



Canada, we must seize the moment to rethink our procurement strategies, ensuring that they serve the best interests of residents, businesses and workers.”<sup>4</sup>

Locally,

- Saanich Council on Feb 3 directed staff to explore the implications of buying Canadian when it procures supplies and services.
- Cliff McNeil-Smith, the Mayor of Sidney and Chair of the Capital Regional District, “said he has spoken with staff at both his town and the CRD about bringing forward a similar motion to both bodies within the next week.”
- At Langford council Monday night, Mayor Scott Goodmanson announced that Langford will be looking into countermeasures including procurement and support for and collaboration with all levels of government.<sup>5</sup>

Media reports suggest that Elon Musk, the head of Trump’s “Department of Government Efficiency” may be using X / Twitter to amplify the US trade war, as well as undermining elections and amplifying extremist voices. “Elon Musk’s comments to a far-right party in Germany have raised concerns about the billionaire’s escalating political interference in foreign countries.”<sup>6</sup> “Musk has made several public statements in Germany voicing support for the country’s far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party, even making a surprise virtual appearance at a campaign event.” Musk’s X / Twitter is under investigations, and is accused of “manipulating its systems to give far-right posts and politicians greater visibility over other political groups.”<sup>7</sup>

Again, cities are taking action. View Royal is deleting its X / Twitter account, Mayor Sid Tobias saying “he made the decision because X owner Elon Musk, a chief advisor to U.S. President Donald Trump, is using the company to amplify a trade war between Canada and the U.S.”<sup>8</sup> The District of North Vancouver has deleted its X / Twitter account. District CAO David Stuart said “There are homophobic comments. There are racist comments that are now allowed on that

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<sup>4</sup> CBC News, *Amid tariff threats, local governments should prioritize buying local, London mayor says* Feb 7, 2025 <https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.7452742>.

<sup>5</sup> Times Colonist, *Saanich explores Canada-first procurement in wake of trade dispute Municipalities are exploring ways to insulate themselves from tariffs*. Feb 5, 2025 <https://www.timescolonist.com/local-news/saanich-explores-canada-first-procurement-in-wake-of-trade-dispute-10185857>.

<sup>6</sup> CBC News, *Elon Musk’s speech in Germany raises concerns about his increased political meddling abroad* Feb 2, 2025 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/elon-musk-afd-1.7445483>.

<sup>7</sup> CNBC, *Elon Musk’s X faces criminal probe in France over algorithm manipulation concerns* Feb 7, 2025 <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/02/07/elon-musks-x-faces-criminal-probe-in-france-over-algorithm-concerns.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Times Colonist, *View Royal ditches X account; mayor says Musk using platform to amplify trade war* Feb 5, 2024 <https://www.timescolonist.com/local-news/view-royal-ditches-x-account-mayor-says-musk-using-platform-to-amplify-trade-war-10183313>.

social site and they're just inconsistent what I think are the community's values and our organizational values."<sup>9</sup> New Westminster is also considering deleting or deactivating its X account.

The City of Victoria can take steps to protect our residents and businesses and do our part in the larger effort, as other cities in the region, BC and Canada are doing. Amending our Purchasing Policy could start with minor wording changes, and can be done in phases. In addition to the City's website, the mainstream media, and hardcopy as it has always relied upon, the City has multiple social media channels and likely will be adding more; maintaining a X/Twitter account is not necessary for the long term.

Mayor Alto is already a member of the Border Mayors Alliance and continues to work with that alliance on border city strategies for response and engagement.

This motion directs staff to explore options and their implications, rather than adopting specific actions, and provides staff – who are busy – with flexibility on their report-back timing and mode (verbal or written).

### **Recommendation**

That Council:

- Directs staff to report on options and implications of the City of Victoria addressing the US trade war, including for example:
  - Adjusting our policies where possible to avoid purchasing US goods and services;
  - Moving to other social media platforms, and closing the City's X / Twitter account;
  - Continuing the City's ongoing work in identifying and pursuing opportunities to diversify and strengthen our economy, particularly small businesses; and
  - Identifying any additional opportunities; and,
- Voices its support for an all-government, Team Canada response to a US trade war, and calls on the federal and provincial governments to take any measures that would further increase the capacity of municipalities to respond effectively using procurement or other means; and,
- Requests the Mayor to write to the Prime Minister and BC Premier to share these actions and positions.

Respectfully Submitted,



Councillor Dave Thompson



Mayor Marianne Alto

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<sup>9</sup> North Shore News, *District of North Vancouver ditches X (formerly Twitter): Complaints to the district about use of the social media platform have been on the rise since Elon Musk took over Jan 21, 2025* <https://www.nsnews.com/local-news/district-of-north-vancouver-ditches-x-formerly-twitter-10110656>.