



Clayton Hunt with a tray of Polyanthus Flowers for use in Sidney's winter gardens. Get winter gardening tips. [SEE PAGE 2](#)

New Official Community Plan nearly ready for public review

The year ahead looks to be a significant one for Sidney as we aim to complete our Official Community Plan update. The plan will guide decisions on land use and planning over the next 20 years, and offer community members a sense of where and how future development will likely occur.

It is a process that relies on strong public engagement to build consensus. Thankfully Sidney community members have been up to the challenge. From September 2020 to June 2021, we heard from the public, local First Nations, and stakeholders through an open house, virtual workshops, meetings, surveys, and other forms of engagement, totaling more than 1,600 interactions.

The input was used to draft a Key Directions Report, which was released for public review from September-October 2021. The review period was an opportunity to check in with the community and see if the plan is on the right track. It includes broad policy direction on a limited number of issues that came up often in the OCP engagement phase. Some of the policy guidelines in the Key Directions Report include (among others):

- Limiting density and building heights to a maximum of three storeys along

Beacon Avenue between Fifth and Second Street and four storeys elsewhere downtown.

- Exploring the feasibility of encouraging redevelopment of older homes next to Mermaid Creek with greater setbacks from the creek. This would make room for an enhanced public trail, native plant restoration, and better stormwater management.
- Encouraging garden suites, secondary suites, and duplexes throughout Sidney's residential neighbourhoods with Form and Character guidelines to enhance neighbourhood character while regulating safety and privacy.

Through the Key Directions Report review process, another 57 feedback submissions were received from the public. These were shared with the OCP Advisory Committee and Council. This input is helping inform the development of the draft OCP, which is currently being written.

In early 2022, the community will be invited to get involved once more by reviewing the draft OCP. Thank you in advance for your ongoing contributions to this planning process!

BEACON WHARF UPDATE



Update on planning for the future of the Beacon Wharf. [SEE PAGE 4](#)

CLIMATE ACTION



Exploring the 8 focus areas of the Climate Action Plan update. [SEE PAGE 5](#)

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Where to turn for information during an emergency. [SEE PAGE 8](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES



Parking Lot B re-opens. [SEE PAGE 2](#)

Message from Mayor and Council

Thanks for opening up the newest edition of Town Talk. You may notice it has a new look. We refreshed the layout and branding to make it easier to navigate and more inviting to read. Let us know what you think.

We put extra thought into Town Talk because it is an important way of sharing what projects and issues the Town and Council are working on, and highlighting ways you can get involved.

In these pages, you'll find that we are looking at ways we can reduce our carbon emissions in Sidney through an updated Climate Action Plan, and making Sidney a safer place for pedestrians and cyclists through infrastructure improvements.

We know that whether you are walking or driving into downtown Sidney, construction throughout 2021 created some disruption. Several development projects are moving into new phases, which means it is our turn to enjoy these revitalized sidewalks and the return of public parking spaces.

This fall, many people spoke up about the future of Beacon Wharf. We appreciated this level of engagement and recognize how special the wharf is to the community. You will find Council's decision on the matter here, as well as next steps.

We have seen some extreme weather over the past year. You may be wondering where to turn when you need urgent information. We have included some key resources on the back page of Town Talk that you can cut out and put in a safe place if you like.

The pandemic has continued much longer than we could have anticipated. And while life has been returning to normal in some ways, members of Council can certainly feel the effect physical distancing has had on our ability to welcome more than a handful of people to Council Chambers and connect with community members at events.

I extend an invitation for you to call, write, or request a meeting with Council members, when something Town-related is on your mind. We could meet by Zoom, over the phone, or in-person. Just reach out at admin@sidney.ca or 250-656-1139. When we take time to connect and listen to each other, we have a much better chance of finding practical solutions, or helping an exciting idea come to fruition.

On behalf of Council, I wish everyone a safe and happy new year!



Councillors Terri O'Keefe, Barbara Fallot, Scott Garnett, Mayor Cliff McNeil-Smith, Councillors Chad Rintoul, Sara Duncan, and Peter Wainwright

NEW SPACES TO WALK, ROLL AND PARK IN DOWNTOWN SIDNEY



Over the past year, we've experienced some growing pains in downtown Sidney as some major construction projects made sidewalks and parking spaces temporarily unavailable.

