

10. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WELL-BEING

Community health and well-being is strongly tied to the availability, accessibility and affordability of housing, food, community facilities, as well as programs and access to parks and green spaces. People of all ages, incomes, abilities, and backgrounds need access to basic services and ample opportunities for cultural and social interaction. Another key element of cultural well-being is understanding and acknowledging local history.

Several of the community values articulated for the Uptown – Douglas Corridor (UDC) directly relate to improving the social and cultural well-being of its residents and visitors. These values include having a safe place to live, work and explore, promoting active lifestyles, and building a sense of community for all abilities, ages and stages of life. Recognized internationally as an age-friendly community, the design of communities in Saanich places additional emphasis on urban environments that are accessible and welcoming to all.

Creating accessible public spaces, particularly those that provide services to a range of populations is a crucial element to community well-being. These spaces may host a range of resources, such as daycares, community kitchens, or simple outdoor gathering places. Ensuring a sense of safety along with a sense of social and cultural inclusion in these places is an important aspect of developing community.

The availability of housing that can serve the full spectrum of household needs is an essential component of a complete community. The UDC provides a diversity of housing, including a variety of non-market housing units with support services. Future development will play a critical role in expanding housing supply and diversity and ensuring new units are designed to foster social inclusion and connectivity to the neighbourhood. The Nigel Valley development will bolster the UDC in this regard and include the renewal of valuable housing for low-income residents.

Art and culture play an important role in community well-being by providing opportunities for residents to interact and reflect on the place in which they live. The land has a rich indigenous history through the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations and their connection to the land. More recently, buildings and trees have been identified for their heritage value and they provide important landmarks that help provide identity to the UDC. Art can also help to add a sense of place and identity to a community and can create a shared bond among residents. Saanich is committed to maintaining and growing its collection of public art in the District through its Comprehensive Arts Policy. The anticipated growth and changes to land use provides an opportunity for the UDC to become a central area of culture and art for the District of Saanich.

This Plan puts forth a bold vision to transform space to place. Through the pedestrian-oriented design of new buildings, the addition of parks and social gathering spaces and the emphasis on streets as public places, the area will become a much more active and vital community. This section supplements those fundamental directions and places an emphasis on fostering social inclusion and strengthening the area as a cultural destination through placemaking, supportive housing and the expansion of art and culture.

OBJECTIVES

- A. Encourage and promote active lifestyles through urban design that creates safe and comfortable walking and cycling options.
- B. Create a public realm that makes residents and visitors feel comfortable, safe and welcome.
- C. Facilitate and encourage the development of housing to accommodate residents of a variety of socio-economic statuses and stages of life.
- D. Ensure community facilities and programs are accessible and affordable for people of all ages, incomes, abilities and backgrounds.
- E. Honour and respect local First Nations' heritage and celebrate their unique art, history and culture.
- F. Acknowledge the history of the area and ensure cultural and heritage values are incorporated into planning and decision making.
- G. Promote and support public art and place-making initiatives that facilitate social interaction and create gathering spaces for a diverse population.
- H. Ensure that all residents have adequate and appropriate opportunities for involvement and engagement.
- I. Enhance opportunities for urban agriculture and improved access to local, healthy food.



10.1 SOCIAL WELL-BEING

A healthy community includes opportunities for people to maintain their physical, social and mental health. This includes access to suitable and affordable housing, nutritious food, employment opportunities, and opportunities for social inclusion. Public spaces are vital to social integration. These spaces should be inspiring, shared locations, where people from different backgrounds can see and encounter each other. They must feel safe and welcoming, serving all members of the community, particularly those that are socially or economically marginalized.

The built environment can offer a variety of meeting places that bring residents and visitors together. Destinations such as parks and playgrounds enable social interaction between

neighbours, while simultaneously serving as pleasant points of connection along walking and cycling routes. Commercial environments such as cafés and restaurants are important “third” places, as are workplaces, schools and venues for culture, recreation and sport. Access to sports facilities and green spaces, and opportunities to enjoy physical outdoor pursuits are important in maintaining a physically active population.

