
February Update from Teale!

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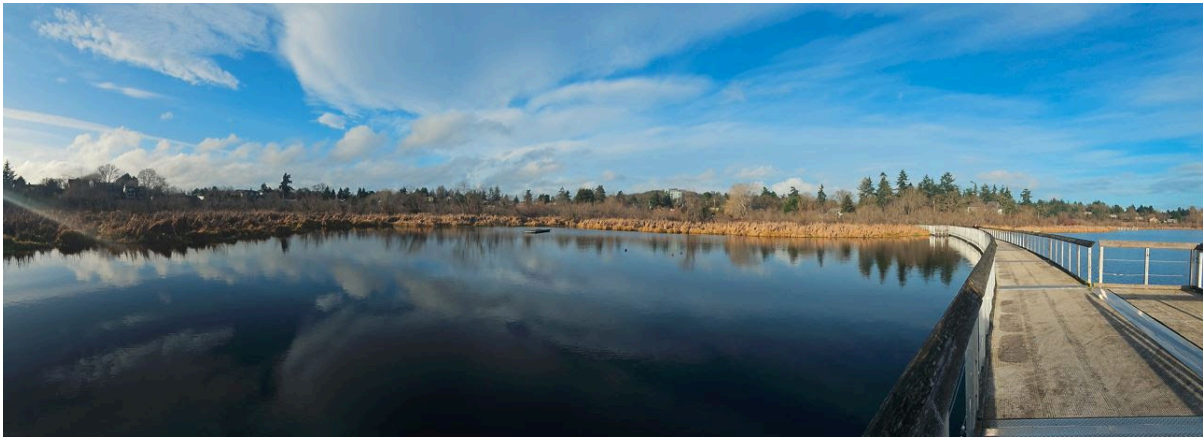
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28 February 2026 at
21:45



A February Update from Teale

Friends,

I hope the start of this early cherry blossom season finds you well. It's been a wild few weeks since my last newsletter, and before I jump into Saanich and campaign updates, I wanted to mention a few things. As I write this, the horror of war is unfolding in the Middle East, and it seems a little strange to write a cheery update about local issues in the face of this and other international Trump-fueled turmoil.

At times like this, please look out for your mental health and for the well-being of others, show compassion and solidarity with fellow humans, and do what you can to help make the world a better place. The care we show to those around us, and to our community as a whole, helps make a difference in these trying times.

If you are ever interested in getting involved in any of my community or advocacy projects, please don't hesitate to get in touch, and as always, I hold regular Thursday office hours, and would love to grab a seasonally appropriate beverage with you to talk local issues. Just get in touch!



Standing in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. Slava Ukraini!

February has been busy, both with Saanich Council and in general. This month, I had the honour of serving as Acting Mayor, and this always gives the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of community events and activities, and to reflect on the hard work of our Mayor. As Acting Mayor, I had the pleasure of attending and representing the District at such events as the Community Forum on Aging Well hosted by Luther Court, the Arts Spaces Forum at Other Guise Theatre, Lunar New Year celebrations downtown, and the Warmth for Ukraine vigil recognizing the 4th anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine at the Legislature.

Speaking of Lunar New Year, a belated happy Lunar New Year! I hope your ride on the year of the horse is a smooth one. I don't know about you, but Stephanie and I were glued to the Olympics, and I'm very proud of the performance of all of our amazing Olympians, and I am excited about watching our Paralympians in Milan Cortina.



Speaking with MLA Diana Gibson and Oak Bay Councillor Carrie Smart at the Community Forum on Aging Well at Luther Court

Monday night (March 2nd), Council will be considering three draft Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) resolutions I am proposing. All three of these are being proposed as joint resolutions with other municipalities:

- **Wheelchairs and mobility scooters in bike routes:** This resolution calls on AVICC and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) to advocate that provincial Motor Vehicle legislation and regulations be updated to allow the use of wheelchairs and 3&4 wheel mobility scooters on bike lanes and traffic calmed bike routes across BC. For a full backgrounder, see [item D.1 here](#).
- **\$1.50 per student food security grant for post-secondary food security:** This resolution calls on AVICC and UBCM to advocate to the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, to provide funding support to BC post-secondary student unions, by establishing a food security grant, equivalent to \$1.50 per student, to address student food insecurity as evidenced by the increased use of post-secondary campus food banks. For a full backgrounder, see [item D.2 here](#).
- **\$10 per day flat rate ferry fare for post-secondary students:** This resolution calls on AVICC and UBCM to advocate to the Minister of Transportation and Transit, for a \$10/day flat rate ferry fare pilot program, during non-peak hours, for post-secondary students. For a full backgrounder, see [item D.3 here](#).

