
Spring Update from Teale

1 message

Teale Phelps Bondaroff via ActionNetwork.org <hello@teale.ca> 12 July 2025 at 17:07

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A June Update from Teale

Friends,

Summer has arrived in Saanich, and that means things have been busier than ever! While Council has fewer meetings in August, our June and July meetings have been jam packed! There are a ton of [awesome events](#) planned throughout the summer. I hope to see folks out at Music in the Park, which occurs every Tuesday from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm in a different Saanich park each week. You can [find the full schedule here](#). It's been a busy month, and there's lots to report on, so in no particular order, let's dive in!



Celebrating Canada Day in the Gorge with Victoria-Swan Lake MLA Nina Krieger 🍁

Saanich Operations Centre AAP: One of the hot button issues this month has been the alternative approval process (AAP) for the Saanich Operations Centre Redevelopment Project (SOC). For background, an AAP is a cost-effective and efficient way to gauge public support for local government initiatives. It allows the electors to have a say and have their opposition counted by submitting an Elector Response Form.

This process ensures that significant decisions reflect the community's wishes while saving resources. AAPs are provincially legislated and can be used for a variety of matters, including borrowing money for a project, establishing new municipal services or adjusting parkland dedications. You can [learn more about this process here](#).



Saanich Council members marching in the Victoria Pride Parade 🏳️‍🌈

The Saanich Operations Centre (located at [1040 McKenzie Avenue](#)) has served our community for more than 60 years. It is the hub of the vast infrastructure network serving the District of Saanich.

While the District continues to deliver services from this bustling hub, we are looking to redevelop the site and replace the old facilities with new ones so our operations will function well into the future allowing us to continue to provide services that support our high quality of life in Saanich. As a result, the District has been working on a [redevelopment plan](#) for the site. Given the costs involved (~\$150 million) and the existing provincial legislation at the time, Council implemented an AAP process.

Staff has been working hard to count the submissions for the AAP for the SOC, and the certified results will be presented at a forthcoming council meeting. Following that, the District will share the results through a news release on [saanich.ca](#) and through updates on its social media channels, and I'll let folks know in my next newsletter.



Music in the Park is back, and the crowd at Goward House was dancing up a storm last week!

ADEI Statement:

I have the honour of chairing Saanich's Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) Advisory Committee. I am incredibly grateful to the amazing community members who volunteer to serve on this committee, we've been working hard!

I'm sure you have noticed a growing attack on DEI around the world, but particularly in the USA. As just one example, this past February, in an egregious move, the Trump regime attempted to blame air crashes on DEI. Given these types of attacks, now, more than ever, it is important that we speak up and reaffirm core Saanich values.

As a result, the ADEI Advisory Committee drafted a statement reaffirming the Districts commitment to these core values, and I am pleased to say that the motion was adopted, with a minor amendment (striking the part of the motion calling for the statement to be "released"), at our June 9th meeting. You can [listen to the full statement here](#), and find the full statement and [livestream of the debate here](#). Please share this with someone in your life who needs to hear this right now.



Up at Claremont High chatting with grade 11 students about local government and how to save the world!

Quadra McKenzie Plan - Phase 4 Consultation: At our most recent meeting, Council received a staff report that included the most recent iteration of the [Quadra McKenzie Plan](#). This plan provides guidance on growth and change over the next 20 years, shaping the homes we build, the streets we travel on, the parks we play in and the neighbourhoods we live in along two major corridors in the District. You can learn more about the plan [here](#).

At a previous meeting, Council requested that staff make some adjustments to the plan, in light of feedback received from the community, and these changes were presented to Council at a special meeting held on July 7th. You can find a summary of the changes [here](#). The current iteration of the plan will go going out for a fourth round of consultation, which will be soft launched at the end of August and begin in earnest in early September. I would encourage everyone to check out the current plan and let us know what you think through this next round of consultation.

I did want to flag one issue that arose at our July 7th meeting, specifically the importance of meeting decorum. Council received reports, and actively witnessed, instances of verbal abuse, bullying, and harassment taking place in the Council chambers. This kind of behaviour is unacceptable.

