

Thursday, February 27, 2025

## Open House at Tillicum Elementary Invites Community Feedback on Outdoor Design with Climate Focus in Partnership with the District of Saanich

**VICTORIA, BC** – The Greater Victoria School District and the District of Saanich are hosting a collaborative open house on Tuesday, March 11 at Tillicum Elementary School to gather feedback on a proposed design for the school’s exterior landscape. The design aims to mitigate growing climate change impacts while incorporating Indigenous plants and an outdoor classroom (subject to funding). All members of the community are welcome to drop-in and share their input between 4:00pm and 6:00pm. For those who cannot attend, an online survey will be available for feedback from March 11 to April 8.

Attendees will learn about:

- The Tillicum Green Infrastructure Project, a partnership project coordinated by the District of Saanich to mitigate climate change and upgrade the Tillicum-Burnside area with more tree canopy cover.
- The importance of climate change awareness and the impacts of extreme heat and rainfall.
- Native tree planting, vegetation, and raingardens and their ability to mitigate climate hazards.
- The importance of Indigenous knowledge when restoring and caring for natural areas.
- Future project engagement opportunities including a blessing of the land when the time comes to begin planting, in-class learning for students and staff, and a ceremony to celebrate the project once completed.

Attendees will be asked to share their feedback on a proposed design which includes:

- Cluster planting (trees and vegetation) with split rail fencing in various areas on the school site.
- Tree planting in various areas on the school site.
- A potential raingarden (subject to grant body approval).
- An outdoor classroom (subject to funding).

For those unable to attend in person, an [online survey](#) will be available to collect feedback, **opening on March 11** and will remain open throughout Spring Break, closing on April 8.

**OPEN HOUSE:** Tillicum Elementary School (3155 Albina Street) Gymnasium

**Drop-in:** March 11, 2025 from 4:00pm and 6:00pm

**ONLINE SURVEY:** <https://forms.office.com/r/U18CmCR0dK>

**Opens:** March 11, 2025 at 7:00am

**Closes:** April 8, 2025 at 4:00pm

## Background Information

### Tillicum Green Infrastructure & Climate Resiliency Project

As many of us have experienced, our summers are getting hotter and we are experiencing more extreme weather events, such as heat domes, wildfires, major storms and extreme rainfall or atmospheric rivers. Our latest regional climate projections show that these events will be more frequent and extreme in future.

Green infrastructure such as trees, rain gardens and natural areas, offer many benefits (or ecosystem services), that help us be resilient to these climate changes. Benefits include shade, stormwater management, air purification, carbon sequestration, water quality, and more.

The Tillicum-Burnside area has been identified in the [Urban Forest Strategy](#) as a neighbourhood with one of the lowest tree canopy covers in Saanich and highly vulnerable to extreme heat, as shown in the [Capital Regional District's Extreme Heat Information Portal](#). The site also lies near important natural ecosystems such as Portage Inlet and Cuthbert Holmes Park and is in Primary Growth Area of Saanich that is expected to see community development in the coming years.

The project includes the creation of rain gardens and extensive tree and vegetation planting at:

1. The residential roads of Albina Street, Maddock Avenue, and Orillia Street:
  - The plantings and rain gardens will be installed on the boulevard and integrated with road and sidewalk improvements.
  - Construction began in early 2025 and is expected to be completed in the Fall of 2025. More information can be found on the project webpage [here](#).
2. Tillicum Elementary School, in partnership with the Greater Victoria School District:
  - The landscape design for the school site has been drafted with feedback incorporated from Tillicum Elementary administration, School District staff including the Facilities Department and the Indigenous Education Department, and the Elder's Advisory Council.
  - In-classroom learning about native planting and climate change is ongoing.
  - Engagement with the school and wider community will begin in March 2025.

The Tillicum Green Infrastructure Project is being generously supported by a \$396,865 grant from the Disaster Risk Reduction-Climate Adaptation (DRR-CA) funding stream of the Provincial Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF). This is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM).

The project is intended to support multiple goals and targets within the Saanich Climate Plan, Official Community Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Urban Forest Strategy, and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, including:

- Expand the urban forest and increase urban forest canopy cover.
- Increase native and site adaptive planting and connection of natural areas.
- Support the implementation of Indigenous knowledge of natural systems and sustainable practices.
- Reduce impervious areas.
- Capture and treat stormwater run-off from hardscape.
- Increase ecosystems services and support climate adaptation.
- Incorporate metrics to measure & evaluate project outcomes.

## Media Contacts

Kelsey Moore (she/her)  
Communications Specialist  
**Greater Victoria School District**  
[kemoore@sd61.bc.ca](mailto:kemoore@sd61.bc.ca)  
250.475.4103



Rebecca Newlove (she/her)  
Manager of Sustainability, Sustainability Division  
**District of Saanich**  
[rebecca.newlove@saanich.ca](mailto:rebecca.newlove@saanich.ca)  
250.475.7118