Locating community services in easily accessible areas of the District ensures all residents can take advantage of programs, facilities and amenities that promote health and well-being. Accessible services may include daycares near employment centres or health services and community programs in proximity to residential neighbourhoods.

POLICIES

- 10.1.1 Support the development of social service facilities that are responsive to the needs of vulnerable members of the Saanich community.
- 10.1.2 Promote healthy living by supporting physically and socially active lifestyles for all people through the inclusion of plazas, parks, open spaces, and recreation opportunities, a safe and inviting public realm, and active transportation.
- 10.1.3 Provide and create access to public parks, daycare facilities, playgrounds, community centres, libraries and other essential services needed to sustain families.
- 10.1.4 Develop, enhance and retain public and private spaces for cultural and social activities, emphasizing flexible uses that can evolve over time.
- 10.1.5 Support the location of new childcare facilities in convenient pick-up and dropoff locations, particularly along major transit and commercial corridors, areas of high employment, and areas of growth and higher density, including through the provision of office space, administrative support and direct funding.
- 10.1.6 In partnership with community service providers, ensure that high-quality, neighbourhood-specific programs and services for youth are accessible, affordable and culturally appropriate.
- 10.1.7 Ensure residents are kept apprised of proposed changes in the community and have ample opportunities to be informed and, where appropriate, share their opinions.
- 10.1.8 Improve the physical connection of the Municipal Campus site with the community and promote it as a place where residents can engage in civic discourse.

10.2 SUPPORTIVE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Having suitable and affordable housing plays an important role not only in a community's quality of life, but also in its economy, health, and sustainability. Housing for low to moderate income households is in notably high demand in the District of Saanich and the Capital Region. Housing that is adaptable, age friendly, coupled with support services or otherwise considers the unique needs of a diverse population is crucial to community well-being. Such diverse and affordable housing forms enable all residents, specifically those that may otherwise be marginalized or

isolated, to remain a part of the community.

The growth and land use change anticipated for the Uptown – Douglas Corridor (UDC) provides an opportunity for the District of Saanich to be a leader in providing inclusive and community oriented housing options. The land use policies that support the addition of diverse and affordable housing are outlined in Section 5.2. This section provides additional policies aimed at building a housing supply in the UDC that encourages social inclusion and helps to meet the housing demands of the District and Region.

POLICIES

- 10.2.1 Support the development and maintenance of secured market rental units in close proximity to transit, services and amenities.
- 10.2.2 Retain existing purpose built rental units or support the integration of the same or a greater number of rental units as a component of new developments.
- 10.2.3 Undertake and regularly update a Saanich Housing Needs Assessment and use the results to guide priorities around the types of housing units that are targeted for redevelopments in the UDC.
- 10.2.4 Support and incentivize non-market housing developments, or developments with a non-market housing component (See also Policy 5.2.3), and further encourage such developments to locate in close proximity to transit, services and amenities.
- 10.2.5 Support the development of housing and associated community service facilities for marginalized populations, people with special needs and seniors, and strive to locate such developments in close proximity to transit, services and amenities.
- 10.2.6 Encourage the use of the Voluntary Design Guidelines for Adaptable Housing when considering the inclusion and design of Adaptable Dwelling Units (as defined in the British Columbia Building Code, as amended) in new developments.
- 10.2.7 Support development that includes a range of unit sizes, including 2 and 3 bedroom units suitable for families (See also Policy 5.2.2), and further encourage the incorporation of additional family-friendly features, including:
 - Multiple bedroom units located on the ground floor for improved accessibility and greater affordability for families;
 - Multiple bedroom units with at least 1 bedroom that is large enough to accommodate a queen size bed;
 - Multiple bedroom units that include additional storage space;
 - Multiple bedroom units that include private outdoor space larger than what is required in the Saanich Zoning Bylaw (See Policy 5.2.5); and
 - Amenity or common space, both indoor and outdoor, that incorporates features which encourage social connection for families and youth, such as playgrounds and play spaces.
- 10.2.8 Encourage the use of energy reduction features in non-market and market rental developments, including Step Code building energy performance beyond level regulated, to reduce operating and utility costs.
- 10.2.9 Collaborate with social service providers to identify opportunities for supportive housing, transition housing, and subsidized housing to help reduce the paths to homelessness.
- 10.2.10 Continue to engage with the community on housing affordability issues and communicate the importance of supportive housing and community service facilities.
- 10.2.11 Support implementation of the approved Nigel Valley development concept as a key aspect of creating a diverse housing stock in the UDC and strive to integrate the development seamlessly with the surrounding area (See also Policy 5.12.8).