If adopted, these resolutions will become joint resolutions with other municipalities that have adopted them, and will be considered at this year's AVICC, which is being held in Victoria, April 24-26, 2026. You can read more about the later two resolutions from this piece in the [Oak Bay News](#) and here in the [Victoria News](#), and for the motion on mobility devices, see news stories in the [Victoria News](#), [CHEK News](#), [Victoria Buzz](#), [Times Colonist](#), and [Canadian Cycling Magazine](#).



Saanich Youth Council gathered around a table hard at work.

Saanich Youth Council: I am so proud of the ongoing work of the Saanich Youth Council! As you know, for the past several months I have been working with local Saanich High Schools to set up and run a youth council. This group has been meeting monthly and I am so impressed with these amazing young people. This month they prioritized their issue of focus and will be turning their attention to transportation issues this spring.

The proud teacher in me was chuffed when they voted to hold extra meetings in March so that we would have more time to explore transportation issues in the District. I can't wait to see what the group comes up with and I hope that we can make the Saanich Youth Council a permanent advisory committee in the future.



Slava Ukraini! The moving vigil on the steps of the BC Legislature commemorating the 4th anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

This month, I signed onto two joint statements I wanted to share with you:

- I joined the call for BC to recommit to meaningful implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. [Read more here.](#)
- I added my voice to UNIFORs call for governments across Canada to remain committed to fully implementing the \$10aDay child care program. [Read more here.](#)



Community advocate Jenn Neilson and I at the Arts Spaces Forum at Other Guise Theatre. It's so important that artists in our community have space!

Saanich News

- **Saanich named one of BC's Top Employers for four consecutive years:** For the fourth year in a row, the District of Saanich has been chosen as one of [BC's Top Employers for 2026](#), earning recognition as a place where talented and passionate people want to build careers and make a difference in our community. [Learn more here!](#)
- **Launch of EV chargers at Pearkes expands charging network in Saanich:** Drivers in Saanich now have access to eight new DC Fast Charging (DCFC) ports at the Pearkes, providing convenient, high-speed charging options at this popular community hub. The new charging site is part of BC Hydro's public charging network of nearly 800 charging ports across the province. You are encouraged to use the charging site when visiting Pearkes, or Saanich Centennial Public Library. [Learn more here.](#)
- **Saanich to further streamline permitting process in 2026 after major milestones reached:** The District of Saanich is continuing to take steps towards establishing a more effective building and development process, one that improves timelines, increases

consistency, and strengthens customer service. In 2025, the District made significant progress toward removing barriers for applicants by expanding digital services and making the online application and payment experience more seamless. These improvements are helping reduce the need for in-person visits and supporting faster permit processing for homeowners, contractors, and developers. And there have been plenty of achievement, [learn more here!](#)



Celebrating Lunar New Year! 🍀

- **New Bylaw to support tenants who are evicted due to redevelopment:** Saanich's new Tenant Protection Bylaw will ensure that more tenants who are evicted due to redevelopment are supported. The new Tenant Protection Bylaw (TPB) replaces the existing Tenant Assistance Policy (TAP) that has been in effect since June 2023. The new Bylaw expands the range of development projects that must provide support to tenants who are evicted due to redevelopment and gives the District better enforcement tools. Tenant support includes financial compensation and assistance in finding new accommodation.

A major difference between the previous policy and the new Bylaw is the ability to enforce the bylaw. Should landowners fail to submit the appropriate reports or be found to be in contravention of the Bylaw, fines may be imposed or permits may be withheld. [Learn more here!](#)

- **Supporting the Gorge Canada Day Picnic:** The Gorge Canada Day Picnic is one of the larger community events held in Saanich. Hosted by the Gorge Tillicum Community Association it regularly attracts upwards to 18,000 people yearly! Unfortunately, dramatically increasing insurance costs have imperilled the viability of this event. Fortunately, Council agreed to update our grants policy so that non-profit groups hosting

large events can be reimbursed for liability-insurance costs of up to \$12,000.

