



|| The Town is purchasing land on Third Street near downtown to create a new community park. Learn more on page 7.

Message from Mayor and Council

We hope this message finds you well and looking forward to the spring season around the corner.

In this edition of Town Talk, we are exploring the new provincial housing legislation introduced last fall that is meant to increase housing supply in more than 80 communities across BC. We have now received the policy details that allow us to see how these provincially-mandated changes apply to Sidney.

While we have seen more density in recent years in downtown Sidney, the new legislation applies primarily to neighbourhoods that are currently designated for single-family and duplex homes. These areas will soon be designated to accommodate carriage homes, triplexes, and other forms of small-scale density.

It is important to remember that communities across BC will be experiencing these changes alongside us. If the new legislation is effective, it could lead to more housing options in Sidney, and some relief for businesses struggling to find workers.

As we update our processes and bylaws to align with the new legislation, we are also taking steps to ensure Sidney continues to be a well-balanced community. For instance, in these pages, you will read about plans to establish a new community park on Third Street near downtown, as well as a new playground with accessible features coming to Philip Brethour Park in West Sidney.

We will continue to engage the public on potential changes in the community and we appreciate your interest.

TAKE-HOME BIKE REPAIR KITS



Need tools to repair your bike? Now you can borrow a set of bike tools from the library.

SEE PAGE 7

Q. When will the Zoning Bylaw be updated to reflect provincial changes?

A. The Province requires all municipalities to update their Zoning Bylaws to expand the number of units that can be built on single-family or duplex-zoned properties by June 30, 2024.

Although these changes are not optional for municipalities, there will be an opportunity for the public to view the proposed changes this spring when the draft Zoning Bylaw is shared with the public.

Planning Department staff have also been working on a broader Zoning Bylaw update since March 2023, following the recent adoption of a new Official Community Plan. The community will be invited to review and provide feedback on the bylaw.

Province no longer allows residential lots to be restricted to single-family homes and duplexes (Bill 44)

In Sidney, the most significant change stemming from the Province's new legislation is a move away from single-family and duplex zoning. By this summer, properties that are currently limited to single-family and duplex homes in Sidney will be permitted to accommodate up to three or four dwelling units, depending on lot size:

- Three units will be permitted on lots that are 280 square metres or smaller, and
- Four units will be permitted on lots that are 281 square metres or larger.

The configuration of housing units can be varied. One property owner interested in redeveloping their property

might opt to build a duplex with two secondary suites. Another property owner might build a carriage home behind their existing single-family home to suit their family's needs. Three friends might choose to develop a single-family property into a triplex.

Housing development is costly, and some homeowners will not be interested in adding more housing to their property. It will be up to each individual property owner to decide if they want to make changes permitted under this new legislation.

You can check the size of properties in Sidney by using the online application SidneyMap at sidney.ca.





Province implements changes to make the development approval process more efficient (Bill 44)

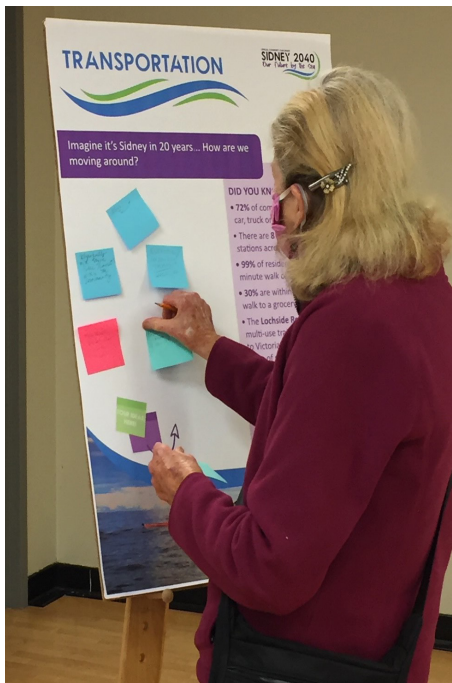
To ensure that new housing is approved more efficiently, the Provincial government is changing some aspects of municipal development approvals in BC.

The new legislation requires municipalities to complete an updated Housing Needs Report by January 2025, which includes projected housing needs for the next 20 years. Once complete, municipalities must update their Official

Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw to “pre-zone” for these 20-year housing projections.

The changes will speed up housing construction by reducing the number of proposals that go through a formal rezoning process involving a public hearing and Council approval.

Communities will also have more certainty about where and how development will occur.



