



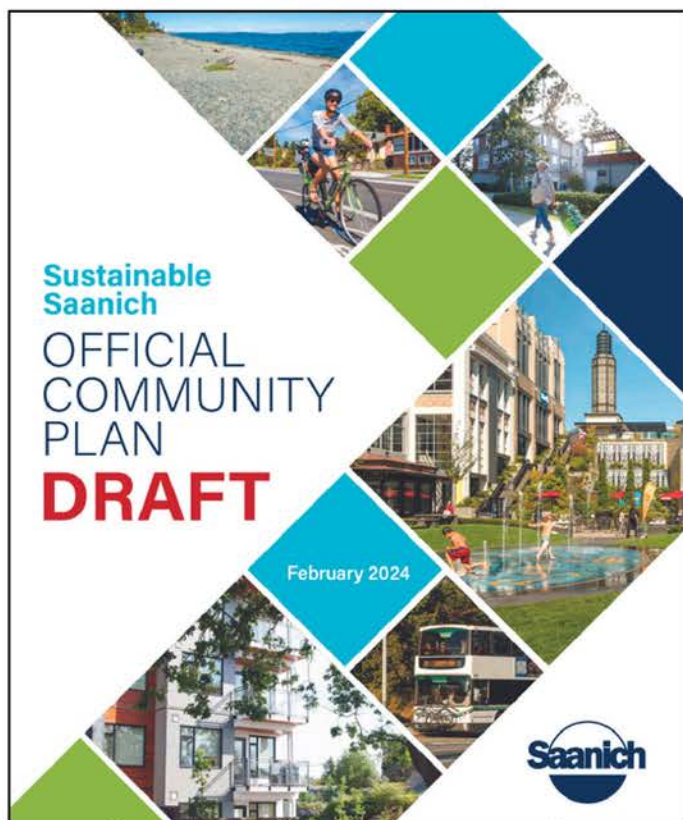
GORGETILLICUM

Neighborhood

GORGE TILLICUM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

NEWS

Planning or Doing: The 2024 Saanich OCP is here!



was produced with input from residents and local business owners. The result was shared with Saanich, who then used it as a basis to develop a Local Area Plan (LAP). The plan included redesign of Tillicum and Burnside Roads and came complete with streetscapes that showed trees, plantings, shops, apartments, parking and pedestrian filled streets. Nearly 20 years later, nothing has happened. Why not? Because the LAP was only a design, not an action plan that laid out steps to achieve its objectives. It left us wondering – what was the point?

There are probably dozens of ways to rejuvenate a community like ours. We have schools, recreational facilities, a seniors’ centre and two major parks. We are close to the city centre and have reasonable bus service to universities and downtown Victoria. We have grocery stores, drugstores and two malls. We sit next to routes leading to two of the four bridges that cross the Gorge waterway. And yet, few of the amenities found in other communities - like coffee shops, restaurants, pubs and small retail outlets - have come our way.

continued on page 3

I remember once, as a child, having sent off an entry to a mail-in contest that promised a prize of one million dollars. I spent the following three weeks planning my future as a rich person. I learned from that experience that there isn’t much point in trying to plan anything that depends on luck. Yet that is what the planners in Saanich continue to do. Our community is a victim of “aspirational” planning that depends on developers deciding to cooperate.

What is the difference between an “aspirational plan” and a childhood dream? In 2005, in a fit of optimism, residents of the Gorge Tillicum community participated in a community planning initiative called a Charette. Experts were brought in to run the exercise and a plan



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

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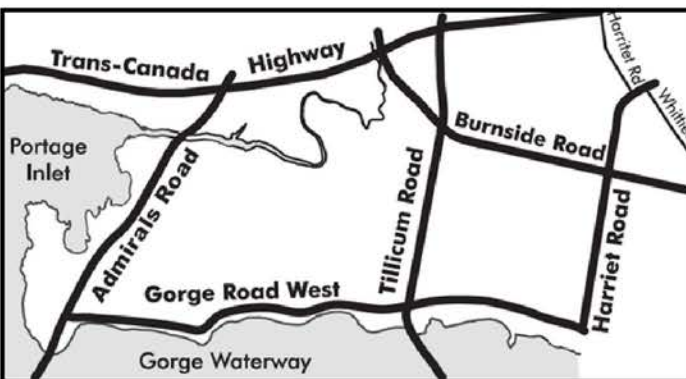
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GORGE TILLICUM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Our Neighborhood

The GTCA boundaries are the Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet shorelines, the Trans-Canada highway to the north and Harriet/Burnside East/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>



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With a few exceptions, we have what we had in 2005. Our so-called “village centre” has never materialized.

