
Summer Update from Teale!

1 message

Teale Phelps Bondaroff via ActionNetwork.org

<hello@teale.ca>

Reply-To: hello@teale.ca

To: tealepb@gmail.com

12 August 2025 at
21:11



A Summer Update from Teale

Friends,

I hope your summer is going well! While there are fewer Saanich Council meetings over the summer months, I have been hard at work getting caught up on correspondence, and have been exploring new programs and policies.

I've also had the pleasure of attending a bunch 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](#), and you can learn about how the District is working to make these events [more sustainable here](#). I'll also be serving as Acting Mayor and helping to open Saanich's first [TransFest](#) this coming Saturday, August 16th, at lower PKOLS (Mount Douglas Park) - near Ash Road.

Let's jump into some Saanich updates, but I did want to flag some exciting placemaking news and an urgent call to action to support Pharmacare in Canada detailed below.



Meeting with Saanich neighbours to explore road safety concerns around Cedar Hill X. Rd.

Protect Our Coast from Tankers: In 2019, after decades of public engagement and advocacy by Indigenous nations, local governments, community groups, and residents, the Government of Canada passed the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act (Bill C-48). This legislation prohibits large oil tankers carrying crude oil and certain persistent oils from docking, loading or unloading at ports along BC's North Coast.

The tanker ban was widely supported in British Columbia and seen as critical to protecting:

- Wild salmon, herring, halibut, and other fisheries that sustain coastal communities;
- Marine mammals, including orcas and humpback whales;
- The region's tourism and seafood industries; and
- Cultural and economic livelihoods of Indigenous nations and local communities.

Recently, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith and oil industry proponents have signalled renewed interest in proposing a northern oil pipeline, which would rely on tanker access to BC's North Coast. This raises concerns about reversing hard-won environmental protections and increasing the risk of catastrophic oil spills.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has stated that a new pipeline project to B.C.'s North Coast is "[highly, highly likely](#)" to be deemed a nationally significant project. BC communities including [First Nations](#) have voiced strong opposition to oil tanker expansion on the North Coast, instead supporting clean energy solutions that create long-term, sustainable jobs without endangering marine ecosystems. Prime Minister Carney has stated he will not advance new pipeline projects

in provinces that do not support them.

If you care about our coast, I would encourage you to [write the Prime Minister](#), Premier, and your MP to tell them to protect our coast! In addition to writing, I just presented a notice of motion to Saanich Council at our most recent Monday meeting. The motions call on the Mayor to write to key federal and provincial decision makers, and for Council to support the presentation of an emergency resolution at this fall's Union of British Columbia Municipalities conference. Council will be debating these motions at our September 8th meeting. I would encourage folks to share their thoughts with Council as well (council@saanich.ca).



More highlights from Music in the Park.

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). From May 21 to June 25, the District conducted an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) to seek electoral consent for the "Saanich Operations Centre Redevelopment Project Loan Authorization Bylaw, 2024, No. 10105." This bylaw would permit the District to borrow up to \$150 million for the redevelopment project.

After the June 25, 2025 deadline for submitting Electoral Response Forms had passed, Saanich's Corporate Officer determined through a statutory process that 10,613 eligible forms had been received. Since this number represents more than 10% of registered voters, electoral assent was not obtained. You can learn more about the AAP process and the SOC [here](#).

Council will be receiving an update from staff about options for next steps at an upcoming meeting.



Enjoying Music in the Park!

A quick speed run of a few recent Saanich happenings:

- **Fire Hall #2:** The redevelopment of [Saanich Fire Station #2](#) reached an important milestone with the placement of the final roof panel. [Learn more here.](#)
- **Housing:** Council set a minimum size of 355 square feet for housing units. [Learn more here.](#)
- **Big Leaf Maple Update:** Staff is working to retain a declining Bigleaf Maple tree on Wesley Road that was previously deemed for removal. Thank you to everyone who wrote in about this matter. [Learn more here.](#)
- **New Roundabout:** We've got a new mini roundabout at Sinclair Road and Cadboro Bay Road, [check it out](#), along with the additional improvements that are underway!
- **SD 61 Reform:** I have had the privilege of serving as the Saanich representative on an ad hoc committee established to explore reforms to School District 61. The reform that is being proposed calls for the election of SD 61 trustees from individual zones (elector areas) rather than the district as a whole (the current at-large model). An online feedback form has been posted, and a session has been set for September 9 at SJ Willis to allow the community to hear a presentation, ask questions, and help identify other items to consider. You can learn more from this [Times Colonist](#) article (see also the [VictoriaBuzz](#)), and most importantly, you can [share your feedback here](#).

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:

- [Climate Plan Update Survey](#) - open through Summer 2025.
- [Gorge Flood Adaptation Survey](#) - open through September 2025.

