

# Public Process Handbook

Revised: August 2015

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## **WE ARE ALL PART OF THIS COMMUNITY**

Welcome to the District of Saanich Handbook on Public Process. Did you know that at any given time, throughout Saanich, there are projects underway that require public input? These projects will impact where you live, work and play.

Many of the important decisions that affect you, your family and neighbours on a daily basis are made at the local government level. The community, as a whole, benefits when there is a strong working partnership between citizens, Council and staff.

At the District we recognize that providing citizens with knowledge and tools about public process and encouraging public participation is an integral part of good governance. The more informed and involved citizens and community groups are, the better able we are to build the community we want. Involving the public in discussions on matters that affect them improves the quality of decisions made and ensures that diverse opinions, information and experiences are considered in the decision making process.

We want to continue to strengthen this partnership with citizens and the community as a whole. Through this Public Process Handbook we will provide information about the District and outline some strategies for how we can successfully work together. We want to understand what is important to you. We would like to hear what you, your family, neighbours, colleagues and friends value. We want to be made aware of the differing perspectives on the many initiatives that the District undertakes.

It is important for all of us to be involved and we believe that this handbook is one way to begin a conversation about future decisions as they will impact you, your family and neighbours.

Thank you for your interest and your involvement.



“ *The challenges of these times call for collective intelligence.  
We must co-create the solutions we seek....”*

~Margaret Wheatley

## WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?

Before we start talking about how and why to become involved in public participation in Saanich it is important to understand what the District does.

This handbook will provide you with:

**Understanding** about local government decision making, public process and public participation.

**Knowledge** about the legislative framework, financial accountability, the budget and community design planning and development in Saanich.

**Information** about how the District engages its citizens and other stakeholder groups.

**Skills** to contribute to the public participation processes in a meaningful way.



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## HOW DOES THE DISTRICT WORK?

Municipal government decisions and the services it provides impact us daily. The water we drink, the roads we travel, the sidewalks and trails we walk, the sports fields, arenas and pools we play in, the community centres where we gather, our personal and property safety, environmental concerns, how communities are planned and developed, parking, running a special event, selling goods or having a noisy dog or neighbour — all are connected with decisions and services at a local government level. Understanding how the District works and how to be involved will help us create the kind of community we all want to live in.

Did You  
KNOW?

### The District:

- Operates four recreation centres and one golf course which serves 109,752 Saanich residents as well as residents in neighbouring municipalities
- Provides garbage/composting services to 34,000 households
- Maintains 573.5 kms of roads
- Provides water to 31,000 households

*\* based on 2014 stats*

## How Are We Governed?

Saanich is governed by an elected Council comprised of a Mayor and eight Councillors. Council serves the citizens of Saanich by fulfilling its responsibilities as set out in the Community Charter and the Local Government Act; being responsible for developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the District; and making sure that the powers, duties and functions of the District are appropriately carried out.

## WHERE TO FIND IT

**Get to Know Your Local Politicians** See the “Meet your Council” section of our website ([saanich.ca](http://saanich.ca)) to learn more and to find contact information.



The Community Charter and the Local Government Act form the legislative framework under which all British Columbia municipalities operate. The Community Charter establishes municipal powers and responsibilities while still providing the flexibility to address community needs. The broad powers provided by the Community Charter are balanced with an accountability and public participation framework while the Local Government Act includes provisions for public information and participation in land use regulatory processes.

The Community Charter also states each member of Council, including the Mayor, has an equal vote, no one member has greater authority. A Council must adopt a procedure bylaw that outlines the process it will follow to adopt bylaws, pass resolutions, and conduct its business. Saanich’s Procedure Bylaw establishes rules of procedure by which Council (and Committees) function and facilitate public participation which is vital to the decision making process.

## Did You KNOW?

The election cycle has changed and will be held in the fall of every 4th year (the next one being held in 2018).

## Who Is Responsible for What?

Here are some examples:

District of Saanich	Capital Regional District	Province of British Columbia	Federal Government of Canada
Distribution of water	Hospitals	Transit	Postal Services
Local roads	Sewers	Public schooling	Citizenship and Immigration
Sidewalks	Drinking water	Health	Military and National Defense
Recreation centres	Community Health	Social Services	Banking rules and legal tender
Local planning	Recycling	Highways	Marriage and Divorce
Parking	Animal Control	Liquor license applications	Patents of Invention and Discovery
Waste and compost	Capital Region Housing	Non-renewable & forestry resources	Criminal Law
Noise bylaws	Corporation	Insurance	Sea Coast and Inland Fisheries
	Docks and mooring		

## Saanich's Role in the CRD

The District of Saanich is part of the Capital Regional District (CRD). The CRD's jurisdiction is the Southern tip of Vancouver Island and the surrounding 70 Gulf Islands. As a corporate entity the CRD is governed by a Board of Directors, made up of elected municipal and electoral area representatives from 13 municipalities and three electoral (unincorporated) areas. The members that make up the CRD are:

- Central Saanich
- Colwood
- Esquimalt
- Highlands
- Langford
- Metchosin
- North Saanich
- Oak Bay
- Saanich
- Sidney
- Sooke
- Victoria
- View Royal
- Juan de Fuca (electoral)
- Saltspring Island (electoral)
- Southern Gulf Islands (electoral)

The CRD is governed by a 24-member Board of Directors, who also sit as members of the Regional Hospital Board. The Board is made up of Municipal Directors (who are appointed by their respective councils), and Directors from the Electoral Areas (who are elected for a four year term). The Board provides a political forum for representation of regional residents and communities and a vehicle for advancing the interests of the region as a whole. Board meetings are held once a month and are guided by the Local Government Act and the Community Charter. Meetings are open to the public.

