

Baseline Conditions Report





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Prepared by: Saanich Planning Department with assistance from FRANK planning collaborative

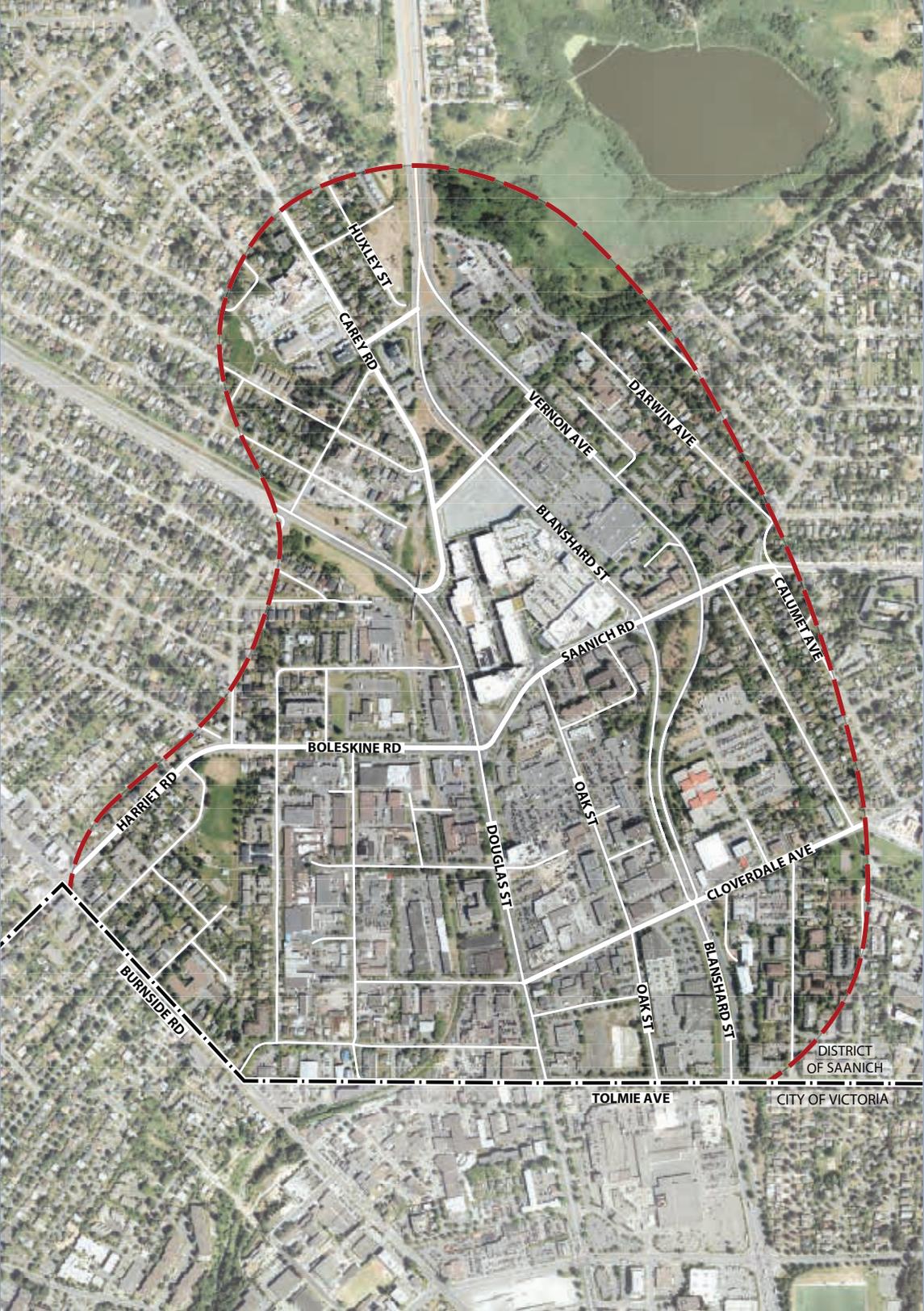
Uptown - Douglas Corridor (UDC) Plan

Baseline Conditions Report

This report highlights the key aspects and current conditions in the Uptown-Douglas Corridor study area. This report will assist community discussions on various planning issues that will be addressed during the development of the Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan.

The Uptown-Douglas Corridor area is approximately 167 hectares (413 acres) in size and is located on the southern end of the District of Saanich. The area is defined by the municipal boundary with the City of Victoria at Tolmie Avenue, to just north of the Municipal Hall at Huxley Street, and between Burnside Road and Harriet Road to the west and Darwin Avenue and Calumet Avenue to the east.

The area includes two major regional transportation corridors; Douglas Street linking downtown Victoria to the western communities, and Blanshard Street connecting Highway 17 to the Greater Victoria International Airport, the Township of Sidney and BC Ferries Swartz Bay Terminal.



Planning Context

Quick Facts

3,874 residents live in the UDC area.

Source: Adapted from RGS Growth Projections (2015)

The **UDC study area** includes parts of the Saanich Core, Quadra, Tillicum and Carey **Local Areas**.

9,500 people are employed at **650 employers** in the UDC area.

Source: Statistics Canada (2011)

There are **14 bus routes** that pass through the UDC area and approximately **30,000** transit riders use these routes daily.

Source: BC Transit (2016)

Approximately **130,000 vehicles** pass through the area daily.

Source: District of Saanich, Traffic Volume Data (2014)

The **Galloping Goose** and **Lochside** Regional trails run through the UDC area carrying 300-500 cyclists per hour.

Source: CRD



What Does This Mean?

The study area borders the City of Victoria and shares major regional corridors, including Douglas Street, the region's most dense employment corridor.

The Sustainable Saanich Official Community Plan (OCP) identifies the area as a Major Centre where new residents and businesses will be accommodated.

The Saanich Municipal Hall, Fire Hall, and Police Station, as well as the Galloping Goose Trail, Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary and Rudd and Rutledge Parks are located within the UDC study area.

