Shelbourne Valley Plan (Update)

Frequently Asked Questions

October 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

i. What is the Shelbourne Valley Plan (SVP)?
The Shelbourne Valley Plan provides a comprehensive vision, policies, and guidelines to guide land use and transportation decisions in the Shelbourne Valley area. This Plan was originally adopted in 2017 (as the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan) following a comprehensive planning process involving the public and other stakeholders and is now in process of being updated.

ii. What will the Shelbourne Valley Plan Update entail?
The SVP update will provide an opportunity to reflect on changes that have happened in Saanich and the Shelbourne Valley over the past seven years and ensure policy directions reflect current realities and direction provided by Council.

The Update will take a focused approach, acknowledging that many of the Plan's directions are still relevant. Key points of focus will include:
- Revisions to the SVAP's existing land use designations and policies to align with the Official Community Plan and the draft land use framework in the Quadra McKenzie Plan (in-progress Plan);
- Updates to align with recently adopted Master Plans, like the Climate Plan, Active Transportation Plan and Housing Strategy;
- Updates to demographic information; and
- Changes to reflect plan implementation progress.

iii. Why is it necessary to update the Plan?
Since the adoption of the Plan in 2017, several significant developments, capital projects, and initiatives (completed and ongoing) have been implemented. An update to the SVP is important to stay consistent with the changing trends in demography, provincial legislation, community aspirations, and Saanich's overarching vision. The plan update provides the opportunity to revise and align land use designations in the Shelbourne Valley area with provisions of the OCP, as well as to further expand the potential for growth in the area.

iv. Who will use the Plan?
Residents, developers, businesses, community groups, staff and Council will use the plan to guide future changes in the Shelbourne Valley, including where and how future growth is intended to occur in the plan area. Planning Staff will use the Plan and the Official Community Plan (OCP) to make recommendations that will guide the Council in making decisions about zoning and development.

v. How will the Plan update affect my property?
The proposed update largely maintains the existing boundary from the 2017 plan. However, it will involve re-evaluating the current land use designations and examining new areas that are currently not designated. These designations will align with the OCP framework and will determine the type of development allowed on various parcels in the plan area upon completion.

B. PLANNING PROCESS

i. How long will it take to update the Plan?

The update involves five phases with an anticipated completion in 2026. Each phase will include opportunities for public involvement, and the final project deliverable is the presentation of a proposed Shelbourne Valley Plan to Council.

- **Phase 1:** Project Initiation and preliminary assessment – To build the information base, create awareness and prepare the strategy for the next phases.

- **Phase 2:** Plan Evaluation – Engagement with the community and other stakeholders to assess the Plan

- **Phase 3:** Plan Update – Amend the Plan to reflect findings from the evaluation and align with the Official Community Plan and other recent initiatives.

- **Phase 4:** Draft Plan Review and Refinement – To collaborate with the community and other stakeholders to revise the initial concepts and draft policy directions.

- **Phase 5:** Plan Adoption - To present the proposed plan to Council, stakeholders, and the public.

ii. Who will be involved in the update process?

The plan update will be led by Saanich's Planning Department with support from Parks, Engineering and Sustainability Departments. Members of the community including residents, landowners, community associations, housing providers, and other interested parties will be engaged at different phases of the update process.

iii. How will development applications be managed during Plan update process?

Decisions on development applications in the plan area will continue to be primarily guided by the Official Community Plan, with additional policy direction from the existing Shelbourne Valley Action Plan.

C. DEFINITION OF TERMS

i. What is a Primary Growth Area (PGA)?

Primary Growth Areas are where most of the future housing, employment, amenities, and services will be accommodated. These areas are envisioned to be vibrant centres and villages, with fully designed corridors for efficient multi-modal transit. Details about Primary Growth Areas in Saanich is provided in Section 7.3 of the Official Community Plan.

ii. What are Centre, Corridor and Village (CCV) plans?

CCV Plans are detailed land use plans that articulate how the broader OCP vision is implemented in the Primary Growth Areas (PGAs). These plans focus on land use, housing, transportation, and the public realm. The centers and villages are vibrant urban and local activity areas respectively, offering spaces diverse housing, commerce, employment, and community amenities. Corridors connect these areas to each other and to adjacent neighborhoods and regional destinations. The Shelbourne Valley Plan is a CCV plan comprising Shelbourne McKenzie Centre, Shelbourne Valley Centre, and Hillside Centre, Feltham Village, and the Shelbourne Corridor.

Click this link to watch a video about Saanich's Centre, Corridor, and Village Plans:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAs0ZfxZVnk

iii. What is Zoning?

