The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: **Mayor and Council**

From: **Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer**

Date: **February 24, 2025**

Subject: **2025 Budget – Efficiencies Report**

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council receive this report for information.

PURPOSE

To outline the efforts undertaken in 2024 to efficiently deliver services within existing municipal budgets.

DISCUSSION

Through the financial planning process, staff present information to Council relating to the capacity of the organization and areas that would benefit from increased resourcing. This report is presented for information as a companion to the reports related to resource requests. The intention is to highlight how the organization remains committed to continuous improvement and delivering services as efficiently as possible within existing budget envelopes. An overarching objective of the District's approach is to ensure the organization makes the most of its resources by transforming labour, materials and capital into services that deliver value to the community.

For Council's information, a table outlining efficiencies and improvements for 2024 is included at Appendix "A" of this report. Some examples include:

- Optimizing solid waste pick-up routes to save staff time and 7% in fuel costs, with additional route rebalancing efforts underway to maximize capacity to support future growth.
- Collaborating with other local governments and institutional partners resulting in the implementation of more actions with the same staff and fewer resources, as well as successful grant applications to fund projects.
- Streamlining administrative processes (such as timesheet, fleet vehicle booking, staff onboarding, and driver abstract processes) to decrease the amount of staff time devoted to routine tasks.
- Upgrading 9200 streetlights to LED technology, which provides for reduced electrical consumption (and therefore financial cost) and lower ongoing maintenance requirements.

- Continuing the rollout of digital tools to enhance service delivery and use less staff time, including: traffic control device work orders; development and permit application processes; SCADA system upgrades; internal file management through Microsoft SharePoint; migration to cloud-based solutions.
- Implementing a pilot of a secure generational AI platform resulting in improved productivity within a framework that meets security, privacy and legislative requirements.

Revenue Opportunities

The list of efficiencies contains examples of steps taken across the municipality to improve business processes with resulting cost savings to the municipality. In addition to finding opportunities for cost savings, staff are reviewing all aspects of service delivery to find alternate sources of revenue.

The District's primary source of revenue for the operating fund is property taxation (70%). Finding alternate sources of revenue presents an opportunity to reduce the upward pressure on property taxation by funding services from alternate sources.

Examples of business processes introduced in 2024 that generate revenue include,

- Through implementing more effective scheduling and utilizing free parts delivery, the Fire Department's Fire Mechanical Division increased the capacity to perform outside mechanical work on heavy apparatus and equipment for other municipal fire departments, generating revenue for the municipality.
- The Cedar Hill Recreation Centre reallocated program and scheduling times in the Ceramics Studio and Tennis Courts, creating increased flexibility, allowing for more availability and resulting in an increase in participation and revenue.
- The Planning Department brought a report forward to Council recommending an adjustment to the Land Use and Development Application Fee Bylaw to introduce a new fee for ALR/ALC exclusion applications, which will increase revenue collected by the Department to move towards cost recovery for the work.

Staff will continue to review opportunities to find new revenue sources into 2025. While the examples listed above are program-specific, we will also explore, where possible, the feasibility of using underutilized municipal assets to generate revenue. A simple example of this might be the sale of surplus property; other revenue streams could also exist in the areas of sponsorships, advertising or naming rights, lease renegotiations or introduction of pay parking requirements.

CONCLUSION

The information in this report is provided for Council's information to support deliberations on the financial plan.

Approved by: Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:
1. Appendix A - Efficiencies

Appendix A – Efficiencies

Operational Area	Description
Corporate Services – Communications/Print Room	Communications continues to provide streamlined and modern engagement opportunities through the HelloSaanich community engagement platform, which was launched in January 2024. To date, nearly 2600 residents have registered for an account on the platform, allowing for a quick and easy option to provide feedback and learn more about Saanich projects and initiatives.
	Communications also continues to promote efficient processes within the Print and Mail Room using Service Now, an online ticketing and job request system. In 2024, 876 print requests were submitted via Service Now, saving staff time and improving efficiency.
Corporate Services – Human Resources (HR)	HR has made several improvements to processes, policies and systems to enable streamlined, clear and efficient performance while meeting legal requirements and creating resilience. Enhancements such as improving HR staff resources on the staff intranet, creating or updating policies (i.e., vacation carry over), modernizing guides (i.e., inclusive recruitment) and improving reporting (i.e., demographic reporting, new fields in our ERP software all improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness by reducing the administrative burden on hiring supervisors and supporting evidence-informed decision making through improved data entry and reporting.
	HR has promoted organization excellence through enhanced learning and development opportunities, continued employee engagement efforts (i.e., YES action plan implementation), enhanced recruitment outreach (i.e., improved access to passive applicants through LinkedIn, continued career fair attendance and ongoing status as one of BC's Top 100 - Employer of Choice). Increased employee engagement has been correlated with decreased absenteeism and presenteeism, reduction in workplace-related injuries, and decreased employee turnover with an associated decrease in recruitment costs which are estimated between 2x-3x of the position's salary
Corporate Services – Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)	Saanich co-hosted a regional symposium to address a novel tree-related hazard caused by climate change (Sooty Bark disease). To ensure staff safety, potentially infected trees will require special handling if testing is unavailable. To ensure staff safety and avoid unnecessary costs related to special handling and disposal, Saanich purchased two PCR test kits and will be training Saanich staff with assistance from National Resources Canada. As climate change continues, this in house resource and expertise will save considerable staff time and money.