New legislation makes it even more important that community members get involved in Official Community Plan updates.

New BC legislation eliminates public hearings for residential developments that align with the Official Community Plan (Bill 44)

The Province’s new housing legislation contains a number of measures to streamline the development approval process so homes are built more quickly. One of these measures restricts local governments from holding public hearings under the following circumstances:

- Where a proposed residential development is consistent with an existing Official Community Plan; or
- Where a proposed residential development involves small-scale, multi-family housing such as a fourplex on a lot previously reserved for a single-family home or duplex.

Fewer public hearings will make public involvement in Official Community Plan updates more important than ever. The Town will continue to engage the community extensively when updating its Official Community Plan to ensure Sidney’s future is shaped by the people who live and work here.



It has been illegal to use an unoccupied condo unit as a vacation rental in Sidney since 2018.

Short-term rental properties will soon require a business licence (Bill 35)

In many communities across BC, short-term rentals have made it harder for renters to find places to live. Recognizing this potential issue for a destination town like Sidney, the Town adopted a Short-Term Rental Bylaw in 2018 which prevented condo units from becoming short-term rentals, among other restrictions.

The Province has now introduced short-term rental regulations that in many ways bring other communities in line with Sidney.

One aspect of the Province's legislation that is new for Sidney is a requirement for short-term rental platforms to post business licence numbers in municipalities where licensing is required.

In January, Council directed Town staff to move in this direction. Staff are now drafting an update to the Town's Business Licence Bylaw to include short-term rentals as a business requiring a licence. More details will be shared with the community once these changes are finalized.



Looking for more information?

If you'd like to learn more about the new housing legislation, visit the Province's information portal:

StrongerBC.ca/Housing



If you want to learn more about how new provincial housing legislation applies to Sidney, visit our zoning page at Sidney.ca or stop by Town Hall to speak to a planner.



Ask a Planner

Featured Bio: Alison Verhagen, Sidney's Director of Development Services, was born and raised on the Peninsula and has worked as a planner for the Town of Sidney for 18 years. Outside of work, you can often find her at the Panorama rink with her kids or enjoying time outdoors. She is an excellent person to speak to about BC's housing legislation changes.

Will Sidney's protected trees be impacted by more housing development?

In keeping with the new Provincial legislation, when three or four units are built on a residential lot, these units are allowed to cover more area than a single-family home. This could lead to requests to remove protected trees. The removal of any protected tree will follow the process laid out in the Town's Tree Preservation Bylaw. Each request would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Will small-scale housing development be allowed in Environmentally Sensitive Areas?

Environmentally Sensitive Areas are not exempt from new Provincial legislation allowing small-scale, multi-unit housing on residential lots. Since these areas require a development permit, the Town would work with property owners to minimize environmental



impacts as much as possible for proposed developments at any scale.

Doesn't the legislation allow for more density near public transit hubs?

Yes. However, at this time, public transit service in Sidney is not frequent enough to meet the criteria outlined in the legislation.

Do you think Sidney is at risk of losing its small-town feel with more housing density?

Since the new legislation is opening the door to small-scale development (not large multi-unit development) in neighbourhoods that have been

restricted to single-family and duplex homes, I'm optimistic that Sidney's friendly residential streets will continue to have warmth and character.

Having spent my life in this area, I have sometimes felt that one of the key threats to the small-town character of communities on the Peninsula is soaring home prices that can force our kids to move away when they grow up or prevent our aging parents from relocating closer when they need our support.

Hopefully, this new legislation helps bring some more housing options to Sidney so we can enjoy the richness of multiple generations living in the same small town.

Accessible playground for multiple ages coming to Philip Brethour Park

Philip Brethour Park in West Sidney will soon have a playground with a play structure for school-aged children (5 to 12 years old) as well as a play structure for toddlers and pre-school aged children (1.5 to 5 years old).

The playground will also have a number of features that support children and caregivers with physical disabilities, including a fully rubberized surface, friendship swing, and a We-Go-Round, which will be the first inclusive merry-go-round of its kind on the Saanich Peninsula.

The playground design reflects input from the Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee, as well as a community survey.

A portion of the playground will be funded through the Province's Growing Communities Fund. It is expected to be completed and open for fun and games this summer.



||| The new playground at Philip Brethour Park will have a rubberized surface, which supports both children and caregivers with mobility limitations.

