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## Transportation and Land Use in Saanich, BC

### A Community Vision Forms the Basis for Real Change!

Using a collaborative charrette event, residents and stakeholders in the Gorge/Tillicum/Burnside area of Saanich, BC, created a plan recommending two vibrant mixed use corridors, anchored by urban village centers. The charrette results formed the basis of a Streetscape Action Plan adopted by the District of Saanich, and some of the recommended improvements will be constructed in spring 2006!

The Gorge/Tillicum/Burnside community includes a range of attractive housing options, excellent regional access, an active retail core, and a variety of community amenities. Yet there are opportunities to improve the community by addressing issues such as heavy traffic, a lack of facilities for pedestrians, cyclists or transit, and low-intensity land uses.

To address these issues, the District of Saanich prepared an Action Plan for the Gorge/Tillicum/Burnside community. As part of that process, the Gorge/Tillicum Community Association engaged Smart Growth BC to coordinate a public forum and an exciting weekend "charrette." These events addressed improvements to the Tillicum and Burnside corridors and the three urban villages at the major intersections.

The public forum was held on September 22, 2003, and included a presentation by Jodie Siu on smart growth and transportation. Click [here](#) to view the presentation (.pdf – 2 MB).

Then, on October 17 through 19, 2003, a dedicated group of community leaders (including residents, local property owners, developers, and other citizens) came together to create a plan to apply smart transportation solutions in the Tillicum Road and Burnside Road corridors. This intensive weekend was called a charrette, a collaborative event that brings together people who have an interest in their community. In an atmosphere of trust, professional architects and planners help these stakeholders make their own design decisions through a process of building consensus. The highly interactive and collaborative process has been used throughout BC to create community visions and identify opportunities to achieve those visions.

The charrette event for the Gorge/Tillicum/Burnside community was facilitated by Franc D'Ambrosio (D'Ambrosio architecture + urbanism) and his staff, along with Patrick Condon (UBC James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Liveable Environments). With their assistance, the charrette participants worked hard over the entire weekend to prepare plans for the Tillicum and Burnside corridors and three urban villages at the major intersections (Tillicum/Gorge, Tillicum/Burnside, and Burnside/Harriet). Key recommendations included:

- ◆ Improving the opportunities for walking, cycling, and transit, by slowing traffic and enhancing infrastructure such as sidewalks
- ◆ Increasing the variety of housing choices available in the community, particularly through redevelopment along Tillicum Road and Burnside Road
- ◆ Enhancing the village ambiance of the area by improvements to the appearance and function of several key sites

An open house was held at the end of the charrette event to present the draft plans to the public. Over 40 residents, property owners, and other interested persons came to view the plans, ask questions, and provide feedback to the representatives who participated in the charrette.

D'Ambrosio architecture + urbanism transformed the draft plans into final form, based on input received at the public open house. To see the final report, click [here](#) (.pdf - 3.65 MB). To see a checklist which you can use to evaluate smart transportation in your community, click [here](#) (.pdf - 2 MB).

The charrette report was used by the District of Saanich to help create a Streetscape Action Plan, which was adopted in June 2005. Funding has been set aside to construct the first phase of improvements along Burnside Road, including landscaped medians, street trees, and bike lanes on both sides of the street.

Financial support for this project was provided by the Gorge/Tillicum Community Association, the Victoria Foundation (Willard & Elva Dawson Fund), Moving on Sustainable Transportation (a program of Transport Canada), and the District of Saanich. In addition, a portion of the services provided by D'Ambrosio architecture + urbanism was contributed in-kind.