

Mayor's Remarks on 2006 Strategic Progress

As we look back on our strategic progress during 2006, our centennial year, I want to take this opportunity to highlight a few of the many accomplishments in our six theme areas. Before I do so, however, I want to recognize the contributions of those who developed the 2006 - 2010 strategic focus and those whose efforts saw the completion and progression of 88% of the 82 priority initiatives. Thank you to everyone involved including the Council, advisory committees, community associations, employees, and, of course, our citizens.

I'll begin my highlights with the **Healthy Community** theme which seeks to promote an active, balanced, and secure lifestyle for all our residents.

- I am pleased to advise that the citizen satisfaction rating of recreation and cultural services went from 67% in 2003 to 71% in 2006. At the same time the citizen quality of life rating increased from 80% to 88%.
- The Heritage Action Plan was completed in 2006 and provides the framework to implement and fulfill the recommendations and policies of our Heritage Management Plan.
- Saanich continues to improve community infrastructure with the redevelopment of G. R. Pearkes Community Recreation Centre, Gordon Head Middle School, and the start of the Layritz Park Sportfield and Trail Development Project.

As we progress toward a **Sustainable Environment** our many climate change initiatives will become increasingly important.

- To this end, Saanich worked with the CRD to complete a Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory, which established community-wide and corporate GHG and Energy baselines from which to measure future reductions.
- In order to address the Riparian Area Regulation and ensure stewardship of the environment, a new Streamside Development Permit Area was adopted in 2006. This flexible system offers land owners two different approaches to meet or exceed the Regulation.

Three of the initiatives undertaken to support a **Vibrant, Connected Economy** include:

- Establishment of a Community Tourism Program with Provincial Funding. In addition to direct assistance to Saanich, this program assisted the Glendale Gardens and the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary.
- Implementation of a sustainability checklist to bring awareness to the economic impact of development proposals.
- Initiation of the BizPal Project in partnership with the Province in order to streamline and increase one-stop online access to business and development related information 24/7.

Increasing our emergency preparedness using a multi-faceted approach will ensure that Saanich is a **Safe Community** now and in the future.

- In 2006 work continued on the Post Disaster Response initiative including the training of personnel, the purchase of supplies, and construction of the post disaster dispatch communication centre which is 60% complete.
- Another important initiative was the Extreme Weather Protocol in which Saanich worked with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre to establish 25 beds.

As our municipality and region continue to grow, the **Balanced Transportation** theme undertakes initiatives to keep "People in Motion".

- The West Saanich Road Streetscape project is the culmination of more than five years of planning, design and construction and will enhance the public amenities for residents and businesses. The changes in road design have resulted in additional green space, sidewalks and bicycle lanes, and have helped to reduce traffic speed through this busy area.
- Stage 2 of the Interurban Rail Trail was completed in 2006. This multi-use trail section between Hartland Avenue and Wallace Drive makes the Centennial Trail link between the urban and rural areas of Saanich. With other sections of the Centennial Trail soon to be completed, residents can look forward to travel from some of our major centres, such as Royal Oak and McKenzie/Quadra to rural farmland, all in the safety and enjoyment that such a trail provides.

In Saanich we believe that the heart of service is people. The many initiatives of the **Service Excellence** theme along with those of our other themes were instrumental in improving our 2006 citizen satisfaction ratings in areas such as citizen engagement, value for money, and customer service which achieved 80%.

- Saanich enhanced its service delivery last year in a number of areas, including harmonized development application forms with the core municipalities, and a unified customer call tracking and response system for Public Works service requests.

All of these accomplishments are consistent with our Saanich Vision for 2025 which is described in our Annual Report. I commend this document to you as an update on how “team Saanich” works to make a great municipality even better.