
Winter Update from Teale

1 message

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A Winter Update from Teale

Friends,

I hope you are keeping toasty as the days grow shorter, colder, and wetter, and gearing up for some fantastic winter holidays, however you like to enjoy the winter season. You may have noticed that I did not circulate an update in November. This was largely because I was working flat out launching two new campaigns: A new [AccessBC](#) campaign to improve pain management for IUD insertions, and [Family Doctors for Saanich](#), a community initiative to help get more people family doctors and nurse practitioners here in Saanich! Scroll down to learn more, take action, and get involved!

Because there was no November update, I've got a ton of things to tell you about, so let's dive in! Speaking of which... one of the highlights this season was helping to open the new waterslide at Saanich Commonwealth Place! I am told on the authority of a number of young connoisseurs that the new slide is faster and more colourful than the old slide. [Learn more here!](#)



Celebrating the new water slide at Saanich Commonwealth Place!

The housing crisis remains a major concern for Saanich Council. The District's latest [Housing Target Progress Report](#) shows the District continues to make good progress to reach provincial housing targets and support the creation of more homes for people. For the period of October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025, 442 net new units received occupancy permits and were completed (73% of the targeted 601 net new units for this period). And cumulatively (October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2025), 810 net new units received occupancy permits and were completed (78% of the target of 1,041 cumulative net new units).

While this does not completely satisfy the provincial Housing Target, we are making significant progress and there are a considerable number of projects in the system. [You can learn more here](#), and from these pieces from the [Times Colonist](#) and [CHEK News](#). Housing also featured prominently in the [Mayor's Annual Address](#).



Celebrating the new water slide at Saanich Commonwealth Place!

Accessibility



At the [December 1st meeting](#) of Saanich Council, I had the pleasure of presenting a motion calling for the District to join the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Campaign](#). The Sunflower Campaign is all about encouraging inclusivity, acceptance, and understanding. It provides people

with unseen disabilities with the opportunity to wear the sunflower (typically on a lanyard, pin, or bracelet) and this serves as a 'cue for compassion.' It signals to staff that a wearer may need additional assistance, patience, or understanding.

I am grateful to Saanich's Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, that worked hard on this issue and submitted a motion to Council. I had the honour of chairing this committee this year. You can watch the [first](#) and [second](#) speeches I gave on the motion. Learn more from the [Saanich News](#) and [Island Social Trends](#). I also spoke with [Josh and Jade from CFAX](#) about the campaign.

The motion was ultimately referred to strategic planning. I hope Council will have a fulsome exploration of the issue when we next have a strategic plan check in, as I believe joining the campaign will help improve accessibility in Saanich. I am also working to support other municipalities in joining the campaign, and will be working to get other regional actors on board as well. If you have any thoughts about this campaign, do please share them with council (council@saanich.ca).

December 3rd was International Day of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the 40th anniversary of the Man in Motion World Tour. On this day, I the honour of participating in a panel discussion exploring accessibility and the built environment, hosted by the [Rick Hansen Foundation](#). A full video of the panel should be available. In addition to a great discussion, the Rick Hansen Foundation announced the launch of forty '[\\$40K National Barrier Buster Grants](#).' And learn more from [this article](#) from the REMI Network.



Decorating a penguin pin at the Uptown Holiday Show and Light Up!

UBCM 2025 - Update!

The 2025 annual [Union of British Columbia Municipalities](#) (UBCM) conference took place in Victoria in late September. As I reported in my previous newsletter, delegates supported a number of resolutions submitted by Saanich, however, we did not manage to get to them all. Any resolutions that did not make the floor were referred to the newly elected UBCM Executive and this past week, they [announced their decision](#). I am pleased to say that a number of Saanich resolutions were supported:

- **NR69 - Legislating the BC Coastal Marine Strategy.**
- **NR77 - Provincial Support for Addressing Feral Rabbits:** read more from the [Fur Bearers](#) and this piece from the [Comox Valley Record](#).
- **NR121 - Adopting European Elevator Standards to Improve Accessibility and Affordability.**

Unfortunately, two of our resolutions relating to road safety were not endorsed:

- **NR100 - Saving Money and Saving Lives: Provincial Default 30 km/h for Local Streets with No Centre Line.**
- **NR102 - Updating the Name of the Motor Vehicle Act.**



At the Uptown Holiday Show and Light Up!

