

# 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 (UD) area 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 UD area 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 UD Plan area 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 UD area. 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 Uptown–Douglas 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 provides opportunities for people to nurture their physical, social and mental well-being. 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 places, where people can engage in positive social interactions and encounters. A healthy community must ensure people feel safe and welcome, serve all members of the community at all stages of life, particularly those that are socially and/or economically marginalized.

The built environment should offer a variety of accessible public meeting places that bring residents and visitors together. Destinations such as parks, plazas, squares and playgrounds enable important 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, next to home and public spaces, 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.

A healthy neighbourhood includes services such as a school, daycares located near schools and employment centres, and healthcare facilities. Locating community services in easily accessible areas of the Uptown-Douglas (UD) Plan area, and throughout the District, will ensure that all residents have an opportunity to take advantage of programs, facilities and amenities that promote health and well-being.

### POLICIES

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| 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 in the UD area by supporting active lifestyles through the addition of new parks, plazas and active recreation opportunities and enhancements to create a safe and inviting public realm.   |
| 10.1.3 | Invest in enhancements to and support the development of new public parks, playgrounds, daycare centres, community centres, schools, libraries, and other essential services needed to attract and sustain families locating in the Uptown-Douglas area. |
| 10.1.4 | Encourage the location of new childcare centres in convenient pick-up and drop-off locations (i.e. along major transit and commercial corridors, employment hubs, high density neighbourhood sub-areas).   |
| 10.1.5 | Develop new, and enhance and retain existing, public and private spaces for cultural and social activities, emphasising flexible uses that can evolve over time.   |
| 10.1.6 | In partnership with community service providers, ensure that high-quality, neighbourhood-specific programs and services for children and 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 share their opinions.  |
| 10.1.8 | Improve the physical connection of the Municipal Campus site within the community and promote it as a place where residents can engage in civic discourse.   |
| 10.1.9 | Encourage housing that supports a broad range of accessibility and age-friendly features, preferences, and family structures, including the ability to age in place (see Policies 5.2.2, 5.2.9 and 5.2.10).  |

## 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. The District of Saanich is undertaking a Housing Needs Assessment as part of a District-wide Housing Strategy to address challenges in the availability and cost of housing in Saanich. 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 are marginalised or isolated, the means to remain a part of the community.

The growth and land use change anticipated for the Uptown–Douglas (UD) area 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 UD area that encourages social inclusion and helps to meet the housing demands of the District and Region.

### POLICIES

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|--------|---|
| 10.2.1 | Support the development and maintenance of affordable and supportive housing throughout the UD area.  |
| 10.2.2 | 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 UD.   |
| 10.2.3 | 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.   |
| 10.2.4 | Support and incentivize non-market housing developments, or developments with an affordable 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 | Work with the Capital Regional District, BC Housing, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and other Provincial agencies to support the renewal/redevelopment of existing non-market housing to that would result in reduced GHG and sustain greater efficiencies and reduce operating costs.  |
| 10.2.8 | Expect new residential developments to provide 2 and 3-bedroom units appropriate for families, and encourage additional child-friendly features suitable to supporting family and needs, and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ground floor units with accessibility features;</li><li>• bedroom sizes that accommodate a queen size bed;</li><li>• additional in-suite or on-site storage space;</li><li>• private outdoor space (see Policy 5.2.7); and</li><li>• amenity and/or common spaces that incorporate design elements to encourage social connections for residents, including families, children and adolescents, such as play space and playgrounds.</li></ul> |

- 10.2.9 Encourage the use of energy reduction features in non-market and market rental developments, including Step Code building energy performance beyond regulated levels, to reduce operating and utility costs.
- 10.2.10 Support the development of non-market and affordable rental housing through considering:
- reductions of municipal fees such as waivers to DCCs;
  - parking variances; and
  - continued prioritized application review and approval timelines.
- 10.2.11 Promote quality design and innovation for new affordable housing developments, with a focus on sustainable, energy conserving, and attractive design that will reduce maintenance costs and increase neighbourhood acceptability.
- 10.2.12 Collaborate with social service providers to identify opportunities for supportive housing, transition housing, and subsidized housing to help reduce the paths to homelessness.
- 10.2.13 Continue to engage with the community on housing affordability issues and communicate the importance of supportive housing and community service facilities.
- 10.2.14 Support implementation of the approved Nigel Valley development concept as a key aspect of creating a diverse housing stock in the UD area and strive to integrate the development seamlessly with the surrounding area (See also Policy 5.12.8).



Vergo - Affordable Housing, Capital Regional District



Olympic Visa - Affordable Seniors Housing, Cool Aid Society



## 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 (UD) area 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 multi-faceted, 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.

