

Connect North Saanich: Spring 2021

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Message from Mayor & Council



Spring 2021 – the COVID-19 virus is resilient and the associated pandemic continues to negatively impact our lives. By the time you read this message many of you will have received an immunization shot - or two. We are optimistic that vaccinations coupled with ongoing public health orders will have enabled us to see our way back to some sense of normalcy.

If you have been able to Think local – Shop local, thank you! Local businesses have done an amazing job adapting to the ever-changing health orders but still require our continued support as they rebuild and emerge stronger in the months ahead.

The 2021 Budget deliberations resulted in a preliminary municipal

tax increase of 3.86% which was subsequently reduced to an increase of 2.86%. Council agreed to continue with our long-term taxation strategy which slowly shifts the tax burden between residential and business class properties which resulted in a 3.15% increase for residential and other properties and a 2.00% increase for business properties.

Municipal hall remains open for tax and utility payments and a steady flow of residents pay in person. With COVID-19 still influencing how we carry out business we encourage residents to pay online if you are able to. For up to date information on municipal hall hours and both online and in-person services available, please check the District website at

northsaanich.ca/COVID-19, or call the municipal hall at 250-656-0781.

Council considered Grant-In-Aid and COVID-19 Restart funding applications as part of the 2021 Budget process. Council approved \$33,500 for 16 non-profit societies, an additional \$36,500 for six COVID-19 Restart applicants, an allocation limit of \$150,000 for 2020/2021 COVID-19 Restart funds, and directed staff to initiate a second round of COVID-19 Restart applications which closed in mid-April. The District received a total of \$2.7 million in Provincial COVID-19 Restart funds at the end of 2020.

Council appreciates that these are stressful times for everyone and we acknowledge that community engagement opportunities for various initiatives these past six months have overlapped and required considerable attention to the topic at hand. Council and staff are sensitive to feedback we have received, continue to assess the effectiveness of each engagement initiative, and are prepared to adapt or modify as deemed necessary.

In lieu of in-person public participation we added the ability for residents to attend Council and Committee of the Whole meetings virtually in early February 2021. Our modified correspondence procedures continue to work well

and for a number of important initiatives we have referred reports to a future Council meeting to allow additional time for public review and comment.

This newsletter provides an update on current projects including the Official Community Plan review, Tree Protection Bylaw review, Active Transportation Plan, and Sandown Lands, and new initiatives including Reay Creek Pedestrian bridge, and Green Waste Facility operational changes (open every Saturday).

Council will host another virtual community meeting on Wednesday June 23, 2021 with Zoom meeting details published in a variety of ways: the District website, email to subscribers, social media, and Peninsula News Review ads.

District employees continue to work hard on your behalf while following appropriate COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Council is extremely appreciative of the staff dedication, quality of work, and continuance of service levels across all departments. Please communicate your appreciation when you have the opportunity.

Take care of yourself, your family, and those inside and outside of your bubble.

Heads Up!

Home Owner Grant Program Changes

Starting in 2021, residents who are eligible to claim the home owner grant can no longer apply through the District. Instead, residents must apply directly to the province online at gov.bc.ca/homeownergrant or by phone at 1-888-355-2700.

Eligible home owners must submit their application each year by the property tax payment deadline (July 2, 2021), in order to avoid penalty.



gov.bc.ca/homeownergrant

Green Waste Schedule

We are pleased to announce that the District's Green Waste Facility, located at 10180 Littlewood Road, is **now open every Saturday**, in addition to the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month (excluding holidays). Hours are 8:00a.m. to 12:00p.m. on operating days.

This facility is a great way for residents to dispose of their yard waste year round, particularly when outdoor burning is prohibited (mid-May through October).



northsaanich.ca/green-waste

Heads Up! (Continued)



We're Recruiting Volunteer Firefighters!

Do you live in North Saanich or the surrounding area? From now until May 31, the North Saanich Fire Department is looking for individuals interested in becoming volunteer firefighters. Applicants must be at least 19 years of age. No previous experience or special skills are required. All applicants will be invited to an information session in June which will provide further information about being a volunteer. After tryouts are completed, successful recruits will begin their 12 month training in September 2021.



northsaanich.ca/fire-recruitment



Project Updates

Tree Protection Bylaw Review

The draft Tree Protection Bylaw is ready for your review. Find out more about the key directions, trade-offs and impacts of the proposed changes.

Complete the survey by May 31, 2021.



The North Saanich Tree Protection Bylaw regulates the cutting, removal or damaging of trees on private property. The bylaw is being updated to reflect the community's values and priorities and to align with best practices. The bylaw includes updates to the definition of protected trees and acceptable reasons to remove those trees as well as new replacement requirements.

