



District of Sooke

Strategic Priorities 2024-2027

We acknowledge that the District of Sooke is located on the unceded territories of the T'Sou-ke and Scia'new Nations. With deep respect, we honour their stewardship of these lands since time immemorial and recognize the ongoing connection Indigenous peoples have to the land, waters, and natural resources.

Statement of Reconciliation

The District of Sooke is committed to fostering respectful, meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples and advancing reconciliation within the region. We acknowledge that the District of Sooke is located on the unceded territories of the T'Sou-ke and Scia'new Nations. With deep respect, we honour their stewardship of these lands since time immemorial and recognize the ongoing connection Indigenous peoples have to the land, waters, and natural resources.

We acknowledge the legacy of colonization and the lasting impacts it has had on Indigenous peoples. The District of Sooke is dedicated to addressing this history by working collaboratively with local Nations and supporting the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.

Our commitment includes advancing meaningful actions to promote cultural understanding and shared opportunities. This includes deepening partnerships with Indigenous communities to support social, economic, and environmental sustainability while recognizing and respecting Indigenous knowledge and governance.

We strive to build a future where reconciliation is not only a commitment but an integral part of how we grow and govern as a community. Together, with humility and accountability, we move forward on this path of reconciliation.



Our Mission and Vision

Our Vision

An inclusive, healthy, and self-sufficient community where the rainforest meets the sea.

Our Mission

The District of Sooke strives to be a compassionate, engaged, and effective organization providing excellent public services by:

- Maintaining our strong sense of identity
- Managing our growth for generations to come
- Making our local economy diverse and resilient

Core Values & Guiding Principles

- ▶ Effective governance
- ▶ Community vibrancy
- ▶ Effective and consistent communication
- ▶ Community well-being and safety
- ▶ Long-term thinking
- ▶ Inclusive and respectful engagement

Reporting

Progress reports will be issued twice a year: in June as part of the Annual Report, and approaching year-end to align with the budget process.



Strategic Objectives 2024-2027

Direction-setting priorities, driving big-picture outcomes



Blue and green spaces refer to aquatic environments like oceans, rivers, lakes, and wetlands (blue), while green spaces include land ecosystems such as forests, parks, and meadows.

Strategic Areas of Focus

Sustainable Growth and Environmental Stewardship

We promote sustainable land use planning to accommodate growth while minimizing environmental impact and maintaining Sooke's West Coast aesthetic. We prioritize the protection of blue and green spaces and the implementation of the best environmental practices when planning for growth and development.

Community Economic Development

We provide essential local services and prioritize a resilient economy focused on health care, town centre revitalization and tourism. We attract diverse businesses to stimulate economic diversity and growth.

Community Safety and Wellbeing

We foster a connected and inclusive community that celebrates diversity, supports local businesses, and enhances social bonds, contributing to a higher quality of life for all residents.

Infrastructure Investments and Multi- Modal Transportation Networks

We make significant investments in infrastructure to support our community's growth for future generations. This involves upgrading existing infrastructure, building new infrastructure, and seeking funding that supports our growing community's needs. By enhancing our connectivity and livability, we can reduce our carbon footprint.

Organizational Development and Capacity Building

We are becoming a well-resourced organization with a high-performing, diverse, engaged, and adaptable workforce that can meet service level demands while incorporating Low Carbon Resilience strategies into operations.

Sustainable Growth and Environmental Stewardship



Strategic Priority Goal:

We promote sustainable land use planning to accommodate growth while minimizing environmental impact and maintaining Sooke's West Coast aesthetic. We prioritize the protection of blue and green spaces and the implementation of the best environmental practices when planning for growth and development.

► Ongoing

- Collaborate with the T'Sou-ke Nation on land use planning and decision-making. Foster ongoing collaboration with the T'Sou-ke Nation to support cultural revitalization and promote traditional ecological knowledge.
- Consider How We Move, How We Build, How We Grow, How We Relate and How We Lead to support a path to Sooke 2030 emission reduction.
- Increase community resilience through emergency management planning including mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.
- Promote local food security and cultural preservation with a focus on community and indigenous gardens.
- Protect water quality and aquatic ecosystems.

