

# 2021 Budget In Brief

## **Saanich Council has finalized the 2021 Budget.**

Take a look at the plans the District of Saanich has for the coming year and how taxes and fees you pay will maintain and improve the services you enjoy every day.



# Saanich's strategic priorities

## OUR PROCESS

The **Saanich Vision** points which way to go, but not how to get there.

The **Official Community Plan (OCP)** provides the framework.

The **Strategic Plan** gives the road map, focusing energy on what is most important.

The **Budget** provides the funding for planned activities and ongoing operations.

The **Annual Report** provides a synopsis of the previous year's strategic, financial and operational progress.

## Saanich's strategic priorities are aligned with the Official Community Plan

The Strategic Plan is Saanich's road map that guides the activities during Council's four-year term in office and beyond. The Strategic Plan goals, initiatives and actions will move Saanich toward its future vision as outlined in the Official Community Plan (OCP).

The OCP provides direction, focus and guidance on how to manage future growth and change in our community. Our OCP places emphasis on three themes:

- **environmental integrity**
- **social well-being**
- **economic vibrancy**

Through the Strategic Plan, Council defines the municipality's priorities, processes, and short and long term plans. Council ensures that the five-year financial plan and annual budget processes allocate funds and resources used to achieve our goals.

## What is your biggest hope for the future? What's the most important issue facing the District?

Here are the top three answers gathered from the latest survey results:

### BIGGEST HOPE FOR SAANICH:

- 16% More affordable housing
- 15% Protect nature and improve green spaces
- 11% Improve infrastructure: roads, water, drainage



### TOP ISSUES FOR COUNCIL'S ATTENTION:

- 22% Housing issues
- 9% Traffic and traffic congestion
- 9% Environment and enhanced greenspaces



See the next page for information on how Council is addressing these hopes and important issues.

Take part in our survey on Saanich's financial future. Look for it in fall 2021.

## Moving the Strategic Plan forward in 2021

Council held a status quo budget in 2020 due to the financial uncertainty created in the early days of the pandemic. In 2021 Council has renewed its commitment to moving forward on implementing Saanich's Strategic Plan goals and initiatives.



### Affordable Housing, Land Use and Infrastructure Management

Council approved an addition to the budget of \$282,000 to hire new staff to:

- move forward on a formal asset management program;
- work on housing planning and policy issues;
- work on mapping the assets in our urban forest; and
- work on critical capital infrastructure projects.



### Community Well-being

Council approved an addition to the budget of \$130,000 to support:

- a volunteer appreciation event;
- a parks refuse collector to address garbage overflow in our well-used parks and; and
- a staff development officer in the Fire Department to ensure our firefighters are trained to keep Saanich residents safe.



### Climate Action and Environmental Leadership

Council approved an addition to the budget of \$2,644,000 to address the Climate Action Emergency and continue work as a leader in environmental stewardship through:

- acceleration of the Active Transportation Plan;
- direct funding for the Climate Action Reserve Fund to ensure key projects can proceed;
- new positions in Sustainability and Urban Forestry;
- improvement to Saanich's fleet of vehicles through support for projects to increase sustainability and use of renewable diesel; and
- increased funds for tree planting.



### Economic Diversification

Council approved an addition to the budget of \$60,000 to fund a new economic development officer.



### Organizational Excellence

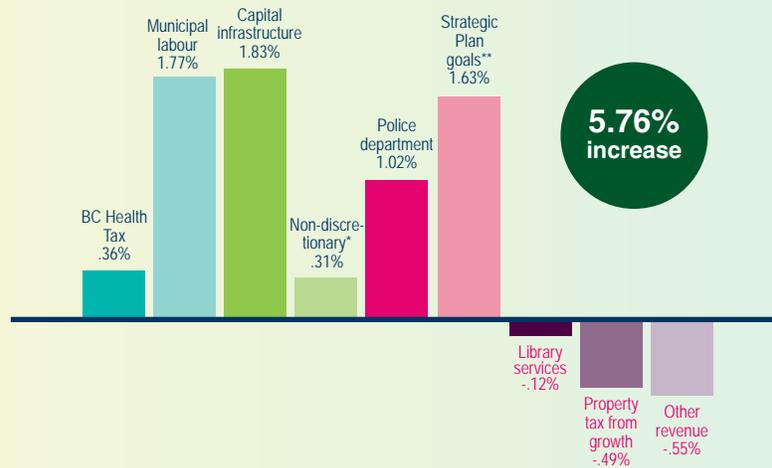
Council approved an addition to the budget of \$515,000 to ensure continued service excellence with:

- new positions in Finance, Human Resources, Legislative Services and Facility Operations to support key internal corporate functions;
- new positions to ensure effective and efficient use of the software that supports tax and utility billing, development processes and calls for service;
- new position to support service to the public with transportation related inquiries and complaints; and
- new positions in Planning to ensure efficient processing of development applications.

