

# Connect North Saanich: Winter 2026



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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 BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin) First Nation and WSÍ,KEM (Tseycum) First Nation for years to come.

## Message from Mayor & Council



As we look ahead to a busy and exciting 2026, we also want to reflect on the accomplishments and important work completed by Council during the fall of 2025. Our focus has been on strengthening community connections, improving governance and decision-making, and ensuring residents have meaningful opportunities to be involved.

One significant project moving forward is the Harvest Hub, an initiative designed to support local agriculture, strengthen food security, and create a shared

space for farmers and community partners. Council approved key steps to advance the project, supported in part by a generous community donation that helped establish a Farm Hub Fund. This milestone reflects the importance of preserving and supporting agriculture in North Saanich.

Council also approved an amended operating lease agreement for Sandown, reflecting a renewed approach to stewardship of this important community asset. The amended lease supports continued agricultural use and community

programming, while establishing clear terms and accountability. Council will continue working with partners and interest holders to ensure Sandown remains a productive and valued space that supports food security, learning, and long-term planning.

Planning continued for Wain Road Park and Noble Garden Park, with staff sharing early concepts and gathering public feedback on amenities, accessibility, environmental protection, and community gathering. Based on this input, Council directed staff to proceed with Scenario B for Wain Road Park, including a nature play area and swing set, and to prioritize the community gathering space for completion in May 2026. Council also placed the Noble Garden Park Plan on hold, with the site continuing to be managed as it is today.

Council has also advanced early engagement for the 2026 budget, providing new opportunities for residents to share feedback through surveys and in-person engagement. Residents were invited to provide feedback on priorities, service levels, and

allocation of municipal resources. This expanded engagement reflects Council's commitment to transparency and informed decision-making, and public input will play an important role as the draft budget is refined.

To strengthen governance and accountability, Council updated the Council Procedure Bylaw to support clear, respectful, and effective meetings, improve consistent decision-making, and ensure transparency and accessibility. Council also approved the establishment of a new Remuneration Committee to provide independent recommendations related to Council compensation.

We are grateful to everyone who has taken the time to participate in surveys, attend meetings, or share their thoughts. Your involvement helps shape better decisions and strengthens the sense of community that makes North Saanich a special place to live. We look forward to continuing these conversations in 2026 and encourage residents to stay engaged.

- Mayor and Council

## North Saanich Among Canada's Most Livable Communities

North Saanich has once again been recognized as one of the country's most livable places to call home, earning a spot on The Globe and Mail's 2025 Most Livable Cities ranking, published January 29.

This year, North Saanich ranked 61st out of 454 communities across Canada, placing it alongside communities such as Whitehorse, Yukon (60) and St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador (62). The result represents a significant jump of 145 spots compared to last year, highlighting steady progress across a wide range of measures that contribute to overall quality of life.

The recognition also reflects

broader strength across the Saanich Peninsula. Our neighbours in Sidney ranked 41st this year, climbing 39 places compared to last year's results: an encouraging sign of regional livability and shared community values.

The Globe and Mail's annual ranking moves beyond traditional discussions focused on housing prices or real estate markets. Instead, it asks a broader question: What truly makes a place a good place to live? The 2025 ranking evaluates communities using 58 variables across 10 key categories, including economy, housing, demographics, health care, safety, education, community, amenities, transportation, and

climate resilience. In response to reader feedback, this year's edition also introduced a population filter, allowing communities to be compared more meaningfully within similar size ranges: an important change for smaller municipalities like North Saanich.

While rankings rely on data, livability is also shaped by everyday experiences. For North Saanich residents, it often means access to natural spaces, a strong sense of community, proximity to services, and a balance between rural character and connected living.

"North Saanich truly is an oasis: a place where natural beauty, strong community connections,

and a high quality of life come together," said Mayor Peter Jones. "This recognition reflects the care our residents have for this place, and the thoughtful work being done to protect what makes our community so special."

This national recognition reflects the ongoing efforts of residents, Council, staff, and community partners who continue to work together to protect what makes North Saanich unique while planning thoughtfully for the future.



# Project Updates

## 2026 Budget

Planning for the 2026 Budget is well underway, and this year the District expanded how residents could get involved. Engagement began earlier than usual, starting in December, giving both staff and the community more time to review information and share feedback. In addition to online opportunities, residents were invited to participate through a random-sample mail-out survey and in-person pop-ups held around the community, helping to broaden participation and reach new voices. An engagement summary report was presented to the Budget Committee on Feb. 10 and will help inform ongoing budget discussions.

