

**BEFORE YOU VOTE
GET THE FACTS**



Everything You Need to Know About Sooke Gathering Place

How will Sooke Gathering Place benefit the community?

- A shared community resource that can adapt to changing needs.
- Reducing social isolation and loneliness, especially for seniors and youth
- Supporting healthy aging and independent living
- Providing affordable space for community organizations
- Encouraging volunteerism; supporting volunteer connections
- Creating opportunities for people of different generations to connect
- Strengthening the social fabric of Sooke by bringing residents together
- Encouraging community collaboration and shared resources and services
- Supporting youth activities and mentorship opportunities
- Providing much-needed space for arts, culture, recreation, education, celebrations, exhibitions, presentations, community gatherings
- An investment in the long-term health, resilience, and vitality of the Sooke Region.

What is the Sooke Gathering Place?

- A proposed multi-purpose inter-generational community hub
- Designed to bring people together, reduce isolation, support health, wellness, learning, and connection.
- Welcoming, accessible, vibrant, flexible, functional, inclusive space/s.
- A place where seniors can stay active and independent, families can gather, youth can participate in programs, and community organizations can share and collaborate.

Why does Sooke need it?

- Sooke is one of the fastest-growing communities on Vancouver Island in all age groups. More than 35% of its population is over the age of 55, and doubling by 2046.
- Youth, community groups, and non-profit organizations are competing for limited meeting and program space.
- Connection is important for a vital, healthy, happy community.

What is guiding the planning and design of Sooke Gathering Place?

- SGP is being shaped by ongoing community engagement and years of planning by the Sooke Region Communities Health Network and its partners.
- Feedback from the community continues, ensuring that the building reflects the priorities and aspirations of the people who will use it.

Who will manage and operate Sooke Gathering Place?

- Managed, and operated by the Sooke Region Communities Health Network (SRCHN), a charitable organization focused on improving health, wellness, and community connection in the Sooke region.
- Operations are community driven and responsive, supported through a collaborative model that includes staff volunteers, and community advisory committees.
- Shared model for partner organizations to contribute through volunteering, partnerships, and program delivery.

What programs, services will be part of the Gathering Place?

- Health and wellness programs
- Arts, music, crafts, and cultural activities
- Educational workshops and lifelong learning
- Community meals and social events
- Fitness and recreation programs
- Volunteer and outreach services
- Intergenerational activities that bring seniors, families, youth, and children together
- Meeting and event space for non-profit organizations

What is the potential Gathering Place location referred to as “Lot A”?

- Lot A is at 6671 Wadams Way, and is owned by the District of Sooke.
- The community has identified uses for Lot A as a medical facility, library, community activity centre and community park space. (District of Sooke 2019).
- On July 13, 2026 District of Sooke council approved a motion to hold land on Lot A “...in reserve for a public plaza and the Gathering Place...” for 5 years.

Will other location options be considered for Sooke Gathering Place?

- Yes, other opportunities may come available while plans are being developed. SRCHN is committed to delivering Sooke Gathering Place in a way that remains realistic, sustainable, and achievable for the Sooke Region.
- As one example, space in the Urgent Primary Care Centre that is under development on “Lot A” may become available for Sooke Gathering Place.

What is a plebiscite?

- A non-binding opinion question asks voters for their opinion. It helps Council understand public support but does not legally require Council to proceed with borrowing, construction, or any specific project.
- On November 15, 2014, District of Sooke voters supported developing local multi-use community centre facilities serving seniors and youth (82.9% of votes).

When will a plebiscite take place and who is eligible to vote?

- It will take place in conjunction with the next municipal election in October 2026.
- District of Sooke voters will be asked their opinion on the District borrowing up to a maximum of \$5M for construction and initial and operation start-up of the Sooke Gathering Place inter-generational centre.

LOT A



Would a “YES” vote authorize borrowing?

- No. A “YES” vote would not authorize borrowing. If a majority of voters indicate support, Council will need more information before any borrowing considerations.

Would a “YES” vote approve the Sooke Gathering Place project?

- No. A “YES” vote would not approve a project budget, construction, site, lease, ownership arrangement, agreement, delivery model, or operating plan. These details would have to be considered carefully prior to any approvals by Council.

