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Central Saanich: Residents want to keep rural feel; [Final Edition]

[Kim Westad](#). [Times - Colonist](#). Victoria, B.C.: [Nov 9, 1999](#). pg. C.5

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Abstract (Summary)

"My main responsibility three years ago was to make things boring," said Mayor Wayne Hunter. The middle school principal is back at the helm in Central Saanich by acclamation.

To many residents of other capital region municipalities, Central Saanich is the vague area they zip through with a carload of relatives en route to Butchart Gardens, or the winding roads leading to freshly plucked corn.

Keating elementary school, 6843 Central Saanich Rd.

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Full Text (661 words)

(Copyright Times Colonist (Victoria) 1999)

Elections '99 Ran with factbox "Where to Vote" which has been appended to the end of this story

CENTRAL SAANICH council is rarely in the news, and that's just the way people like it.

"My main responsibility three years ago was to make things boring," said Mayor Wayne Hunter. The middle school principal is back at the helm in Central Saanich by acclamation.

"I don't think people want a community that is going through a lot of change. People's lives are too busy and they want to sleep at night thinking their community is under reasonable control and is moving slowly in a way people are comfortable with."

Major issues involve growth and taxes

The mayor's views are echoed in the platforms of the seven people vying for six council seats. Slow, controlled growth, keeping taxes down and maintaining the rural nature of the community while enhancing business and agriculture are common themes.

It sounds like a tall order. But so far, Central Saanich seems to be filling it.

To many residents of other capital region municipalities, Central Saanich is the vague area they zip through with a carload of relatives en route to Butchart

Gardens, or the winding roads leading to freshly plucked corn.

But the municipality, which stretches from the daffodil fields at Vantreight's farms to the Tsawout reserve, is home to a diverse community of an estimated 15,749 people.

Rural character important

The three main business and commercial centres are in Saanichton, Brentwood Bay and the Keating Ridge area.

Further development of the Keating industrial park is one of the economic development drivers in the recently adopted official community plan.

But the main identity of the area is rural, and that's the way people want it to stay.

The official community plan calls for slow growth, and is supported by the municipality's new sewer plan that calls for Central Saanich, North Saanich and Sidney to stay within a certain capacity.

Some 65 per cent of the municipality's land is in the Agricultural Land Reserve, and there is little move to change that. While the ALR land doesn't necessarily provide a large tax base, it's important to the municipality for its food production and employment, not to mention its character.

Running on a tight budget

But money has to come from somewhere, and financing has been somewhat of an issue in the community. The municipality has had three financial cuts over the last four years, resulting in a loss of \$750,000.

Raising taxes one per cent nets the municipality only \$55,000 in revenue.

"We've had a bit of an alligator to deal with in terms of funding any new initiatives. We've been playing catch-up with the cuts," said Hunter, who said the municipality was already "very lean and mean."

The municipality has a small staff, there are few sidewalks, and streetlights are at intersections, not dotting each block as they are in "the city."

And that creates some issues.

"Some people move here from suburban areas and they like the idea of sidewalks everywhere, and streetlights on every corner. Our roads are country roads," Hunter said.

"As a society, we like to have all the amenities. That's a human trait. But it has to be balanced with good financial management."

Other issues include the redevelopment of the Brentwood Bay business area; the Brentwood Bay-Mill Bay ferry, which needs the dock redone and another ferry; and a request to supply water to the **Senanus** Road area, which is not on the municipal water system.

WHERE TO VOTE

Keating elementary school, 6843 Central Saanich Rd.

Cultural Centre, 1209 Clarke Rd.

Central Saanich Municipal Hall,

1903 Mount Newton Cross Rd.

Election day is Saturday, Nov. 20; polls are open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- Mayor has won by acclamation.
- Seven candidates for six council seats.

The Times Colonist invited candidates to submit brief statements about why they're running for public office. Their answers appear on the bottom of this page.

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