Now several of those projects are past the initial construction phase, and public street spaces are returning to the community.

When these spaces re-open, ageing infrastructure is refreshed and upgraded. Often this means wider sidewalks of new brick-lock, with new public amenities and natural components to enjoy such as benches, bike racks, and trees.

The completion of the Oceanna building on the corner of Third Street and Sidney Avenue has also meant the re-opening of Parking Lot B - with 35 free parking spaces with a three-hour limit. Like the public parking lot under the Sidney Pier Hotel, these spaces are meant to be well-used, not best-kept-secrets.

Thank you for your patience during this period of change. Please take advantage of the public amenities that follow the upheaval of construction!

Gardening tips for the winter season

BY: CLAYTON HUNT

Feature Gardner Bio: Clayton grew up in Sidney and one of his first jobs was working at Marigold Nursery on Lochside Drive. In a happy coincidence, Clayton's hockey coach was the Parks Superintendent for the Town of Sidney. He encouraged Clayton to follow his passion for plants. Clayton began working with the Town in 2008 and now serves as Gardener for the downtown area.

I know that in January and February, it can seem like the gardening season is months away, but there's actually a lot you can do to get ready for spring.

Hedges & grasses

This is a great time of year for trimming hedges and cutting perennial grasses. You will see the Parks team doing hedgework throughout Town in January and February, preventing these features from losing their shape and getting overgrown.

Garden prep

If you haven't pulled your summer annuals yet, there's still time. You can compost last year's flowers and add mulch to your gardens and planters, priming them for the spring season.

Winter is also a great time to step back and consider whether you want to expand or change your gardens. We design our flower beds many months in advance and are continually evaluating what is working and what we'd like to improve.

An area I'm currently experimenting with is what I call the "Wedding Cake". This is the



||| Town Gardeners plant winter blooms in the "Wedding Cake" garden at the end of Beacon Ave.

round tiered garden within the roundabout at the end of Beacon Avenue. It is a very exposed location that is hit hard by ocean winds. I'm trying polyanthus flowers in the Wedding Cake during the winter since they bloom through the cold season. Take a look when you're down that way to see a pop of purple and red flowers with yellow centres set against strong textured leaves.

Winter blooms

Winter blooms aren't possible for every gardener in Canada, but we are some of the lucky few here in Sidney. The flowers I use most during the winter are pansies and bellis (English daisies). They keep blooming through the winter with their foliage spreading out to create green cover. If they are hit with a cold snap or snowfall,



||| Planning for Sidney's spring blooms

they generally go dormant for that short period and recover quickly. After some initial watering to help the plants settle in, these flowers don't require much maintenance - there is plenty of winter rain to keep them hydrated. I deadhead the pansies along Beacon Avenue once a month to make way for new blooms.

It's never a bad time to plant some pansies, but if you want to get the most out of your winter flowers, I suggest doing your planting in October so you can tuck tulip bulbs underground at the same time and enjoy the fruits of your labour for as long as possible.

If you see me at work around Town, please don't hesitate to say hi and ask me any gardening questions you may have!



||| Polyanthus flowers bloom during the cold season



RCMP: Online and phone fraud

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SCAMS AND FRAUD

Corporal Andres Sanchez, Operations Support
NCO/Media Relations Officer Sidney and North
Saanich RCMP

A growing concern in Sidney is the prevalence of those who look to take advantage of community members through the internet and over the phone. As a police officer, I have seen the direct effect that both cybercrime and telephone fraud have on local residents. Here are some tips to help you avoid becoming a victim:

1. If a telemarketer tries to get you to buy something or to send them money right away, don't be afraid to say no. Hang up or request the information in writing
2. Always verify that the organization you're dealing with is legitimate before you take action. For example, you can verify Canadian charities with the Canada Revenue Agency and verify any calls with your credit card company by calling the phone number on the back of your credit card.
3. Beware of unsolicited calls where the caller asks you for personal information, such as your birthdate, Social Insurance Number, credit card or banking information. If you didn't initiate the call, you don't know who you're talking to.
4. Many scams request you to pay fees in advance of receiving goods, services, or a prize. It's illegal for a company to ask you to pay a fee upfront before they'll give you a loan. There are no prize fees or taxes in Canada. If you won it, it's free.
5. Watch out for urgent-looking messages that pop up while you're browsing online. Don't click on them or call the number they provide. Never give anyone remote access to your computer. If you are having problems with your system, bring it to a local technician.
6. Protect your online accounts by creating strong passwords that are different for each online account.

