

Good afternoon,

Thank you for being here. Looking around I see people who care about the future of Saanich.

That gives me tremendous hope. Because today isn't simply about launching a campaign.

It's about starting a conversation.

A conversation about the community we love, the future we want to build together, and the responsibility we all share to leave Saanich stronger than we found it.

That conversation begins with three simple words.

Protecting What Matters.

Those words have guided my life in Saanich long before they became my campaign slogan.

Long before I ever imagined standing before you asking for your support.

More than thirty years ago, my husband and I bought our first home in Saanich.

Like so many young families, we weren't thinking about politics.

We were thinking about possibility.

We wanted a place where we could afford to build a life.

A place where our children could play street hockey, walk to school, explore parks, and grow up knowing their neighbours.

A place where community wasn't just something you talked about—it was something you experienced every day.

Saanich became the place where we raised our two sons, built lifelong friendships, coached youth sports, volunteered in our schools, led Scouts, and discovered something that has shaped every chapter of my life.

Strong communities don't happen by accident.

They are built by ordinary people who choose to get involved.

That simple belief is the reason I'm standing before you today.

People sometimes ask me why I'm running for Council.

The truth is my journey didn't begin with politics. It began with a sidewalk.

More than twenty years ago, while walking my children to school, I realized the route we travelled every day wasn't safe.

I could have hoped someone else would fix it. Instead, I asked one simple question. Who is responsible?

That single question changed the course of my life.

One conversation became another.

One Council meeting led to another.

Before long, I found myself sitting around tables with municipal engineers, planners, school district representatives, provincial officials, and community members.

I wasn't there because I was an expert. I was there because I cared.

What began as one parent's concern became years of research, collaboration, persistence, and advocacy.

Eventually, that work became the Burnside Road Streetscape Project.

Looking back, I realized I had accomplished far more than building safer sidewalks.

I learned how local government can improve people's everyday lives.

I learned that lasting progress doesn't come from shouting the loudest.

It comes from listening first.

Researching the facts.

Understanding different perspectives.

Building trust.

And bringing people together around practical solutions.

Most importantly, I learned that good leadership doesn't begin with having all the answers.

It begins with asking the right questions.

That lesson has stayed with me throughout my life.

Whether serving as President of the Carey Area Residents Association, Chair of the Saanich Community Association Network, working alongside organizations to help protect Panama Flats, serving on municipal advisory committees, coaching Little League, volunteering with Scouts, or supporting our schools, I've seen the same lesson repeated time and again.

Communities become stronger when people work together.

Over the years I've attended hundreds of community meetings.

I've knocked on doors.

I've listened around kitchen tables.

I've spoken with parents in schoolyards.

I've talked with seniors who have watched Saanich evolve over generations.

I've met young adults wondering whether they'll ever be able to afford to stay in the community where they grew up.

I've listened to small business owners working hard to navigate rising costs.

I've spoken with first responders trying to keep our community safe while managing the pressures created by rapid growth.

Although every conversation is different, they all point toward the same question.

How do we protect what matters while preparing responsibly for the future?

That question has become the foundation of my campaign.

Saanich is standing at an important moment in its history.

Can we create attainable housing while preserving the character of existing neighbourhoods?

Can we improve transportation, so people spend less time in traffic and more time with their families?

Can we protect the parks, forests, wetlands, and green spaces that define our community?

Can we ensure every taxpayer dollar is spent wisely and transparently?

I believe we can, not by engaging citizens less - by engaging citizens more.

By asking questions, listening to one another, and making decisions that put people first.

After more than thirty years in this community, I've come to believe something very simple. Every decision Council makes touches someone's life:

- A young family trying to buy their first home.
- A senior hoping to remain in the neighbourhood they've helped build.
- A student planning their future.

- A business owner creating local jobs.
- A volunteer giving back.
- A child walking safely to school.

That's why every decision begins with one question.

What best protects what matters for the people of Saanich?

That question has guided every conversation I've had across our communities.

Over the years, I've spoken with thousands of Saanich residents—at community meetings, on neighbourhood walks, while knocking on doors, over coffee, and at local events.

Every conversation is different. Every person's story is unique. However, the expectations people have for Saanich are remarkably similar.

Parents want to know their children have the opportunity to build a future here.

Young adults don't want to have to leave the community they grew up in simply because housing is too expensive.