The CRD derives authority from Letters Patent, through Establishment Bylaws and generally from provincial legislation, primarily the Local Government Act and the Community Charter.

Representation on the CRD Board balances the need to reflect varying population bases across the region with different community interests. Each local government gets one vote for every 5,000 population (or portion thereof). Each local government gets one director for every 25,000 population (or portion thereof). If a member municipality has more than one director, then the number of votes are divided as evenly as possible.

## HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE?

There is a predictable cycle that Council follows when setting the policies that guide the operations, programs and activities of the District. At each phase in this cycle, Council welcomes public input. In addition, to ensure that Saanich is moving in the right direction, citizen and business surveys are conducted at regular intervals. The cycle begins with the creation of a vision statement which articulates the dreams and hopes of Saanich in the future.

Did You Know?

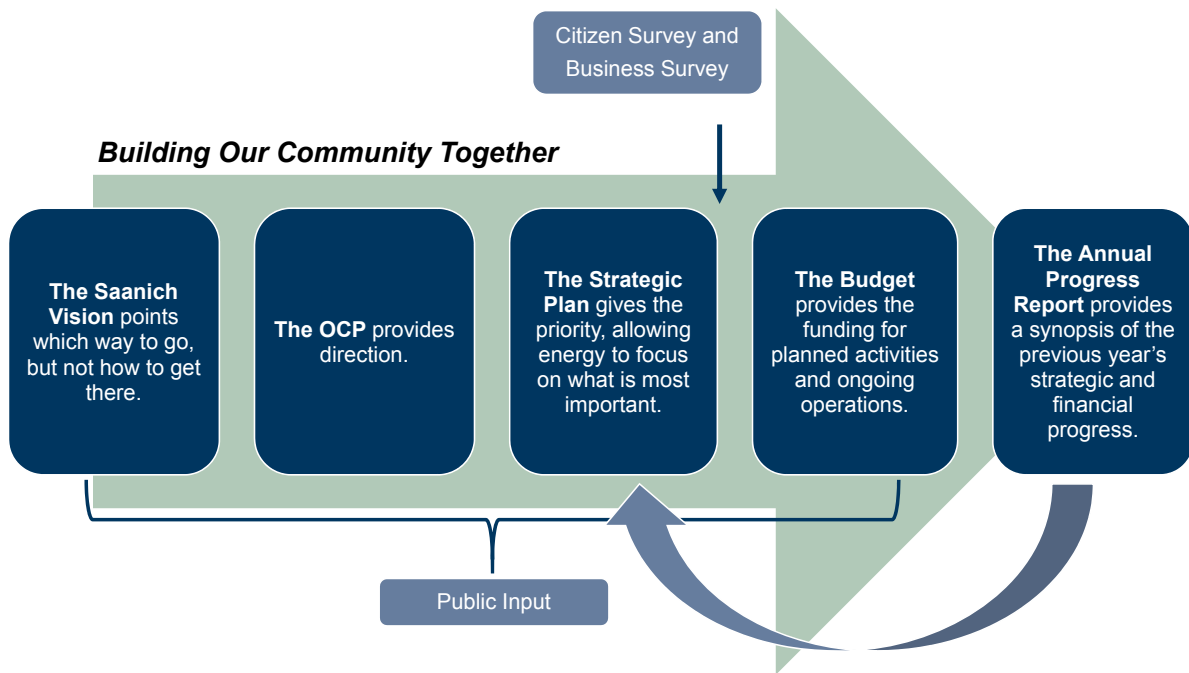
The CRD was created in 1966 as part of the BC Provincial Government's initiative to establish the 'regional district' concept of local government province-wide.



*"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*

~ Brundtland Report 1987





### ***Official Community Plan***

The second phase of this cycle is the Official Community Plan (OCP). This plan is the umbrella document which provides Saanich with the overall community values, vision, direction and focus. It helps Council and citizens manage future growth and change in our community. It applies to the entire municipality and is the principal policy document that Council uses to make decisions on matters such as land use, growth management, design of the built environment, protection of the environment, transportation and mobility, economic development, infrastructure, and housing needs.

### ***Strategic Plan***

The third phase of this cycle is the Strategic Plan. This document outlines a number of the key initiatives that the District will focus its energy and resources on. The plan maps out the actions that the District will undertake to achieve the future vision. Each of the initiatives are aligned with one of the OCP Community Theme areas – Social Well-Being, Environmental Integrity and Economic Vibrancy.



## ***Budget***

The fourth phase in the cycle is for Council to approve a budget that provides the funding for not only the activities included in the Strategic Plan, but also funding for the ongoing operations of the District.

## ***Annual Progress Report***

The Annual Progress Report is the final phase and the method by which the District provides information and demonstrates accountability to Saanich residents. Strategic, financial and activity progress is reported annually to citizens through this report.

The combination of these plans and reports provide a clear map to travel from today to the future.

## ***WHO DOES WHAT AT THE DISTRICT?***

The local government structure can be divided into two categories – policy and administration. Council is responsible for determining overall policy which it carries out through actions like the adoption of the Official Community Plan, the Financial Plan, and the Strategic Plan. Carrying out the policy decisions made by Council falls to the administration (municipal staff) under the responsibility of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Municipal staff oversee the day to day operations and delivery of services as well as the implementation of Council bylaws and decisions.

