

TC Letter, June 21, 2019

Reconstruction is a key point

Re: "Province's local-government systems need an overhaul," June 16.

The call for reconstruction of our local government system is yet another call for amalgamation, but the use of the word reconstruction is novel and especially apt.

Much of the advocacy for regional amalgamation is shallow: Amalgamate and all that ails us will be resolved. But take away a real commitment to reconstruction and amalgamation will deliver little.

Reconstruction would involve changes to programs and services, consolidation of union bargaining units, and layoffs amongst municipal workers, including some working in hot-button areas such as policing.

Therein rests the chief challenge for amalgamation.

Few politicians or managers have the fortitude to really pursue reconstruction, and yet it seems likely future municipal leaders would be none other than a subset of today's incumbents.

In health care, which the article references, reconstruction often required a change in senior leadership at the board level and in management.

The opinion piece is correct that without change, all we get are good intentions, but thus far that is all the amalgamation debate offers, too.

We need reconstruction, but we need to see a concrete plan. This is especially true if the task rests on the shoulders of incumbents who have thus far struggled to deliver less complex change.

James Murtagh

Oak Bay