



New Streetscape Coming to Gorge Road

Saanich Engineering informed the GTCA Board in December 2020 that they expected to begin work to repair and replace the storm drain system along Gorge Road West between Tillicum and Admirals. At that time, they shared a partially completed set of engineering drawings illustrating a new design for the road as part of the project. (These plans can be found on at gorgetillicum.ca, under the resources tab)

Saanich typically tries to tie in road work with underground work to save money so this is entirely consistent with past practice. Though the road work plan is still under discussion, the general idea is to create a protected two way bike lane on the south side of the road with 'floating' bus stops between the new bike lanes and the road. The project also includes a new side walk on the north side of the road.



Picture of AAA cycling infrastructure from the Saanich Active Transportation Plan. Saanich is proposing similar bike lanes for the south (water) side of the Gorge Road between Tillicum and Admirals.

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The project manager is confident that work will start this summer and will take up to a year to complete. The GTCA Board submitted a list of observations to Saanich along with a request for broad community consultation before the plan is finalized.

Anyone wishing to be heard on this project may do so by phone through the Saanich switchboard 250-475-1775 or by email: engineering@saanich.ca

While plans for improved bike lanes along this stretch of Gorge Road are in the Saanich Active Transportation Plan, the timing, and prioritization of this stretch of Gorge Road comes as something of a surprise to the community association. The GTCA

has long lobbied for pedestrian and cycling improvements along Gorge Road between Tillicum Rd. and Harriet Street, as many community residents have expressed safety concerns about this stretch of road.

We are also actively lobbying to see streetscape improvements on Tillicum Road and pedestrian and cycling improvements on the Gorge Bridge. See pages 6 and 7 for more information on Tillicum Rd.

The Board will continue to monitor this project closely and will keep you informed via our website.

–Phil Lancaster,

Chair of the GTCA Transportation and Mobility Working Group



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 April 30, 2021.

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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.



GORGETILlicUM

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

zoom

GTCA Meetings

All board and working group meetings for the foreseeable future will be held virtually via the ZOOM platform. If you are interested in attending a meeting email us at info@gorgetillicum.ca and we can send you a ZOOM invite.

GTCA Annual General Meeting

Please be advised that the GTCA will be holding its virtual Annual General Meeting on:

Thursday, April 15, 7:00pm via ZOOM

Residents of the community are invited to attend, but in order to vote you must be a member by March 17, 2021. You can purchase a membership online at gorgetillicum.ca/membership, or by mailing the form on the last page of this newsletter.

Members will be invited by email or mail. If you are interested in attending please email info@gorgetillicum.ca and you will be sent a ZOOM invite.

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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

As the old year ends and a new year begins, the Board is settling into working within the realities required by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have shifted to Zoom. It's certainly not as desirable a format as sitting and talking around a table but we're finding that we're still able to work this way.

We hosted our Annual General Meeting in mid-October, with participating GTCA members electing 16 people to the 2020-2021 Board of Directors -- 6 in executive roles and 10 others as directors-at-large. A bylaw change was also approved whereby the role of membership secretary was replaced by that of membership coordinator -- with an added feature of this role now including that of "enhancing communication and contact between the Board and Association members".

The Gorge Park Community Gardens also held their Annual General Meeting in October, saying farewell to one coordinator and welcoming another as well as establishing a committee to assist the Gardens in transitioning from being a project of the GTCA to operating independently as of the end of December 2021. GPCG is well established now and its graduation (shall we say) will allow the Board to use the time and energy we currently invest in the Gardens for other projects.

As with so much of what we do, we welcome and rely on participation in Board activities by people in our wider community.

Our Working Groups are another way we think and plan with people in the community. These groups meet together to generate ideas for new projects and subsequently, subject to Board approval, help them come to life. The groups are as follows:

- Arts Culture and Celebration WG. This group promotes all things

artistic, cultural and celebratory in the neighbourhood -- public art installations, performing arts, art shows, celebrations of one kind or another, etc.

- Buildings WG. This group considers the types of development that might benefit the various parts of our community and to engage with others in bringing about such development. (Note that the work of this group is the proactive counterpart to the work of responding to projects brought to us by developers, with the latter being addressed by the Board as a whole.)