► Now

- Update Housing Needs Report.
- Update zoning bylaw following provincial regulations.
- Establish clear, consistent and equitable development policies and a process for streamlining applications.
- Integrate ecosystem protection into all stages of development projects.
- Identify and map environmentally sensitive areas.

► Next

- Update Official Community Plan
- Develop more substantial, brand-relevant design guidelines to articulate a clear identity for Sooke.
- Create incentives to bring more commercial and industrial uses to the district.
- Create a municipal land acquisition strategy to support planned development and expand green spaces.
- Strengthen environmental protection through Environmental Development Permit Areas.

Community Economic Development



Strategic Priority Goal:

We provide essential local services and prioritize a resilient economy focused on health care, town centre revitalization and tourism. We attract diverse businesses to stimulate economic diversity and growth.

► Ongoing

- Collaborate with the Sooke Region Business Cooperative to strengthen business partnerships and growth.
- Work with service organizations like the Sooke Chamber of Commerce, WorkLink BC, and other local groups to offer workshops, networking events, and programs that support business growth and development.
- Provide resources and grants to local organizations that drive economic development through workforce training, business services, and volunteer initiatives and community events that boost the local economy.

► Now

- Implement the Municipal & Regional District Tax Program (MRDT).
- Develop long-term regenerative and community-led destination tourism planning.
- Update zoning to promote mixed-use zoning, enhancing community livability and economic vitality through residential-business integration and creating business-friendly environments for both new and existing businesses.
- Enhance support for small businesses and startups.
- Prioritize business retention initiatives.
- Advocate for inclusion in the Island Coastal Economic Trust Area (ICETA) to gain access to community grant programs.

► Next

- Invest in infrastructure improvements for key transportation routes and corridors to support economic hubs.
- Enhance community appeal and economic growth through aesthetics and functionality.
- Create an employment lands strategy.
- Lead the establishment of a Municipal Development Corporation.

Community Safety and Wellbeing



Strategic Priority Goal:

We foster a connected and inclusive community that celebrates diversity, supports local businesses, and enhances social bonds, contributing to a higher quality of life for all residents.

► Ongoing

- Participate in collaborative networks of community service providers to share information and facilitate access to services. Focus on childcare, homelessness, food security, health care, education, public safety, social services, culture and heritage.
- Proactive policing and bylaw education and enforcement.

► Now

- Create zoning that allows for diverse housing opportunities to meet the needs of individuals and families across various income levels and demographics.
- Integrate safety elements into subdivision development standards and zoning regulations.
- Promote food security initiatives by including community gardens in larger developments.
- Strengthen climate disaster preparedness and resilience.
- Enhance community identity and cultural vibrancy through public art.

► Next

- Evaluate and enhance traffic flow around the town core for improved access, mobility and safety.
- Develop neighbourhood parking plans, focused near the town core, to enhance functionality and sightlines.

Infrastructure Investments and Multi-Modal Transportation Networks



Strategic Priority Goal:

We make significant investments in infrastructure to support our community's growth for future generations. This involves upgrading existing infrastructure, building new infrastructure, and advocating for funding that supports our growing community's needs. By enhancing our connectivity and livability, we can reduce our carbon footprint.

► Ongoing

- Collaborate and advocate with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, including reviewing and updating memorandums of understanding, to design alternative road networks and enhance current infrastructure.

► Now

- Leverage new provincial financial tools for funding amenities and infrastructure.
- Enhance asset management planning and infrastructure care and replacement with a Low Carbon Resilience lens.
- Review all District Master Plans and identify data gaps and relevancy, including a mid-point review of the Transportation Master Plan and Parks and Trails Master Plan.

