



## Frequently Asked Questions

March 1, 2022

### ***Where and what is the Saanich Operations Centre?***

- The Saanich Operations Centre (formerly known as the Parks and Public Works Yard) is located at 1040 McKenzie Avenue and houses all of the District's Parks and Public Works staff and operations.
- More than 300 staff work at or report out of this location.

### ***What services are delivered from the Saanich Operations Centre?***

- Currently, all of Saanich's Parks and Public Works operations are based at the Saanich Operations Centre.
- This includes all staff in the Parks Division (Park Operations; Parks Planning and Development; and Community Development; Administrative) and all Public Works Divisions (Waterworks; Storm and Wastewater; Street Operations; Fleet and Solid Waste; Surveys; and Support Services). The Stores Division which falls under the Finance Department oversees the ordering, stocking and supply for materials used for all site divisions.
- These teams support and are responsible to deliver the following services that support a high quality of life for Saanich residents:
  - **Transportation:** Saanich transportation infrastructure includes 178 km of major or collector roads, 370 km of residential roads, 151 km of bike lanes, 286 km of sidewalks and 32 bridges.
  - **Parks:** 171 parks covering 8.55 km<sup>2</sup>/ 855 hectares plus 100 kilometres of trails.
  - **Water:** The water infrastructure has been in existence since the early 1900's and includes 550 km of pipe, over 29,000 water services, 4 reservoirs, 18 pump stations, and 2,300 fire hydrants.
  - **Solid waste:** District fleet collects curbside garbage including organics from 32,000 households. Annual garbage and organics volumes are 10,000 tonnes each.

### ***What is the purpose of the Saanich Operations Centre Redevelopment Project?***

- We need to ensure these critical municipal services will continue to be delivered well into future.
- More than 300 staff are working in sub-standard facilities more than 60 years old; the age and condition of these facilities pose unnecessary risk to our service delivery.
- Our vision for the redevelopment project is to ensure service interruption risks will be minimized as much as possible and that our infrastructure will be dependable and able to continue to support a high quality of life for Saanich residents.

- These critical services require a highly technical, robust and resilient facility constructed to a high standard to last up to 80 years into the future.
- The project objectives include a three-fold vision of service delivery, healthy environment and community vitality.

***Why is the redevelopment of Saanich's Operations Centre such an important priority?***

- The Saanich Operations Centre is our number one priority due to several factors including the:
  - importance of services that are supported through the facility. These services are vital to the health, safety and well-being of the community.
  - facilities being well beyond their life cycle and serviceability.
  - facilities no longer being able to support staff safely due to non-conformance to building codes and relevant standards and practices.
  - facilities being more expensive to maintain and requiring significant effort to manage minimum standards of health and safety.
  - insufficient space, area and fit-out to adequately support staff work duties to deliver services to residents; and
  - increasing risk in the facilities' ability to adequately support staff delivery of critical services delivery to residents and taxpayers.
- Saanich's population has increased 50 per cent since the facilities were built. This puts increased pressure on the facility, the site infrastructure and staff. Looking to the future, these pressures are unsustainable and action should be taken to address them.
- Given the District's estimated population growth and development over the coming decades and the need to continually manage and replace our infrastructure as necessary, the prioritization factors these into our understanding of the required increased capacity for the facility and operations.
- The redevelopment of the operations centre reflects the commitment of Council and staff to providing high quality service and ensuring public safety.

***What are the physical constraints and challenges of the current facilities?***

- Most people would be surprised by the outdated poor condition of the buildings. Overall the buildings contain a concerning number of issues.
- These facilities have served their purpose and are at their end of service life. In addition, they do not comply with life safety requirements of the building code as well as the standards required for a post-disaster operations centre.
- Particular concerns include un-sprinklered large wooden buildings; structures that could not withstand an earthquake of even modest magnitude; facility inaccessibility for staff or visitors with disabilities; and exceeded distances for the safe exit of staff from certain areas of the building.
- These examples are only a few of the many deficiencies that staff face on a daily basis. Saanich cannot continue to accept this situation due to the risks experienced by staff in these work environments which affect safety, efficiency, and morale.