Seniors want to remain in the neighbourhoods they helped build, close to their families, friends, and support networks.

Business owners want a municipality that supports local enterprise and recognizes the important role they play in creating jobs and vibrant communities.

People want local government that listens, plans, and spends their tax dollars wisely.

These conversations have shaped my campaign.

They've shaped my understanding of "what protecting what matters" really means.

It begins with housing.

Housing has become one of the defining issues facing our generation.

Too often, the conversation becomes polarized. You're either for growth and development or against it.

The real question is this:

How do we create attainable homes while protecting the characteristics that make people want to live in Saanich in the first place?

I believe we can do both.

We need homes that students and young families can afford.

Homes that allow fixed income residents seniors to stay in the communities they love.

Thoughtful growth that's more than increasing density.

Growth supported by infrastructure and services.

By transportation. By parks. By schools. By community amenities.

Because successful communities aren't measured by the number of homes we build. They're measured by the quality of life we create.

Every development decision should ask a simple question:

Will this leave Saanich stronger for the next generation?

That same principle shapes how I think about transportation.

Sometimes we talk about transportation as though people belong in competing groups.

Drivers. Cyclists. Transit users. Pedestrians.

However, that's not how most of us live. We're all of these people.

We drive to work. Walk the dog. Ride the bus downtown. Cycle with our children. Push a stroller. Use mobility aids.

Transportation shouldn't divide us. It should connect us.

It should safely move people where they need to go, regardless of how they choose to travel.

Perhaps that's why this issue is personal for me.

The first community project that brought me into civic life wasn't really about roads. It was about children walking safely to school.

That experience taught me something I'll never forget.

Infrastructure isn't concrete. Infrastructure is people.

The parent who wants to know their child will get home safely.

The senior who wants to cross the street with confidence.

The commuter who wants to spend less time in traffic and more time around the dinner table.

The firefighter, police officer, and paramedic who need transportation networks that allow them to respond quickly when every second matters.

Good transportation planning isn't about favouring one group over another.

It's about designing a system that works better for everyone.

When we get it right, we spend less time travelling. And more time living.

More weekends coaching sports.

More opportunities to support local businesses.

More time volunteering in our communities.

Those are the moments that strengthen a community.

They're worth planning for.

Protecting what matters means protecting the places that make Saanich unlike anywhere else.

Whenever I ask residents what they love most about living here, they rarely begin by talking about buildings.

They talk about Panama Flats. Our parks. Our urban forests. Our beaches. Our wetlands. Our Garry oak ecosystems.

They tell stories.

Walking the dog after work.

Watching salmon return.

Seeing an eagle overhead.

Finding peace after a difficult day.

These places aren't empty spaces on a map.

They are where our lives happen.

I've spent years working alongside residents and community organizations committed to protecting these special places.

What those experiences have taught me is that environmental stewardship isn't about resisting change.

It's about guiding change responsibly.

We can welcome new neighbours while protecting biodiversity.

We can create housing while preserving mature trees and environmentally sensitive areas.

We can strengthen local food security by protecting agricultural land.

These aren't competing priorities.

They're complementary responsibilities.

The decisions we make today determine the community future generations will inherit.

Protecting what matters means ensuring that our children and grandchildren experience the same natural beauty and sense of belonging that so many of us have enjoyed.

Every one of these conversations is about housing, transportation, parks, and growth. Bringing me back to the lesson I learned on that sidewalk more than twenty years ago.

Good decisions don't begin with predetermined answers.

They begin with curiosity.

With listening.

With asking better questions.

With respecting different perspectives.

And with bringing people together around practical solutions.

That's the kind of leadership I want to bring to Council.

Leadership that listens before it speaks.

Leadership that builds trust before it builds consensus.

Leadership that understands good decisions are rarely about choosing sides—they're about finding common ground.

Because that's how strong communities are built.

And that's how we'll continue protecting what matters.

The piece that connects everything I've talked about today.

Is trust. Trust isn't built during an election campaign.

It's built over time. It's built by showing up. By listening.

By doing the work. And by following through.

During my career in information technology, governance, and business operations, I've worked with organizations across Canada and the United States to improve municipal systems, simplify complex processes, and help organizations make better decisions.

Whether the challenge involved planning, permitting, building, licensing, or public service delivery, the work always came back to the same principle.