- Community Connections WG. This new group will consider ways in which people in the community might work and play together, find what they need, and (possibly) help each other. Think, for example, of street-based groups like Earl Grey Neighbours that celebrate Hallowe'en, locate lost pets, make music and sing carols, and share resources with each other. Or people that band together to welcome newly arrived residents or to take care of elderly neighbours during the pandemic. And so on ...

- Natural Areas WG. This group acts in support of neighbourhood parks, boulevards, gardens, and waterways -- whether they're managed or wilder, public or private.

- Local Economy WG. While, in theory, we'd love to see this group come into being, we don't currently have a director willing to lead the group. That being said, when it does see the light of day, the group will promote the maintenance and development of a vibrant local economy.

- Mobility and Transportation WG. This group works to improve the experience of anyone traveling within and/or through our neighbourhood,

whether they're walking, cycling, using a mobility device, driving a car or other vehicle, or using public transportation.

If you'd like to join one (or more) of the above Working Groups --- or, if you'd like more information about them -- please contact us at info@gorgetillicum.ca.

We also rely on -- and are eternally grateful to -- the many people that help us deliver the Gorge Tillicum Neighbourhood News to homes, businesses and organizations through the area three times a year. We are currently short of people for this task -- particularly in the area between Burnside and the Highway but elsewhere as well. If you'd like to help out in this way, please let us know. (Thanks in anticipation.)

Finally:

- If you wish to renew your GTCA membership or become a new member, please do so through our website at <https://www.gorgetillicum.ca/membership-with-form> or mail in the form at the back of this newsletter.
- Again, we try to keep our website as current as we can -- feel free to check it out regularly at <https://www.gorgetillicum.ca> to see what's happening in, or what's planned for, our community.
- And, if you'd like to see what Saanich is doing as they implement the Cuthbert Holmes Park Management Plan, please visit their virtual open house before the end of the year at <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/parks-recreation-community/parks/projects-in-saanich-parks/active-projects/cuthbert-holmes-park.html>.

Take care and stay safe,

Gabe Epstein (GTCA President)

GTCA Community Art Project: Burnside Road Mural

We like to make things happen in our neighbourhood here at the Gorge Tillicum Community Association. We envision more art in our neighbourhood and the next project is a mural on Burnside Road. As we will not be running the Gorge Canada Day Picnic in 2021, we are doing this instead. We've got \$5,000 set aside in an Art Fund that was raised from the Pancake Breakfast and Strawberry Tea events during past Gorge Canada Day Picnics. We've also applied for a grant for further funding, and we will be canvassing local businesses for some donations. The project will then depend on successfully meeting our GoFundMe fundraising goal to complete our needed budget. Should we raise more than our goal, the GTCA has committed to saving the funds in our Art Fund for a second mural at a different location in the community, hopefully next year.

The location is the large south side wall of the old building at 100 Burnside Rd W (on the corner at Wascana), which currently houses Cycles West. We have already met with the building owner, who is keen for this public art and will be contributing to the costs. We have made contact with local artists and have a vision of a mural that pays tribute to the building's and neighbourhood's past. (See page 5 for the history of this building.) In the next issue of the newsletter we will do a feature on the selected artist.

There are steps down to the cycle shop from Burnside Road, and interestingly, the building was originally street level,



Paul Kimmitt pictured in front of the site of the future mural on the Wascana side of 100 Burnside Rd.W.

but Burnside Road has been raised since then, making the main entrance no longer street level.

Our initial explorations for the mural subject matter revolve around paying homage to former businesses at the site along with some beautiful indigenous art. We will release concept drawings later in the year as things firm up.

Help us grow art in Victoria and the Gorge Tillicum neighbourhood! Help us employ a local artist! We thank everyone for their support and look forward to this project.

—Chris Kask

BURNSIDE MURAL CAMPAIGN

Please support this art project in our community

You can donate online at **GoFundMe.com**

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/art-in-our-neighbourhood-burnside-mural-campaign>

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101 Burnside Rd. West (between Tillicum and Harriet)

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History of 100 Burnside Road

We thought it was built in 1917 but we recently learned from Lotus Johnson that it was built in 1920. It was originally a grocer, hardware store/gas station and the upstairs was rented out for weddings and dances. An addition to the left was a shoe store for many years.

