after setting a GHG target and difficulty threshold. Analyzing the feedback of more than 850 participants to identify which of those climate plans would be best was beyond the power of any spreadsheet. Ethelo provided an easy way to sort through all the feedback, in real time.

HOW ETHELO HELPS TO MAKE A FAIR PLAN

Aside from achieving the goals of the plan, it's important to have a plan with widespread support. Just being the most popular option doesn't mean it's not polarizing. For example the two pictures below represent levels of support and opposition for two potential plans:



The plan on the bottom is a better plan than the one on the top. Why? Because the people on the bottom are roughly equally happy. The plan on the top is divisive, with winners and losers. Ethelo's patented algorithm analyzes all of the community input and helps identify the set of options that is most broadly supported.

The fundamental idea behind Ethelo is using technology to help find solutions to difficult problems. At a time when algorithms are being “weaponized” for profit and power Ethelo has built an algorithm intended to find peace.

Participants who submitted their personal climate plan were able to see the most broadly supported climate action plan that distributed GHG reduction targets across the 13 different areas. This “Community Consensus” shifted and evolved over the life of the project as more people participated. The final result is described below in Results.

“

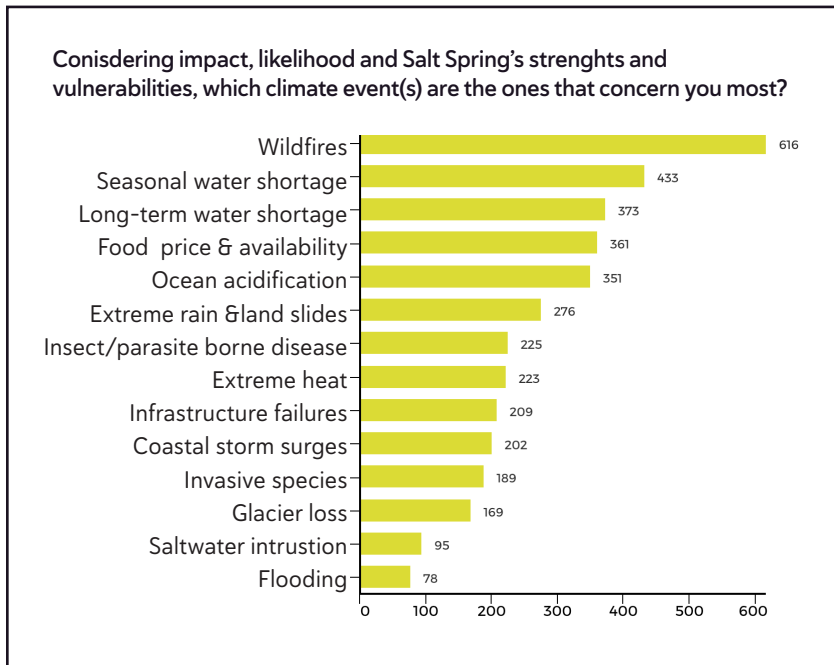
This is a fantastic project, to survey island residents and be able to see what we would all support, and then use this information to support environmental change. Kudos to all who have worked so diligently to create this survey. It is a wonderful step towards making our island a part of the global change that is absolutely essential for human beings and all our relations.