10.3 CULTURE

Saanich residents and visitors spend much of their time in parks, squares and other public spaces, including District buildings and facilities. As the Uptown – Douglas Corridor (UDC) grows and changes, new development and redevelopment should create space for cultural expression in various forms. Publicly visible and accessible works of art help to establish multifaceted, interesting, attractive and democratic public spaces. Diverse cultural programs, activities and opportunities for engagement contribute to a thriving community. Public and private spaces can be designed to

reflect or incorporate a range of cultural traditions, fostering community interactions and creating a sense of belonging.

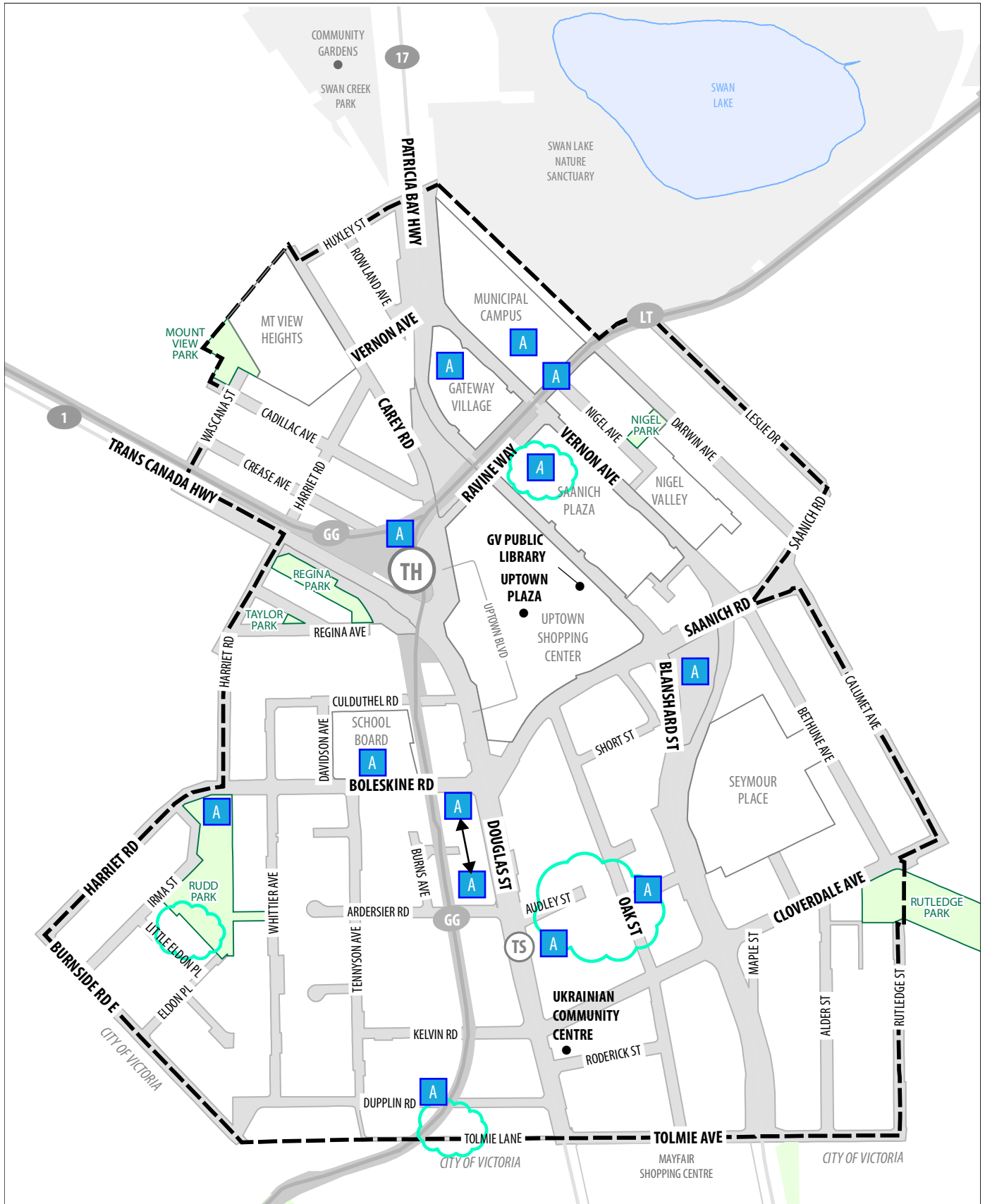
The creation of cultural places should acknowledge and embrace the rich indigenous history of the land and be representative to the traditions of the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations. As noted in Section 2.2, the UDC has extensive indigenous history and there are opportunities to celebrate and showcase the historical and cultural connections. Continuing to learn, explore and celebrate these connections will contribute to the creation of a meaningful, vibrant and socially inclusive place.