I am not talking about applause, heckling, or other similar interventions. Folks who follow meetings will know that this are not permitted and the meeting chair does their best to remind folks of the importance of ensuring that these types of interventions do not occur in order to ensure that everyone feels welcome sharing their views with Council, regardless of whether or

not those views are supported by the majority of folks present in the chambers. No, I am talking about interpersonal interactions where the aim was to intimidate and bully (read more from this [Times Colonist article](#)).

In light of this behaviour, the Mayor released the [this statement](#). As you know, I take the importance of everyone feeling welcome and safe in our council chambers very seriously, and I also released [a statement of my own](#). I will be working with my colleagues and staff to ensure that this sort of thing does not happen moving forward. Let's treat each other with respect, compassion, and empathy.

Draft UBCM Resolution Updates



Attending the Uptown Multicultural Festival.

This fall, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) will be meeting in Victoria. The annual UBCM conference is a gathering of municipal council members from across the province. The conference features educational presentations and panels, networking opportunities, a tradeshow, meetings with provincial minister, and debate on draft resolutions. Any resolutions adopted by UBCM go on to become part of the organizations advocacy efforts towards the province.

I am pleased to have help draft a number of UBCM resolutions this year. Earlier this year, Saanich Council supported calls for the province to [enshrine the Coastal Marine Strategy into law](#), and to take leadership on [feral rabbits](#). The later of which was back in the news this week (see this piece in [CHEK News](#)). This past month, Council adopted a number of additional resolutions:

- **Accessible Buildings:** Calling on the Province to incorporate the latest accessibility standards established by the *Canadian Standards Association* into the *Provincial Building*

Code to ensure that all new construction in British Columbia meets accessibility standards, and that the Province commits to achieving the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification gold certification on all its new buildings. You can read the full resolution and backgrounder [here](#), and learn more from this piece in the [Journal of Commerce](#).



I'm exploring a variety of ways of increasing accessibility in the District through the work of the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee.

- **Updating the name of the Motor Vehicle Act:** Calling on the province to change the name of the *Motor Vehicle Act* to the *Road Safety Act*. Learn more [here](#).
- **Saving Money and Saving Lives - Provincial Default 30km/h for Local Streets with no Centre Line:** Calling on the Province of British Columbia to amend the Motor Vehicle Act to establish a default provincial speed limit of 30 km/h on local roads without a centre line, while preserving municipal authority to increase speed limits on such roads on a case-by-case basis. Learn more [here](#), and from [this Times Colonist](#) news story.
- **Saving Money and Saving Lives - Empower Municipal Default Speed Limits:** Calling on the Province to amend the Motor Vehicle Act to allow municipalities to adopt a default speed limit for unsigned roads. Learn more [here](#).

