
UBCM Update and News from Teale

1 message

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A September Update from Teale

Friends,

It has been a very busy September and I have a ton of updates for you; from Saanich news, the annual Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) conference, little free library celebrations, new research reports, and progress on reproductive justice issues. Much of my month was occupied with preparations for, and participation in, the annual UBCM conference, so let's jump in there!



Meeting with the Honourable Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs, with Mayor Dean Murdock, and Kim and Uli Egger, representatives of the Rick Hansen Foundation at UBCM 2025 to talk about housing and accessibility.

UBCM 2025

We just wrapped up the 2025 annual [Union of British Columbia Municipalities](#) (UBCM) conference, which took place in Victoria from September 22 to 26. Prior to the conference, I sat down with the [Victoria Buzz](#) to talk about what UBCM is, what it does, and the various resolutions submitted by Saanich.

It was a jam-packed week that included a wide range of educational and informative panels and presentations, plenty of opportunities to connect with colleagues from other municipalities, presentations and meetings with folks from senior government, and the debate and adoption of resolutions covering a variety of issues.



Meeting with the Honourable Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship and the Honourable Diana Gibson, Minister for Citizens' Services, along with Langford Councillor Mary Wagner, to talk about the Coastal Marine Strategy, feral rabbits and the North Coast Tanker Ban.

You can [find all of the resolutions here](#), and there were a lot of them. I wanted to provide an update as to where all of the Saanich resolutions stand now that the dust has settled. am pleased to say that I helped draft all of the resolutions that were submitted by Saanich this year, and they are as follows:

- **RR10 - Declaring Housing as a Human Right:** See also 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. I am very pleased to say that this resolution was resoundingly adopted by conference participants on Thursday. You can learn more from these articles in [Island Social Trends](#), the [Delta Optimist](#), [Victoria Buzz](#), and [CHLY 101.7FM](#), and press release from the [BC Poverty Reduction Coalition](#).
- **EB71 - Saving Money and Saving Lives: Empower Municipal Default Speed Limits:** Adopted as part of the Endorsed Block.
- **EB95 - Lobbyist Registration:** Adopted as part of the Endorsed Block. You can learn more from news stories in the [Saanich News](#), et pour mes amis francophones, j'ai donné une entrevue sur le sujet à [Radio Canada](#).
- **NR41 - The Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification in BC Buildings:** Adopted resoundingly by delegates on Friday. You can learn more from this [press release](#) from the Rick Hansen Foundation, and from this recent article in the [Oak Bay News](#).



Speaking out in favour of resolution NR41, calling for improved accessibility standards for buildings in BC.

- **NR69 - Legislating the BC Coastal Marine Strategy:** We only managed to get to resolution NR67, and unfortunately did not get the opportunity to debate subsequent resolutions. I did attempt to extend debate, but this procedural measure was unsuccessful. Resolutions that were not debated at the conference will be passed along to the newly formed executive for further discussion. I will report back on anything that emerges from this process.
- **NR77 - Provincial Support for Addressing Feral Rabbits:** Same as above, not debated. You can learn more about this issue from this piece from the [Victoria News](#).
- **NR100 - Saving Money and Saving Lives: Provincial Default 30 km/h for Local Streets with No Centre Line:** Same as above, not debated.
- **NR102 - Updating the Name of the Motor Vehicle Act:** Same as above, not debated.
- **NR121 - Adopting European Elevator Standards to Improve Accessibility and Affordability:** Same as above, not debated.



Premier David Eby addressing UBCM.

- **ERX - Supporting the North Coast Tanker Ban:** Submitted after the deadline and not accepted by the committee for emergency consideration. This is a critical and evolving issue, with Premier Danielle Smith recently announcing her desires to see a [northern pipeline built](#). In consultation with allies, we decided to not attempt to present this motion from the floor, as UBCM already has a strong stance supporting the North Coast Tanker Ban, and we did not want to risk the motion potentially failing and reversing this position.

I am pleased to report that my motion concerning this issue was adopted by Saanich Council earlier in the month. The motion had two prongs, one was this emergency resolution, and the other, a letter to a number of key members of senior government. I am hoping that municipalities across BC will step up and echo this call, and will be reaching out to colleagues soon. If you are about maintaining the North Coast Tanker Ban, please take a few moments to [write to the Prime Minister today!](#)



Celebrating the adoption of resolution NR41 with Kim and Uli Egger, from the Rick Hansen Foundation.

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.

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. Along with colleagues, I met with the Ministers of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Minister for Citizens' Services, and Housing and Municipal Affairs to discuss some of the issues captured by Saanich's resolutions.



Attending a session at UBCM on ways of getting more family doctors into communities.