# Why did Saanich property tax increase by 5.76%?

The Saanich budget saw an overall net increase in property tax of 5.76%. This increase came from a variety of investments in everyday services you and your neighbours enjoy, for the repair and replacement of the assets that support delivery of those services and funding to move forward with Strategic Plan goals.

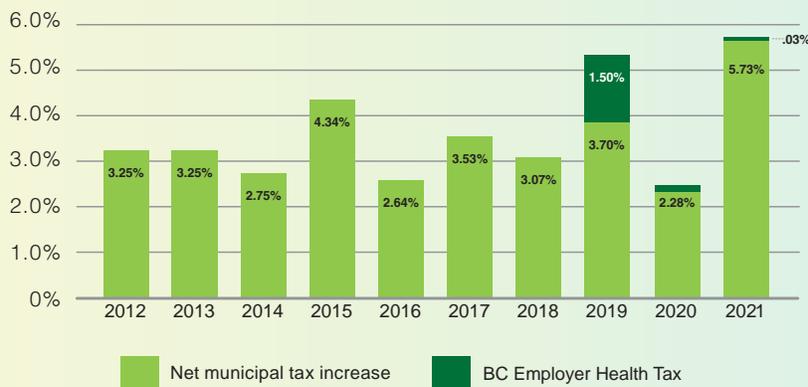
## Municipal property tax increase 2021



\*Non-discretionary – includes increases to utilities, contracts, insurance, fuel and other costs that are impacted by factors outside of Saanich’s control.

\*\*See page 3 for more information on Strategic Plan goals.

