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## Back to School Update from Teale!

1 message

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6 September 2025 at  
00:51



## A Back to School Update from Teale

Friends,

I hope you had a marvelous summer! While there were fewer Saanich Council meetings in August, I've been very busy working on policy, conducting research, catching up on correspondence, and attending community events. I wanted to provide a quick update as to some recent Saanich happenings from August, and tell you about some important upcoming events.

September is going to be a jam-packed month! It will include the [1,000th little free library celebration](#), the launch of a new AccessBC campaign focused on improving pain management for IUD insertions, and the 2025 Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) conference, being held in Victoria! With a full summer and so much on the horizon, let's dive in!

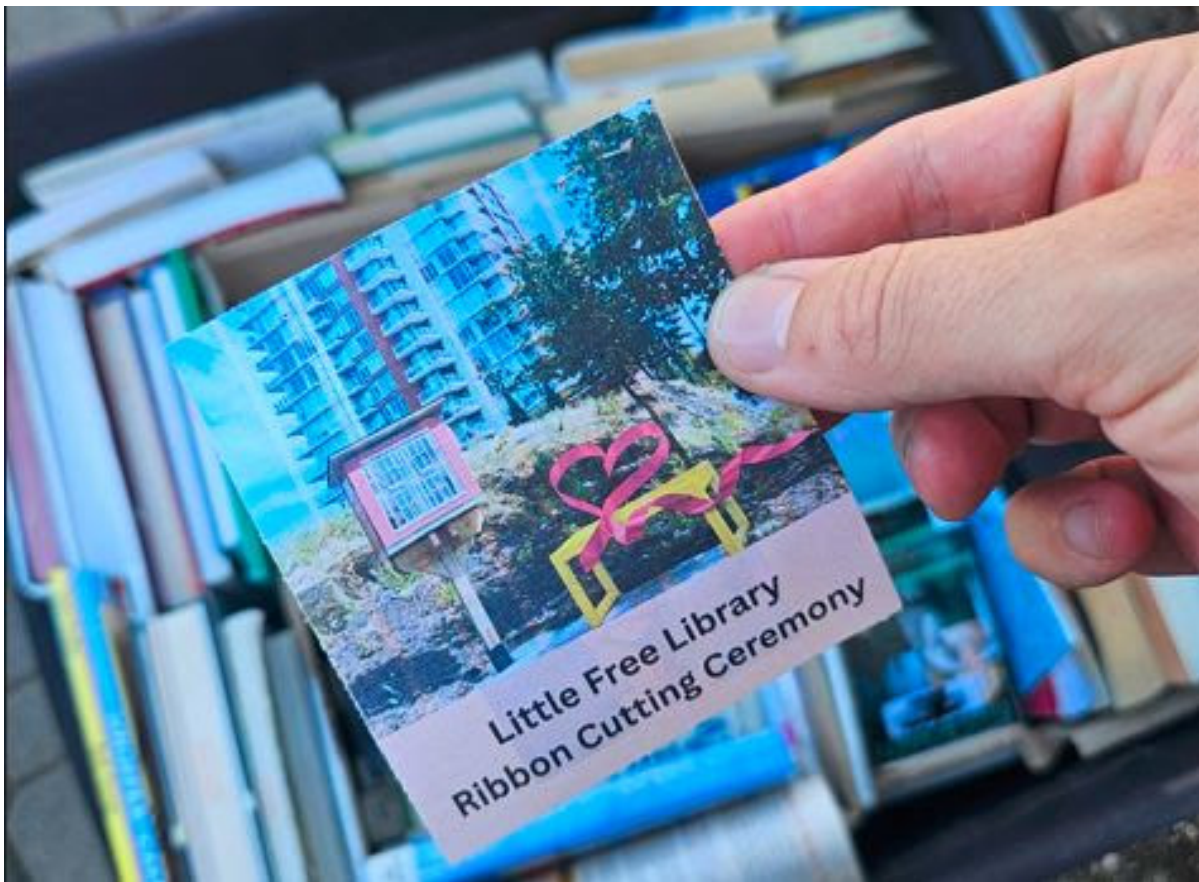


Music in the Park in Rudd Park!

