

CITIZENS RELEASE SAANICH COUNCIL VOTING RECORD

Council Voting Record available 12:01 AM Friday October at <http://www.saanichcivicleague.ca>

87% of respondents to the Saanich Civic League's Citizen Survey say they intend to vote in the November 15 municipal election, but three-quarters of them want to know more about their current mayor and councillors' own voting record before heading to the ballot box.

Only 19% of eligible Saanich voters voted in the last municipal election. According to the Union of B.C. Municipalities, Saanich had the fifth lowest voter turnout in B.C. (2005)

The values-based Saanich Civic League formed a year ago to kickstart citizen engagement at the local level, where it matters most. The non-partisan civic league's first measurable goal is to increase voter turnout in the November 15 Saanich municipal election. SCL developed 10 guiding values in consultation with community (values ranging from Government that Works for Citizens, to Leadership on Climate Change, to Quality Development). They then conducted a summer survey campaign asking neighbours what they value about Saanich, and how well Council is doing on those values. Door knocking garnered 300 survey responses in thirteen neighbourhoods. (Citizen Survey now available to residents on SCL website)

Survey comments verify what residents said on the doorstep. "People are willing to engage, they will talk on the doorstep for 45 minutes about what they desire for Saanich, but to vote they want unbiased information about what Council has done, and can do. Not just electioneering," says Saanich Civic League chair Sher Morgan. "Survey comments confirmed an appetite for information on who made what decisions at the council table in this last term of office."

I don't have time to attend Council Meetings...

Everyone sounds great at election time, but do they practice what they preach?

Track the performance of mayor and councillors...

I'm a new voter. I feel strongly about what I want but have no idea what council members are really doing in these areas.

Morgan says, "Citizens asked us for an authoritative voting tool. We heard people say – I need thorough research that will show me, at a glance, how each councillor votes --- to give me a sense of their values."

The Saanich Council Voting Record is comprised of eighteen motions, a table showing how each council member voted on each motion, and a Saanich Civic League statement on why the motion is important within the context of its established community values. Information was gleaned from publicly available Council Minutes on the District of Saanich website. An SCL committee worked for six months combing through Council Minutes dating from the time council took office December 2005 to the end of June 2008.

Vote for What You Value. Saanich Council Voting Record 2005-2008 is believed to be the first citizen-researched document of its kind in Greater Victoria. Find it on the Saanich Civic League website www.saanichcivicleague.ca