## ***How Council Makes Decisions***

- An issue or item is introduced by Council, staff, citizens or it can come from the Official Community Plan, budget or Strategic Plan.
- Information is presented by staff on this issue or item; Council considers the information and the options presented may require more information related to policies, bylaws or the Community Charter, and public input may be needed.
- Each decision is put to a vote; Council members each have one vote with equal weight; a quorum of five members is required.
- All decisions are recorded in the minutes which are stored on the website at [saanich.ca/living/mayor/minutes.html](http://saanich.ca/living/mayor/minutes.html).





## Financial Sustainability

Each year the District creates / updates its Five Year Financial Plan (budget) which includes revenues and expenses for both day to day operations and capital or project budgets.

### Where does the money come from?

The District uses a variety of revenue sources to pay for services that residents and businesses depend on and use regularly. The major revenue sources used to pay for day to day services include:

- Property tax
- Utility user fees (e.g. garbage, sewer, water charges)
- Other user fees (e.g. recreation passes/registration fees, connection fees, rezoning application fees)
- Permits and licensing fees (e.g. building permits, dog licenses, business licenses)

The District also has access to funding which is generally used for capital projects like building roads, sidewalks and bridges.

These funding sources include:

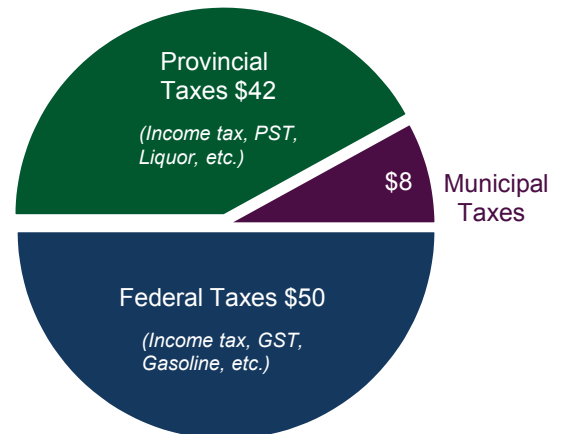
- Grants from the provincial and federal governments and their agencies
- Borrowed funds
- Reserve funds (funds saved up over time for large projects)

Did You  
KNOW?

By law, the District of Saanich has to have a balanced budget. The District is not allowed to run a deficit so all decisions on services and infrastructure have to be made with this in mind.

Did You  
KNOW?

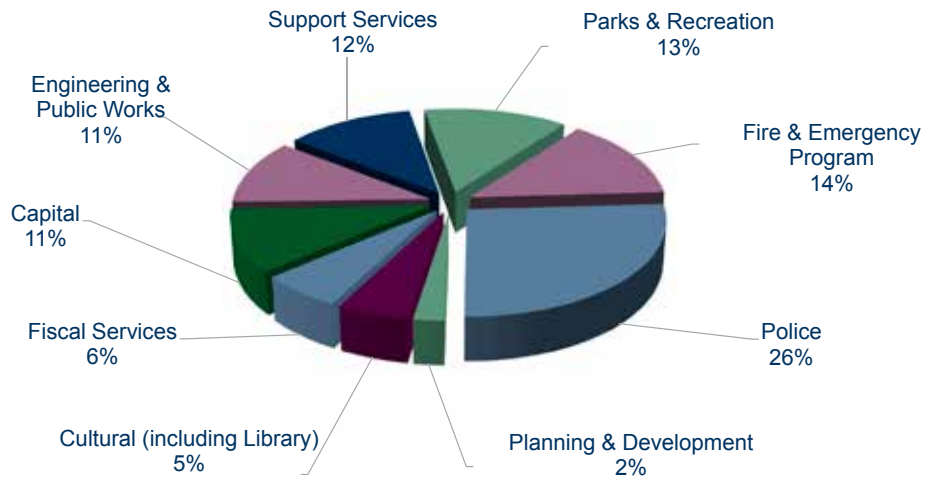
Every \$100 the average household pays in taxes is divided between the federal, provincial and municipal governments with only \$8 going to their respective municipality.



### What is the money spent on?

The District of Saanich is a service based organization which provides a wide variety of services to an extremely varied client base. The challenge is striving to meet the needs of as many of our “customers” as possible in a fiscally responsible way, particularly when these needs are often very diverse.

## Where 2015 Municipal Taxes are Spent



Examples of expenditures are:

- parks,
- recreation facilities,
- fire and police services,
- garbage / compost pickup,
- non-discretionary items (e.g. electricity, gas, phone, internet, legislative changes to EI and CPP),
- new infrastructure projects and ongoing maintenance and upgrade of existing assets,
- roads, bikeways, trails and sidewalks,
- water, sewer and drainage.

### ***Community Design, Planning and Development***

The way in which Saanich has been planned, built and developed is central to the quality of life offered to its citizens – for those who live here and for those who will come in the future and stay for the enviable quality of life the District provides.

Some of the planning and land use decisions that Council makes are related to:

- local area plans,
- the density of a neighbourhood,
- sustainability initiatives,
- the size and dimensions of a lot,
- the type, height and size of buildings permitted,
- the design of multi-family and commercial buildings,
- the redevelopment of established neighbourhoods making the best use of space and land,
- the protection of hazardous and sensitive environmental areas.