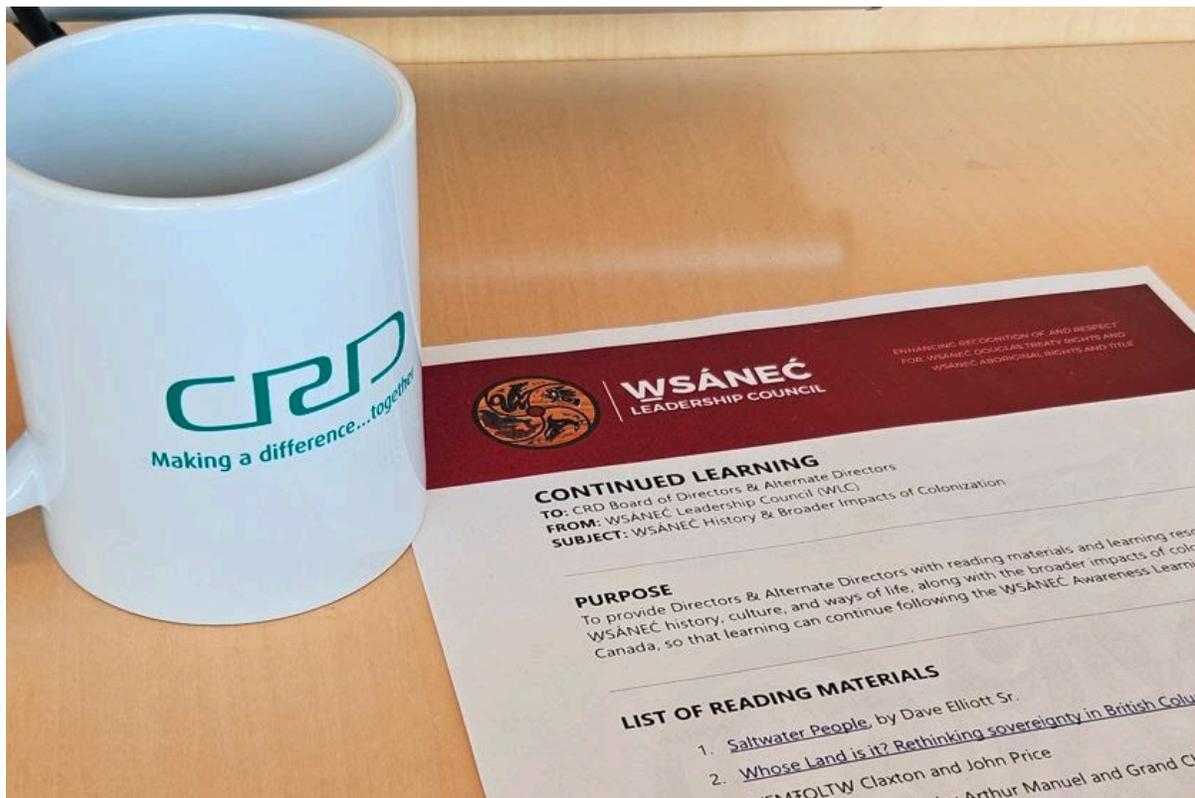


I had the honour of serving as Acting Mayor for the month of June. This meant that among other things, I had the privilege of chairing a couple of committee of the whole meetings.

- **Declaring Housing as a Human Right:** For the past several months, I have been working with friends from the [BC Poverty Reduction Coalition](#) to mobilize municipalities across BC to adopt draft UBCM resolutions calling on the BC Government to enshrine housing as a human right in legislation and forthcoming housing and homelessness strategies. This past month, nine BC municipalities stepped up, including Vancouver, North Vancouver, Burnaby, Port Moody, Langley City, Victoria, Saanich, Nanaimo and Langford.