I am pleased that we were able to support this fantastic event. Learn more from this piece in the [Times Colonist](#), and the [Saanich News](#). I am also grateful to the Gorge Tillicum Community Association for hosting this amazing event. Be sure to check out their brand [new mural on Burnside Road!](#)

- **Community Canvas Mural Grant Program:** Speaking of murals, Saanich has extended the deadline to apply for the [Community Canvas Mural Grant Program](#). If you are contemplating some mural-based placemaking in your community, please check these out. And I am particularly excited to announce that Saanich has release our [Guidelines for Road Murals!](#) These have been many years in the making and I'm excited to see more road murals going up in our community. If you are interested in installing one in your community, please get in touch, I have advice to share!



The Falaise Crescent Road Mural repainting party from this past summer!

- **Shelbourne Valley Plan:** Council made some amendments to the draft Shelbourne Valley Plan and moved to send this plan to public hearing. The most significant of these amendments was the downgrading of what was previously designated at the 'Shelbourne Valley Centre,' from 'centre' to 'village.' This is the area in and around the intersection of Shelbourne and Cedar Hill Cross Rd. While identified as a potential location for buildings up to 12-storeys, the downgrading of this area now means the maximum height in this area is six storeys.

While I support the will of Council and this change was not sufficient to warrant my voting against sending the amended plan to public hearing, as the lone vote against this change, I thought I'd explain my reasoning. Throughout the consultation, from extensive correspondence, and from presentations from neighbours in the council chambers it is

clear that residents want to more greenspace in this area and support the daylighting of Bowker Creek. I strongly support both of these things and we need funding and flexibility to achieving them.

As I argued in Council, we get funding for greenspaces and daylighting Bowker Creek through mechanisms like Community Amenity Contributions (CACs). With less density comes lower CACs, and lower CACs mean less funding for greenspaces and creek daylighting. And as we heard from the Friends of Bowker Creek, well-configured density can help with watershed health. What this means is that if a developer is restricted to six stories, their project will likely cover a significant part of a lot, whereas if we provide some flexibility with respect to height, a developer has more options, allowing them to preserve important trees, provide more public amenity space, and better accommodate the creek and greenspaces on their property. Learn more from this piece in the [Times Colonist](#), and [read the full plan here](#).

Ongoing Engagement Opportunities and Community Events

- **Participate in Saanich's Financial Planning Process:** Saanich Council will adopt the five-year Financial Plan Bylaw as well as the 2026 Tax Rate Bylaw on May 11, 2026. These bylaws establish the operating and capital plans for all municipal programs, including the tax revenue required to support service delivery. A big thank you to everyone who completed the survey and participated in earlier consultations around the budget. There's still an opportunity to provide input to Council; as always, you can write to Council@Saanich.ca, and you are most welcome to attend and share your views at one of our upcoming financial planning meetings. For which you can [find a full schedule](#), and learn more, [here](#).
- **Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations Update:** The District of Saanich is updating its Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations to reflect modern transportation trends, support sustainable development, and align with housing and mobility goals in the Official Community Plan. [Participate here!](#) The survey is open until March 8th.

Family Doctors for Saanich!



Family Doctors for Saanich volunteers tabling at Saanich Commonwealth Pool!

The **Family Doctors for Saanich** campaign has been gradually ramping up! Volunteers have been out tabling in the community and I've been hitting to doorstep talking to Saanich residents and promoting our ongoing Health Connect Registry registration drive.

This volunteer-led initiative aims to help more residents get attached to primary care providers and encourage participation in local efforts to bring additional doctors to the region. Family Doctors for Saanich is encouraging anyone who does not have a family doctor or nurse practitioner, and who is not already on the list, to sign up with the **Health Connect Registry**. This is the provincial system used to help match patients with available primary care providers in their community. Signing up only takes a few minutes, and doing so helps both individuals and the health system as a whole.

[Learn more, take action, and get involved here!](#)

We are also working on a few other important measures, as getting people on the Health Connect Registry is not enough. Over the upcoming few months, I will be presenting policy to Saanich Council aimed at helping support and attract doctors, so be sure to sign up for our **[update list](#)**, which we will use to let people know about relevant items coming up in front of Saanich Council!

Reproductive Justice Advocacy




Pain Relief Is Not a Luxury, It's a Right!

Call on your MLA to improve pain management for IUD insertions:



 [AccessBC.org](https://www.accessbc.org)

 [AccessBC](https://www.facebook.com/AccessBC)

 [access.bc](https://www.instagram.com/access.bc)

 [AccessBC](https://twitter.com/AccessBC)

[AccessBC](#) is celebrating the launch of the National Pharmacare Plan in BC. The plan, also known as [Plan NP](#), builds on BC's trailblazing implementation of free prescription contraception for all residents in April 2023, and expands the scope of medications that will be available for free to BC residents.

