

Saanich Spotlight



Saanich aims to boost voter turnout

All governments face the challenge of determining how to improve citizen voter engagement in their elections, and consequently increase voter turnout. Some levels of government seem to attract more voters than others – with municipal government elections traditionally having the lowest turnout.

Why is that, when local government has such an immediate and profound impact on its citizens? Municipal elections are the most direct way to influence governments that deliver core services and shape communities.

So, what can be done to turn this trend around?

There is no single answer. We need a mix of strategies to reduce barriers to voting, cynicism and apathy, and inspire a change in voter behaviour. Some of these barriers are beyond our control, but we are taking several steps to address low voter participation rates.

Enhancing the voting experience

While we cannot know exactly how each contributes, there are several factors that influence an individual's decision to vote or not vote including, ease and convenience of voting; awareness of candidates; and awareness of the election and processes are key among them. Some of the measures we have implemented as we strive to increase our voter turnout include:

- Making voting easier and more convenient:
 - registration at the voting location on voting days;
 - Voter Information Cards for faster check-in;
 - electronic voter check-in and simplified voter registration;
 - accessible curbside voting for those who cannot navigate a voting place;
 - voting by mail from the comfort of home;
 - six advance voting opportunities to avoid line-ups and crowds on general voting day; and
 - mobile voting for residents of seniors' facilities.
- Enhancing awareness of candidates and their policy positions:
 - produced a [Candidate Profile Guide](#) with bios and contact information provided by candidates; and
 - posting [all-candidates meetings](#) and forums on our website to share information and assist the organizers.
- Increasing awareness of the election and processes through innovative public engagement:
 - communicating key election information through videos on [social media](#);
 - social media posts and ads; and
 - continuous website information updates in addition to our regular print ads.

"The decisions made by municipal elected officials significantly affect our residents and their daily lives," said Chief Election Officer Angela Bains. "In the 2018 election, 37% of eligible voters determined the results in Saanich and for this election I am going to issue a challenge to all electors in Saanich to increase our voter turnout. It's important for our residents to engage in democracy and vote. In addition to our polling stations, Saanich is providing a new option of voting by mail for all eligible electors. It's never been easier for Saanich residents to have their voice heard."



Based on past experience, we know increased awareness of the election, greater access to voting, and simplified voting processes contribute to increased voter turnout. But the issues and candidates in any election also have a significant influence on voter turnout. A race for Mayor, for example, typically motivates citizens to head to the polls.

Building relationships with future voters

Traditionally, there have been socio-economic biases in the make-up of the electorate. Age, gender, ethnicity, income and home ownership status influence voter behaviour. Saanich wants to shift that too and find ways to encourage students and young people to get involved in elections from an early age to build an interest in local government that will last into the future.

We conduct an advance poll at the University of Victoria and once again will feature student videos talking about the importance of voting in the municipal election on our website. As in 2018, we have hired a number of high school students to serve as greeters at our voting locations. These future voters are excited for the opportunity to be involved and we look forward to the fresh perspectives this generation brings.

The District of Saanich is committed to celebrating the rich diversity of people in our community, and we welcome the responsibility of creating an equitable and inclusive community for all. We embrace the opportunity to instill these values in this and future elections

Please get out and vote, or stay home and vote – we have options!

To find out more about the 2022 General Local and School Board Elections, visit saanich.ca/elections.





Name Restoration for PKOLS (Mount Douglas Park)

At a meeting on August 15, Saanich Council approved a request from the **WSÁNEĆ** Leadership Council (WLC) to move forward with a name restoration for PKOLS (Mount Douglas Park). PKOLS is the name of Mount Douglas in **SENĆOŦEN** and is an important place for the **WSÁNEĆ** people.

*"PKOLS is an extremely important location in the history of the **WSÁNEĆ** Nation," said Eric Pelkey, Community Engagement Coordinator for the **WSÁNEĆ** Leadership Council and Elder from the Tsawout First Nation. "It was created by **XÁLS** as the border between us and the Lekwungen people, and it was where we met with James Douglas in 1852 to discuss what became known as the Douglas Treaty. For these reasons, we, as **WSÁNEĆ** people, have a special relationship with PKOLS."*

Saanich Council identified an action in its 2019-2023 Strategic Plan to rename the park recognizing the sacred significance of the location to the **WSÁNEĆ** people.

On December 3, 2021, the WLC and Saanich formalized their commitment to reconciliation and pursuit of shared opportunities with the signing of an **ÁTOLNEUEL** ("Respecting One Another") Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The name restoration has emerged as one of the jointly supported priority areas of both Councils.

Saanich Council has the authority to name or rename a municipal park under its Park Naming Policy.