***Does the District have a process or framework this project?***

- In April 2018, Council adopted the [Strategic Facilities Master Plan](#). In it, the Saanich Operations Centre (then referred to as the Parks and Public Works Yard) is identified as our top priority for capital investment.
- This redevelopment project is the first step in implementing the Facilities Master Plan which is a framework that will guide our work to improve and maintain facilities now and in the future.
- As part of the development of the Strategic Facilities Master Plan, a report card confirmed the high risk to service delivery posed by the deteriorating state of the facilities at the Saanich Operations Centre.

***Does Saanich need to build new or can the existing facility be repaired and renovated?***

- The existing facilities were constructed and assembled between the late 1950s and mid-1970s. While they were adequate at the time, they no longer conform to building codes and operational standards and practices.
- Renovations to the buildings to bring them up to current codes and standards would be so extensive in scope and cost that doing so would be a poor use of public money.
- Renovating existing facilities that were built to accommodate less than half of our necessary projected staff would result in a facility requiring significant additions and modification in the near future.
- We are looking ahead by considering a building that will last for e80 years.

***What are the project design goals?***

- **Delivery of services** is our primary objective. Services must meet minimum levels and delivered sustainably long into the future.
- **Environmental targets** focused on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Specifically, to get to net-zero within 30 years. Our facility should also reflect design strategies that support climate change resilience.
- **Environmental restoration** - while the risk of soil contaminants present on site is low, the opportunity to renew the site as well as to restore Public Works Creek will be a positive benefit.
- **First Nations reconciliation** - this project has the opportunity to seek mutual benefits for Saanich and the local First Nations.
- **Best workplace practices** to incorporate building code and WorkSafe BC guidelines and practices in any scenario.

***Are there no other suitable locations for the construction of this facility?***

- We undertook e18 months of extensive review and analysis of all District properties starting in 2018 which confirmed there are no other available sites to relocate the operations centre.
  - Through our GIS database, we reviewed all properties of a minimum six acres in area for our operations. Although the process included contact with several owners of potential criteria-meeting site requirements, no alternate site opportunities materialized.
  - We also engaged an external consultant to conduct an independent review through a marketplace solicitation which resulted in no alternate sites identified as suitable for District purposes.
- In September 2019, Council endorsed the staff recommendation that the operations centre should remain located at 1040 McKenzie Ave.

***What work on the redevelopment project has been completed so far?***

- Our design consultants have reviewed our current operations and understand the number of staff and the spatial requirements required to perform their duties. They have also advised how we might better locate staff so that a future facility could improve efficiency and enable staff to deliver services better.
- Our consultants have also looked ahead 20 to 40 years to understand what work areas may change and how the planned facilities can accommodate growth.
- The conceptual plans reflect a robust testing of ideas starting with four site plan concepts, narrowing down to two and then finally to one. Through this iterative process, departmental staff were involved in evaluating and pursuing improvements of the plans.

***What is the estimated project budget for the redevelopment project?***

- The preliminary project budget range is currently between \$183M and \$212M including estimated escalation to the construction timeline of 2026 to 2029.
- The estimated project budget range was recently developed by Saanich's Quantity Surveyor and peer reviewed by another Quantity Surveyor. Given the current level of detail and project definition, this estimate class should be viewed as having a +/- 20% variance.
- The magnitude of the redevelopment project will require financial resources on a scale previously unseen by Saanich.
- While the project will be refined and developed with greater detail and certainty over the next several years, we'll share known costs, variables, unknowns and contingencies with the public.