Q. Did this park used to be called “Brethour Park?”

A. Yes! The Town recently discovered that when the park land was donated to the community in 1969 by Philip Brethour’s family, it was meant to be named “Philip Brethour Park” in his honour. Generations of Sidney residents continue to benefit from this gift, and we are pleased to use the park’s full name as intended.

Town of Sidney completes its first Accessibility Plan

Making Sidney more accessible is an ongoing priority for the Town of Sidney. Accessibility means that all people can take part in the community, including people with disabilities.

After gathering public input this summer, the Town of Sidney adopted its first Accessibility

Plan in November. The plan details 35 initiatives related to:

- Transportation;
- Municipal and emergency services;
- Municipal communications and public engagement;
- Employment and procurement within the Town of Sidney; and

- Municipal building, infrastructure, and public spaces.

Some initiatives will be completed over the next few years, and others will be undertaken as infrastructure is renewed.

To see the plan, visit [Sidney.ca](https://sidney.ca).

CHECK OUT NEW TAKE-HOME BIKE REPAIR KITS AND BIKE REPAIR STAND AT THE LIBRARY

Do you need to make some bike repairs but don't have the tools to get the job done?

Come by the library where you can borrow a bike repair kit with a range of tools to take home. You can also work on your bike outside the library, where the Town has installed a new bike repair station.

This initiative is one of many steps the Town is taking to support cycling in Sidney, following the approval of our first Active Transportation Plan.

Thank you to BC Alliance for Healthy Living for funding this project.

NEW COMMUNITY PARK TO BE ESTABLISHED ON THIRD STREET

The Town is purchasing a nearly one-acre parcel of land near downtown to serve as a community park. The property, located at 10103 and 10097 Third Street, near Rothesay Beach, has a long history of recreation and play - it was the former site of Discovery House Early Childhood Centre.

The decision to create the neighbourhood park follows the Town undertaking a Parkland Needs Assessment to identify gaps in Sidney's parks system. The Shoreacres area of Sidney was identified as a neighbourhood lacking a community park.

Recent changes to provincial legislation to increase housing density in BC communities are also expected to create more demand for parks.

The land is expected to be transferred to the municipality in spring 2024 and the Town will announce when the land is available for public use. At this time, the site remains private property.

The public will be invited to provide input on a park concept plan in the future to determine what amenities would be best for the new park.

GALARAN ROAD: BEFORE AND AFTER MAJOR ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Galaran Road has come a long way over the past year! There has been a full road resurfacing, the addition of sidewalks, plus distinct parking bays, landscaping, and more. This project has received some funding from an ICBC Road Safety Grant.

As the Beacon Avenue West Roundabout nears completion, this growing part of Sidney will be better able to support community safety, as well as residential and economic growth.



STOP BEFORE YOU CHOP DOWN A TREE

Planning on removing or extensively pruning a tree on your property? It is important to know in advance if you need a Tree Removal Permit. Urban trees provide many benefits to communities and some trees in our community are protected through the Tree Preservation Bylaw.

To find out whether you need a Tree Removal Permit, call our Parks Department at 250-656-1034 or email engineeringservices@sidney.ca. One of Sidney's arborists would be happy to speak with you before you get started.



VOLUNTEER TO HELP NEIGHBOURS THROUGH A DISASTER

Interested in helping community members in the event of a disaster? The Peninsula Emergency Measures Organization (PEMO) is accepting volunteers to support:

- Emergency Support Services
- Communications
- Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness

Contact the Sidney Fire Department at 250-656-2121 or firedept@sidney.ca.



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

DRAWING CONNECTIONS: 40 YEARS OF ART AND HOPE FOR THE SALISH SEA

New featured exhibit opened February 24

Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea (9811 Seaport Place)

A visual journey through ecological stories that have shaped this region, featuring works of renowned local artists.

SIDNEY ART WALK

March 15 - April 15

Downtown Sidney

Businesses throughout downtown Sidney will be displaying local artists' work and public art installations.

EASTER EGG HUNT

Sunday, March 31, 1:00pm to 2:00pm

Dominion Brook Park, North Saanich

Children are invited to bring their Easter Baskets to find hidden eggs, visit the Easter bunny, and enjoy games and activities.

OUR LIVING LANGUAGES: FIRST PEOPLES' VOICES IN BC

April 10 - July 25

Sidney Museum (2423 Beacon Avenue, Lower Level)

Learn about Indigenous language history and revitalization efforts in our province as well as our local SENĆOTEN language of the WSÁNEĆ peoples.