

# Connect North Saanich: Winter 2022

Municipal Hall: 1620 Mills Road, North Saanich, BC V8L 5S9 | [admin@northsaanich.ca](mailto:admin@northsaanich.ca) | [northsaanich.ca](http://northsaanich.ca)  
250-656-0781 | [f @northsaanichdistrict](https://www.facebook.com/northsaanichdistrict) | [t @northsaanich](https://www.twitter.com/northsaanich)



North Saanich exists on the traditional territories of the WSÁNEĆ peoples. We thank them for caring for this land and look forward to working with the BOKEĆEN (Pauquachin) First Nation and WSÍKEM (Tseycum) First Nation for years to come.

## Message from Mayor & Council



This winter has provided North Saanich residents with ample reminders that climate change is both inescapable and challenging to predict. The “significant atmospheric river event” of November 14-16 brought record amounts of rain to the region and the rain didn’t let up for a couple of weeks.

We are grateful that neighbours looked out for one another and offered assistance whenever they could. The District was in touch with our Pauquachin and Tseycum neighbours during this rainfall event and is prepared to offer assistance when and if necessary in the future.

Since the rainfall in mid-November, District crews have been addressing a number of flood-related issues around North Saanich, most notably

the road washout on Chalet Road and the flooding in the Tseycum Creek watershed area. Thank you for your patience as we tackled these stormwater conveyance problems, prioritizing and responding as quickly as we could.

Council appreciates the service provided by staff – in the field and at the hall – during this event and others during the past year. We encourage you to send in a note of thanks to acknowledge the services provided.

The heavy rainfall has been a timely reminder of the importance of planning for emergencies. Please take time this spring to prepare yourself and your residence for poor weather and emergencies.

Despite high vaccination rates in BC and even higher (94%) in North Saanich, COVID-19 also continues to impact our daily lives, especially as new variants emerge. We are grateful and suitably impressed that North Saanich residents are doing their best to ensure they and others remain safe and healthy. To live (and thrive) during the ongoing pandemic will require vigilance, behavioural shifts, ongoing self-education, and true expressions of care and concern for others.

As the pandemic continues, Council will balance the desire to connect in person with the commitment that we are doing everything we can to ensure residents’ health and safety.

This is particularly true with the Official Community Plan (OCP) review process. During the spring and summer of 2021, many people expressed a desire to engage fully in the process by meeting in person to learn more, share their ideas, or provide feedback to the project team and Council.

Council is acutely aware of the heightened interest in the OCP Review and the polarized views expressed via editorials, letters to the editor, social media, correspondence, and public participation at Council meetings. Please see the “Official Community Plan Review” section to learn about

Council direction to staff at the January 31 and February 7, 2022 Council meetings. We understand the importance and complexity of preserving the rural and agricultural nature of the municipality while also responding to often competing initiatives such as climate change, the land and marine environment, and housing.

Over the summer and fall we began increasing in-person attendance at Council meetings. The Provincial Health Officer Order on Gatherings and Events (Nov. 16, 2021) permits limited in-person public attendance at council meetings. At this point, in-person attendance in Council Chambers is limited, and masks are required.

We will always ensure all participants feel safe, comfortable, and welcome while participating in the democratic process. Please see the “Participating at Council Meetings” section of this newsletter to see the various ways you can participate.

We hope you enjoyed the Christmas holiday season and managed to connect meaningfully and joyfully with family and friends. We encourage you to take advantage of local opportunities to connect with nature, a feature that North Saanich has in abundance.

Take care of yourself and each other.

## Outdoor Burning

### Burn Smart, Burn Clean

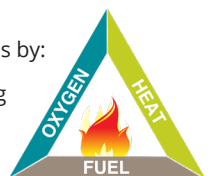
Outdoor burning has been allowed in North Saanich for many years as a way to manage excess green waste. However, there is a growing awareness about the impact of the smoke from outdoor burning on human health, particularly for children, the elderly, and people with pre-existing health conditions.

You can help by choosing alternatives to burning. If you must burn, burn smart & clean.

