

June Update from Teale and Save the Date for my 2026 Campaign Launch!

1 message

Teale Phelps Bondaroff via ActionNetwork.org <hello@teale.ca> 16 June 2026 at 17:17

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A June Update from Teale

Friends,

Summer is upon us and I've got a ton of exciting news to share with you! I wanted you to be the first to know that I will be launching my re-election campaign for Saanich Council next month.

Please mark your calendars, we have a date set for my official campaign launch! Join me in **Rutledge Park on Saturday July 11, from 1:00pm to 2:30pm** to mark the official start of my re-election campaign for Saanich council and CRD!

The event will feature:

- Remarks from yours truly
- A group photo
- A make-your-own-Teale-button station
- An opportunity to give an endorsement by video or text
- A book swap at the Rutledge Park LFL (of course!)
- A chance to learn more about how you can support the campaign

We are looking for volunteers to help make this event a success! We need support with event photography and videography, set up and take down, and people to manage the button, endorsement video booth, and campaign support stations. Please reach out to my campaign

coordinator Stephanie Ferguson at slaferguson@gmail.com as soon as possible if you would like to help out with any of these roles.



Teale and a group of amazing volunteers hit the doorstep in Saanich.

Re-Election Campaign Volunteer Canvassers Needed!

As part of my re-election campaign, I've been getting out onto the doorstep every week and I would love some help! If you like to chat with people and enjoy a bit of walking, our canvassing team is perfect for you! You can join in for as much or as little time as you'd like and training is provided. To sign up, fill in our [volunteer form](#) and our campaign coordinator will be in touch.

Canvassing is a fantastic way to connect with Saanich neighbours and learn more about the issues that are important to residents. We've also been talking to people about the Family Doctors for Saanich Health Connect Registry registration drive, and doing what we can to help get folks attached to a family doctor or nurse practitioner (see below for more).



I had a fantastic time helping sort books for the TC Book Sale and attending the sale, where I bought a 'reasonable' number of books, I swear!

Fighting for Housing!

It has been a busy few months for housing in Saanich. As an update from my last newsletter, Saanich Council approved the draft UBCM resolution I submitted alongside Councillor De Vries, calling for the province to reinstate the Community Housing Fund. The draft resolution, responded to the Province's decision to indefinitely pause new intakes to the Community Housing Fund, a provincial program supporting affordable rental housing delivered by non-profit housing providers, housing co-operatives, municipalities, First Nations, and Indigenous-led housing societies. It built on Saanich Council's March 2026 advocacy, when Council directed that the Mayor write to the Premier, the Housing Minister, and local MLAs regarding the Province's decision to pause the fund. Learn more from this piece in [CHEK News](#) and the [Saanich News](#).



Helping my friends from United Way fight period poverty by helping fill a bus full of menstrual products!

On May 4th, Saanich Council adopted a motion urging the Province to reinstate funding for a major student housing project on the University of Victoria campus, following our approval of a Development Variance Permit for [3800 Finnerty Road](#), the site of the proposed residence. The proposed UVic student housing project would create 510 new student housing units on campus, including 360 beds in 90 four-bedroom apartment-style units for upper-year undergraduate students and 150 studio apartments for graduate students. The project would increase UVic's total residence capacity to more than 3,500 beds.

When the project was announced in October 2025, construction was expected to begin in spring 2026, with completion targeted for fall 2029. The total capital cost was estimated at \$178 million, including \$121 million from the Province and \$57 million from UVic. Unfortunately, following Budget 2026, the Province announced that it was delaying several capital projects, including the UVic student housing expansion. UVic subsequently confirmed that the project's estimated completion date had been pushed to 2034. Learn more from these pieces from [Victoria News](#), [CHEK News](#), [Island Social Trends](#), [Victoria Buzz](#), and [The Martlet](#).

For a bit of good news with respect to student housing, the provincial government did announce funding for the first ever student housing on Camosun campus, with beds for 429 students! Learn more from this [CTV News story](#) and this [government press release](#).