Next Steps

Saanich staff will work with WLC staff to develop an appropriate protocol to honour the name restoration. Information about a name restoration event to take place in 2023 will be shared at [Saanich.ca](https://www.saanich.ca) when it becomes available.



Saanich Recognizes 2022 Arts, Culture and Heritage Award Recipients

The Arts, Culture and Heritage (ACH) Awards recognize and celebrate outstanding contributions made by individuals, groups, organizations and businesses to arts, culture, and heritage that impact our municipality. The 2022 ACH Awards were announced at the August 8 Council meeting.

The awards, held once per Council term, are an initiative of the Saanich ACH Advisory Committee and were presented by Mayor Fred Haynes. The ACH Advisory Committee is a dedicated group of appointed volunteers whose duties include reviewing the nominations received from community members and carefully selecting the winners.



The 2022 ACH Award recipients include:

Cultural Steward (Organization)

Friends of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory

Proactively reviving and expanding the 'Centre of the Universe' visitor centre as an important resource for public education on scientific literacy.

Unsung Hero (Individual)

Parminder Virk

Building community connections and positive social change through cultural education and charitable work.

Unsung Hero (Individual)

Ashley Howe

Threading together the artistic community through environmental education and access to sustainably repurposed art supplies.

Unsung Hero (Individual)

Teresa Ranson

Charitable fundraising and artistic education through quilting and sewing projects.

Youth (Individual)

Olivia Hahn

Inspiring the youth arts community through positive collaboration and expression, including writing a book

on teenage grief to help others processing the loss of a parent to cancer.

Lifetime Achievement (Individual)

Pulchérie Mboussi

Fostering an educational environment and organizing community events that celebrate cultural exchange and the dismantling of systemic barriers.

Lifetime Achievement (Individual)

Steven Baileys

Building capacity and empowering community through conservation, education, and vibrant celebration of cultural programs and events.

Arts, culture, and heritage enrich and enhance our community, and the recipients of the ACH Awards are making an exceptional difference in our community now and into the future.

In addition to being honoured at the August 8 Council meeting, award recipients received a framed certificate and are recognized on the Saanich website.

Learn more about the recipients and the awards at saanich.ca/ACHawards.



New Protected Cycling Lanes Coming to Tillicum Road

The District of Saanich is in the process of installing protected cycling lanes on Tillicum Road. This section is an important corridor for safety improvements as it's a particularly vulnerable area for active transportation users.

Saanich will remove two general purpose vehicle lanes to create the protected cycling lanes. Two general purpose and one left-turning lane will remain along Tillicum Road from Arena Road near Tillicum Centre to Saanich's boundary with the Township of Esquimalt at Tillicum Road Bridge.



Protected bike lanes offer physical separation from motor vehicle traffic creating safety for all road users among many other benefits. Protected bike lanes:

- designate space for all road users;
- increase comfort of cyclists and promote cycling to new and less confident cyclists;
- place cyclists in a predictable space on the roadway;
- keep vehicles completely out of bike lanes (no ability to park or pull over into the lanes); and
- promote safety for pedestrians due to extra separation from the roadway.

As with all changes in traffic patterns, there may be some initial delays that will be monitored to allow Saanich staff to adjust traffic signals as needed.

Council approved eight quick-build projects recommended by the Active Transportation Advisory Committee, including the Tillicum Road bike lane separation, at its March 14, 2022 meeting. The project budget is estimated at \$500,000. The protected bike lanes are expected to be open in late 2022.

Learn More

Find more information about the bike lane separation at Tillicum and other quick build projects at [Saanich.ca](https://www.saanich.ca).



Saanich Launches a New Online Permit and Development Tracker

Accessing information and updates about development and permit applications in the District of Saanich just got a lot simpler thanks to the launch of Saanich's new online **Permit and Development Tracker**.

The Saanich Permit and Development Tracker lets you view newly submitted permits and development applications and track their progress online. The tracker shows the status of development permits, rezoning, subdivision and board of variance applications, and the status of boulevard, plumbing, tree and blasting permits, to name a few. It also shows residents the dates of upcoming council meetings associated with development applications.

"This new online tool allows the community to access and view newly submitted permits and development applications and track application progress online," said District of Saanich Chief Administrative Officer Brent Reems. "Now Saanich residents have the option to search by address, neighbourhood or permit type and easily see the progress being made on applications from their desktop or mobile device."

The tracker aims to increase transparency and accessibility for applicants, the development community, stakeholders, and any member of the public wishing to see what's happening in their neighbourhood and around Saanich. Look for more application types to be added to the tracker throughout the fall.

Find the tracker at saanich.ca/developmenttracker.