## **Planning Process**

The planning process provides Council with professional and technical guidance on current and future land uses as well as a wide range of issues including housing, heritage, environment, urban planning, and social policy.



### **Municipal Staff:**

- Advise Council on current and future land use, housing, heritage, environment, urban planning, and social policy.
- Promote conservation and enhancement of Saanich's natural environment through policies, bylaws, education and outreach.
- Develop the Official Community Plan (OCP), Local Area Plans (LAP) and Action Plans which are road maps that guide positive change and development in neighbourhoods.
- Support the development of liveable, sustainable and affordable neighbourhoods.
- Act as a link between Council decisions and how builders and designers implement those decisions.
- Ensure that all involved in land use changes have an opportunity to provide input.

**Did You  
KNOW?**

One key role of the planning is the development of Local Area Plans (LAP) which are important road maps that provide clear but flexible frameworks to guide positive change and growth in neighbourhoods. The goal of these plans is to create liveable, sustainable and affordable neighbourhoods which emphasize walking, cycling and public transit while providing plenty of public spaces for you and your neighbours to live, work, and play.

### **Community Development**

When development applications are considered by the District, planning tools such as the Official Community Plan, the Regional Sustainability Strategy, Local Area Plans and the Zoning Bylaw help the District make decisions and realize its goal as a community. To meet our sustainability initiatives and objectives, the District strongly encourages new development to incorporate a full range of sustainable features from site planning to new construction. This means taking a holistic view of various environmental, social and economic elements combined within the neighbourhood context, site planning, proposed building design and construction techniques to create the most sustainable project possible. To that end, the municipal staff issues permits and licenses for the development, construction and use of all residential, commercial, industrial and institutional properties and buildings.

### **WHERE TO FIND IT**

Our OCP, LAP, and Action Plans can be found on the Saanich website under "Living in Saanich" on the "Community Planning" page.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - WHAT IS IT?**

So now that you know more about what the District does, it is time to think about how you can become involved and why. Public Participation (P2) can mean different things to different people. It is often used synonymously with community engagement, community involvement or community consultation.

The following is how the District defines P2, and some definitions from experts in the field of public participation.



Photo Source: Dialogue Partners

**District of Saanich** Public participation is a reciprocal process that involves the public (anyone who is interested in or affected by the issue under discussion) in problem solving or discussion, and links public input to the decision. It is not a single engagement event, but rather a journey with an opportunity to build relationships and trust.

**International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)** IAP2 views public participation as any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make decisions.

**National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD)** Public engagement involves convening diverse, representative groups of people to wrestle with information from a variety of viewpoints all to the end of making better, often more creative decisions. Public engagement aims to provide people with direction for their own community activities, or with public judgments that will be seriously considered by policy-makers and power-holders.

### ***What Makes Public Participation Meaningful?***

In order for public participation to be meaningful it must contain the following three elements (source IAP2):

- 1. Decision oriented:** a decision needs to be made and the input of the public and stakeholders will have a clearly stated degree of influence over the final outcome or decision.
- 2. Values based:** the dialogue and interaction between the public/ stakeholders and the District is grounded in sharing and understanding the needs, interests and values of all participants.
- 3. Goal driven:** the process will have clearly defined goals and objectives and will determine specific, purposeful and productive outcomes that will be achieved over the course of the project. The role of the public is clear.

Municipal staff describe public participation as:

“Effective community engagement that benefits all”

“A chance to exchange ideas”

“The development of a common understanding of project objectives”

“Exploratory dialogue that leads to results”

“An interactive exchange of needs and ideas”



## Guiding Principles for Meaningful Participation

Guiding principles for meaningful participation refer to the attitudes and behaviours that guide interactions between the District and the public. These principles articulate the District's fundamental values associated with the practice of public participation and provide overall direction and guidance to the planning, implementation and evaluation of public participation initiatives (see Appendix A).

In September 2013, the District of Saanich developed a Public Participation (P2) Policy that guides the way the District and residents will engage in dialogue on issues that are important to them:

*“The District of Saanich believes that decisions are improved by engaging citizens and other stakeholder groups. The District is committed to undertaking public participation on issues that affect citizens’ lives and their District. The District is committed to reporting back to citizens on how their views have been considered in the decision making process. The District is committed to transparent and inclusive processes that are supported by factual information, are inclusive of the diversity of Saanich and are within the District’s ability to finance and resource.”*

Effective public participation is about continuing to build trusting relationships. In addition to transparency and respect, the public participation process is founded on:

- Everyone’s time and input being respected;
- Participants knowing what to expect, how to engage and how their input will contribute to the decision;
- Clear and forthright two-way communication;
- Discussion and recommendations which reflect the full range of stakeholder perspectives;
- People feeling comfortable to share their ideas and opinions;
- Issues being moved beyond “positions” by listening to other’s opinions; and
- Public confidence in government activity increasing while resources are effectively targeted to those issues of citizen priority and value.