	Annually, more than 215 invoices are received and processed to support employees' safe and sustainable return to work through Saanich's Workplace Injury Management (WIM) program. OHS is working with all vendors to sign up for electronic funds transfers (EFT) to reduce OHS and Finance staff time.
	Saanich continues to provide staff training on various health and safety-related topics. To reduce costs and support worker health and safety across the CRD, Saanich offers open seats to other local governments. Such outreach is especially important for smaller municipalities that do not have sufficient staff to book their own unique course.
Corporate Services – Sustainability	In 2024, the Sustainability Division developed their workplan collaboratively with staff from the Climate teams at the CRD and City of Victoria – identifying aligned priority projects and proactively sharing workloads. This resulted in several collaborative projects and joint contracts, meaning more climate actions could be implemented with the same staff and fewer resources. It also resulted in a successful combined grant application to the UBCM Provincial Emergency Preparedness Fund for $350,000 to support a Gorge Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy.
	In 2024, 2 car parking spaces were converted into 12 bicycle parking spaces at the Municipal Hall, increasing land use efficiencies and supporting parking for a greater number of staff in a smaller location. The Sustainability Division also increased office sharing with staff from planning and economic development, requiring less space and associated heating/maintenance.
	Garbage truck route optimization: Sustainability collaborated with Engineering to fund a garbage truck route optimization initiative, saving 7% in fuel costs.
	NRCan EV Charger Grant: Sustainability collaborated with Engineering to apply for an NRCan grant (for 42 EV chargers distributed between the SOC and the new Lochside Dr. Building. We've recently received conditional approval for this grant, representing a potential grant value of up to 50% of charger costs, or $340k in savings for Saanich. Implementing this expanded EV charger infrastructure represents a key strategy in fleet decarbonization, which will yield many benefits in the future for our municipal fleet, including reduced GHG emissions, reduced air and noise pollution, reduced fuel and maintenance costs, and the ability to pilot medium and heavy-duty vehicles with fast chargers.
	Saanich has partnered with UVic on a wildfire smoke infiltration study that implements a Climate Plan action item. This project delivers valuable data to the District with no financial requirements with a total of $55,880 direct benefit to the District.

Engineering / Admin	Timesheet Administration: Streamlined process for self-input by employees, resulting in timely and accurate updates in preparation for manager approval. This has reduced Admin efforts by 90%.
Engineering / Admin	Fleet Vehicle Bookings: Digitized booking process for more effective administration of bookings resulting in consistent vehicle availability and transparency of resource whereabouts.
Engineering / Admin	Onboarding Training Matrix: Digitized policy and safe work practice procedures into a single platform for ease of use and sign-off by incoming employees.
Engineering / Admin	SharePoint implementation: Establishment of an online resource for all staff, including a Resource Library and a Social Club page, including group-specific pages to drive team efficiencies. We continue to work on this as business needs evolve and change, driving digital solutions across the team.
Engineering / Admin	Project Mailout optimization: Developed templates with a mail merge function to enable mailouts to be completed more efficiently when sent to the Print Shop. This has reduced Admin time by 95%.
Engineering/Public Works/ Fleet Services	Initiated consultant to help streamline our Saanich Operations Center parking plan from a paper-based to an electronic tracking system to allow better tracking of current and future parking plans.
Engineering/Public Works/ Fleet Services	Helped streamline our monthly commercial drivers' abstract requirements by the creation of an automatic and up-to-date database from HR that allows Fleet to capture all employees (full-time and casual) that may operate commercial vehicles and/or equipment
Engineering/Public Works/ Fleet Services	Received clarification and endorsement on appropriate commercial vehicle hours of service exemptions for emergency and after-hours planned work. This clarification and endorsement help crews and employees who operate applicable commercial vehicles to continue operations when unexpected and/or emergency events occur.
Engineering/Public Works/ Fleet Services	Procurement of new fleet assets such as our ETransit Vans and medium-size pickups have been streamlined due to leveraging multi-year contracts that were put in place. This ultimately reduced the strain on the purchasing team, shortened the procurement process, and allowed us to easily procure 6 new replacements and outfit 5 service bodies in 2024. Additional assets have also been procured through Canoe Sourcewell which considerably shortens the lead time on placing orders vs. our traditional RFP/RFQ procurement process. This has allowed us to procure an additional 7 new replacements in 2024.
Engineering/Asset Management Program	In 2024, the implementation of the AM Strategy resulted in several improvements to operational efficiency. We began the purchase of mobile devices to allow Staff to collect digital asset information from the field, eliminating paper-based processes, and we transferred asset data to a central database to eliminate duplication.

Engineering/Public Works/ Solid Waste Services	Completed traffic flow improvements at the Yard and Garden Waste Drop-off, including installing a new Attendant Booth. Continued progress on all YGWDO redistribution strategies including introduction of a larger 360 Litre organics cart.
Engineering/Public Works/ Solid Waste Services	Implemented new garbage collection routes, aiming to minimize travel distance and reduce fuel consumption. Preliminary results show a fuel reduction of 7%, with additional route rebalancing efforts underway to maximize capacity to support future housing density and growth.
Engineering/Public Works/ Solid Waste Services	Retrofitted 13% of our existing Litter Bins with new cart-based cabinets that add capacity and are safer for staff to empty. Combined with better signage and a restrictive receptacle opening, the new cabinets show a markable reduction in abandoned household waste.
Engineering/Public Works/ Waterworks	Deployed field laptops for the Unidirectional Flushing Program have eliminated paper-based processes for the flushing program. Electronic data access to the Saanich GIS and Inframap software has allowed staff to access water and drainage information, streamlining the process for field crews to verify drainage impacts due to our flushing activities. Electronic entry replacing handwritten field flushing log sheets has eliminated duplication of effort previously done by administration staff at Public Works for entry into the flushing database.
Engineering/Public Works/ Waterworks	This year marked the completion of the upgrading project for Saanich SCADA. This program brings several efficiencies for both current and future operations. Some examples are a more reliable call out system, better offsite access to the SCADA to allow for ease of operation and better collection of data to drive future decision-making processes.
Engineering/Public Works/Storm & Wastewater	Improved sewer maintenance and infrastructure planning with a new video camera inspection van. Previously, identifying underground pipe issues relied on reactive maintenance and time-consuming manual assessments. The new technology allows real-time inspections, helping us detect problems early and plan infrastructure replacements proactively. By addressing issues before they escalate, we have reduced emergency repairs, optimized resource allocation, and extended the lifespan of our sewer system, ensuring a more reliable and cost-effective service for the community.
Engineering/Public Works/Storm & Wastewater	The Storm & Wastewater section has been actively piloting an innovative digital call-for-service program this past year. This forward-thinking approach empowers the team to receive real-time updates on all service requests, significantly enhancing their ability to respond swiftly and effectively. It also facilitates seamless communication with the main office, ensuring alignment and efficiency.
Engineering/Public Works/Support Services	Underground Locating Program Billing – The transfer voucher process for billing service required extensive duplicate data entry. JDE DAS reporting is now used to generate a spreadsheet that can be entered directly into JDE.
Engineering/Public Works/Support Services	Customer Service was enhanced by working closely with Communications and using on-hold messaging and email auto-replies to provide residents with multiple sources of information. For instance, communication for the Solid Waste Services Schedule Changeover was used to support the transition.

