

# THE SOOKE SPOTLIGHT

DISTRICT OF SOOKE QUARTLERY NEWSLETTER

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## A STRONG CONNECTION

Thank you for remaining diligent as the globe responds to the COVID-19 pandemic. With hope on the horizon and the dissemination of a COVID-19 vaccine in its early stages, the District reflects on what has happened, where we are now, and what lies ahead.

Our economy has been hard hit and while the tide may be turning on the pandemic, many residents and local businesses will feel the effects for some time. As a community, let's continue to be patient, kind and compassionate. Together, let's hold onto the Sooke spirit that we feel deeply and are so proud of.

As we remain connected through our community spirit, new infrastructure is facilitating connections within our active transportation network. From sidewalk additions on West Coast Road to in-park trail system expansion, and further implementation of the approved Transportation and Parks & Trails Master Plans to take shape in the coming months, critical corridors are being linked to facilitate a safer and healthier community.

## PICTURE SOOKE: A REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

An Official Community Plan review is an opportunity for the District to ensure that the goals and objectives of the OCP remain relevant and reflect the priorities of the community as we plan for the future. The OCP guides land use and development for the community. For this reason, it is important that the community is involved in the document development.

In the fall, residents shared their vision for the community. Emerging themes from this public consultation include:

- the value of the natural landscape;

Work is underway on the Official Community Plan (OCP) review, a new recreation facility in Sunriver with the multi-sports box construction, tree management, as well as on a waste management strategy and planning for a long-awaited dog park. Opportunities for public participation on these items will be numerous, visit [sooke.ca/engage](http://sooke.ca/engage) to learn more and sign up for electronic notifications through [sooke.ca](http://sooke.ca) > online services > subscribe.

This newsletter will provide updates on current projects and be delivered four times per year. If you have limited computer access, please contact the municipal hall. District staff will work with you to keep you informed; they can be reached by phone at 250.642.1634.

Looking forward to continuing to connect with you as the page turns on our calendars and an exciting year of opportunity awaits.

Kindest regards,  
*Mayor Maja Tait*

- the importance of developing the local economy;
- the need for housing options;
- the concern for vehicular traffic congestion;
- the need for safe cycling and pedestrian connections;
- the desire to age in place;
- the interest in a renewed relationship with the waterfront and;



Visit [picturesooke.ca](http://picturesooke.ca)

*continued on page 2*

Picture Sooke continued...

- the need to develop the OCP through the lenses of compassion and climate action.

Our next phase explores three scenarios for the growth of Sooke over the next ten years using the emerging themes heard in Fall 2020 and scientific data on current growth trends. **We will be looking for resident input on what you like and do not like about each scenario.** Please subscribe to our electronic mailing lists to be notified of

the engagement opportunities: [sooke.ca](http://sooke.ca) > online services > subscribe and/or visit [picturesooke.ca](http://picturesooke.ca).

**NEW! We've launched a NEW project website to make it easier to receive your input, visit [picturesooke.ca](http://picturesooke.ca) to share your ideas and to learn more.**

Not keen on computers? Please call us at 250.642.1634 to receive surveys by phone or post.

## PROVINCE CENTRALIZING HOME OWNER GRANT

On December 8, 2020, the B.C. government introduced legislation to amend the *Home Owner Grant Act*.

The province shares, "these amendments are the first step to centralizing the homeowner grant program for the 2021 tax year. The proposed amendments do not change the eligibility criteria for the program."

What this means:

- The Province will be entirely responsible for the home owner grant program for the 2021 tax year.
- All home owners will apply directly to the Province online or over the phone.
- Starting Jan. 1, 2021, local governments can no longer accept retroactive or new applications for the grant and instead homeowners must go to [www.gov.bc.ca/homeownergrant](http://www.gov.bc.ca/homeownergrant)

By centralizing this program within the B.C. government reports they will:

- Ensure homeowners receive the grant amount they are eligible for, such as the additional grant for seniors or persons with a disability.
- Automate the approval process for grants resulting in quicker application processing – this will help prevent ineligible homeowners from being penalized for late property tax payment.

**Learn more: [sooke.ca/finance](http://sooke.ca/finance)**

## PROJECT UPDATE: 275 METRE ADDITION TO SUN RUN TRAIL

A new 275-metre trail connection from Willowpark Way to the Sunriver Nature Trail is the next step in the District of Sooke enhancing the walkability of the community.

The Sun Run Trail will ultimately connect Sunriver to the town core providing residents with the opportunity to use active transportation such as cycling or walking to safely navigate within the community. "This is a significant project and while final completion is still some time away, it is important to recognize this milestone," said Mayor Maja Tait. The District is waiting for news on a recent grant application that would aid in facilitating a critical juncture of the connection, Little River Crossing at DeMamiel Creek.

Project lead, Manager of Parks and Environmental Services Laura Hooper shares, "Timelines associated with leveraging available funding opportunities mean we should hear back this Summer. Careful planning of the environmental considerations has us looking towards a spring 2022 construction start and spring 2023 opening." In the meantime, those who frequent the Sunriver Nature Trail can enjoy this addition.

This is the second major milestone for the Sun Run Trail. In July 2019, a Pedestrian Crossing by Journey Middle School was added. "Increased trail infrastructure benefits our residents and the environment, especially as we plan for the long-term growth of our community," Tait added.