## Annual property tax increases

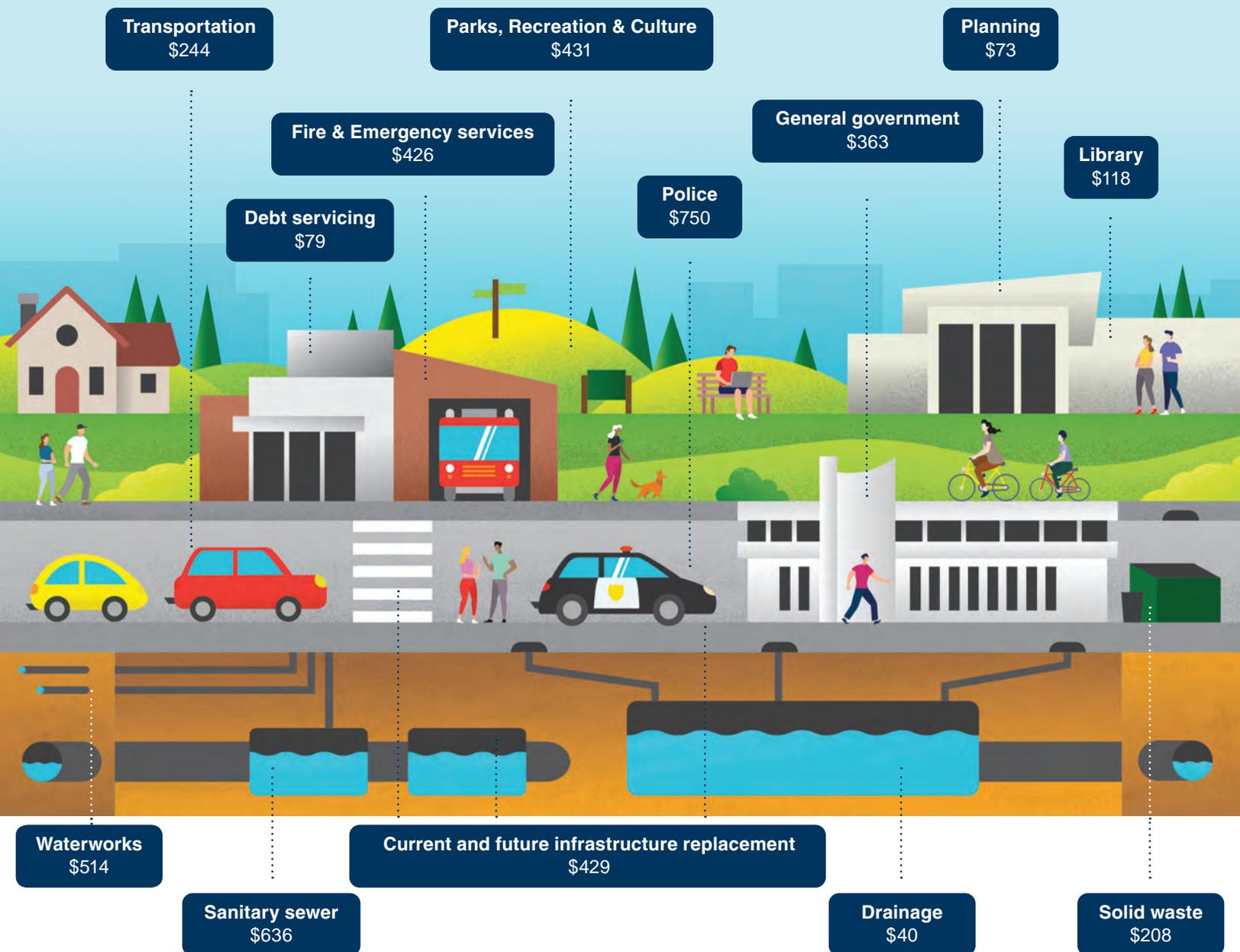


## External senior government-related impacts

- The COVID-19 Safe Restart Grant** – The Federal and Provincial Governments provided the District a one-time COVID-19 Safe Restart Grant of \$7,453,000. These funds were used in 2020 and will be used in 2021 and beyond to address revenue shortfalls, facility reopening and additional operating costs associated directly with the pandemic.
- The Federal Government** is implementing an [Enhanced CPP Program](#) designed to help increase retirement income for working Canadians and their families. Saanich must pay this increased contribution rate for all its employees.

# What services does the budget support?

The taxes and fees you pay fund a wide variety of municipal services.



## Total taxes and fees of \$4,310:

- Taxes are based on 2021 budgeted municipal taxes for an average homeowner with a property assessment of \$940,300.
- Sanitary sewer fees are based on the 2020 average homeowner's usage of 175 cubic metres.
- Solid waste fees are based on cart sizes of 120 litres each for garbage and organic per household.
- General government includes administration, finance, human resources, information technology, safety, communications, bylaw and inspections services.
- Waterworks fees are based on the 2020 average homeowner's consumption of 269 cubic metres.

# 2021 Capital budget

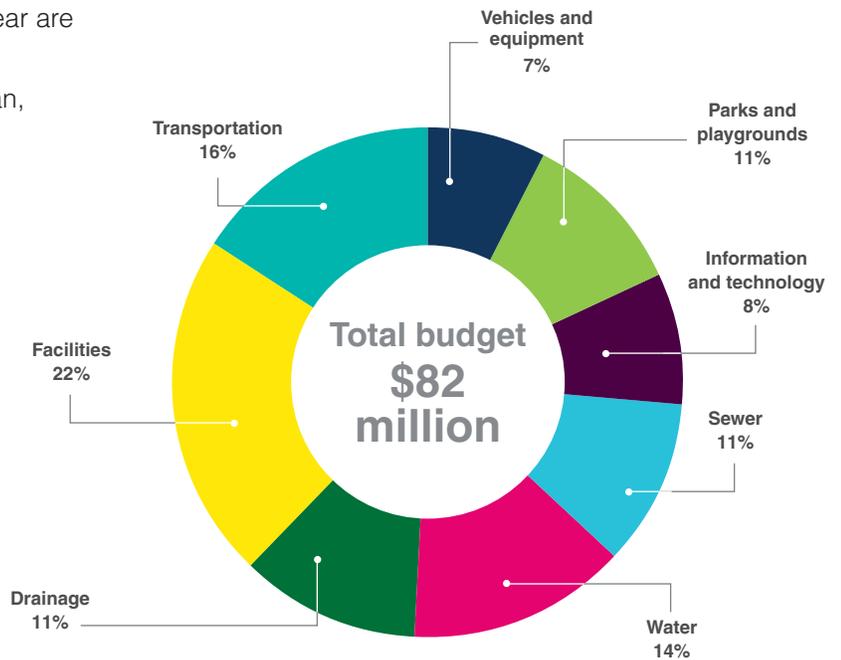
## How are the capital projects for the year determined?

Saanich is committed to taking care of the assets we all own, from sewer and water lines to roads, trails, parks, buildings, and vehicles. Proper stewardship means ensuring appropriate funding is available to keep them in good working order and replace them when their useful life is over.

To accomplish that, we establish how much we need to be funding this repair and replacement on an annual basis.

