



2025 Annual Address
Saanich Mayor Dean Murdock
November 17, 2025

Good evening everyone. Welcome to your Council Chambers.

As we gather here this evening, let's begin by honouring and recognizing the rich history and enduring spirit of the land upon which we meet.

We are privileged to convene in a place that breathes history and tradition, the ancestral and unceded homelands of the ləkʷəŋən speaking peoples - known today as the Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations, as well as the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, represented by the W̱JOLƏLP (Tsartlip), BÓKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), S̱TÁUTW_ (Tsawout), W̱SIKEM (Tseycum), and MÁLEXEL (Malahat) Nations. Indigenous Peoples who have stewarded these lands since time immemorial and we are grateful for the opportunity to gather here this evening.

While we begin each meeting with a territorial acknowledgment, our commitment to Reconciliation, decolonization and a stronger future with the ləkʷəŋən speaking peoples and the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples goes deeper than words.

We are committed to celebrating the rich diversity of people in our community. We are guided by the principle that embracing diversity enriches the lives of all people. We all share the responsibility for creating an equitable and inclusive community and for addressing discrimination in all forms.

I am proud of the fact that we are, and will continue to be, a community where everyone belongs.

Working together for a stronger future

The annual address from the Mayor is an opportunity to share a few highlights of the important work that is underway to build a stronger, healthier, more equitable and sustainable Saanich for everyone.

As we enter the final year of this term, this will be my last formal opportunity to reflect on what we've accomplished and what we plan to achieve in our final year.

The District's initiatives and key accomplishments are always too numerous to include everything in my remarks. I've added an appendix with this year's address that includes highlights from each of Saanich's Departments. I encourage to take a look when you have a chance. It's an impressive list that just scratches the surface of the work of Saanich's staff and crews.

This term, your Council has remained focused on the priorities you told us are important to you:



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- Creating homes that families can afford in walkable and accessible neighbourhoods.
- Adding to the vibrancy of neighbourhoods where parks, schools and services are accessible on foot and bike.
- Protecting against the changing climate, restoring our natural areas and adding to our Urban Forest.
- Taking action to build a stronger economy, and
- Working together as a region to deliver services and champion senior government investments.

A confident future

We're living through complex and challenging times. 2025 has delivered its share of challenges and opportunities, as we position the District for long-term success and resilience. Admittedly, it hasn't all gone exactly as I'd expected.

The replacement of the Saanich Operations Centre has been a question that successive Councils have struggled to confront. This term, your Mayor and Council put forward a plan to replace the aging facility and ensure the long-term viability of our core municipal services and safety of the crews who deliver those services.

Earlier this year, voters told us that they do not support the proposed borrowing for that replacement project as it had been envisioned. Your Council and I heard that message loud and clear, and we respect the outcome of the process. But let's be clear, the need to replace the aging facilities doesn't go away.

Tonight, Council will make a decision on proceeding with a rescoped project that will see the redevelopment take place in phases. Phase One will tackle the most urgent components as a priority.

As elected officials, we have an obligation to ensure the infrastructure and facilities our residents rely on are maintained and replaced. A phased approach to replacement of the Operations Centre provides Saanich residents with confidence that the services they rely on will continue into the future.

As a growing community, your Mayor and Council have another important responsibility, and that is to ensure we are planning for more people and the homes, services and amenities for their long-term success as future residents.

Our planning processes are intended to instill confidence about the future of this great community that we love and call home. You and your family deserve to know that the



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neighbourhood where you've built a life is one you can continue to enjoy. And that as your kids grow up, they can find a place of their own that offers the same great benefits.

It's why we initiated our corridor planning processes, including the Quadra McKenzie Plan, the update to the Shelbourne Valley Plan, and Tillicum Burnside plan. Plans that build a strong, confident future for today's and future residents.

It's become clear that those efforts have had unintended consequences. Instead of instilling confidence, they've at times created uncertainty and, in some cases, fears about the future.

To my incredible disappointment we've seen those uncertainties and fears exploited by political interests that have sowed division by spreading disinformation about the plans, including telling people that Saanich would demolish their home or build a high-rise next to their house.