### Burn Better

If you are going to burn, please reduce smoke from fires by:

1. Burning on good venting days. Check the B.C. venting index at: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/venting](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/venting)
2. Burning hot. Ensure your fire has adequate oxygen.
3. Burning dry material. Do not burn leaves, green grass, construction waste, or household items.



[northsaanich.ca/outdoor-burning](http://northsaanich.ca/outdoor-burning)

# Project Updates

## Budget 2022

Each year, the District develops an annual budget outlining how tax dollars are invested to support our residents and community. We include a five-year balanced financial plan to guide our strategic investments and departmental service plans while keeping property taxes and utility fees affordable over the long term.

In 2021, the District's financial plan included a 2.84% increase in overall property taxes, including a 3.15% increase in residential taxes and 2.0% in business taxes. The plan also included a \$50 water infrastructure replacement parcel tax increase, with an additional \$50 increase proposed for 2022.

In 2021, the District allocated \$840,350 in COVID-19 Safe Restart grant funds for ongoing COVID-related expenditures, capital projects, grants to organizations, and revenue shortfalls.

This year, we asked residents about their concerns for the upcoming budget year through an online survey, which ran from January 10 – February 7, 2022. Thanks to all who submitted answers, comments, and thoughts. Your feedback will help shape funding priorities, service levels, and property tax rates as we develop the 2022 District budget.

You can review the 2022 survey results and keep up to date on the budget engagement process at: [connectnorthsaanich.ca/2022-budget](https://connectnorthsaanich.ca/2022-budget).

## Official Community Plan Review



Over the summer and fall of 2021, Council directed staff to revise the Phase 2 Engagement Summary and develop a revised

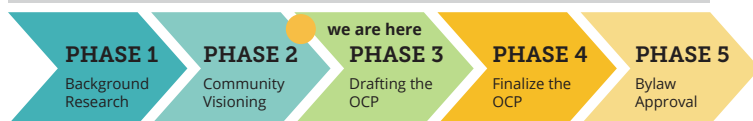
draft Phase 3 Engagement Plan, work plan, and budget.

On November 22 and December 6, Council discussed these documents and directed the project team to proceed to draft an Official Community Plan (OCP) focused on five themes (agriculture and local food systems, marine and land based natural environments, climate action, healthy communities, and jobs and the local economy), and to plan a public engagement process focused on housing and affordability.

On January 31, staff reported back with an associated work plan, a public engagement plan for housing and affordability, and a revised budget for these tasks, including drafting the plan. At this meeting, Council directed staff to draft the OCP, focusing solely on the five themes; in this scenario, engagement on the topic of housing and affordability would not take place.

However, on February 7, Council voted to reconsider the January 31 motion, acknowledging that public engagement in the next stage of the review process was desirable, particularly on a key topic (housing and affordability) of the OCP, a document that helps guide land use (type, density and location of development) management.

### COMMUNITY, FIRST NATIONS & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



## What's next?

On February 7, Council decided to meet again in mid-February to discuss the OCP. An outcome of this meeting could be new direction for the OCP review to inform the project team's next steps.

Throughout the OCP review process, the project team has listened carefully to the voices of the community and remained flexible, changing the approach and providing additional information in response to Council direction. As we continue, it's important to reflect that the OCP process is iterative—nothing is final in this upcoming Phase (3). The OCP only becomes a formal guiding document when Council accepts it as a bylaw as part of Phase 5.

For more information, including ways to get involved, please subscribe to project updates at [connectnorthsaanich.ca/ocp](https://connectnorthsaanich.ca/ocp).



[connectnorthsaanich.ca/ocp](https://connectnorthsaanich.ca/ocp)

## Tree Protection Bylaw Review



The seasonal rainfall is yet another reminder that trees play an important role in water storage and rainfall interception. Not surprisingly, we continue to register high levels of interest on the draft Tree Protection Bylaw, which regulates the cutting, removal, or damaging of trees on private property.

At the November 1 Meeting of Council, Council was presented with a staff report on the Tree Protection Bylaw Review - Phase 3 Engagement Plan Options.