SURVEY PARTICIPANT

6.2: MONITORING

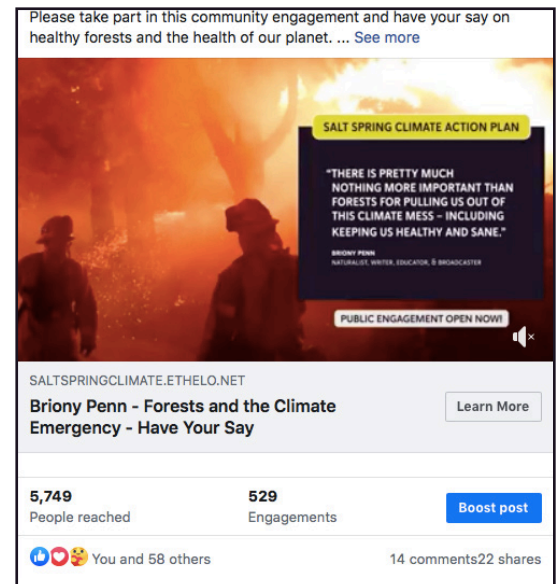
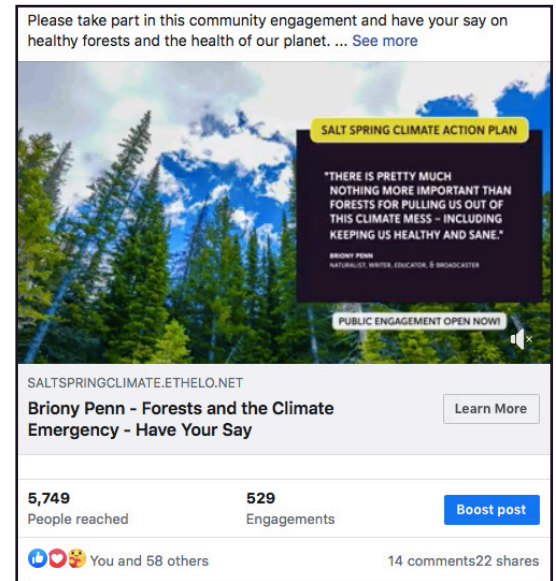
The eDemocracy and steering committee members conducted constant monitoring of the engagement and provided ongoing technical support. Monitoring included answering questions on social media, moderating discussions, providing both technical and logistical assistance and conducting additional outreach to any underrepresented groups. As the process progressed, decisions were made about how best to allocate resources to reach under represented groups.

Additionally, careful monitoring of aspects of the survey allowed for adjustments in the engagement strategy as it progressed. For example, a question that asked participants to identify their largest concerns around climate change, quickly thrust one specific community concern that cut across demographic lines to the forefront.



Early and consistent results from this survey showed that 'Wildfires' far and away were the largest concern for the community members that had participated to that point. As the concern cut across demographics of gender, age etc. It seemed likely that this same concern would be prevalent in the rest of the community. And it was. A quote meme was created with a community influencer

around forests and forest fires. This meme, far and away became the most viewed of the ads and also netted the most conversions.



7: Results

The end of this process is also the beginning of the next phase of engagement as well as implementation. The steering committee members are analysing the results, incorporating the key takeaways into their action plan and once the CAP is complete they will start moving the specific policy initiatives and community concerns from words to actions.

Follow ups will include specific, targeted engagement to delve deeper into the specific priorities that have been highlighted. And, while this engagement has been very local in its nature, other communities have been watching and are watching for lessons learned to be incorporated into their own engagements.

What follows is a summary of the results and next steps.