If in doubt, ask a friend or family member for their opinion or feel free to call me (250-656-3931) for assistance. Additional information can be obtained through the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraud.ca.



Update on the future of Beacon Wharf

This past fall, Town and Council turned to the public for input on planning for the future of the Beacon Wharf, which will likely reach the end of its life over the next 8-10 years. Members of the public sent in more than 1,000 survey responses to share their perspectives. The survey results are summarized below:

- 42.4% of respondents selected the option to maintain the wharf until the end of its life, and then do not replace it
- 27.1% of respondents selected "Other", which frequently came with comments requesting that the wharf continue to be repaired and kept as is
- 21.2% of respondents selected the option of replacing the wharf with a floating wharf under the proposed Public-Private Partnership
- 9.3% of respondents commented that the issue needs further study of options before a decision is made

One common misconception that appeared in comments related to sea level rise. Some respondents questioned engineering studies that stated a fixed replacement wharf would need to be built 2.5 metres higher than the end of Beacon Avenue to meet sea level rise over the next 50 years. It is important to note that sea level is expected to rise 0.8m over the next 50 years, not 2.5 metres. The added height would be required to prevent flooding due to storm surges and waves.

The level of community engagement around Beacon Wharf planning was remarkable and spoke to how much people care about Sidney's future, its character, and its waterfront. Thank you to everyone who took the time to get involved!

This input guided Council's decision on November 8th to maintain Beacon Wharf for as long as practical. Another condition assessment of the wharf will be undertaken in 2023, at which point Council will consider next steps.

The community expressed a strong attachment to the buildings on Beacon Wharf, especially the often-photographed Fish Market. Council has decided to extend the existing commercial leases on the wharf until the end of 2024 with the potential of future extensions.

There were many concerns expressed about the proposed public-private partnership on a floating wharf. Given this feedback, Council will not proceed further with that option.



Exploring the 8 focus areas of the Climate Action Plan update

The Climate Action Plan is currently in the process of being updated. This Plan will address eight different areas where we can take action on climate change, such as transportation, buildings, natural environment, and infrastructure. Over the past few weeks, the Town has been sharing fun facts about each of the plan's eight different "focus areas" on social media, and encouraging people to take the survey. Since social media isn't for everyone, we're recapping the information here!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey, your feedback is greatly appreciated. For those who missed it, there will be more climate action engagement opportunities to come this year. Your feedback is also welcome anytime at climateaction@sidney.ca.

Transportation

Since transportation makes up half of Sidney's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, it's also our biggest opportunity to make a difference! Consider choosing to walk, bike (either regular or electric), carpool, or bus when running errands and commuting. If you're on the fence about switching to an Electric Vehicle (EV) for those longer trips, check out the rebates available from Go Electric BC!

Buildings

The energy we use to heat, cool, and power our buildings is Sidney's second biggest source of GHG emissions, mostly from oil and natural gas. If you switch from oil or gas to an electric heat pump, you could be eligible for \$1000s in rebates! Not sure where to start? The CleanBC program offers FREE energy coaching to guide you (you can call them at 1-844-881-9790).

Land Use

How the land is planned can have a big impact on emissions. When people are close to their daily needs, like a coffee shop, bus stop, or grocery store, it makes it easier to choose to walk or roll! The Town of Sidney Official Community Plan is currently being updated with climate action in mind; check out www.sidney.ca/ocp for more information.