Next Steps

The proposed bylaw will be presented to Council for the bylaw approval process in Summer 2021.



connectnorthsaanich.ca/tree-bylaw



Active Transportation Plan

The Active Transportation Plan has been approved. This high-level plan, developed through two rounds of public engagement, provides guidance to staff for advancing active transportation initiatives. Major improvement projects identified in the plan may require further technical study, detailed design and public engagement.

We are moving forward with the design for a crosswalk at Littlewood Road and Mills Road, with a goal of installing it later this summer.



connectnorthsaanich.ca/active-transportation-plan

Drainage and Stormwater Management Planning

The District is currently developing plans to guide upgrades to our drainage infrastructure and better manage water quality and quantity in the Tseycum Creek watershed. These plans will provide roadmaps for infrastructure planning and investment to control flooding and erosion, protect our health and environment, and work with community members towards sustainable future.

The Drainage Master Plan will guide how we manage, operate, and maintain our entire drainage infrastructure. The work is being completed as part of the District's overall asset management program to identify deficiencies and priorities for potential upgrades.

The Tseycum Creek Integrated Stormwater Management Plan will analyze the Tseycum Creek and McDonald Park Road Drain watersheds to better manage stormwater and the health of the watersheds. The plan will help improve water quantity and quality through recommended infrastructure improvements and best practices that preserve how our ecosystem functions.

Upcoming Engagement

We will be engaging with First Nations, local stakeholders and the community in the coming months.



connectnorthsaanich.ca/drainage

Reay Creek Pedestrian Link

We are partnering with the Town of Sidney to explore a pedestrian link between Reay Creek Park in North Saanich and Peter Grant Park in Sidney. This walking link would require either a bridge over Reay Creek or a route next to the Pat Bay Highway.

Next Steps

Please take the survey to share your thoughts on the three proposed options.



connectnorthsaanich.ca/reay-creek

Reminders

Outdoor Burning

Outdoor Burning season is now closed and will re-open in the Fall. This includes the burning of yard waste. During this time, we encourage you to access our Green Waste Facility (now open every Saturday!) for disposal of your yard waste. Small fires for cooking or quiet enjoyment are still allowed throughout the summer (with a permit), as long as no provincial fire ban is in effect.

northsaanich.ca/outdoor-burning

northsaanich.ca/green-waste

Stay Connected

Stay in the loop with what's happening at the District by:

- Signing up for news and public notices: northsaanich.ca/notifications
- Signing up for project updates: visit connectnorthsaanich.ca, select the project, click on "Stay Informed"



Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan design workshop was held mid-May to explore what the future of North Saanich may look like and the different ways it may change over time.

The public was invited to attend the launch of the workshop to provide feedback on the draft vision and goals and to help define the qualities of different areas of North Saanich. The public was also invited to attend the close of the workshop to provide feedback on the land use concepts.



Next Steps

We will be holding outdoor pop-ups around North Saanich in June to get your feedback on the draft land use concepts (subject to public health orders). Check the project page for dates and locations.



connectnorthsaanich.ca/ocp



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18 members of your community are following this project

Sandown Update

In 2020, the Sandown Centre for Regenerative Agriculture (SCRA) was chosen by Council to operate the Sandown Lands on Glamorgan Road, with financial assistance from North Saanich.

The Farm has been evolving and new infrastructure has been installed including water, electricity, deer fencing and a greenhouse.

The Sandown Centre has launched several programs, including:

- Farmpreneur program, which provides new farmers with access to land, mentorship, and other supports
- Forest steward program, which allows community members to “adopt a patch” of forest in the Sandown lands and work to remove invasive vegetation and replant with native plants and foods
- “I Grew This Feast!” program, which provides participants instruction on garden planning, companion planting, and irrigation installation

In addition, later this year SCRA plans to assign community garden plots to those who have indicated interest.



www.sandowncentre.com



Questions & Requests

Should I Contact Staff or Council?

Have a question or request relating to the District or its operations? A large majority of requests can be quickly and easily resolved by District staff, and do not require you to contact North Saanich Council.

Although the Municipal Hall remains closed to the public for everything other than payments, staff are happy to assist you via email (admin@northsaanich.ca) or phone (250-656-0781), Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (excluding holidays).

Contact Staff For...

Operational Items

Permits – building, development, blasting, contractor permits
Licensing – business licenses, dog licenses
Applications – developments, subdivisions, zoning, variances
Bylaw compliance
Reporting issues and safety concerns (eg. roads, utilities, parks, trees)

Information Requests

Green waste and outdoor burning dates
Questions about trees, including tree removal and permitting process
Park usage inquiries – beaches, trails, pickleball, playgrounds
Zoning information
Looking for information on a property

Current Public Engagement Initiatives

How can I have my voice heard?
Questions about:
• Official Community Plan review
• Tree Protection Bylaw review
• Active Transportation Plan

Financial Information

Property taxes
Utilities (water and sewer) and billing
The District's Budget
Grants