### **Town Hall Meeting - Tuesday, September 9th, 6 to 8 pm**

You are cordially invited to attend the District of Saanich's Town Hall meeting, talking place this coming Tuesday, at the Saanich Municipal Hall ([770 Vernon Ave.](#)). The Town Hall will be an informal open mic session with no set agenda. Residents are welcome to speak on topics of importance, with a limit of three minutes per speaker, following the guidelines set out in the Council Procedure Bylaw.

To register to speak, please email [council@saanich.ca](mailto:council@saanich.ca) or call 250-475-5501. There will also be an opportunity to register at the Town Hall meeting. You only need to register if you would like to speak at the meeting. You are most welcome to attend to observe without registering. [Learn more here.](#)



Cutting the ribbon on one of our region's newest little free libraries.

#### **Saanich Council - Monday, September 8th**

We have a number of items that may be of particular interest on the agenda for our upcoming Council meeting this Monday. The first is that there is a staff update on next steps for the Saanich Operations Centre. I encourage anyone who is interest to review the staff report ([item F.3 here](#)). We will be exploring permissive tax exemptions, a topic that is near and dear to my heart (read some of my research on the topic [here](#)), and there are two motions that I draft relating to protecting our coast from tankers.

#### **Protect Our Coast from Tankers**

In 2019, after decades of public engagement and advocacy by Indigenous nations, local governments, community groups, and residents, the Government of Canada passed the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act (Bill C-48). This legislation prohibits large oil tankers carrying crude oil and certain persistent oils from docking, loading or unloading at ports along BC's North Coast.

Recently, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith and oil industry proponents have signalled renewed interest in proposing a northern oil pipeline, which would rely on tanker access to BC's North Coast. This raises concerns about reversing hard-won environmental protections and increasing the risk of catastrophic oil spills.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has stated that a new pipeline project to BC's North Coast is “[highly, highly likely](#)” to be deemed a nationally significant project. BC communities including [First Nations](#) have voiced strong opposition to oil tanker expansion on the North Coast, instead supporting clean energy solutions that create long-term, sustainable jobs without endangering

marine ecosystems. Prime Minister Carney has stated he will not advance new pipeline projects in provinces that do not support them.

**Let's be clear: calling pipelines 'nation-building projects' is reckless in an era of climate change.** We simply cannot afford to risk the lives of salmon, orcas, herring and other species for projects that increase the already severe impacts climate change is having on our communities. The federal government and Prime Minister need to receive a clear message from British Columbians that we will not stand by while the irreplaceable ecosystems we depend upon are put at risk to serve outdated fossil fuel fantasies.

That is why I have proposed two motions for this Monday's meeting. The first asks the Mayor to write to relevant federal and provincial leaders, while the second proposes an emergency resolution for this month's UBCM conference. Council will be debating these motions at our September 8th meeting. I would encourage folks to share their thoughts with Council ([council@saanich.ca](mailto:council@saanich.ca)) before noon on Monday.

**If you care about our coast, I would also encourage you to [write the Prime Minister](#), Premier, and your MP to tell them to support the North Coast Tanker Ban!**



MLA Diana Gibson and Victoria Councillor Dave Thompson, and I at the Victoria Labour Day Picnic.

**School District 61 Reform**

I have had the privilege of serving as the Saanich representative on a task force established to explore reforms to School District 61. The reform that is being proposed calls for the election of SD 61 trustees from individual elector areas rather than the district as a whole (the current at-large model). An online feedback form has been posted, and **a public consultation session has been set for Tuesday, September 9** at S.J. Willis to allow the community to hear a presentation, ask questions, and help identify other items to consider. You can learn more from this [Times Colonist](#) article (see also the [VictoriaBuzz](#)), and most importantly, you can [share your feedback here](#).

