

SAANICH CANDIDATE RESPONSES

Amalgamation Yes Questionnaire

2018 Municipal Election

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1. The City of Victoria and the District of Saanich will pose a 2018 ballot question to voters on the formation of a joint Citizens' Assembly to study amalgamation of those municipalities. Do you support the citizens' assembly model as a means to independently review local government structure? Why or why not? Please explain.

2. The current Capital Region District Board consists of municipal councillors and mayors who are appointed from the 13 municipalities. By legislation, these municipal appointments are responsible to represent the interests of their home municipalities. Do you think that regional interests would be better served if the entire CRD Board was directly elected by voters region-wide? Why or why not? Please explain.

SAANICH CANDIDATE RESPONSES: (NOTE: Candidates listed in alphabetic order. Mayoral candidates denoted with “M”)

Name	Q 1: Supporting the Citizens' Assembly Model?	Q 2: Electing CRD Board by all voters, region-wide?
Benjamin Allan	I am and will always be open to newer forms of governance and I am in favour of some form of amalgamation within the capital region. Four years ago, Saanich residents voted nearly 10 to 1 in favour of initializing a review of the governance structure. A change in governance proposal must be developed by those residents that are most passionate about the change, therefore I believe a citizens assembly model to review our current government structure is likely the best use of taxpayers money.	The CRD board should be afforded the freedom to make hard choices without fearing the retaliation of losing their council seat. In the current model, this doesn't seem to be the case. I believe that if the CRD Board members were elected by voters region-wide, it would improve the overall function of the Board and thus better serve the interests of all CRD residents.
Richard Atwell - M	The proposal on the Victoria and Saanich municipal ballots is directed at studying for the first time the pros and cons of amalgamating these two municipalities. With regional planning and transportation challenges affecting affordability and quality of life, Greater Victoria is struggling with growing pains as it becomes a major metropolitan region. Efforts to gather the necessary data to make an informed decision has long been held back by political self-interest. This is one the reasons why I am proud to have pushed for and participated in the formulation of an arm-length process where citizens of both communities will decide. This is an exciting development and I hope that citizens in both municipalities will vote in favour of establishing an assembly that will put the power of decision making into their hands.	No. The CRD is essentially a wholesaler of water, sewage, solid waste services (garbage) and housing to the region's municipalities. These services are levied as bills by the municipalities either through utility billing or property taxation and when residents have issues with the services or costs they contact their municipal councillors who sit at the CRD table. Rather than separate the billing and increase the number of elected officials, this region needs to be working towards simplified and more effective governance models. One idea would be to send one (or perhaps two) representatives from each municipality or electoral area to the CRD with weighed vote based on the population because as boards become larger they tend to become less effective. Now, if one of the goals of amalgamation is to simplify and created a

		<p>more effective government that can address regional issues such as planning and transportation, I believe that would best be handled by a separate body that would be collapsed into a future amalgamated municipal model.</p> <p>Otherwise, it will give rise to two levels of elected government with two sets of staff, policies and strategic plans trying to address planning which is a municipal responsibility and inextricably linked to transportation. This is the system we have now and simply isn't effective, elected or not.</p>
<p>Trevor Barry</p>	<p>Yes. The Citizens' Assembly process is sublime. I have a lot of faith, and put a great deal of stock into it.</p> <p>No matter which side of the fence you lean, there is significant interest here in Saanich/CRD in the concept of integration and amalgamation, and it really deserves proper, thorough investigation.</p> <p>Proper: like a jury, a non-biased and representative group of citizens who get the chance to ask questions, seek clarification, and ultimately make recommendations based on evidence!</p> <p>Thorough: the price tag allows for ample scoping. However, I must admit that I am concerned that the scope may not be wide enough*.</p> <p>Personally, I strongly "feel" that 13 municipalities for an area served as a single market by, e.g. only one private talk radio station, demonstrates some level of redundancy if not absurdity. However, as somebody who also believes strongly in "evidence-based decision making" I reserve my judgement until after the facts, and analysis [with transparent methodology] are presented... and to be honest, I reserve my judgement anyways*, because if the Citizens' Assembly says "we recommend X", then far-be-it-for-me to suggest otherwise!</p> <p>*One small reservation, however! re: Scope.</p> <p>...If the "study" does not take into account other member municipalities of the CRD (re: amalgamation/integration options, with each other, with Victoria/Saanich) then it better darn well take into account options for CRD service integration, and in particular: a Translink-style #SmartGrowth authority!!</p>	<p>I do... in general: the status quo is not good enough.</p> <p>For starters, Langford is really screwing over the rest of the region, so there's that.</p> <p>But that's somewhat circumstantial and political, the real crux comes down to building public policy based on consensus of vision and values, NOT on fiefdom protectionism!</p> <p>One Alternative = running for CRD director on the Saanich ballot, and either being allowed to serve in spite of not winning a council seat, or indeed: these positions voted on separately -- so that "saanich voice" can be on CRD board, but without those rep persons being put in a perpetual conflict of interest, i.e. "best for region VS. best for my re-election chances in Saanich": yuck.</p> <p>(psssst: ya'know what else might help? Term Limits!)</p> <p>Another Alternative: completely separate race (same time same ballot is fine) of directly elected CRD Directors / #SmartGrowth Authority reps... .. using a ranked ballot system.</p> <p>(psssst: a ranked ballot, e.g. STV/etc, instead of "plurality at large" = also way better idea in just about every case)</p> <p>While we are at it: No Wards! Unless they are very multi-member and use ranked ballots.</p> <p>wards are divisive, uncollaborative, mean-spirited nasty things that induce partisanship and make you late for dinner. Independent Voices at the local level, from diverse backgrounds, is something truly special in LOCAL Government, and ought to be maintained, preserved, enhanced!</p> <p>Incumbent Mayor Richard Atwell may have said it best during this campaign: "The role of Mayor is unique in Canadian democracy: because it is our only directly-elected executive officer" (all the rest "1st Ministers" require the Confidence of the Westminster parliament/assembly to be selected). Incidentally, [so-called weak*] mayors still require Supply from majority of council [*phrase used by Haynes, concept baked into the stump of Wickson].</p> <p>IN CONCLUSION:</p> <p>Yes to the Study.</p> <p>Yes to citizens' recommendations.</p> <p>Yes to REGIONAL Transportation/mobility, RGS Land-use, #SmartGrowth AUTHORITY</p> <p>Yes to more representative, collaborative, transparent and accountable regional governance!</p>