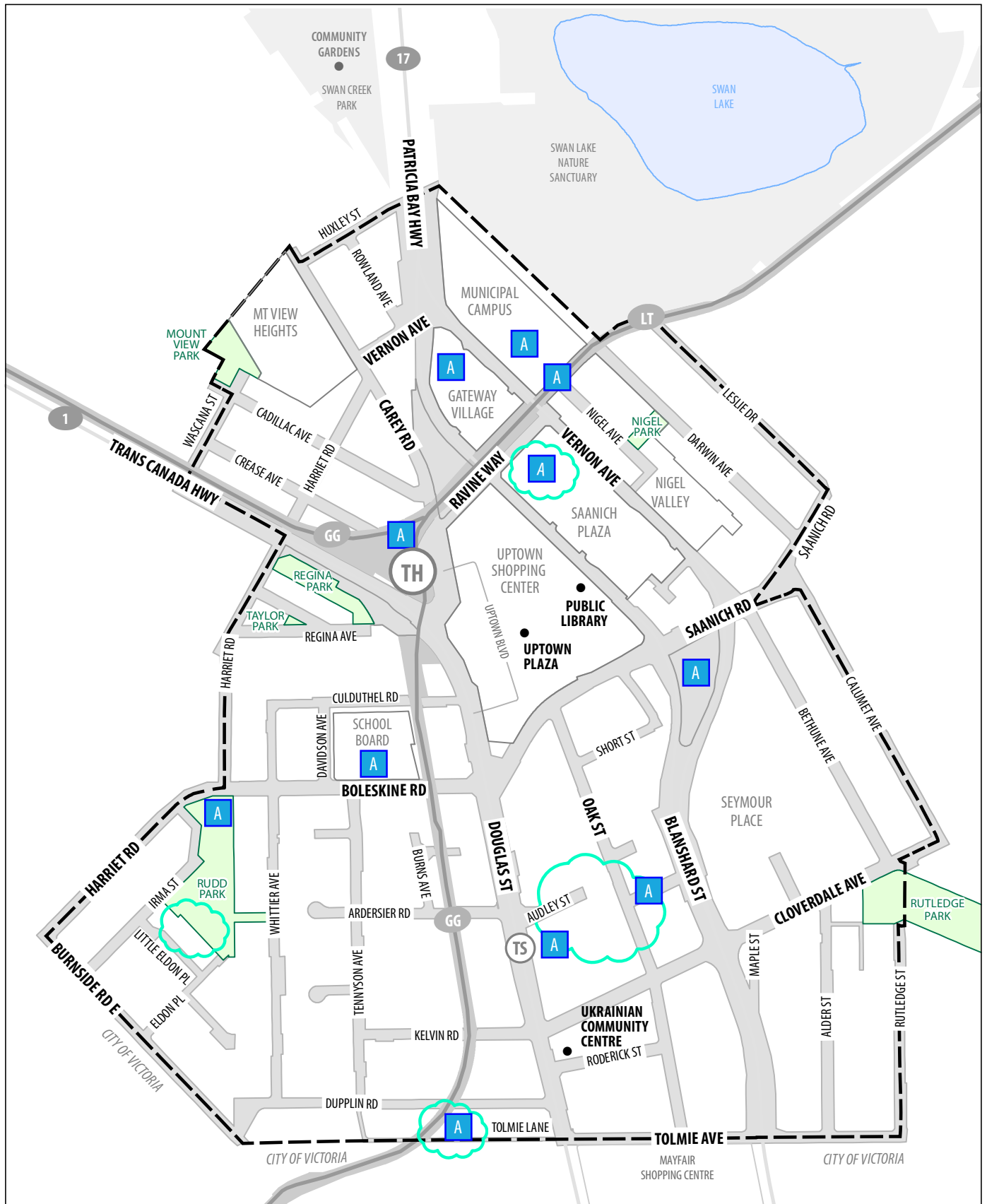
The creation of cultural places should acknowledge and embrace the rich indigenous history of the land and be representative of the traditions of the Songhees Nation and Esquimalt Nation. As noted in Section 2.2, Saanich has extensive indigenous history and there are opportunities to celebrate and showcase 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 local First Nations, notably the Esquimalt and Songhees 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 UD area, including through the redevelopment of larger sites or as the component of new park spaces.
- 10.3.4 Expect 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 local First Nations art within the UD 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.
- 10.3.8 Consider cultural programming needs when designing public and private spaces.