If you are interested in learning more about UBCM, I put together [this video summary](#) prior to the conference, and I also put together daily video updates. You can find them on my [TikTok](#) and [Instagram](#) channels.

One additional highlight was the District of Saanich being awarded the prestigious Presidents Committee Choice Award for our Asset Management Strategy and Implementation Plan. Recipients of the UBCM Community Excellence Awards are recognized for going above and beyond the purposes of local government in BC. They are innovative, provide direct benefit to their community, and demonstrate leadership in their field.



The District of Saanich won the prestigious Presidents Committee Choice Award for our Asset Management Strategy and Implementation Plan!

The Presidents Committee Choice award recognizes a community the UBCM Presidents Committee believes deserved special recognition for exemplary demonstration of excellence and outstanding achievement in relation to a current issue faced by local governments. You can learn more about our award-winning [Asset Management Strategy](#) [here](#)!



One of my favourite parts of UBCM every year is seeing the massive collection of municipal flags!

Saanich News

- **Maynard Park Playground Improvements:** The Maynard Park playground in Saanich's Cadboro Bay neighbourhood is officially open and ready to be enjoyed! [Learn more here.](#)
- **E-Bike Incentives Work:** A new study from UBC has found that income-based rebates for electric bicycles are helping British Columbians drive less, save money, and generate revenue for the province. This is a program that was initiated right here in Saanich. [Learn more here.](#)
- **Disruption of Online Services:** There have been a few issues with online services offered by the District. Thank you to those who wrote in to flag these and for folks' patience as they get resolved. [Learn more here.](#)
- **Federal grant supports locally-delivered services for Saanich seniors:** For seniors facing isolation, community programs and resources can be a lifeline to help alleviate loneliness and improve their mental, emotional and physical well-being. Now, the District of Saanich and local partners can expand these offerings thanks to more than \$2.5 million in funding over 5 years from the federal government. [Learn more here.](#)



I had the privilege of attending the 100th Anniversary of the Commissionaires celebration.

- **Saanich Operations Centre Update:** As you will recall, the proposed AAP for borrowing for the Saanich Operations Centre surpassed the 10% threshold, and as a result, Council was required to explore other options. This month, staff came back to Council with fresh options, and we decided to adopt a phased approach. I am pleased to see the project moving forward, as the redevelopment of this site is critical to Saanich's ability to deliver services to residents. I lament that the new phased in approach will likely have fewer amenities (particularly housing), and that the project will cost us more money in the long run. As it stands, every month's delay is costing the District \$400,000. You can learn more from these stories from the [Victoria News](#), [CHEK News](#), and the [Times Colonist](#).

- **Budget Guidelines Set:** Budget season is on the horizon, and as part of the budgeting process, Council sets 'budget guidelines' that provide direction to staff on desired rates and reductions. You can learn more from these articles in the [Times Colonist](#) and [Saanich News](#).
- **Bike and Scooter Share Comes to Saanich:** The Evolve bike and scooter shares are popping up around the District. [Learn more here!](#)
- **25 New Shelter Beds:** I am very pleased to say that the Victoria Native Friendship Centre has received funding from the provincial government to offer 25 additional temporary shelter spaces! This is very good news and comes after considerable work by all parties involved. You can learn more from articles in the [Times Colonist](#), [Saanich News](#), [CTV News](#), and from the [BC Government Press Release](#).

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:

- **Updated Draft Quadra McKenzie Plan: Survey** - Survey extended to October 5th, 2025, so you still have a little time to share your thoughts about this plan! [Learn more here!](#)
- **Climate Action Plan Update** - A targeted update to the 2020 Climate Plan is underway. Opportunities for public engagement will be shared [here](#). You can also find out more about upcoming open houses and take [this survey](#) to share your thoughts.
- **Updated Shelbourne Valley Plan:** A new round of public engagement is launching to gather feedback on the first draft of the [updated Shelbourne Valley Plan \(SVP\)](#). Learn more and share your thoughts [here](#).



I am proud to stand in solidarity with workers as the fight for fair wages!

- **Saanich 2026 Advisory Committee Applications are now open:** The District of Saanich is accepting applications from residents wishing to be involved in local government by sitting as a member of an Advisory Committee, Board or Foundation. Appointments effective January 1, 2026, are made by Saanich Council and are generally for a one-year term. If you would like to serve your community, I would encourage you to [apply](#).

There are a number of committees (you can find them all [listed here](#)), and I have the privilege of chairing the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, and this committee gets a lot done! The aforementioned UBCM resolution NR41 originated in this committee and I just this week adopted another motion that promises to help improve accessibility for people with hidden disabilities.