For questions about the development tracker, please call 250-475-5589 or email planning@saanich.ca





Phase Two of Shelbourne Street Improvements Project

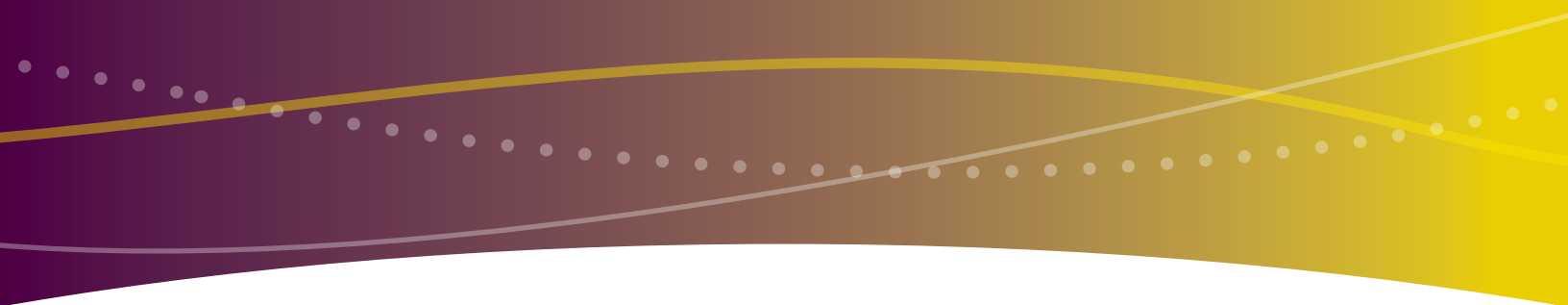
Construction began on August 2 on phase two of the District of Saanich's Shelbourne Street Improvements Project (SSIP) from North Dairy Road to Elm Street.

This phase will see the addition of the new **UVic bike connector** among many other active transportation and infrastructure upgrades, including protected cycle tracks and underground utilities.

Watch for these improvements:

- replacement of underground utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm drainage);
- new northbound and southbound separated cycle tracks from North Dairy Road to Pear Street;
- new raised multi-use path on Derby Avenue connecting Shelbourne Street to the Bowker Creek greenway at Browning Street;
- traffic signal upgrades at intersections of Shelbourne Street at North Dairy Road, McRae Avenue, Cedar Avenue and Pear Street;
- new pedestrian and cyclist activated traffic signals at intersections of Shelbourne Street at Knight Avenue and Derby Avenue;
- all intersections upgraded to improve crossings for pedestrians and cyclists;
- full road repaving;
- new highly visible reflective road markings and embedded pavement reflectors;
- replacement of all Shelbourne Street sidewalks;
- new and upgraded sidewalks on McRae Avenue from Shelbourne Street to Keats Street
- improved roadway lighting;
- new street trees and landscaping;
- improved bus stops with new shelters and lighting; and
- new street furniture including bike locking posts, waste receptacles and benches.





The UVic bike connector upgrades will make the cycling connection between Shelbourne and UVic safer, more comfortable and more efficient. Upgrades include:

- cycle tracks along Pear Street/Poplar Avenue between Richmond Road and Shelbourne Street;
- raised AAA Multi-Use Path between Poplar Avenue and Cedar Hill Cross Road;
- improved crossing at the Cedar Hill Cross Road/ Richmond Road/St. Aidan's Street intersection;
- protected intersection at Poplar Avenue/Richmond Road;
- improvements to St. Aidan's Street from Cedar Hill Cross Road to Broadmead Avenue; and
- new sidewalk on the north side of Pear Street/Poplar Avenue between Richmond Road and Shelbourne Street.

Phases and Timing

Construction of this phase is expected to take approximately 24 months. Phase three construction is expected to begin in 2024. **Phase one was completed** in early July.

Construction Impacts

Residents and businesses near the area have been notified of any construction impacts. Construction updates and information about traffic disruptions will be shared on Saanich.ca, Facebook and Twitter as the project progresses.

Saanich has worked diligently to ensure the number of trees that must be removed is as few as possible. Some trees will be removed, but for every tree that must be removed three will be replanted as per the Tree Protection Bylaw.

Learn More

Find more information about the project at saanich.ca/shelbourne.



What's Happening with our Garden Suite Program

The Garden Suite Program has had a successful first year and a half since launching, and it's encouraging to see the continued positive response to the program. To date, 120 applications in total have been received. 50 garden suite applications have received approval at this time, and the remainder are at various stages of review and approval.

As part of receiving the [first annual review](#) of the Garden Suite Program, several areas of improvement have been brought forward for consideration.

Proposed Changes

Below is a summary of the areas identified for improvement. These changes will reduce the number of variances required to reduce processing times.

