

An Update from Teale: Talking free transit this Monday!

1 message

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Let's Talk Free Transit!

Friends!

I hope you are enjoying the beautiful weather we've been getting. I've got a bunch of fresh updates for you. Saanich has a [jam-packed agenda](#) at our upcoming meeting on Monday, May 13th, and I wanted to draw your attention to a few items.

As you may know, I chair Saanich's [Transportation Advisory Committee](#), which is a fantastic group of volunteers who help advise the District on issues relating to transportation. The Committee recently drafted a [UBCM](#) resolution calling for the expansion of the

province's [Get On Board](#) free transit for young people to include all young people 18 and under.



A couple of weeks ago, Council unanimously adopted an amended version of [this motion](#), drafted by Councillor Westhaver, which asks the Mayor to write to BC Transit and the Minister of Transportation, asking them to make transit free for young people.

Following the discussion around the motion, I drafted a subsequent UBCM resolution, which calls on the province to make transit free for seniors (aged 65+). This policy was recently [rolled out in Montreal](#) and was a huge success.

Both motions will be on Council's agenda this coming Monday, and I wanted to encourage neighbours to [write in](#) and share their thoughts about them.

Noise Camera Pilot



I know many folks who receive my newsletters share my concerns about noise pollution in the District, and I wanted to shared an updated about my work on this issue. As you may recall, the Transportation Advisory Committee had previously recommended to Council that request staff explore the feasibility of running a noise camera pilot project in the District. This motion was referred to Strat Planning (read more in the [Times Colonist](#) or [Saanich News](#)).

This past Monday, Council had a Strategic Plan Check-In, which provided an opportunity to for us to explore issues referred to the Strat Plan's 'bike racks.' Council ultimately decided to remove the item from the Strategic Plan. Thus, I can report that Saanich will not be moving ahead with exploring the feasibility of running a noise camera pilot project. You can watch Council's [debate of this topic here](#).

I am committed to making progress on noise pollution in Saanich this term, and will be exploring additional measures in the coming months. These include revisiting my efforts to ban gas-powered landscaping equipment and exploring ways to update Saanich's Noise Suppression Ordinances. I put together a [video update here](#).

And if you are interested in some recent research on the issue of vehicular noise pollution, you might find [this article](#) of interest. North Vancouver has also [taken action](#) on this issue and will be setting up noise monitoring stations.



The [Times Colonist Books Sale](#) was a huge success this weekend, and the Monday after the sale, the TC gives whatever is leftover to local charities. I was please to coordinate book pickups for the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network's Pocket Places Project - we picked up over 7,500 books destined for the region's +835 little free libraries.

New Official Community Plan

I am pleased to say that Saanich has a newly updated [Official Community Plan \(OCP\)](#). The OCP the primary document that will shape growth and change in Saanich and which guides municipal actions related to land use.

I appreciate everyone who participated in the public consultation around the OCP update, as well as in the consultative processes around the various documents, strategics, and plans that informed the update, including the Active Transportation Plan, Climate Plan, and Housing Strategy. You can learn more and find links to the [new OCP here](#).



This week, I participated in Capital Bike's Commuter Challenge. I raced the Mayor from Saanich Hall to the Legislature. I cycled, while Mayor Murdock drove a car, and I crossed the finish a cool 6 minutes before the Mayor! You can learn more from these [Times Colonist](#), [Victoria News](#), and [Victoria Buzz](#) articles.

More Saanich Updates!

As always, a ton of things have been going on in the District and on Council, so here's the rapid fire updates:

- The deadline for Saanich's Name the Sweeper competition is Wednesday, May 15th! Help us properly welcome this mini sweeper to the fleet by submitting your best name idea through Saanich's public participation platform, [HelloSaanich](#).
- Saanich has expanded Leisure Involvement For Everyone (L.I.F.E.) program accessibility and benefits. [This program](#) helps individuals and families residing in the District of Saanich living on a low income to access recreation services.
- We are currently looking for public input related to Saanich's Draft Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and updated Draft Urban

Forest Strategy. Learn more about how to [get involved here](#).

- Saanich has [re-launched our e-bike incentive](#) and will be asking the province to increase support for the provincial program. A recent study from UBC explored the incentive program and found it to be very effective. [Take a deep dive here](#).

In addition to the aforementioned resolutions on free transit on this Monday's meeting, there are a bunch of other important items, which include draft UBCM resolutions calling for more funding for the provincial e-bike incentive, improving traffic count systems, increased transparency in the process for requesting the installation of traffic cameras, and a letter to the province regarding maintaining the urban containment boundary (UCB). We will also be exploring bylaw amendments relating to small-scale multi-unit housing (inside and outside of the UCB), transit-oriented areas, a bunch of new developments, and more! You can find the [full agenda here](#).

Little Free Libraries



This past weekend's '[Little Free Library Superheroes Adventure!](#)' was a huge success! This event, saw superheroes from the [Superheroes of Victoria](#) stationed at four little free libraries in Fernwood, where they gave out comics to celebrate Free Comic Book Day, placemaking, community, and the 10th anniversary of the [Greater Victoria Placemaking Network](#) (GVPN).

A huge thank you to everyone who made this event a success! You can learn more from the [Saanich News](#).



Reproductive Justice



Devon Black receiving a BC Achievement Foundation Community Award from the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, Janet Austin.

This week, my amazing friend and [AccessBC Campaign](#) co-founder [Devon Black](#) received a [Community Award](#) from the BC Achievement Foundation. The Community Award program celebrates British Columbians who go above and beyond in their dedication and service to others. It honours individuals who devote their time and energy to building stronger, better and more resilient communities.

Devon has been pivotal to the campaign's success, and her hard work is one of the reasons why we have free prescription contraception in BC. You can learn more about her work [here](#), and watch the entire ceremony [here](#).

I am proud to have worked with Devon, fighting for progressive causes, for nearly 20 years! Our fight continues, as we work with reproductive justice advocates across the country to election-proof the national pharmacare plan and ensure that direct cost will never again prevent Canadians from accessing prescription contraception. You can support these efforts by [donating to the AccessBC Campaign](#)!

BC Humanist Research Team



My work with the BC Humanist Association Research Team on unconstitutional prayers in municipal council meetings across Canada - the Saguenay Project - continues. This week, we released a new report on Albertan municipalities: [The Last Municipality Standing](#).

This report examines the inclusion of prayers in municipal council meetings in Alberta, and compliance with the Supreme Court of Canada's 2015 ruling in *Mouvement laïque québécois v. Saguenay* (Saguenay). That decision found the practice of opening council meetings with a prayer to be unconstitutional. Despite the ruling, six Albertan municipalities included prayers in their 2021 inaugural meetings and six continued to include prayers in regular council meetings.

You can [learn more here](#). Next up are Saskatchewan and Ontario, so stay tuned for more on this front, as well as updates on our potential [court case against Vancouver](#). And if you are interested in reading some of our previous reports, you can [find them here](#), along with links to my other published research.

I hope you have a fantastic sunny weekend!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teale Phelps Bondaroff', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Teale Phelps Bondaroff

Saanich Councillor

P.S. If you know a neighbour who might like to receive these updates, please let them know they can sign up [here](#).

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