Source: Dialogue Partners Inc., “Standing in the Fire: Transforming Conflict Through Collaboration” ®

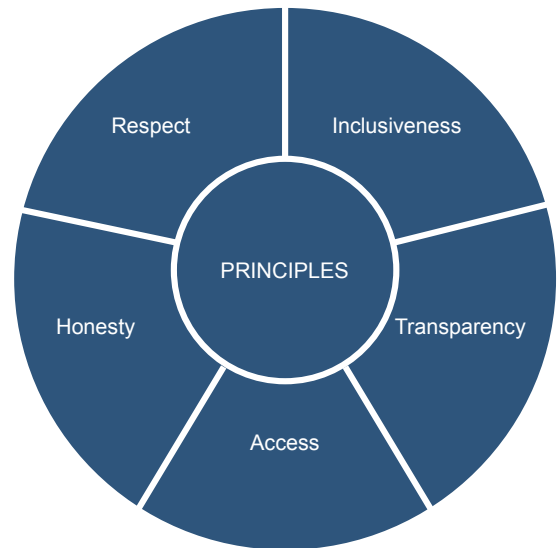


Photo Source: Dialogue Partners

### ***To Do P2 or Not... That Is the Question***

Not everything requires public participation. The starting place to determine the need for public involvement is with the potential decision under consideration. We need to think about what is driving the issue and who is responsible for decision making. For example, it could be a planning and development process, it could have budget or capital impacts, it could be legislatively required or it could be a community based initiative. It is important to fully document the nature of the issues under consideration in order to determine if public involvement is appropriate and necessary.



*It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are."*

*~Roy Disney*

### **Did You KNOW?**

These are some of the questions that municipal staff ask to assess and determine when it's best to engage with the public and by what method:

- Is this a low impact or routine situation where a small number of people will be interested or affected?
- Is additional information or input needed to improve the quality of results and the final decision?
- Is there a potential for conflicting or competing values (social vs. environmental vs. economic)?
- With no certain answers, what are the possible paths or options open to moving forward?

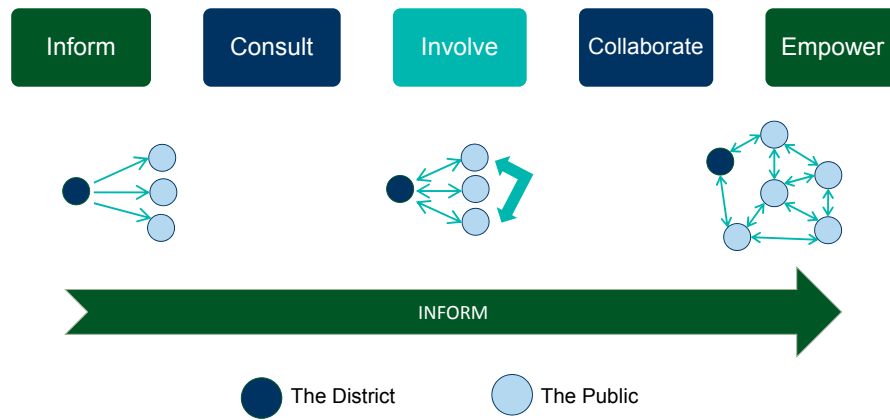
### ***How Will the District Engage You?***

There is a range of options the District can use to communicate, interact and collaborate with citizens. Depending on the issue, the District may simply provide information, engage in a two way dialogue to exchange information or organize events where we work together collaboratively to make decisions about our current and future needs.

The District will make every effort to communicate with and provide opportunities for participation to anyone who is interested in or affected by decisions. The District realizes that not everyone will want to participate in the same way, for example some may want to be actively involved, others will attend a meeting, some may go on-line to participate and others will just observe the process. A meaningful discussion means that people are aware of the process and have an opportunity to participate.



The Public Participation Continuum - The range of options the District will use to work together with citizens to make decisions.



The goal of public participation is to create opportunities for citizens from different cultures, backgrounds and with different points of view to come together to share their opinions and views with staff and elected officials. Listening and learning from citizens assists Council as they move forward in solving problems and making decisions. Public participation is not always meant to achieve absolute consensus or agreement, nor is it intended to delegate the final decision to the community. Mayor and Council still have to make the final decisions, but with valuable input from citizens, those decisions are more informed and responsive to public concerns and values.

**We All Have a Role**

Public participation involves a three-way conversation between Council, municipal staff and Saanich citizens.



## ***How Do We Benefit from Meaningful Public Participation?***

We believe that everyone can benefit from meaningful public participation. The following are some examples of potential benefits. Are there other benefits? Which are most important to you?

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS**

- » Sharing of information and perspectives.
- » Understanding issues more clearly.
- » Developing new ideas and recommendations.
- » Building cooperative working relationships with the District and among the public.
- » Reaching balanced decisions and resolving issues.
- » Collaborating on decisions.
- » Building understanding and support for District initiatives.
- » Increasing trust in the District's decision making.
- » Improving quality and delivery of programs, projects, services and initiatives.

The process brings together individuals and groups from many areas and builds mutual understanding. Consulting with neighbourhoods, interest groups, businesses and other affected parties is both desirable and necessary for the District to achieve excellence in decision making.



*“Don’t be afraid to take a big step when one is indicated. You can’t cross a chasm in two small steps.”*

~David Lloyd George

*“The hardest thing about the road not taken is that you never know where it might have led.”*

~Lisa Wingate



## ***So You Want to Get Involved — Here Are Some Helpful Tips and Tools***

Considerations when becoming involved in the decision making process:

**Do some homework.** Consider doing a little detective work. You need to find out what changes / issues are being considered. Take the time to learn about when and where you can provide your input. Early inquiries are always a good idea. Take some time to understand the dynamics of your neighbourhood — How is your neighbourhood unique? Get the facts. It is essential to do some research and analysis to build a case for making change. Public documents, reports, newspapers and magazine articles, scientific studies, the internet and personal experiences are all important sources of information.

