



On Dec. 14, Sidney Fire Department and Town staff responded to flooding and debris from high tide and storm surge. A new tide gauge on Beacon Wharf means the public can see real-time changes in tide levels. [Learn more on page 7.](#)

Changes coming to Bowerbank Road to help bikes and drivers safely share the road

This summer, plans to create a north-south active transportation corridor within Sidney will start to take shape. Upcoming changes to the Bowerbank Road area will help create a safer space for cyclists and pedestrians, especially youth heading to nearby schools and parks.

Rather than creating bike lanes, which would involve the removal of on-street parking, the Town will create a neighbourhood bikeway, including:

- Traffic diversion for

southbound vehicles on Bowerbank Road near Ardwell Avenue and Piercy Avenue;

- Traffic diversion at Siddall Road and Mills Road intersection; and
- Speed humps on Melville Drive

The project was identified as a priority following public engagement on Sidney's first Active Transportation Plan in 2022 and 2023. Learn more about the bikeway design at Sidney.ca.

DISCOVER SIDNEY'S MANY OUTDOOR GEMS



Do you recognize this public beach access point? It's located near the end of Beaufort Road. Pick up a free Parks and Trails guide with beach walks, playgrounds, parks, and more at Town Hall or the Sidney Visitor Centre. [More on page 4.](#)

Updated forecast for housing demand in Sidney

In November, the Town released an Interim Housing Needs Report, as required by the Province, looking at expected 20-year housing demand. The forecasted number of additional homes needed in Sidney by 2045 to accommodate expected population growth is just under 3,000.

These numbers will continue to be revisited to ensure as much accuracy as possible. The next Housing Needs Assessment is scheduled for 2028.

By the end of 2025, municipalities across BC will need to have updated their Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaws to reflect recent housing forecasts. Town staff are now analyzing our current Official Community Plan (2022) and Zoning Bylaw (2024) to determine if any additional changes are needed to accommodate the forecasted increase in population.

Once that analysis is complete, staff will report to Council on potential next steps. Changes would involve public engagement.

Message from Mayor and Council

Winter is coming to an end and we hope your year is off to a great start.

In 2024, we had an important transition for the municipality. First, we shared our appreciation for retiring Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Randy Humble, after 25 years of service to the Town of Sidney. And this past fall, we welcomed our new CAO, Liam Edwards, who joins us from Bowen Island, where he also served as CAO. We have been fortunate to transition from one highly skilled, dedicated, and caring leader to another. You can learn more about Liam on page 5.

It has been a productive year for the Town, with the completion of some major projects, such as a watermain replacement on Lochside Drive, the Beacon West Roundabout, Galaran Road upgrades, Zoning Bylaw update,

and the opening of the Seaport Washrooms near Beacon Park.

In recent months, we collaborated with the District of North Saanich on the construction of a pedestrian bridge across Reay Creek. In September, we collaborated with volunteers on Tree Appreciation Day to plant trees lining a pathway to the new inclusive playground at Philip Brethour Park.

In the year ahead, Council and staff will continue to ensure municipal bylaws and practices align with new Provincial housing legislation. This begins with analyzing whether the current Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw reflect forecasts around future housing needs, which were updated in November, as mandated by the Province.

We look forward to connecting with community members in the year ahead.



Back row from left to right: Councillor Scott Garnett, Councillor Richard Novek, Councillor Steve Duck, Councillor Chad Rintoul. Front row from left to right: Councillor Sara Duncan, Mayor Cliff McNeil-Smith, Councillor Terri O'Keeffe.



Looking to the future as Town Hall shows its age

A longstanding item in the Town’s Strategic Plan has been to plan for the replacement of Town Hall.

Sidney’s Town Hall was constructed in 1964, and has undergone a range of modifications over the past 60 years. The building is becoming increasingly expensive to maintain as it ages. As standards evolve, it is no longer meeting some important public and employee needs.

Key building challenges include:

Accessibility:

- Much of Town Hall is inaccessible to people with mobility limitations.

Building Condition:

- The heating system will soon need to be fully replaced, as the heating pipes are beginning to leak and the boiler is due for replacement. Much of the building’s drywall and ceiling would need to be removed in this process.
- The building’s electrical system cannot support additional electrical load, such as a new electric heating system.
- These types of extensive renovations would need to comply with the BC Building Code, leading to further upgrades to meet standards such as seismic provisions.

- Perimeter drainage around Town Hall will soon need to be replaced. At this time, Sidney Archives, which is in the basement of Town Hall, is vulnerable to flooding.

A renovation of this scale would cost several million dollars, and is likely not achievable without a temporary and disruptive relocation of Town services.

Space Constraints:

- The reception area is inadequate for meeting with community members who seek information and services.
- Council chambers are too small to accommodate large groups of people who attend Council meetings when topics of high public interest are on the agenda.