I can tell you in no uncertain terms that Saanich has no plans to do either of those things. But it's clear that calling out disinformation and correcting the record isn't going to be enough.

We have to lower the volume in order to have a conversation about how our community will grow. A conversation that invites people in. One where all voices - not just the loudest voice - feel welcome to shape the future vision.

To accomplish that I intend to bring a motion to Council to do three things:

First, that we remove the 24-storey buildings proposed for the corner of Quadra and McKenzie from the draft Quadra McKenzie Plan. It's clear that proposed height sends the wrong message about the growth we expect or will realistically see on these corridors. Our focus has to be on family-suitable homes that can be delivered with low rise, multi unit buildings and townhouses. Let's keep the high-rises downtown.

Second, that we remove the transportation cross sections that contemplate lane reduction on Quadra street. The brand new regional transportation service is about to get started on a new regional transportation plan in partnership with BC Transit. Quadra and McKenzie are major corridors for people all over this region who use them to drive, bus, bike and walk. They are clearly key parts of the region's transportation network. Let's work with our regional partners to ensure that the long-term vitality of these corridors serve everyone who relies on them to get around.

Finally, that we evaluate our corridor planning process. With QMP, the Shelbourne Valley plan update, and the Tillicum Burnside Plan all underway and in various states of completion, we have an opportunity to evaluate what's working and what we need to



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improve. Let's ensure that we strike the right balance between long-term planning and instilling confidence in our future.

I know that by making these changes, we can get our planning efforts and the conversations they engender back to one of optimism and support for a vision in which everyone can see a future for themselves and their loved ones.

Your health matters

Planning for a growing community means ensuring available services for more people. Beyond plans for homes and infrastructure, we're also looking out for the essential supports that individuals and families rely on.

Staff recently reported on the work that's been completed to create more child care spaces for families to put their young ones in day care. Child care is an essential part of a sustainable economy and fundamental to a healthy community.

We also know that more people are looking for a family doctor and health care provider. There are a number of activities already underway to bring more health professionals to Saanich and the South Island.

We're working collaboratively with South Island Prosperity Partnership and Island Health on a recruitment campaign to attract health professionals from abroad to settle on the South Island. These efforts have already helped attract dozens of foreign trained providers from the Pacific Northwest to work in our capital.

Work is underway with the University of Victoria to locate a teaching clinic in Saanich that will help our residents get access to practitioners.

Additionally, Shoreline Medical Society, a non-profit that operates clinics in Sidney and Brentwood, will attend a Council meeting next month to share their plans to open an additional clinic. It's a key opportunity for us to attract another medical clinic to serve Saanich residents.

Rather than pursue these overlapping initiatives with various organizations as a series of one-offs, we need to get on the same page. To do that, I propose convening a Mayor's Forum on health services in Saanich that will bring together these various organizations along with our local MLAs to ensure we are working in coordination.

Let's be clear, this isn't a Working Group or a Blue Ribbon Panel to produce another strategy. This will be a session focused on coordinated action and confirming next steps to get Saanich individuals and families access to health providers.



Homes that people can afford

Everyone in Saanich deserves a home that meets their needs, at a price they can afford.

This term, we have dedicated a lot of time, energy and effort to attract and support affordable, non-market housing. We introduced Rapid Deployment of non-market housing, which prioritizes and streamlines approvals for proposals that build homes that are below-market prices. We've also put forward Saanich-owned properties to build non-market, affordable housing in partnerships with non-profit housing providers.

This approach is paying dividends and getting more affordable homes built more quickly.

This year, half of the units approved at the Development Permit stage are non-market affordable homes. Interestingly, this year we issued twice the number of DPs compared to the year before. That means the DPs issued this year for non-market units is equivalent to the total number of all DPs approved the previous year.

In the last two years, we've seen 433 units of non-market housing approved at the DP stage, representing 46% of total DP approvals. Next month, staff will provide Council with a progress report that highlights this important work in more detail.

Getting non-market homes built more quickly gives people and their families options that meet their needs and at a price they can afford.

I noted with the interest that the federal government has earmarked \$13 billion for Build Canada Homes. I have conveyed to our local MPs and to Federal Housing Minister Robertson that Saanich is keen to work collaboratively to get non-market affordable homes built in our community.

