

▼ **NORTH SAANICH**

# Majority of residents ready to pay for new hall

**By Susan Chung**  
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Building a new Peninsula community hall has only lukewarm support from North Saanich residents but they are still willing to pay for it, according to questionnaire results.

Exactly half of 546 residents responding to a survey on Sanscha Hall said they would prefer to see the building demolished and a new community cultural centre built on the site.

But although respondents appeared ambivalent about building the hall, 58 per cent of those who responded to a survey said they are in favor of municipal tax dollars going to the project.

North Saanich town hall asked residents whether they wanted to take part in building a new \$4.6-million community hall at the intersection of Patricia Bay Highway and Beacon Avenue.

The Memorial Park Society, which owns the land, has proposed razing the 10,000-square-foot, 42-year-old building and replacing it with a new 26,000-square-foot centre.

Sidney has said it wants to be involved, but North Saanich is still deciding.

Adding a commercial component such as retail stores, office space or a restaurant to offset the cost of operating the centre is acceptable to most residents with 57 per cent saying they could support a move.

North Saanich Mayor Linda Michaluk was buoyed by the high response rate of 14 per cent. Usually only three per cent of the community responds to questionnaires.

"But what my interpretation of those results is, that while the community is interested in those lands, they're not excited, turned on — whatever phrase you want to use — by the MPS (Memorial Park Society) proposal. That tells me more work has to be done," she said. The municipality's committee of the whole will meet April 13 to discuss what to do with the results.

Meanwhile, the society has applied to the federal government to obtain funding for the hall through Millennium Project Funding.

The society wants Ottawa to contribute half of the \$4.6 million capital cost over three years.