Engineering/Public Works/Support Services	Administrative Staff Training and Orientation Program – Developed detailed orientation and training program documents to support onboarding administrative staff.
Engineering/Public Works/Street Operations	New corner punch unit for the Sign Shop. Upgrade on the previous corner rounder helps create smooth, round corners on signs more quickly and creates a better product.
Engineering/Public Works/Street Operations	E-bike for the Sign Shop to be used to support the graffiti program. This allows workers to attend graffiti calls more efficiently in remote areas and at a lower cost and carbon footprint than a gas-powered vehicle.
Engineering/ Transportation and Development Services	Traffic Control Device Work orders are now all digital, with creation, review, and sign-off by the Engineer of Record and transmission to Public Works for implementation
Engineering/ Transportation and Development Services	Bluebeam Digital Drawing Review Software and process has been implemented for all development projects, including customized toolsets and layer templates to facilitate drawing review. The software is being used to review and circulate design drawings and supporting documentation digitally, which was historically completed manually.
Engineering/ Transportation and Development Services	Streamlined reviewing development proposals to analyze our sanitary and water systems. Introduced a new file type, “MDL,” with an automated Prospero workflow for improved efficiency between Development Services and Water Resources.
Engineering/ Transportation and Development Services	Introduced eApply and automated Prospero workflow for several Engineering Permits, such as “permit to construct on our road allowance” and “permit to occupy our road allowance.”
Engineering/ Transportation and Development Services	Introduced a new, user-friendly template relating to servicing requirements, including an accompanying spreadsheet which outlines specific actions the applicant must take (and when they must be taken by) to advance their application to the next phase.
Engineering/ Transportation and Development Services	Created automated workflow for the damage deposit (security) held for Building Permits, which Development Services is responsible for reviewing. Implemented automated workflow with Prospero to provide clarity to applicants, which has resulted in fewer inspections and fewer inquiries regarding damaged or incomplete works by email or phone.
Engineering	Bluebeam Digital Drawing Review Software and process has been implemented for all engineering capital works, including customized toolsets and layer templates to facilitate drawing review. The software is being used to review and circulate design drawings and supporting documentation digitally which was historically completed manually.
Engineering/ Water Resources	Contracted Archeologists’ services on a blanket order to support capital project construction in upholding Heritage Conservation Act requirements. Reduced procurement time and permitting time.
Engineering/ Water Resources	Creation of new ISMP and Stormwater Management Webpages to share status of ISMP project works and share knowledge/resources for stormwater management and frequently asked questions.

Engineering/ Transportation and Development Services, and Engineering/ Water Resources	Paperless signing and sealing of engineering drawings has been implemented. This removes printing from the process, saving staff time and paper.
Engineering/ Transportation and Development Services, and Engineering/ Water Resources	Together with Finance, the invoicing, review, and payment process has become paperless. This reduces the processing time, as invoices no longer travel through interoffice mail, and saves paper.
Engineering/Public Works/Street Operations	This year the Electrical Section have completed the LED streetlight upgrade program in which we upgraded 9200 Streetlights to L.E.D. This new technology has reduced electrical consumption and financial costs and has lowered the number of calls for service by our maintenance crews.
Engineering/Public Works/Street Operations	Signs and Markings has purchased a powered Hilti Shovel, making digging in hard-packed gravel much easier. This speeds things up and reduces the risk of repetitive motion injuries.
Engineering/Public Works/Street Operations	We have purchased a Thermoplastic kettle, which has enabled us to do our own touch-up of crosswalks and stop bar paint in-house.
Finance	Improve Accounts Payable Process: Development of an interim solution for accounts payable invoice approvals. Invoices are saved in specific department/section folders on a network drive where approvers digitally approve the invoices. This will decrease time and paper costs as hard copies of the invoices will not be sent via inter-office mail. Improved efficiencies for employees processing the invoices. Decreased the requirement for Purchasing staff to print copies of purchase orders.
Finance	Drive to have more taxpayers pay online vs in person: Staff are continuing to encourage taxpayers to sign up for monthly property tax payments or the use of electronic bank transfers. This has resulted in staff spending less time balancing and reconciling manual tax payment deposits containing cheques and cash. Reconciliation of electronic payment batches is prompt, efficient, and accurate. In addition, less paperwork is required as payment files are saved on the Saanich network reducing the amount of paper being used and filed.
Finance	Stores re-organization: Stores staff undertook a project to reorganize the outdoor area of the Stores section. The reorganization was an effort to make emergency stock and storage of larger items that require multiple staff to access, retrieve and load safely, such as large-diameter ductile iron pipes, easier to access. The improved access results in reduced staff time required to access the items and then load them for hauling to the site.