Now we are facing a new round of planning enthusiasm in Saanich: we have a new Road Safety Action Plan, a draft of a new Official Community Plan, an updated Active Transportation Plan, new design standards for developments, and a new environmental plan, all working their way through the city’s processes. Shortly, we will begin to hear a lot about a new Gorge Tillicum Area Plan, which will generate a yet another consultation to lay out a new vision for what our community should look like. My guess is that the new plan will look very much like the last one: yet again, the plan will depend on developers paying for streetscape upgrades in front of their properties.

The problem with this approach is that the District of Saanich has a reputation for being a difficult place to get anything built. And so the plans to improve our streetscapes and attract amenities depend on developers who largely don’t want to do business in Saanich due the Planning and Building departments’ reputation as being difficult to work with.

Why don’t we reallocate the money and time used to re-draft these lovely plans, and instead focus on solving the problems that prevented us from implementing the previous ones?

For those with time on their hands, I recommend you take a good look at the collection of plans on the Saanich website. Consider that while Saanich has

been very busy making plans, other communities have built houses, developed retail space, made roads safer, and made their communities look, feel, and function better. Why are we lagging behind?

Having a plan is a good first step in solving any problem. But failure to identify the right problem to be solved almost guarantees that wheels will spin without taking us anywhere. And failure to implement the plan produces the same result as having done nothing in the first place. All it does is get our hopes up.

As a taxpayer, I don’t want to pay for someone to step harder on the gas pedal when I can see that we’re stuck in a rut. I would much sooner pay someone to get out of the car and identify the problem.

When Saanich comes knocking at our door looking for input to the Tillicum Plan, perhaps we should insist that they begin by explaining how they propose to implement whatever plan they produce. If previous plans have failed to produce results, then perhaps we need more pragmatic and less grandiose plans.

GTCA Land Use Working Group



GTCA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Unit 128 Tillicum Centre (upstairs by the escalators)

Please Join Us For:

- Board Elections
- Annual Report Presentation
- Presentation Planning & the Future of the Neighbourhood
- Meet & Greet with your neighbours

Refreshments Will Be Served

GROW A HOMEGROWN PARK WITH US!

Eight members of the Gorge Tillicum Urban Farmers (GTUF) recently met to discuss the importance of native plants. It was a book group of sorts, with everyone invited to read a book or listen to one of the many podcasts by Douglas Tallamy. Tallamy is an entomologist and a strong voice for rethinking how we landscape. Many of us read *Bringing Nature Home*, a work where he describes how anyone can

creating a DIY “Homegrown National Park”, an entity generated when in ways big or small we intentionally add native plants back to our balconies, yards, and parks. Every act counts. We no longer have the luxury of putting aside great swathes of land to make new parks. Even if we did, we learned that although new reserves are central to any large-scale conservation effort they are not big enough, nor are they connected



help slow the rate of environmental extinction by simply giving the plants native to their area more room to put roots down. In a nutshell, Tallamy talks about why local biodiversity matters and how it works. The plants native to a specific ecoregion co-evolved over millennia alongside local insect, bird, and other wildlife populations in ways which allowed all to interact and thrive. By removing plants from their native habitats and introducing new ones from elsewhere, we have unwittingly disrupted the balance. What really spoke to us was how Tallamy linked native plants to insects and to birdsong. Many local insects lay eggs and spin cocoons on plants their young will immediately eat when they emerge. Introduced plants might have pollen, but they are not the specific plants that our native insects and pollinators require to complete their life cycle. Without the presence of the right host plants, insects decline. Nesting chicks need A LOT of food to thrive (hundreds of caterpillars and other bugs per chick per day!) If there are fewer native plants, there are fewer insects, and then there are fewer birds.

Sounds bad, of course, but Tallamy offers a solution. Every native plant - whether in a pot on your balcony or in the ground - can contribute to rebuilding a healthy thriving local ecosystem. Tallamy calls for

to one another, so the wildlife populations within them are small, isolated, and therefore vulnerable to extinction. So every native species we plant helps build biological corridors that connect all the green spaces together, creating stronger more productive stable ecosystems for wildlife to thrive. So we can build a different kind of park by choosing to use the space we have differently. A positive movement we can support wherever we are.

It was a good discussion! If you're interested in Tallamy's ideas, his website is Satinflower Nurseries on Haliburton Road in Saanich is the only local nursery which concentrates exclusively on native plant education and native plants local to this area. Look them up at (In coastal B.C., satinflowers are native to the Victoria region.) During our discussion we all noted that our yards and pots were full of introduced plants but that as spaces opened up, we could insert native species. We agreed to meet periodically, perhaps to read other books, learn more about what's native to our area, trade plants, seeds, and knowledge, and tour different sites that incorporate native plants. If you'd like to join us, please contact the GTUF Native Plant Group at gturbanfarmers@gmail.com.