Honouring longstanding and retiring Saanich staff at the Retirement and Long Service Awards Banquet

Saanich Youth Council

More than a year ago, Claremont student Gus Kirby, Claremont teacher Mark Neufeld, and Mayor Murdock approached me about the possibility of establishing a youth advisory committee. I am passionate about youth engagement, and young people are a group that Council seldom hears from. Saanich has advisory committees with designated youth representative positions. However, those positions can be difficult to fill, and adult-centred advisory committee spaces may not always provide the type of setting that supports meaningful youth participation. When efforts to advance a formal advisory committee proved challenging, we opted to establish an ad hoc committee as a pilot project.

After a lot of planning last summer and fall, I was delighted to get the Saanich Youth Council together for its first meeting in November 2025. This amazing group of 14 students representing Claremont, Reynolds Spectrum Mt. Doug, SMUS, and St. Andrew's schools, with support from teacher sponsors, met monthly, and then voted to meet more often in order to get more work done!



The Saanich Youth Advisory Committee with myself and Mayor Murdock at our final meeting this month.

This group worked hard! Meetings included numerous learning opportunities, with members receiving training on municipal government, Council procedures, policy development, advocacy, media relations, and public communication. Through discussions, surveys of their peers, and presentations from guests, transportation emerged as the committee's primary area of focus. They advanced two major motions to both Saanich Council and senior levels of government. One motion calling for the support for the Reconciliation Corridor Initiative (learn more from the [Victoria Buzz](#) and [Saanich News](#)), and the other calling for free transit for youth.

Despite operating as a pilot initiative without dedicated staff support or a formal budget, the SYC produced a significant body of work. Key accomplishments included developing and approving Terms of Reference, conducting a survey that received 319 student responses, drafting policy motions and supporting materials on transportation issues, approving correspondence to federal and provincial decision-makers, issuing public communications, and undertaking advocacy with elected officials. Check out this great piece in the [Saanich News](#) about the SYC!



Working with the Saanich Youth Council members on issue prioritization.

The committee also developed recommendations for establishing a permanent youth advisory body, highlighting the value of structured youth engagement in municipal decision-making and demonstrating the capacity of young residents to contribute meaningfully to local policy discussions. I spent much of the previous weekend drafting up the SYC's 100+ page end of term report, which I will be presenting to Saanich Council in July 6th, along with the SYC's motions on the Reconciliation Corridor Initiative and free transit for youth.

It was an honour working with this amazing group of passionate and dedicated young people and I very much hope that Saanich Council takes their recommendations to heart and considers establishing a permanent youth advisory committee.

Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Conference

I had the pleasure of attending this gathering of local government people from across the region in Victoria from April 24 to 26th. [The conference](#) was jam-packed with learning sessions and panels, talks and presentations, visits to the trade show, networking with colleagues from other local governments and other levels of government, and debate draft resolutions submitted by members.



Oak Bay Councillor Carrie Smart, myself, and the incoming and outgoing UVSS Directors of Campaigns & Community Relations celebrating the adoption of our resolutions at AVICC.

I am pleased that the resolutions on student affordability that I had previously attempted to move through Saanich Council were both adopted. I am grateful to Oak Bay Councillor Carrie Smart

for her leadership on these motions and for students from the UVSS who worked tirelessly to get these motions adopted. The first motion called on the province consider a \$10 per day flat-rate ferry fare pilot program for post-secondary students travelling as foot passengers during non-peak hours. Learn more from these articles in the [Victoria News](#), [Trail Times](#), and this great op ed in the [Times Colonist](#).

The second resolution called on the province to create a provincial Student Food Security Grant, equivalent to \$1.50 per enrolled post-secondary student, to support campus food banks. Learn more from these articles in the [Saanich News](#), [Island Social Trends](#), And read about both resolutions in [The Martlet](#).



Leading a learning tour about placemaking and community building with AVICC delegates, including my late friend and Langford councillor Lillian Szpak. Our region lost an amazing and dedicated person in [Councillor Szpak](#).

In addition to participating in as many learning sessions as I could, I also had the pleasure of hosting a learning tour. My tour, which was run in cooperation with the [Greater Victoria Placemaking Network](#), explored placemaking, how tactical urbanism can help build and transform community, and the role local governments can play in supporting placemaking.

