

**MINUTES**  
**ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held electronically via MS Teams  
**January 19, 2022 at 6:01 pm**

Present: Councillor Karen Harper (Chair), Braedan Drouillard, Kaden Calleberg (Youth Member), Kurban Ali Keshvani, Ryan Senechal, Sarah Anderson, Spencer Gillis (Youth Member).

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Nathalie Dechaine, Manager of Community Development/Business Systems; Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; Silvia Exposito, Planner; Megan MacDonald, Senior Committee Clerk; and Austin Winters, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Jennifer Grant

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**MINUTES**

**MOVED by R. Senechal and Seconded by B. Drouillard “That the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held November 25, 2021 be adopted as circulated.”**

**CARRIED**

**CHAIR’S COMMENTS / WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed new members to the committee. The Chair encouraged all members to contact her if they have any questions, concerns or ideas about the committee. Members of the committee and staff participated in roundtable introductions.

**2022 MEETING DATES / TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Chair confirmed that meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month, except for July, August and December. The Terms of Reference were provided to members of the committee for informational purposes.

**IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY INPUT TO TREE INVENTORIES**

Committee Member R. Senechal presented on community tree inventories: The following was noted:

- Parks staff provided a report on mapping and tracking the urban forest to Council in 2020 that provides some background on the utilities of tree inventory to the community.
- The key points of the report include:
  - There are high levels of engagement and interest into Saanich’s urban forest.
  - Information on tree quantity, species, health and growth is currently insufficient.
  - An inventory is important to manage the urban forest comprehensively and efficiently.
- Council supported and funded these recommendations beginning in 2021 and the Parks Department’s capacity to take on inventory tasks is coming online.
- Capturing Saanich’s public trees is a large undertaking and time is precious given the anticipated stress on urban trees modeled in a 2 degrees Celsius warming scenario.

- Volunteer participation in measuring and monitoring urban forests can increase the effort to build a public urban tree inventory.
- In doing so it can improve the community's understanding of the urban tree benefits.
- Community tree inventories (CTI) blend the needs of urban forest managers with engagement and empowerment of community members.
- A tree inventory is a spreadsheet combining information about trees and their physical location in a predetermined area. This information may or may not be visually represented on a map.
- Tree inventories can be used for monitoring the condition of a tree population over a temporal scale; provide insight into the survival rate of a tree population to plan for succession; and assists with prioritizing use of operational resources.
- CTI incorporates volunteers gathering field information including the physical location of trees in a predetermined area, the size of trees and their condition.
- The field skills volunteers require would be developed through training sessions and occasional audits that are delivered by inventory experts.
- Field data that is collected would then be integrated into Saanich maps and geographical information systems (GIS)
- In Saanich's public facing GIS there are currently 141 significant trees under public, private or shared ownership.
- Tree inventory is widely supported in the field of urban forestry and is an important tool to adapt to climate change pressures.
- CTI has been utilized in cities such as Portland, New York City, and Hamilton, Ontario though volunteer inputs vary in each location.
- The University of Toronto has tree inventory resources that are easy to follow through their Neighbourhoods Program.
- A potential motion to recommend that Council consider a CTI pilot project in the form of a special event at a special urban park was brought forward.
- If this event were to be successful, additional events could be considered by Council in the future.
- Cost of this initiative could vary based on the quality of data that is desired as well as potential staff oversight.

The following was noted during discussion with committee members:

- CTI could potentially assist in completing many goals that were established in the 2010 Urban Forest Strategy.
- Questioning over how education could be intertwined with CTI took place.
- Staff volunteered to come back to the committee at a later meeting and present in March or April on the topics raised.
- iNaturalist could be utilized as a citizen science tool for CTI.
- Saanich just hired a new Manager of Asset Management and they will assist in ensuring data collected is integrated into existing systems appropriately which could in turn assist efforts with a CTI initiative.
- Some agencies have used i-Tree as a part of encouraging citizen science and community engagement.
- i-Tree is a collection of free science-based tools that: quantifies the benefits and values of trees around the world; aids in tree and forest management and advocacy; and shows potential risks to tree and forest health.
- Due to a potential lack of staff resources, community based initiatives are an ideal solution to rectifying CTI and issues alike.

**OVERVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS, MOTIONS AND INITIATIVES FROM 2021**

The Manager of Environmental Services presented on current outstanding actions, motions and initiatives relating to ENAC from 2021. The following was noted:

- The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Environmental Awards took place.
- The draft goals and objectives of the Resilient Saanich Committee was reviewed.
- The Committee supported budgets for the Urban Forest Strategy on various items.
- Some of the topics the Committee provided feedback on in 2021 include:
  - Pollinators;
  - The Cordova Bay Local Area Plan;
  - Natural gas in new constructions;
  - Accessible urban forests;
  - Plastic pollution;
  - Green shores;
  - Deconstruction;
  - The Climate Plan report card;
  - Fossil fuel use in buildings.
- Some topics that will need Committee feedback in 2022 include:
  - The Bowker Creek daylighting study;
  - The Streamside Development Permit Area guidelines;
  - The Streamside mapping;
  - A step code and building retrofit study;
  - The Climate Plan report card;
  - The Cordova Bay pilot integrated storm water management plan project;
  - The water course and drainage bylaw;
  - The Urban Forest Strategy;
  - Panama Flats engagement;
  - The Housing Strategy;
  - The Environmental Awards;
  - Any significant tree nominations.
- Some outstanding motions from 2021 include:
  - A motion to Council to acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the Saanich Greenbelt Proposal, to recognize successes in its implementation and to highlight the need for continued environmental leadership.
  - A motion that Council direct staff, consultants and the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee to implement an intersectionality lens in the update of the Urban Forest Strategy, the development of the Biodiversity Strategy, and the Environmental Policy Framework.
  - The Committee requested more details on the proposed expansion and funding for the Saanich Naturescape Program.

**RESILIENT SAANICH UPDATE**

The Manager of Environmental Services gave an update on the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee (RSTC). The following was noted:

- RSTC is an initiative that has a 3 milestone approach.
- The first milestone has been completed and a progress report went to Council.
- Milestone one was about getting the community together and trying to come up with goals and objectives for the Committee.
- The RSTC is currently in milestone 2 which is the assess phase and explores the state of biodiversity as well as different elements of an environmental policy framework.

- Councillor Mersereau is the Council liaison for the RSTC and the chair of the RSTC is a member of the public.
- All of the members who sit on the RSTC had to apply and were then appointed by Council.
- Members of the RSTC have areas of expertise in a wide range of fields such as biology, landscape architecture, urban forestry, First Nations peoples, and conservation biology.
- RSTC's Terms of Reference can be viewed in the link below:
  - <https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Community/Documents/Environment/RSTC%20TOR.pdf>
- Requests for Proposals went out to get a consulting team together to develop the state of biodiversity report and the biodiversity conservation strategy as well as extra support for the RSTC.
- The three main parts of the RSTC's focus right now are:
  - The existing Climate Plan;
  - The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy; and
  - Stewardship
- Involvement with First Nations has been prioritized to get them engaged and ensure their voices are heard with respect to the work being done by the RSTC.
- Saanich and the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council have a Memorandum of Understanding in place.
- Cultural training and exchanging will be taking place for the RSTC.

## **DRAFT CADBORO BAY LOCAL AREA PLAN**

Silvia Exposito, a Planner from Community Planning and Project Manager of the Cadboro Bay Local Area Plan (LAP) delivered a presentation on the Draft Cadboro Bay LAP. The following was noted:

- LAPs are one of the guiding policies for the District of Saanich and they are critical to delivering substantive change over a 20 to 30 year time frame.
- There is a process that is approved by Council for developing LAPs. This process includes:
  - Phase 1 is project initiation;
  - Phase 2 is community visioning;
  - Phase 3 is plan development;
  - Phase 4 is the draft plan review (current phase);
  - Phase 5 is the plan finalization.
- ENAC is brought this LAP to review and provide feedback on prior to bringing this draft LAP to Council.
- The last Cadboro Bay LAP was established in 2002, thus there is a need to update the LAP to meet current municipal priorities and policies.
- The LAP update began in 2018 and it includes an advisory committee that has been assisting staff with community outreach.
- The community input for this draft LAP has been a multi-year process that has explored issues and developed fundamental content of the draft plan.
- Multiple surveys, workshops, open houses, stakeholder meetings and multi-day charrettes were completed to better develop policies and garner key priorities for the LAP.
- The LAP is part of Saanich's Official Community Plan which includes the Sustainable Saanich OCP.
- The updated LAP process also looked to integrate the District's housing strategy, climate action priorities with regards to mitigation and adaptation as well as updates to active transportation.

- The LAPs are very comprehensive in the range of topics they address, but with respect to this presentation the primary focus is on transportation, land use, and the environment.
- Cadboro Bay Local Area has three distinct neighbourhoods which include “The Village, Ten Mile Point, and Queenswood.”
- A lot of the future growth and change from the LAP is focused primarily on the Village Centre and the Village neighbourhood.
- The Queenswood and Ten Mile Point area would largely remain as is with regards to future land use designations except for district wide in-fill projects.
- There is a huge diversity of ecosystems within Cadboro Bay and the draft LAP looks to provide approaches such as education, stewardship and restoration to ensure sensitive development that respects these ecosystems.
- The majority of Cadboro Bay is single detached dwellings and it contains many large institutional properties.
- Cadboro Bay is projected to be one of the areas of Saanich most impacted by a potential sea level rise due to climate change.
- Sinclair Road is a key focus of the LAP process, with clear policy direction for improvements in the Draft LAP.
- The improvements include a design concept for Sinclair Road in alignment with Draft LAP objectives, enhancing the role of Sinclair as a community gateway, and enhancing the Cadboro Bay Rd. and Sinclair Rd. intersection.
- Section 3 of the LAP focuses on the environment and sustainability for which includes policies and directions around protecting and enhancing local areas, the marine shoreline, the coastal upland, and the urban forest.
- These policies within the LAP would increase the ability of Saanich to adapt to climate change impacts.
- There is detailed mapping within the LAP of significant natural assets found within Cadboro Bay such as nesting areas and significant trees.
- There are two large institutional properties in the Queenswood area that contain young forests and diverse ecosystems.
- There are nine key directions taken into account for the Cadboro Bay LAP, for which a lot of them are related to retaining the character of the area while also making housing and active transportation more accessible.
- From a land use perspective the majority of the change with this LAP is in the village neighbourhood where ground-oriented housing will be supported.
- There is also support for added height allowances on institutional mixed-use sites for affordable housing.
- The LAP looks to expand the area where townhouses would be supported as well as additional commercial opportunities and smaller scale apartments along Sinclair Ave.
- With regards to concerns about potential sea levels rising the LAP incorporates the most recent CRD sea level rise mapping and adjusts land use designations based on the mapping.
- From an active transportation aspect improving connectivity of the street and trail network for pedestrians and cyclists accessing the Village, the beaches and area destinations is a key priority of the updated LAP.
- The LAP envisions keeping the green character and semi-rural quality of the streets within the Ten Mile Point area.
- The Village Design Guidelines are also being updated along with the LAP.
- The Guidelines provide direction for building and site design in the Cadboro Bay Village and its surrounding area.
- The Guidelines apply to multi-unit residential, commercial and mixed-use developments in the Village area.

- The next steps for the Cadboro Bay LAP include community and stakeholder consultations followed by changes to the LAP based off of feedback and surveys.
- The LAP will be brought forward for Council consideration and adoption in April or May 2022.

The following was noted during discussion with committee members:

- Questioning took place over the degree to which the Planning Department collaborates with the Engineering Department for this LAP.
- It was clarified that the draft LAP has been written in collaboration with the Engineering Department.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

## **NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting is Wednesday February 16, 2022.

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Councillor Karen Harper, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Austin Winters, Committee Secretary