Public art in Rutledge Park



Map 10.1 Potential Public Art Locations

## 10.4 HERITAGE SITES

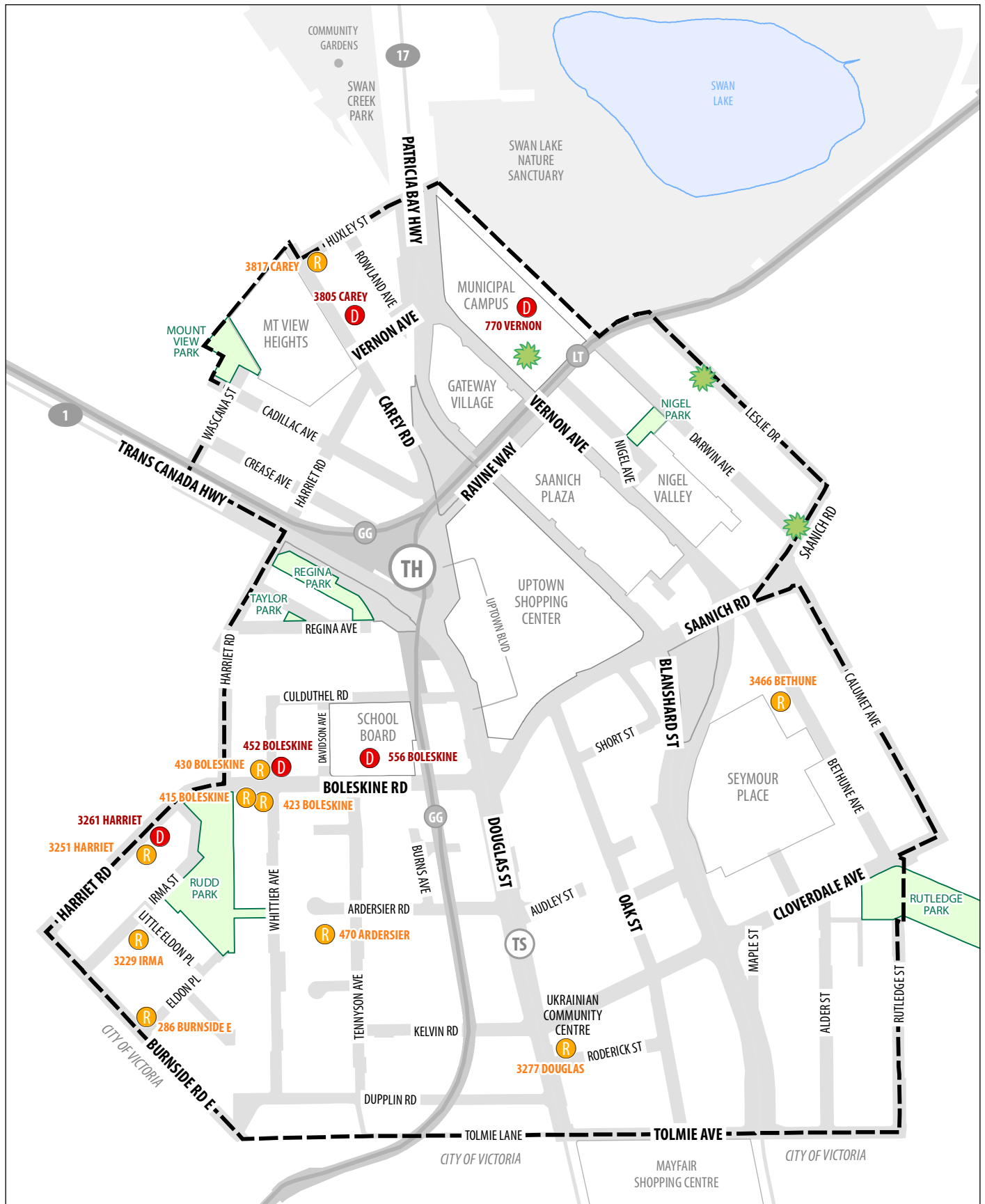
An important part of the identity of a community is its natural and built heritage. A number of features in the Uptown–Douglas (UD) area add to the character of the area. Saanich, and particularly the commercial node within the Plan boundaries, experienced a land boom in the period between 1910 and 1914. This period of construction is reflected by heritage buildings in the area. Significant buildings that are prominent on the UD area 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, including five buildings with a Heritage Designation, as well as three significant trees (as per the Tree Protection Bylaw).

### POLICIES

- 10.4.1 Recognize and celebrate the value of culturally diverse heritage assets in the UD area 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 Promote 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 and the Significant Tree Committee in their respective roles in preserving the District's 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, while encouraging new development to be integrated on the site.
- 10.4.9 Seek to include sites of heritage significance as part of a wayfinding framework and promote heritage in the area (e.g. walking tours).
- 10.4.10 Explore potential additions to the Heritage Register, including 520 Ardersier Road.



UPTOWN-DOUGLAS  
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.



Axhome Residence, 430 Boleskine Road.



Johnson Residence, 3261 Harriet Road.



Tapscott Residence, 415 Boleskine Road.



Crowther Residence, 423 Boleskine Road.



McAdoo Residence, 3571 Calumet Avenue.



Henson Residence, 3817 Carey Road.

## 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 (UD) area 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-unit 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.