Zoning is a local government tool, authorized by the Local Government Act, to regulate how land, buildings, and other structures are used, built, and divided within a community. Through zoning bylaws, municipalities can establish rules for the specific uses (like residential, commercial, or industrial), building heights, density, and property setbacks, effectively shaping a community's growth and development.

iv. What is Pre-zoning?

Pre-zoning is a mechanism where the municipality can initiate a zoning change for a larger area to match zoning with the designation in advance thereby supporting the implementation of the objectives and policies expressed in the area plans. Pre-zoning eliminates the need for rezoning applications. That said, all applications for redevelopment, even those in alignment with new zones, would still be subject to a Development Permit which would involve a review to assess alignment with design guidelines.

Pre-zoning can be a proactive approach to land use planning to speed up approvals and provide greater certainty for applicants. It does however remove the negotiation stage where community amenity contributions (CACs) are often secured. The Uptown Douglas Plan Pre-zoning and Network Design Project is an example of an ongoing pre-zoning project in Saanich. Pre-zoning could be considered as a potential implementation item of the Shelbourne Valley Plan.

v. What are special sites?

Special Sites are properties in the Shelbourne Valley Plan with additional policy guidance due to their unique characteristics, assets, environmental conditions, or infrastructure constraints. These sites are typically:

- Larger development parcels that are cornerstone sites in the area and have the potential to contribute to multiple plan objectives;
- Directly impacted by Bowker Creek, either as a natural creek or one that is
- underground and has the potential to be daylighted; and/or
- Constrained by the presence of existing underground municipal storm and / or sewer infrastructure.

D. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS AND INITIATIVES

i. What is the relationship between the Shelbourne Valley Plan and the Official Community Plan?

The Shelbourne Valley Plan supplements the Official Community Plan (OCP), which is the main policy document for managing land use and growth in Saanich. The plan provides detailed guidance for land use in the primary growth areas within the Shelbourne Valley. Content from the Shelbourne Valley Plan will be considered as part of the OCP Bylaw following its adoption.

ii. What is the relationship between the Plan and the Quadra McKenzie Plan?

Both the Quadra McKenzie Plan and the Shelbourne Valley Plan (SVP) are CCV plans with overlapping areas at the intersection of Shelbourne Street and McKenzie Avenue, known as Shelbourne McKenzie Centre. The SVP update will defer to the Quadra McKenzie Plan for land use designations and related decisions. Visit www.saanich.ca/qmp to learn more about the Quadra McKenzie Plan.

iii. What is the relationship between the Plan and the Shelbourne Street Improvement Project (SSIP)?

The Shelbourne Street Improvement Project is an element of the 2017 Shelbourne Valley Action Plan. However, the Plan update will not consider changes to the Shelbourne Street Improvement Project. Relevant sections in the SVP will be updated to reflect SSIP implementation progress.

iv. How do other District/ Regional Plans and Initiatives relate to the SVAP?

The Shelbourne Valley Plan works in concert with several other plans and initiatives like the Official Community Plan, Climate Plan, Housing Strategy, Bowker Creek Initiative, Active Transportation Plan, as well as Urban Design Guidelines, to provide direction for future change in the community. The Shelbourne Valley Plan overlaps the Quadra McKenzie Plan at the University Centre, with the Quadra McKenzie Plan taking precedence in this area.

E. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PLAN

i. Why are the Zones in the Zoning Bylaw different from the Designations in the Plan?
Zones in the Zoning Bylaw defines what is permitted on a property now. Land Use Designations, describe what is envisioned for the area in future. In order to implement conditions identified in the Future Land Use Designations, a rezoning process is required that would involve evaluation of multiple factors, including building and site design.

ii. Will the Plan result in the rezoning of my property?
The plan will not automatically result in the rezoning of properties. What the Plan provides are land use designations. So should a property owner choose to redevelop their property, the Plan would be used to guide any potential rezoning process, which would still require a council decision with the Shelbourne Valley Plan being used to help evaluate that decision.

iii. Will the Plan force multi-unit development to occur on my property?
No. Although the land use designations are mapped to parcel level in the Shelbourne Valley Plan, achieving the development expectations in many areas will often require rezoning and sometimes land assembly to meet the requirement of the new zone. For example, a property that is zoned single-family use but designated for Apartment (Low Rise) in the Plan, will need to go through the rezoning process before such a development can occur. This change would only occur in instances where it is initiated by the property owner.

iv. What is the implication of the new land use designations on property taxes?
BC Assessment is responsible for assessing and assigning land value, which informs the tax payable. In doing so, the agency considers the zoning, current use, and improvements on the land. Policy designations applied over a large area (without rezoning) generally do not typically significantly affect property values or the resulting taxes.

v. Where will the new parks to support future population in the area be located?
The Shelbourne Valley area is one of the areas with limited parks compared to other areas in Saanich. In planning for the anticipated growth, the District have identified the Shelbourne Valley as one of the key areas for future park acquisition. Parks acquisition in based on the District-wide funding through the Development Cost Charges and other park acquisition funds.