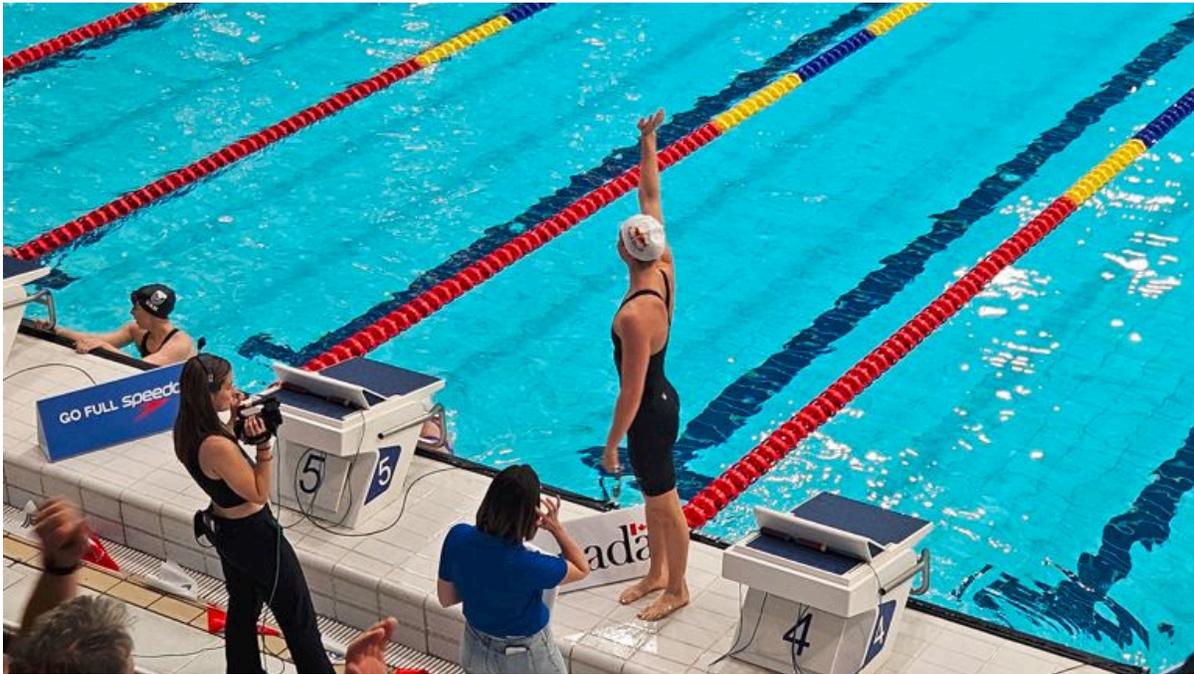
Recognizing housing as a human right fundamentally shifts government motivations by adding critical urgency and responsibility to ensure access to affordable housing (meaning housing costs are aligned with income) through policies that prevent homelessness, address the escalating housing and homelessness crisis, eliminate discrimination, and prioritize the needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

You can read more from news stories from [CBC News](#), [Tri City Dispatches](#), the [Times Colonist](#), [CBC Radio](#), the [Nanaimo News Bulletin](#), [CBC News](#), and the [Saanich News](#). And you can watch my presentation to Council [here](#).



This month, I had the pleasure of attending two highly informative sessions run by the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council.

- **Municipal Lobbyist Registration Administered by the Province:** It is challenging and expensive for individual municipalities to establish their own lobbyist registration systems. This draft resolution proposes a system whereby municipalities could opt into a provincially established and administered system, similar to the provincial mechanism under the BC Lobbyists Transparency Act. You can watch my presentation to Council [here](#). As a minor clarification, as I received a couple of questions from folks about this, the opt-in element of this proposal is for municipalities to opt into a registry, once this is done, registration by lobbyists would be required.



I had the honour of watching Summer McIntosh break a world record at the 2025 Bell Canadian Swim Trials, which were held at Commonwealth Place this month. It was breathtaking!

- **Adopting European Elevator Standards to Improve Accessibility and Affordability:** Calling on the province to adopt European codes and standards for elevator construction and maintenance, reducing building costs and encouraging more elevators to be installed in new buildings. European elevator codes and standards permit elevators with smaller cabin sizes, and the European standard for elevator parts have become the global standard, creating a large market for affordable, standardized elevators and replacement parts. A [recent report](#) from the Centre for Building has found that the US and Canada have some of the most expensive elevator costs in the world, and that adopting European elevator codes standards would reduce costs and improve accessibility, particularly in low- and mid-rise buildings.

This draft resolution received considerable media attention. You can learn more from [CBC News](#), [RedFM 89.1 FM](#), [Saanich News](#), the [Times Colonist](#), and the story even got written up in [Elevator World](#) (also available in [German](#), [French](#), and [Turkish](#)). Et mes amis francophones peuvent lire cet article à partir de [Radio Canada](#). And you can watch my presentation to Council [here](#).

BC District Pushing for European-Style Elevators

Jun 16, 2025 | [British Columbia - Canada - Daily News - International News](#)



Saanich Updates

There is always a lot going on at Saanich, so here are a few more updates, in no particular order:

- **The Great Horned Owl Crowned the Official Bird of Saanich:** Thank you to everyone who voted to help us select the official bird of Saanich. The great horned owl won with 33.2% of the votes cast, followed by the Bewick's wren (27.3%), the Northern flicker (27.1%), and the Cooper's hawk (12.4%). Check out this elegant beauty! And my favourite fact about the great horned owl, and I'll tell anyone who will listen, is that it's little feathery horns are called 'plumicorns!'