- Consideration of garden suites in side yards and front yards (in addition to rear yards, as currently permitted);
- Expansion of the geographic areas for garden suites to include RS-zoned properties within the Urban Containment Boundary that are not within the Sewer Service Area;
- Addition of a map in the zoning bylaw to show areas where garden suites are permitted to clarify the exclusion of the Broadmead covenant area;
- Adding additional managers to delegated authority for garden suite Development Permits for staff coverage; and
- Minor amendments to the regulatory framework to improve clarity and enhance process efficiency.

These proposed changes are in various stages of implementation as staff fine-tune the Garden Suite Program to ensure it continues to perform well.

Thank you, Saanich, for your tremendous interest in the Garden Suite Program, and we look forward to sharing more updates as proposed changes are formally adopted.

Learn More

To learn more about the Garden Suite Program and the application process, visit saanich.ca/gardensuites.

Questions?

If you have questions regarding Garden Suites, please get in touch with us at gardensuites@saanich.ca.



Saanich Parks and Natural Intelligence Featured in Canadian City Parks Report

In 2022, the Canadian City Parks Report by Park People assessed Saanich Parks for the first time and [featured our Natural Intelligence program](#) in their City Profiles section. The report measures local and national trends in parks across Canada, highlighting cities that excel in their areas. Park People is a Canadian charity that supports and mobilizes people to help them activate the power of parks to improve the quality of life in cities across Canada.

Highlights of their findings:

- Saanich is above average for percentage of parkland that is natural area at 65%.
- 7.4 ha of parks & green space / 1000 people
- 65% of parkland is natural area - 563 ha total
- 8% of total city land is parkland - 10,830 ha of total city area
- 16 Public washrooms - 11 winterized public washrooms
- 1.7 Volunteers / 1000 people - 200 total park volunteers

By growing our Natural Intelligence, we build our understanding of the changing natural world around us. When we respect nature's gifts, we can adjust our habits to be more in tune with the natural world. Our actions as individuals and as a community determine our future.

To learn more about Saanich's assessment and read the Natural Intelligence feature, visit [Canadian City Parks Report 2022 \(parkpeople.ca\)](#).





Youth Bike Skills Park is now open for users to enjoy

The new Tripp Station Youth Bike Skills Park in Saanich opened July 16 just in time for users to enjoy it during the summer season.



Bike parks are an area designed for mountain bike and BMX riders to develop and practice riding skills in a structured, safe and managed environment. Riders of all levels and experience can develop expertise in a range of skills at the new bike park. Features include an asphalt pump track, dirt jumps and a skills trail. The park is adjacent to the Lochside Trail and easily accessible by bike.

"The Tripp Youth Park is a great new addition to urban bike parks in Greater Victoria," said South Island Mountain Bike Society Director of Advocacy Yvonne Mendel. "We hope that children and youth will find the bike park to be an exciting new amenity."

Additional improvements include a gravel pathway from the main entrance of the park off Lochside Drive adjacent to the Lochside Regional Trail connecting to Borden Street, park furniture, bike racks, a drinking fountain, signs and a portable toilet.

Saanich leased [the one-acre portion of the land](#) at the George Tripp Hydro Substation from BC Hydro in 2019 to develop the park. This partnership provided

a unique opportunity to create a youth bike skills park without the need to purchase or use existing park space elsewhere in the community.

Getting There

The youth bike skills park is located beside the George Tripp Hydro Substation at 4050 Lochside Drive north of McKenzie Avenue. A small parking lot is available, but Saanich encourages everyone to access the park by bike via the Lochside Regional Trail.

Learn More

Find more information about the project at saanich.ca/parks under Park Projects.



Saanich Housing Strategy Wins Silver Award for Excellence in Planning

The District of Saanich has received recognition for its Housing Strategy from the Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC). The District received the 2022 PIBC Silver award in the Excellence in Policy Planning - City & Urban Areas category during the PIBC Awards Ceremony this summer.

PIBC's awards honour the best in professional planning work. The Excellence in Policy Planning category recognizes the development of leading-edge and visionary planning policy that seeks to enhance communities' social, economic, environmental and/or cultural wellbeing.

The Housing Strategy, completed in 2021, is a 10-year planning framework that provides a clear direction on how Saanich can accommodate a broader range of community housing needs. The strategy builds on existing actions, supports partnerships, and focuses efforts on areas within municipal influence.

A Task Force provided the foundational content for the strategy, recommending supporting principles, key strategies, and prioritized actions. Input from stakeholders, residents, and experts was also key to shaping the strategy. Through an expedited process, the strategy determines the most effective way forward to address complex housing issues vital to overall community health and well-being.

Actions in the strategy focus on urban areas near centers, villages and corridors, supporting broader Saanich goals of addressing climate change, preserving the natural environment, achieving transit-oriented development, and building walkable and healthy communities.