In 1925 the address changed to 100 Burnside Road West in Saanich and it was occupied by James H. Dwyer,

grocer. In 1930, 100 Burnside Road West was occupied by George Lapp Auto Garage, but by 1935 it was vacant

In 1940, the building was occupied by Alex Grocery and Confectionery. In 1945, it was occupied by 3 businesses: J.E. Saunders shoe repair, Burnside Hardware, and Burnside Barber Shop.

Apartments were put in upstairs in the 1940's.

It housed Electron TV from about 1968 for 41 years and currently it is occupied by Cycles West, Great Smiles Denture Clinic, JBD Appliance & Refrigeration and Love One Hair Studio.

– Paul Kimmett

Current Owner of 100 Burnside Road



Pictures of the hardware store from the 1940's and 1950's.

Photos given to Rina Langford-Kimmett

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Tillicum Road - A Road Forgotten

In 2004, a group of Gorge/Tillicum residents got together and participated in a Community Charette. The Gorge Tillicum Charette Report outlined a bold vision for our community, notably vastly improved streetscapes for Tillicum and Burnside Roads. (This report can be found in the resources section of the GCTA website)

We have written about our challenges in moving these plans forward in past issues of this newsletter. And now the GTCA is beginning to make improving Tillicum Road, a vital initiative of the association. Not only have we waited long enough, but some activities make it imperative that action take place.

First, there are numerous developments planned along the Tillicum corridor. These developments may kickstart the renewal along the Tillicum corridor; however, without Saanich's leadership, improvements along the road will be piecemeal, at best.

Secondly, Saanich is planning extensive streetscape improvements along Gorge Road, but this infrastructure will not connect to other infrastructure. Tillicum will continue to be hazardous to pedestrians and cyclists.

On January 21, the GTCA was invited to present to the Saanich Active Transportation Committee. (The full presentation can be found in the resources section of the GCTA website)

Tillicum Road, as it is currently, is simply unacceptable. You may ask why Tillicum when there are some many sub-par roads in our community?

We believe that Tillicum is essential to our community's well-being because of its unique position in the heart of the neighbourhood. As it is, it divides our community instead of bringing us together.



Tillicum Road - A Call to Action

UNSAFE

The GTCA Mobility and Transportation working group is very concerned about safety on and along Tillicum Road. The last complete accident report from the Saanich Police Information Coordinator is from 2019. It notes that Tillicum Rd. -between Gorge Rd. and Burnside - had 54 accidents compared to Gorge Rd with 27 and Burnside Rd. with 20.

Despite the fact that many children attending Tillicum School or wanting to get to the library, local daycare programs or Pearkes Recreation Center must cross Tillicum, there are no crossing guards and no traffic calming measures to slow traffic down.

With the approval of the recent major development at Gorge and Burnside and others in the future – all of which will increase traffic flow – we must have significant pedestrian and roadway improvements finished before the completion of the developments to ensure citizens' safety. If anyone has any suggestions on improved safety, contact the working group at larryscott0422@gmail.com

UNCONNECTED

Tillicum should be a vital pedestrian and cycling-friendly north/south route connecting the envisioned Tillicum Major Centre and the Gorge Village Centre. However, it lacks even the most basic infrastructure of the 'complete street' Saanich's plans espouse. Cycling is treacherous on the narrow, fast-moving street. Crosswalks are sadly lacking, and sidewalks are incredibly narrow.

UNAPPEALING

It also has the greatest mixed-use development potential in our neighbourhood. If we want small shops, restaurants, coffee shops, etc., they will most likely go on Tillicum Road. It could become a destination where people in our community could walk and get essentials and meet friends for coffee.

While a few developments are in the works, many properties are underutilized and are waiting for re-development. Amalgamated properties remain unsold.

The GTCA is Asking That Saanich:

1 Reprioritize improvements to Tillicum Road and complete long-promised work.

We firmly believe that over twenty years of waiting is long enough! Tillicum is a critical connection, to and for this community, and it should be a priority. Particularly given the safety concerns.