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

Electoral Reform



Presenting to the 'Special Committee on Democratic and Electoral Reform.'

I had the honour of presenting to the 'Special Committee on Democratic and Electoral Reform' where I talked about how our electoral system shapes the nature of political discourse. In my presentation to the committee I explained how the 'first past the post' method leads to big tent parties aggressively campaigning using attack ads and vitriol, whereas the collaboration needed under 'proportional representation' requires more constructive dialogue and positive campaigning. You can watch my [full presentation here](#), and the [follow-up questions here](#).

Noise Pollution



As you know, I take noise pollution very seriously and have been trying to tackle this issue in the District for a number of years. I am working on a draft motion on gas-powered landscaping equipment for presentation to Saanich Council some time this fall, and will let folks know when this is taking place. I wanted to share [a blog post](#) I recently collaborated on with Councillor Samantha Agtarap from Port Moody. I'm pleased to say that Port Moody has launched a noise monitoring pilot project, and I'm hoping that this project will help support the case for noise cameras in BC. Read the [full blog post here](#).

More Family Doctors in Saanich



I am very pleased to say that our small group fighting to bring more family doctors to Saanich is making steady progress. After numerous conversations with MLAs and other stakeholders, we will soon be launching a campaign aimed at getting more people signed up on the [Health Connect Registry](#).

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.

If you are not already signed up, [please do so here](#), and tell anyone you know who doesn't have a family doctor to do the same!

Our group is still looking for folks from all walks of life to help us fight for more doctors in the District. Please email me to get involved. In particular, we will soon be launching a Health Connect Registry sign up drive, and we will need folks to help table and sign up folks at community events.

Reproductive Justice Advocacy



This month, [AccessBC](#) launched an emergency campaign to help save Pharmacare. The Carney government recently signaled that it was backing off further negotiations with provinces that have yet to sign agreements around the national Pharmacare plan (learn more from [City News](#), the [Free Press](#), [iPolitics](#), and [CTV News](#), et en Français [Radio Canada](#) et [Le Devoir](#)). This is worrying news.

This means that only 17% of Canadians currently live in provinces and territories that have signed on to the national Pharmacare plan, and the federal government will not be taking leadership to increase this number. Or, put another way, Canada's 'national' Pharmacare plan will not cover 83% of Canadians!

Federal leadership is needed! Both to sign agreements with provinces that are enthusiastic about the policy, and to bring some of the more reluctant provinces on board. Unfortunately, instead, we see the Carney government stepping back. The national Pharmacare plan is a core government commitment and needs to be completed.

Please take a few moments today to [write the Prime Minister](#) to tell him that someone's ability to access life-saving and life-changing medicine should never depend on their income or their postal code!

Participate in our letter writing campaign today!



This comes at a time when two other stories are making headlines. The first speaks to the success of free prescription contraception in BC: UBC researchers published a paper this month that found that more people opted for long-acting birth control methods (intra-uterine devices and implants) after BC adopted universal no-cost prescription contraception.

The study found prescriptions for all types of contraception increased significantly after the province began covering contraceptives in April 2023, and in particular, the identified a 49% increase in prescriptions for intra-uterine devices (IUDs). You can learn more from this [UBC press release](#), [Global News](#), [CBC News](#), the [Times Colonist](#), and [City News](#). I also took a deep dive on an interview on [CJSF 90.1 FM](#).

While BC's leadership is paying dividends, Ottawa's support for reproductive justice and gender equity matters also seems to be waning. In addition to a potential about face on Pharmacare, the Carney government seems to be launching into a wave of heartless Harper-style austerity cuts. While the Carney government is calling for departments to find 15% in cuts by 2028-29, the Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) is facing budget cuts of 80% in their recently released departmental plan.

At a time when globally, women's rights and gender equality are under attack from regressive movements and governments alike, savaging the budget of this important department is the last thing the Carney government should be contemplating. This will be the first time since the Harper era, we are facing an unprecedented and catastrophic rollback of support for these hard-won and fundamental freedoms.

In response, AccessBC joined hundreds of organizations, campaigns, and groups in issuing a [joint statement](#) calling on the federal government to support gender equality! You can also [write](#)

the Prime Minister yourself.



There's another way you can help! Our friends from Action Canada are collecting stories for an upcoming storytelling campaign, to showcase how contraception or diabetes coverage has improved people's lives. Here's a message from Action Canada:

We are launching a new campaign to demonstrate how the Pharmacare Act is positively impacting people's lives. By gathering stories from those who are already experiencing this impact (or who would benefit if available in their provinces/territories), we will be able to demonstrate the need for a universal program across all provinces and territories. Has the coverage of contraception in your province made a difference in your life? Or are you looking forward to how it will improve your health, autonomy, or financial stability? If you live in a province that has signed onto the Pharmacare Act and have benefited — or expect to benefit — from it, we want to hear from you! You can share your story by completing [this form](#).