I will not be able to attend the public event on Tuesday, as it conflicts with Saanich's Townhall, but I would encourage anyone who is interested to attend and/or to share their feedback with the school district.



Highlights from this year's Greek Fest!

## UBCM 2025

This year's [Union of British Columbia Municipalities](#) (UBCM) conference is taking place right here in Victoria at the end of September (22 to 26) and I am looking forward to attending. Saanich has submitted nine resolution (ten if this Monday's emergency resolution is adopted). You can [find all of the resolutions here](#). I am pleased to say that I helped draft all of the resolutions that were submitted by Saanich this year, and they are as follows:

- **EB71 - Saving Money and Saving Lives: Empower Municipal Default Speed Limits** (p.90)
- **EB95 - Lobbyist Registration** (p.109)
- **NR41 - The Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification in BC Buildings** (p.148)
- **NR69 - Legislating the BC Coastal Marine Strategy** (p.168)
- **NR77 - Provincial Support for Addressing Feral Rabbits** (p.174)

- **NR100 - Saving Money and Saving Lives: Provincial Default 30 km/h for Local Streets with No Centre Line** (p.193)
- **NR102 - Updating the Name of the Motor Vehicle Act** (p.194)
- **NR121 - Adopting European Elevator Standards to Improve Accessibility and Affordability** (p.208)
- **RR10 - Declaring Housing as a Human Right** (p.214), see NR17 from Victoria for the NR resolution on this topic. I've been working with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition to mobilize municipalities from across BC to support this call, and we had ten nearly identical resolutions submitted as part of these efforts.

UBCM resolutions are sorted into different categories:

- 'EB' refers to the 'Endorsed Block' - These are resolutions that support established UBCM policy, and they are voted on as one large block, like a consent agenda.
- 'NR' refers to 'No Recommendation' - These are resolutions that touch on new issues, that is, issues around which UBCM has no established policy.
- 'RR' refers to 'Referred Resolutions' - These are resolutions that are similar resolutions found elsewhere in the Resolutions Book.

I will be working hard to see that the Saanich resolutions are adopted, and working to support other important resolutions as well.

In addition to debating and adopting resolutions, UBCM is also an opportunity to connect with council colleagues from across the province, attend information and training sessions, and meet with representatives from senior levels of government. I have arranged meetings with the Ministers of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship and Housing and Municipal Affairs to discuss some of the issues captured by Saanich's resolutions.

If you are interested in learning more about UBCM, I put together [this video summary](#). I will be providing daily updates during the conference and a full debrief in a future newsletter. If you spot any resolutions you wanted to bring to my attention while reviewing the UBCM agenda, please don't hesitate to reach out!



The famous Greek Fest Loukoumades!

## Saanich News

Here's a quick speed run of recent Council decisions and Saanich happenings.

- **Housing Affordability in Saanich:** In August, sat down with folks from the Victoria Buzz to chat about what the District of Saanich is doing to improve housing affordability. If you are interested in a deep dive, I would encourage you to check out this [detailed article from the Victoria Buzz](#).
- **Saanich Zero Emissions Fleet Strategy:** Saanich is working hard to meet our ambitious climate targets and we have a ways to go. Vehicular emissions are a major source of corporate emissions for the District, and our newly adopted Zero Emissions Fleet Strategy will help us reduce our emissions and hopefully hit our targets. The strategy will also save us money in the long term, another added bonus. Read the [full strategy here](#), and read more in the [Times Colonist](#), [CHEK News](#), and the [Saanich News](#).
- **Traffic Calming Policy Adopted:** I was very pleased to support the adoption of the District's new Traffic Calming Policy, which lays out a clear process for identifying key roads in Saanich that could benefit from traffic calming measures. This is a key component to the District's ecosystem of road safety measures, and I hope it will help us achieve Vision Zero! I will work hard during budget negotiations to ensure that the \$250,000 allocated for the implementation of this policy is supported. Read the [full policy here](#), and learn more from this [Times Colonist](#) piece.