2 Takes the LEAD on Tillicum streetscape improvements and NOT defer to developers.

At the recent public hearing for the Gorge/Tillicum development, Saanich Engineering confirmed that they hoped that developments would lead to improvements on Tillicum Road. However, this will inevitably lead to a patchwork road with an inconsistent streetscape.

This approach is also incredibly shortsighted. The lack of a decent streetscape makes the road unattractive to development - as evidenced by the lack of action during one of the largest building booms in history.

The GTCA strongly believes that funding streetscape improvements should be viewed as an investment - not a cost. It will pay off both in the form of increased tax revenue from development and a greener community that is well connected and therefore less reliant on cars.

3 Work with Esquimalt to improve the Gorge Bridge corridor(Gorge and Tillicum).

The bridge is integral to connecting our community. It is the only direct and convenient way to cross the Gorge Waterway for several kilometers in either direction and thus should have had a high priority in the Active Transportation Plan. There has been a bridge over the Gorge for nearly 150 years for the very good reason that it is necessary. If we think it is important for motor vehicles it is doubly so for active transportation users. We believe the needs of the community are at least as important as the convenience of through traffic and that smart road design could harmonize traffic more effectively. Please consider helping us get more attention to this long ignored problem by writing to the Mayor and Council at Council@Saanich.ca.



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The Green

Cuthbert Holmes Park Owl Update



This drawing was done by Carrie Walker, our neighbourhood artist and owl watcher.
This is Ollie, our surviving park Great Horned Owl.

In October of 2020, one of our long loved and monitored great horned owls from Cuthbert Holmes Park was found freshly dead in the Colquitz River estuary.

Initially thought to be the male of the pair, Ollie, the two birds had lived in the park, and fledged babies for nine years.

We contacted the provincial bird call line and submitted the bird to the Wildlife Health Program that sent it to the Animal Health Centre in Abbotsford where a necropsy was performed by an avian pathologist. No injuries were noted but we had concerns it had been affected by

rodenticide (rat) poisoning, as has been seen in a number of owls in our municipality. This poison can affect birds that kill and eat rodents that have eaten poison baits. The rodenticides cause a bleeding defect so rodents become weak from blood loss and can be easier for owls (or other carnivores, even cats or dogs) to catch.

The pathologist found that the owl was the female of the pair and recognized lesions of avian tuberculosis, caused by a bacteria that is similar but different to the bacteria that causes this disease in humans. It is a chronic disease but does cause a contagious disease and can affect humans. There were no signs of internal bleeding but no analyses for

rodenticides were performed due to the human health risks.

Sadly, I continue to answer calls from the public and am assisting our wildlife health program with pickups of other wildlife, including dead owls. Some of them have been confirmed to have died from rodenticide poisoning and further work is being done by others, including the Canadian Wildlife Service, to analyze the data for changes to provincial and federal legislation.

There are ongoing calls for the province to ban these products. Our municipalities only have jurisdiction over the use of them in their own municipal facilities, which is now occurring. A list of municipal bans on rodenticides is kept updated here: [SPCA.BC.CA/safe-from-poison](https://www.spcabcc.ca/safe-from-poison). The BC SPCA is working directly with a few municipalities to help ensure the transition to alternative pest control is effective and sustainable.

-Dorothy Chambers with assistance from the BC Wildlife Veterinarian

TO REPORT DEAD BIRDS

Including raptors (owls, hawks, eagles, etc)

1-866-431-Bird (2473)

Your report will lead to a call to assess the situation, if appropriate including the bird being picked up and necropsied, to provide the data so important to the health of our wildlife.

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Cuthbert Holmes Tree Removal Update

Cuthbert Holmes Park users may have seen many fallen trees recently.

These are dead Grand Fir, which have been impacted by droughts and climate change, here on the island.

For the safety of the public, the trees that could fall and impact the park trails have been felled by the Saanich Parks Urban Forestry team.