Good organizations never lose sight of the people they exist to serve.

I believe local government should be no different.

Every decision Council makes should be measured against one simple question:

Will this improve the lives of the people who call Saanich home?

Every dollar Council spends belongs to someone who worked hard to earn it.

It belongs to the young family saving for their first home.

To the senior living on a fixed income.

To the entrepreneur investing in a local business.

To every resident who expects their municipality to use those dollars wisely.

Fiscal responsibility isn't about saying yes to everything.

And it isn't about saying no to everything.

It's about making thoughtful decisions that deliver lasting value.

It's about planning for tomorrow while respecting the taxpayers who make those investments possible today.

That's the business perspective I will bring to Council.

Building confidence.

Confidence grows when people understand how decisions are made, know their voices have been heard, and can see measurable results.

People often ask me what kind of councillor I want to be.

I want to be approachable.

The councillor you'll see at a community event long after the election is over.

The councillor you'll stop and talk to at the grocery store.

The kind who answers the phone, responds to emails, attends neighbourhood meetings, and welcomes difficult conversations.

Because that's how trust is built.

I've never believed good leadership happens behind closed doors.

It happens around kitchen tables. On neighbourhood walks. At local events.

In conversations where people don't always agree—but choose to listen to one another anyway.

That's the kind of leadership I believe Saanich deserves.

Leadership that listens before it decides.

Leadership that asks questions before reaching conclusions.

Leadership that brings people together instead of driving them apart.

I know we won't all agree on every issue.

Healthy communities are built on different experiences and different perspectives.

But disagreement doesn't have to become division.

One of the greatest strengths of Saanich is the diversity of people who call it home.

Young families beginning their journey.

Students planning their futures.

Seniors who have helped build this community over generations.

Business owners creating opportunity.

Farmers protecting our agricultural heritage.

Teachers, tradespeople, artists, engineers, health-care workers, first responders, public servants, and the thousands of volunteers who quietly make our community stronger every single day.

Every one of these voices matters.

Because better decisions are made when more people have a seat at the table.

As I stand here today, I can't help but think back to that morning more than twenty years ago.

One parent. One walk to school. One simple question. Who is responsible?

At the time, I couldn't have imagined where that question would lead.

I wasn't thinking about running for Council.

I was thinking about making one route to school safer.

That one question became one conversation.

One conversation became one project.

One project became years of community service.

Those years became lasting friendships, new opportunities to serve, and a deeper understanding of the community that my family has proudly called home for more than three decades.

Looking back now, I realize there has always been one common thread running through that journey.

Whether I was advocating for safer streets...

Working alongside neighbours...

Leading community organizations...

Helping protect Panama Flats...

Supporting our schools...

Coaching young athletes...

Or working professionally to improve the way organizations serve people...

The purpose remains the same. To protect what matters.

To protect the people who make this community extraordinary.

To protect the places that define who we are.

To protect opportunities for future generations.

And to protect the trust that residents place in the people they elect.

That is why I'm running for Saanich Council.

Because I believe one person can help bring people together.

I've seen neighbours helping neighbours after storms.

Volunteers giving countless hours to improve our parks, coach our children, and strengthen our community.

Residents from very different backgrounds sitting down together, listening respectfully, and finding common ground.

I believe Saanich's best days are still ahead of us.

If we choose collaboration over conflict.

If we choose thoughtful planning over reactive implementation.

If we choose evidence over assumptions.

If we choose listening before deciding.

I'm asking for your vote. Your ideas. Your participation.

I'm asking you to volunteer. To put up a sign. To donate.

To have conversations with your neighbours.

To challenge my thinking. To hold me accountable.

And to help build the kind of Saanich we all want our children and grandchildren to inherit.

Together, we can build a Saanich where young families can afford to put down roots.

Where seniors can continue living in the neighbourhoods they love.

Where businesses can thrive.

Where transportation works better for everyone.

Where our parks, forests, wetlands, and farms are protected for generations to come.

Where local government earns the confidence of the people it serves.

And where every resident knows their voice matters.

That is the future I believe in.

That is the future I will work for every single day.

My name is Hollis Hodson.

Serving this community has been one of the greatest privileges of my life.

It would be the honour of my life to serve it as your councillor.

Thank you for believing that, together, we can continue...

Protecting What Matters.