A beautiful Saanich sunset seen from Peacock Hill

- **Heat Pump Financing Program:** The District's [Heat Pump Financing Program](#) is once again accepting applications from residents, as part of the sixth intake for this popular program, [learn more here](#).
- **Saanich provides donation of computers to W̱SÁNEĆ school:** The District of Saanich delivered dozens of desktop computers along with new mice and keyboards to the W̱SÁNEĆ ŁÁU, WELNEW Elementary School. [Learn more here](#), and from this [Times Colonist story](#).
- **Salmon make a comeback in restored Gabo Creek:** Some encouraging salmon news, [learn more here](#), and from this [CHEK News story](#).
- **A Call For Poets:** The District of Saanich's Community Poets Program – through the roles of Community Poet and Youth Community Poet – celebrates the power of poetry, spoken word and the literary arts to connect, inspire and reflect the spirit of our region. Expressions of Interest Now Open to be Saanich's Community Poet and Youth Poet. Deadline to apply: October 31, 2025. [Details here](#).
- **Support the Gorge Tillicum Community Association Mural Project:** Friends at the GTCA are raising funds to help get a [wonderful new mural](#) installed. Check out the design and support the project if you can.

## Upcoming Events

- **Saanich Police and Fire Open House:** Come on down to Saanich Fire Station No. 1, on September 13, from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm for games, live demonstrations, and giveaways. [Details here](#).

- **Autumn Lantern Festival:** Celebrate the arrival of fall with a beautiful display of lanterns, vibrant lights and community connection at the Autumn Lantern Festival at Gordon Head Recreation Centre and Lambrick Park, on Saturday, September 13 from 5:00 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. [Details here](#).
  - **Saanich Town Hall:** Come on out and share your views with Council at the Saanich Municipal Hall, this Tuesday, September 9th, 6 to 8 pm. [Learn more here](#).
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## Ongoing Engagement

There are a number of active public engagement opportunities in the District of Saanich. Please check out these opportunities to let us know your thoughts:

- [Climate Plan Update Survey](#) - open through to September 30, 2025.
  - [Gorge Flood Adaptation Survey](#) - open through to September 30, 2025.
  - [Updated Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan: Survey](#) - open through to October 1, 2025.
- There are a number of webinars and open houses scheduled around this draft plan, and I would encourage everyone to check these out!

As always, you can keep up to date with engagement opportunities and more through the [HelloSaanich platform](#).

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## More Family Doctors for Saanich



There are a few issues that come up time and time again when I chat with Saanich residents, and one of the top issues is the lack of family doctors. I've team up with a group of Saanich neighbours to campaign to bring more family doctors to the District and we need your help.

**If you are like me and do not currently have a family doctor, please make sure you are signed up on the [Health Connect Registry](#), and tell everyone you know who lacks a family doctor to sign up!**

The Health Connect Registry is a way for people to sign up to get matched with a family doctor or nurse practitioner in their community. It only takes five minutes to sign up. In addition to helping people get matched with a healthcare professional, our hope is that the number of people signed up on the list will send a powerful signal to the provincial government to prioritize bringing more family doctors to Saanich.

Our group is still looking for folks from all walks of life to help us work to bring more family doctors to the District. Our plan is two pronged:

First, we want to get out into the community to sign folks up for the Health Connect Registry. The idea is that the more people we sign up, the stronger the message sent to the provincial government to prioritize bringing more doctors to the District.

Second, we are working to explore other ways of supporting the creation of new clinics in Saanich, which includes working with our local MLAs, community organizations, and folks in the medical community.

If you are interested in helping volunteer on the campaign in any capacity, please get in touch. We need folks to table at events, come out and knock on doors, help design campaign materials, conduct research and more!

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## Reproductive Justice Advocacy



Thursday, September 4th was World Sexual Health Day, and to mark the occasion, AccessBC released [this statement](#). In it, we celebrate the amazing success of universal no-cost prescription contraception in BC, and urge the federal government to revive the pharmacare negotiations that it has stalled.

