

# FROM THE DESK OF THE MAYOR - APRIL 2015



Dear Residents,

First and foremost, I would like to commend the efforts of Council, staff and community volunteers for their combined efforts in moving Sooke forward as we wind up the first quarter of our Term.

Since our Inaugural meeting, we have been building relationships, setting strategic priorities and working out a 5-year financial plan that will set in place a framework to enable Sooke to move forward as the South Island destination for residents to prosper.

For several years now, we have worked towards the creation of a vibrant Town Centre and over the next several months, this vision will evolve into reality. Evidence of such is already underway at the new Royal Bank site, and Town Centre improvements will include sidewalks, the long awaited Roundabout, intersection improvements at Church and Sooke Road along with Murray and Sooke Road.

Thanks to the dynamic work of Council and staff, we have also successfully landed a cycling grant to provide a safe connection to the Galloping Goose from the Sooke River Road Park and Ride. We have also endorsed a grant for the second phase of the connector, (Phillips to Charters Road), and recently celebrated the grand opening of the bike park at Seaparc. We are very grateful to Director Mike Hicks for taking the lead on a grant through Seaparc for an all-weather field at Fred Milne Park.

Council is well aware of parking congestion in that area on busy sports-day weekends, and a review is underway to alleviate this. The newly formed Parks and Trails committee will be examining allowable uses in Sooke River Road Park, and will then refresh the park plan for John Phillips Memorial Park, with other parks and trail opportunities to follow, including our boat-launch facility.



Council refreshed a motion from early 2014 for the Library to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new location in the Town Centre. The Vancouver Island Library Board will now take the lead on locating a site for a new library, leaving Council with strong encouragement from the referendum to follow through on exploring community facilities to accommodate our diverse and growing population.

The majority of Council will be off to the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities (AVICC) Conference, with a firm resolution to restate opposition to tanker traffic, in keeping with the results of last year's plebiscite.

A healthy community is a strong one, therefore I am pleased to pick up the reins on the Primary Health working group that was put together by outgoing Mayor Milne. As we roll out our strategic priorities, other working committees will be formed for broader community engagement, and we look forward to sharing these priorities with you in the weeks to come.

We've received several letters of introduction from community stakeholders, and we are pleased to be forming strong relations with the many parties that contribute to the overall wellbeing of our community.

With your encouragement and support, I'm confident that Council and staff will continue to find creative ways to fulfill the goals and vision we all share in making Sooke an attractive place to call home.

With kind regards,

Mayor Maja Tait