I also wanted to highlight that we are exceeding provincial targets for the creation of family-suitable 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom units, which will allow more families to settle in our community. There are currently 212 homes in the review and approval process through SSMUH zoning. These projects will deliver duplexes, triplexes and multiplexes that give more families options that meet their needs and budgets.

Replacing infrastructure and creating safer streets

Saanich continues to make strong progress on major infrastructure investments that are shaping a more connected, resilient, and sustainable community.

Shelbourne Street Improvements Project

Phase 2 of the Shelbourne Street Improvements Project, south of Pear Street, is now



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complete. Work on Phase 3 — the final section between McKenzie Avenue and Pear Street — is well underway and on track for completion in early 2026. Once finished, this will mark the completion of the largest infrastructure project ever delivered by Saanich, transforming one of our busiest corridors into a safer, greener, and more accessible street for everyone.

Sinclair Road Upgrades

Our work to modernize Sinclair Road between UVic and Cadboro Bay Village is also nearing completion. The road is expected to reopen early in the new year, marking the culmination of a multi-year effort that replaced aging underground utilities and delivered a fully redesigned street — one that will serve people walking, cycling, and driving for decades to come.

Gorge Road Improvements

Looking ahead, Saanich expects to begin the final phase of improvements to Gorge Road in 2026. This project will install new sewer and drainage infrastructure, followed by a redesigned roadway and an upgraded intersection at Gorge and Tillicum. Once complete, this investment will help finish a key link in the regional cycling network, connecting Saanich seamlessly with Esquimalt and Victoria.

Neighbourhood Bikeways

Saanich is making it easier and safer for people of all ages to get around on foot and bike. We have heard that people want more cycling options that are off busy streets.

The Neighbourhood Bikeways project is an initiative that will see streets with low traffic and speed, designed so people cycling and driving can safely share the road. These bikeways typically include traffic calming measures, signage, and road markings to make cycling safer and more comfortable for everyone.

Neighbourhood bikeways and other types of cycling facilities work together to build out the network, giving individuals and families safe and convenient options to get around in, and enjoy, our community.

Consultation on Neighbourhood Bikeways gets rolling next month.

Natural area restoration and Climate Adaptation

Restoring our natural systems is a key part of responding to a changing climate. This summer, Saanich Parks and Public Works partnered with the Peninsula Streams Society on a project to restore 170 meters of Gabo Creek and improve salmon and invertebrate habitats.



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This year also saw the completion of the Tillicum Green Infrastructure Project – a partnership between Saanich and Greater Victoria School District. The project included planting hundreds of trees and plants and 13 rain gardens along with an outdoor classroom at Tillicum Elementary School. The plantings accompanied sidewalk and road improvements with \$400k in Provincial grant funding support. The improvements make it safer and easier for our children and residents to get to school, increases our urban tree canopy cover, provides more shade, stormwater management and protects us from climate change impacts like extreme heat and flooding.

I also want to highlight that engagement efforts on the updated Climate Plan and Zero Waste Strategy have now wrapped up. We can expect both plans to come forward for Council consideration in early 2026.

A healthy and vibrant community

A key aspect of liveability and vibrancy is abundant green spaces and recreation opportunities to serve individuals and family. That means prioritizing the creation of places and spaces that foster social connection and well-being.

A recent example is the renewal of Maynard Park's playground and green space enhancements. The new playground includes a number of modern and accessible features to ensure everyone can enjoy the fun. The sustainable features include a natural play area to encourage kids to interact with biodiversity in the sensory gardens, and tree planting to increase existing shade protection.

Another key initiative this year is the brand new waterslide at Saanich Commonwealth Place. Proving that infrastructure replacement isn't just essential, it can also be fun. The new, modern waterslide will open this week with a grand opening event planned for November 29. It's bigger, more colourful, and promises to be a lot of fun. It also accommodates lower rider heights, which means more people can enjoy the fun.

We wish to thank everyone for their patience during the pool area improvements and slide installation, and we're delighted to welcome you back to SCP.