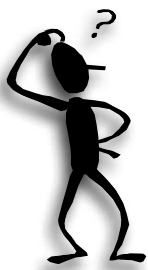
The District of Saanich homepage is a portal to many citizen-friendly resources.



**Educate yourself.** Learn what decisions have already been made, and what decisions or parts of decisions remain to be made and will be affected by public input, and what the public input is intended to achieve. Sometimes your input addresses only a part of a decision, and other (and possibly larger) parts may already have been decided and are no longer open for public discussion.

**Pose questions to help define the issue.** It helps if you think of answers to the following questions:

- What is the problem? Who is affected by it? How serious or widespread are the effects?
- What has been done to date? What has worked, not worked and why?
- Who else has a stake in the issue? What are their concerns?
- What will happen if nothing changes?
- What will happen if the issue / problem is resolved? How will individuals and the community as a whole benefit?
- What would a win-win look like?



**Understand the decision making process.** Recognize that municipal staff and Council may have practical and legal constraints on what they can do. Council is the ultimate decision maker and must consider what is good for all Saanich residents.

**Know what's important to you.** Think through some of the following questions before deciding on a specific solution, consider what's important to you and why.

- Concerns** - What is it that concerns you about...?
- Hopes** - What are you hoping for when...?
- Expectations** - What are you expecting when you...?
- Assumptions** - What assumptions lead you to...?
- Priorities** - What is important to you about this situation/issue?
- Beliefs or Values** - What do you believe would be...?
- Fears** - What fears do you have? What are you most afraid of?
- Impact/Importance/Issue** - How has this impacted you? What is most important to you? What issues are you concerned about?
- Consequences or Care** - What consequences do you foresee with this process/project...? What do you care about?

Source: Dialogue Partners Inc., "Group Facilitation Skills for Public Engagement" ©

Council must make decisions that consider the needs of all parties concerned, the possible solutions and how might they work. They must also understand all of the costs – fiscal, social, economic and environmental.

**Other levels of government** may sometimes need to be involved in what appears to be a simple municipal matter. You can take the initiative to involve other government officials or take your input to forums set up under provincial or federal legislation.

**Never underestimate your power as a citizen** to affect change in a positive and productive way.



*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

~Margaret Mead

## ***YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE — PARTICIPATE AND HAVE YOUR SAY***

With an understanding of what the District does, what meaningful public participation is and how the District of Saanich approaches it, how do you become involved? There are many different ways to engage with your municipality. Council and municipal staff want you to provide your ideas and need to hear your feedback.

The District will engage the public in a variety of ways on specific issues, projects or opportunities that arise. However, there are also a variety of ongoing opportunities for you to engage with the District. These are some of the ways to be engaged:



## Advisory Committees

What we often call a “Saanich Committee” may actually be a committee, commission, board or other body established by Council. The District has a number of committees and boards. Boards normally have a decision making role at arm’s length from Council, while the primary role of Advisory Committees is to develop and recommend policies and provide a community perspective on municipal services and programs.

### Saanich Advisory Committees

- Advisory Design Panel
- Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility
- Board of Variance
- Environment and Natural Areas
- Healthy Saanich
- Parks, Trails and Recreation
- Peninsula Agricultural Commission
- Planning, Transportation and Economic Development
- Saanich Heritage Foundation

Advisory Committees are chaired by a member of Council who leads the committee members in fulfilling their mandate to provide advice to Council and to offer a variety of different perspectives on matters affecting the community. Volunteering to participate on a committee is a great way to contribute to the greater good of the community.

Committee and board meetings are open to the public with their location and start time published weekly in the newspaper. If you have an idea for an agenda item, please talk to the Councillor who chairs the committee.

## Council Meetings

Council Meetings are where decisions are made on bylaws, land use and development applications, and other official business. Meetings generally occur on a Monday at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers at Municipal Hall. Meetings are open to the public with the agenda and minutes posted on the Saanich website ([saanich.ca](http://saanich.ca)) on the Friday prior to the meeting.



## Committee of the Whole Meetings

All Council members attend Committee of the Whole Meetings. These meetings generally occur immediately following a Council Meeting and are less formal. Applications and issues which require a more detailed examination and discussion are dealt with here then passed to a regular Council Meeting for a decision. Meeting agendas and minutes are published on our website ([saanich.ca](http://saanich.ca)).

The Committee of the Whole Meeting presents a key opportunity for residents to provide feedback and comments directly to Council during the meeting. The District is required to provide public notification for all forms of development applications and various community initiatives pending consideration. This provides members of the public with advance information and notice should they wish to speak to Mayor and Council on a particular topic. If you cannot attend the meeting or are uncomfortable with public speaking, your written submission is equally welcomed.

### Public input opportunities at Council meetings include:

**Delegations** - up to two 10 minute delegations per meeting

**Input on regular Council and Committee of the Whole Agenda Items** - up to five minutes per speaker

**Open Forum** - once per month, each speaker will be given three minutes to address Council following adjournment (see “Council Meeting Schedule” at [saanich.ca](http://saanich.ca) for meetings where open forums will be held)

For more information, see Saanich’s [Council Procedure Bylaw](#) at [saanich.ca](http://saanich.ca) - Mayor and Council.