		P.S... while [dt] Victoria polices the region [tradeoff for saanich], Saanich provides most of the shared roads. Either way, Langford gets off scott-free, then steals our business. Booooo.
Susan Brice	I supported putting a Citizen's Assembly option to Saanich voters for this municipal election.	I support the process used in Saanich which is a separate ballot for voters to select CRD Directors. I guess it will have to be "no" given your question. I have taken a regional approach to issues at CRD board table including advocating for a Regional Transportation Service, Funding a Regional Arts Service, adding Regional Park land regardless of jurisdiction and many many other examples. I believe Directors can take a Regional perspective. I realize you only want yes or no answers for ease of reporting out but I believe the matter would need to be discussed much more thoroughly prior to a change to region-wide vote.
Judy Brownoff	Whether the Citizen's Assembly is the appropriate model for an independent review of a municipality the size of Saanich will be determined by the voters.	I am committed to validating voters decisions from a dual ballot but candidates must also be Councillors.
Kathleen Burton	I am in favour of the formation of a Joint Citizen's Assembly with the purpose of studying the pros and cons of amalgamating Victoria and Saanich. Citizen's Assemblies offer a valued process in studying and developing specific recommendations to the issue being explored. If the demographics of the area are well represented the results should be of great value. I believe listening to the residents and weighing their feedback is paramount in order to make an informative decision on amalgamation.	While I have my own rational for what I would support, I do think it is time that the CRD as it currently exists should be reviewed and revised. The CRD is not the same landscape as it was when it was initially formed seeing the various regional issues and relationships change year over year. A review of this regional level of governance in my opinion is overdue. I support the directors being elected by voters region wide, and I believe the catchment is best served by individuals who are not in office being the represented voice with the power to make integral decisions. This does not mean I think the CRD should work alone, it is important to have a collaborative approach to the decisions made through work done with the municipalities involved. This will ensure a collaborative approach and that a duplication of services does not occur.
Nathalie Chambers	Yes, I support the Citizen's Assembly as a model to independently review local government structure and to provide input to Council in its decision-making process.	I think it is misleading to suggest that the CRD board is currently appointed. In Saanich, for example, voters effectively choose CRD directors. While the winners of this election are technically appointed to their role by council, it is Saanich residents who control the process. I oppose a move to region-wide voting. Residents in Langford do not share the same concerns as residents in Mechotsin. Allowing each community to elect their own representatives allows each community to have its own unique voice, putting forward its own concerns. A region-wide voting model would be dominating by the densest regions of the CRD – Victoria, Langford, and View Royal, for example, at the expense of rural communities like ours here in Saanich. I value our farming communities, our coastal communities, and the full diversity of lifestyles across the CRD, and I cannot support sacrificing their voices in favour a regional government dominated by the city centers.