I am also in the process of establishing a Youth Advisory Committee! This is not formally affiliated with Saanich's advisory committees, as we wanted to explore it as a pilot and iron out any kinks first. If you have a young person in your life who lives in Saanich and attends a Saanich high school, please let them know and put them in touch. I am looking forward to sharing more details about this committee after our first meeting later this month!

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

More Family Doctors for Saanich



Things are moving on the doctor front friends! We are getting close to launching our campaign oriented around signing up Saanich residents for the Health Connect Registry.

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!

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



On September 20th, the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network (GVPN) and the Oaklands Community Association hosted the Beats, Bites, and Books Festival to **celebrate one thousand little free libraries in the region**. It was a smashing success and I wanted to thank everyone who helped make this event possible! I had no idea that we'd hit 1,000 LFLs when we first launched the Pocket Places Project.

The event featured a little free library 'Petting Zoo,' where people could see examples of LFLs from around the region; crafts and a cozy reading circle for kids; information tables from a number of local organizations, including the Greater Victoria Public Library and Victoria Literacy Connection; a free book pickup; and live music and food trucks, curated by the Oaklands Community Association. The event was also attended by the [Superheroes of Victoria](#), who distributed free comic books and graphic novels to attendees, and who were very popular. The event also included a live auction, with proceeds going to support the work of the [Victoria Literacy Connection](#).

You can learn more about the event from this [GVPN blog post](#), and from news stories from [CBC](#), [Victoria Buzz](#), [Victoria News](#), [the Martlet](#), et [Radio Canada](#).



Throngs of people at the LFL auction at the Beats, Bites and Books event.

I have even more exciting little free library news! At the big celebration, we launched the **2025 Greater Victoria Little Free Library Awards**. The GVPN is looking for members of the community to nominate their favourite LFLs to be recognized by an award. You can [learn more and nominate an LFL here](#). The prize categories are:

- Best Plant/Seed LFL
- Best Boardgame/Puzzle LFL
- Most Verdant Greenroof
- Best Literary Themed LFL
- Cutest LFL
- Most Creative LFL
- Best LFL with a Bird On It
- Best Organized LFL
- Best LFL That Looks Like Another Thing

- Best Upcycled/Reused LFL

Members of the public can nominate a LFL and vote for their top picks here. Nominations will be closed at the end of the day on October 20th, 2025, with online voting continuing until the end of the day on November 6th at 4 pm. Winners and runners up will be announced at the GVPN's 2025 AGM, held on November 13th, 2025. Ribbons will be awarded to the winning LFLs!

[Nominate a LFL and vote for your favourite today!](#)

Reproductive Justice Advocacy



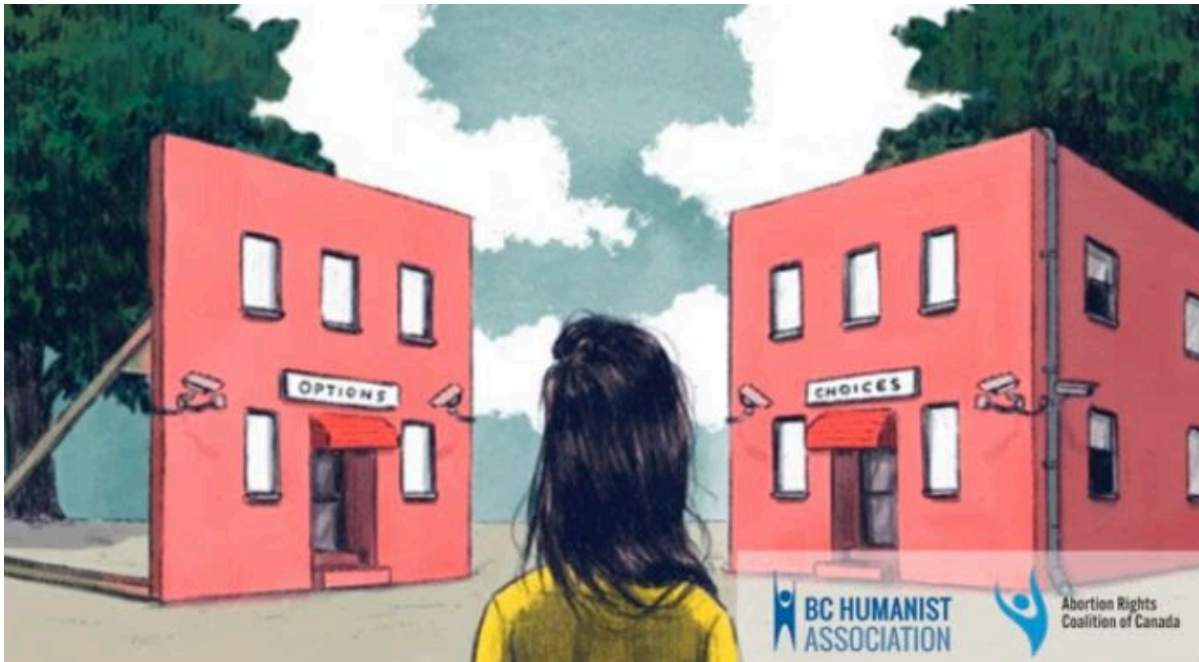
It has been a good month on the reproductive justice advocacy front! September 26th was **World Contraception Day**, and we took a few moments to appreciate the amazing progress we've made here in BC and reflect on the work that remains to be done.