Share your story today!

Placemaking and Little Free Libraries



Falaise Crescent Road Mural installation, 2022.

This coming Sunday, August 17, the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network (GVPN) is teaming up with friends from the [Falaise Community Association](#) to repaint and expand the Falaise Crescent Road Mural. The road mural was first installed in 2022, and features yellow montane violets. When it was first repainted in 2023 we added large purple camas flowers. For this update, we are planning to add red-flowering currant flowers, and we need your help! You can see pictures from [past repaints here](#), and learn more about road murals as well!

The GVPN is looking for volunteers to help repaint and expand this beautiful road mural. This is a great way to help beautify the community and improve road safety. And for those looking to install a road mural in their own communities, it is a great opportunity to learn how it's done.

So pop on your painting clothes and a sunhat and head over to [Falaise Crescent](#) (right across from Falaise Park) this Sunday, August 17th between 9 am and 2 pm to help with the mural. Kids are welcome and we even have acorns running alongside the road that individuals can decorate. [Learn more here!](#)



Falaise Crescent Road Mural installation, 2022.

We've got some very exciting little free library (LFL) news! Our region's network of LFLs continues to grow and we are approaching a massive milestone: **1,000 little free libraries in the region!** There are currently over 936 LFLs for books in the region, and these are joined by 31 LFLs for seeds and plants, 24 LFLs for puzzles and board games, and 13 LFLs for art and art supplies.

To celebrate this massive milestone, the GVPN is teaming up with the Oaklands Community Association to throw a Little Free Library Festival. The festival is scheduled for Saturday, Sept 20, 2025, from 4:30-8:30 pm. This fun, free, and family-friendly afternoon will feature:

- LFL Build Contest – Vote for your favourite new library builds of 2025.
- LFL Auction – With proceeds going to the Victoria Literacy Society.
- DIY Zone for Kids – Bookmarks, crafts & a cozy reading circle.
- Placemaking Info Booths – Learn how to get involved with your own LFL.
- Live music & food trucks – Curated by Oaklands Community Association.

So mark your calendars! We are also looking for volunteers to help make this event a reality. You can [learn more and sign up here](#).



And finally, I still need folks help to keep our LFL map up-to-date. 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



The BC Humanist Association (BCHA) Research Team is engaged in a wide range of issues, and one of those broader issues is tax fairness and reform. One area around which we have been particularly active is calling for improvements to how municipalities allocate permissive tax exemptions. If you are interested in learning more about this issue, check out [this report](#) that we released a few years ago.

This past month, the BCHA joined friends from the Kelowna Atheists, Skeptics, and Humanists Association (KASHA) at a rally outside Kelowna City Hall, calling on council to reconsider outdated and unfair tax exemptions for religious organizations. You can learn more about the rally from this piece from [Castanet](#), [KASHA](#), this other piece from [Castanet](#), and [Abbotsford News](#).

The BCHA is also headed back to the Supreme Court! Joining the Canadian Secular Alliance, the BCHA has been granted leave to intervene in a case that tests the legality of Quebec's religious symbols ban, Bill 21. The BCHA [condemned the law](#) at the time, calling it a "clear infringement of our fundamental freedoms." [The board passed a resolution](#) stating the law "invokes government control over the personal clothing choices of individuals and therefore stands in opposition to Humanism's principles." You can [read more here](#).

Marine Conservation



My work on [sea cucumber wildlife crime in Mexico](#) made headlines this past month, I'm not particularly sure why our paper from a few years ago caught the attention of Mexican press, but it has, and you can find articles in [La Chispa](#), [Punto Medio](#), [Luz Noticias](#), [Ecosfera](#), [MacroNews](#), and [InfoBae](#).

There was also huge Canadian sea cucumber crime news this month! Notorious poacher Scott Steer was sentenced to six years in prison and a \$1.1 million fine for eight charges relating to poaching sea cucumbers on the west coast. In the ruling, the judge noted that the unrepentant steer had a reputation for "ravaging the ocean and flouting the law," and that Steer believes himself to be "unbound by laws." Since 2008, there have been 15 different Fisheries and Oceans Canada files on Steer, and a November 2021 ruling banned him for fishing for life.

According to [my research](#) on Canadian sea cucumber crime, this is the highest fine ever awarded for sea cucumber-related crimes, and the first time that a prison sentence has been handed down. You can read more about the case from [CBC News](#), [BIV](#), the [Nanaimo News Bulletin](#), [Vancouver Sun](#), and even the [Miami Herald](#). I also sat down for a longer interview on the subject on [CJSF 90.1 FM](#), in case you are interested in a deep dive.

I hope to see you at a community event this summer and keep cool in this hot weather friends!



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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