As we look to expand our recreation spaces, the Lambrick Park campus, home to the Gordon Head Rec Centre, offers opportunities to grow our recreation services for our growing community. The Lambrick Park Planning process is now underway with engagement opportunities all this month and a survey that's open until December 6.

Renewing our vision for this key municipal park will allow Saanich to better serve people of all ages who make use of Lambrick's beautiful green spaces, busy sports facilities and



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inclusive recreation programming. Whether it's swimming, skating or court and racquet sports, Lambrick will offer activities for all ages and abilities.

Reconciliation and relationships

In July, your Mayor and Council were invited to join the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council to celebrate the official name restoration of PKOLS (formerly Mount Douglas) and sign rededication at the top of the mountain.

We continue our government to government relationship with the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council to advance the ÁTOL, NEUEL Memorandum of Understanding and deliver on its key commitments.

We continue to take steps to build stronger relationships with the Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations, as well as the Métis Nation of Greater Victoria.

A stronger local economy

This year, we continued to roll out key actions in Saanich's Economic Development Strategy to support local businesses and attract local employers to set up shop in Saanich and create well-paid, family-supporting jobs for people in our community.

This spring, Saanich launched BusinessCare. It's a new initiative that puts local businesses at the centre of economic decision-making, ensures District programs and policies reflect real business needs, and celebrates and promotes local business success.

Working together as a region

I want to highlight one of this term's major achievements: the creation of a regional transportation service. I know that doesn't sound like much, but it is a significant step toward better transit and transportation in our region.

For the first time, we can speak with one voice to advocate to senior governments for investments in transportation infrastructure that will move people more quickly and conveniently.

Finally, the Citizens Assembly on Amalgamation with the City of Victoria completed their work this year and submitted a recommendation to amalgamate our two communities. I've heard a lot of strong views from folks about this recommendation. A referendum on the



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Assembly's recommendation will be held as part of the 2026 local government election. It will be the people of Saanich and Victoria - not your Councils - who make the decision.

Continuing the work for a Stronger Saanich

As we move into the final year of our term, we've achieved a lot together as we strive to build a stronger, healthier, more equitable and sustainable Saanich for everyone.

The secret is out. Saanich is a great place to live. It's important that we protect, preserve and enhance the things that we love, and ensure that more individuals and families get the chance to fall in love with this great place too.

While we have much to be proud of, there is still work ahead of us to ensure everyone can find a home and build a life in this great community. And that they can settle in walkable and accessible neighbourhoods, surrounded by schools, services, amenities and abundant green spaces and natural areas to enjoy with family, friends and loved ones.

Saanich is an incredible place and it has been the honour of my life to be your mayor and work with this great group of Councillors on the priorities Saanich residents have told us matter most to them. I want to thank each of you for your dedication and time you've expended as we've advanced this important work. I look forward to working together for the final year of our term.

I also want to take a moment to thank the incredible staff, whose hard work and dedication have allowed us to advance these important initiatives. One of my favourite parts of this job is the chance to visit with staff, hear about the work they're doing, and thank them for their service to Saanich residents.

A highlight for me this year was the chance to stand on the pool deck when Summer McIntosh set one of many world records at the Saanich Commonwealth Place this past June. I didn't get to present Summer with a gold medal. That honour fell to the Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services. A truly incredible experience and one of the few times my kids thought anything about my job is cool.

Thank you.

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Planning

- There has been lots of non-market housing interest in the District, due to Council's suite of supports including Rapid Deployment and fast-tracking non-profit housing applications. Half of the units approved at the DP stage are long-term, non-market affordable homes
- 212 homes are in process through SSMUH zoning. These are family-sized units in all parts of Saanich.
- Implemented bylaw changes to protect the integrity of agricultural lands, including by limiting house size and requiring clustering of residential uses
- Advanced planning in Centre, Corridor and Village areas through engaging over 3,800 people in the development of the Quadra McKenzie, Shelbourne Valley and Tillicum Burnside Plans.
- Over 1100 planning enquiries received and responded to between mid-June (when tracking began) and end of September, equating to an average of 315 enquiries per month in what is typically the slowest time of the year
- Enquiries take an average of 16 minutes to respond to, meaning over 2 FTE of staff time is used to provide this service alone (84 hours) each month
- Current Planning has reviewed 51 plan submissions for Rezoning, Subdivisions, and Development Permit applications, and provided written feedback and direction on next steps for each between January and end of September 2025
- 738 reviews were completed on Residential Building Permit Applications between January and end of September 2025, along with 335 Business Licence applications requiring zoning reviews, 62 Sign Permit Applications, and 47 Board of Variance Applications
- Planning Applications Digitization - In April 2025 Planning moved over to receiving and processing applications in a fully digital format. To date there has been a 100% adoption of this paper-less process.