Finance	Collaboration tools: The introduction and usage of SharePoint by Purchasing staff has had notable and impactful time savings on the amount of time required to prepare and distribute Reports and Memos for review and approval, as well as day-to-day multi-staff input and participation in the preparation of solicitation documents.
Finance	Emailed pay stubs: Payroll has transitioned all employees to have their pay stubs emailed. This reduced payroll staff time printing and distributing weekly pay stubs, which also saved time that the different departments took to distribute the paper copies to their employees.
Finance	Improved automated data entry tools and capabilities within JD Edwards: Supported Human Resources, Finance, Engineering, Public Works, and Payroll with automated data entry across many record types, which saved an estimated 500 hours of data entry work in 2024 alone.
Finance	Expanded system capabilities of JD Edwards to meet the needs of the business: Provided new methods of storing and reporting on information in areas such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Asset Management, and Finance. Allowing JDE to be the record system for new data as the business needs to expand and change over time.
Finance	Automated tools in JD Edwards: Created a new automated process for consuming and recording Fleet fuel transactions, as well as monitoring charges against Fleet assets to reduce the likelihood of incorrect charges or missed inventory transactions affecting Fleet finances. Saving hours of employee time by automating entries and monitoring transactions.
Information Technology – Email Upgrades	Moved Saanich's email from on-premises to Microsoft cloud-based hosted exchange. Results in improved security and backup of data, mail access from anywhere, mailbox sizes to 99GB, and potential for additional improvements/features with Microsoft’s broader productivity suite (that are only compatible with hosted Exchange). Migration planned and started in 2024, will continue and complete in 2025. The project includes email for every Saanich employee, resulting in improved workforce productivity, data security and employee engagement.
Information Technology – Online Employee Workspace Portal for IT Services	Implemented Incident, Service Request and Change request tracking in IT to improve service response times, customer service, training, and system availability. Results in faster on/offboarding for staff, improved labour productivity, improved access to technology and better system availability. Conducted annual upgrade for the platform. Stats for 2024 include: 639 Change Ticket Raised / 583 Closed/Resolved 3225 Incident Raised/ 3102 Closed/Resolved 2496 Request Raised / 2426 / Close /Resolved 128 Requestable Catalogue Items 1900 Configuration Items (IT Assets) in CMDB 64 Knowledge Articles created for future use.

Information Technology and Public Works - Redeveloped and launched new Operational Monitoring Network for Public Works	The new SCADA system for public works improves asset monitoring, reduces outages, and reduces costs associated with managing water works (and soon-to-be traffic) based assets. Improved proactive monitoring results in better asset utilization, reduced service outages and reduced maintenance costs.
Information Technology and Police – Improved IT Cyber Incident Response process and resources	Along with SPD, Saanich IT has been onboarded into Microsoft's Unified Support and Cyber Response service. This results in better access to documentation, support, and incident response services should Saanich ever be the target of a major cyber incident.
Information Technology, Planning, Inspections, Engineering, Parks – Improved online permit applications (non-Pam related)	A variety of applications and services previously only available via paper/email application were launched online and available through the Saanich.ca website. Board of Variance (BOV) and Sign Permit and the many permitting improvements delivered under the Permitting Application Modernization program. Further PAM improvements include online scheduling for Pre-Application meetings and building inspections, expansion of credit card payments, and subscriptions to the Planning and Development Tracker.
Information Technology - Improved Employee Field Mobility	Implemented dozens of mobile devices into the field for Engineering and Parks, Inspections, and Recreation to improve mobile worker flexibility and efficiency of service delivery to the community. Results in improved labour productivity and potential for reduced permitting times. This includes approximately thirty-five new high-powered laptops to enable mobility for engineers who need improved performance of computing assets. Ten iPad rolled out to the Inspection department so they can update and report on inspections while in the field, improving their time durations to update and complete inspections.
Information Technology - Improved Cyber Security monitoring and overall Saanich posture	Established a partnership with the Canadian Center for Cyber Security to improve cyber monitoring capability and response to security incidents if/when they occur. Implemented District-wide access to cyber security training and awareness. Results in access to lower cost cyber insurance, improved labour productivity, and improvement of Saanich reputation for protecting information.
Information Technology - Implemented cyber threat intelligence program	Implemented a system that monitors the outside world for cyber threats that can impact Saanich and help eliminate them before they materialize. Results in protecting Saanich's reputation and improved labour productivity.
Information Technology – Improved Saanich mail filters for unwanted mail	Made improvements to the Saanich email system to better filter out unwanted SPAM and malicious emails before they hit the user. Significant reduction in unwanted mail hurts productivity and exposes Saanich to potential threats.

Information Technology - New Saanich IT Project Management Office	Implemented improved governance around IT project delivery, resource consumption, financial management, and demand management. This improved governance improves the quality of delivered IT projects and improves how new demand gets prioritized and planned while aligning with Council's strategic objectives. Includes a dashboard of all current IT projects. Results in more effective spend of capital and earlier benefits.
Information Technology and Finance - Improved budgeting and planning	In conjunction with Finance, implemented FMW phase 2 which focuses on improvements around financial budgeting and planning workflow. Results in less time to process needs into a finalized budget and less chance for clerical errors. Results in improved labour productivity when conducting annual planning and reporting of financial budgets.
Information Technology and HR - Initiated planning for Human Resources Information Management System	Conducted project initialization, project planning and initial procurement activities to prepare for Saanich to implement its first Human Resources system over the next 3 years. This will result in better workforce engagement and better utilization of district human capital.
Information Technology - Improved financial management capacity in IT	IT processes hundreds of invoices each month across dozens of vendors. Implemented improved process and efficiency improvements related to receiving, tracking, receiving and approving requisitions and invoices. Results in improved transparency, better cashflow and improved reputation with service partners.
Information Technology - Begun implementation of several Microsoft Productivity-enhancing applications	Microsoft SharePoint, Forms, Lists, Polls and Teams all work together to improve workforce productivity while collaborating on documents together in real-time. Fifty-nine active business units deployed on SharePoint with 106 sites created and ready for deployment when the work units are ready. System policies updated to enforce thirty-day retention and remove transitory messages and chats that are not considered records.
Information Technology – Several Infrastructure Improvements	Several back-end infrastructure improvements were completed, including installing uninterruptible power supplies and power distribution components in the data center and key networking closets through Saanich. Results in improved availability of IT systems, and reduced cost from damage that can occur with unstable power.
Information Technology – Digital Security Improvements	Implemented geo-fencing and multi-factor authentication for all users and most IT services. Saanich can now apply for reduced cyber insurance rates and score favourably on related audits from the Payment Card Industry and any other regulatory body where IT security is in scope. Results in reduced risk of cyber threat and loss of sensitive information, reduced insurance rates, and improved reputation.
Information Technology and District Management Team implements Secure AI for internal use.	Implemented a pilot of a secure generational AI platform called GovAI (based on ChatGPT). Work results in improved productivity, like having a personal digital assistant for research, training, content analysis and many features that can be automated, thus saving precious employee time. The system is secure, meets BC Privacy legislation and places Saanich in a great position to accrue the benefits of ethical AI. Eventually, this platform can deliver a smart chatbot for the public, but only after it is used consistently internally.

Information technology - Software License true-up activities	IT regularly conducted software asset checks and true-up licenses for users. Work resulted in cost avoidance during license renewal with vendors such as Microsoft, Oracle, Service Now, Central Square, Esri etc. Required license volumes change as Saanich needs to evolve and/or software license contracts get modified.
Information technology and Parks – Mobile Asset and map updates	Piloted and deployed Field Maps so staff can update asset and map records in the field without having to document them via paper and wait until they are in the office. Results in greater productivity and more accurate and real-time data for better decision-making.
Information Technology – Saanich Map GIS layer enhancements	The year created seventeen new layers of spatial GIS data used by most departments for the delivery of services. Many updates related to Small Scale Housing Transit Corridors, changes related to revised OCP, Primary Growth areas and many sewer and storm features. Updates include new arial data specially planned to reduce building lean in topographical overlays. Results include improved staff productivity, the value of data for external real estate and planning, and reduced cost of asset management and citizen engagement.
Information Technology – Emergency Readiness	All IT Divisions participated in emergency preparedness tabletop exercises to ensure EOC readiness during a disaster.
Information Technology – Created foundation for Business Intelligence (Reporting)	Implemented Microsoft Power BI, a toolset that can be utilized to gather and transform data for service delivery and governance. Being used extensively for the PAM project to automate the housing report and dashboard progress towards Saanich provincial metrics. Used in many other areas, including Fire, Sustainability, Fleet, Business Licensing, and the planned Council voting dashboard.
LPS - Archives	Reviewed and organized vault storage of archival material to increase available storage space, enabling Archives to accept additional material.
LPS - Archives	Digitized, updated, and consolidated to SharePoint all archive finding aids – guides, inventories, and catalogues – to enable staff to find material quickly for the public and District of Saanich inquiries.
LPS - Building & Inspections	Implementation of credit card payments for building, plumbing and development permits.
LPS - Building & Inspections	Implementation of digital permit applications, first through SharePoint and soon through e-apply. Moved to paperless applications and reduction of current file storage space.
LPS - Building & Inspections	Implementation of the Bluebeam program for review and processing building and development plans, which will improve permit processing times and the ability to collaborate with other departments.
LPS - Building & Inspections	Introduction of MYSaanich, where applicants and staff can view building permit applications in progress, and applicants can book online inspections.
LPS - Building & Inspections	IPads in the field have been utilized by Inspectors which allows access to LAN folders and review of plans on site.
LPS - Building & Inspections	Introduction of permit tracker system, which displays applications next in the queue for review as well as providing a number of days the application has been active.

LPS - Building & Inspections	Introduction of a combined building and plumbing permit, which reduces staff time and additional plumbing permit applications.
LPS - Bylaws & Licensing	Implementation of electronic signatures for all Bylaw and Licensing Services staff.
LPS - Legislative Services	Launched the District's new agenda management platform, Granicus OneMeeting. The software supports agendas, minutes, and reports for Council and all Committees to enhance access to all District records. As part of Granicus staff launched automated workflows for staff reports to Council and Committees. The new system eliminates the need for paper and enables reports to be circulated and approved for an agenda from any office location. Projected launch of Council voting dashboard through Granicus in 2025, enhancing access to District records.
LPS - Legislative Services	Launched an online committee application portal, streamlining the submission of committee membership applications and allowing efficient tracking of membership terms and other pertinent details.
LPS - Legislative Services	Updated the Board of Variance correspondence templates and meeting procedures and created a comprehensive position manual to reflect the most efficient methods for completing tasks and procedures, enhancing consistency and workflow efficiency.
LPS - Legislative Services	Began removing duplicate electronic files and transitioning to a new filing structure in preparation for an EDRMS (Electronic Document and Records Management System).
LPS - Legislative Services	Launched the new electronic Board of Variance application. This streamlined submission process allows applicants to submit applications, revised documents, and payments online. Integration with Prospero automatically populates relevant information and sends automated email notifications, simplifying workflows for both staff and applicants.
LPS - Records & Information Management	Re-introduced quarterly meetings and updates for Records Liaison Clerks.
LPS - Records & Information Management	Conducted District-wide business unit interviews for the review of the Records Classification and Retention Schedule project.
LPS - Records & Information Management	Conducted on-site records management reviews that include consideration of access and security of physical folders. On-site visits included records clean-ups.
LPS - Records & Information Management	Enhanced tracking and accountability by corporate numbers tracking for the District’s archived records and revising records management forms and processes.
LPS - Records & Information Management	Created a District-wide scanning procedure with a tip sheet and video.
LPS - Records & Information Management	Appropriate staff updates to advance digital recordkeeping initiatives.
LPS - Records & Information Management	A steering committee was formed with the Records Management team and select staff from Parks, Recreation and Community Services to standardize processes and workflows for that department.

Fire	The Fire Mechanical Division collaborated with the Purchasing Department to purchase bulk supplies like motor oil, washer fluid, radiator fluid, diesel exhaust fluid, and transmission fluid for servicing our fleet.
Fire	Through internal process efficiencies, such as more effective scheduling and utilizing free parts delivery, the Fire Mechanical Division increased the capacity to perform outside mechanical work on heavy apparatus and equipment for fire departments in other municipalities, generating revenue for the Department.
Fire	Increased Fire Dispatch call volume for client municipalities resulted in a rise in service base fees.
Fire	Electrifying the Fire Prevention Division fleet and implementing eco-idle features on all front-line apparatus achieved fuel savings.
Fire	Modifications to our response plans increased the usage of Fire Medic Units and reduced the number of heavy apparatus responses, leading to lower fuel and maintenance costs for the heavy apparatus.
Fire & EP	The Department submitted several grant applications, optimizing funding opportunities for emergency programs and wildland firefighting initiatives.
Planning	Completed a proposed Official Community Plan that provides clearer guidance on future land use changes, adds Corridors as primary growth areas, and provides parcel-based boundaries for Villages and Centres. Collectively, these changes provide direction on priority areas for redevelopment and allow faster evaluation of development applications. Uncoupling Local Area Plans from the OCP Bylaw removes uncertainty in the land use decisions and reduces the frequency of OCP amendments which makes the development application timeline shorter.
Planning	Council endorsed a definition of housing affordability for Saanich. This definition ensures applicants, staff and the public speak the same language when we discuss housing affordability in the context of development applications and policy formulation. This helps streamline development and policy processes around this topic.
Planning	Standardizing housing agreements facilitates process efficiencies in the development application process and increases transparency and predictability for applicants.
Planning	A focus on data management and tracking for housing and development statistics has led to several efficiencies: - Refining data attributes for better search results - Reducing time in manual searches - Higher quality data for staff, Council, and the public - Better and more timely tracking of key statistics
Planning	Phase 1 Development Process Review complete – Cross-departmental process review to look at current Development Permit and Commercial Building Permit process review. The completed phase identified key areas for process improvements and efficiencies and looked to have departments review their current processes for ongoing continuous improvements with existing tools and resources.