The specific projects to be completed each year are determined by considering:

- **Master plans** (The Active Transportation Plan, Shelbourne Valley Action Plan and Parks Management plans, to name a few)
- **Condition assessments**
- **Health and safety**
- **Maintenance history**
- **Risk assessments**
- **Efficiency and coordination** with other capital projects.



## Key 2021 projects

- **Active Transportation Plan acceleration** – \$1.8M
- **Sidewalk Installation Program** – \$3.1M
- **Fleet, IT & other capital replacement for protective services** – \$2.3M
- **Rutledge Park playground replacement and washroom addition** – \$462K
- **Saanich Commonwealth Place air handlers and controls replacement** – \$3.9M
- **Tree and Trails Programs** – \$804K

For detail on more capital projects go to the [Capital Projects Guide 2021](#)

Rutledge Park



Saanich fleet vehicles



Saanich Commonwealth Place



## 2021 Saanich utilities

### Saanich builds, maintains and operates three underground systems.

Water and sanitary sewer are utilities funded through user fees and storm drainage is funded through your tax dollars. These underground systems require daily operational repair and maintenance (operating budget) and major repair and replacement (capital budget).

### Water rate increases

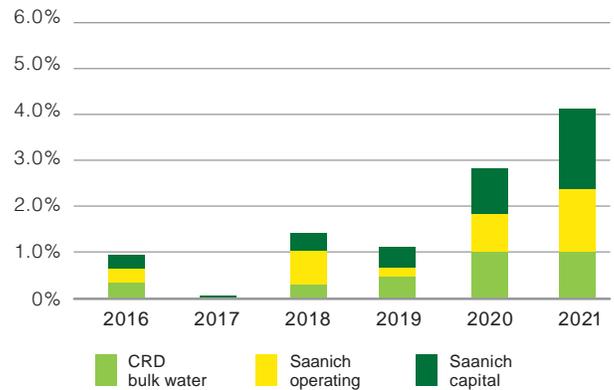
Although regular water consumption has reduced, the overhead costs remain the same. Over 47% of the water rate increase is to offset the annual cost of delivering the water services.

### Working together

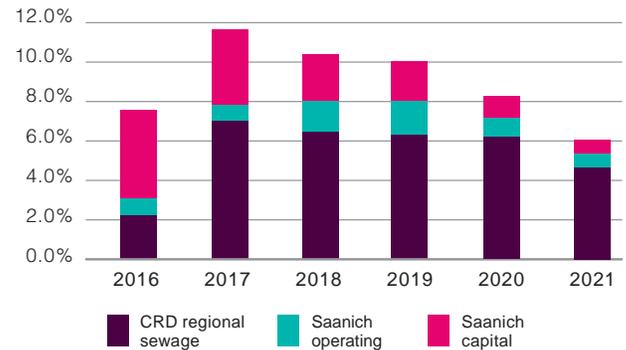
**Saanich works in collaboration with the Capital Regional District (CRD) to provide underground services.** The CRD is responsible for treating, disinfecting and supplying drinking water from a large trunk watermain network that distributes water to all of the municipalities in the region. It is also responsible for the treatment of sewage and implementation of the regional sewage treatment infrastructure. The fees for the CRD portion of the system are collected when you pay your Saanich utility bill, and we pass the money on to them. This streamlines the revenue collection into one bill. Saanich is responsible for the distribution of safe and reliable drinking water, collection of sanitary wastewater and stormwater management services.

## Over time: a look at water and sewer rate increases

Water rate increases



Sewer rate increases



## Significant 2021 capital projects

### WATER

Investing close to \$11,286,700 million in major repair and replacement in the 2021 budget

- Sinclair Road, Finnerty Road to Cadboro Bay Road main improvement
- Water meter replacement
- Asbestos, cement and cast iron main replacement at over 13 locations

### STORM DRAIN

Investing close to \$9,295,400 million in major repair and replacement in the 2021 budget

- Sinclair Road, Haro Road to Hobbs Street drain improvement
- Wood stave and substandard replacement at over 9 locations
- Crease Avenue drain improvement

### SANITARY SEWER

Investing over \$8,816,000 million in major repair and replacement in the 2021 budget

- Asbestos cement sewer main replacement at over 6 locations
- Arena Road, Ker Avenue to Dysart Road main replacement

Your questions and feedback are always welcome. Contact the Finance Department at **250-475-5415** or [\*\*budget@saanich.ca\*\*](mailto:budget@saanich.ca)

More resources are available at [\*\*saanich.ca\*\*](http://saanich.ca)