Saanich News

- **Stable Funding for the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary:** Council adopted a new policy that will increase the management fee provided to the sanctuary each year by the Consumer Price Index plus one per cent. [Learn more here.](#)
- **Saanich Town Hall Meeting:** A big thank you to everyone who attended our [December 2nd Town Hall Meeting](#). I very much appreciated people sharing their thoughts with Council. This will be our last Town Hall before the October 2026 election. However, if at any time you would like to share your views with Council, don't hesitate to email Council@Saanich.ca, contact us individually, or hit me up for my weekly Thursday office hours, which I will be restarting in January.



Attending the 2025 BC NDP Convention in Victoria.

- **Saanich Operations Centre Update:** Council agreed to a phased in approach to replace the Saanich Operations Centre. The phased approach to redevelopment will allow the District to maintain service delivery, while addressing the highest priority facilities. The initial phase will involve replacing the 65-year-old administrative and workshops building, with construction of the new building happening while the current one is in use. [Learn more here](#), and from these pieces in the [Times Colonist](#), [Victoria News](#), and [CHEK News](#).
- **Nigel House is Open:** I am very happy to see the new Nigel House up and running. It is the first of a number of very important supportive housing projects in the Nigel Valley. [Learn more here](#).
- **Streamlining business licence applications and billing needs:** The District debuted two new online services as part of our ongoing commitment to modernize and streamline business licensing services for our community. [Learn more here](#).



Halloween at our multi-family housing complex was a blast this year! We set up a tent and gave out candy in front of the building.

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, and as always, you can find current engagement opportunities on the [Hello Saanich](#) platform:

- **Tree Protection Bylaws** - Residents are invited to share their ideas to help inform the Tree Protection Bylaw Updates Project. The [questionnaire](#) is active until December 15th.
- **Neighbourhood Bikeways Identification and Prioritization** - Saanich's Active Transportation Plan shows a long-term bicycle network, but now we need to identify which streets should become neighbourhood bikeways and which should be other types of cycling facilities. The Neighbourhood Bikeways Identification and Prioritization project will help inform those decisions and create a process to prioritize which bikeways get built first. The online survey is open until December 14th. [Learn more here.](#)
- **Lambrick Park Campus Renewal Project** - Saanich's Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department is planning for the future renewal of the Lambrick Park Campus. This will start with the development of conceptual design options for the site, which serves as an important sports, recreation, and community space for residents District-wide and within the region. The Gordon Head Recreation Centre, sports

fields/courts, natural areas, heritage buildings, and supporting facilities are all part of the project scope. The online questionnaire closed on December 6th, but if you have additional feedback, please share it with Parks, Recreation, and Community Services.

- **City of Victoria Noise Bylaws** - While this is a City of Victoria consultation, I know that many of you care deeply about noise pollution, and we all know noise does not obey municipal boundaries. [Please share your thoughts!](#) Incidentally, I did attempt to introduce efforts to tackle noise pollution into Saanich's strategic plan at our last check in, but the motion failed to find a seconder. My hope is that improved noise bylaws in Victoria may help to inspire change here in Saanich.

Family Doctors for Saanich Launched!



On Universal Health Coverage Day (December 12), a group of Saanich neighbours gathered in Rutledge Park to launch **Family Doctors for Saanich**. Saanich neighbours and I set up this grassroots campaign to help improve access to family doctors and nurse practitioners in the District. The 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.

In the Saanich Peninsula and Oak Bay (covering a total population of ~134,000), over 98,000 people are currently attached to a provider, while over 19,000 are on the Health Connect Registry (HCR). However, an additional ~23,000 people are not attached and not currently on the HCR. That's why we decided to launch our campaign with an HCR registration drive!

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

In the coming months, our growing team will be tabling at community events, canvassing neighbourhoods, and talking with friends and neighbours to raise awareness of the Health Connect Registry and the importance of registering. We are also working to support broader

efforts to bring more primary care capacity to the region, including fundraising initiatives led by local partners and allies. For example, we are currently helping support the fundraising efforts of the [South Island Primary Care Society](#), a local organization helping to expand access to primary care across Greater Victoria. Their current fundraising priorities include expanding clinic capacity and supporting the arrival of new doctors to the region. Family Doctors for Saanich strongly supports these efforts and encourages residents to donate directly to the Society.

Learn more from the [Saanich News](#), and if you would like any cards to give out to neighbours, please get in touch!