Stay tuned for more updates on the 2026 Budget and the 2026–2030 Financial Plan at [www.connectnorthsaanich.ca/2026-budget](http://www.connectnorthsaanich.ca/2026-budget)

## Zoning Bylaw

The Zoning Bylaw review is ongoing, with a summary of potential zoning updates expected to be presented to Council in February, followed by public consultation in March.

Updates will be posted to the project page:

[www.connectnorthsaanich.ca/zoning-bylaw-update](http://www.connectnorthsaanich.ca/zoning-bylaw-update)

## Chalet Creek Culvert Repair

Chalet Creek crosses beneath West Saanich Road just south of Tatlow Road through a culvert that was inspected by the District in December 2024. The inspection revealed the culvert includes a deteriorating wood-stave pipe beneath the roadway, with sections missing or collapsed and in very poor condition.

While the culvert is currently stable, staff have increased monitoring, implemented contingency measures, and begun planning for replacement due to its condition and the presence of critical utilities above it. Council authorized a direct award for engineering and construction inspection services in September 2025, with construction anticipated in summer 2026 following a February tender, which will require closure of West Saanich Road south of Tatlow Road.

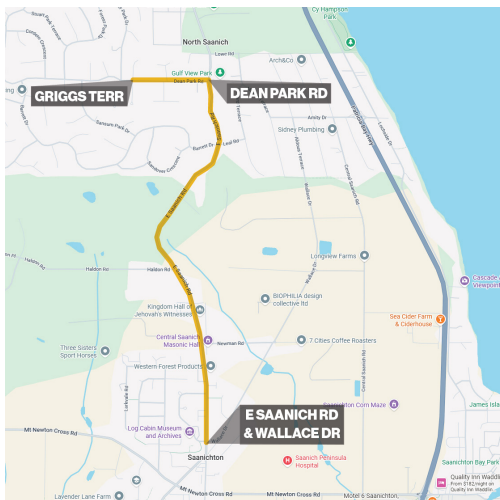
Find out more at [northsaanich.ca/chalet-creek-west-saanich](http://northsaanich.ca/chalet-creek-west-saanich)

## CRD Water Main Extension

The CRD is upgrading vulnerable sections of the Saanich Peninsula Water System, including designing and constructing a new transmission water main along East Saanich Road to improve resiliency, seismic resistance, and meet future demand.

Construction is expected to take 6-8 months, beginning in June.

Read more: [northsaanich.ca/bear-hill-extension-project](http://northsaanich.ca/bear-hill-extension-project)



## Wolf Orchard Park



Construction on the park began late last year. The entrance parking area has been paved; shoulder work is nearly complete with new gravel shoulders and flexible bollards installed, and the planter boxes have been rebuilt and reinstalled within the orchard.

Work will continue in the spring with concrete pads for bike racks, a gazebo, and a picnic table.

Follow along with this project: [northsaanich.ca/wolf-orchard-park](http://northsaanich.ca/wolf-orchard-park)

## Sandown

The District of North Saanich has approved an amended Operating Lease Agreement for the Sandown Agricultural Lands with the Circular Farm and Food Society. The updated agreement supports responsible stewardship of this important community asset while allowing regenerative agriculture and valued community programming to continue.

Under the amended lease, the District is balancing fiscal responsibility and long-term planning with its commitment to keeping public lands active, productive, and accessible. The District will continue working closely with CFFS and other interest holders to ensure Sandown remains a hub for food security, agricultural innovation, and community learning.

Find out more at [northsaanich.ca/sandown](http://northsaanich.ca/sandown)

## Resident Associations Engagement

In November, District staff met with representatives from eight local resident associations to talk about communication, engagement, and how the District can better share information and identify community priorities. This initiative stemmed from a notice of motion brought forward by Irene McConkey in early 2025 and aligns with the District's Citizen Engagement Strategy commitment to establish clear, consistent channels for engagement. These conversations provided valuable insight and helped strengthen relationships between the District and resident associations. Staff and resident associations will continue to meet on a bi-annual basis, with the next round of meetings planned for this spring.

## Harvest Hub

The Harvest Hub project in North Saanich is advancing with Council receiving a staff update and endorsing the Working Group's recommendations. A revised site plan and building design for a prefabricated ~1,720 sq ft facility focused on food processing, retail, and covered space was approved, within the \$1.25M budget supported by a generous \$750,000 community gift plus reserves.

Early site work including geotechnical, utility servicing and septic assessment has begun under an aggressive schedule targeting completion by late 2026. A design-build contract using a CCDC 14 delivery model was recommended to optimize cost, coordination and timeline.



Learn more about the project at [northsaanich.ca/harvest-hub](http://northsaanich.ca/harvest-hub)

# What's Happening

## Website Improvements

Work is getting underway to improve the District's municipal website. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued in November and closed in December, attracting strong interest from across the industry, with 38 submissions received. Following a thorough evaluation process, the contract was awarded to Upanup Studios Inc., a Victoria-based firm with extensive experience building websites for Canadian municipalities. Work on the new website will begin in February, with an anticipated launch in late August or early September. The updated site will focus on improved usability, accessibility, and clearer access to information for residents.

## Strategic Planning

The District's Strategic Plan is being updated following a working session between the management team and members of Council on February 9. The Strategic Plan serves as an "umbrella policy," setting the overall direction for the District and helping to align more detailed plans related to finance, land use, solid waste, information technology, infrastructure, and parks.

The updated document will be available shortly on our website at [northsaanich.ca/local-government/corporate-annual-reports](http://northsaanich.ca/local-government/corporate-annual-reports)

## Home Energy Improvements Workshop

Coffee, conversation and energy tips! Join in whether you rent or own, want DIY fixes or plan upgrades like solar.

**When:** Saturday, March 7, 1:00 - 3:00pm

**Where:** Brentwood Cultural Centre

Registration: [www.centrialsaanich.ca/mar7workshop](http://www.centrialsaanich.ca/mar7workshop)

## CARP Vancouver Island Meeting

Join CARP Vancouver Island's chapter meeting on Wednesday, March 11, for a presentation on "Spill Response on Canada's West Coast," from Michael Lowery, Director, Public & External Relations, for Western Canada Marine Response Team.



**When:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026

**Where:** SHOAL Centre, 10030 Resthaven Drive, Sidney

# CRD Updates

## Swan Lake Native Plant Workshops

Offers native plant identification, explores the cultural history and ecological benefits of native plants, includes a walk through the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary native plant gardens, and introduces the CRD's water conservation program.



Riparian Beecreek

Spring 2026 dates, from 12-3 p.m.:

- February 20
- February 21
- March 6
- March 7

Learn more and register on the Swan Lake website, through:

[www.swanlake.bc.ca/nativeplantworkshops](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca/nativeplantworkshops)

## Agenda Timeline Changes

A new Council Procedure Bylaw went before Council in December, resulting in changes to council agenda deadlines:

- Agendas are now published on Tuesdays.
- The deadline for the public to submit agenda items is now 12 p.m. on the Monday 1 week prior to a Council meeting (instead of 12 p.m. on the Wednesday prior). This allows councillors a full week to review the agenda.
- The deadline for written requests to appear before Council is now 12 p.m. on the Monday 1 week prior (instead of 12 p.m. on the Wednesday prior).
- The deadline to submit a notice of Council motion is now 12 p.m. on the Monday 1 week prior (instead of 12 p.m. on the Wednesday prior).
- Late items will still be accepted up until noon on the day of the meeting.

These changes support both Council and residents. More time to review the agenda means deeper discussion and more informed decision-making.

## North Saanich Residents Association

The next NSRA meeting is scheduled for February 17, from 7 - 9 p.m., at the Saanich Peninsula Presbyterian Church. On the agenda will be an update on zoning bylaws and the housing advisor, update on the Harvest Hub, and an analysis of the District's 2026 budget.

More info: [www.placespeak.com/topic/6103](http://www.placespeak.com/topic/6103)

## Heritage Week & the Sunset Riding Club

During Heritage Week (Feb. 16-22), the District of North Saanich is proud to recognize the Sunset Riding Club and its lasting contribution to the wellness and vibrancy of our community.

In May 2025, Council approved a resolution to honour the Club through the installation of a North Saanich Heritage sign at the Tatlow Road trailhead, and by formally recognizing the Sunset Riding Club during Heritage Week 2026.

To mark the occasion, residents are invited to visit Municipal Hall during Heritage Week to view a special display featuring historical photos, artifacts, and memorabilia from the Club's rich history in North Saanich.



[northsaanich.ca/sunset-riding-club](http://northsaanich.ca/sunset-riding-club)

## Celebrating Regional Parks Volunteers



Last year was a big one for the CRD Regional Parks Volunteer Program.

In 2025, volunteers contributed an incredible 8,220 hours to regional parks - up from 6,679 in 2024 and more than double the total from 10 years ago.

Highlights included 2,607 hours from park stewards, 1,868 hours dedicated to ecological restoration, 139 volunteer events, and engagement with more than 8,800 park visitors.

Volunteers play a vital role in caring for and enhancing the parks we all enjoy.

Interested in getting involved? Learn more at [crd.ca/volunteer](http://crd.ca/volunteer)

## Reminders

### SPAAC Vacancies

We are looking for residents to join the **Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC)**.

It is a tri-municipal committee between North Saanich, Sidney, and Central Saanich that focuses on accessibility on the peninsula.

To qualify, an applicant must be an individual with a disability, or be someone who supports/assists a person with a disability.

Learn more and apply on our website: [northsaanich.ca/accessible-peninsula](http://northsaanich.ca/accessible-peninsula)

Central Saanich [municipalhall@csaanich.ca](mailto:municipalhall@csaanich.ca)  
North Saanich [commissions@northsaanich.ca](mailto:commissions@northsaanich.ca)  
Town of Sidney [admin@sidney.ca](mailto:admin@sidney.ca)



### Dog and Business Licence Renewals

Renew your dog and business licences by February 28, 2026. We now issue permanent dog licences, so keep your tag when renewing.

We accept cash, cheque or debit at Municipal Hall. Credit not accepted.

If you can't make it in-person, you can mail us a cheque or use online banking by adding The District of North Saanich as a payee and including your account (or customer) number as the account number.

Learn more on our website:  
[northsaanich.ca/dog-licence](http://northsaanich.ca/dog-licence)  
[northsaanich.ca/business-licence](http://northsaanich.ca/business-licence)

## Sidney/North Saanich RCMP

### RCMP Target Highway Speeding

This past fall, Sidney/North Saanich RCMP targeted speeders on the Patricia Bay Highway. Nine drivers were stopped for excessive speed, including high end performance vehicles and a motorcycle.

No vehicle is exempt from the consequences of speeding...or the law. We encourage all motorists to slow down, stay alert, and help keep our highways safe for everyone.



### Asphalt Scam

Sidney/North Saanich RCMP has advised of an asphalt paving scam affecting residents. In the reported incident, a man approached a local homeowner to offer discounted asphalt paving services.

After the work began, the crew left without completing the job. There have been two similar reports in Sooke. Please be cautious about this suspected scam.

If you have questions related to potential fraud, please contact the RCMP at 250-656-3931

## How To: Public Works Service Requests

Our Infrastructure Services department handles 1,500 service requests annually!

To make the process easier, we have a new online form for placing a public works service request: [northsaanich.ca/service-request](http://northsaanich.ca/service-request)

## Family Day February 16

Municipal Hall and the Fire Hall Admin Office will be closed on Monday, February 16.

## Upcoming Council Meetings

**Regular Meeting of Council:** Feb. 23, Mar. 9, Mar. 23

Regular Council and CoW meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Hall, 1620 Mills Road, unless posted otherwise.

Advanced registration to attend a meeting via Zoom is required.

Please contact Corporate Services via email at [corporateservices@northsaanich.ca](mailto:corporateservices@northsaanich.ca) or by phone at 250-656-0781 prior to 12p.m. on the day of the meeting.

Subscribe to receive agendas as soon as they're published!  
[northsaanich.ca/council-meetings](http://northsaanich.ca/council-meetings)

## Water Main Flushing This Spring

The District of North Saanich will be flushing water mains from March through May 2026 (weather dependent) as part of its annual program to remove sediment and maintain water quality. Temporary discolouration or low pressure may occur - this is not a health hazard; simply run your cold tap until the water clears. For questions, contact Public Works at 250-655-5480.

## Fire Department Updates

### IAFF Agreement

The District of North Saanich has ratified its first collective agreement with IAFF Local 5509, covering all paid members of the Fire Department, including full-time and on-call firefighters. This milestone supports a fair, professional work environment and reflects a shared commitment to collaboration, community safety, and the long-term sustainability of emergency services.

### Tree Chipping Fundraiser

The North Saanich Fire Department tree chipping event on January 3 raised \$2,006.50 for CFAF Santas Anonymous! Your donations will support CFAF Santas new summer food program at the Peninsula Lions Food Bank.

Thanks to the community for your generosity and to our devoted volunteers for another successful event!

Learn more about CFAF Santas Anonymous: [www.cfaxsantas.com](http://www.cfaxsantas.com)

### Reflective Address Signs

Available for \$65 at the Wain Fire Hall (includes installation).

### Upcoming Events

- Feb. 22 - Wounded Warriors Run from Port Hardy to Victoria



## We Want to Hear From You!

We're looking for feedback on our quarterly Newsletters. Let us know what works, what doesn't, and if you have any comments or suggestions!