Community members across demographics have voiced a commitment to taking climate action in Sidney. On October 16th, volunteers made a difference by taking part in a tree planting event in Melville Park. For more information on Tree Appreciation Day in 2021. [SEE PAGE 6](#)

Food & Waste

Composting organic waste (like our food scraps and garden waste) instead of it going to the landfill in our garbage bins can play an important part in reducing the GHG emissions that come from our waste.

Natural Environment

Trees are multi-talented: they help keep us cool during warmer days, improve the energy efficiency of homes by helping insulate from wind, and absorb water from storms through their root systems.

Town Leadership

As a local government, the Town's biggest source of emissions is its vehicle fleet. That's why we continue to transition our vehicles to electric and hybrid models where possible.

Infrastructure

One way the Town is preparing for future impacts of climate change is by being proactive about considering how changing weather patterns will impact infrastructure, like the impact of rainier days on storm water pipes.

Emergency Preparedness

The Sidney Fire Department doesn't only respond to things like fires and floods in the community. It also prepares for long term future risks with the Emergency Management team, by developing plans such as the Heat Response Plan, and by regularly updating the Town's Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessment.



SIDNEY FIRE DEPARTMENT'S SMOKE ALARM AND HOME SAFE INSPECTION PROGRAM

Did you know that in the event of a house fire, your chances of survival increase by 74% if you are alerted by a working smoke detector?

If you own or rent in Sidney and would like your existing smoke detector checked, or a new battery powered smoke detector installed, please call the Sidney Fire Department at 250-656-2121 or email fire-dept@sidney.ca to set up a free appointment. Please note that hard-wired alarms requiring replacement must be serviced by a qualified electrician.

The Fire Department can also conduct a home safety assessment, which includes your home fire escape plan. They also offer a variety of presentations on fire safety and emergency preparedness topics.



UPGRADES TO PAVED MULTI-USE PATH ALONG THE WEST SIDE OF PAT BAY HIGHWAY

Active transportation along the west side of Pat Bay Highway is getting better as upgrades continue to be made to the multiuse pathway. The formerly narrow and bumpy path is being smoothed out and widened to 2.5 metres with lighting installed along it. In 2020, upgrades were made from Beacon Avenue West to Henry Avenue West. This year, upgrades were made from Henry Avenue West to Malaview Avenue West. In years to come, the upgrades are slated to stretch all the way to the McDonald Park Road overpass.



NEW TREES IN SIDNEY

As part of Tree Appreciation Day in Sidney on October 16th, volunteers took part in a tree planting event at Melville Park. The Town also gave out more than 80 trees to community members and groups in October who are helping create a beautiful tree canopy in Sidney for future generations to take shade under.

What happened to those little Douglas fir saplings that weren't chosen? The Parks Department took them to their shade house and potted them. The young trees are now thriving and will end up planted in key locations in Town. Please note: we've spotted a few saplings planted without permission in local Parks. Please be sure to check with us first!



LOWERING EMISSIONS FROM PARK MAINTENANCE

The Parks Department is trying to green its operations as well as our public spaces! We are reducing emissions by transitioning away from gas-operated equipment where possible. Keep an eye out for electric golf carts and battery-powered equipment around Town.

ALERT THE TOWN IF YOU SEE HAZARDOUS TREES

If you see a tree on Town property -including the right-of-way in front of your home - with branches that are at risk of falling, please alert the Town. One of our professional Arborists can safely inspect and trim hazardous trees.



SNOW REMOVAL REMINDER

If we experience snowfall this winter, please do your part to keep the Town safe and accessible by clearing snow and ice from the sidewalk along your property, business, or home. This is a requirement under the Town's Streets and Traffic Regulation Bylaw No. 1966 (sec. 51).

If you can, please consider extending a hand to neighbours who need assistance with snow clearing.

The Town will work to keep major and collector streets open and clear snow and ice from as many local streets as possible on a priority basis, particularly those in the downtown area. As time permits, we will also clear ice and snow from intersections and bus stops, beginning with high-use areas.

Thank you for your help on snowy days!