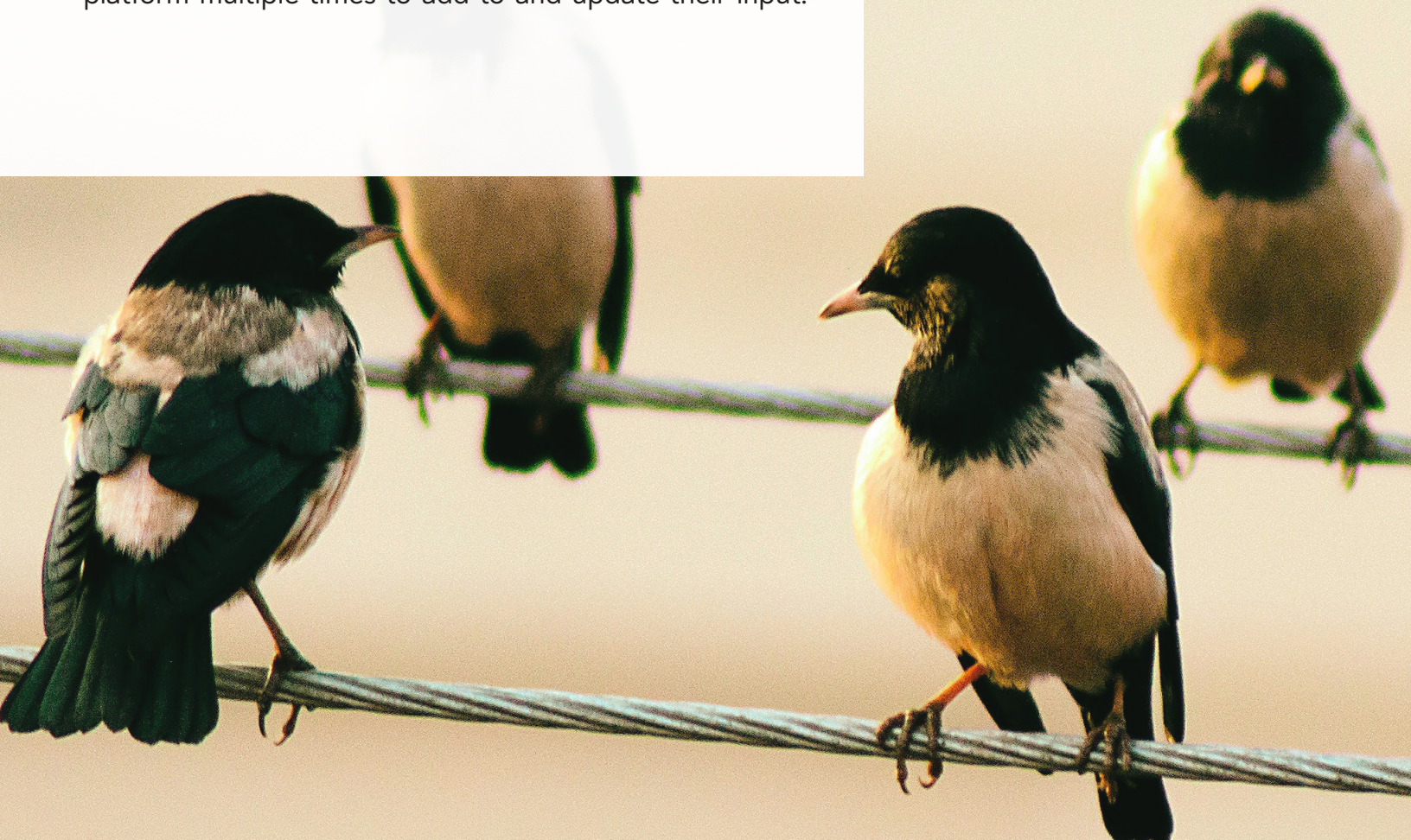


7.1: PARTICIPATION

The CAP steering committee achieved its goal of including between 5 and 10% of the population of Salt Spring Island. 936 members (14%) of the eligible community (those over 16) took part in the engagement, spending roughly 22 minutes (on average) reaching their decisions. Additionally, another 2261 people (32%) spent at least four minutes reading through content without logging in. Overall, Ethelo recorded roughly 8000 unique visits and over 13000 people engaged with their content online over the course of a month.

User type	Visitors	Visits	Page visits	Avg visit length (mins)
Guest participant (anonymous account)	2,261	2,956	11,712	4
Participant (authenticated account)	936	1,563	24,472	22

Users reported that it took them between 10 minutes and over an hour to complete the process. Many visited the platform multiple times to add to and update their input.



“As a scientist, understanding the concerns, misconceptions and sometimes idiosyncratic ideas of community members helps me to more clearly frame research questions and evaluate how the data should be disseminated. The public feedback from our islanders clearly shows that forests are recognized in very different ways. Some that, from an ecological standpoint, are helpful and others, that are not. What was evident, was the need to clarify what is often a very murky topic; making crystal clear through further education and outreach, what good forest stewardship and management would look like in order to sustain nature and livelihoods, protect our water, reduce fire risk and continue to sequester and store as much carbon as possible.

RUTH WALDICK, PH.D.

There were also over **5000 comments** recorded.

Alongside the participants in the process, the Climate Action Plan committee and elected officials, there was another group of people that found the process results to be informative, insightful and meaningful for their work: scientists and other ‘on the ground’ practitioners.