Inefficient Use of Civic Site:

- The downtown block that is home to Town Hall, Driver Services, and the Courthouse could serve the community in additional ways if the space was better utilized. Replacing the aging buildings that provide municipal services could potentially lead to more usable public space and more housing supply.

The Town is looking into options to replace Town Hall and some of the municipal buildings on this site. Any future plans would involve extensive public engagement.

Volunteers help plant 82 trees at Philip Brethour Park

On September 21, about 40 volunteers from as far away as Cowichan Bay came to Sidney to mark the fifth annual Tree Appreciation Day, in partnership with the Greater Victoria Green Team. The group planted 82 trees, and transformed the path leading to the newly built playground into a tree-lined walkway of Karpick maples.

A variety of trees were also planted throughout the park and forest. Volunteers and members of the community took home 15 trees as part of the tree giveaway to plant on their own property.

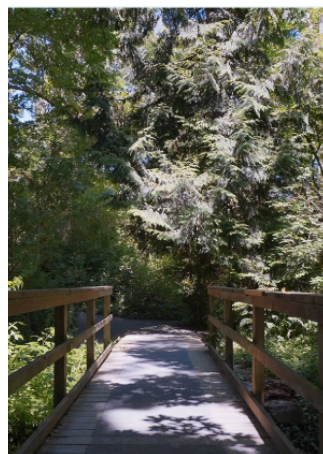
Tree Appreciation Day is part of the Town's ongoing efforts to increase the community's tree canopy and create more shade cover in local parks.



||| A new pedestrian bridge over Reay Creek opened in October.

New pedestrian bridge across Reay Creek connects Sidney and North Saanich

This fall, a new pedestrian bridge was completed stretching across Reay Creek between Peter Grant Park and the Eaglehurst neighbourhood. The bridge enhances connectivity between Sidney and North Saanich, offering a beautiful new way for residents to enjoy the natural spaces in both communities. The project was led by North Saanich, with the Town of Sidney making a \$60,000 contribution to project costs.



**SIDNEY
PARKS &
TRAILS MAP**

Discover parks, beaches, and viewpoints

The Town wants to help community members and visitors find all the playgrounds, viewpoints, beach strolls, and nature walks Sidney has to offer. A Parks and Trails brochure with a fold out map and list of amenities is now available to pick up at Town Hall (2440 Sidney Ave) and the Sidney Visitor Centre (2281 Beacon Ave). Come grab a brochure and get exploring! A map of Sidney's parks, beach walks, viewpoints, and pathways is also available online at Sidney.ca/discover-sidney/parks.

Welcoming a new Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Profile: Liam Edwards is the Town of Sidney's new Chief Administrative Officer, leading the community's municipal operations. Most recently, he served as the CAO of Bowen Island Municipality, following 14 years of working with communities on behalf of the Province's Ministry of Municipal Affairs, where he served as Executive Director of Infrastructure and Finance in the Local Government Division and the Deputy Inspector of Municipalities.

What made you interested in leading the Town of Sidney's municipal operations?

Sidney is a thriving and beautiful community that any CAO would be really pleased to be part of. It was also appealing to know that Sidney had a strong municipal team that was already functioning well from many years of steady leadership. Working with a community that has a mix of single-family and high density housing, along with commercial and industrial lands presents interesting challenges and opportunities that was a real draw for me. Being by the ocean is another big draw; I have deep respect for water and always look at how we can minimize our impact on it.



From a personal perspective, working for the Town of Sidney also brought my family closer to relatives in the Victoria area and offered my teenage daughter access to the kinds of opportunities that just weren't possible on a small island.

How did you make your way to a career in local government?

I didn't take a direct route to local government. I love the outdoors and spent many years working out on the water as an outdoor adventure guide. This line of work helped me develop a deep appreciation for environmental protection, but I didn't feel I was necessarily contributing to that cause. I became passionate about protecting water systems and limiting contamination in our oceans and decided to return to school and study water resource management at the

University of Victoria.

I discovered that land use management is one of the best ways to protect water and that local governments have significant influence in that realm, so I made my way to the Local Government Division in the Province, and eventually to serving as a Chief Administrative Officer for Bowen Island, and now Sidney.

While I am passionate about the range of services local governments provide, and the challenges each municipality faces, I will always have an added interest in water management.

What has been your favourite local discovery so far?

I've loved walking down Beacon Avenue and the Waterfront Walkway, visiting locally-owned businesses, and feeling like I am part of a complete and charming community.

Town replaces primary water feed on Lochside Drive due to aging

Ensuring water and sewer mains within Sidney are well-maintained is one of the Town's most critical responsibilities.

This fall, residents and visitors adjusted their driving routes as the aging watermain along Lochside Drive was replaced in order to reduce the risk of watermain breaks and make the Town's water system more resilient to seismic activity.

