

North Saanich, BC

A small municipality becomes a government transparency pioneer



North Saanich is a municipality with a small population but a grand vision for making government more transparent. It recently became the first district in British Columbia, Canada to offer regular online web-casting of committee and council meetings. Previously, while agenda and minutes documents could be found online, the only media recording of meetings were on an audio tape that residents would have to go to city hall and request to listen to onsite. Today, meetings are regularly being viewed hundreds of times, on demand, using the webcast from their website.

While the principle of government transparency was the driving factor, making data more accessible to the public was also an objective. The municipality needed to replace their traditional method of offering tape recorded meetings and headsets with something that citizens could freely access on-demand without requiring excessive staff time and resources to facilitate

“The new webcasting capability is part of an ongoing effort to improve the district’s communication with the public.”

- Alice Fina, Mayor

Success Highlights

- First among British Columbia municipalities to adopt meeting webcastign
- Over 8,650 meeting video views over the past year
- Increased participation in public meetings tenfold
- Eliminated cumbersome procedures
- Easier minutes-taking cut work effort in half

Fast Facts

Agency Type: District

Population: 11,089

Solution:

Granicus Platform

Government Transparency Suite

Citizen Participation Suite

Meetings per month: 4

Previously, meeting agendas were created by scanning multiple documents into a PDF document package. With the Granicus Transparency Suite, that PDF now offers far more depth and ease of access to the public without adding work to the clerk's process. The agenda is digitally imported into Granicus, which automatically parses it and creates a fully indexed agenda that is cross-linked with the meeting video. This allows viewers to easily search and review agenda items, and jump directly to the discussion of a particular item in the meeting video. North Saanich is now empowering individuals with Granicus to find what they want on their own, creating an immeasurably more efficient government.

“Our residents can click on the subject that is of interest to them, without having to wade through a 300 page document to find it. So, it's very popular with our residents. And now I get far less information requests because people can open the document and jump to the part of the agenda or to the part of the video they are interested in. It's made my job much easier.”

- Lisa Coburn, Deputy Clerk
North Saanich, BA

With benefits for citizens and government firmly established, Deputy Clerk Lisa Coburn described the ease of adoption as her favorite advantage for the staff, “I'm not particularly computer literate. So, I was quite anxious about the learning curve for this, but the software is so forgiving and so intuitive that it's a pleasure to work with. It really is!”

North Saanich - by the numbers

June 2012 - June 2013

11,089

Population

8,687

Page & Stream Views

2,946

Citizen Visits

2,753

Unique Citizens Engaged

Citizen engagement rate: 25%!