The comments related to forests (over 1000) are analogous to all the other components that make up the community’s GHG inventory. They are extremely illustrative of how much outreach and education is needed to inform the community of best practices, costs, strategies and factual information about GHG reduction as well as how many awesome ideas there are out there that might not otherwise have been heard.

“I have thought of ideas like: No subdivision within 20 years of clear-cut. Incentivizing eco-forestry. Exchanging increased density in a home plate model for conservation covenant on large tracts of land to incentivize affordable housing rather than logging and single large homes.”

“Incentives need to be worth at least the same as clearing it and getting an agricultural tax benefit. At the moment, conservation covenants do not equal agricultural tax incentives - therefore there is an incentive to clear the forest and run a few sheep.”

“Perhaps we could have tax breaks similar to farmers for stewarding forests. There could be a system similar to the ‘environmental farm plan’ which would include a workbook with best practices that is used to create a forest plan. Then these properties would be eligible for forest tax break incentives.”

“The forest should be considered part of the common good. There should be a compelling reason for removing and also a stiff tax disincentive.”

“It’s the most important policy area we need to explore. The DPA will fail. We need to be able to aggregate the carbon value and sell that into the Western Climate Initiative. The revenue goes back to landowners and loggers who are incented not to log fairly.”

*There were 1188 comments about Forests. This is a small representative sample.

7.2: ALGORITHM RESULTS

The Ethelo platform took all of the input from participants and found a bundle of GHG reduction targets across the 13 areas that met the overall 50% reduction target while maximizing support and minimizing polarization. In other words, the algorithm found a democratic consensus that distributed satisfaction fairly. By taking this approach, Ethelo Decisions finds solutions that treat people fairly, ensuring that everyone's preferences are reflected in group decisions.

“This process has helped many community members understand the scale of change required and the trade-offs involved as well as provide their own unique ideas to the plan. It has been an invaluable contribution to our ability to make change a reality in our community”

GARY HOLMAN, CRD LOCALLY ELECTED OFFICIAL

POLICY OPTION	LEVEL OF SUPPORT	LEVEL OF REDUCTION SUPPORTED	GHGS REDUCED
Electrifying Personal Vehicles	75%	50%	12,900 tonnes
Halting Forest Clearing	73%	75%	12,000 tonnes
Electrifying Ferries	71%	50%	8,850 tonnes
Reducing Freight Emissions	75%	50%	1,350 tonnes
Retrofitting Electric-Heated Homes	75%	50%	1,500 tonnes
Reducing Tourism Vehicle Emissions	74%	50%	1,050 tonnes
Retrofitting Oil/Propane Homes	70%	75%	975 tonnes
Retrofitting Wood Stove Homes	74%	50%	761 tonnes
Increasing Composting	74%	75%	491 tonnes
Increasing Cycling Infrastructure	65%	75%	360 tonnes
Increasing Bus Routes	73%	50%	255 tonnes
Electrifying School Buses	66%	100%	90 tonnes
Electrifying Public Buses	68%	100%	70 tonnes
			40,688 tonnes

7.3: RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on community members' votes, Ethelo was able to identify an ambitious Climate Action Plan that meets the community's 50% reduction target and is widely supported by a broad cross section of community members. This plan would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40,688 metric tons per year by 2030 – much more than the minimum of 35,000 metric tons. This plan is considered difficult but achievable overall.

Community Consensus

Here you will find the most broadly supported strategy amongst community members who have participated. The following pages summarize the five policy options with the largest potential for greenhouse gas reduction. All of this feedback will be incorporated into the SSI Climate Action Plan 2.0.

Level of Support

The level of support is the number of people that would support the details of this plan. The distribution of support shows how happy people are with the plan overall. People on the right-hand side are happy, people on the left are unhappy.

40,688 tonnes
of greenhouse gas reduction

difficulty score of 4.71
out of 10. This plan is considered difficult, but achievable overall.