POLICIES

- 10.3.1 Work with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations to better understand the pre-colonial conditions and cultural practices and explore opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate their history and culture.
- 10.3.2 Support cultural events and programming that can animate the area.
- 10.3.3 Explore the introduction of cultural facilities in the UDC, including through the redevelopment of larger sites or as the component of new park spaces.
- 10.3.4 Encourage public art projects in key strategic locations, including those identified on Map 10.1, and continue to explore the coordination, funding and/or implementation of these pieces and projects.
- 10.3.5 Support efforts to integrate culturally appropriate First Nations art within the UDC area.
- 10.3.6 Integrate public art into the public realm, enhancing the pedestrian experience, complementing the surrounding built environment and raising awareness of the history of the area.
- 10.3.7 Ensure spaces for cultural and social activity reflect the character and identity of the neighbourhood. Consider cultural programming needs when designing public and private spaces.



Public art in Rutledge Park



- UPTOWN-DOUGLAS CORRIDOR PLAN
- POSSIBLE LOCATIONS FOR PUBLIC ART
- UDC PARK
- PRIORITY AREA FOR PARKS
- COMMUNITY FACILITIES / POINTS OF INTEREST

10.4 HERITAGE SITES

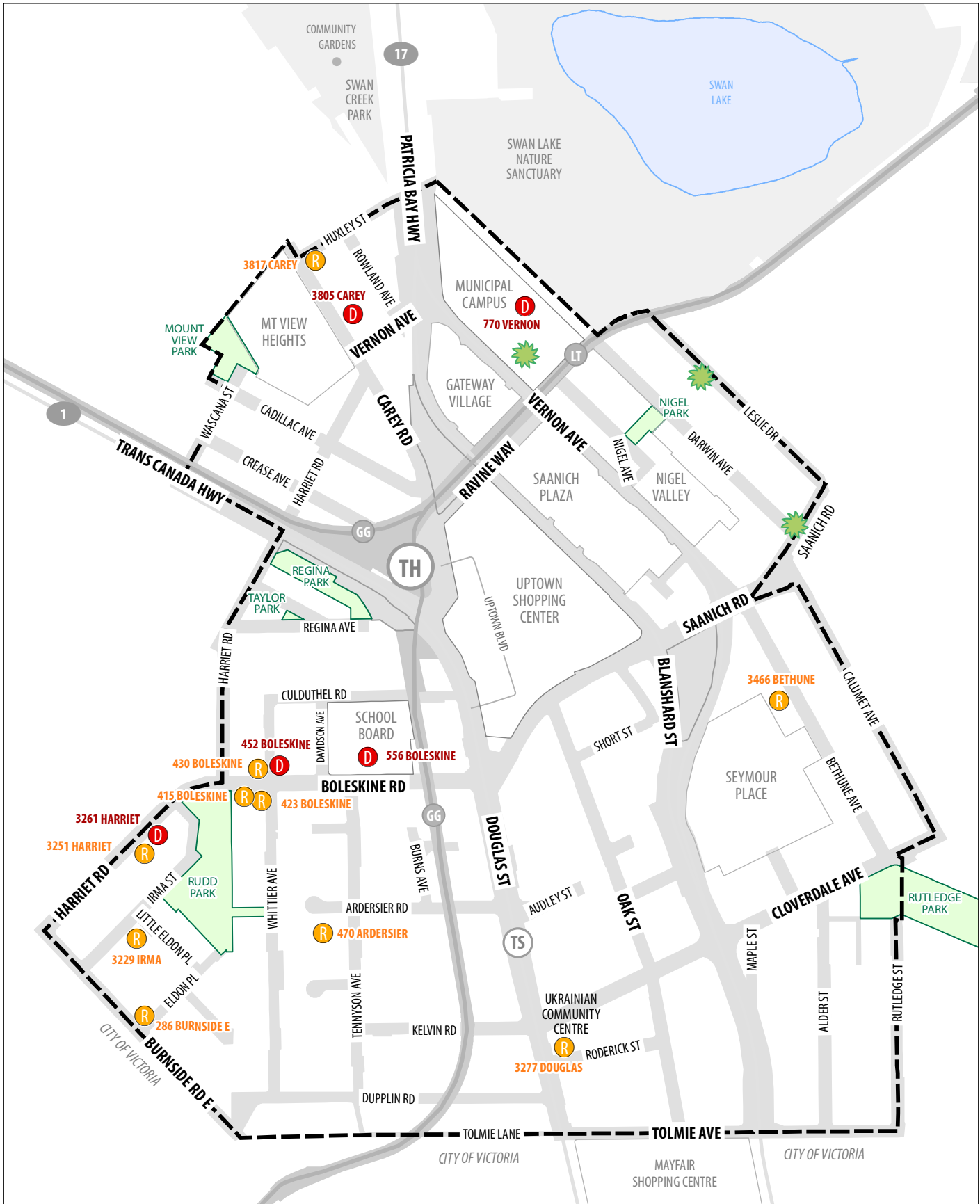
An important part of the identity of a community is its natural and built heritage. A number of features in the Uptown – Douglas Corridor (UDC) add to the character of the area. Saanich, and particularly the commercial node within the boundaries of the UDC, experienced a successive land boom in the period between 1910 and 1914. This period of construction is reflected by heritage buildings in the area. Significant buildings that are prominent on the UDC landscape include Tolmie School, built in 1913, and Saanich Municipal Hall, completed in 1965. The District of Saanich works with other organizations to protect its heritage