This summer, the Carney government [signaled](#) it was backing away from further negotiations with provinces and territories to finalize pharmacare agreements. Just this week, the Carney

government [indicated](#) that they intend on waiting to see how the existing agreements pan out before starting new negotiations with outstanding jurisdictions. This is alarming and prompted AccessBC to launch our “[Pharmacare shouldn't depend on your postal code](#)” letter writing campaign. This campaign urges the Carney government to show leadership and actively pursue fresh pharmacare agreements.

The lacklustre and vague ‘wait and see’ approach of the Carney government is creating health inequalities across Canada, and is not only policy failure, it’s a betrayal of core Canadian values. Pharmacare should not be a privilege determined by your postal code. It must be a program accessible to all Canadians. Without strong federal leadership to negotiate, sign, and fund pharmacare agreements, millions of Canadians will continue to face barriers when trying to access life-saving and life-changing medicine.

I am incredibly grateful to everyone who sent in letters, and it is not too late! If you haven't participated, please take a few moments to write a letter today. It only takes a few seconds on the AccessBC website.

[Participate in our letter writing campaign today!](#)

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## Beats Bites Books: Celebrating 1,000 LFL in the Region!



Our region's network of LFLs continues to grow and we are approaching a massive milestone: **1,000 little free libraries in the region!** There are currently over 943 LFLs for books in the

region, and these are joined by 31 LFLs for seeds and plants, 24 LFLs for puzzles and board games, and 13 LFLs for art and art supplies.

To celebrate this massive milestone, the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network is teaming up with the Oaklands Community Association to throw a Little Free Library Festival: **Beats Bites Books**.

The festival is scheduled for Saturday, Sept 20, 2025, from 4:30-8:30 pm, at the Oaklands Community Centre (2827 Belmont Ave.). This fun, free, and family-friendly afternoon will feature:

- The launch of the 2025 Little Free Library Awards.
- LFL Auction – With proceeds going to the Victoria Literacy Society.
- DIY Zone for Kids – Bookmarks, crafts & a cozy reading circle.
- Placemaking Info Booths – Learn how to get involved with your own LFL.
- Live music & food trucks – Curated by Oaklands Community Association.

So mark your calendars and I hope to see you there! We are also looking for volunteers to help make this event a reality. You can [learn more and sign up here](#).

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## Placemaking: The Falaise Community Road Mural Repaint!



On Sunday, August 17, 2025, volunteers from the Falaise Community Association, the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network, and the neighbourhood threw a repainting party for the road mural on Falaise Crescent in Saanich. A team of over 30 volunteers repainted and expanded the existing road mural. A huge thank you to everyone who came out and to the Falaise Community Association, GVPN, and District of Saanich for making this amazing project a reality.

The initial road mural was designed by local artist Desiree Shelley, working in consultation with neighbours, and takes its inspiration from the [yellow montane violets](#) that were discovered in

Falaise Park. It was installed in August 2022, and you can read more about the initial design and installation process [here](#).

The following year, in August 2023, the mural was [repainted](#). In addition to touching up the yellow montane violets, purple camas flowers were added. This year, we decided to add red-flowering currants, another native wildflower that can be found in the nearby park. You can read more about the repaint from this [GVPN blog post](#).



Road murals like this one do more than just beautify our streets. They bring people together, celebrate the unique identity of a neighbourhood, and create a sense of belonging. [Research](#) has also shown that road murals help encourage drivers to slow down, and in this way, they help make our roads safer.

You can find more about road murals [here](#). You can read local news stories about the road mural repaint in the [Victoria Buzz](#), [Saanich News](#), and [Times Colonist](#).

If you are interested in exploring a road mural on your street, please don't hesitate to get in touch!

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I hope you are weathering the back to school season and that you have a fantastic September!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Dr. Teale Phelps Bondaroff

P.S. - If you have Saanich friends and neighbours who might like to receive these newsletter, do please share [this link](#) with them.



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