856

**community members
voted in the public
engagement process.**

THIS PLAN HAS

**82%
SUPPORT.**



OPPOSE

SUPPORT

2,200

community members
answered some (but not all) of the
engagement questions.



Electrifying our vehicles.

This was the most supported and least polarized option.

THE RESULTS:

On Salt Spring, our personal vehicles, work vehicles and off-island deliveries are responsible for close to 30,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases every year. That's more than 1/3 of all of our local emissions.

Right now there are approximately 9200 personal vehicles and 300-400 commercial vehicles on Salt Spring: only about 300 of the vehicles are electric. That's just under 3%.

Soon, the cost of an electric vehicle (EV) will be on par with a gas one, vehicle range and style choices are ever-expanding and savings in gas and service each year are generally around \$2000 - \$2500. With government incentives, EV vehicle sales are increasing and are much more affordable. Not only that, but we finally have enough used EV vehicle stock to make buying them realistic for more people.

Community members were asked:

How many gas vehicles do you think we can and should replace with electric vehicles in the next 10 years?

50%

of vehicles to be replaced in the next 10 years.

12,900

tonnes of greenhouse gas reduced as a result.

75%

of participants supported this plan.



OPPOSE

SUPPORT



Healthy forests.

THE RESULTS:

Between 2009 and 2017, about 86 hectares of forest were clear-cut on Salt Spring (an average of 11 hectares/year), equalling approximately 126,850 tonnes of CO2e. It also means we have 86 hectares less of our forests working as a carbon sink to offset our daily emissions or as water sponges to support our natural aquifers and lakes.

Areas that are left unforested will never store nor sequester carbon at the same capacity again. However, even those that are reforested, will need more than 100 years before they can regain the carbon that was emitted by the initial loss, if ever.

Community members were asked:

What percent of trees should and can we stop from being cleared over the next ten years (if 110 hectares is 100%)?

THE RESULTS:

75%

reduction in forest clear-cutting over the next 10 years.

12,000

tonnes of greenhouse gas reduced as a result.

73%

of participants supported this plan.



OPPOSE

SUPPORT



Electrifying our ferries.

THE RESULTS:

Our ferries add another 17,700 tonnes/year to our transportation-related emissions. Almost all island residents use the ferries at some point either personally, with the goods that they receive or through the businesses that they run and work at. We all contribute to these emissions.

By electrifying ferries on shorter routes, we would cut large amounts of emissions. BC Ferries has ordered new hybrid ferries that can operate on battery power alone for short routes, and say that they may transition to electric “when the technology matures”.

Community members were asked:

What percent of our ferries do you think we can and should replace with electric vessels in the next 10 years?

50%

of our ferries replaced with electric ones over the next 10 years.

8,850

tonnes of greenhouse gas reduced as a result.

71%

of participants supported this plan.



OPPOSE

SUPPORT



Decreasing freight emissions.

THE RESULTS:

Salt Spring relies heavily on imported goods which have a relatively large impact on our contribution to greenhouse gases, especially when it comes to our reliance on freight trucks to get what we need from off island.

Even when we are ‘buying locally’ rather than from Amazon or Wayfair, most of our goods are produced somewhere else. Cutting down in this sector includes buying less in general, trying to eat local food and buy used local items whenever possible, and watching for low-emission delivery opportunities now and in the future. As electric vehicle options for heavy-duty vehicles come on line in the next couple of years they will undoubtedly become popular due to the cost savings.

Community members were asked:

What percent of commercial transport emissions on Salt Spring do you feel could be decreased over the next ten years?

50%

of freight/commercial transport emissions reduced within the next 10 years.

1,350

tonnes of greenhouse gas reduced as a result.

75%

of participants supported this plan.



OPPOSE

SUPPORT

Retrofitting our homes.

Pictured: Heat pump.

THE RESULTS:

We have approximately 4900 private homes on the island, with 80% of those being single family detached homes. Electrically heated homes using heat pumps and other energy efficient equipment emit very few greenhouse gas emissions.

Compared to baseboard heaters, heat pumps can reduce your electricity use for heating by 50% or more. Using solar, solar hot water or geothermal in addition to a heat pump can reduce it down to next to nothing.