Other Saanich Updates

There's always so much going on, so here's a rapid fire of some important recent Saanich news:

- **Shelbourne Valley Plan:** Council approved an updated long-term plan for the Shelbourne Valley. The updated plan refreshes the original 2017 Shelbourne Valley Action Plan and brings it into alignment with Saanich's current Official Community Plan and other Council-approved plans and policies adopted in recent years. It also reflects changing demographics and community needs, with a stronger focus on climate resilience. The SVP will help guide growth and change in one of Saanich's key urban areas over the coming decades – supporting complete, connected and livable neighbourhoods while reinforcing the community's distinct character and sense of place. Learn more from the [Times Colonist](#) and the [District of Saanich](#).
- **2026 Budget Approved:** Council adopted the five-year Financial Plan Bylaw as well as the 2026 Tax Rate Bylaw, which establish the operating and capital plans for all municipal programs, including the tax revenue required to support service delivery. You can [learn more here](#).

As the lone councillor to vote against the budget this year, I thought I would explain my vote. Overall, it's a solid budget, and I support the will of Council, but as I [said at our meeting](#), we cut too deep particularly when it came to: 1) Support for active transportation funding, which would have helped provide more residents with safe, sustainable, and cost-effective ways of getting around the District. And 2) fully funding the Biodiversity Conservation and Urban Forest Strategies, both critical to the health and well-being of people, wildlife, and ecosystems in the District. Read more in the [Saanich News](#).



I was delighted to serve as a celebrity judge in this year's [Scream Like A Gull](#) competition, held in Beacon Hill Park in recognition of World Migratory Bird Day. Learn more [here](#) and [here](#), and hear the gull cries in this story on [CHEK News](#), Screeeeeyah!

- **2025 Climate Report Card:** The latest Saanich [Climate Plan Report Card](#) shows that the District has achieved a 47% reduction in corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for 2025 compared to the 2007 baseline – notably close to the 50% target. This target was

set five years ahead of the 50% community emissions reduction target to demonstrate the District's commitment to leading by example. I am proud of the progress we've made, but recognize that there is considerably more work to be done! [Learn more here.](#)

- **Saanich Affordable Housing Reserve Fund Eligibility Expanded:** Council agreed to provide a \$227,500 grant to Habitat for Humanity Victoria to partially fund a 13-unit non-profit affordable-homeownership project on Feltham Road, and we voted to expand eligibility for the [Saanich Affordable Housing Reserve Fund](#) to include affordable ownership projects, whereas the fund was previously only accessible to rental housing projects. Learn more from the [Times Colonist](#).



Touring the Saanich Operations Centre during Public Works Week. [Learn more here.](#)

- **Saanich's Gordon Head Recreation Centre earns top marks for accessibility:** Gordon Head Recreation Centre has achieved the highest possible accessibility certification from the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) program – demonstrating the District of Saanich's commitment to removing barriers and improving accessibility for visitors of all abilities. Gordon Head is the first Saanich recreation centre to achieve the 'RHF Accessibility Certified Gold' rating. Saanich Commonwealth Place and G.R. Pearkes Recreation Centre have attained RHFAC certification, and Cedar Hill Recreation Centre will be assessed in the future following the completion of the Green and Accessible Improvement Project. [Learn more here.](#)
- **Construction begins on Library and Affordable Housing Project:** We will soon see a modernized library and 210 units of affordable housing begin to take shape at 3950 Cedar Hill Road! I am very excited that construction of the new Nellie McClung library project has begun! This project is a partnership between the District of Saanich and the Capital Region Housing Corporation with a nominal lease of the land and funding for the library

contributed by the District. Funding through the Province's Building BC: Community Housing Fund program will support the purpose-built rental housing at a range of rental rates to support people with low to moderate incomes. The mix of rent levels includes:

- 20% of the units at shelter rates;
- 50% of the units offering rent-geared-to income rents; and
- 30% of the units with near market affordable rents. [Learn more here.](#)



Visiting Cuthbert Holmes Park on Saanich Biodiversity Day! [Learn more here.](#)

It's going to be an awesome summer! Don't forget to check the [Saanich Calendar](#) for a ton of exciting summer events! And come over and say hello if you spot me at Music in the Park, Pride, the Strawberry Festival, Gorge Canada Day Picnic, and other community events.