In my last update, I explained how the AccessBC Campaign and other civil society actors have been pushing the federal government to step up and take leadership on negotiating Pharmacare agreements with outstanding provinces and territories after Carney signaled that his government would be backing off additional negotiations.

The pressure worked! At first, the Carney government [indicated](#) that they intend to waiting to see how the existing agreements pan out before starting new negotiations with outstanding jurisdictions. However, additional pressure was brought to bear and I am pleased to say that

Carney has changed his tune, and earlier this month announced that the government would [recommence efforts to negotiate agreements](#) with outstanding jurisdictions!

While this is a promising step forward, it's just the beginning, and we are committed to keeping up the pressure until more agreements are actually signed. As such, AccessBC is going to keep our current letter writing campaign going. This campaign urges the Carney government to get more Pharmacare agreements across the finish line. A huge thank you to everyone who has participated to date, and if you have not yet had the chance, please take a moment to [write the PM](#) (and you MP) and let them know you want to see leadership on Pharmacare! [Participate in our letter writing campaign today!](#)



I have been working to combat the many harms committed by crisis pregnancy centres (CPCs) for the past several years. These are fake clinics set up to intentionally dissuade people experiencing unplanned pregnancies from choosing abortion as an option. CPCs engage in motivated counselling, and are documents as relying on disinformation, deception, omission, and a wide range of manipulative practices in order to manipulate people in vulnerable situations.

In a previous [joint report](#) from the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC) and the BC Humanist Association (BCHA), we examined the websites of CPCs, documenting a wide range of issues. If you are interested in learning more, this month, we released another [CPC website walkthrough](#) video, where a friend and I explore the many questionable and problematic elements on the website of the "Valley Care Pregnancy Centre" in Kentville, Nova Scotia. We have an entire series, in case you are interested in taking a deep dive.



Earlier this month, we were alerted that Fraser Health had partnered with "Hope for Women," an Abbotsford-based CPC. Over the summer, Fraser Health supported four community groups to lead [Breastfeeding and Chestfeeding Cafés](#) for new parents, with Hope for Women delivering the cafés in Abbotsford during August.

Hope for Women is an unregulated pregnancy centre that should not be given any public funding or support because they promote an anti-abortion agenda while misrepresenting themselves as neutral providers of pregnancy options counselling. You can learn more about the issue from [this press release](#).

The ARCC, BCHA, and AccessBC contacted Fraser Health and then the press. Fraser Health responded, noting that it “does not have a partnership, funding relationship or service contract with Hope for Women” and that it offers “education on infant feeding to people who have previously provided that education to volunteers that work with Hope for Women.” We are pleased that Fraser Health has distanced itself from this dishonest actor and are working with them to ensure that something similar cannot happen in the future. If you are interested in learning more, please read this [excellent piece in the Tyee](#).

There is much more work to be done, and I am currently working with an excellent team of volunteers to complete a report detailing the CPCs of British Columbia.

BC Humanist Research Advocacy



This month, the [BC Humanist Association](#) (BCHA) Research Team, which I have the pleasure to lead, released a new report! This is the eighth report in our ongoing series as part of [The Saguenay Project](#), which monitors and advocates for the elimination of unconstitutional prayer in Canadian municipal council meetings. The report, entitled [The Island Anomaly](#), examined regular council meetings and swearing-in ceremonies in Prince Edward Island.

We identified no prayers in regular council meetings and just one instance of prayers at a swearing-in ceremony, which compares favourably with other provinces. Also contrasting with other provinces, we noted an increasing prevalence of Indigenous territorial acknowledgements in meetings. You can [read the full report here](#), and you watch a [recent live stream](#), where BCHA Executive Director Ian Bushfield and I break down the report and contextualize it with our previous studies.

Next on deck, for our Saguenay Project studies, we will be examining New Brunswick. The BCHA Research Team is also working on a wide range of other issues, including such things as school district policy, permissive tax exemptions, [Bill 21](#) in Quebec, charitable law, Humanist marriages, and more, and I look forward to sharing our work with you soon!

I hope harvest season is treating you well and I wish you a spectacularly spooky Halloween!

Warm regards,

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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