Engineering

- Shelbourne Street Improvements Project
Phase 2 of the Shelbourne Street Improvements Project, south of Pear Street, is now complete. Work on Phase 3 — the final section between McKenzie Avenue and Pear Street — is well underway and on track for completion in early 2026. Once finished, this will mark the completion of the largest infrastructure project ever delivered by Saanich, transforming one of our busiest corridors into a safer, greener, and more accessible street for everyone.
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- Fire Hall 2 Redevelopment - The District's Fire Station #2 Redevelopment Project continues to reach major construction milestones that reflect great progress that the contractor together with the project team have made in the past year. The 23,000 ft² two storey building has risen along Royal Oak Drive to have a striking presence to both neighboring residents, pedestrians, bus patrons and vehicular traffic passersby. Most predominate is the materialization of the buildings use of mass timber as clearly seen in the floor and roof constructions. This net zero energy performance facility is on schedule for a Q3 staff move in and Q4 official completion and opening.
- Asset Management Strategy and Implementation: In 2025, the District of Saanich was honoured to win the Presidents Committee Choice Award at the UBCM 2025 Community Excellence Awards for our Asset Management Strategy and Implementation Plan. We were recognized for this prestigious award for demonstrating collaboration, creativity and innovation through continuous improvement towards sustainable service delivery.
- Municipal Servicing Assessment – The District recently completed the Municipal Servicing Assessment which considered the viability of Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing development across the District given the infrastructure servicing in place. A summary, mapping and user guide are under development for publishing online. Meanwhile, there is the mapping work completed related to fire flows, FAQ's and other materials available online to support these applications.

Legislative and Protective Services

- Council Voting Dashboard
Launched in March 2025, the new online Council Voting Dashboard provides a clear and accessible record of Council votes, filterable by meeting, agenda item, and Council member. The tool improves transparency and makes it easier for residents to see how Council members voted on specific items.
- Town Halls
In keeping with Council's Strategic Plan commitment to open dialogue, three Town Halls are being held in 2025. These sessions are designed to give residents the opportunity to share their ideas and concerns directly with Council in a less formal setting focused on listening and engagement.
- Council Procedure Bylaw Update
Adopted October 6, 2025, the updated Council Procedure Bylaw streamlines the order of business by starting meetings 30 minutes earlier and moving Public Input closer to the beginning of the agenda. These changes help reduce wait times and make it easier for residents to participate in Council meetings.
- 2026 Local Government and School Board Election
Planning is underway for the 2026 General Local Election, scheduled for October 17, 2026. Legislative Services is leading the coordination to ensure an accessible and efficient election process that supports voter participation. As recommended by the Victoria Saanich Citizens' Assembly, a question on potential amalgamation of the two municipalities will also appear on the ballot for Saanich voters.
- Digitization of Records

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Digitization of housing related records (paper and microfiche) is underway for Inspections and Planning which will create staff efficiencies and improvements in retrieving required records.

- Archives
Archives team is on the road! They attended their first ever Saanich Fair (a rousing success!) and will be at the Bay Street Armoury Open House in December.
- PKOLS Telecommunications Replacement Tower Project
Tower design and location are finalized and the construction is set to start beginning of January, 2026 and take 4-6 months. Removal of the current tower will be done through Phase 3 of the project anticipated to commence in late 2026 once current tenants have been transitioned to the new monopole.
- Library redevelopment at 3950 Cedar Hill Road
The Development Permit and Building Permit are anticipated to be approved shortly and demolition to start by the end of the year. Construction is currently in the tender process with Capital Regional Housing Corporation.