2025 Greater Victoria Little Free Library Award Winner Announced!





**2025
Greater
Victoria LFL
Awards!**

In September, we celebrated the 1,000th little free library (LFL) in the region and in addition to throwing a big party, we also launched the 2025 Greater Victoria Little Free Library Awards! The Greater Victoria Placemaking Network wanted to showcase the amazing LFLs around our region, and we hope to make these an annual thing. You can find out more about all the winners in this [Greater Victoria Placemaking Network blog post](#), and watch the official announcement [here](#). And read stories about the awards in the [Martlet](#), [Saanich News](#), and the [Victoria Buzz](#).

If your LFL won an award, I have a plaque for you and it's either in the mail or I'll be dropping it off as soon as I get the chance, and congratulations! Stay tuned for next year's awards!

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/accessbc)

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

This month, [AccessBC](#) launched a new campaign calling on the Government of British Columbia to improve access to effective pain management during intrauterine device (IUD) insertions. BC's universal contraception policy has made extraordinary progress in removing financial barriers to prescription contraception. Since its implementation, IUD access has grown significantly, helping more people choose contraceptive methods that work best for them. However, this increased access has also exposed a critical and long-overlooked gap in care: many patients continue to endure preventable and sometimes severe pain during IUD insertion because pain management remains inconsistent, optional, or unavailable.

Despite the expansion of contraceptive access achieved through BC's groundbreaking universal contraception policy, many individuals seeking IUDs continue to face significant and preventable pain, inconsistent standards of care, and a system that minimizes or normalizes gynecologic pain. To learn more, please check out the amazing and [detailed backgrounder](#) the AccessBC team put together!

To address this, we launched a new [letter writing campaign](#), calling on the Government of British Columbia to take the following actions:

1. Adopt province-specific clinical guidelines for addressing pain management planning for IUD insertions.
2. Implement appropriate MSP billing mechanisms for pain control interventions.
3. Work with post-secondary and training institutions to implement mandatory training requirements for practitioners.
4. Implement strategies for equitable access to pain management during IUD insertions across all regions.

Please take a moment to learn more and [write your MLA and the Minister of Health today!](#)



You can learn more about the campaign from recent news stories from the [Chilliwack Progress](#), [CHEK News](#), [Radio Canada](#), [CBC](#), [Victoria News](#), and [City News](#)!

In related news, the Federal Government continues to dither on the implementation of the national Pharmacare Plan (read more from [CBC](#)). And despite commitments to explore additional agreements with outstanding jurisdictions, there appears to be zero federal leadership promoting new agreements.

AccessBC paused our national letter writing campaign encouraging Prime Minister Carney to follow through on his governments commitments to pharmacare as we ramp up our pain management campaign, but we will continue to work with our sister campaigns across the country as the attempt to motivate provincial, territorial, and the federal government to prioritize people's health and well-being.

BC Humanist Research Advocacy



This month, the [BC Humanist Association](#) (BCHA) had a big win! Drivers coming into Kelowna will no longer be confronted by anti-abortion billboards thanks to efforts by Kelowna pro-choice activists with legal support from the BC Humanist Association!

Last spring, UBC Okanagan student Sophie Harms raised over \$3000 to erect a billboard that declared that abortions are "safe, normal and common." Unfortunately, the companies that operate billboards around Kelowna refused her application despite some having frequently run [anti-abortion](#) and [anti-SOGI](#) billboards for years.

When that news broke, the BC Humanist Association reached out to Harms to offer our support. We connected her with the pro-bono legal counsel that's supported [our past interventions](#) and helped craft arguments to challenge these refusals.

The responses from various advertising companies were mixed, however, the advertising company that seemed to host the most anti-choice ads, BC Billboards, agreed that the company "will no longer be advertising pro life or pro abortion advertising. Any existing ads to that effect will be removed at the end of their contract." You can read more from this longer piece from the [BC Humanist Association](#), as well as news media stories from the [CBC](#), [Castanet](#), [InfoNews](#), and [Global News](#).

Our advocacy also made a few other headlines as well. Our work on permissive tax exemptions (PTEs) was featured in a two part CTV News story on tax exemptions, see [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#). Look out for a sample PTE policy coming out very soon!

I also had the pleasure of shooting a new entertaining education segment about unregulated pregnancy centres (UPCs also known as crisis pregnancy centres) with friends from the [Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada](#), and I can't wait to share this when it's ready. Hint, I got to tap into my

inner 'Guy Smiley.' If you value the work that either of these organizations do, please consider supporting them in your end of year giving!

I hope you and your families have a marvelous winter season!

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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