Planning	Development Tracker – worked with IT to add more application types to the online tracker for the public and applicants. This reduces the number of update requests regarding applications and ensures that the most up-to-date information is conveniently available and reduces inquiries to staff.
Planning	Removed the need for a rezoning process for non-market housing development projects that build to the height and density in the OCP. These changes expedite the construction of non-market, affordable housing in Saanich and streamline development approval processes.
Planning	Initiated testing of electronic referrals for larger development applications. This reduces the transit time for paper plans to make their way to various departments and allows quicker response times for referrals.
Planning	New Sign Permit application materials were developed for e-Apply and electronic review. Moving more services to electronic application and approval will result in faster service delivery and modernization to electronic record keeping and application processing.
Planning	Interim amendments to the Zoning Bylaw for residential parking were adopted, including removing the minimum parking requirement for projects of more than 12 units. This modernizes parking requirements in the District and will reduce the number of parking variances going to Council, streamlining approval processes.
Planning	Adopted Zoning Bylaw changes to permit roadside stands, pocket farm markets and temporary farm markets. This will remove the need to obtain Temporary Use Permits for individual stands/markets, greatly shortening timelines and processes for farmers or applicants.
Planning	Completed rezoning of all eligible RS and RD properties to allow small-scale multi-unit housing to support more housing options within neighbourhood areas. These changes streamline development approval processes by reducing the need for many rezoning applications. The requirement for a Development Permit was also removed on all applications resulting in fewer than four units and Garden Suites, streamlining approval processes.
Planning	Zoning Bylaw amendments to refer adaptable housing requirements to the Building Permit process result in consistency with the BC Building Code and one less item to secure through a covenant at the development application stage, thus streamlining development application processes.
CSD Child & Youth	Partnered with a bakery to receive bread for programs and offer some loaves to take home. This will decrease food costs for all three Youth Centres and provide food security.
CSD Volunteer Services	Stopped maintaining contact lists and volunteer tracking documents outside of Better Impact.
CSD Volunteer Services	Stopped sending onboarding documents as an autoreply to all volunteer applications.
Recreation/CHRC	Discontinued certain glazes in the ceramic studio for safety and cost-savings.
Recreation/SCP	Operationalized a new electric fleet vehicle.
PRCS	Increasingly produced proactive key messages for staff engagement and response during change, construction, and service interruption to provide clearer and timely information.

Recreation/SCP	Updated site-specific emergency procedures and created training and resource tools for the different Department roles for improved emergency response.
Recreation/All	Created a Facility Rentals and Permits Refund Policy to provide booking clerks and renters with clear and consistent guidelines removing the need for management oversight.
Recreation/All	Created email templates for new hires on various topics: shortlist, qualifications and reference, and onboarding that all staff could use to reduce hiring time.
Recreation/All	Implemented staff development workshops that improved instructors' knowledge in District priority areas while contributing to BCRPA-required fitness instructor certification hours to increase participation rates.
Recreation/All	Updated High-Performance Sport User Policy and User Agreement to provide clarity and consistency to user groups resulting in less time spent dealing with conflict.
Recreation/All	Updated bylaw specifying conditions for parking at recreation centres to improve access for participants.
Recreation/SCP, GHRC	Implemented an inclement weather procedure checklist that improved customer service and staff effectiveness when responding to inclement weather events.
Recreation/All	Introduced iPads at reception desks to assist with translations, provide the ability to walk around the counter to help show or inform patrons, and provide improved customer service.
Recreation/SCP	Introduced promotional swims during slower hours when club rentals are occurring to increase general attendance and participation when staff time (guards) is already paid for.
Recreation/SCP	A safety and cleanliness sticker campaign was implemented to increase worker's safety awareness and implement standards.
Recreation/GR Pearkes	Revised Capital Reserve Plan for Zamboni to account for price differential of the electric machine to alleviate future budget implications.
Recreation/GR Pearkes	Developed an online form for staff to report situations of note, such as facility issues or updates, which improved communication and reporting timelines.
Recreation/GR Pearkes	Completed design of fieldhouse upgrade. Phase one will replace the curtains (currently a manual system that requires several workers to complete). The new units will be mechanical and can be completed by one worker. The design and placement of the new curtains will maximize flexibility for different sports and activities.
Recreation/GHRC	Leveraged SharePoint and Teams framework in Aquatics for streamlined communications, scheduling, and collaboration.
Recreation/GHRC	Created a new system for tracking first aid records, incident investigations and inspections, ensuring that preventative measures are complete, preventing recurrence (occupational and patron/public first aid).
Recreation/GHRC	Revamped aquatics programming portfolios to accommodate increased programs and services without additional staff.
Recreation/GHRC	Revamped pool safety plan with a focus on formatting, making it more efficient for training and improving comprehension across business units (aquatics, BSWs etc.).

