

*Note: Responses are limited to open-ended comments in the 2024 Annual Questionnaire relating to items that Administration can generally respond to without additional budget/Council sanction. Suggested improvements relating to policy matters/service level adjustments are within Council's governance oversight and will be considered by Council on December 2, 2024 at Council's annual review of Council Priorities.*

## Community-Suggested Improvements, Categorized

Summarized comments/suggestions from the community are noted below in black text. Staff responses are noted in green text.

### Type of Information Desired

- housing densification
- infrastructure projects (what streets to avoid), including work undertaken by other jurisdictions
- project timelines and progress updates
- bylaws / expectations
- who to contact/people responsible
- use of tax dollars
- marina
- deer
- what services are being delivered/why/by who
- how to register complaints
- challenges facing community
- budgets v. expenses
- community events
- info on flushing, water shut offs, water main breaks

➤ **RESPONSE:** Some of this information is already available to the public, but not necessarily easily accessible/widely known. The above list has been forwarded to Communications. Communications will work with subject matter experts to obtain desired information where it is not available and to promote it better where it is available. Timeline for completion = Spring 2025.

### Engagement

- More/earlier engagement with respect to infrastructure
- **RESPONSE:** The [District's new Municipal 511](#), launched in July 2024, is a map-based road information program that will help us communicate District road closures and infrastructure work.

Project information is available on the District's website, but not necessarily easily accessible/widely known. Project updates are available for those who wish them. The public can get these by going to [Connect.Oakbay.ca](https://connect.oakbay.ca) and signing up for email updates.

## Communication

- regular newsletter to all households
  - consistent social media presence
  - open Mastadon account
  - info centre at public market
  - daily updates on Facebook "What's Happening Today" (events/road closures/deadlines etc.)
  - enhanced social media presence -- municipal updates, council meetings, special events etc.
  - more factual (rather than spin)
  - email before and after Council meetings with key issues and decisions
  - plainer/simpler language on development signs
  - more info for those living in apartments
  - summarize information
  - shorter staff reports
  - advertise in TC, not just OBN
  - more advance notice on council meeting agenda topics
  - more timely
- **RESPONSE:** Council has provided funding for a Communication Needs Assessment. This project has been commenced and is expected to be completed by year end. The community feedback noted above has been forwarded to the consultant working on this project and will be considered in the context of the Needs Assessment.

## Correspondence

- acknowledge receipt
  - reply to emails
  - provide more timely response
  - faster responses to requests for services
- **RESPONSE:** On high correspondence volumes relating to Council agenda items and emerging matters, staff are not able to do more than acknowledge a response, indicating that the item has been forwarded for Council or staff consideration. On operational matters received through Administration, correspondence is acknowledged and forwarded to the relevant department for response. Writers are also advised of the opportunity to, in future, directly contact the relevant department through the District's [Service Request System](#). It is noted that this system does not operate as smoothly as staff would like and staff are looking into how the system can be improved and better communicated. Once the new website is in place (later in 2024), work will begin on investigating how the Service Request System can be enhanced and better promoted through the new website interface.

## **Website**

- less confusing
- easier to navigate/find what one is looking for
- better layout/better organized
- better/more current info on services (including times open)
- map of bike lanes
- more interactive/more engaging
- better search function
- indicate who is available to respond in person
- improve appearance
- more information

➤ **RESPONSE:** Council has provided funding for an update of the District's website. Discovery, planning and technical requirements were completed early in 2024. Set up of development site, template design and navigation/ user testing took place over the summer months. Launch of the website is expected for end of October. It is anticipated that this will address most, if not all, of the issues raised with the current website.

## **Technology**

- embrace technology
- more online services
- a public issue tracker (allow residents to take picture, add location, and have staff indicate status) – available for all to see (like Calgary 311)
- web camera to show line-up at Elgin drop-off
- ability to sign documents electronically
- ability to view and pay property and water bills online
- include map option on Oak Bay development tracker
- better registration program

➤ **RESPONSE:** Over the course of 2024, the CAO has been working with staff to identify ways to enhance organizational effectiveness. Use of technology emerged as a key theme in those discussions. Among the recommendations emerging from that was to undertake a technology needs assessment to optimize use of existing software and create a strategy to fill key technology gaps. The above-noted public feedback has been forwarded to the team working on assessing the resource implications associated with this recommendation. If technological needs cannot be met with existing resources, staff will submit a budget request for Council's consideration.

