



Saanich MATTERS

Saanich Civic League E-Bulletin



September 13, 2008

What Does The CRD Do?

What does Saanich Council Do? see Sept 12 E-bulletin

As Saanich Civic League volunteers go door to door with our Saanich Citizen Survey, people say: I don't know what municipal government does. I don't understand the jurisdictional difference between Saanich Council and the CRD. Here are some answers to What is the CRD?

CRD members:

- Central Saanich
- Colwood
- Esquimalt
- Highlands
- Langford
- Metchosin
- North Saanich
- Oak Bay
- Saanich
- Sidney
- Sooke
- Victoria
- View Royal
- and the Juan de Fuca,
- Southern Gulf Islands, and Salt
- Spring Island electoral areas.

What is the Capital Regional District (CRD)?

There are 27 regional districts in British Columbia, a "federation of municipalities" concept that is unique within Canada. Our Capital Regional District is made up of 13 municipalities and three electoral areas governed by a board of 22 directors plus a chairperson. Saanich, being the most populated municipality in the region, has five directors at the CRD table, more than any other municipality. This means Saanich voters wield tremendous potential influence on quality of life in the region. Your values, your voice, your vote matter locally, regionally, globally.

What services are within the CRD's jurisdiction?

The CRD's purpose is to supply local services on a regional scale in concert with other municipalities. The province mandates some services:

- Solid Waste – Hartland Landfill, recycling, composting programs,
- Liquid Waste – sewage treatment, storm water management, etc,
- Water – CRD Water District supplies bulk drinking water to the municipalities for distribution,
- Regional parks and trails,
- Emergency preparedness and disaster response,
- Health – Taxpayer's regional contribution to local hospitals,
- Regional Growth Strategy,
- Custom services such as water, sewer, building codes, parks etc for the electoral areas Juan de Fuca, Southern Gulf Islands, and Salt Spring Island.

In addition to provincially mandated services, the CRD administers over 200 agreements between some, but not necessarily all, member municipalities. The Housing Trust Fund is an example of a select partnership agreement between only some municipalities within the CRD. The CRD can take the lead in fostering other regionally

appropriate initiatives, for instance arts development, water conservation, healthy communities, acquisition of parkland, the new Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, etc.

Regional Growth Strategy

How important is the CRD?

Under provincial law, a plan called the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) guides regional development, regional land use and regional transportation planning. The RGS directs municipalities within the CRD to shape a common growth strategy based on eight strategic initiatives

- Keep urban settlement compact;
- Protect the integrity of rural communities;
- Protect regional green and blue space;
- Manage natural resources and the environment sustainably;
- Build complete communities;
- Improve housing affordability;
- Increase transportation choice; and
- Strengthen the regional economy

Regional growth and management

The RGS defines the areas in municipalities available for development and those that are not to be developed. It also defines a network of regional growth centres for more intensive, mixed-use development, and a corresponding network of primary transportation corridors to service the centres. In theory, for example, the RGS calls for development of rapid transit on the primary corridors beginning with a direct link between downtown Victoria and Langford. In practice, however, the CRD appears lukewarm on implementing rapid transit because the suburban municipalities have a tendency to impede the strategy due to cost. If Saanich residents believe in rapid transit, for instance, we need to choose CRD directors who will be more vocal on this issue. The new Saanich Official Community Plan supports the compact centres-style of development required for rapid transit – not without controversy at Town and Country, and Royal Oak however.

One way for voters to evaluate the work of CRD directors and municipal councils would be to compare your municipality's **Official Community Plan (OCP)** with the Regional Growth Strategy and then track how often Mayor and Council vote in contravention to their OCP.

Hot topics for the CRD during the current three-year term, include:

The Bear Mountain Development – an amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy that changed the Highlands Urban Containment Boundary. Passed by one vote

Planning a new sewage treatment system for the region's core areas

The province's move to permit development of Timber Forest Lands (TFL) in the Juan de Fuca electoral area – a development in conflict with the provincially mandated Regional Growth Strategy that will impact all CRD municipalities in infrastructure management and costs for years to come.

Who represents Saanich on the CRD?

Most municipal councils in BC select their regional district representatives internally. In Saanich, we the voters select the councilors we want to serve Saanich on the CRD. When you mark your ballot this November, you are expected to indicate which **four council candidates** (plus mayor) **you want on CRD.**

You decide. VOTE Nov 15!

Useful links on CRD

Capital Regional District <http://www.crd.bc.ca/>

Saanich Official Community Plan

<http://www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/business/development/plan/ocp.html>

Union of BC Municipalities facts on municipal and regional government

<http://www.civicnet.bc.ca/siteengine/activepage.asp?PageID=279>

One citizen's comment on Bear Mountain debate (dated)

Urban Sprawl Affects Us All <http://www.rodglover.ca/ucb/>

Coming up

Upcoming E-Bulletins from Saanich Civic League

What Saanich Citizens are Saying: early results from the Saanich Civic League Citizen Survey, and

Local Agriculture & Food Security -How is Saanich doing?

Is this information useful to you ~

77% of Saanich Civic League survey respondents say voters need more information.

Just 19% of eligible Saanich residents voted in the last municipal election. **77% of residents** surveyed say voters need more information. **Help Saanich Civic League** provide the information your neighbours say they need to vote November 15.

If we receive the donations needed to cover SCL web costs, we plan to provide **non-partisan profiles** on **Candidates for Saanich Council**.

If this information is useful to you, please **DONATE** or **join now** <http://www.saanichcivicleague.ca/membership.html> **Thank you!**