***How will the redevelopment project benefit the community/surrounding local areas?***

- The conceptual site layout confirms opportunities for the project to benefit not only our operations, but to also support our Official Community Plan's designated Quadra-McKenzie Neighbourhood Centre.
- Through planning that improves the McKenzie frontage and accessible green space adjacent to Public Works Creek, opportunities for commercial and retail lease spaces and third party development will benefit the community and support the Neighbourhood Centre.
- We will explore opportunities to incorporate other site uses including new green space, exterior public amenities, and possible non-District uses such as residential and commercial.
- The co-location of public and private interests on municipal property will support the Quadra-McKenzie neighbourhood's growth and prosperity.
- In addition to environmental restoration, providing public green space as well as re-imagining the Quadra-McKenzie corridor, the redevelopment project for the Saanich Operations Centre is an opportunity for a shared future; a shared future which will mutually benefit us all.

***What is the intention behind proposing other uses on the site?***

- Through the conceptual planning completed to date, the site has opportunities to condense operations and to reimagine the site as more efficient and providing space, area and volume for other uses.
- The identification of available space and the inclusion of other uses, specifically commercial and residential use opportunities, will provide:
  - opportunity to support the OCP and more strongly realize the Neighbourhood Centre designation of the Quadra/ McKenzie area.
  - opportunity for increased density on the site that will directly benefit from the location via access to several regional bus routes, immediate adjacency to regional bicycle and pedestrian paths and centrally located in the District on key major roads.
  - a template for economic growth and community vitality.
  - a potential revenue opportunity for the District that can positively impact the project's cost and affordability.

***What are the redevelopment project next steps?***

- Staff will deliver a business case to Council in late spring 2022.
- The intention of the business case is to present a preferred solution with a preliminary project budget and to seek Council support to proceed into next steps which include detailed design.
- It's important to note business case approval is not a commitment to full project funding and approval. This support will allow us to seek greater certainty for the project's cost and viability.

- Following several steps including advancing the detailed design, public consultation and and electoral approvals process; and development and building permits, construction is estimated to start likely no sooner than 2026.

***What is the proposed project schedule?***

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Approximate timelines</b>
Design Development	2022 to 2023
Public Engagement/ Electoral Approval process/ Development Permit	2023 to 2025
Construction documentation/ pre-construction and tendering	2025 to 2026
Construction and commissioning	2026 to 2029

***How will Saanich pay for this project and will residents have a say?***

- The District’s funding strategy will incorporate a combination of reserve funds and borrowing.
- The District will require resident approval to borrow money to finance the project. This could be done through an Alternative Approvals Process.
- The Alternate Approvals Process will allow District residents to indicate if the impact on taxation to complete this project is supportable.
- Additional engagement will take place during the AAP to ensure a well-informed decision is made.

***How can residents learn more about the redevelopment project?***

- We are committed to share redevelopment project information with residents that is relevant and understandable.
- Residents’ awareness and participation in the project’s public engagement will help us create a more robust redevelopment plan.
- There may be many residents who are unaware of the extent of our municipal services that are based out of the Saanich Operations Centre. Given the importance of our services, the service delivery risks we face, and the significant capital investment, increasing public education and awareness of how our service delivery contributes to our residents’ quality of life is key to the success of this project.
- The most up to date information about the Saanich Operations Centre is available at [saanich.ca/socplan](http://saanich.ca/socplan)

***What information will the redevelopment project’s business case include for Council’s consideration?***

- Primary information includes:
  - Costs developed from a preliminary design illustrated through site plans, building plans, elevations and illustrations confirming site activities and vehicle movement.
  - An overview of what opportunities for other uses and private sector investment could provide. Additionally, a description of how the District could go about doing this while outlining strategies and risks.
  - A recommended implementation strategy that includes an outline of the project’s overall affordability and financial impacts.
- The business case will include public input gathered from the month-long campaign. In addition to tabulated responses from a survey, collected comments from information sessions will be included.
- Public input to the conceptual site plan is likely to reflect questions around site accessibility, noise, and security.