



GORGE TILLICUM

Neighbourhood

Gorge Tillicum Community Association FALL/WINTER 2021

NEWS

Big Changes Coming to Tillicum/Burnside

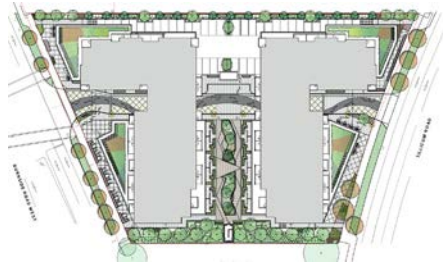
On May 11th, Saanich Council overwhelmingly approved the proposed development at 3400 Tillicum Road – the old Bingo Hall site.

The mixed-use development by local developer The Ciello Group will feature residential apartments and ground-level commercial units. The plan includes 242 homes of varying sizes in two L shaped buildings. The units will range from studios, one-bedrooms, two-bedrooms and three-bedrooms, plus 12 ground-level townhome-style residences. The development will include both rental and strata homes.

The site was identified as a potential development site for housing in the 2004 Gorge Tillicum Charette. With excellent road access and transit accessibility, the central location will make it ideal for a variety of tenants from students to families and those looking to downsize.



A rendering of the buildings looking across Burnside Road. (building on the far right is the Royal Bank)



Top view of the two L-shaped buildings situated on the lot. Burnside is on the left, Tillicum on the right. The grey swirl indicates a decorative sidewalk featuring metal salmon artwork and which will allow public access through the site.

The developer's Community Amenity Contribution(CAC) of \$242,000 will be broken down as follows:

- \$100,000 Contribution to the District of Saanich to provide funding for a new all-weather basketball court at Hampton Park.
- \$65,000 for on-site artworks by local artists
- \$52,000 to the Saanich Affordable Housing Fund
- \$25,000 to the District of Saanich to support community education and engagement or other direct-action initiatives by the Salmon in the City group.

The developer hopes to start construction in late 2021 with completion in 2023.

For more detailed information on see <https://ciellobproperties.ca/project/3400-tillicum/>

-Vera Wynn-Williams

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The GTCA met with the Ciello Group very early on in the process to discuss the form of the building. We pushed strongly for mixed-use, including both retail and restaurant space suitable for small local businesses. We wanted a rich streetscape that would enliven the area and encourage people to walk to and around the site. We believe the developer took our input and developed a plan ideally suited to this location. This development will not only revitalize that area but also provide high-quality homes to hundreds of new residents.



GORGETILlicUM

Neighbourhood News

We welcome comments—please let us know what you think of your newsletter!

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Unsolicited articles welcome.

The deadline for submissions & advertising for the next issue is Jan 10, 2022.

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Distribution:

All 3,800 copies of this newsletter are delivered by volunteers, and we could always use more help. Please contact Scott Karpes at 778-679-3545.

GTCA Board Meetings

The Board normally meets at 7pm the second Thursday of each month from September to June. Please check our website for the most up to date information.

Everyone is welcome to attend board meetings. If you want to put an item on the agenda please email our president one week in advance.

Agendas will be posted to the GTCA website a few days in advance of the meeting.

A Community Solstice Celebration

LIGHTS ON THE GORGE

Sunday, Dec. 19th
4:30pm

Outside the Victoria Canoe & Kayak Club



LIGHT-UP LANTERN PROCESSION*
SINGING

*Please bring your own lantern & percussion!



The GTCA is now on  Instagram
gorgetillicum

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The GTCA boundaries are the Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet shorelines, the Trans-Canada highway to the north and Harriet/Whittier/Harriet to the east.

To learn more about Saanich Community Associations and view the boundaries, see <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/community-associations.html>

an update from the GTCA

These past six months have been a busy season for the GTCA.

In the spring we welcomed four new board members, bringing us to a board of 18. These new board members bring new energy and new ideas - both of which are welcome.

Our six Working Groups are at various stages of development -- each needing a director serving as its chair and each with its pro-active task of generating ideas for new projects and subsequently (subject to Board approval) helping them come to life. Two of the groups (Buildings; Mobility & Transportation) have strong levels of participation, drawn from the pool of directors and from the wider community; two other (Arts, Culture & Celebration; Natural Areas [formerly Green & Blue]) have small dedicated groups of participants; and two others (Community Connections; Local Economy) are looking forward to launching in the not-too-distant future.