REMINDER: BE SURE YOUR 72 HOUR EMERGENCY KIT IS READY

If there is a disaster, you may need to be self-sufficient for at least 72-hours without running water or electricity. Be sure you have an emergency kit ready to help you and your family through this time. Don't forget about medications! Refill your prescriptions regularly so you don't run out of critical medication in an emergency. Learn more about building an emergency kit online at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management>



ANNUAL LEGO BRICK EXHIBITION

January 2-March 31, 2022

Sidney Museum

The always popular LEGO Brick Exhibition is returning to the Sidney Museum. To commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the Anacortes Ferry the theme for the exhibition this year will be sea-faring vessels. The exhibition will showcase hundreds of LEGO sets from the Museum's own collection, alongside several kits loaned from local collectors, ranging from fairy tale castles to 1960s pop culture icons. More details to come on a special event for Family Day weekend.



ADULT WINTER READING CLUB

January & February

The evenings are long, dark, and often wet! It's the perfect the time of year to curl up with a good book someplace warm and cozy. To make your reading activity even more enjoyable, the Vancouver Island Regional Library has created a winter reading club - for adults! Lots of reading, special events, challenges and chances to win some terrific prizes, coming up in January and February 2022. Stay tuned at: virl.bc.ca/calendar

FAMILY LITERACY WEEK 2022: LEARNING IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

January 21-30, 2022

Sidney/North Saanich Library

We'll have fun, free literacy activities for the whole family happening to support learning, reading and playing together.

SIDNEY EMPLOYMENT EXPO

February 24, 2022

Mary Winspear Centre

2:00pm to 6:00pm

To facilitate the connection of local employers and job seekers, the Sidney BIA and Beacon Community Services are proud to present a free career fair, the Sidney Employment Expo! This community event will bring together job seekers, local businesses and business support programs such as inclusive hiring programs, grant opportunities, co-op programs and more for a lively afternoon of networking and career development. For more information or to register your business, visit sidneybia.ca/expo



Where to turn for information during an emergency

If there is an extreme weather event or emergency in Sidney, it is important to know where you can find safety information and updates. Below are resources organized by the severity of the situation.

Potentially Life-Threatening Event

- **Saanich Peninsula Alert**

Register: saanichpeninsulaalert.connectrocket.com

Sidney, North Saanich, and Central Saanich send public safety alerts with critical and potentially life-saving information to those who have registered for the free service. Alerts are sent for events such as earthquakes, tsunami alerts, evacuation notices, or other safety threats. You will receive a phone call or text message when an alert is sent out.

- **Boil Water Advisory**

www.crd.bc.ca/about/alerts-notice

If the drinking water in Sidney is unsafe to drink, this will first be detected and reported by the Capital Regional District who manages our drinking water system. This advisory will then be shared through a variety of local media and information providers to increase its reach.

- **Town of Sidney website**

www.sidney.ca

The Town of Sidney will have a red banner at the top of its homepage sharing critical information if a serious event has occurred. If the event happens outside of business hours, this is updated by the Sidney Volunteer Fire Department at their earliest opportunity.

- **Local Radio**

If you do not have internet connection, tune into local radio station for updates such as CBC Radio (90.5 FM)

Potentially Disruptive Event

- **Sidney Volunteer Fire Department 250-656-2121**

If there is a major snowstorm, minor flood, significant road closure, power outage or other event, you can reach out to the Sidney Volunteer Fire Department for more information and help.

- **Social Media from the Sidney Volunteer Fire Department and the Town of Sidney Facebook**

www.twitter.com/sidneyfire

www.facebook.com/townofsidneybc

www.twitter.com/townofsidneybc

The Sidney Volunteer Fire Department stays on top of emergency situations round the clock and sends updates out over Twitter during major events. During regular business hours, you can find updates on disruptive events from closures to extreme weather, along with information on resources and services available to community members on the Town's social media feeds.

Preparing for an Emergency

- **Prepare Yourself workbook**

If an emergency occurs, you may find that you need to be self-sufficient for a period of time. You may not be at home when this unexpected event occurs. The Town of Sidney worked with the Capital Regional District and other municipalities to put together a workbook that outlines key steps on how to prepare for emergencies in this unique region. Get your own copy from the CRD website and fill it out so you have plans in place for an emergency.

The Sidney Volunteer Fire Department also offers emergency preparedness presentations that can be booked by calling 250-656-2121