Corporate Services

Communications, Business Planning and Reporting, Economic Development

- Completed the Resident Pulse Survey with a 500% increase in participants compared to previous survey.
- Boosted subscribers on HelloSaanich, Saanich's online engagement platform, by 100%. This aligns with Saanich's increased efforts to share information about projects, services and new programs, and provide a variety of ways for the public to engage.
- Launched BusinessCare, a unique business visitation program, which aims to gain insights into opportunities and challenges for local businesses of all sizes.
- Revamped Saanich's Annual Report and presented a more modern and accessible design.

Human Resources

- People & Culture Plan: Our crafted People and Culture plan, along with our Cultural Tenets, reinforces our daily commitment to excellence and collaboration in the workplace. This commitment:
 - Empowers staff & boosts engagement.
 - Positions the organization to leverage data- driven decision making.
- Ensures alignment of skills and roles, with the right people performing the right tasks.
- Staff development: To date, staff have completed nearly 3,000 learning hours covering a range of topics from New Employee Orientation to Respectful Workplace to ADEI training. Staff development cultivates a skilled, knowledgeable, and productive workforce which enables citizen service delivery.

Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

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- Hired a Manager of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation in a newly created role – the first one at the District. It is aimed at building trusted relationships with Indigenous communities, governments, businesses and staff and Métis and Urban Indigenous partners; nurturing Council-to-Council relationships with Nations and leading the development of frameworks, plans and agreements.
- Undertook a range of activities to advance reconciliation that included:
 - Collaborating with the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council to advance the ÁTOL,NEUEL Memorandum of Understanding and deliver on key commitments that included the Pkols (Mount Douglas) name restoration and sign rededication event;
 - Providing funding as a gold sponsor and participating in the South Island Powwow and staff learning activities in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day on September 30; and
 - Successfully applying for a UBCM grant to hold a Council-to-Council meal and event and build relationships with the Métis Nation of Greater Victoria.

Occupational Health and Safety

- In October, the District received the BC Municipal Safety Association Organizational Safety Excellence Award. This award recognizes local governments for activities that improve experience rating, and ultimately reduce injuries, illness, disease, and fatalities.
- Successfully completing its 16th COR audit, ensuring continuous improvement in our health and safety program and providing the district with significant rebates— \$ 251,171.91 in 2024 and \$ 328,308.46 in 2025, with a forecasted rebate of \$413,804 in 2026. These rebates are in addition to insurance discounts Saanich is currently receiving for performing better than industry average.
- Celebrated Safety and Health Week, Emergency Preparedness Week and Mental Health Week with more than 25 offerings throughout the week. Staff took part in emergency drills, fire extinguisher and first aid training, restocked first aid kits, learned about summer safety and new mental health programs, and were encouraged to take it all home to support family, friends and neighbours.
- Supported compliance efforts related to new legal requirements (e.g. occupational first aid), new hazards (e.g. sooty bark), and existing high risk work activities (e.g. confines spaces, fall protection, violence in the workplace).
- Upcoming:
 - support the procurement of an Integrated Workforce Management system including OHS functions
 - Initiate a participatory musculoskeletal injury (MSI) prevention program
 - Initiate an overarching psychological health and safety program

Sustainability

- Approved the Zero Emission Fleet Strategy that not only transitions us to a clean, quiet electric fleet, but also saves money over the lifetime of the vehicles through

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reduced fuel, operations and maintenance costs. Secured \$350,000 in federal funding to install 40 Level 2 EV chargers and 2 EV fast chargers to support the Strategy's implementation.

- Completed the Tillicum Green Infrastructure Project – a partnership between the District of Saanich and Greater Victoria School District that included the planting of over 100 trees, 1200 native plants, 13 rain gardens and an outdoor classroom at Tillicum Elementary School and the adjacent streets, alongside sidewalk and road improvements with \$396,000 in Provincial grant funding. Not only making it safer and easier for our children and residents to get to school, but also increasing our urban tree canopy cover; providing shade, stormwater management and protecting us from climate changes like extreme heat and flooding.
- Expanded our approach to sustainability and zero waste at Saanich festivals and events, with zero waste stations and reusable service ware in place of single use items such as the use of reusable bowls for Saanich Strawberry Festival with support of a Rethink Waste Grant from the CRD.
- Introduced a new Energy and Carbon Emissions (ECE) Reporting Requirement for large buildings with supporting programs to help monitor our community's building emissions and drive reductions in energy use alongside cost savings.
- Upcoming – Final phases of updating the Climate Plan with engagement through Fall and a draft plan by early 2026.
- Upcoming – Finalizing the Zero Waste Strategy with engagement through Fall and a draft plan by early 2026.