## **Responsiveness / Customer Service / Inclusion**

- follow-through
- return phone calls
- resolve issues
- no shuffling off
- solutions-focus/"How can I help?" attitude

- listen
  - less bureaucratic
  - people-focused
  - more interested/helpful/friendly/approachable/ respectful/pleasant/kind
  - resident-focused
  - face-to-face and contact by phone
  - flexible
  - inquiries desk
  - greater effort to include marginalized populations
  - even-handed (unbiased)
- **RESPONSE:** The CAO is working with the Human Resources Department to arrange for customer service training for all front-line staff in 2025. In anticipation of that training, the CAO will work with staff to develop District standards for customer service to address the matters raised by the public, so that expectations are clear.

### **Hours of Service**

- extend hours for some services
- **RESPONSE:** Extending hours of service represents a change to “Level of Service”. Council will have an opportunity to deliberate on/direct changes to departmental levels of service at the Annual Council Priorities review session, which is scheduled for December 2, 2024.

### **Use of Time**

- better impressions of good use of time/work ethic for staff
  - increase efficiency
- **RESPONSE:** The majority of feedback received related to staff (and likely also contractors) working on infrastructure repair and replacement projects. When the public sees staff or contractors that are not actively digging/sawing/paving or doing other manual work, they may feel that workers are demonstrating poor work ethic or that they are not being properly supervised. Work Safe BC Regulations require a certain number of staff to be present at work sites. It is also important to recognize that staff are entitled to breaks. The District may need to better communicate Work Safe BC Regulations when advising residents of work being undertaken in their neighbourhood and may also need to do some further general public education on this matter. The CAO has passed this on to the District’s Communication staff for action. If the public feels that staff are not working as they ought to be, the public is welcome to call the Public Works Division at 250 598 4501 to discuss the matter. This number will be shared with the public as part of enhanced communications.

## Timeliness

- finish infrastructure projects more quickly/efficiently once started
- **RESPONSE:** The District may need to better communicate about timelines for infrastructure projects and the rationale for those timelines, and also advise residents that timelines may be thrown off by the need to attend to urgent, unplanned infrastructure repairs, as the same staff are used for both reactive and proactive work. As the District adds staff to address infrastructure deficits, the District should be able to finish proactive projects on a more predictable and timely basis.

## Staff Knowledge

- rules applying to Heritage Conservation Area
- better knowledge of records and services
- understanding of roles
- understanding of history
- know who to direct calls to
- **RESPONSE:** Over the course of 2024, the CAO has been working with staff to identify ways to enhance organizational effectiveness. One of the key recommendations emerging from those discussions was to define operational services/service levels and map/document key processes in each department to clarify roles/responsibilities and identify new and emerging innovative physical and digital tools to improve efficiency. The above-noted public feedback has been forwarded to the team working on assessing the resource implications associated with this recommendation. If addressing this action cannot be achieved with existing resources, staff will submit a budget request for Council's consideration.

## Elgin Road

- more helpful staff
- increase throughput
- open longer on weekends
- control noise
- help for elderly and injured
- make rules more obvious
- make green waste disposal more efficient/organized
- ensure those not living in municipality don't use facility
- web camera to show line-up at Elgin drop-off
- extended hours for obtaining stickers for cars for Elgin drop-off
- accept driver's license with Oak Bay address instead of sticker
- **RESPONSE:** There are space constraints at the Elgin Road site that contribute to conflicts. Where space is an issue, resolution of related conflicts may need to await a new site. At present, there are no plans in place for a new site. The above list has been forwarded to the Director of Engineering &

Public Works who will work with the Public Works Division to address public feedback, where possible. Timeline for completion = Spring 2025. It is noted that changing hours of service would represent a change to “Level of Service”. Council will have an opportunity to deliberate on/direct changes to departmental levels of service at the Annual Council Priorities review session, which is scheduled for December 2, 2024. Council has as a ‘long list’ item (i.e. not yet on staff work plans, but available for Council consideration as a future priority project), Project #17 – Identify Options for Improving Solid Waste Management at Elgin Road. Should Council wish to advance this project, they can do so in December at the priorities review session, with allocation of required resources.

## **Permitting**

- less expensive
  - more timely
  - streamline/simplify
  - checklists
  - clarify process and timeline at outset
  - more communications through permitting process
  - fact sheets – what can/can’t you do
  - accurate processing timeline
  - share information on building permits with neighbours
- **RESPONSE:** The above list has been forwarded to the Director of Community Building & Planning who will work with staff to prioritize addressing public feedback. Much of the input provided relates to a Council Priority Project #78 – Optimize Development Processes. Earlier this year, the District applied for and received a grant to fund review of development application processes. The process review will commence in 2024 and recommendations for improvements are expected to be available by June 2025, with implementation to follow.