For more information on the District's award and the other recipients of PIBC's Awards for Excellence in Planning, please visit [Awards for Excellence in Planning | Planning Institute of British Columbia \(pibc.bc.ca\)](https://www.pibc.bc.ca/awards-for-excellence-in-planning).



Nadine Kawata and Cameron Scott with the 2022 Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC) Silver award in the Excellence in Policy Planning - City & Urban Areas.



Saanich Commonwealth Place Turns to Biomass for a Renewable Fuel Source

The District of Saanich will begin construction this fall to [upgrade the existing natural gas boilers at Saanich Commonwealth Place](#) to new biomass boilers with the goal of reducing the facility's fossil-fuel greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 90 percent.

SCP is Saanich's largest recreation facility and currently the largest source of GHG emissions for all of the District's facilities. This conversion enables the facility to use renewable fuel instead of fossil fuels.

Set up began this summer with construction now underway. The new system is anticipated to be in operation by Fall 2023. The project is fully supported by \$4 million in Federal Gas Tax Funding which [Saanich was awarded](#) in 2018.

What is Biomass?

Biomass energy is the creation of heat and/or power from biofuel such as solid wood or wood residues, agricultural crop residues, aquatic plants and animal wastes. As a renewable form of energy, it can help Saanich reduce its carbon footprint and achieve its climate target of becoming a 100 per cent renewable energy community.

BioFlame Briquettes Ltd., located in Chemainus in the Cowichan Valley, was awarded the contract to manufacture Saanich's biomass pucks for the new boilers. The biomass they will supply is a highly efficient woodfibre by-product created from post-industrial milling operations. As such, Saanich has sourced a local supply of renewable biomass fuel that will significantly reduce our corporate carbon footprint while supporting local business and helping pre-consumer and post-consumer industries and markets.

Recreation Service Interruptions

SCP will be closed to the public temporarily until October 10 due to interruptions to basic utilities including electrical power and water during construction. The temporary closure will impact the entire building including the aquatic facilities, weight room and recreation program spaces. Staff are working

to find alternate spaces off-site for some of the most popular programs.

This five-week closure period is an extension of the regular annual shutdown period. Other facility maintenance such as structural repairs of the dive tower, re-tiling of the competition pool, LED lighting upgrades, plumbing repairs, electrical maintenance and painting will also take place during the closure.

The closure will not overlap with the [current temporary pool closure at Gordon Head Recreation Centre](#). Patrons may use their Saanich Access Pass to visit one of the other three Saanich Recreation Centres during the closure. Recreation schedules are available at [saanich.ca/recreation](#) or you can call the centre before visiting.

Construction Timeline

Construction will continue until Fall 2023. Whenever possible, construction will take place between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Most exterior construction noise will be completed by October 10.

Learn More

Information about SCP's continued programming is available at [saanich.ca/recreation](#). For updates and information on the project as it progresses, visit [saanich.ca](#) and follow Saanich on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