Parks, Recreation and Community Services

- Outdoor Sports Field Strategy Overview of Saanich's current outdoor sports fields, their allocation and asset management. Provides transparency to all user groups for what Saanich currently offers, their condition and help plan for the future to prioritize capital investment into the community's outdoor sports fields and lacrosse boxes.
- Panama Flats Concept Plan Update The 2014 concept plan was reviewed and revised with broad community input and support. The updated plan is based on the high biodiversity values of the Flats, Colquitz River and Panama Hill and will allow for appropriate recreation activities such as trail uses and birding.
- Gabo Creek restoration project In summer 2025, in partnership with Saanich Parks, Public Works, and the Peninsula Streams Society, 170 meters of Gabo Creek were restored to improve salmon and invertebrate habitats by removing sediment, reshaping pools, and adding spawning gravel. Increased presence of Coho fry and Cutthroat trout, demonstrating successful habitat restoration and improved biodiversity. Supports the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy by prioritizing freshwater habitat restoration and involving the community in ecosystem stewardship with follow-up planting activities in October 2025.

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- Maynard Park Playground Rebuild Replacement of playground at Maynard Park. Successful completion of asset replacement with opening celebration September 2025.
- PKOLS Naming Celebration Ceremony & Sign Rededication (July 2, 2025) Parks staff successfully supported the event which was led by the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council (WLC). The event recognized the 2022 restoration of the Park's name under the memorandum of understanding between Saanich and the WLC (ATOLNEUEL or "respecting one another").
- New Public Art Commission for Fire Station No. 2 CSD is leading the process to acquire a new site-specific commission of artwork to celebrate the redevelopment of Fire Station #2. Sculptor, Luke Marston (Ts'uts'umutlhw), has been selected to create a unique piece that reflects the neighbourhood and the mandate of the fire department. The proposed sculpture will incorporate traditional and contemporary elements that complement the building's design and materials.
- REACH: New grant-funded programs to improve social connections for isolated older adults CSD was awarded a \$2.5M federal grant to fund programs aimed at reducing social isolation for seniors throughout the CRD for the next five years. The project will expand community programming and resources for seniors aged 55 and older, including newcomers, Indigenous, Black, racialized and gender diverse residents in Greater Victoria. The funding will also support organized events, drop-in sessions and transportation options to improve accessibility.
- Gordon Head Rec: Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Gold Certification Gordon Head Recreation Centre achieved Gold Accessibility Certification status from the Rick Hansen Foundation, positioning Saanich as a leader in equity, diversity and inclusion. With installations such as assistive hearing technology, upgraded pool accessibility equipment, and new stairs and ramps, GHRC is the only Gold Certified recreation facility in Greater Victoria, and one of only three – along with GR Pearkes and Saanich Commonwealth Place – that have achieved RHF Accessibility Certification.
- Commonwealth Place Waterslide replacement After two years of careful planning and design, the new waterslide at SCP will be officially unveiled at a grand opening celebration on November 29th. The newest waterslide on the island, the slide has new twists and turns, exciting visual effects, and invites even more sliders in on the fun, with a lowered height requirement for the vertically challenged.
- Commonwealth Place Hosts the 2025 Bell Canadian Swimming Trials SCP hosted the trials in June 2025 which saw Joshua Liendo, Nicholas Bennett, Summer McIntosh and so many other talented athletes swim there way to success.

Finance

- Allowing more fees to be paid by credit card either in person or online starting in the upcoming year. (Council approved but bylaw is yet to come to Council).

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- New Council Purchasing Policy that puts Council Governance to the forefront, directing how purchasing will be conducted at Saanich and reducing administrative processes.