A traffic signal with yours truly for scale. This year's Public Works Week tour of the Saanich Operations Centre was an absolute blast! [Learn more here.](#)

Ongoing Saanich Engagement

- **Draft Tillicum Burnside Plan Survey:** The District of Saanich is inviting residents, businesses, property owners and community members to review the [Draft Tillicum Burnside Plan](#) (TBP) and help refine this important vision for the future. Learn more and share your views [here](#), the survey is open until July 13.
- **Uptown Douglas Pre-Zoning & Network Design Project Survey:** The Uptown Douglas Pre-Zoning and Transportation Network Design Project is the next step in putting the Uptown Douglas Plan (UDP) into action. This project is the next step in transforming the area into the complete, people-oriented 'heart' of Saanich. Learn more and share your views [here](#), engagement is open until July 6. [Learn more here.](#)
- **Interurban Wilkinson Project Survey:** The Interurban and Wilkinson intersection is a key part of Saanich's local and regional transportation network. It's a complex five-leg intersection that serves people traveling by all modes of transportation and has a long history of congestion, safety concerns, and neighborhood traffic impacts. The District of Saanich is starting the Interurban Wilkinson Project (IWP) to design and implement significant improvements to the Interurban and Wilkinson intersection. Learn more and share your views [here](#), engagement is open until July 6. [Learn more here.](#)



Celebrating the start of Pride Month with Mayor Murdock at the pride flag raising at Saanich Hall

Family Doctors for Saanich



It has been a busy couple of months for the [Family Doctors for Saanich](#) campaign! I have been working hard to advance policies through Saanich Council that will help get more folks attached to a family doctor or nurse practitioner, and I am very pleased to say that the motion I presented to Council on density bonusing and other incentives to get more clinics built in Saanich was adopted. You take a deep dive on this resolution from the accompanying backgrounder, which is [available here](#), and I put together this quick [explainer video here](#).

You can also learn more about this motion from these news pieces from [CHEK News](#), the [Times Colonist](#), [Saanich News](#), [Victoria Buzz](#), and tune into [this interview](#) I gave on CFAX. Our policy was highly praised by [BC Family Doctors](#), and I hope more municipalities will step up and explore similar incentives for getting more clinics built!



Community members, including Family Doctors for Saanich volunteers (in bright pink) gathered to support Shoreline Medical earlier this year.

More recently, I also advanced a draft UBCM resolution through Council, calling on the province to remove barriers to team-based care in BC. The draft resolution asks UBCM to call on the Province to develop sustainable funding, governance, and operational models that enable the widespread implementation and long-term sustainability of team-based primary care in BC. The resolution was unanimously adopted by Council and will now be submitted for consideration at the 2026 UBCM Convention, taking place September 14 to 18 in Vancouver.

I was pleased to work on this resolution with Central Saanich Councillor Sarah Riddell, and friends from Shoreline Medical. The resolution was adopted by Central Saanich Council on June 15th. You can learn more about this draft resolution in this piece from the [Times Colonist](#). I also recently spoke to [CHEK News](#) about the importance of clinic space.

The [Family Doctors for Saanich](#) campaign has been trucking along, with amazing volunteers tabling and canvassing around the community as part of our Health Connect Registry registration drive. If you do not have a family doctor or nurse practitioner, and are not already on the list, please sign up to the [Health Connect Registry](#).

We are always looking for folks to get involved, especially as we get our new welcome wagon rolling. [Learn more, take action, and get involved here!](#)

Reproductive Justice Advocacy



It has been busy times for [AccessBC](#). In mid-April, we learned that the Federal government was contemplating treating the national Pharmacare plan as a pilot project, letting the program end when funding runs out in 2029. This, coupled with the fact that zero new pharmacare agreements have been signed since Carney became Prime Minister is part of a worrying trend (read more from these pieces in [The Tyee](#), [The Hill Times](#), [Canadian Affairs](#), and [CCPA](#)).

We immediately scrambled, and working with the [Council of Canadians](#), we mobilized over 65 civil society organizations in calling on the Carney government to fund this critical program into the future and show leadership by negotiating agreements with outstanding jurisdictions. You can [read the full letter in French and English here](#), and tune into an interview I gave on the topic on the [Jill Bennet Show](#).

