

Report of Trustee Liaison to the Saanich Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee
Submitted by Rob Paynter

At the SD 61 Board Meeting: Monday, June 20, 2016

The Saanich Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee (PRTC) has been established to advise Council and recommend policies on relevant elements of the Strategic Plan as well as parks (excluding natural parks), trails and recreation matters, including services, facilities and specific community interests.

The Committee is chaired by a member of Saanich Council (currently Councillor Susan Brice) and eight community representatives appointed by Council. Non-voting liaisons have been assigned by School District 61 and the Saanich Youth Council. SD63 (Saanich) also has this opportunity.

Summary:

My appointment to the Committee occurred in February and consequently my participation has been relatively limited. Several items discussed had relevance for the Sd61 Board (listed below). Overall however, I believe that liaison roles with local government would be more effective if they were aimed at engaging the elected representatives of the regional district, municipalities and First Nations communities we support. Participation on committees results in trustees receiving a compartmentalized view of activities and initiatives that may result in opportunities for Board engagement being missed.

Council liaison roles would not detract from the role of the Chair as the political representative of the Board as responsibilities could be clarified as required. A liaison to regional district, First Nations and municipal councils can be reasonably be expected to elevate the role of the School District both practically and in terms of perception, and better position the Board to work proactively and collaboratively with policy makers to the benefit of our staff and students.

Noteworthy topics:

In December 2015, the Saanich Parks, Trails and Recreation Department celebrated Council's adoption of the [Saanich Youth Development Strategy and Implementation Plan: 2016-2020](#). This strategic plan will guide the district's work on youth development and youth recreation for the next 5 years. It is telling that although the number of youth in Saanich has decreased since the last Youth Strategy in 2003, the perceived need for youth programming and facilities has increased due to changing societal circumstances. [Associate Superintendent Deb Whitten represented SD61](#) during the Strategy development process by in her former role as District principal for Student Services.

The [Mackenzie Interchange](#) was a significant point of discussion for the PRTC due to its anticipated impact on Cuthbert Holmes Park. As the interchange proposal was an issue of concurrent interest for SD 61, examination of the matter from a second perspective was particularly beneficial in developing a more comprehensive understanding of the project's expected implications. I believe that there is merit in all land owners discussing their respective interests collaboratively in order to ensure the most favourable outcome in negotiations with the Province respecting land sales.

The [Capital Marine Trail Project](#) is a private proposal that would see the creation of a circle route linking the Gorge Waterway with Esquimalt Harbour via Portage Park in View Royal. Infrastructure elements include proposals for a pedestrian bypass of the tidal rapids at Tillicum and portage routes linking the Gorge and Esquimalt Harbour. The Shoreline Portage Trail was completed along the periphery of Shoreline School grounds in 2015. If this project moves forward it may have significance for Shoreline Community School and bears continued monitoring.