## **Public Hearings**

Public Hearings occur when there is a proposed amendment to the Zoning Bylaw or Official Community Plan. Public notification will be placed on our website and in newspapers announcing the date and time of a meeting. Council's role at a Public Hearing is to listen to the members of the public who will be affected by the proposed bylaw or OCP amendment. Council does not debate or challenge the comments being offered, but may question what they hear to make sure they understand what is being said. All comments presented are to be on the merits of the application before Council.

As a Public Hearing is a formal session, subject to specific legislation and common-law rules, Council cannot receive further communication from the applicant or public between the closing of the Public Hearing and the enactment of the bylaw (see our website for additional information at [saanich.ca](http://saanich.ca)).

## **Open Forum**

Council has created another opportunity for you to come and meet with them to discuss any topic you have in mind. An open forum is held following the third regular Council meeting of the month. It is a more relaxed setting, without the formality of a council meeting where two-way dialogue can happen. Speaker will be given three minutes to explain their topic to Council and ask related questions.

## **Budget Meetings**

The public is invited to budget meetings held from February through April each year. At the beginning of each meeting there is an opportunity for you to contribute thoughts and suggestions or to ask questions. Budget meetings focus on departmental operations, budget requests submitted from other organizations (e.g. Greater Victoria Public Library), budget requests from organizations seeking social service and community grants as well as capital projects planned for the inclusion in the Five Year Financial Plan. Public notification will be placed on our website and in newspapers announcing the dates and times of meetings.

## **Planning Meetings**

Residents and other interested parties play an important role in deciding how the community will continue to develop by making their views known to Council. The development of plans and bylaws usually provides several opportunities for public consultation through attending public hearings, open houses, community association meetings or talking with the developer involved. In addition, Council can receive recommendations about land use planning through their Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee (PTED). For additional information on this or any committee, please see Saanich website page titled "Mayor and Council / Council Committees and Boards".



“ We are a community of possibilities, not a community of problems.”  
~Peter Block



## Surveys

The District regularly conducts citizen and business surveys. These are comprehensive surveys designed to gather public input that can be used to inform the planning, budget and reporting processes.

## Communicating with Council

If you have an idea or suggestion to share with Council we encourage you to call or email them via the contact information listed on our website. As well, all correspondence e-mailed to **council@saanich.ca** is provided to all members of Council.

Did You  
KNOW?

Survey results are  
online at [saanich.ca/  
services/docs](http://saanich.ca/services/docs)

## WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

Council needs the feedback and the interest of the residents they represent to help bring about change. Just as elected officials have duties, as residents it is in everyone's interest to participate and engage in opportunities to learn more about proposed changes in our community. The first step is seeking out further information.

### Website ([saanich.ca](http://saanich.ca))

The District of Saanich website is a great tool for getting informed about items that Council is considering. Interested in a proposed initiative, development project, bylaw or policy?

Check with staff in the Legislative Services Department to see if you can be added to a notification list that will inform you should the particular item be scheduled for a future Council Meeting.

### Agendas and Minutes

The Saanich website contains current and archived minutes of Council and Advisory Committees. Reading the agendas and minutes can help you stay on top of current initiatives.

## Join our Community!

### Follow us on Twitter

@SaanichParksRec  
@SaanichFire  
@SaanichEP  
@SaanichPolice  
@SaanichBlkwatch  
@AceK9Saanich  
@SustainaSaanich  
@CedarHillGolf

### Connect on Facebook

- Parks & Recreation
- Communities in Harvest
- Saanich Archives
- Sustainable Saanich
- Ace Mascot
- Saanich Police
- Saanich Blockwatch

### Subscribe to Feeds

- NewsRSS
- JobsRSS

### Connect on LinkedIn

- District of Saanich

### Subscribe to Newsletters

- Parks & Recreation Matters
- Block Watch: Saanich Police
- Climate Action
- Our Backyard: Natural Environment

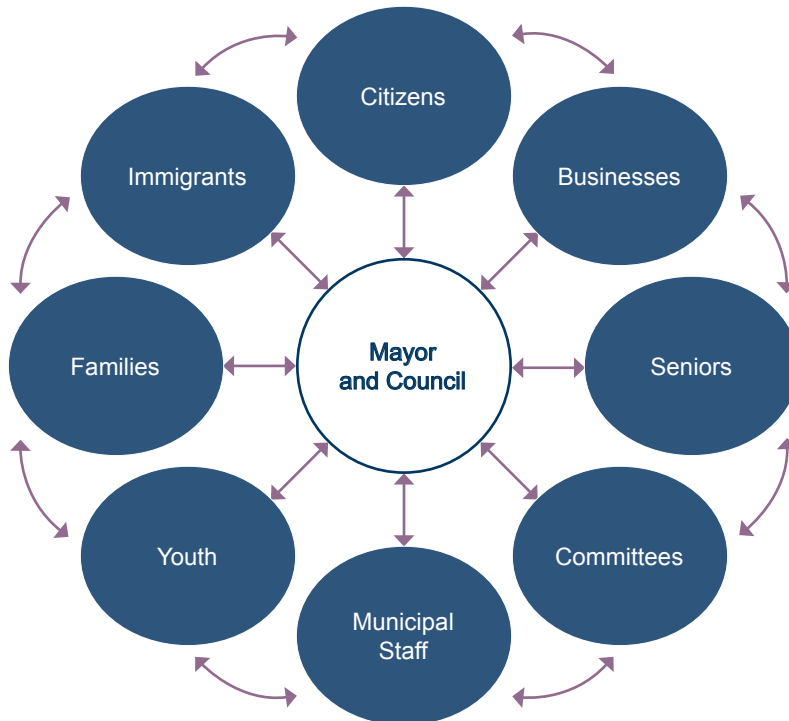
## ***BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES TOGETHER***

Saanich is filled with people and organizations that care about the well-being of this community. Think about reaching out to your neighbours and becoming involved in the work that they do. Together we can and will make Saanich the community we want.



## ***BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER***

We hope that you find this handbook useful. We want you to get involved with your local government. We thank you for taking an active role in helping to make Saanich a better community for all. For more information please see [saanich.ca](http://saanich.ca) or contact us at 250-475-1775.



<b>SUBJECT:</b> PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	
<b>DATE OF ISSUE:</b> SEPTEMBER, 2013	<b>ORIGIN:</b> ADMINISTRATION

The District of Saanich believes that decisions are improved by engaging citizens and other stakeholder groups. The District is committed to undertaking public participation on issues that affect citizens’ lives and their District. The District is committed to reporting back to citizens on how their views have been considered in the decision making process. The District is committed to transparent and inclusive processes that are supported by factual information, are inclusive of the diversity of Saanich and are within the District’s ability to finance and resource.

Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide public participation activities conducted by the District;

Inclusiveness: The District will endeavor to involve and enable the participation of all interested parties across the full range of our diverse population.

Transparency: The District will endeavor to ensure decision processes, procedures and constraints are understood and followed. The purpose and limitations on public participation will be made clear. Respective roles and responsibilities will be clearly communicated. Feedback will be provided on what stakeholders said and how their opinion was considered by decision makers.

Access: The District will ensure that accurate information is available to participants in a timely manner.

Respect: Public participation requires the mutual respect of all participants. The District will listen with an open mind and show consideration and value for another person’s point of view.

Honesty: In conducting public participation the District will demonstrate our core value of honesty; we will tell the truth, follow through on commitments and act in a trustworthy manner.

Public Participation Framework

Whenever the District undertakes a public participation process, the objective of the participation, the commitment for performance and the level of the framework will be clarified at the beginning of the process. Each level describes a type or depth of participation that may be appropriate to support the pending decision.

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Objectives of the Public Participation</b>	To provide balanced and objective information to support understanding by the public	To obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives, issues and/or decisions	To work with the public to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered	To facilitate discussions and agreements between public parties to identify common ground for action and solutions	To place final decision making in the hands of the public
<b>District of Saanich Commitment</b>	To inform the public	To listen to and consider the public's concerns	To work with the public to exchange information, ideas and concerns	To seek advice and innovations from amongst various public parties	To work with the public to implement agreed upon decisions
<b>Examples of issues/ technique that might fall in these categories</b>	Repair or replacement of existing park asset  Open Houses – Solar Hot Water  Public Works notices of construction/ repair	Change of recreation program format  Mapping Update -Environmentally Significant Areas  Capital project planning or designing	New park asset such as new playground or new trail  Climate Change Adaptation Plan	Park concept & or management plans ie Cadboro-Gyro Park  Official Community Plan  Technical Advisory Committee  "Safe Routes to School" plans	Referendum  Elections/ By-election  Alternate approval process
<b>Participant's Responsibility</b>	To become informed	To provide feedback	To be open to other points of view and work with staff and other members of the public	To put aside personal agendas and participate in discussions	To work with staff to implement agreed upon decisions

Commitment & Resources

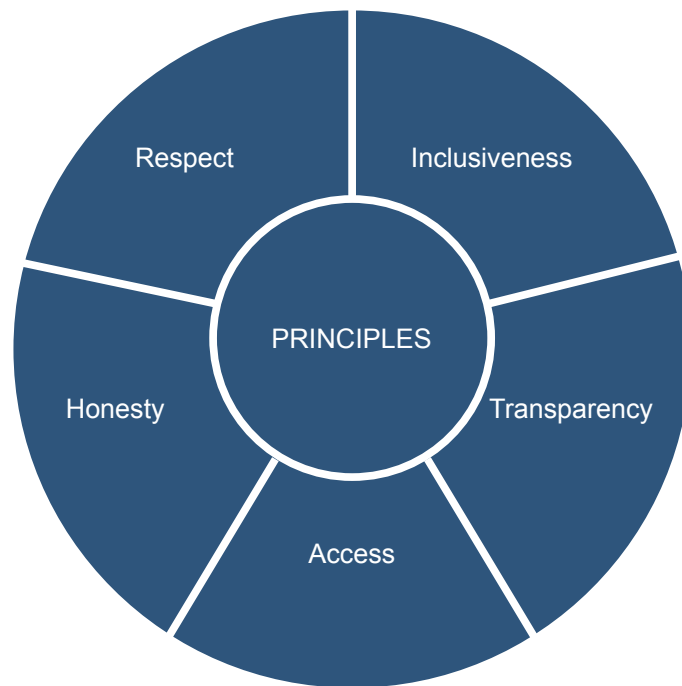
The District, within its ability and capacity, will allocate adequate financial, human and technical resources for effective public participation.

The District will support citizens and stakeholder groups to develop their skills and ability to participate effectively. This support will involve education and information about District processes, initiatives and policies.

Accountability and Evaluation

The District will be accountable for acting in accordance with this policy. Public participation processes will be measured for consistency with the stated objective and commitment.

The District will report, on an annual basis, on the public participation activities that have been conducted.









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