We continue to deal with a variety of proposed developments at various stages. (See page 12 for a list) We also have had to deal with the announcement of BC Housing's Supportive Housing Project for Albina Street. We were disappointed to learn that the seniors' housing development that we worked on with the developer was not going to happen. Instead, we were informed, without consultation, that the location would be used for supportive housing. We are aware that many such housing projects fit into the community and cause no problems; however, it is not always the case. We have met with BC Housing and Saanich on several occasions to ensure neighbourhood concerns are dealt with. We will have more information as we approach the completion of this project in the spring.

A considerable amount of time and effort has gone into the early stages of promoting changes to Tillicum Road

between Burnside and the Gorge Bridge. The Board sees this stretch of road as unsafe (particularly for pedestrians, cyclists, and people in mobility scooters), unsightly and neglected -- as a road that is not living up to its full potential as a safe multimodal transportation corridor with numerous vibrant commercial and social opportunities. We have been actively engaging with Saanich Council and staff regarding desirable changes -- through presentations and onsite visits -- and will be speaking more about this with the wider community as well.

We have made some progress in that Council approved the following motions:

#1). That Council direct staff to coordinate with the Township of Esquimalt and consider the Tillicum Road from Arena Way to Tillicum Bridge Active Transportation Project as a short-term priority in the Active Transportation Plan 2023/24 refresh.

#2). That Council ask the ATAC to identify and recommend short-term and/or pilot projects to improve road safety/active transportation within the District of Saanich where Active Transportation projects are determined medium-to-long-term priority areas.

However, we are acutely aware that we need to continue to advocate for faster change - so we know this is a marathon!

At the same time, Saanich has engaged with us regarding their plans to start work on changes to Gorge Road West between Admirals and Tillicum Roads and has announced plans to address long-standing traffic safety issues on streets immediately adjacent to Tillicum Elementary School. Saanich has also informed us of their intent to start a conversation with the City of Victoria about Gorge Road East

and the section of Gorge Road West between Tillicum and Harriet. Based on these conversations, Saanich will design changes to the latter strip of roadway and start work on it in 2023 (hopefully).

With respect to planning and neighbourhood changes, Saanich Planning is in the process of presenting a work plan to Saanich Council. Both the Official Community Plan (OCP) and the Tillicum Local Area Plan (LAP) have not been updated for twenty years. In the meantime, Saanich has rolled out the Active Transportation Plan, the Climate Action Plan, and the Housing Action Plan - all of which contain policies that affect what happens in our community. Unfortunately, sometimes these plans are contradictory and result in misunderstandings in what is, and isn't allowed and set up development by development fights about what kind of development is appropriate to the community. The GTCA will continue to follow this situation.

With COVID restrictions lifting, we are looking to engage in wider conversations with our community.

**-Vera Wynn-Williams
on behalf of the GTCA Board**

Join Us By Becoming a GTCA Member

Support your local community by joining the Gorge Tillicum Community Association. The larger our membership, the greater our voice with the District of Saanich on issues that affect Gorge Tillicum.

Our membership is individual and available to all members of a household who are 18 years of age or older. The price is only \$5.00 per person per year or \$25.00 for businesses that are located or operate in our community.

You can pay and/or join online via our website: www.gorgetillicum.ca. You can also join by completing and mailing the membership form on page 12. Your e-mail address is important to us so please ensure you include your e-mail address with your membership or payment form. This will assist us in communicating with you efficiently. We don't share our member information with anyone else.

GTCA Arts & Culture

June

Sunflower Girl Mural on Burnside Road

The GTCA had long wanted to do a mural in the neighbourhood and this past summer we made it happen with the support of the building owners of 100 Burnside West and community members who donated on our Go Fund Me page.

Local artist Paul Archer and his team made this mural come to life in six days!

It was quite the learning curve for the GTCA but now we are hoping to do more murals in the community.



Photo: Paul Archer

Paul Archer in front of the mural on day 3 of the project.



Photo: Colin Plant

The official "enveiling of the mural."

July

Curb Appeal

In lieu of Canada Day celebrations, Curb Appeal encouraged creative installations all over the neighbourhood.



Art installation on Earl Grey Ave.



Photos: Reb Stevenson

A community weaving installation on Obed..