As of March 1, 2026, BC residents will receive coverage for the full cost for eligible diabetes and menopausal hormone therapy (MHT) medications, with some additional medications receiving partial coverage. Coverage for selected diabetes-related devices and supplies will also be extended beginning April 1, 2026.

I commend the BC and federal governments for following through on their commitment to implement the Pharmacare Act and eliminate out of pocket costs for these life-saving and life-changing medications. The successful uptake of BC's groundbreaking free prescription contraception program has already demonstrated the transformative impact of removing financial barriers to basic healthcare. We will be celebrating here in BC, while urging the federal government to ensure that people across Canada receive the same level of universal access.

More information on Plan NP's implementation and coverage is available from the Government of BC [here](#).



If you haven't had a chance to do so already, please take 30 seconds to participate in our ongoing [letter writing campaign](#) aimed at improving pain management for IUD insertions. **Please take a moment to learn more and [write your MLA and the Minister of Health today!](#)**

We are also ramping up our outreach efforts, and are looking for volunteers to help with tabling at community events and with our social media efforts. If you are interested in helping out, [please fill in our volunteer intake form](#), and thank you for stepping up!

And take note! April 1st is the 3rd anniversary of free prescription contraception in BC and we will be planning something special!

Marine Conservation



I recently consulted on a very cool [DW Planet A](#) documentary projects, run by [Aditi Rajagopal](#), investigating sea cucumber crime in India and Sri Lanka. Here's a short description:

"The film uncovers a rapidly expanding illegal trade in sea cucumbers across the Indian Ocean, where the creatures have become the most trafficked marine species in India. Demand is driven largely by markets in East and Southeast Asia, where sea cucumbers are prized as a delicacy and for traditional medicine. Because many species are now protected, poachers, middlemen, and organized smuggling networks have stepped in to meet demand, moving the animals across borders — often at night and through remote coastal routes — to evade authorities. The video follows Indian wildlife officers and coastal police as they attempt to intercept shipments, revealing how understaffed enforcement teams struggle against a lucrative, well-organized black market."

If you are interested in learning about my work on sea cucumber conservation and this important issue, I would encourage you to [check out this 15 minute long video](#).

Canadian Politics



This month, I was proud to endorse Avi Lewis as leader of the Federal NDP. Avi offers a bold and unapologetic progressive vision, and communicates it with clarity, confidence, and urgency. I like how he connects big ideas to people's daily lives -- exactly the kind of leadership New Democrats need right now.

I'm supporting Avi because he demonstrates that real change comes from building a confident, well-organized, unapologetic movement that believes government can and should deliver for people. By clearly articulating bold progressive policies -- like free, reliable public transit, public grocery stores, serious climate action, support for public health care and pharmacare -- he presents a hopeful vision for the future coupled with the competence to get us there.

Ce mois-ci, j'ai eu la fierté d'appuyer Avi Lewis comme chef du NPD fédéral. Avi propose une vision progressiste et audacieuse, qu'il communique avec clarté, assurance, et détermination.

J'apprécie sa capacité à relier les grandes idées au quotidien des gens – exactement le type de leadership dont les Nouveaux Démocrates ont besoin en ce moment.

Je soutiens Avi, car il démontre que le changement naît de la construction d'un mouvement confiant, bien organisé, et résolu, convaincu que l'État peut et doit œuvrer pour le bien commun. En présentant clairement des politiques progressistes ambitieuses – comme des transports publics fiables et gratuits, des supermarchés publics, une action climatique efficace, le soutien aux soins de santé publics et à l'assurance médicaments – il propose une vision pour l'avenir pleine d'espoir, assortie des compétences nécessaires pour la concrétiser.



Before the month is officially out, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for your generous gifts towards my re-election campaign for my 40th birthday. We surpassed our fundraising target, thanks to over 100 individual donations!

Of course, we still have a ways to go, but this is going to help us get off to a great start. Your contributions are going to make sure we can get materials printed, book advertising slots, and purchase re-elect stickers for our signs. It's always heartening to see how working together achieves more than we can on our own, and this fundraising campaign has renewed that feeling for me. Thank you so much!

If you missed out, and want to be a part of the action, there is always time for a belated birthday gift!

You can donate or sign up to volunteer 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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