GTUF Native Plant Group

FISH STORIES FROM THE COLQUITZ



Department of Fisheries educator Joscilyn Jupp, and Salmon in the City volunteers teamed up this fall to provide salmon/nature/river education to School District 61 nearby students.



Classes attended the Colquitz River fish fence in Cuthbert Holmes Park, to participate in a salmon dissection, learn about the salmon spawning migration, and area watershed wildlife in the river and park.

Help Keep our Parks Clean & Safe

- Dispose of garbage and dog waste in the receptacles
- Please report overflowing garbage cans or illegal dumping to Saanich Parks at parks@saanich.ca or 250-475-5522
- Report camping & campfires to the Saanich Police non-emergency line at (250) 475-4321





Community Events

ARTS & CELEBRATION

SCHOOL KIDS GIVING BACK TO CUTHBERT HOLMES PARK

It was the season for giving...to nature! Three classes with over 60 students from Tillicum Elementary gave back by planting many native trees, shrubs, and ferns at Cuthbert Holmes Park in early December. While the grade 5 class tackled larger Douglas fir and the grade 2 class planted Oregon grape and Aspen, the kindergarten students planted an amazing 81 Sword ferns, proving that many small hands can do great things! Students were excited to learn in a hands-on way, seeing how they could be involved in ecological restoration in their own neighborhood. Saanich staff explained how this provides opportunities for food and shelter for a variety of native animals (though sadly, not for crocodiles or flamingos as was speculated by a few imaginative kindergarteners).

A passerby expressed delight in seeing the kids so active in their work and sent a "Huy ch q'u" (thank you) to them.





Community Issues

BUREACRACY

AFTER SUNFLOWER GIRL WHY NO MORE MURALS?



100 Burnside West - Before and After

In 2021, the Gorge Tillicum Community Association (GTCA) took a bold step forward, collaborating with local community members, the building owner, and esteemed muralist Paul Archer to bring the vibrant Sunflower Girl mural to life at 100 Burnside Road. This initiative sparked not just color on a wall but ignited a sense of pride and community spirit. The whole building was refreshed and a pollinator garden was planted in front of the mural. However, the journey since then has been marred by unnecessary

hurdles and frustrations, primarily due to excessive regulations hindering further mural projects in our community.

Despite the evident success of the Sunflower Girl mural, navigating the labyrinth of regulations to undertake additional mural projects has proved daunting. Our enthusiasm to follow up with more murals was met with the harsh reality of limited available surfaces and bureaucratic red tape. Take, for instance, our proposal for the Meadow Park washroom building—a seemingly ideal canvas for community expression. Yet, Saanich's response was not one of encouragement but rather a barrage of rules and obstacles.

Saanich boasts of a mural program outlined in a brochure from 2011, but in reality, it serves as a deterrent rather than an enabler for community-driven initiatives. The sheer volume of regulations, coupled with the insistence that even for privately-funded murals on private property, we must also seek council approval or convene a Public Art Jury Process, raises the question: Is this level of oversight truly necessary? It seems absurd, especially when considering pressing issues like housing and road safety that demand council attention. Comparing Saanich's approach to mural regulation with other communities across the province reveals a stark contrast. Many municipalities actively support mural projects, offering clear guidelines and facilitating the process.

continued on page 9



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continued from page 9

In contrast, Saanich's bureaucratic maze stifles creativity and enthusiasm, leaving community groups like ours disillusioned and frustrated.

The absurdity reached its peak when our proposed mural design faced objections based on arbitrary criteria. Initially featuring dogs, we were swiftly vetoed due to Saanich's ongoing PR issues with dogs in parks. Fair enough we thought. Shifting gears to a

regulatory roadblocks, we urge Saanich to look to neighboring Victoria for inspiration. Victoria's Mural Toolkit and Mural Artist Roster offer a streamlined approach, resulting in a vibrant tapestry of murals adorning its streets, particularly in neighborhoods like North Park. Saanich's purported support for the arts must transcend mere rhetoric and translate into actionable policies. It's time to stop suffocating community creativity with bureaucratic inertia. We implore Saanich to adopt a more pragmatic approach, one that fosters rather than

District of Saanich's Bylaw No. 8417, Respecting Unsightly Premises, requires that any drawing, printing, picture, writing or mark on a surface on public lands or on private lands where the surface is visible by the public, must be approved by Council; or through a Public Art Jury process outlined in Saanich's Comprehensive Arts Policy; or through a permit pursuant to the Sign Bylaw, 2000, No. 8101.

Public Art Jury Process

1. Select a project jury including:
 - 3 artists;
 - 1 community member delegated through the local Community Association; and
 - 1 representative of the land owner or commissioning agency.
2. Prepare a project brief or terms of reference including criteria for judging.
3. Advertise a 'Request for Proposals' based on the project brief.
4. Artists submit entries.
5. The project Jury judges the entries and chooses a winning submission.
6. Submit a copy of the project brief, list of Jury members, and images of winning submission to the Saanich Planning Department.