Information Technology

- Through 2025 IT completed several major upgrades to Saanich permitting and licensing system (Tempest). More than half of all permits and licenses Saanich offers are available to apply for and pay for fully online. Recent improvements include launch of e-billing for dog licenses, tax, and utilities, applications for Board of Variance, Business Licenses, residential Building permits and some commercial building permits. Much more to come including planning and calls for service improvements.
- By the end of the year every Saanich employee will have a Saanich email address, be able to access a new intranet (replacing e-link) and will have full access to Microsoft online apps, even from a personal mobile phone. No longer will casual and part time employees have less access to our full suite of collaborations tools. This will improve engagement and collaboration for all staff.
- Starting mid-2024, IT launched a new analytics and reporting service (Power BI). Since then IT has worked collaboratively with several departments to produce over 24 reports and dashboards from referral timelines, permits and council voting actions. These reports vastly improve staff productivity and improve decision making as priorities shift.
- Using our new tools to contribute to Operational Excellence, IT have (collaboratively) developed several improved and automated business processes from procurement and finance to irrigation, inspections and risk management. One example includes a recent pilot connecting our irrigation system to an upgraded cloud based scheduling system. Slated for full deployment in 2026, Parks staff will be able to control and optimize irrigation in real time, without having to visit and reprogram systems in person, thus saving staff time, money and valuable water resources.
- With all this new online digital capability comes the need for increased capacity and improved cyber security. IT has made significant improvements from training and awareness to automated monitoring and cyber response. We are also planning for complete refresh of our DataCenter, and Windows desktops through 2026. With these improvements our risk profile has significantly decreased while improving our access to modern digital tools.

Saanich Fire

- Fire department call volume continues to increase:
 - 2023: 6,086
 - 2024: 6,364 – 4.6% increase
 - 2025 (projected): 6,706 – 5.4% increase
- The construction of Fire Stn 2 is progressing well. It should be ready for move in the middle of 2026, with the project fully completed by the end of next year.
- In September Police and Fire opened their doors to the community with our Open House
- Fire continues to embrace technology as our dispatch centre will be transitioning to the Next Generation 911 system in early 2026. The department is also working on configuring a new Records Management System, new apparatus mobile data terminals and advancements in our data analytics.
- Regionally fire department cooperation has increased with the rebranding of the Capital Region Fire Chief's Association. Saanich and Oak Bay are currently going through a

Annual Address Appendix – 2025 Highlights and key activities

joint recruitment process. We continue to look for training opportunities and to find collaborative efficiencies with our neighboring departments.

- Shelter bed increases at VNFC.
- Broadview Church and Our Place Society partnership for Emergency Weather facility for this winter.
- Saanich Emergency Program volunteers dedicated more than 4,000 hours to serving our community, helping ensure that Saanich, and the people who call it home, remain resilient and well-prepared for whatever challenges may come our way. Their work directly supports Council's goal of strengthening community well-being.
- We also put our emergency response plans to the test, conducting a full-scale functional exercise with more than 70 staff participating. This exercise validated our systems, strengthened our coordination and demonstrated Saanich's strong state of readiness to respond when it matters most.

Saanich Police

- Community Liaison Officers continue to complete training and courses related to trauma informed practices, engaging and assisting marginalized people, autism awareness, First Nations cultural awareness and other relevant learnings that meet or exceed the School District 61 Safety Plan recommendations. The reintegration into SD61 schools has been meaningful and successful.
- To enhance our succession plan, career pathing, and leadership development, SPD is introducing a customized senior leadership development program in December 2025. This program is designed to enhance and strengthen leadership character and emotional intelligence, improve strategic thinking, decision-making, and change management skills. This program will support and encourage mid-level supervisors to continue their developmental journey, while effectively preparing them for future senior leadership positions.
- As a result of an analytics review of Patrol and the Traffic Safety Unit, there will be a change in resource deployments to better reflect call volumes and workload per officer. The Traffic Safety Unit will introduce a permanent collision analysis team, and shifts will be tailored to match high call demands. This change is expected to increase efficiency and effectiveness, while positively affecting officer wellness.