The UDC study area provides 21.5% of all jobs in Saanich, and is a key economic hub.

With more jobs than residents, people are commuting into the area in the morning and out of the area after work.

As the UDC area carries the most through vehicular traffic in the District, transportation will be a key issue to address during Plan development.

The local trail network carries some of the highest volumes of cyclists in the region. This means that the Plan area is an important contributor to the multi-modal network in the Region.

As a central area of the region easily accessed by all modes of travel, the UDC has the potential to be the vibrant heart of Saanich.

Points of Interest



Municipal Hall



Uptown



Switch Bridge



Mayfair Mall



School Board Office



4000 Seymour



Demographics

Quick Facts

3,874 people currently live in the UDC area, representing approximately **3.5%** of the **population** of Saanich.

Source: Adapted from RGS Growth Projections (2015)

The **median age** is approximately **36 years** old. The median age for Saanich is 44 years.

Source: Statistics Canada (2011)

Median **household income** in the UDC area is **\$51,100**, lower than Saanich as a whole at \$68,393.

Source: Statistics Canada (2011)

Just under **50%** of the **households** in the UDC area are **single person** households compared with 27% in Saanich.

Source: Statistics Canada (2011)

Residential tenancy in the UDC area is **62% owner** and **38% renter**. Saanich as a whole is 50% owner, 50% renter.

Source: Statistics Canada (2011)

36% of households report spending **more than 30%** of their **total income** on shelter costs, which is slightly higher than Saanich as a whole at 28%.

Source: Statistics Canada (2011)



What Does This Mean?

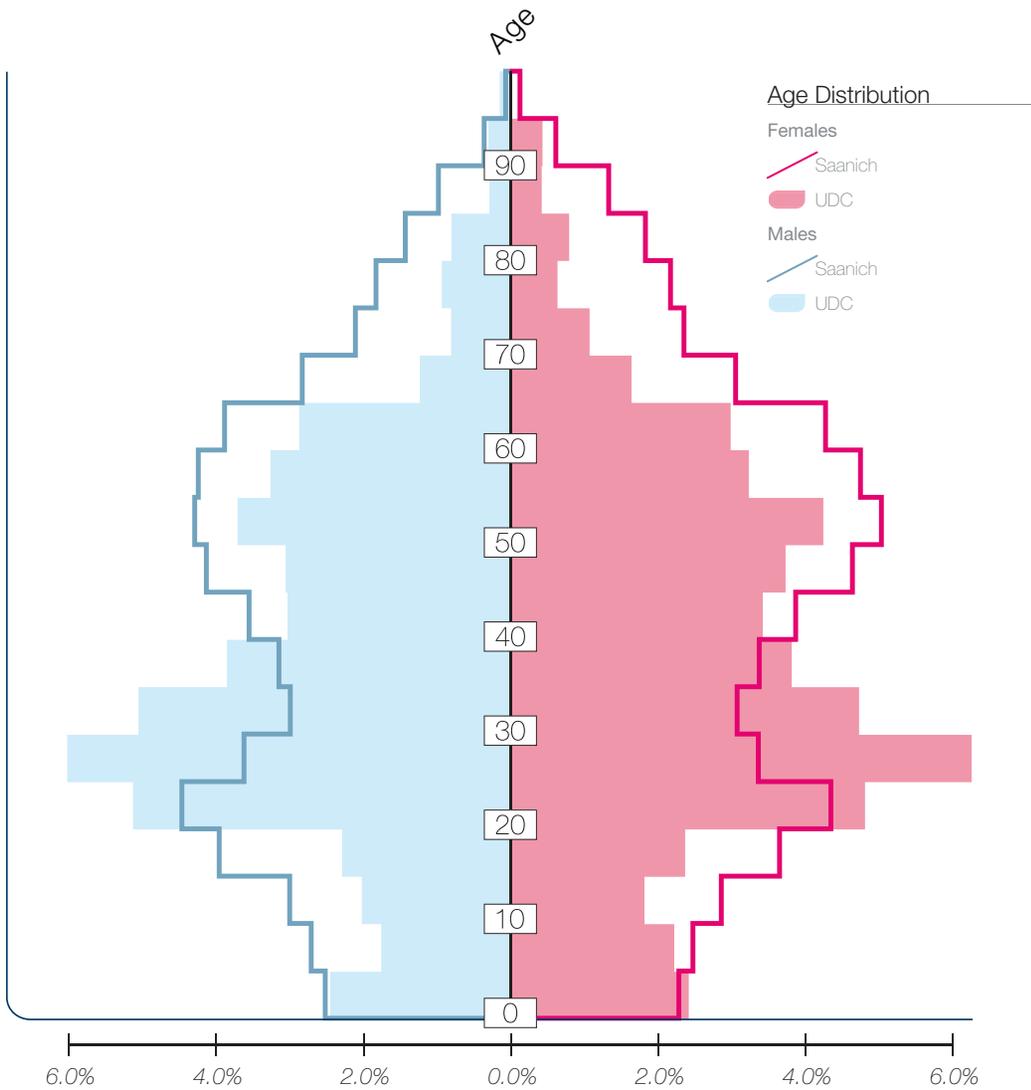
A slightly younger demographic resides in the UDC area than the rest of Saanich. This may influence travel and housing choices, education enrollment levels and commercial and retail services.

The population in the UDC study area has grown approximately 8% over the last 5 years. Growth projections indicate that the population in the study area could increase by approximately 50% by 2038.

When compared to the rest of Saanich, there is a high percentage of single-person households, renters and multi-family dwellings in the UDC area. This is the trend in most urban centres across Canada where families tend to choose single family dwellings further from the core.