Ultimately, Council deferred further discussion regarding engagement options for the Tree Protection Bylaw Review to December 13, at a Committee of the Whole session dedicated to the topic.

At this meeting, Council endorsed three staff recommendations:

1. Receive the additional research on tree protection bylaws that Council requested on November 1, 2021;
2. Direct staff to proceed with the Phase 3 Engagement Plan in accordance with the engagement plan outlined in Staff Report No. PCS-21-014; and
3. Approve the revised budget of \$29,547 for the additional scope of the Tree Protection Bylaw Review in 2022.

Public engagement is anticipated to launch in late March 2022. Engagement activities will include sending mail to each North Saanich household regarding engagement opportunities; an online open house; two in-person open houses; and a survey. Engagement will also include various presentations and meetings with relevant commissions, stratas, and stewardship groups.

Subscribe, review drafts and reports, and stay informed at [connectnorthsaanich.ca/tree-bylaw](https://connectnorthsaanich.ca/tree-bylaw).



[connectnorthsaanich.ca/tree-bylaw](https://connectnorthsaanich.ca/tree-bylaw)

## What's Happening



By Jen Rashleigh

### Sandown Centre

The Sandown Centre for Regenerative Agriculture has completed its first year of operation. A big “Thank You” to the North Saanich farmers, residents, and community organizations for your time, support, advice, participation, and encouraging words!

What's next on the horizon?

*The next generation of growers: Anna-Lise's focus is on fresh culinary herbs.*

Growing Young Chefs as they bring school-aged kids on site; working with undergrads from the UVIC School of Environmental Sciences and PhD candidates from the Ecogastronomy Lab; and supporting new growers in the Farmpreneur Program. The Sandown Centre mentors these new growers by helping them refine their business plans, define their niche products and services, and connect with markets within the CRD.

We're partnering with the District of North Saanich and VanCity on the Sandown Soil Lab that will build the site's soil health using regenerative techniques—while gathering the data we need to demonstrate the soil's

improved ability to sequester carbon and withstand droughts and flooding. Once good techniques are established, this new knowledge will be shared with interested local farmers on a. At the same time, we're working with companies like Terramerra, leaders in developing a regional carbon market. They will use the data from the Sandown Centre to advance their carbon market research and development.

To keep up to date, visit [sandowncentre.com](http://sandowncentre.com).



[www.sandowncentre.com](http://www.sandowncentre.com)

### Annual Food Drive and Tree Chipping

Thanks to the generosity of North Saanich residents, the volunteers at the North Saanich Fire Department raised funds for charitable organizations this holiday season, including a recording-setting \$7,300 (and 12,000 lbs. of food donations) for the Saanich Peninsula Lions Food Bank's 23rd annual drive.

In early January, they provided North Saanich residents with Christmas tree chipping service, raising funds for CFA Santa's Anonymous.

Earlier in the fall, the Fire Department volunteers raised \$25,591 for the Movember campaign.

Thanks to all local residents for supporting these initiatives and helping make a difference.

## Reminders

### Rainfall Preparedness

Spring may be around the corner, but that doesn't mean we can bid farewell to heavy rains. Homeowners and business owners can prepare for rainfall by clearing nearby catch basins and culverts of waste or debris like leaves.

It also helps when you ensure accumulated yard waste is kept well away from any location where it could wash into drains or culverts.

These simple actions help manage the flow of water around properties to ensure drainage systems are working as they are designed.



Chalet Road at Chalet Creek

### Chalet Rd. Closure

During the extreme rainfall on November 15, the District closed Chalet Road at Chalet Creek due to localized flooding and safety concerns.

After a review of road volumes and access, and an assessment of the risks associated with a temporary repair, the District will maintain the closure of Chalet Road until we can implement a new design in 2022.

We recognize the continued closure of Chalet Road may inconvenience local residents, but until the road is reopened, the District asks residents to use alternate routes and respect the presence of temporary fencing, which prevents access to the site.