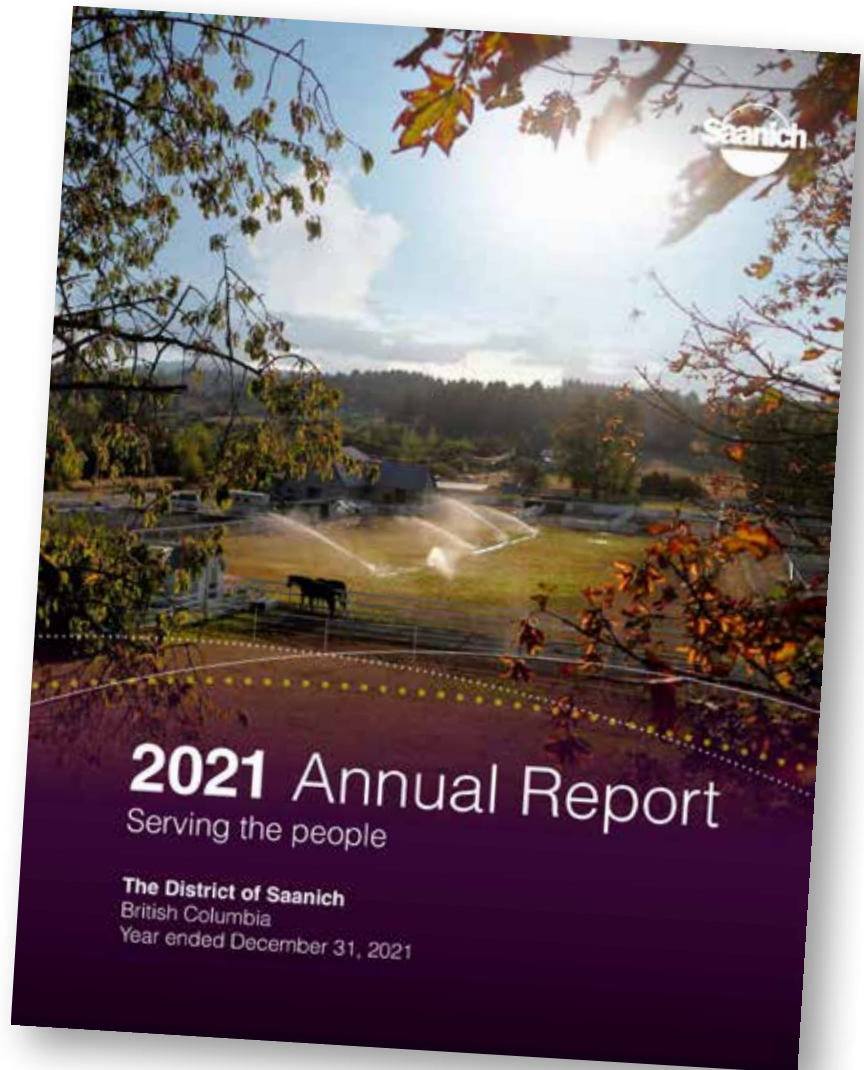




2021 Annual Report Endorsed by Council

Saanich Council endorsed the 2021 Annual Report at the June 20, 2022 Council meeting. The Annual Report provides a synopsis of the previous year's strategic, financial and operational progress.

You can view the full report and previous reports on the [Annual Report page.](#)





Saanich Welcomes New Fire Fighters to Support Fire Department Needs

Fire Department staffing levels are increasing with the hire of ten new fire fighters this year as part of a 10-year funding strategy to ensure fire operations, staffing and equipment keep pace with population growth.

The Fire Services Review completed in 2019 recommends increasing on-duty staffing levels to meet response time standards and address Saanich's growth in population and density, which has resulted in a considerable increase in emergency incident responses and service delivery demands.

This year's new hires will increase Station 3 on-duty staffing by two fire fighters, growing from four to six. The staff increase allows for a full-time medic unit to operate in the Station 3 response area. The Fire Services Review identified Station 3 met the NFPA eight-minute response time standard only 49.6 per cent of the time, that fire losses are increasing, and the District's most significant dollar loss fires have occurred in the Station 3 response area.

Due to the round-the-clock nature of firefighting, five hires are needed to fill one fire fighter position 24/7. In 2026, Station 3 staffing will increase by two more fire fighters –from six to eight – and will provide a fully staffed Engine and Ladder in the Station 3 response area.

"I am thankful to Council for their continued support and investment in the District's fire service which allows current service delivery standards to be maintained while ensuring the sustainability for the community over the longer term," said Fire Chief Michael Burgess. "It is clear that both Council and the community support us, and we will continue to do everything we can to serve Saanich and keep that trust."

Quick facts

- In November 2019, Council moved to receive the 2019 Fire Services Review – 2020 Master Fire Plan completed by Dave Mitchell & Associates Fire Services Consultants Ltd. as a future reference and planning tool for the delivery of fire services within the District of Saanich.
- The Fire Services Review provided a comprehensive assessment of the Saanich Fire Department, including future operational and staffing requirements and related recommendations to ensure continued sustainability and success.
- In October 2021, Council confirmed their commitment to implementing the staffing recommendations from the Fire Services Review and approved a 10-year funding strategy for inclusion in the Five Year Financial Plan commencing with the 2022-2026 Financial Plan
- The 10-year funding strategy, approved by Council in October 2021, seeks to minimize large swings in new taxation funding from year to year. Establishing a longer term process that has a smaller and more consistent impact over the term, recognizes the impact on taxpayers. The taxation impacts range from an estimated low of 0.12 per cent to a high of 0.61 per cent.



Saanich Announces 2022 Environmental Award Recipients

Every year, Saanich recognizes individuals, businesses, organizations and youth for their significant contributions to stewarding the environment. The awards announced at the June 20 Council meeting, are an initiative of Saanich's Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee (ENAC) and are presented by Mayor Fred Haynes and the committee chair, Councillor Karen Harper. The ENAC is a dedicated group of appointed volunteers whose duties include reviewing the nominations received from community members and carefully selecting the winners.

This year's recipients were recognized for ecological restoration and stewardship, ecological protection on private lands, fundraising and community leadership, climate action related leadership, youth environmental leadership and so much more.