A trenchless pipe-bursting method was used to shorten the length of time traffic was disrupted and minimize ground disturbance, since the Lochside Drive area is a historical First Nations village site.

Landscaping and final paving will be completed in the spring.



Sidney Fire Department working toward wildfire prevention and preparedness

The Town of Sidney is developing a Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan to guide the Town's efforts to prepare and prevent wildfires, as we are situated near rural and forested lands. The Town expects to have the plan completed by early 2025.

To reduce the risk of wildfire, community members can FireSmart their homes. Some examples of FireSmart actions include, among other strategies:

- Pruning trees to create at least two metres of clearance from the ground;

- Storing firewood at least 10 metres away from homes; and
- Adding non-combustible 3mm screens to external household vents (except dryer vents) to keep wildfire embers out.

Learn more about FireSmarter your home here: <https://firesmartcanada.ca/homeowners/protect-your-home/>

The plan is being funded through the Union of BC Municipalities' FireSmart Community Funding and Supports grant.



FireSmart Grant Opportunity

Neighbourhoods and groups can apply to receive \$500 to fund wildfire community preparedness activities in their community through FireSmart Canada. Check out 'Wildfire Community Preparedness Day' at: FireSmartCanada.ca/programs

TIME FOR SHORT TERM RENTAL OPERATORS TO APPLY FOR A BUSINESS LICENCE

With longterm rental stock in Sidney in very limited supply, the municipality continues to take steps to regulate short term rentals.

A business licence is now required to operate a short term rental in Sidney, and to list the rental property on an online platform, such as Airbnb. A one-year grace period until December 31, 2025 will be provided to operators who need additional time to meet Building Code or other bylaw requirements.

A guide for applying for a short term rental business licence is online at Sidney.ca.

REAL-TIME TIDE GAUGE INSTALLED AT BEACON WHARF

Are you ever curious about changing tide levels in Sidney? You may be interested in the real-time data posted online from a new tide gauge installed at Beacon Wharf. The gauge was installed by the Canadian Hydrographic Service, which posts current and past data here: tides.gc.ca/en/stations/07260



SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS MADE TO CROSSWALKS NEAR SIDNEY

To improve safety for students walking to and from Sidney Elementary School, the Town has installed temporary delineators at nearby crosswalks.

These delineators narrow the traffic lanes, slowing the speed of traffic and shortening the distance that students walk through traffic.

Get to know priority improvements in the Active Transportation Plan by visiting Sidney.ca.

SIDNEY AND NORTH SAANICH WORK WITH RCMP ON A NEW SERIES OF SCAM ALERT VIDEOS

With community members increasingly losing money to targeted scams, the Town of Sidney is working with the District of North Saanich and the RCMP on a series of online videos to help people spot and avoid common scams.

Below is an excerpt from one of the latest videos:

“The main goal of a scammer is to get your money. They will try to assume your identity, try to gain access to your banking and personal information, or convince you to send funds to help a loved one. In the end, all they want is your money.

Fraudsters will prey on your vulnerabilities, tell you to keep it a secret, and try to convince you that others are not to be trusted.

They will pressure you into making a rash decision and they will ask you to send non-traceable currency like cash, bitcoin or gift cards.

If you are unsure if you may be dealing with a scam, help avoid financial loss by directly contacting the RCMP, your bank, or a trusted family member.”

You can watch and share the videos here:
[YouTube.com/@SidneyNorthSaanichScamAlert](https://www.youtube.com/@SidneyNorthSaanichScamAlert)



Ever wonder where to look for a detailed list of upcoming community events? Visit www.sidneybia.ca/events to view or add events.

ANNUAL LEGO® BRICK EXHIBIT

Exhibit running until March 30

Sidney Museum (2423 Beacon Avenue, Lower Level)

Hundreds of classic LEGO® brick creations are displayed throughout the Museum drawing on themes such as Architecture, Creator Expert, Star Wars™, and Lord of the Rings™ alongside new featured sets like Notre-Dame de Paris, Jaws, the Batmobile™, and more.

WILD ALLIES: NATIVE PLANTS AND POLLINATORS

Daily beginning March 1

Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea (9811 Seaport Place)

Healthy pollinator populations are essential to the health of the planet and our food supply. The Centre's newest exhibit explores the wonderful world of pollinators and the plants those animals love.

SIDNEY EMPLOYMENT EXPO

Wednesday, March 12, 2pm to 5pm

Mary Winspear Centre (2243 Beacon Avenue)

This event, organized by Sidney BIA and Beacon Community Services, is a chance for local job-seekers and people considering making a career shift to connect with local employers looking for a range of skill sets and interests.

ANNUAL RE-OPENING OF ARTSEA GALLERY

March 21, 2025 (or earlier)

Tulista Park

There is a new art exhibition each week at the ArtSea Gallery. Explore diverse art and meet local artists.