What would happen if a majority of voters vote “YES”?

- A “YES” result would indicate support for the District to examine potential borrowing, feasibility, funding models, and implementation approaches in more detail.
- Working with SRCHN and community representatives, District staff would report back to Council on next steps, including feasibility and business planning, capital and operating impacts, potential partner or agency roles, delivery models, site and tenure considerations, taxpayer implications, and any further statutory approval requirements.

What would happen if a majority of voters vote “NO”?

- A “NO” result would indicate that a majority of voters do not support the District pursuing the project with potential borrowing of up to \$5 million at this time.
- Council would then determine whether any alternative next steps should be considered.

Why is the amount “up to \$5 million”?

The \$5 million figure is a planning threshold for public opinion purposes only.

Including an “up to” amount is intended to help obtain a tangible and informed response from voters by identifying the maximum level of potential District borrowing that may be considered, should future feasibility work indicate that borrowing is necessary.

Will residents have opportunities to ask questions before the vote?

Yes. Residents need accurate information and opportunities to ask questions before making an informed decision.

This FAQ is one way to provide clear, factual answers directly from the project team. SRCHN will continue to update it as new questions arise and additional information becomes available.

SRCHN will hold information sessions where residents can learn more and ask questions. We welcome thoughtful dialogue.

Does this mean my taxes will increase?

A YES vote on the plebiscite for Sooke Gathering Place would not itself raise taxes.

Any potential tax impact would come through the District's annual budgeting process

Tax implications will depend on how much other funding is secured through grants, donations, and partnerships, and how much is actually borrowed (it may be less than the maximum)



**Vote YES
on your election
ballot in October.**

Projected Cost Scenario

Borrowing Amount	Estimated Annual Debt Servicing	Approximate Municipal Tax Increase	Approximate Monthly Impact for Average Residential Property	Approximate Annual Impact for Average Residential Property
\$2,000,000	\$147,164	1.02%	\$1.70	\$20.41
\$3,000,000	\$220,745	1.53%	\$2.55	\$30.62
\$4,000,000	\$294,327	2.04%	\$3.40	\$40.82
\$5,000,000	\$367,909	2.55%	\$4.25	\$51.03



What other funding sources are being pursued besides borrowing?

SRCHN is actively pursuing a range of complementary funding sources to reduce the overall cost to taxpayers and strengthen long-term sustainability.

Local community fundraising efforts have already raised over \$400,000, demonstrating strong support and commitment to the project.

A YES vote will put SRCHN in a stronger position to pursue additional funding opportunities. This includes government grants, philanthropic contributions, private donations, corporate sponsorship, and in-kind support from partners and local organizations.

These partnerships could significantly offset overall project costs.

Would future borrowing require another approval process?

Yes. Any future long-term borrowing would require further Council consideration and any applicable statutory approval requirements before proceeding.

How can I support the project?

Spread the Word. Increasing awareness and engagement is an important contribution. Share information, attend public events, participate in discussions to ensure that the project reflects the needs and priorities of the community.

Businesses may contribute as financial sponsor, donors, or partnerships that help offset construction and operating costs.

In addition, in-kind contributions such as materials, equipment, professional services, or skilled labour can significantly reduce overall project expenses.

Contribute to fundraising efforts. Local fundraising helps demonstrate strong local commitment and strengthens the ability to secure additional funding from government grants, sponsors, and partners.

New opportunities for supporting the project will unfold as the project develops.

VOTE YES on your election ballot in October.

I want to help. Can I volunteer?

- YES! Volunteers are an important part of bringing Sooke Gathering Place to life and will continue to play a key role as the project moves forward.
- Sooke Gathering Place, and the YES campaign will need volunteers to help with fundraising activities, community events, outreach and engagement, or contributing expertise in areas such as planning, communications, programming, or operations.
- When Sooke Gathering Place is established, volunteers will also be essential to its day-to-day success—helping support programs, events, hospitality, and community activities that make the space welcoming and active.
- To volunteer, please complete an application on the SRCHN website.

**Visit SookeRegionCHN.org or
Email Mary.Dunn@SookeRegionchn.org**



**SOOKE REGION COMMUNITIES
HEALTH NETWORK**
SRCHN