As of the time of my writing this newsletter, we have yet to hear back from the federal government, and AccessBC is gearing up for a national letter writing campaign, which we will launching towards the end of this month. The growing cost of living crisis is making it harder and harder for Canadians to access the medicine they need to stay happy, healthy, and alive, and the federal governments inaction on Pharmacare is resulting the unacceptable situation where a Canadian's ability to access life-saving and life-changing medicine now depends on both their income and their postal code. Please stay tuned for more on this impending campaign!



The federal government's lack of leadership on pharmacare is even more frustrating given the increasing evidence demonstrating the positive impact that free prescription contraception has had in BC. A couple of weeks ago, a new study exploring the patient savings associated with the policy was published in [JAMA Health Forum](#).

The peer-reviewed found that BC's universal, no-cost prescription contraception policy sharply reduced out-of-pocket costs for reproductive-aged women aged 15 to 49, and especially individuals aged 20 to 29. Researchers found that the share of contraceptive prescriptions paid for out of pocket fell from 38.7% before the policy to 9.6% after two years. By the two-year mark, while total contraceptive spending across patients, insurers, and the public system remained stable, out-of-pocket patient spending was 83% lower than expected, translating into average savings of \$43 per contraceptive user per year.

Read the [AccessBC press release here](#), and learn more from [Global News](#), [Medical Press](#), and directly from the [Women's Health Research Institute](#). Et pour mes amis francophones, [voici un article de Radio-Canada](#), ainsi que [cette entrevue](#) que j'ai accordée à ce sujet (et [une interview plus longue ici](#)).

I also took a deep dive into the issue and the ongoing work of AccessBC with my friend Kathleen Johnson, in this episode of [The Kreactivators Podcast](#).

Finally, while we gear up for our national letter writing campaign to save and expand pharmacare, AccessBC is still fighting to improve pain management for IUD insertions here in BC. If you haven't done so already, please take 30 seconds to participate in our ongoing [letter writing campaign](#) on this issue.

BC Humanist Research

GODLESS SERENITY

Unconstitutional prayers in New Brunswick municipal council meetings



The BC Humanist Association Research Team has been growing and hard at work. Last month, we released a new report I co-authored as part of our ongoing [Saguenay Project](#), which explores unconstitutional prayer in Canadian municipalities. The report, entitled [Godless Serenity: Unconstitutional prayers in New Brunswick municipal council meetings](#), found that the inaugural meetings held in 2021, six included prayer, and those held in 2022/2023, three included prayer. We also identified four municipalities that open their regular meetings with prayer. All of these practices are in contravention of the Supreme Court's ruling in the Saguenay decision (2015). We also identified a number of practices we describe as 'stealth prayer' - efforts to skirt the law, through minimal nominative changes to what nearly everyone would consider a prayer.

I am also very excited that our team has brought on several summer researchers, with the support of a Canada Summer Jobs Grant. I am looking forward to working with this team over the next couple of months as we explore a wide range of topics, including wrapping up the final Saguenay Project reports (Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia), tax policy, reproductive justice, school district policy, and more. Stay tuned for a flurry of reports on these topics and more this fall.

Little Free Library News



Check out [this great piece in The Martlet](#), all about some of our region's amazing little free libraries!

I spent some time updating the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network's regional little free library map (though there are still some updates to go), and I'm excited to say that there are now over 1,008 little free libraries for books in the region, as well as 34 for seeds and plans, 28 for puzzles and board games, and 14 for art and art supplies! If you are out and about in the community this summer and spot an unmapped 'wild' little free library, or one that is missing a photo (marked in purple on our [map](#)) or a precise location (marked in yellow on our [map](#)) please let me know!

And if you are looking for a fun family friendly summer activity related to little free libraries, why not check out LFL Bingo! You can find a link to the GVPN's [LFL Bingo Card Generator here](#)! The great thing about LFL Bingo is everyone gets a prize - free books!

I hope to see you out at my official campaign launch on the 11th of July, and you can sign up to volunteer for my re-election campaign at teale.ca.

Warm regards,

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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