Community members were asked:

How many electrically heated homes can or should we retrofit in the next ten years?

50%

of our homes to be retrofitted over the next 10 years.

1,500

tonnes of greenhouse gas reduced as a result.

75%

of participants supported this plan.



OPPOSE

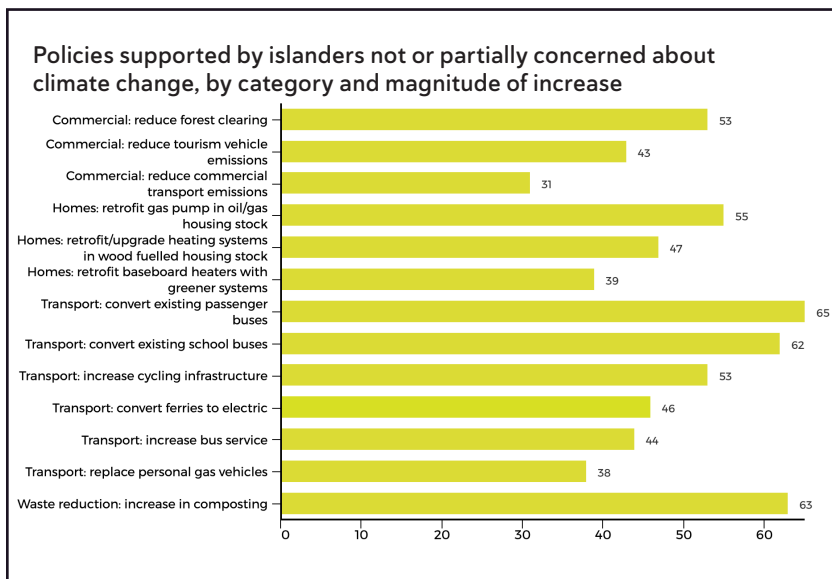
SUPPORT

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The fact that this process was extremely grounded in the ‘local’ was one of the reasons that it was so successful. The story that this engagement revealed was of how this community could deal with their own particular situation when it came to climate change. The options and ideas were not generic. They came about through consultation with locals that know their community. This, above all, made the process satisfying and inviting for Salt Spring Islanders. And while they might not all agree on the solutions, by completing the process and looking at how they are able to balance their ‘carbon budget’ by making tradeoffs and by not expecting to do everything at once, they are now much closer to being able to find a path forward to reduce the island’s GHG emissions.

A report was produced highlighting key takeaways from the engagement process. This document was produced for the steering committee to use to plan further outreach and actionable items as well as to share with participants. This, along with the research of the committee and other targeted stakeholder engagement conversations will form the basis of the Island’s updated Climate Action Plan. The Key Findings Report can be read here.

Our analysis of community members input highlighted some important points to consider in the context of the plan overall. Focusing additional attention on these and other areas detailed in the report was recommended:



► One important group to take into consideration is those that are not concerned about climate change. Finding the climate solutions policies that they support regardless of their views on climate can be an effective way to move forward with policies everyone can be on board with. Interestingly, those that are not concerned or are minimally concerned with climate change still supported:

- a \$20/yr. (the maximum amount considered) increase in taxes to pay for expanded public transit.
- the electrification of transit and school buses as well as shuttle buses for tourists and locals

► Another interesting finding from this group was that they showed an interest in more information about native plants and gardening that was helpful for addressing climate change. One of the community members who provided a quote to use during the engagement is a botanist, researcher and master gardener. Coordinating with her to follow up with these community members appropriately is a good local fit.