► Next

- Enhance mobility options and active transportation safety, including exploration of creative and innovative fast and clean transit options that could provide alternate modes of transportation for day-to-day and emergency service requirements.
- Collaborate and advocate with BC Transit on increasing service.

Organizational Development and Capacity Building



Strategic Priority Goal:

We are becoming a well-resourced organization with a high-performing, diverse, engaged, and adaptable workforce that can meet service level demands.



▶ Ongoing

- Conduct a municipal service level review to define customer service levels and associated costs to determine the appropriate staffing levels to meet our service level targets and legislative changes.
- Leverage technology and foster innovation to enhance organizational efficiency and service delivery.
- Support staff attraction, retention, and professional development across the organization.
- Identify policy gaps and prioritize policy and bylaw review program.
- Enhance municipal facilities for improved service delivery and community benefit.

▶ Now

- Develop a long-term workforce planning strategy.
- Strengthen records management for transparency, accountability and ease of access to information, internally and externally.
- Support establishment of an effective committee structure to aid in streamlining processes and support Council in their decision making.

▶ Next

- Develop and maintain modern HR policies and services to foster trust, inclusion, and engagement, maximizing employee potential and building a trusted, talented organization

Council Leadership and Advocacy



Sustainable Growth and Environmental Stewardship

Collaborate with the T'Sou-ke Nation

- Advance the District of Sooke's partnership with the T'Sou-ke Nation through a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that deepens collaborative governance and shared land stewardship.

Advocacy for Sustainable Land Use and Services Supporting Growth

- Engage with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Housing to secure support for the infrastructure needs of our growing community
- Advocate with the Ministry of Education and through a Memorandum of Understanding with School District 62 for a clear plan to accommodate the district's growing student population, and secure fair funding and new school developments in Sooke, including Sooke Elementary and Sunriver Elementary, in response to the rapid population growth.
- Partner with BC Hydro to explore buyback power incentives for renewable energy, encouraging local businesses and homeowners to invest in sustainable energy solutions.

Transportation and Connectivity

- Engage with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to secure funding and support to address congestion on Highway 14 including bridge expansion, alternative route possibilities, and expanded transit and trail and cycling networks.
- Collaborate with BC Transit to explore creative transit options for local area use and expanded servicing.

Emergency Management and Resilience

- Work with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness to strengthen local emergency management planning, focusing on climate resilience through mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery measures, including advocating for permanent funding and resources.

Community Economic Development

Advocating for Health Care and Economic Resilience

- Work with the Ministry of Health and Island Health to advocate for expanded healthcare services.

Destination Tourism and Revitalization

- Support efforts to enhance tourism marketing efforts and implement the Municipal & Regional District Tax Program (MRDT), ensuring Sooke can leverage resources for tourism infrastructure and development.

Business-Friendly Opportunities and Policies

- Collaborate with the Ministry of Citizens' Services to secure support and funding for a co-working hub, fostering economic development and collaboration among local entrepreneurs, freelancers, and remote workers.
- Work with regional economic partners to align economic growth strategies that foster residential-business integration and support local startups.

Small Business and Startups

- Advocate with Small Business BC and Innovate BC to secure support and funding for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and startups in Sooke, ensuring they have access to the tools, mentorship, and resources needed to thrive.
- Strengthen partnerships with local economic development agencies to enhance business retention initiatives and create long-term, sustainable economic growth.

Access to Community Grants and Economic Programs

- Lead advocacy efforts to include Sooke in the Island Coastal Economic Trust Area (ICETA), unlocking access to regional community grant programs and funding opportunities that support local business, infrastructure improvements, and economic resilience.