The following message is from Jason Clarke, Supervisor of Urban Forestry and Natural Areas, Parks Division, District of Saanich

"The Urban Forest is a vital component of our community. They occur as street trees, park trees, private trees and in natural areas or remnant forest stands. Our goal, as described in the Urban Forestry Strategy, is to protect and enhance the urban forest, however, our obligation is also to provide a

safe setting for staff and the public.

Under Work Safe BC Regulations, the Municipality of Saanich (Employer)



Photo: Dorothy Chambers

This Grand Fir held the nest of the Great Horned Owls in April 2020, and came down in a January wind storm.

is required to ensure the worker is safe from hazards. Under the Occupiers Liability Act the Municipality of Saanich also has a duty to the public to take reasonable care to see that people and their property will be reasonably safe on the municipality's premises. In either case, the municipality must take steps to ensure that any trees located on its property are not hazardous to persons or staff.

Urban Forestry staff do not routinely inspect trees for hazards. In undeveloped parks and park natural areas' we respond to complaints or service requests from the public or municipal staff."

-Dorothy Chambers



Photo: Dorothy Chambers

A duck nesting box has been installed by the Saanich Natural Areas team, in the new wetland pond, along the berm in Cuthbert Holmes Park. **Dogs must stay out of these wildlife areas.**

Watch for duck breeding action from up on the berm pathway.



Photo: Dorothy Chambers

This gate and fenced area has been added to a berm trail leading off the Burnside Road off ramp from the highway. The gate provides access for parks vehicles and watering trucks.



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Walter Park - A Natural Space Reclaimed

“Where is Walter Park some might ask?”, as there is no sign anywhere naming this property located on the corner of Dysart Road and Walter Avenue. This piece of land was donated to Saanich in 2014 by Marian Bratt and Steven Lilligard and their wishes were to have a natural area for people to enjoy. In 2016 the community was consulted and a design for the park was created including a small grassy area in front of the blue chairs, a natural play area for kids on the rock outcrop and the rest of the park remaining natural. Over the years invasive plants and kids’ sport equipment (often left behind and broken) have taken over the park. In order to revitalize the park, Lead Stewards with Saanich Park’s Pulling Together Program and other neighbourhood volunteers have been working and collaborating with Saanich Parks to remove non-native invasive species such as Periwinkle, Cyclamen and Himalayan blackberries and replace with pollinators and other native species. The Pulling Together Program is designed to protect plant diversity and enhance biodiversity in the parks. The initial work at Walter Park started under the big Oak tree prior Covid-19 in December 2019. Earlier this year various native plants including Woolly Sunflowers, Camas, Sea Blush, Sedum, Tall Oregon Grape, Yarrow, Rolmer’s Fescue and Harvest Brodiaea were planted. The natural play area for kids has been enhanced with large boulders and logs to encourage play and the exploration of this natural area. As the park is zoned P4N (natural park). No toys any play equipment should be left in the park. In keeping with the donors’ wishes, the goal is to restore this park



Photos: Anne Genuist

Walter Park at the Corner of Walter Avenue and Dysart Avenue



Plaque in Walter Park

to a beautiful natural area where people come to enjoy the space.

As soon as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, anyone who would like to assist in the restoration process is welcome and can contact Lead Stewards Steve and/or Anne at genuistlegg@hotmail.com.

-Anne Genuist

The Growing Importance of Pocket Parks

“The importance of green space and access to recreation opportunities in urban contexts cannot be overstated. Access to public open space, parks, natural areas and playgrounds creates numerous health, environmental and social benefits.” Saanich Uptown Douglas Corridor Plan.

This is also true for the Gorge/Tillicum Neighbourhood. As housing density increases in our neighbourhood, it is vital to free up additional green space. Natural areas pocket parks are a perfect way to do this.

Development cost charges (DCCs) are fees collected from land developers on a user pay basis to help fund the cost of growth-related infrastructure and parks - including land acquisition.

The GTCA will push Saanich to use some of the revenue from increased density to acquire lots to create other pocket parks in our neighbourhood.

It’s a way to maintain balance, and is good for the community and the environment.