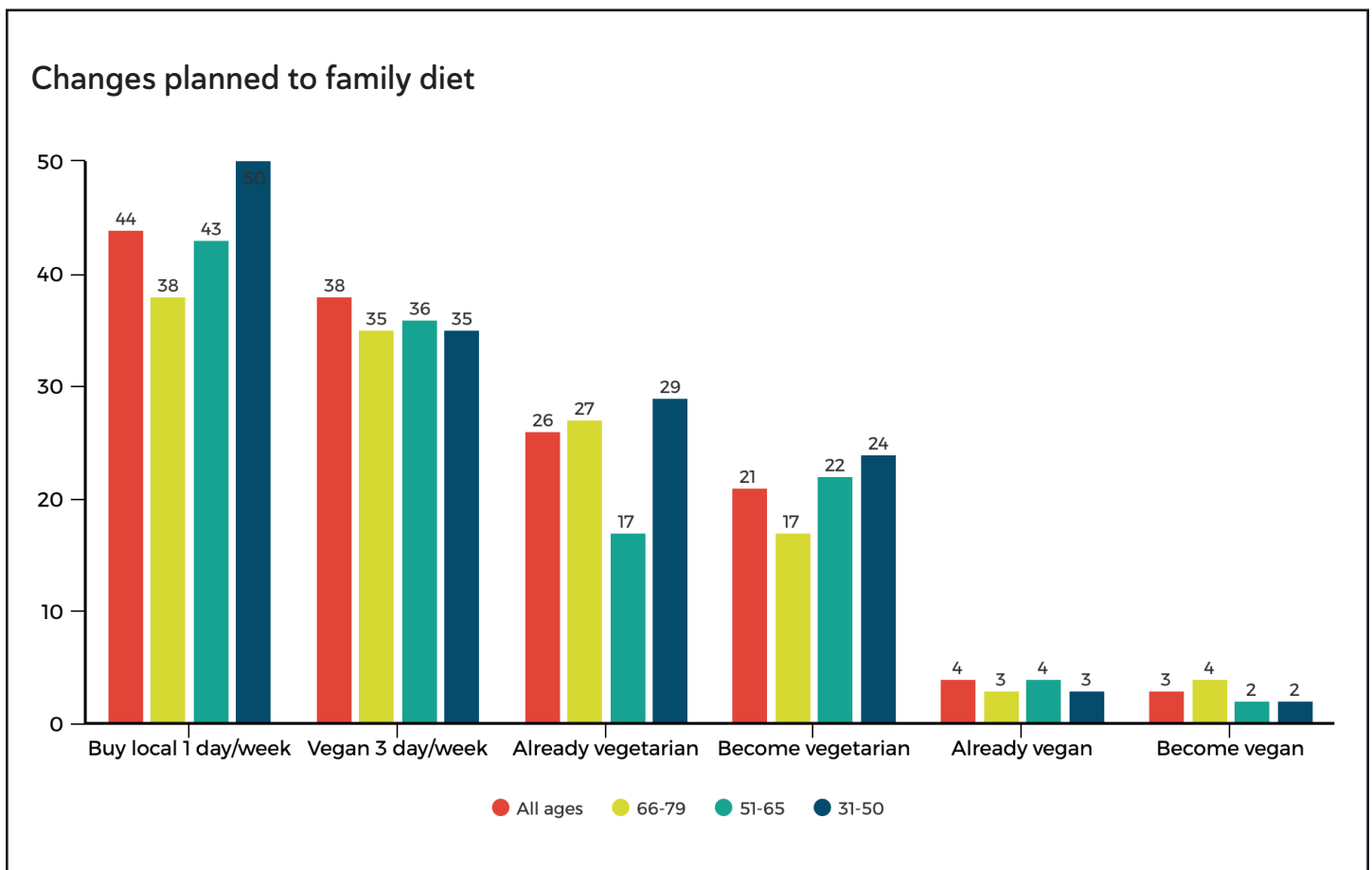
► For those that are considering getting an EV there is a higher level of concern regarding costs. One recommendation would be for the EV club on the island to be encouraged to follow up with this group letting them know all

the details of currently existing incentive programs and other opportunities to affordably switch to an electric car. In many cases community members can actually save money by switching vehicles but they are unaware of current prices and incentives. There appears to be a group of potential EV owners who need up-to-date information to inform their decision.

- ▶ Other opportunities for strategic follow up communications include focusing on providing information for people who answered that they are open to the idea of reducing their meat consumption and eating a more plant based diet. This group showed the highest level of openness to making these kinds of changes to their diet. Helping to make that choice safe, affordable and

accessible could help this group reduce their personal contribution to GHG emissions from factory farming.