Aug. 3

Music in the Park

Due to COVID, this event was scaled down but was still a wonderful evening as The Pickups put on a great show in Rudd Park.



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July 31

Gorge Tillicum Tour

How do you entertain the neighbourhood without creating crowds? Well our Arts & Culture working group were up to the challenge.

Our first ever Gorge Tillicum Tour with Theatre Skam's pop-up truck was a

success! Six stops and 200 neighbours entertained!

It was so heartwarming to see you out celebrating the arts and our community in our parks and on our streets!



GTCA Arts, Culture & Celebration Working Group

Most of these events were initiated and organized by the GTCA Arts & Culture Working Group. If you are interested in seeing more events and art in our community this is your opportunity to join a group of like minded individuals.

If you'd like join this group, or you want some more information, please contact us at info@gorgetillicum.ca.

Nov. 1

Gorge Park Pumpkin Parade

Our first ever Pumpkin Parade was a huge success! With over 300 pumpkins, music by Jeff Poynter and a puppet show by Theatre Skam, and hot chocolate it was a magical evening.

Thanks to a great team who got the site set up and cleaned with amazing efficiency.

Lots of requests for this to become an annual event.



Photos: Reb Stevenson



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The Green Space

Cuthbert Holmes Park Trail Relocation and Colquitz River Improvement Project

This project will see many of the invasive English hawthorn trees removed and replaced with high-quality habitat native tree species. The resulting longer blooming period and more habitat options will increase the variety and number of birds, and insects, that the park can support - a boost to the local area's biodiversity.

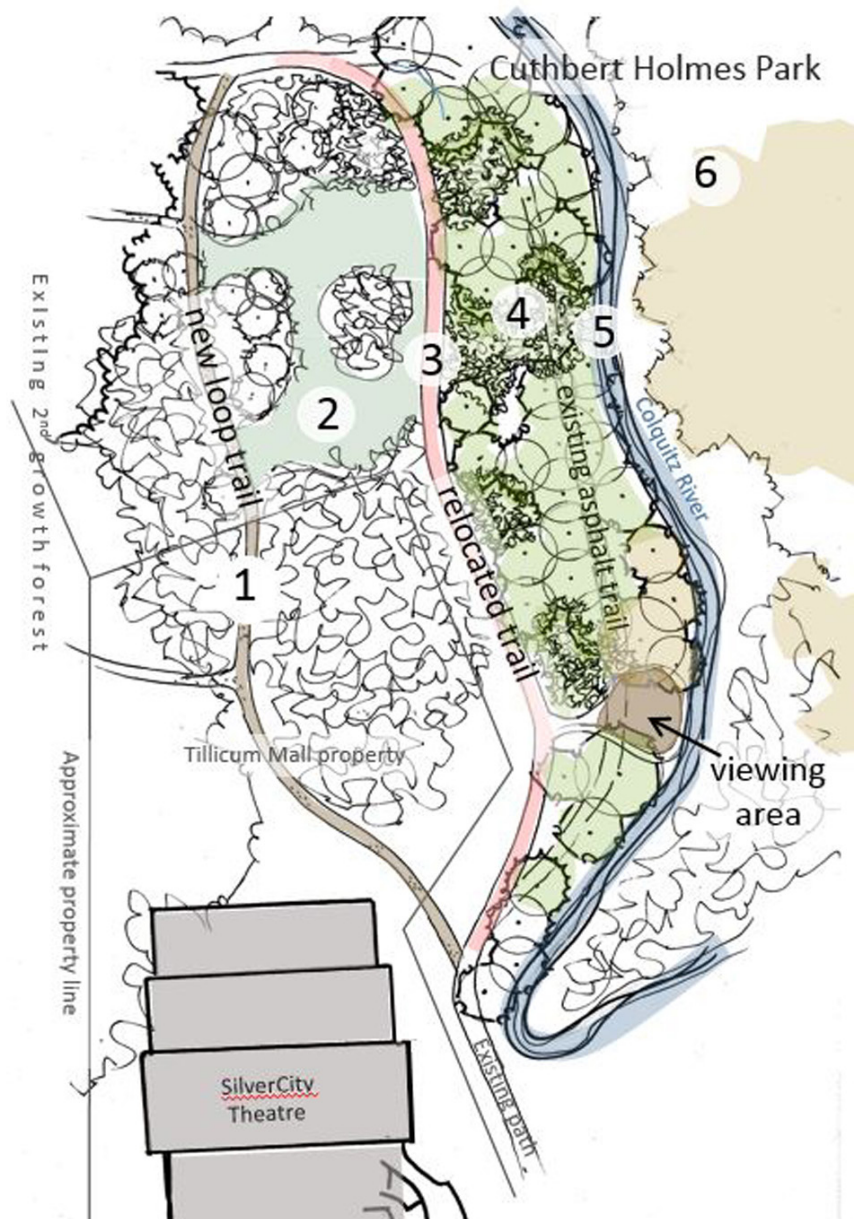
This project will take place over 5 years and will further the goals set out in the Cuthbert Holmes/Tillicum Parks Management Plan:

1. New loop trail and open space will enhance recreational opportunities, and discourage previously concealed unwelcome activities.
2. Removing invasive English hawthorn to create open space will reduce its spread to other areas. Each English hawthorn tree that is removed will be replaced with 3 native trees.
3. Relocated trail will avoid seasonal flooding.
4. 30 m native plant buffer will improve habitat and river health.
5. In-stream work will support salmon, cutthroat trout and other native fish and wildlife. Associated viewing area promotes Natural Intelligence.
6. New Trembling Aspen Woodland will expand the park's habitat range and improve overall park ecology.

Saanich crews and machinery will be on site as project components are completed. Please respect work zone barriers.

For more information contact us at 250-475-5522 or parks@saanich.ca.

This project is funded by Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure compensation funds related to the McKenzie Interchange Project.



- **Becky Goodall**
Saanich Parks

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New American Kestral Home

In early November, a rare bird visitor to Cuthbert Holmes Park put on a show. !

An American Kestrel, a type of falcon, has spent the last few weeks hunting along the highway berm in the park.

He can be seen resting atop of the upright dead trees that were installed, for this very bird purpose !

To encourage him to get a date and stick around, John Potter, who volunteers

with local conservation organizations, and builds various sized nesting boxes, made and installed the appropriate scaled box last week.

Another great wildlife collaboration with Saanich Parks, and the area stewards.

Our park Red Tailed Hawk watched us with keen interest, from his nearby perch !

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y04R9ZrSRig>. A wonderful video from inside a nest box, the Kestrel's raising their young.

I hope you get to enjoy his presence !

- Dorothy Chambers

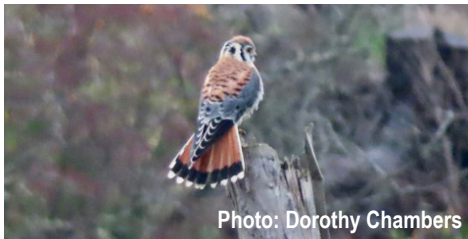


Photo: Dorothy Chambers

American Kestrel in Cuthbert Holmes Park



Photo: Dorothy Chambers

Volunteers installing new nesting boxes

Fish Fence Update



Photo: Dorothy Chambers

November 16, 2021 - Flood waters overflowing the fish fence and the viewing area. Logs and debris created a jam at the fish fence.

The fish fence was installed at the end of September, and removed just ten days later, with a count of 11 Coho.

We had extremely low flows in the Colquitz, and the few salmon that did enter the system, had to run the gauntlet of low clear water, and a plethora of predators along the Gorge, Portage Inlet and into the river.

Only a few weeks later, the entire area was flooded.

All over BC there is concern for the spawn this year. Raging sediment filled, contaminated waters, and woody debris scouring out the stream bed as it passes quickly by in the fast moving water.... Likely removing and damaging the gravel salmon redds, where the eggs are laid.

Hearing reports of salmon sightings, dead or alive, along the Colquitz, is always appreciated.

- Dorothy Chambers
Cuthbert Holmes Park Steward



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Community Updates

SAD GOODBYES

Gorge Point Pub Closes After 100 Years

After four years on the market the Gorge Point Pub site was sold to Abstract Developments. Abstract is engaging in public consultations and working with the City of Esquimalt on the new design. Community feedback has been strongly in support of a mixed use development with restaurant or community gathering space. For more info about the proposed development check out <https://abstractdevelopments.com/developments/1075-tillicum/>



Bakeology Closed on August 29th

It was with great sadness that the GTCA learned of the closure of Bakeology. In its short life, this coffee shop/bakery became a beloved community gathering spot. The GTCA investigated the feasibility of taking over the business as a social enterprise but that was not possible in the short time we were given. We now hope that Amica can find a coffee shop tenant so that the space can once again be a local gathering spot.

