

Mayor's Report – August 19, 2025

Yesterday (Aug 18), Deputy Mayor Trainer and Councillor Barkwill joined me in Penticton for the opening of the Okanagan Lake Dam East Salmon Passage. The passage is a naturalized stream built to connect the river channel with Okanagan Lake to allow fish to bypass the outlet dam. For the first time since the 1950s, sockeye and chinook will be able to return from the ocean and swim unimpeded to their historical spawning grounds on 14 tributaries to Okanagan Lake, including Trout Creek. The salmon passage project was led by the Okanagan Nation Alliance and is the latest in a series of measures taken recently in BC and Washington State to restore healthy salmon populations to the Okanagan Basin.

On August 13, Deputy Mayor Trainer, Councillor Barkwill, and Councillor Peake joined me at Rotary Beach to see the installation of the new mobi-mat, which is a rollout mat for wheelchairs and other wheeled equipment such as strollers to help people access the lake. The mat is a non-slip walkway made from recycled material and it just sits on top of the sand. The mat will be rolled out each summer and stored away during the winter. The mobi-mat compliments the accessible year-round washrooms opened earlier this year at Peach Orchard Beach and fits with Council's priority to implement the Waterfront Concept Plan.

On August 7, Councillor Barkwill and I attended the regular board meeting of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) where I brought forward a motion for the Board to support the District of Summerland's application to collect a Municipal and Regional District Tax, which we require as part of our application to the Province. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Board also passed a resolution to write a letter to the Province to express support for the finalization of the incorporation of the municipality of Okanagan Falls, and to raise concerns about the delay in issuing the Letters Patent, which is the legal document that finalizes the incorporation process.

Finally, a delegation from BC Transit provided an update on regional transit matters, including a digital on-demand pilot that started in April in the Crawford neighborhood of Kelowna. Rather than having a fixed scheduled, this service uses technology to dispatch buses to pick up riders at bus stops. So far the service has seen a steady increase in ridership and rider satisfaction and, while further analysis is required, it appears the cost of a digital on-demand service is equivalent to a conventional bus route. BC Transit says there could be an opportunity for running another pilot in the South Okanagan in 2026 and we should discuss if we would like Summerland to be considered.

- Mayor Doug Holmes