*Progress is being made on sun run trail, which aims to connect sunriver to town core*

## HIGHWAY 14 UPDATES

Construction on the \$85 million project is underway and will continue through to fall 2022. The District has been advised by Windley Contracting and the Ministry of Transportation that while a plan is in place to minimize traffic impacts, motorists can expect delays and your patience is appreciated.

Hours of work are 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Saturday, excluding long weekends.

Visit [sooke.ca](http://sooke.ca) > our community > Highway 14 for links to the Ministry of Transportation project pages, including a photo gallery of the work completed and underway.

General questions regarding this project should be directed to Kyle Webb, Traffic Control Manager for Windley Contracting Ltd. at 250-758-3411.

## TREE MANAGEMENT BYLAW UNDER DEVELOPMENT

532 residents participated in the fall 2020 tree management bylaw engagement, laying a foundation for how and where such a bylaw should reside as the District works to manage the long-term growth of the community. To best stay informed on tree management in Sooke, please subscribe to the tree management electronic mailing list at [sooke.ca](http://sooke.ca) > online services > subscribe.

*View from the Stickleback Urban Trail by Stan Jones Ball Field. Stroll or roll through 6.5 kilometres of urban trail on the Stickleback Urban Trail, connecting the Galloping Goose Trail at Kirby to Clarkson Park on Broomhill.*



## SITE PREPARATIONS FOR NEW SOOKE COMMUNITY RECREATION FACILITY BEGIN

Commissioning of multi-use sport box in Sunriver set for December 2021

Thanks to an \$892,778 Canada Infrastructure Program Community, Culture, and Recreation Program grant and \$400,000 contribution from Sunriver Estates, the District of Sooke and SEAPARC are set to begin the development of a multi-use sports box at 2430 Phillips Road in Sunriver.

Geotechnical site preparation is underway. SEAPARC Manager and Project Lead Steve Knoke shares, "Once the geotechnical study is complete, we will have a better idea of the box location. If the geotechnical study presents multiple location options within budget, we will consult with neighbours to refine the site plan."

Project neighbours include Sooke School District 62 with plans emerging to include a 396-space elementary school located at 2438 Phillips Road. "Sooke has a vision of an inclusive, healthy and self-sufficient community. Such a recreation facility that is easily accessible to many residents is a tremendous asset to assist us towards this vision," said Mayor Maja Tait. "Leveraging funding to maximize the cost-benefit to residents thanks to the coordination between SEAPARC and District staff adds to the excitement of this project," shared Tait.

The project is set to take shape in multiple phases with phase one aiming for an end of year 2021 completion. Phase one will include a sport box facility, washroom, connecting trail and parking. Additional phases will include facility and park enhancements in consultation with neighbours and facility users.

For more information including answers to frequently asked questions, please visit [sooke.ca/sportsbox](http://sooke.ca/sportsbox)

## MASTER PARK PLANNING: JOHN PHILLIPS MEMORIAL PARK

### Parks and Trails Master Plan approved: next phase of enhancements at John Phillips Memorial Park begins

With the approval of the Parks and Trails Master Plan in the fall, exciting enhancements are set to take shape at John Phillips Memorial Park. A revised site plan is being developed with input from the parks and trails master planning process and the community.

“From speaking with residents through the recent master planning and in daily conversations, the community is keen to have parks and recreation space available to be enjoyed for future generations,” says Mayor Maja Tait. “This next phase does just that.”

To help identify priorities for amenities, the public is encouraged to participate in a park amenity survey – which will remain open until March 31, 2021. A revised site plan will highlight the work that has been done since the 2005 and 2016 park-specific consultation took place, the input from the parks and trail master planning process, and the latest community input.

The public will be invited to participate in more robust amenity specific engagement as priorities are determined. It is anticipated this will begin with plans for a fenced dog park, with public participation available this spring.

Parks updates will be shared through the District of Sooke website. For updates and to learn more about public participation in Sooke, please visit [sooke.ca/engage](http://sooke.ca/engage).

### Have your say

What additions would you like to see at John Phillips Memorial Park:

- Children’s play area?
- Disc golf?
- Interpretative signage?
- More park benches and/or picnic tables?
- Public access to the pond?
- More trees?
- Additional trails?

Do you have other ideas? Share your thoughts at [sooke.ca/engage](http://sooke.ca/engage)



## TUNE IN: COUNCIL MEETINGS STREAMED

Most District meetings take place on Mondays at 7:00 p.m. To view the schedule and learn how to participate, or simply watch/listen live, please visit our website [sooke.ca](http://sooke.ca) > online services > Agenda & Minutes.

Council appreciates hearing from the public on issues that are important to them and encourages residents to comment on upcoming agenda items. Residents may choose to:

1. Submit written comments by email to [corp@sooke.ca](mailto:corp@sooke.ca) or dropped off at the Sooke Municipal Hall by noon on the day of meeting
2. Register to speak live, call 250.642.1634 or email [corp@sooke.ca](mailto:corp@sooke.ca) by noon on the day of the meeting to register. You can participate by phone or, if you have a webcam and microphone, via Microsoft Teams.

District of Sooke Quarterly Newsletter Contact: Christina Moog, Communications Coordinator at 250.642.1634 or [cmoog@sooke.ca](mailto:cmoog@sooke.ca)