buildings and sites. In addition to preserving heritage in the built form, Saanich strives to protect trees that are unique or historically significant.

Over a dozen buildings of historical significance, predominately built in the early twentieth century, still scatter the landscape. Heritage Assets are shown on Map 10.2. Figure 10.1 identifies buildings of historical significance as listed in the Saanich Heritage Register, and includes five buildings with a Heritage Designation. In addition, three trees are listed in the Tree Protection Bylaw as significant trees.

POLICIES

- 10.4.1 Recognize and celebrate the value of culturally diverse heritage assets in the UDC and Saanich as a whole.
- 10.4.2 Preserve and enhance the public visibility of all properties on the Saanich Heritage Register, with special consideration to Heritage Designated properties and buildings.
- 10.4.3 Ensure preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of heritage assets through any proposed redevelopment.
- 10.4.4 Encourage owners to seek Heritage Designation when considering proposed redevelopment of properties on the Saanich Heritage Register.
- 10.4.5 Require design sensitivity when considering rezoning, development and subdivision applications in the vicinity of buildings or sites on the Heritage Register or with a Heritage Designation, or in the vicinity of significant trees.
- 10.4.6 Maintain streetscape views and a strong visual presence of heritage assets.
- 10.4.7 Continue to support the Saanich Heritage Foundation, the Saanich Heritage and Archival Committee and the Significant Tree Committee in their respective roles in preserving heritage assets.
- 10.4.8 Support a comprehensive development project that preserves, restores and enhances the Tolmie School Building, a designated heritage site located at 556 Boleskine Road.
- 10.4.9 Seek to include sites of heritage significance as part of a wayfinding framework and promote heritage walking tours in the area.
- 10.4.10 Explore potential additions to the Heritage Register, including 520 Ardersier Road.



- UPTOWN-DOUGLAS CORRIDOR PLAN
- HERITAGE DESIGNATED
- HERITAGE REGISTERED
- SIGNIFICANT TREES

Heritage Buildings

Designated

452 Boleskine Road	Graham Residence	(1913)
556 Boleskine Road	Tolmie School	(1913)
3805 Carey Road	Mountain View Residence	(1914)
3261 Harriet Road	Johnson Residence	(1913)
770 Vernon Avenue	Saanich Municipal Hall	(1965)

Registered

470 Ardersier Road	Home Lumber Office	(1972)
3466 Bethune Avenue	Leahy Residence	(1912)
415 Boleskine Road	Tapscott Residence	(1914)
423 Boleskine Road	Crowther Residence	(1911)
430 Boleskine Road	Axhome Residence	(1899)
286 Burnside Road East	Hancock Residence	(1905)
3571 Calumet Avenue	McAdoo Residence	(1919)
3817 Carey Road	Henson Residence	(1937)
3277 Douglas Street	Douglas Street Baptist Church	(1913)
3251 Harriet Road	Stoddart Residence	(1895)
3229 Irma Street	Matthews Residence	(1895)

Significant Trees

833 Leslie Drive	Black Locust	(#174)
3666 Saanich Road	Garry Oak	(#84)
770 Vernon Avenue	Contorted Pekin Willow	(#16)

Figure 10.1 Identified Heritage Assets



Rudd Park, 1946.



St. Marks Church, 1893.



Greenhouses seen from Douglas Street, 1978.



Fire Hall No. 1, 1939.



Saanich Core, 1974.



Town and Country with Woolco, opening day 1961.



Douglas Street seen from Regina Park, 1965.



Bridge crossing over CNR Rail (now Lochside Trail), 1971.

10.5 AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

The District of Saanich recognizes the importance of agriculture and food security as part of a sustainable community. Currently, the majority of food consumed in our region is imported which increases Saanich's vulnerability to market changes. Interest in food production in urban areas has expanded dramatically in recent years and is seen as a key way to supplement conventional agriculture and bring community members in touch with local food and natural processes.

The District of Saanich's Official Community Plan and Agriculture and Food Security Plan prioritize expanding opportunities for food production in urban areas. Urban agriculture is encouraged in order to reduce "distance to plate",

encourage social interaction, and allow more locally grown food production. While the Uptown-Douglas Corridor (UDC) is within the Urban Containment Boundary, agriculture and food security can play an important role in meeting the area's social, environmental, economic, and health goals.

Saanich protects its high capability agricultural land, but despite this access to healthy, local food is difficult for some households. Approximately 6% of households in Greater Victoria are considered 'food insecure'. Directions in the Plan contribute to the goal of raising production levels of food on the local land base and also address convenient access to healthy food by residents.

POLICIES

- 10.5.1 Incorporate fruit and nut bearing trees and other edible landscaping elements on suitable public and private lands, where appropriate.
- 10.5.2 Encourage access to healthy and culturally appropriate food by supporting farmers markets, community gardens, community meals, food support programs and similar initiatives.
- 10.5.3 Consider community gardens within existing or proposed parks, undeveloped parcels, and closed right of ways, as per the District of Saanich Community Gardens Policy.
- 10.5.4 Recognize, support and enhance existing community food security initiatives, including through partnerships with the School Board and other institutional partners.
- 10.5.5 Support community food hubs and their work in redirecting food resources that would otherwise be disposed.
- 10.5.6 Support the establishment of uses that expand access to and awareness of local food and animate the area, including farmers markets, on-site farm stands and food trucks.
- 10.5.7 Support the introduction of facilities in industrial areas that support local food production, distribution and access.
- 10.5.8 Continue to utilize the Municipal Campus as a location to showcase food production and food accessibility.
- 10.5.9 Integrate spaces for food production within commercial and multi-family developments, both at grade and on shared / accessible rooftops.
- 10.5.10 Encourage community contributions that introduce assets that enhance food security and support agriculture.

