

Editorial: Amalgamation study vital

Several Greater Victoria municipalities have opted to have emergency dispatches handled from Surrey rather than pay higher fees proposed by Saanich.

Capital Regional District directors have voted unanimously to abandon a bid to form a regional transportation authority, and so transportation issues will continue to be dealt with in a piecemeal fashion.

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A region with a population of 368,000 has four municipal police forces and three RCMP detachments, as well as four professional fire departments and multiple volunteer fire departments.

Local-government services are delivered in as many ways as there are municipalities.

Don't these and other issues scream out for an in-depth amalgamation study?

In the 2014 municipal election, a majority of voters favoured a study on the costs and benefits of amalgamation. The Capital Integrated Service and Governance Initiative report, commissioned by the provincial government, was a good start, but only a start.

Many municipal politicians are reluctant to push for an amalgamation study, but don't fault them — they were elected to look after their own municipalities. The province needs to take leadership. It should dig deeper, come up with the facts and figures elected officials and citizens need to make rational decisions.

Lumping everyone into one large entity is not likely the answer, but neither is

continuing with chaos and confusion brought about by the multiplicity of municipalities.

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