### 2022 Assessment Notices

BC Assessment has released the 2022 property assessments. If you have questions about your assessment notice, visit [bcaassessment.ca](http://bcaassessment.ca)



## Did You Know?



### Peninsula 1000x5

Literacy is a life-long skill—and it can start surprisingly early.

The District is supporting the Peninsula 1000x5 project, which helps distribute books for babies and toddlers to local homes.

Stop by Municipal Hall to pick up a free package of books to read to your wee ones.

Interested in donating (including gently-used books from your own library) or learning more? Visit [www.1000x5.ca](http://www.1000x5.ca).

### Community Meetings and Conversations with the Mayor

In addition to their formal, scheduled meetings at Municipal Hall, Mayor and Council appreciate opportunities to connect with residents informally.

Community meetings feature Mayor and Council members. These are excellent opportunities for neighbours to discuss current initiatives and District activities with Council members. The “Conversations with the Mayor” sessions are self-explanatory – and are a mix of chats with no predetermined topic and more focused discussions.

To stay informed, visit our social media channels or check the District's calendar for upcoming dates at [northsaanich.ca/events-calendar](http://northsaanich.ca/events-calendar).

As always, you can schedule a one-on-one meeting with Mayor Orr by contacting Jodi Graham at [corporateservices@northsaanich.ca](mailto:corporateservices@northsaanich.ca).

### Participating at Council Meetings

Most North Saanich council meetings are open to the public, to facilitate transparency and accountability of the council process. Residents are welcome and encouraged to participate. There are many ways to get involved at the meetings, which typically occur on **Mondays**:

1. Submit written correspondence, relating to any topic, by noon **on the preceding Wednesday** via email or mail for inclusion on the agenda. This time allows us to include the correspondence on the agenda, which is typically published on the following day (Thursday).

You may still submit correspondence pertaining to items on the agenda via email or mail by noon **on the Monday** of the scheduled Council meeting. This correspondence will be considered by Council as a “late item” for inclusion on the agenda.

2. Attend in-person to speak or observe by pre-registering via email by noon **on the Monday** of the scheduled Council meeting. At this time, in-person attendance in Council Chambers is limited; masks must be worn at all times.
3. Attend virtually to speak or observe by pre-registering via email by noon **on the Monday** of the scheduled Council meeting.
4. Attend virtually to watch through the livestream at [northsaanich.ca/council-meetings](http://northsaanich.ca/council-meetings).

If you have pre-registered to speak, you will have 3 minutes to present your perspective. The email address for correspondence and to register to attend is [corporateservices@northsaanich.ca](mailto:corporateservices@northsaanich.ca).

For more information, please see: [northsaanich.ca/council-meetings](http://northsaanich.ca/council-meetings).

### Municipal Elections

The next general local elections are scheduled for Saturday, October 15, 2022.

The administration of general local elections (and by-elections) is a shared responsibility between local governments and Elections BC. The District of North Saanich, like every other local government in BC, is responsible for running its own general local election.

Visit Elections BC for details about who can vote, to register to vote if you are 18 years or older, or to update your information: [elections.bc.ca](http://elections.bc.ca).

#### Key dates:

Nomination period: Tuesday, August 30 – Friday, September 9. The period for candidates to submit their nominations to local election officials.

Campaign period: Saturday, September 17 – Saturday, October 15. The period that begins on the 28th day before General Voting Day and ends at the close of voting on General Voting Day. Candidate and third-party expense limits apply during this period.

General Voting Day: Saturday, October 15, 2022

The District of North Saanich will post materials related to the election throughout the year. Nomination packages will be available in late Spring, 2022. Please check our website for details, including other key dates: [northsaanich.ca/elections](http://northsaanich.ca/elections).

### 2022 New Business Licence Fees and Renewals Waived

North Saanich is waiving both renewals and new business license fees for 2022 to help support local businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you are operating a business in North Saanich and don't currently have a licence or if your services have changed, please fill out the business licence application.

Find out more: [northsaanich.ca/business-licence](http://northsaanich.ca/business-licence).