*NOTE: All follow ups are done on an opt in basis for any communications sent directly to participants who said they would like to know more about opportunities to get more involved or take further action. Other communications may take place with more generally micro targeted communications based on identifiable sub community groups.



8: Next Steps

This will be the first in a series of ongoing conversations for community members on Salt Spring Island. Policy priorities will be discussed in more detail and updates will take place annually for further input and discussion. Resolving the climate crisis is a massive project and everyone has a role to play. Ethelo Decisions, eDemocracy Solutions and Elephant in the Room Communications are working with communities throughout Canada and elsewhere internationally to help them create plans for addressing climate change at a local level.



Specific next steps for Salt Spring, informed by their public engagement process as well as their stakeholders process, will be to tackle valid ideas, criticisms and barriers that need addressing.

Issues such as:

- ▶ How to support people who need a truck or other non-electric vehicle for their livelihood, when there is no other alternative
- ▶ Well-intentioned renters that are unable to act on climate at home without ownership over their space (growing local food, installing an EV charger, making building envelope or energy efficiency upgrades etc.).
- ▶ Creating a visual narrative to help inform the community of important concepts that relate to both adaptation and mitigation
 - Forests—as they relate to both GHG emissions and fires
 - Water
- ▶ Finding ways to confront and find realistic solutions to the predicament of livelihood vs emissions as it relates to:
 - Private forested property
 - Logging in general
 - Building
 - Tourism
 - Agricultural practices
 - Work specific vehicles
 - Time/knowledge
- ▶ Costs for both private and public options
- ▶ Social justice issues around both mitigation and adaptation
- ▶ Lobbying
- ▶ Ongoing outreach

Even the comments that reveal a lack of knowledge or a disregard for it, point the way for future public information programs. This process was a great first step for involving the community in the Climate Action Plan.

“If people of colour, people with lower incomes and people who know nothing about climate change because no one has ever reached out to them are never in the room where the decisions are being made we are going to continue to have two different worlds and two different realities. I think we need to give people the opportunity to participate in their future, give them ownership over it and give a real voice to the voiceless.

SURVEY PARTICIPANT

There were over 5000 comments on this process. Many were ideas that will be included in the plan. These comments, along with the results of the survey questions and the GHG reduction preferences can be tabulated into demographically significant cross-tabs.

“Many new young farmers would like to live in Community in small dwellings, sharing land to farm together, or more traditional farms need farm worker housing. Both of these scenarios are difficult under current regulations making the viability of local food production and resiliency more difficult to achieve.”

“An improved cycling network to connect the town to neighborhoods and the ferries is both beneficial in terms of emissions reduction and tourism.”

“Being an Island, with a reputation for being unique, we are lucky to be able to call the shots. If you want to experience Salt Spring you have to buy into the ethos. So, only electric cars or public transit. Compost and recycle everything. Make a feature out of it.”

“Give retirees an incentive to take their money out of offshore funds. Community bonds could help build recreation facilities, composting facilities, bike lanes, housing and more, plus the community buy in goes through the roof when locals are actually co-investing in it with their local governments.”

“Many places have a local tax that is added to hotel (b+b) rates, that could be earmarked for things like shuttle busses or incentives for EV charging stations and solar installations.”

“I want to see all climate solutions, whether mitigation or adaptation, assessed through the lens of climate justice and resilience. I do not want to be a climate-savvy community using methods that further exclude diverse demographics or exacerbate income inequality.”

“I have to work for a living and I have to use a truck. I want to buy an electric truck. I wish there was one available.”

“The pandemic has shown us that we are vulnerable, but also we’re seeing the best in people come out too. We need to grab this moment before it is too late. Local government needs to start acting like this is an emergency.”

“There needs to be an educational campaign to teach people about the carbon footprint of foods and help them to choose lower carbon foods while shopping.”

“ This was the first survey that, at my age didn’t treat me as a child –congratulations.

SURVEY PARTICIPANT



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