Recreation/All	Revamped the Child Protection policy and manuals with a focus on formatting. Increased efficiency for training and improved comprehension for new and returning staff across all centres and Community Services (i.e. camp staff). Included general review for best practices.
Recreation/All	The fitness committee revamped reserve accounts for weight room equipment replacement by creating cardio and strength (different lifecycles) accounts. This allows for more accurate tracking of asset lifecycles, replaced on schedule, and ensures the funding is in place.
Recreation/GHRC	Lap pool and hot tub pumps experienced end-of-life issues early. New pumps were put in on warranty. Instead of disposal, old pumps were refurbished to have on-site as backup pumps should primary pumps fail again. This was an inexpensive initiative that would ensure minimal impact on patrons should pumps fail.
Recreation/GHRC	Installed a new plastic hot tub pump, which is lighter, less expensive to repair, and for which parts are readily available. The new pump reduces energy use by 30% and is significantly quieter, increasing safety for staff and reducing disruption for neighbours. As the existing cast iron and brass pumps need to be taken out of service, they will be replaced with these new high-efficiency plastic pumps.
Recreation/GHRC	Upgraded underwater lights in the hot tub, tots and leisure pool to LED for efficiency, reduced maintenance and extended lifespan (note: lap pool fixtures were upgraded to LED in 2023).
Recreation	Created a Booking Clerk working group to create efficiencies and consistency for room/space bookings.
Recreation	Streamlined the registration and withdrawal process for reserved drop-in programs to improve customer efficiency and reduce staff time needed to facilitate.
Recreation/CH Campus	Installed glass doors on arts wing display cubes to eliminate the need to load cubes from a staff-only area allowing artists to install their displays, reducing staff hour allocation.
Recreation/CH Campus	Reviewed allocation of program times and open studio times in the Ceramics Studio. Reallocated program bookings to create increased flexibility and a better balance between programs and open studio availability, resulting in increased participation and revenue.
Recreation/CH Campus	Ceramics program participants created mugs, bowls, and plates to support the operation of the Second Chance café that employs brain injury survivors though the Cridge Centre at Cedar Hill Recreation Centre.
Recreation/CH Campus	Began accepting additional sports equipment in Project Re-Bounce (CRD grant-supported program in partnership with Recreation Oak Bay and Panorama Recreation) donation bins collection of end-of-life equipment for transport to a waste-to-energy facility in Burnaby, keeping them out of Hartland Landfill. New in 2024, patrons were invited to take equipment from the bin for reuse, further reducing waste.
Recreation/CH Campus	Reviewed allocation of tennis court public bookings, group lessons and private lessons, resulting in additional lesson time on Saturday mornings, which increased revenue and reduced the 200+ waitlist.
Recreation/CH Campus	Worked with Parks staff to plant an edible garden in front of patio planters. Vegetables and herbs were made available to the Second Chance Café for food preparation.

Recreation/CH Campus	Improved the weight room by replacing the 2007-era flooring with Dinoflex flooring, a product made from recycled tires. Incorporated a full re-paint of weight room space, mitigating the need for a separate shutdown.
Recreation/CH Campus	Installed a new accessible-height water fountain in the tennis facility lobby.
Recreation/CH Campus	Performed a market analysis of ceramics studios locally, regionally, and provincially to compare service levels, pricing structure and studio operations. Included tours of local studios to inform changes and efficiencies to Ceramic Studio pricing and programs which improved the recovery rate of the program.
Recreation/CH Campus	The pro shop launched an online store to sell golf green fee gift cards in March 2024 as an additional revenue line.
Recreation/CH Campus	Green Fee Punch Pass sales moved to Tee On, eliminating the need to issue plastic cards.
Recreation/CH Campus	Eliminated the Annual Golf Pass and completed a comprehensive market scan to review product mix and pricing in local, regional, and provincial markets that increased equitable access to the golf course and created a fee structure more in line with the service provided.
Recreation/CH Campus	Improved the efficiency and flexibility of the clubhouse by installing a glass door and glass panel partition in the restaurant, creating better separation between the clubhouse and the restaurant.
Recreation/CH Campus	Adopted Toro asset management program for the golf equipment fleet used by the Golf Course Mechanic to improve the preventative maintenance program.
CSD Older Adult Services	Requested a short URL for the community services website to improve access to community information.
CSD Disability Inclusion Services	Updated our intake forms for children and youth in Inclusion. This supported summer camp programs to make them online PDF fillable, and consistent across all greater Victoria municipal recreation facilities. (Families can use the same form at any municipality.)
CSD Financial Development	Launched the online application for the LIFE program, including an integration with BC Services to verify residency information. Implemented council-approved changes that include increasing the life pass from one year to two-year approvals based on the approval date, as most clients' financial situations do not change within this time.
CSD Child & Youth	Lowered the age range for SNPP day camps. This increased participation in camp activities and resulted in a decrease in the behaviour issues that were previously on the rise.
CSD Child & Youth	Re-organized the oversight of SNPP camps to Programmer I's closest to the parks they operate in. This reduces transportation costs, increases time efficiency, and allows for more creative development within programs, making SNPP more manageable overall.
CSD Special Events and Film	Reduced administrative redundancy by no longer duplicating permits when events or films overlap with Parks or Transportation permits, resulting in a more streamlined process and time savings for all parties.

CSD Special events	Streamlined the event application process with the creation of a technical/operations multi-departmental group, which meets monthly to review all upcoming applications and provide comments. This reduces email communication, saves time, and allows for dialogue to fully understand the impact of individual events.
CSD Special events	Streamlined the webpage creation process to allow event pages to be rolled over year-to-year instead of requiring staff to create a new page annually. The new structure is also more accessible to the public and easier to navigate between events.
CSD Special events	Created an online application process for event vendors that allows programmers to review all applications and make selections based on set criteria. Ensures fees, waivers, acknowledgements, etc. are signed-off on by all applicants.
CSD Volunteer Services	Began to align volunteer onboarding with the seasonal release of the Saanich Activity Guides (as appropriate) and discuss broad volunteer needs with staff ahead of time.
CSD Volunteer Services	Transitioned most onboarding documents to fillable PDFs, allowing many volunteer applicants to complete their applications online, allowing staff to spend more time with volunteers in an active role.
Parks/UFNACS	The integration of Environmental Services with Parks has allowed for the pooling of resources, expertise, and knowledge. One result, in alignment with the Climate Plan and the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, is increased training and educational opportunities for internal staff and external partners, including Pulling Together Program Learning Days and this spring's Parks staff training focused on biodiversity conservation and enhancement.
Parks/UFNACS	Amalgamated private and public invasive species management programs: The transition has enabled closer cooperation between invasive species management on both private and public land within Saanich. This collaboration has created efficiencies, especially when the species occurs on both private and public lands, resulting in improved invasive species identification, management, and restoration efforts. This partnership has been instrumental in helping preserve the ecological integrity of natural areas within the municipality.
Parks/UFNACS	Enhanced protection of birds, including monitoring and mapping: The collaboration between the Environmental Services' expertise in environmental monitoring and Parks' management of natural spaces has led to comprehensive and accurate monitoring of nesting activities. This collaborative effort has resulted in the successful mapping and protection of vulnerable bird nesting sites across the municipality. It has also ensured that when any tree removal is required, a comprehensive nest check can be done. New nest regulations have made this a priority regarding protected species/nests such as Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Barn Swallow, and Pileated Woodpecker.