Thanks to Kai and her team for some wonderful memories.

CONGRATULATIONS



Gorge Soccer inducted to the BC Soccer Hall of Fame

Since the 1950s, Gorge Soccer Association (Gorge FC) has been a leading community club in Victoria and BC. "A community based club providing all of its members with fun, development, and a lifelong passion for the beautiful game." Today, Gorge FC serves about 1,500 players, on male and female teams, at youth, adult and older age levels.



Silver Threads Celebrates 65 Years

Celebrating 65 Years Membership gives those 55 years and better access to both centres. Today, the organization serves a wide variety of social and recreation needs of older adults, from online classes, technology training, discussion, art and writing groups to energetic Pickleball, Zumba Gold, table tennis and fitness classes. There is something for everybody 55+ with a variety of interests.

For more information on the ongoing celebrations check out: silverthreads.ca

NEW TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

New Basketball Court Mural at Hampton Park

Hampton Park is the home of a gorgeous new mural by local First Nations artist Sarah Jim. The mural was part of

the Outside the Lines: A Court Mural Project of this summer's We the West Basketball Festival.



Photo: Sarah Jim



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5 Ways to Reduce Carbon Pollution

You can help fight climate change with these top tips

Many of our daily activities result in carbon pollution, and it's disrupting our climate. Changing how we live, how we travel, and how we deal with our waste can help. Be part of the climate solution by trying one of these tips!

1. Get active by walking, biking, or taking public transit

- Active travel, like walking or biking, reduces carbon pollution but is also good for your health and saves money. Need a boost? Try an e-bike!

2. Choose electric for your next vehicle

- Almost half of the carbon pollution in our region comes from driving vehicles.

In BC, electric vehicles (EVs) generate 85-90% fewer emissions than gas cars over their lifetime.

- Charging an EV costs 75% less than fueling up, and EVs are cheaper to maintain. Plus, receive up to \$8,000 in rebates! Visit goelectricbc.gov.bc.ca.

- Charge at home or on the go! The capital region has over 200 EV charging stations – check out this interactive map at www.plugshare.com.

3. Make your home climate-friendly

- Switch from natural gas, propane, or oil heating to an electric heat pump. Heat pumps provide heating, air conditioning, dehumidification and air filtration. Rebates of more than \$3,000

are available! Visit www.crd.bc.ca/heatpump for more information.

- Borrow a CRD Climate Action To-Go Kits from your local library for tools and activities that can help you reduce energy use at home.

4. Strive for 5-minute showers

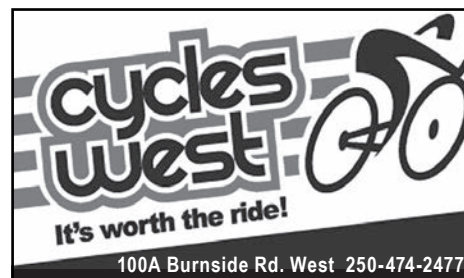
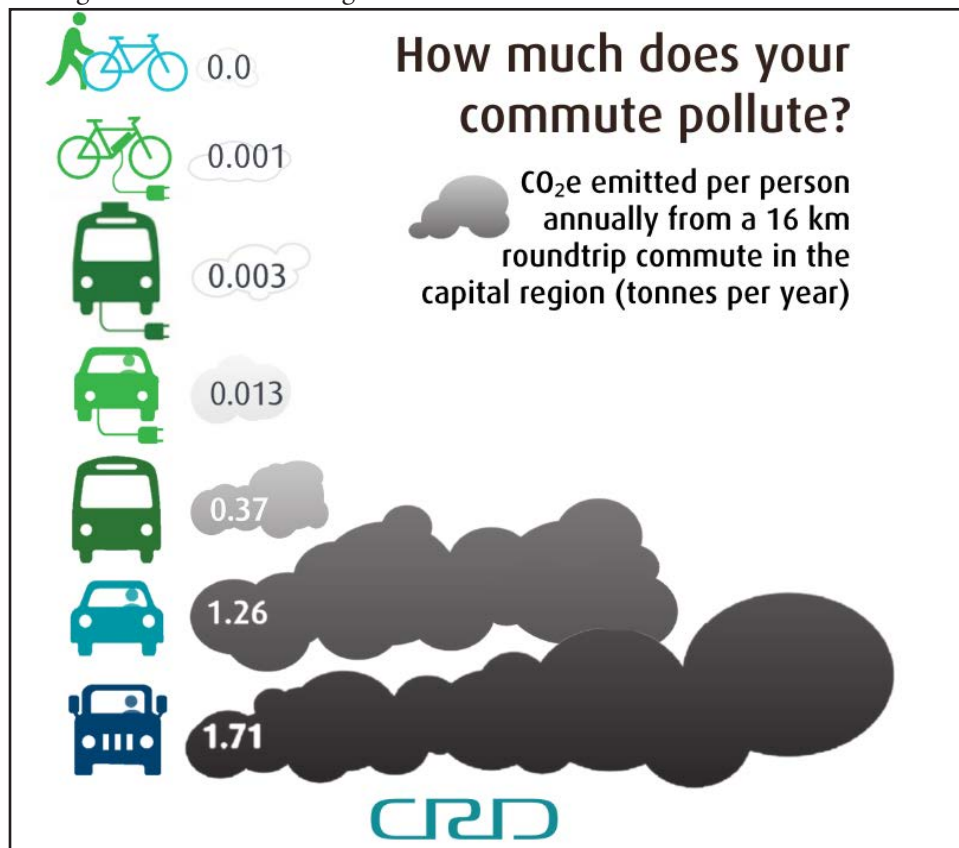
- Showering is the second biggest water use at home! Taking a shorter shower means less energy is used to heat water as well as deliver and treat it. Saving water builds resilience for our water supply as we experience longer dry spells caused by climate change.

- Switch to a high-efficiency showerhead for more water and energy savings without losing pressure. Learn more at www.crd.bc.ca/shower.

5. Reduce waste and compost food scraps

- Decomposing garbage in landfills, especially organic waste like food scraps, produces carbon pollution as it breaks down.
- By preserving food, making a meal plan, using up leftovers, and always composting your kitchen scraps you are fighting climate change! Find out more at www.lovefoodhatewaste.ca.

For more climate action tips and resources, visit www.crd.bc.ca/education/climate-action.



Where seeds are planted, community grows

To learn more about the garden and upcoming activities see the following:

W: <http://gorgegardens.ca>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/gorgeparkcommunitygardens/>

E: gorgegardens@gmail.com

Gorge Tillicum Pollinator Project

Pollinators world-wide are in the news as requiring our support. With this in mind, the GTCA's Natural Areas Working Group (NAWG) is working with UVic Geography 380 students to explore just how welcoming Gorge Tillicum is to pollinators. Pollinators - butterflies, moths, bees and other insects and animals - need specific food sources and a stable overwintering place to lay their eggs and have them hatch in Spring. Unique native plants or landscape features are often required to meet these needs.

NAWG has worked with students over three terms, with each new group taking the project one step further. The mapping project started as a way to see if there are pollinator corridors in our area. Pollinator corridors in urban spaces are continuous stretches of habitat that provide sufficient food, water, and shelter to support a healthy and diverse range of pollinator populations. Ideally these welcoming landscapes exist without gaps.



To begin identifying where such corridors might be, the students have established a digital open green pollinator map for the Gorge Tillicum area. In early November they hosted a Pollinator Event in Gorge Park Community Gardens to begin collecting community mapping data.

They gathered data for the map, gave away native plant starts and seeds, and talked about the importance of pollinators in our world. Thank you to everyone who came out in the rain and sun to begin adding your knowledge of local pollinators to our neighbourhood map!

To fill in a survey to add data to the map, here's the link: <https://forms.gle/kJexFUhEVWRsLNtr5>.

Many thanks to Erica, Georgia, Sarah, Linfeng, Anna, Ben, Rachel, Riley, Aishyn, Alix, Devin, Lauren, and Mary - and to instructors Maleea Acker and Ken Josephson - for your work!

Stay tuned for future events related to pollinators, mapping, and ways we can all support pollinator habitat in our neighbourhood.

**- Laurie Jones,
for the Natural Areas Working Group**



Photos: Ken Josephson



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Thanks to our Boulevard Brigade

Three cheers for our Boulevard Brigades! They recently did their fall clean up in the Dysart and Obed boulevards! All tidy and ready for some bulbs and mulch.

All the boulevard and traffic circle gardens are maintained by volunteers. If you are interested in helping to beautify the neighbourhood and meet some great people email info@gorgetillicum.ca.



Former Saanich Councillor Dean Murdock hosts a weekly podcast celebrating the amazing people and places in our communities



Listen now on Spotify, Apple Podcasts or visit www.anchor.fm/amazing-places



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Special thanks to our local girl guide group who made decorative signs for our boulevard gardens!



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Membership Application

Membership in the GTCA is by calendar year. In December of each year, those paying membership fees during December may designate them to be the fee for the upcoming calendar year and, in such cases, membership is valid from January 1st to December 31st of the following year. Join or renew by mail or online on our website!

DATE: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

*EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

*This will be added to our distribution list for occasional emails regarding upcoming events or community issues.

If you are paying for other members of your household, please list the other Members' names:

PAYMENT:

Please enclose payment and mail to above address

Individual: \$5/each x _____ memberships = \$ _____

Couples : \$10/each x _____ memberships = \$ _____

Organization: \$25/each x _____ memberships = \$ _____

Donation: Your extra support helps offset Newsletter and other costs. Thank-you! + \$ _____

Total Payment Enclosed = \$ _____

DETAILS:

Membership is open to any resident or property owner who is 19 years old or older living at a fixed and officially recognized street address within the Gorge Tillicum neighbourhood and to businesses and other organizations operating at a fixed and officially recognized street address within the Association territory.

Major Neighbourhood Developments

Currently under Construction:

- 2949 Albina Street. BC Housing Supportive Housing - 5-storey modular building with 52 units with 24/7 supports. For more info: <https://letstalkhousingbc.ca/saanich-albina>
- 2939 Qu'Appelle Street - a 3-storey, multi-family building with 44 units. The building will be rental with some affordable units.

Proposals approved by Saanich:

- 300 Gorge Rd West and 2900 Tillicum Rd – a 53 unit, 5-storey multi-family residential building (condos and rental units) with 3 new commercial spaces on the ground floor. Construction to start shortly.
- 3400 Tillicum Rd., the former bingo hall site – a multi-family residential (condos and rental units) building with commercial space included. Two, 6-storey buildings with 242 units. Construction to start shortly.
- 1 and 21 Obed Avenue at Harriet – 3 storey multi-family rental building with 26 units. The site with approved development is now for sale.

Proposals submitted to Saanich:

- 630 Gorge Road West - 26, 3-bedroom, family-sized strata townhomes.
- 992 Gorge Road West at Rockwell Ave. - This proposal is being revised from the initial six story condo building and townhomes to all townhome development.
- Tillicum/Obed/Albina (consolidation of 14 lots) 1 six story and 1 five story building with 292 purpose built rental units. Some mixed use on the Tillicum Rd. side.

Potential proposals

- 3143 Tillicum Road - 7 story building with 66 micro-units. This would be all rental units with an onsite manager. Ground floor coffee shop.
- Early Grey/Gorge Road Corner This is a new proposal for the corner site which is currently a big hole. They are proposing a 5 storey rental building which is the same height as the previously approved proposal. The building would have 39 units with a variety of unit sizes.

For more information about active development applications check the Saanich website at <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/local-government/development-applications/active-development-applications/tillicum.html>

As a member of the community you can always comment on developments by writing or emailing Saanich Planning at the following:

- 770 Vernon Avenue, Victoria, B.C. V8X 2W7
- planning@saanich.ca

ROLE OF THE GTCA IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The GTCA will meet with developers at various stages of the process with two main purposes: 1. To encourage development in line with the Design Charrette and the Tillicum Burnside Action Plan; and 2. To encourage developers to thoroughly consult with the community through open houses and meetings with directly affected neighbours. **Note: Saanich recommends, but does not require, public open houses or meetings with affected neighbours**

Saanich formally asks the GTCA to respond in writing to all development applications within our boundaries. The GTCA is asked whether it:

- Has no objection to the project;
- Generally has no objection with suggested changes or concerns; and
- Does not support the project (please provide reason).

It is the policy of the GTCA to only provide comments on proposals. The GTCA comments reflect what we heard from the community, both pros and cons.