Please see Section 7.2 of the Comprehensive Arts Policy for detail on the Jury process.



Extract from Saanich's Mural Brochure (2011). For those interested in seeing Saanich's Brochure and Victoria's documents they will be posted to our website.

wildlife theme, we were then instructed to depict animals native to Meadow Park, not those from neighbouring Cuthbert Holmes Park. Let that sink in.

Such nonsensical demands only serve to impede progress and fuel frustration. As summer approaches and our aspirations for a new mural dim due to

hampers artistic expression. Let's liberate our walls from the shackles of excessive regulation and embrace the transformative power of community-driven murals. First step, repeal Bylaw No. 8417.

Vera Wynn-Williams

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Gorge Canada Day Picnic – Call for Volunteers

We're looking forward to another Gorge Canada Day Picnic, coming up July 1, 2024! The planning committee works for many months on this event and lots of wonderful people help make it happen.



We could use a few more volunteers this year, so if you can help with planning or lend us a hand on July 1st, we want to hear from you. You can email us at: info@gorgecanadaday.ca.



We need people for varying times from 7am to 5pm for roles such as:

- **Assist Saanich staff with the Gorge on Art event ...** checking artists in, monitoring morning set-up, helping at the Saanich table with art activities.
- **Assist Saanich staff with the Kids' Zone ...** morning set-up & afternoon take-down, and helping at the Saanich table with activities.
- **Work on the Strawberry Tea team ...** prepping food on June 30th, set-up and take-down on the 1st, and serving and cleaning at the Tea in the afternoon.

After the picnic is done we have a fabulous volunteer wrap party sponsored by the Tillicum Save-on-Foods and 4 Mile Brewing! It's lots of fun and a great way to meet some of your neighbours. Come join us!



Gorge Park Cleanup

**Saturday
April 20, 2024
9 am - noon
(rain or shine)**

Free coffee and donuts.

Join us in Gorge Park, across from Fairway.
Look for the GTCA red tent.

Most supplies are provided but bring gardening gloves if you have them.

DETECT AND SAVE: FIX A LEAK WEEK 2024!



Did you know that household leaks can account for up to 14% of indoor water use? It's a significant figure but straightforward actions can make a big difference in preventing clean drinking water from being wasted.

Easy Steps to Leak Prevention:

1. Annual Checkup: Be proactive by inspecting faucets and toilets at least once a year. It's a simple yet effective way to catch and fix potential leaks.

2. Emergency Preparedness: Familiarize yourself with the location of your main water shut-off. This knowledge is invaluable in case of unexpected water leaks.

3. Pay attention to common leaky fixtures:

- **Toilets:** Silent water wasters! A running toilet can waste significant water – up to 350,000 liters per year. You can easily check for leaks using a dye tablet, food coloring or instant coffee. If the water in your toilet bowl changes color after 15 minutes, you've detected a leak.

Often, simple fixes like replacing a worn-out flapper can often solve the leak issues, but you may need professional help from your plumber.

- **Faucets and Showerheads:** Keep an eye out for drips! Even a small, intermittent drip can waste over 35,000 liters annually. Check for worn washers and "O" rings. A leaky showerhead may just need a tighter connection or a touch of pipe tape.

This year, we'll celebrate Fix a Leak Week from March 18th to March 24th. Join us in spreading awareness about leak detection and its role in reducing potable water loss.

Throughout this week, multiple locations in the region will offer free leak detection kits. These kits include toilet dye tablets, a showerhead flow rate measurement bag, an emergency water shut-off tag, and a handy household guide to water efficiency.



Visit www.crd.bc.ca/leaks to delve deeper into Fix a Leak Week and water conservation efforts in our region.

March 2024

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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.

JOIN THE GTCA

More Members = More Influence

Please support the GCTA by buying or renewing a membership. Your membership you will not only help support our community initiatives but you will also amplify our voice. With a strong membership base we can better advocate for our community when it comes to issues such as planning, transportation and development.

One Year Memberships Fees:

\$5 Single

\$10 Couple

\$25 Business

How to join/renew:

- Use the form to the left to mail in your membership
- Go to our website gorgetillicum.ca
- Scan the QR code to go to the membership form



St. Martin-in-the-Fields Anglican Church, 550 Obed Avenue circa 1940
Photographer: G.Burns, Courtesy: Saanich Archives

INTERESTED IN NEIGHBOURHOOD HISTORY?

Saanich Archives proudly presents a new online exhibit!
- Neighbourhood History: Tillicum -

Read about popular regattas celebrated on the Gorge, Muggins the Red Cross dog that raised money during World War I and so much more!

Scan the QR code to visit the online exhibit:

