



## Good evening North Saanich Residents, Staff and Council;

Thank you for your attendance tonight as we look back on a year full of hard work, collaboration, and community achievements. It's been a year defined by progress, resilience, and a deep sense of community, and I am honored to stand before you today to share some of the key highlights from 2024.

- This year, we saw a revitalization in our efforts to engage the community about the Official Community Plan. Our Mayor's OCP Advisory Committee met frequently to ensure broad community involvement. Throughout the year, our Planning staff gathered substantial input to shape a vision that aligns with the aspirations of North Saanich residents and the long-term sustainability of our community.
- We worked diligently to engage residents across a variety of initiatives, including comprehensive input sessions on the 2024 Budget, the development of the Parks Master Plan, detailed traffic calming strategies for Tatlow and Deep Cove, the Citizen Engagement Strategy, and the Growing Communities Fund. Our administration underscored a commitment to ensuring that community feedback is central to shaping policies and projects that directly impact residents' lives.
- In February, we updated the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, refining our goals and priorities to emphasize the protection of the natural environment, support for local agriculture, fostering of a vibrant and inclusive community, and promotion of sustainable growth practices. These goals aim to ensure that North Saanich not only retains its charm but also enhances its resilience and sustainability for future residents.
- Significant developments included the inauguration of the Blue Heron Park artificial turf soccer fields, which represent a major investment in community sports infrastructure. Additionally, strategic hires in the finance and planning departments have been pivotal in streamlining municipal processes, enhancing the efficiency and responsiveness of local governance.
- The establishment and operation of three new advisory bodies have significantly enriched our decision-making processes. These bodies provide expert insights on various issues, thereby enhancing the transparency and informed nature of policy developments.
- The recent enhancements at the Municipal Hall, including the installation of a new historical display, are part of broader efforts to celebrate and preserve the rich history of North Saanich. There was a Records Management review, that involved all employees, to enhance accessibility, transparency and efficiency as outlined in Council's Strategic Plan and further enhance public service levels. This has never been performed in the District. This also included the Policy Review.
- The expansion of the fire department, including the addition of a full-time FireSmart Coordinator, underscores a proactive approach to managing and mitigating fire risks. Comprehensive fuel mitigation projects further reflect our commitment to safety and preparedness in the face of increasing wildfire risks. The Fire Department certified as a Union under IAFF Local 5509 – collaboration with IAFF, Association, and growth of the Fire Department. This is a huge achievement for the District and public service levels.
- The introduction of a tracked trail chipper has revolutionized the maintenance of our district's trails, significantly enhancing their accessibility and usability. This improvement demonstrates our dedication to promoting outdoor activities and ensuring that recreational spaces are maintained to the highest standards.
- The launch of a new accessibility feature on the District's website is a key step toward ensuring that all residents can easily access and utilize online resources. By allowing users to customize text size, contrast, and readability, we are making strides toward greater inclusivity and accessibility for everyone in the community.
- Highlighting the importance of public engagement, we encourage all residents to remain actively involved in the community's governance. This ongoing participation is vital for ensuring that our decisions reflect the true needs and wishes of North Saanich residents, helping to foster a transparent and collaborative governance environment.

Thank you to all residents of North Saanich for your engagement and trust. Your input is vital in shaping our community, and we look forward to enhancing our connection through the upcoming Citizen Engagement Strategy.

This Council values your feedback and encourages your continued participation. Together, let's continue to build a safe, inclusive, and vibrant community that supports sustainable growth.

***Thank you for being part of our journey to make North Saanich the best it can be.***