The 2022 Saanich Environmental Award recipients include:

- Individual – Sharon Stangeland
- Volunteer – Kings Community Nature Space Fundraising Group
- Youth – Matthias Spalteholz
- Biodiversity conservation – Barry Andrushuk
- Sustainability - Jim Church
- Long term environmental achievement – Heather Coey

Heather Coey, a teacher at Reynolds Secondary School, received the long-term environmental achievement award for her leadership in youth engagement in environmental stewardship and sustainability.

"I'm honoured to be recognized with so many other outstanding environmental leaders in Saanich," said Coey. "As I approach retirement after 33 years of teaching, I hope to continue to have a positive impact on my community."

In addition to being honoured at a Council meeting, award recipients receive a framed certificate and recognition on a commemorative plaque at Municipal Hall.

Learn more about the recipients and the awards at saanich.ca/enviroawards.





Community Canvas Mural Project

Meet... Claire Crawford, the inaugural artist as part of our Community Canvas Mural Project

Claire designed and painted the beautiful new outdoor mural on the Emergency Support Services storage container at the entrance to Cedar Hill Recreation and Arts Centre off Cedar Hill Road. She is a Vancouver Island local, whose creative focus explores natural themes and their connection to culture. This initiative will see the creation of three murals in Saanich parks.

Could you tell us a little bit about yourself? What led you to becoming an artist?

I'm an artist and illustrator who is really interested in how humans interact with the natural world, and how we can bridge the gap between the two. I've been an artist since I was young and have always felt compelled to create art in some form or another, which has always granted me the clarity to pursue art as a profession. Art is deeply intertwined with who I am as a person, and this path, while a lot of hard work, has always felt laid out.



How did get involved with this program? What caught your eye about it that inspired you to apply?

The District of Saanich put out a public call to artists requesting proposals for the 3 mural sites within the district. I immediately wanted to apply as I am continuing to build my skills as a muralist and was also interested to work within a unique space that brings community and nature together, such as Cedar Hill. Saanich also put emphasis on community engagement for the project, which I really value.

What was your inspiration for the final design she chose?

This design was created specifically for the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre as the location provides a wonderful location for both natural and social assets within the community. From the Tributary of Bowker Creek, to the Cedar Hill Golf Course, to the fitness centre, the location brings many people together, with varied backgrounds and interests, with a common thread of making use of a diverse and welcoming area. This multi-use area is celebrated for its inclusivity, as highlighted by the many different species of birds that sweepingly fly through the mural design.

What were the unique challenges of this project? How did you overcome these?

There were a few challenges throughout the project that I was forced to work through. Painting on a SeaCan with corrugated metal posed its own challenges to make sure that the perspective of the design looked accurate. It simply required patience and a thoughtful design plan before beginning the painting process. All these challenges forced me to put my thinking cap on for, which truly adds to the fun of being outside and creating a work of art on such a large scale.



How do you hope this mural impacts people that experience it? What do you hope that they see/feel when viewing the mural?

I really think that public art adds to the wellbeing of a community in many ways. It can facilitate folks coming together and having a conversation with one another, perhaps even people in the community that haven't stopped by the recreation centre before. I hope that community members will pop by and have a look and perhaps simply view some beautiful birds that have been painted, but hopefully engage more deeply as well, there's certainly some hope to be seen within the piece.

Meet... Sarah Jim, Beckwith artist as part of our Community Canvas Mural Project

Sarah Jim designed and painted the beautiful new outdoor mural on the at Beckwith Park. She is a Vancouver Island local, whose creative focus explores natural themes and their connection to culture. This initiative will see the creation of three murals in Saanich parks.

Could you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I'm an emerging artist of Coast Salish, Mexican, and Russian-Jewish ancestry, and a proud member of the WSÁNEĆ nation from the Tseycum village. I have received a BFA from UVIC and practice environmental restoration on my ancestral territory. Creating place-based artwork of my homelands and waters allows me to bring awareness of the importance of native plant food systems, coastal medicines, and traditional practices in relation to the ecosystem and WSÁNEĆ culture. Growing up on these lands has inspired me to reflect my world view in a visual way.

What drew you to apply for this District of Saanich program?

I really wanted WSÁNEĆ art to be represented in the traditional territory of my people. Our artwork belongs in these spaces.

What inspired you as part of your final proposed design?

The surrounding ecosystems inspired my designs for this site. The wetland and meadow spaces are two habitats that were quickly disrupted after colonization due to them being "unused space". Bringing attention to these ecosystems allows folks to reconsider what it means to decolonize and respect the laws of the land.

What were your biggest artistic influences as part of this mural?

The native plants and animals of these lands are constantly influencing the way I conduct myself. A large portion of my life has been to build relationships with our non-human kin and promote their well-being. One way I do this is by advocating for them through artwork. Art is quite an accessible way for folks to learn and start these conversations.

What's the purpose or goal of your work?