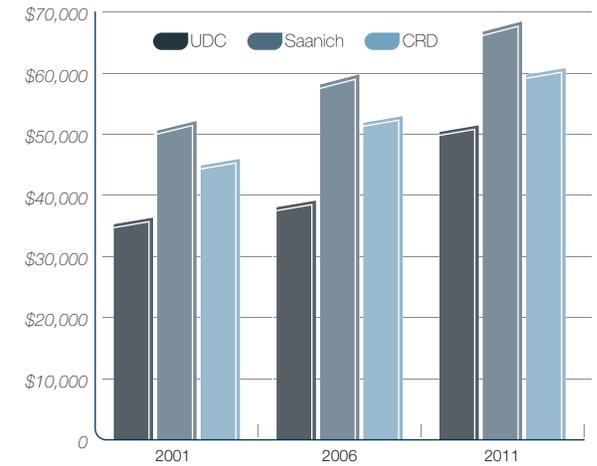
The lower median household income can be attributed, in part, to the significantly higher percentage of singles in the UDC area.

Population & Age Distribution: UDC & Saanich



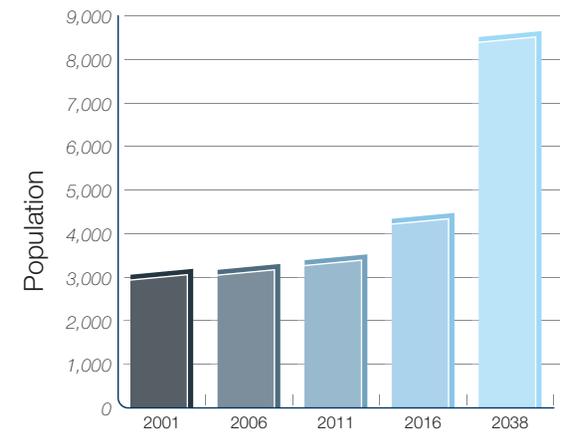
Source: Adapted From Statistics Canada (2011)

Median Household Income



Source: Adapted from the CRD Regional Growth Strategy Population Growth Projections (2014)

UDC Population Projections



Source: CRD RGS Population Forecasts (2014)

Land Use, Urban Design and Placemaking

Quick Facts

The **central spine** of the UDC area (near Douglas and Blanshard Streets) consists mostly of commercial and industrial businesses.

There are **506** single-family homes and **1,025** apartments in the UDC area.

43% of the UDC area consists of **Commercial** zoning. Many commercial zones also permit residential uses.

Nearly **30%** (20.72 ha) of the **Industrial lands in Saanich** are located within the UDC area.

There are **2,247 dwelling units** in the UDC area.

Almost **50%** of the **single-family homes** in the area were built **before 1945** and are now at least 70 years old.

There are **15 heritage buildings**: 11 Designated & 4 Registered.

There are several **public gathering spots** in the UDC area: the Public Library (Uptown); Swan Lake Sanctuary and Wildlife Centre; Rutledge Park; Rudd Park; Uptown Plaza; Ukrainian Community Centre and the Mt. View Park Community Garden.

What Does This Mean?

The UDC area plays a key role in Saanich by accommodating a broad range of housing options, commercial services, industrial activities and institutional uses.

There is a mix of housing types in the UDC study area:

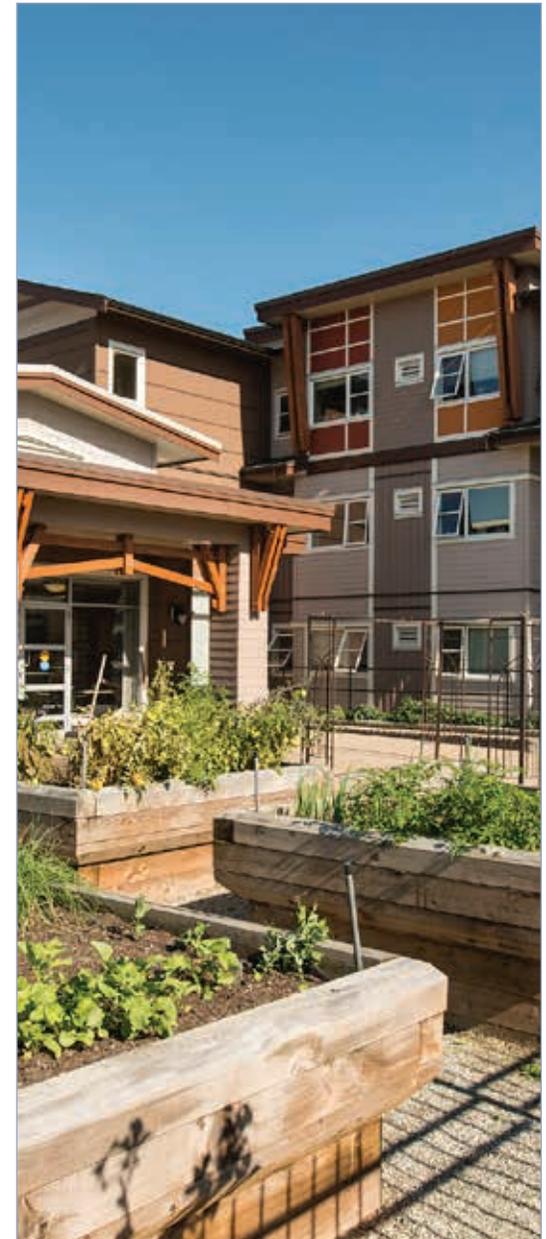
- 506 single-family units;
- 277 townhouse units in 22 buildings;
- 1025 apartment units in 31 buildings;
- 439 units of non-market and social housing in 26 buildings; and
- 274 beds in 2 care facilities.

A number of “places” exist in the UDC area, but their accessibility, visibility and connectivity are inhibited by urban design conditions.

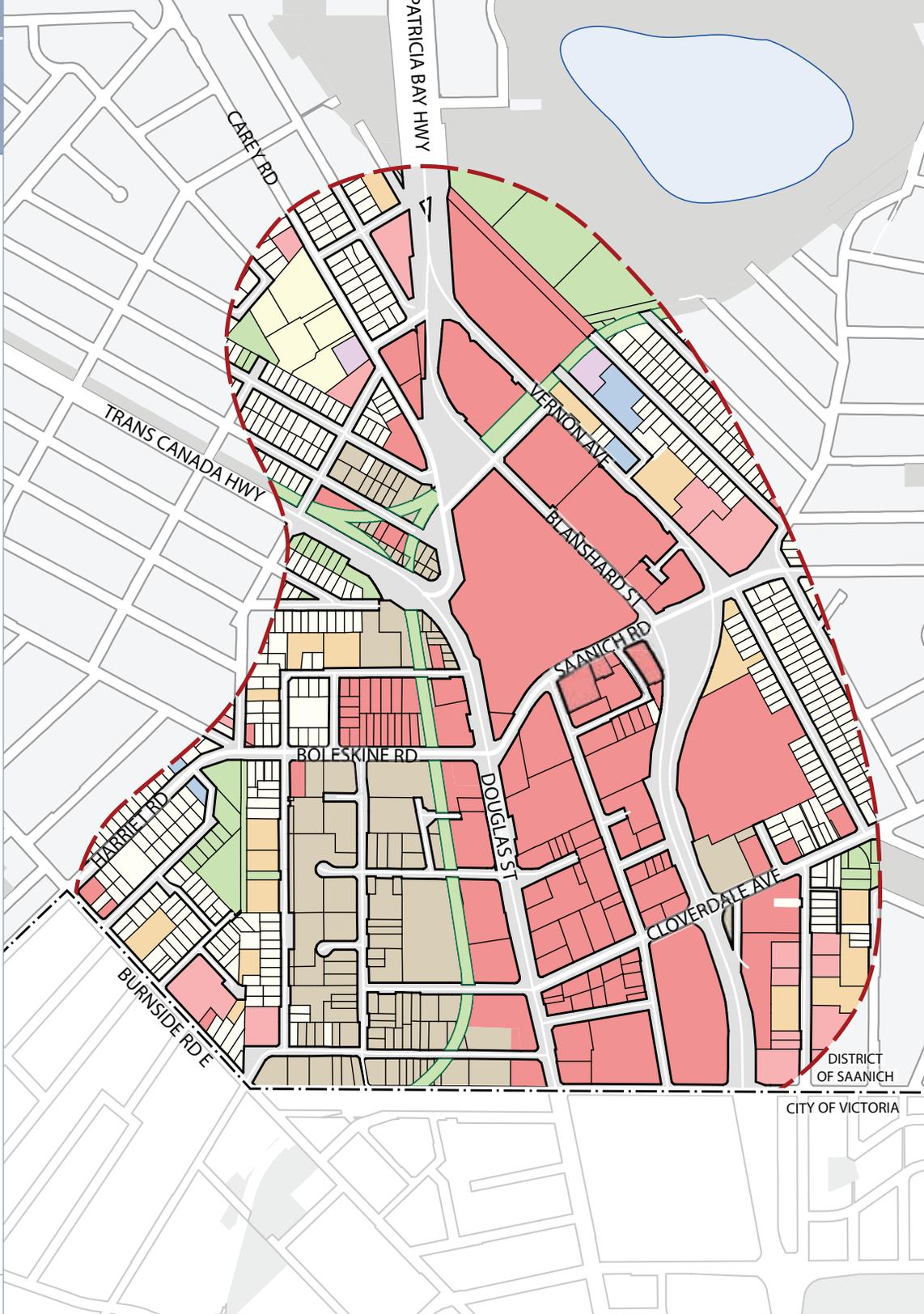
In developing a Major Centre in the UDC area, the OCP encourages:

- Provision of publicly accessible open space that creates identifiable focal points;
- Development of traditional “mainstreet” streetscapes; and
- The enhancement of the node’s unique “sense of place”.

The development of the Uptown Shopping Centre and the future introduction of rapid transit along Douglas Street will increase the potential for creating a vibrant, people-friendly heart of Saanich.



Zoning Designation



-  Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan Area
-  Single-Family
-  Attached Housing (Townhouses)
-  Multi-Family (Apartments)
-  Mixed Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Comprehensive Site
-  Residential Care
-  Public
-  Park / Trail



Transportation and Mobility

Quick Facts

Approximately **136,000 people** (38% of the population of the CRD) reside within a **10-minute drive** from the UDC area.

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada & Google maps

Approximately **2,400 cyclists and pedestrians/day** use the Galloping Goose and Lochside Trails through the UDC area during the summer months, and approximately 1,300 cyclists and pedestrians/day in the winter.

Source: CRD Parks Data (based on 2015 counts)

Approximately **30,000 passengers** take transit through the UDC area daily.

Source: BC Transit

Douglas Street is identified as a **rapid transit corridor** and Uptown Centre has been identified as a **transit hub** in the BC Transit - Transit Future Plan.

Source: BC Transit – Transit Future Plan

Approximately **130,000 vehicles** per day pass through the UDC area: Douglas Street (40,000 vehicles/day), Vernon Avenue (29,000 vehicles/day) and Blanshard Street (30,000 vehicles/day).

Source: District of Saanich Engineering (Traffic Counts)

62% of GHG emissions in Saanich are attributed to transportation-related activities.

Source: Saanich Climate Action Plan

What Does This Mean?

Given the UDC's role as a major transportation hub, traffic has, and will continue to have a significant influence on the character and land use of the surrounding area.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's ownership of Blanshard and Douglas Streets, Vernon Avenue, Ravine Way and the TransCanada Highway, means the District of Saanich does not have full control over the design of those streets.

The high volume transportation corridors bisecting the study area are critical for the movement of general traffic, transit, and commercial goods. Transitioning these corridors to urban arterial streets that support pedestrian and cycling activity and a vibrant public realm is a primary challenge for the Plan.

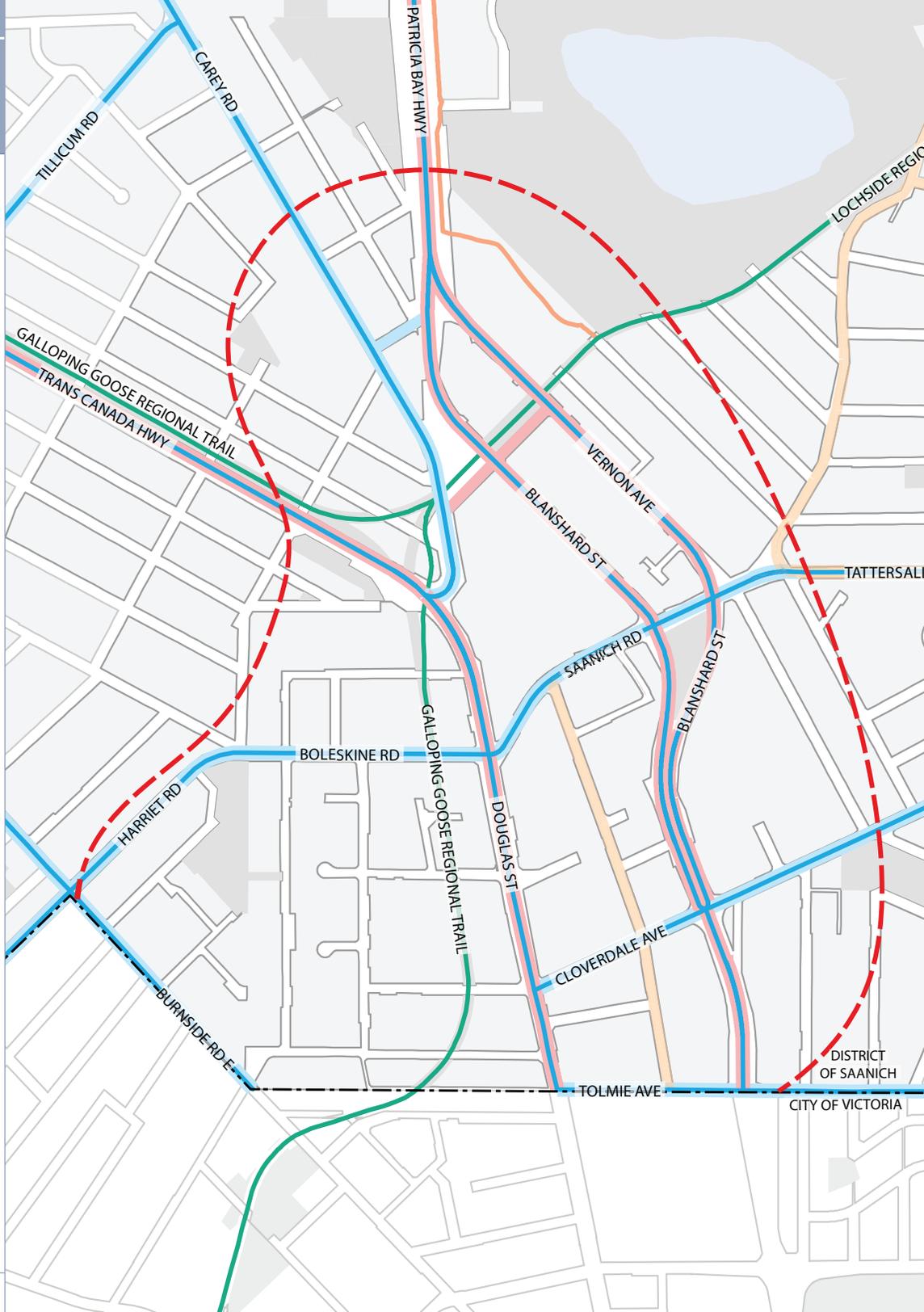
For most vehicle drivers, and to a degree transit riders, this is an area that one must go through on their commute. It is also a destination and a neighbourhood for residents, employees, and business owners.

McKenzie Avenue, located just north of the UDC study area, is a primary east-west connector that runs through Saanich. A significant portion of the traffic moving through the UDC area is heading to and from McKenzie Avenue.

Saanich is starting work on the Active Transportation Plan that intends to improve the connectivity and quality of pedestrian and cycling facilities as well as build on the success of the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails.



Transportation Network



 Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan Area

Bicycle & Pedestrian Network

 Commuter Cycling Network

 Regional Trail

 Local Bikeway/Pedestrian Connector

Street Classification

 Highway (MoTI)

 Major

 Collector

 Residential



Economic Vibrancy, Prosperity and Sustainability

Quick Facts

Approximately **9,500 people** are employed at **650 employers** in plan area (this represents 21.5% of jobs in Saanich).

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2011) and current statistics from Uptown Mall.

Employment levels in the UDC area are projected to **increase by 50%** by 2038, with approximately 5,200 new jobs added to the local economy.

Source: CRD RGS Employment Projections (2014)

The current **employment growth rate** in the study area is **1.7%** annually, with an average of approximately 193 jobs added each year – roughly double that of Saanich (0.79% annually), and the CRD (0.88% annually).

Source: CRD RGS Employment Projections (2014)

50% of employers have **less than 10 employees** in the UDC area.

Source: CRD Employment Database (2011)

The UDC area contains **1,736,000 square feet** of office space.

Source: BC Assessment (2014) – This does not include Municipal facilities (Fire, Police and Municipal Hall).

Approximately **16%** of the plan area is **industrial land**. This represents approximately 30% of the industrial land in Saanich and roughly 10% of the regional supply.

What Does This Mean?

As a major focal point of the region, and the most significant urban centre in Saanich, the UDC area has the potential to be strengthened as a destination in the region and a compliment to downtown Victoria.

The UDC area has high visibility and easy access by a variety of travel modes making it an attractive location for businesses.

The study area has a higher number of employees (jobs) than residents, something that is common to community cores and employment areas.

The 3 fastest growing employment sectors, as projected from 2011 - 2038 are: Health Care and Social Assistance (114%); Office (70.3%); and Retail Trade (57.4%).

There has been a significant amount of new office space introduced to the market in the last

five years, resulting in a sizable surplus. This, combined with the lack of demand for Class A office space in the suburban market, caused negative absorption in the first half of 2015.

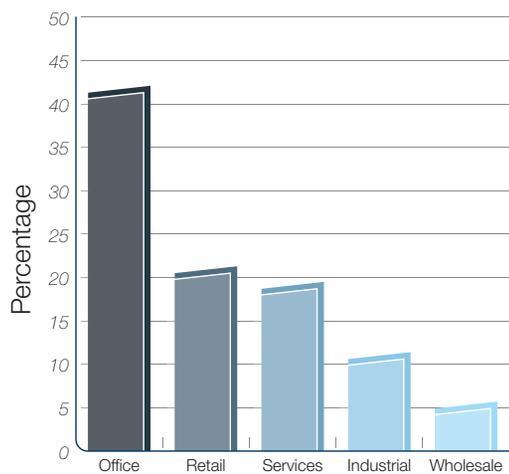
With the new space available at Uptown Shopping Mall, Midtown Court (Hillside Avenue) and Eagle Creek Village (View Royal), slow absorption and high vacancy rates are expected until demand catches up to the significant increase in supply.

The Greater Victoria industrial market posted the highest vacancy rate in the past 15 years at nearly 6% from mid-year 2014. This increase can be attributed to the shift from older buildings to new product.

Increasing traffic congestion and rising land values continue to be a challenge for industrial businesses.

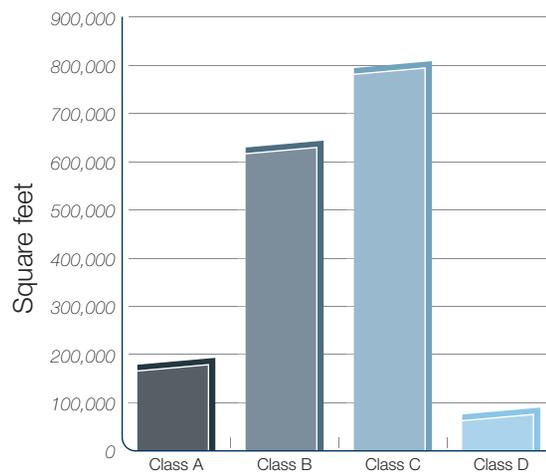


Top 5 Employment Sectors in UDC



Source: Adapted from the CRD RGS Employment Projections (2014)

Office Space by Class in UDC



Source: Colliers National Report (Spring 2015)



Parks, Open Space and Community Facilities

Quick Facts

6% (7.5 ha) of the UDC Plan area is classified as **park**.

There are **2,300 metres of trail corridor** including the Galloping Goose and Lochside trails.

Swan Creek Park and the Swan Lake Christmas Hill **Nature Sanctuary** are located on the northern edge of the UDC area.

Major regional trails run through the UDC area.

There are a limited number of **parks, public meeting places** and **plazas** in the central core of the area. Some smaller, privately owned spaces such as the splash pad at Uptown Mall are becoming **community gathering spots**.

A **5,500 square foot public library** is located at the Uptown Shopping Mall.

Rudd Park and **Rutledge Park** are neighbourhood parks at the periphery of the UDC area.

What Does This Mean?

The majority of open space and trail amenities are located west of Douglas Street and run north to south. There is less connectivity and open space east-west through the study area.

Some of the open space and park areas are located adjacent to high traffic areas, impacting their usability and accessibility.

The two Capital Regional District (CRD) trails that run through the study area are multi-use trails providing bike and pedestrian commuter routes, recreational opportunities and tourism attractions.

There are three times as many employees than residents in the UDC area. Typically, Saanich has focused park space on serving residential populations, however in order to attract investment, support commercial activity and improve the quality of life for everyone in the area, additional consideration will need to be given to parks and open spaces that services a number of populations.

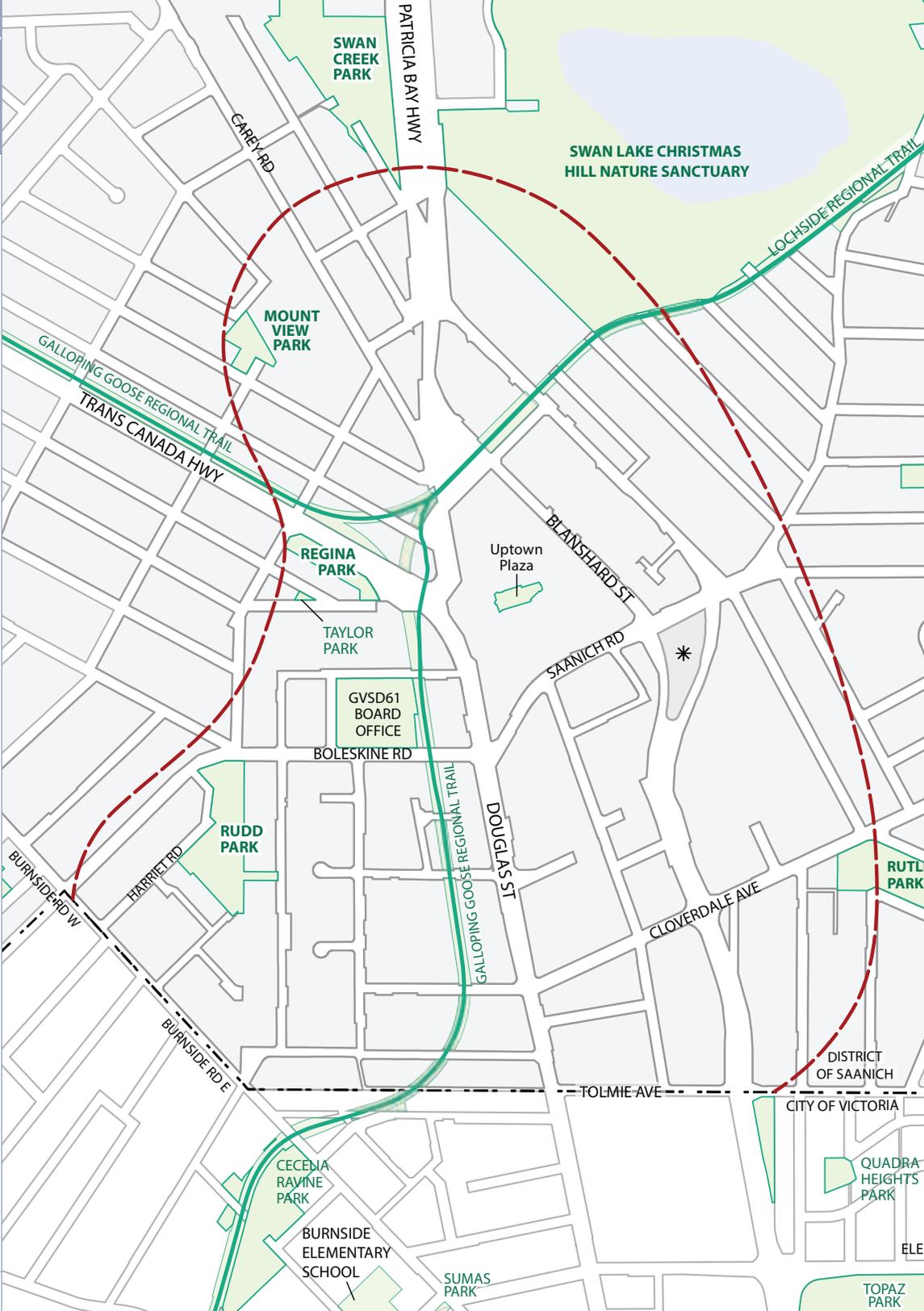
The Official Community Plan identifies the parks standard as 5 ha per 1,000 residents (excluding Regional Parks). It is further broken down as follows:

Park Type	ha/1000 residents	
	OCP Standard	UDC
Neighbourhood	1.2	1.0
Community	1.4	0.0
Municipal	2.4	1.1
TOTAL	5.0	2.1

On average, Saanich exceeds the park standard on a municipal level, however the UDC area will need to add a significant amount of new park space to meet the needs of the current and projected population.



Parks and Open Space



-  Uptown-Douglas Corridor Plan Area
- Open Space**
-  Park & Open Space
-  Regional Trail
-  BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (Row)



Sustainable Design, Green Buildings and Infrastructure

Quick Facts

426,468 tonnes of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions were emitted by community activities in Saanich.

Source: Community Energy & Emissions Inventory (2010)

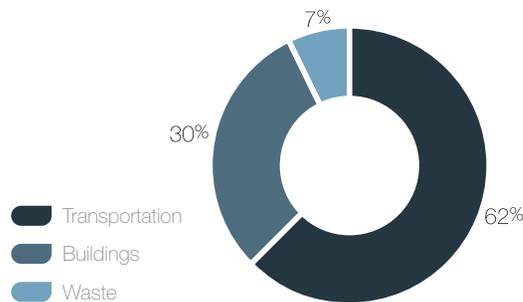
A **33% reduction** of 2007 levels in community GHG emissions is targeted by 2020.

Source: Climate Action Plan (2009)

4 commercial buildings have achieved sustainable standards/certifications (BOMA BEST or LEED).

There are **8 electric vehicle** charging stations in the Plan area, including one DC fast charger.

Saanich Community GHG Inventory



What Does This Mean?

The breakdown of GHG emissions by sector shows 62% is related to fuel combustion vehicles, 31% related to buildings and 7% to landfill waste.

Source: Community Energy & Emissions Inventory (2010)

Saanich is aiming to reduce community emissions below existing levels as follows:

- Transportation – 45%
- Buildings – 30%
- Waste – 50%

Source: Saanich Climate Action Plan (2010)

Given the relatively high redevelopment rates and the age of the existing building stock, significant opportunities exist to improve the overall energy performance of buildings. Increased transit service and transportation options, including rapid transit, has significant potential to reduce community GHG emissions.

More complete, sustainable, mixed use developments could reduce the need for vehicle trips, and in turn, enhance pedestrian, transit, and cycling friendly commuting – reducing GHGs.

There has been a reduction in permeable surfaces in the UDC area. Permeability could be improved by including green infrastructure such as bioswales, permeable paving and green roofs.

District energy could improve energy efficiency and reduce GHGs, however more research and analysis is required to determine the feasibility.



Natural Environment

Quick Facts

There are **2 watersheds** within the UDC area: Cecilia Creek Watershed & Colquitz Creek Watershed.

The UDC Plan area has relatively **few ecologically significant areas** with a portion around **Swan Lake** identified as sensitive ecosystem by the Provincial and Federal Governments.

Cecilia Creek, which runs through the UDC area, has the undesirable title of being one of the Capital Regional District's most polluted creeks.

Most of the pollution in Cecilia Creek comes from urban runoff, as approximately **70%** of the UDC Plan area consists of **impervious surfaces** (compared to 60% in 2005 and 50% in 1986).

There was approximately a **37% tree canopy loss** in the UDC area between 2005 and 2011.

What Does This Mean?

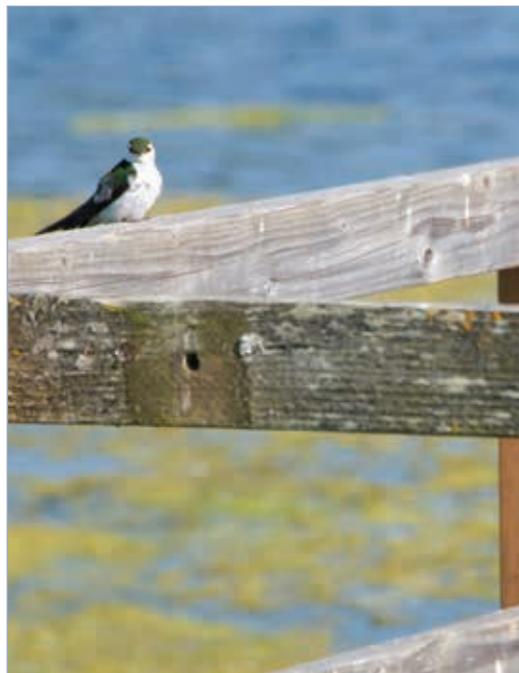
Over time, the UDC area has been intensified by development, mostly commercial, industrial and multi-family with high levels of building coverage or paving. Permeability has decreased over time which has reduced the ability of nature to filter pollutants from stormwater runoff before it returns to water bodies.

Tree canopy cover has steadily declined since 1986 indicating that street trees and tree stands have disappeared as the area was developed. Street trees create

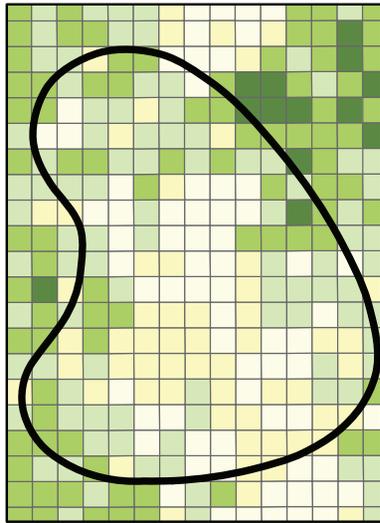
a positive, enjoyable atmosphere for pedestrians and contributes to the quality of the urban environment.

Outside of the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, no areas of the UDC have been formally identified for environmental protection.

Given that the ecological integrity of the area has been significantly degraded, the majority of future opportunities will involve restoration, the re-introduction of native plants and Naturescaping.

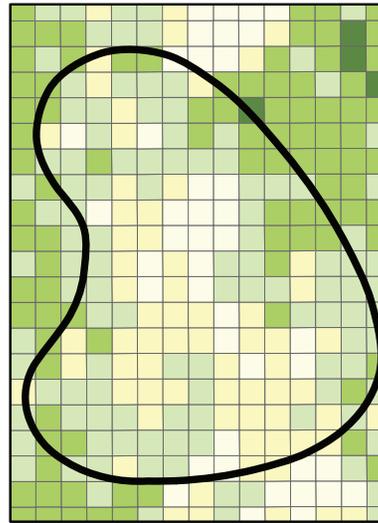


Tree Canopy
14.3%



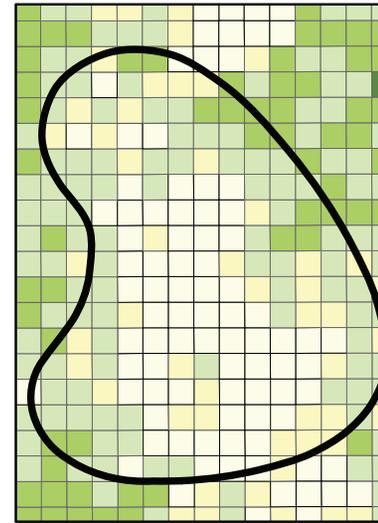
1986 Conditions

15.6%



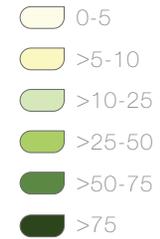
2005 Conditions

10.9%

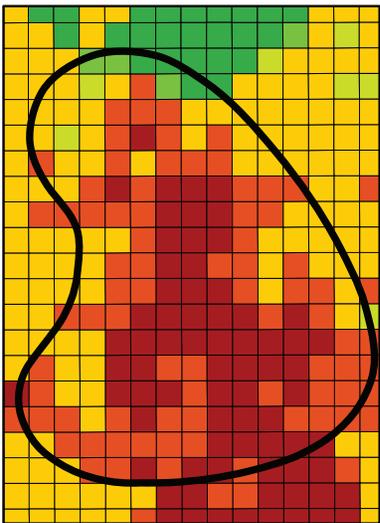


2011 (Current Conditions)

% Tree Canopy Cover (1986 - 2011)

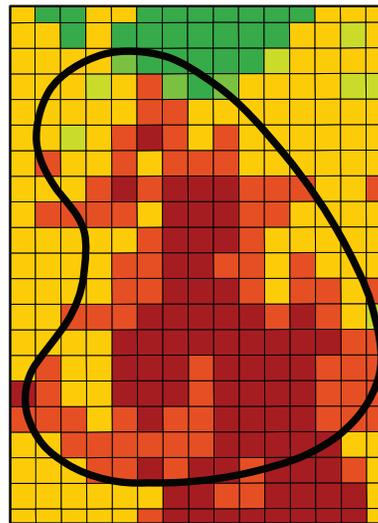


Permeable Surfaces
49.8%



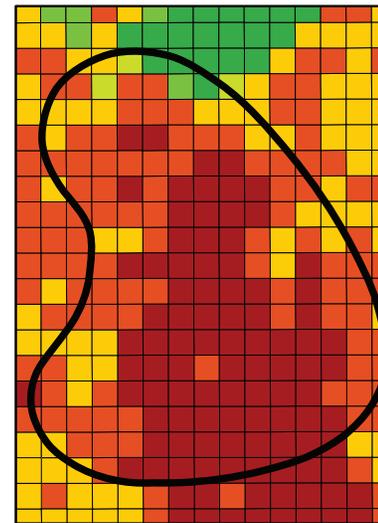
1986 Conditions

60.8%



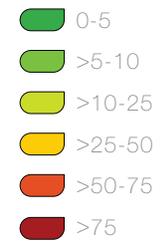
2005 Conditions

68.6%



2011 (Current Conditions)

% Impervious Surface Density (1986 - 2011)



Note: Stormwater management systems (e.g. Uptown Shopping Center) is not included in the data

Source: Urban Forest Canopy Cover Mapping and Analysis in the CRD (2012)