Council Leadership and Advocacy



Community Safety and Wellbeing

Advocating for Enhanced Community Services

- Collaborate with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to advocate for improved access to childcare, homelessness services, health care, and social services in Sooke. Council will also work with local service providers to address gaps in services, ensuring that residents have access to critical support.
- Engage with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to strengthen proactive policing and funding support, ensuring public safety initiatives are well-supported and effectively managed.
- Work with the Ministry of Public Safety and other municipal partners to include Sooke in the Vancouver Island Integrated Major Crime Unit (VIMCU).
- Advocate for the implementation of Peer-Assisted Care Teams (PACT) in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Safety and Island Health, enhancing crisis response capabilities for mental health emergencies.
- Collaborate with the Office of the Seniors Advocate to address isolation and precarious housing issues impacting seniors, advocating for solutions that enhance social connections and increase access to affordable housing and long term care.
- Advocate with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction for increased operational funding for the Sooke Shelter, ensuring consistent support for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Work with the Ministry of Health to secure funding for comprehensive prenatal care services, ensuring support for expectant mothers and the long-term health of families in Sooke.
- Advocate for additional funding for the Mobile Youth Services Team and other agencies supporting vulnerable youth.

Traffic Safety and Mobility Advocacy

- Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to advocate for improvements to traffic flow and safety in and around the town core. Council will lead efforts to secure funding and prioritize infrastructure projects that improve mobility, access, and pedestrian safety in key areas of the community.

Climate Resilience and Preparedness

- Advocate with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Emergency Management BC for funding and support to strengthen the District's climate disaster preparedness and resilience.

Support for Food Security and Public Spaces

- Work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to advocate for food security initiatives that contribute to the well-being of residents and support local food resilience, and secure sustainable funding for community food banks, ensuring they continue addressing food insecurity and enhancing community resilience.
- Advocate for provincial support in refreshing the District's Agricultural Plan, promoting local food production and sustainability while addressing long-term food security needs.

Council Leadership and Advocacy



Infrastructure Investments and Multi-Modal Transportation Networks

Advocating for Transportation Infrastructure and public transit

- Continue advocating with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for improvements to Highway 14, addressing congestion, safety, and connectivity challenges.
- Advocate for a second bridge across the river and further corridor improvements post-2017-22, ensuring these are included in the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's 10-year capital plan.
- Advocate for infrastructure funding to complete the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), prioritizing transit and reducing car dependency along Route 14.
- Work with BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to expedite the implementation of the Sooke Local Area Transit Plan, and advocate for increased transit services in Sooke, focusing on improving access, frequency, and routes that align with the community's mobility needs.

Leverage New Provincial Funding Tools

- Engage with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to utilize new provincial financial tools, such as Amenity Cost Charges, to help fund amenities and infrastructure to support Sooke's growth.
- Council will advocate for flexibility and additional funding mechanisms that align with the community's unique needs.

Asset Management and Low-Carbon Resilience

- Advocate with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy for resources and support to enhance Sooke's asset management planning through a low-carbon resilience lens. Council will champion infrastructure care and replacement strategies that contribute to long-term sustainability while meeting the demands of future generations.

School Sites and Community Safety

- Advocate to the Ministry of Education and Child Care, alongside School District 62 to ensure safe and accessible school sites, addressing access points and road safety, particularly on Highway 14.

Organizational Development and Capacity Building

Become a best practice governance model

- Implement a Council Code of Conduct Policy.
- Engage with the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and Local Government Management Association (LGMA) and other municipal associations to adopt best practices in local governance.

Technology and Innovation Advocacy

- Advocate for access to provincial and federal funding programs to support technological investments that enhance service delivery and organizational efficiency.

Attracting and Retaining Talent

- Support efforts to foster an inclusive and supportive workplace culture that values employee contributions, supports work-life balance, and promotes employee well-being.

Committee Structure and Public Participation

- Determine a committee structure that supports promoting a more effective, responsive, and transparent governance model, empowering residents and stakeholders while also streamlining business processes to maximize organizational capacity.



2205 Otter Point Road Sooke BC V9Z 1J2
Phone 250-642-1634
info@sooke.ca
www.sooke.ca