Key priorities for future acquisition in the Shelbourne Valley include locations in or near the Shelbourne Valley Centre and the Shelbourne McKenzie Centre, and properties needed for Bowker Creek greenway implementation. Details about specific parks acquisitions remain confidential in order not to impact the District's negotiating position negatively.

vi. How will the Plan address housing affordability in the area?
The land use designations in the Plan support more housing, thereby directly addressing the supply of market housing. The Plan also contains specific policies to support affordable housing, including non-market housing on institutional properties.

Other district-wide efforts to increase affordable housing include:

- [Rapid Deployment Non-Market Housing Program](#), which seeks to make it easier to build non-market housing in Saanich. By increasing housing supply above demand, market forces may help regulate prices, while the additional efforts will further enhance housing affordability.

- **Providing Saanich-Owned Land.** While Saanich does not own a lot of surplus land, the District is exploring partnerships with non-profits for new affordable housing projects. For example, Saanich partnered with the Capital Region Housing Corporation, BC Housing, and the Federal government to redevelop the site of the Nellie McClung Library branch to include a new library and 210 units of

nonmarket housing. Providing land can significantly reduce both upfront and carrying costs of new housing projects, resulting in more affordability.

- **Saanich Affordable Housing Reserve Fund** dedicated to supporting the development of non-market housing. The Fund receives monies from community amenity contributions from private development. These funds can be leveraged to apply for major funding from organizations like BC Housing and CMHC.

- **Saanich's Non-Market Housing Policy**, which enables f**ast-tracking approvals for** non-profit and co-operative housing providers are prioritized throughout the entire development review process. These priority projects go to the "top of the pile" from initial application right through to occupancy permit.

- **Reductions in Costs and Fees for** non-profit housing providers to help keep rental costs as low as possible. These include waivers for Community Amenity Contributions, reduced Development Cost Charges, and permissive tax exemptions.

vi. How does the Plan address daylighting and other challenges associated with the Bowker Creek?

The Bowker Creek is an important natural feature in the area. The Plan supports the overall enhancement of the Creek, including the riparian areas and watershed, through various policies in the climate and environment section. Additional guidance was provided for development on sites (Special Sites) that are directly impacted by the Creek. Daylighting (i.e. making it open and above ground) of the Bowker Creek is an inter-municipal exercise. Daylighting the Creek is not a requirement for development within the plan area, but it will be part of the negotiations during the development application process. The Bowker Creek Blueprint is a 100-year plan, and it acknowledges the challenges of trying to daylight the creek in an already urbanized area.

vii. How will the Plan address the possibility of heat sinks with increasing large, heavily clustered structures and virtually no trees?

The Plan supports the preservation of exiting trees and plating of new ones, especially along the road right of ways. A Tree Equity Map for the are have also been included to identify specific areas where it is critical to improve tree canopy. The CRD's extreme heat data have also been incorporated to map the level of building vulnerable to heat in the area.

viii. Why was the Plan renamed Shelbourne Valley Plan?

The plan was renamed as to align with the naming convention of other Centre, Corridor and Village Plans in Saanich.

viii. Why are you proposing this scale of developments in this area?

The Plan is working within the framework of the Official Community Plan approved by Council. The OCP designates this area as part of the Primary Growth Areas in Saanich where most new future development is expected to be accommodated. This will help Saanich achieve complete communities with housing, employment, shopping, and other community services located within proximity and along major transit routes.

ix. How will the infrastructure needed to service the future developments proposed in this be provided?

Development Cost Charges (DCCs) and Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) are the two primary mechanisms by which Saanich finances these improvements. DCCs are obtained as part of development applications, and they fund capital upgrades to sanitary, water, drainage, and transportation systems, and provide funding for parkland acquisition. CACs contribute to area livability through a defined framework for community contributions, guided by Saanich's Community Amenity Contribution and Inclusionary Housing Policy.

This policy outlines expectations for rezoning applications to provide public benefits (monetary or in-kind). Additionally, site specific improvements are often required to be provided by the developer as part of individual redevelopment applications.

x. Are the schools in the Plan area involved in the process?

The District work closely with the School Board, providing them with Saanich future land use plans and projection numbers. The Board considers this information in their priorities for development.

xi. Will future developments along Shelbourne Street leave enough space for landscape and pedestrian realm?

The Shelbourne Valley Plan identifies a long-term design concept for Shelbourne Street that includes wide sidewalks, tree planting space and separated bike lanes. As properties along Shelbourne Street redevelop they provide dedications at the front of their property that allow the space to implement these improvements (see section 6.6 of the Draft Plan).