The Great Horned Owl was crowned the official bird of Saanich this month. One thing I love about this bird is that it's little feathery horns are called 'plumicorns.' Photo by Timothy G.

Lumley/Earth Rangers.

- **PKOLS name restoration ceremony:** On July 2nd, the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council hosted, in partnership with the District of Saanich, a ceremony to celebrate the restoration of the name PKOLS and the sign rededication. The name means "white rock" in SENĆOTEN, and I had the honour of attending.

In 2013, W̱SÁNEĆ people marched up PKOLS and dedicated a sign placed at the summit, created by the late Charles Elliott, to honour the traditional name on the mountain. Chas Elliott, Charles Elliott's son, restored and rededicated the sign placed at the summit. PKOLS, steeped in millennia of W̱SÁNEĆ history, culture, and tradition, serves as a sacred gathering place, where stories are woven into the fabric of the landscape, and ancestral connections are preserved.

PKOLS also holds profound historical significance as the site of the treaty meeting on February 11th, 1852, between W̱SÁNEĆ leaders and Governor James Douglas, which resulted in the Douglas Treaty. See more pictures from the event [here](#). You can also learn more from the [Saanich News](#) article and [Saanich press release](#).



Hereditary Chief and WLC Community Engagement Coordinator Eric Pelkey addressing folks at the name restoring ceremony for PKOLS.

- **Amalgamation Update:** The report from the Citizen's Assembly tasked with exploring the costs, benefits and disadvantages of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria is now public. We will be receiving this report at our next council meeting. You can learn more about the process [here](#), and find the full report and other documents [here](#).
- **Get Splashing!** Just in time for this weekends hot weather, I am very pleased to say that the Rutledge Park Splash Pad is back up and splashing again! Thank you for everyone's patience as our staff worked hard to address the issue. [Learn more here](#).



I have the responsibility of representing Saanich on a number of local boards, and I am honoured to represent the District on the board of the Royal MacPherson Theatre Society, pictured here from our recent AGM.

- **Tenant Assistance Policy:** In order to strengthen tenant protections, Council decided to transform our Tenant Assistance Policy into a bylaw. The policy, and soon the bylaw, "requires developers to provide assistance to tenants who will be displaced by redevelopment and can include financial compensation, assistance finding alternative rental housing, covering moving costs and offering the right of first refusal in the new development at 20% below market rent" (from this longer article in the [Times Colonist](#)). I am looking forward to seeing the new bylaw and hope that these measures will help protect tenants when multi-family buildings are re-developed.

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:

- [Tillicum Burnside Plan Survey](#) - open until July 14.
- [Panama Flats Concept Plan Questionnaire](#) - open until July 16.
- [Climate Plan Update Survey](#) - open through Summer 2025.

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts about the District's draft [Traffic Calming Policy](#), you can find a summary from this engagement [here](#).



I have the responsibility of representing Saanich on a number of local boards, and I am honoured to represent the District on the board of the Greater Victoria Public Library, pictured here from our recent board retreat.

More Family Doctors in Saanich



Thank you to those who reached out to get involved in this initiative. I am still in the process of gathering names and engaging in background research. I did have a very productive conversation with Victoria-Swan Lake MLA Nina Krieger about this issue recently. I am hopping to get folks together this summer to plan next steps. If you are interested in getting involved, please get in touch. No advocacy experience is needed!

We are looking from folks from all walks of life to help us fight for more doctors in the District. [Please email me to get involved \(hello@teale.ca\)](mailto:hello@teale.ca).

