

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2018

### **A new way for constituents to engage with MLA Adam Olsen**

Residents in the provincial riding of Saanich North and the Islands will now have a new way to communicate online with their MLA, Adam Olsen. The newly-launched [PlaceSpeak page](#) allows constituents to engage meaningfully on topics that matter to them in a safe, secure, and privacy-respecting way.

As an innovative BC-based startup, PlaceSpeak was developed with the support of the National Research Council of Canada (NRC-IRAP). Its unique geo-verification technology provides Olsen with the flexibility to hear from all British Columbians, or exclusively from constituents within his riding. The authentication process deters negative behaviour such as trolling or spamming, facilitating a respectful environment for online dialogue and engagement.

“I am excited to explore new platforms such as PlaceSpeak, to increase for civic engagement,” said Olsen. “Increasing participation in our provincial democracy is one of the main goals of our office and I am hopeful that using PlaceSpeak will allow for more meaningful discussions to occur. PlaceSpeak is an example of a innovative BC-based company that is raising the bar on democratic participation in this province. I look forward to hearing from you.”

Participants can currently complete a survey on agriculture in the region, and respond to a simple polls on issues in the riding and in the province. They can also contribute feedback on wild salmon in British Columbia through the discussion forum, and pin local transit issues on a map of the riding.

With privacy and data concerns at the forefront of people’s minds, PlaceSpeak ensures that users’ personal information is kept secure. As a [Privacy by Design](#) ambassador, privacy measures have been built into the very architecture of the platform. The information that is used to authenticate participants is never shared, sold or otherwise distributed – not even with the MLA’s office.

“PlaceSpeak has been designed to help restore the public trust through a combination of authenticity, privacy and transparency in online public consultation,” according to founder and CEO Colleen Hardwick. “We are strongly encouraged by the use of PlaceSpeak for constituent engagement by MLA Adam Olsen in Saanich North and the Islands.”

Recently, PlaceSpeak was used by the District of Central Saanich to collect feedback on issues in Brentwood Bay and on the 2018 Budget. Residents who have previously registered have been notified of the opportunity to engage with Olsen’s constituency page. By breaking down

silos between different levels of government, PlaceSpeak creates a convenient single stop for community members to engage with decision-makers – be it the municipality or their MLA.

Residents of Saanich North and the Islands can register and join the conversation from their computer or mobile device. Participate at <http://placespeak.com/adamolsen>.

-30-

**Contact:**

Aldous Sperl  
Chief of Staff | Office of Adam Olsen  
MLA Saanich North and the Islands  
Telephone: 250-655-5601  
Email: [aldous.sperl@leg.bc.ca](mailto:aldous.sperl@leg.bc.ca)

Mary Leong  
Communications Manager | PlaceSpeak Inc.  
Telephone: 604-336-6977  
Email: [mary@placespeak.com](mailto:mary@placespeak.com)