-Vera Wynn-Williams

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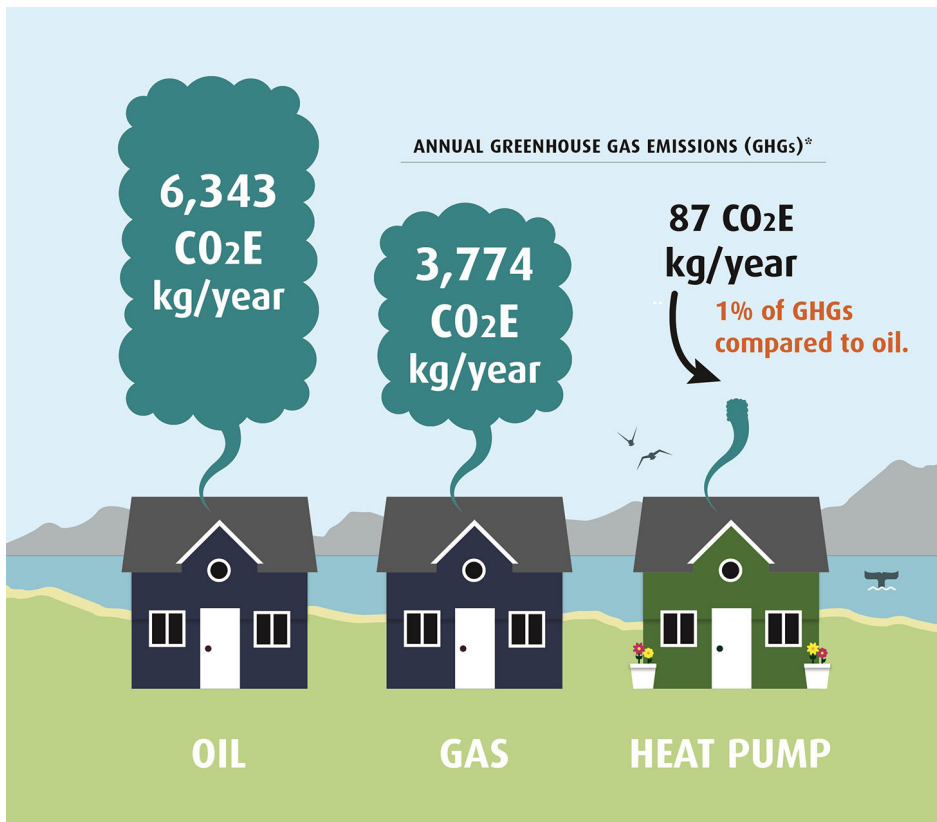
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Register for the promo code by March 31, 2021, to apply for the Double the Rebate offer. (<https://betterhomesbc.ca/rebates/double-the-rebate/>) Upgrades must be complete and invoiced by June 30, 2021.

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Membership Application

Beginning on January 1, 2018, membership is valid from the time of payment of membership fees to the end of the month of the anniversary date of payment. Join or renew by mail or online on our website!

- ☐ New Membership(s) or
☐ Renewing Membership(s)

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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 or older, living within the Gorge Tillicum neighbourhood as well as person engaged in business in the neighbourhood.

If membership is not renewed you will remain on our email distribution list for one more year before being deleted. Memberships are available in three categories; individual, couple or organization.

Major Neighbourhood Developments

1. 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.

2. Proposals submitted to Saanich:

- 1 and 21 Obed Avenue at Harriet – 3 storey multi-family rental building with 26 units.
- 3400 Tillicum Rd., the former bingo hall site – a multi-family residential rental building with commercial space included. The proposal is for two, 6-storey buildings with 242 units.
- 630 Gorge Road West - 26, 3-bedroom, family-sized strata townhomes.
- 992 Gorge Road West at Rockwell Ave. - 6 story building multi-family residential with 148 units and 18 townhouse units. All units would be strata.
- 2969 Earl Grey St. - Daycare Expansion

3. Potential proposals:

- 2921 Earl Grey St at Gorge Road West. Site has recently changed hands. The new developer's plans are currently unknown.
- 3143 Tillicum Road - 7 story building with 66 micro-units. This would be all rental units with an onsite manager. Ground floor coffee shop.

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

Once a public hearing date is set, the GTCA will make every effort to promote the date through our communications channels. We have also added development information on our website gorgetillicum.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.