Parks/UFNACS	Enhanced public engagement and education: Leveraged the collaboration between Environmental Services and Saanich Parks to provide new avenues for public engagement and education. Interactive programs provided the community with valuable insights into the importance of environmental conservation and the vital role of parks in preserving local biodiversity.
Parks/UFNACS	Implementation of a Saanich communications matrix for all of Parks, Rec and Community Services, including key deadlines and content/submission guidelines, resulting in the streaming of communications and marketing functions.
CSD Child & Youth	Lowered food costs by switching from "pizza" to “dinner” as an option for programs, allowing for more flexibility and creativity for food options while decreasing overall costs.
Recreation/SCP	Streamlined systems, processes, electronic files, and updated forms to fillable. This includes aquatic competition requests, set-up forms, and facility host guidelines.
Recreation/All	Implemented RecStaff scheduling software which has saved considerable time for area supervisors. Aquatic and Reception supervisors spent up to 25% of their time backfilling and replacing shifts.
Recreation - Registration	Initiated ongoing updates to tags and naming conventions in ActiveNet to improve the program search function for patrons.
Recreation/All	Restructured GHRC dryland programming to bring multisport program offerings in-house at all centres creating certainty for participants and increasing revenue.
Recreation/GHRC, SCP	Undertook crossover initiatives for SCP and GHRC aquatics programs to align program delivery and internal practices and improved training efficiency and consistency.
Recreation/GHRC	In consultation with BC Hydro, began exploring the implementation of battery units to reduce peak electricity usage, resulting in cost savings and the ability to provide emergency backup service during outages.
PRCS/Parks Ops/Various Sections	Revamped the snow and ice program to respond to two scenarios: "business as usual" routing for ice only and light snow events (Maintenance & Horticulture) and "extreme weather events" for significant snow lasting more than one day (Maint, Hort, UFNACS, Construction). 48 staff across Parks sections attended a training meeting to review this new program, including safety and new equipment updates. This resulted in a more efficient approach to extreme weather events and was shown to be effective in February 2024.
PRCS/Parks Ops/Horticulture	Increased the productivity on horticulture capital projects (streetscapes and cul-de-sac renovations) roughly threefold with the addition of a second Parks Worker II, an updated approach considering timeline and budget constraints, and the implementation of clear service level standards and a comprehensive maintenance and watering program. Additionally, as Parks Worker I’s assisted the horticulturalists in the required maintenance and watering schedules, the team reduced complaints by distributing renovation projects equally among neighbourhoods.

PRCS/Parks Ops/Horticulture	Completed a thorough horticulture inventory on the six routes of the section and assigned clear service levels and work plans for each horticulturalist's areas, including garden beds, passive turf, and irrigation. This improved the planning, accountability, and tracking of the horticulture section's work and helped establish a baseline for comparing year-over-year accomplishments.
PRCS/Parks Ops/Maintenance	Increased the ability of Parks staff to conduct their temporary overnight sheltering cleanup tasks more safely and efficiently after revisions to the Parks Management and Control Bylaw. Parks Maintenance staff increased their ability to handle hazardous and potentially hazardous materials with equipment, reducing exposure through manual processes.
Parks/CDBS and PAM	Initiated a formal pre-approval process to provide the community with better and more consistent upfront guidance so that Development Permit applications require fewer rounds of review.
Parks/CDBS and PAM	Began accepting full digital development review referrals through the Parks referrals email inbox.
Parks/CDBS and PAM	Automated task use and task flow processes in Prospero in conjunction with PAM and Tempest teams.
Parks/CDBS and PAM	Created a Permit and Application Tracker (PAT) in conjunction with the IT and PAM team; adopted the PAT dashboard for workflow, delegation of work and workload management.
Parks/CDBS-Sport User Group	Streamlined the process for home user groups to submit schedules.
Parks/CDBS	Implemented field tools for field review, increasing staff productivity.
Parks/CDBS	Provided mapping coordinator with ESRI-compatible mobile mapping tool (iPad), resulting in more efficiency and productivity.
Parks/Planning & Development	Began undertaking a Parks-wide asset management inventory as a first step in Parks' implementation of the corporate Asset Management Strategy. Thousands of park assets are now catalogued, with thousands remaining. Signs, benches, garbage containers, trails, and many other park assets are now uploaded to the internal GIS database and are accessible to staff for more efficient operations. This inventory work is expected to run into 2026. Some data layers will be made public in time as data is verified. This will help evaluate service levels in future.
Parks/Planning & Development	Increased soil salvage and careful handling between projects, reducing costly disposal charges and the volume of new growing medium needed. This resulted in cost savings at both the demolition and reconstruction stages. Projects included Rutledge, Copley, and Fowler Parks. Growing medium (soil) is a significant capital cost for park renewal and maintenance, and careful handling will be pursued for all future projects.
Parks/Planning & Development	Instituted a Parks-wide Contaminated Soil Protocol to address new provincially defined contaminated soil handling requirements. The streamlined procedures help staff address suspected contaminated soils efficiently and provide clear direction for material handling.

Parks/Planning & Development	Implemented successful material salvage and re-use of logs, lumber, sand, gravel and other building supplies at Wedgewood, Fowler, Rutledge, and various other Saanich Parks. This includes the continued salvage of lumber when replacing wooden benches with new standard recycled plastic lumber benches. This new style dramatically reduces maintenance costs and staff time required for upkeep and refinishing.