Public education of indigenous ecosystems, ways of being, and decolonization is a main goal of mine. We can work together to heal these lands and relationships of people with art being the starting point of dialogue.

What motivates you to create art?

Expression motivates me to create art. I feel as though it's my responsibility to tell stories in a visual way. This not only helps the viewer to understand certain concepts, but it helps me in my own well-being as art is medicine.



Restoration of the Colquitz River

Parks, Public Works, and partners continue restoration of the Colquitz River

The Colquitz River is home to both cutthroat and coho salmon. In recent years, the number of coho spawners has declined. With the goal of helping coho populations recover and flourish, Saanich Parks, the Public Works Creeks and Waterways crew, and Peninsula Streams Society have restored another 100 metres of the river at Copley East Park. This has been an on-going restoration project- over three hundred metres, from Eastridge Crescent to just North of Gabo Creek, has benefitted from instream restoration work since 2018.

A series of rock crests, pools, and spawning gravel has been added along the entire stretch that was once just clay and hardpan. This year alone, over 100 tonnes of boulders, blast rock and cobbles were brought in and over 30 tree stumps were added to increase salmon habitat. Dozens of large boulders and stumps were cabled together to control bank erosion and offer additional habitat structures. Viewing platforms were also built to create learning and social gathering opportunities for our community, and to help bolster their 'natural intelligence.'





Saanich asking residents to help develop interactive mapping tool with natural areas of interest

The District of Saanich has launched an interactive online mapping tool, the Community StoryMap to engage residents and inform two projects related to Saanich's natural environment:

- the [Urban Forest Strategy Update](#); and
- the [Resilient Saanich State of Biodiversity Report](#).



The Community StoryMap provides background on both projects, allows for self-paced engagement and exploration, and enables users to identify places they value for biodiversity and the urban forest, as well as any threats and improvements needed.

The input collected will help Saanich understand the community's priorities to help prepare later project phases that will include further public engagement. Integrating the Urban Forest Strategy Update and Resilient Saanich State of Biodiversity Report projects through the Community StoryMap allows participants to explore the crossover themes and highlights Saanich's comprehensive approach to environmental planning.

Resilient Saanich program

One of the key outcomes of Resilient Saanich program is the development of a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. A State of Biodiversity Report is under development and will inform the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, which will be developed over the fall and winter.

Input collected for the State of Biodiversity Report will highlight the community's valued characteristics and types of natural areas; and identify natural areas of significant value to the community and local biodiversity, along with areas that are threatened. The information will inform the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

Urban Forest Strategy Update

The Urban Forest Strategy Update will guide staff, Council and residents to manage Saanich's urban forest over the next 10 to 50 years. Input collected for the Urban Forest Strategy will help Saanich understand community values, and identify places that require improvements, trees and forests that residents value, along with threats to trees/forests to inform the Urban Forest Strategy

The Community StoryMap

The interactive Community StoryMap is now available at saanich.ca/urbanforeststrategy and saanich.ca/biodiversity. The StoryMap will remain open until October 11, 2022.

Learn more

More information about further opportunities for public input on the Urban Forest Strategy and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is coming soon.

To stay informed about the Urban Forest Strategy, visit the [project webpage](#) and sign up for the [Parks, Recreation and Community Services e-newsletter](#).

You can stay informed about the development of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and the broader Resilient Saanich initiative [here](#) or by subscribing to the [Resilient Saanich e-Bulletin](#).



Gorge Road infrastructure and transportation upgrades kick off

The District of Saanich has begun a significant storm drain replacement and active transportation improvement project on Gorge Road West between Admirals Road and Tillicum Road.

Transportation and roadway improvements

A major portion of this project is the installation of a bi-directional protected cycle track on the south side of the road and improvements to the existing pedestrian infrastructure on the north side, as per Saanich's [Active Transportation Plan](#). As part of the bike lane and pedestrian infrastructure installation, improvements to the existing east and west-bound bus stops will also be made.

Storm drainage upgrades

Saanich will replace approximately 1,500 metres of storm drain pipes, eight drainage outfalls to the Gorge waterway and all storm drain house connections to property lines. The existing storm drain pipes have not been updated for many years and are in poor condition.

Project detours, lane closures and property access

Gorge Road will be reduced to single lane traffic for much of the project duration. The project construction is scheduled to be fourteen months in duration. Businesses along Gorge Road will remain accessible and open for the duration of the project.

Learn more

Find more information about the project please visit saanich.ca/gorgeupgrade.



UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS

We encourage you to tune in to the meeting
webcast at 7 p.m. at saanich.ca/agendas

COUNCIL MEETINGS

October 24 **November 28**
November 7 **December 12**
November 14

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETINGS

November 21
December 5

Your vote counts!
General Municipal Election **October 15**



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