Reproductive Justice Advocacy



AccessBC is gearing up to launch a new advocacy campaign this fall. The campaign will focus on urging the provincial government to improve pain management for IUD insertions. To learn more, tune into our very own Sara Sunderji's [June 3rd](#) presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services as part of the 2026 provincial budget consultation. You can hear her [full presentation here](#).

We plan on launching this campaign on World Contraception Day 2025, and could use your help getting the word out. If you are not already signed up for the AccessBC Campaign Action List, please do, and any donations to support the campaign's work will go a very long way to helping us reach more people with our campaign.

I also spoke to the [Times Colonist](#) about the importance of sustained provincial funding for sex education programs, and advocates in Nova Scotia are pushing hard for free prescription contraception, learn more from these articles in the [Saltwire](#), [Global News](#), [Y95.5 CJLS](#), the [Chronicle Herald](#), and [CBC News](#).

Little Free Libraries



Celebrating over 927 little free libraries in the region!

Our region's network of little free libraries (LFLs) continues to grow. Last month we cut the ribbon on the 900th LFL in the region, and since this time, we have identified even more LFLs! There are now more than 929 LFLs across the CRD.

Given this pace of growth, and just how awesome LFLs are, the [Greater Victoria Placemaking Network](#) is planning a massive 1,000th LFL celebration! So mark your calendars, Saturday, September 20th, when we will be throwing a LFL gathering. Stay tuned for more details.

I also need your help! I will be working hard this summer to keep the GVPN's regional LFL map up to date, and I need your help to do it. You can [find the map here](#), and you will notice a number of different coloured entries on the map. Purple entries are confirmed LFLs but we are missing a photo, and yellow entries indicate that we have heard there is an LFL somewhere in that area, but need to confirm the location and get a picture. So any help confirming locations and snapping pictures of local LFLs would be much appreciated.

I also need your help finding LFLs that are not on the map. So if you happen to pass by a LFLs that's not recorded on the map, please let me know the location and send over a picture!

BC Humanist Research



My work with the BC Humanist Research (BCHA) Team continues. I am currently putting the finishing touches on a report exploring unconstitutional prayer in municipal council meetings in PEI, which is part of the BCHA's [Saguenay Project](#). I will be working on reports on other Eastern provinces over the summer and hope to have a review of every province completed by the end of the year.

The team is also in the process of exploring a wide range of issues, which include tax policy, the history of prayer in the BC legislature, sumptuarial regulations in Canadian legislative assemblies, crisis pregnancy centres, school district policies in BC, and more! Our team is made up of wonderful volunteers who are looking to make a difference and support the separation of religion and government in Canada. If you have any capacity over the summer and were interested in helping out, please get in touch (hello@teale.ca)!

I also spoke with the [Saanich News](#) about some archaic language in Saanich's parks bylaw that prohibits 'blasphemy' in our parks. I'll make sure these get fixed next time we crack open the parks bylaws.

Marine Conservation



It seems like my recent publication in [Conservation Biology](#) exploring crime in seahorse fisheries has been making quite a splash. The paper, entitled "Using online reports of seahorse seizures to track their illegal trade," examined online seizure records from 2010 to 2021 and found smuggling incidents in 62 countries. We found that close to five million smuggled seahorses worth an estimated CAD\$29 million were seized by authorities over a 10-year span, and this number is almost certainly much larger.

This collaboration between [Project Seahorse](#) and [OceansAsia](#) made global headlines this month! You can find English language articles on the paper in [The Cool Down](#), [Innovando News](#), [Smithsonian Magazine](#), [Asian Pacific Post](#), and [Inkl](#). And news articles in [Slovenian](#), [Portuguese](#), [Italian](#), [Albanian](#), [German](#), [Korean](#), [Chinese](#), [Turkish](#), [Dutch](#), [Hebrew](#), and [Spanish](#).

The OceansAsia research team is currently expanding our work on crime in global sea cucumber fisheries, and I'm looking forward to sharing future publications with you. You can [read the entire seahorse paper here](#).

I hope to see you at a community event this summer!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Teale Phelps Bondaroff".

Dr. Teale Phelps Bondaroff

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



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