		Saanich is more than a suburb of Victoria. Saanich is its own community, and we deserve our own voice at the CRD.
Zac Di Vries		
Karen Harper	I absolutely support the formation of a Joint Citizen's Assembly to study the pros and cons of amalgamating Victoria and Saanich. Citizen's Assemblies are a well established and respected processes used to study, deliberate and develop recommendations on specific issues. The members are typically randomly selected and tend to reflect the demographics of the area they are studying. What is most important about this process is that it is citizen led. It is time for the residents, rather than the politicians, to investigate this matter, deliberate and recommend based on the investigations they have undertaken. While I definitely have a preferred result, I will accept the recommendations of the Assembly.	I believe that the CRD definitely needs revision. Having been established over fifty years ago, the changing nature of regional issues and relationships requires a revision to our regional level of governance. At least two things need to occur in order for the CRD to be more accountable and effective: 1. Directly elected CRD directors. These individuals should not be sitting councillors or mayors, as their focus needs to be the region as a whole. 2. The CRD must have the power to carry out the items/issue/areas for which they are given responsibility. An example of where this didn't occur, which is still fresh in all of our memories, is the sewage project. This change will likely entail a legislative redefinition of what the CRD does, and what municipalities do. There should not be a duplication of services between the municipalities and the CRD.
Fred Haynes - M		
Ian Jessop		
Vernon Lord		
Rebecca Mersereau	Yes. I do think citizens' assemblies are a promising tool for objective, independent review of local government structures. While it may seem tempting to hand this responsibility over to experts with appropriate professional backgrounds, it can be very difficult to avoid the influence of political agendas when considering changes to our fundamental governing structures. (For example, it has been suggested the last provincial government's review of governance in the CRD was not advanced due to a lack of political interest.) Citizen's assemblies have the advantage of objectivity because they are comprised of a representative and inclusive group of residents, and as such – they are considered highly democratic. This means their processes and recommendations are likely to be considered more trustworthy and held in higher regard by the public, which will ultimately decide on the best path forward.	Yes - it seems obvious that regional interests (transportation being a big one for me) would be better served by individuals who are specifically elected to serve in that regional role. From a democratic perspective, I can also see how this structure could improve accountability for voters and the public. However, I don't believe the solution to our regional challenges is that simple. Legislatively, our regional districts are structured as federations of municipalities and (we often forget) elected representatives of unincorporated electoral areas. This has the advantage of allowing all parties at the table to opt out of services they are not interested in participating in or receiving, although the other side of the coin is that it is not possible to compel individual member municipalities/electoral areas to participate or collaborate. Until there are regional entities with the legal authority to compel member municipalities to act (such as our own regional transportation authority), I unfortunately don't foresee our big, hairy, regional problems going away.
Cory Montgomery	I support the formation of a Joint Citizen's Assembly to study the pros and cons of amalgamating Victoria and Saanich. Citizens assemblies are a great way to accurately review the needs of each individual area of Saanich and other municipalities. The needs of	I believe that the CRD needs a make over and should not be a side cart on the election campaign. I believe that the CRD board should be directly elected on the ballots in the same way we have trustees, council and mayor Candidates.

	<p>Cordova bay may be different than James Bay, this is a way to bring diversity to the table to see if the demographic makes is feasible. Politicians should not be the ones to decide - it should be up to the citizens to do so, and we would have to accept the results of the study.</p>	<p>The elected CRD council needs to be independent with people from every municipal jurisdiction and they need to have their entire focus on the CRD alone and be able to work with all municipal bodies. I feel that the CRD is not doing its job or getting its message out right now. By having these people directly elected puts the responsibility on them to carry out their duties to the public as a single focus.</p>
<p>Shawn Newby</p>	<p>Yes, I will support the question and the citizens' assembly in order to reach an understanding of the benefits and disadvantages. It is incredibly important to research the consequences of an amalgamated format independently from the Council and staff of the municipalities that are involved. This will help to circumvent any biases that may naturally arise.</p>	<p>I understand the concern that Directors won't be able to leave their "municipal hat" at the door and focus on the larger region when decisions are made. However, by electing a board directly, there is a possibility of having a governing body that may be less familiar with the minutia of particular communities within the region. When you have municipal appointments, you create a specialized board that is familiar with these details. The best way to ensure that the CRD Board governs with the with the region's best interests in mind is to elect those individuals that are able to foster relationships with other Board Members to understand the greater regional picture and govern accordingly.</p>
<p>Teal Phelps-Bondaroff</p>		
<p>Colin Plant</p>	<p>I am supportive of the proposed Citizens' Assembly model. I support having unbiased, randomly-selected citizens study the costs, benefits and disadvantages of amalgamation and to make a recommendation to Victoria and Saanich residents on the topic.</p>	<p>In Saanich, where I serve as a Councillor, the public is given an opportunity to vote in a non-binding referendum to select their Saanich CRD Directors. The referendum results in the top four vote-receiving candidates and the Mayor being recommended to be appointed as CRD Directors. (It is assumed the mayor will be one of the five appointed to the CRD Board from Saanich.)</p> <p>As described in the question I could not currently support a region-wide election of CRD Directors. The challenge with this proposal would be with the larger municipalities being able to overwhelm the smaller municipalities/electoral areas because of their populations and the likelihood of these voters electing people from their own jurisdiction rather than those from other areas that they would likely know less about. The CRD is designed to have regional interests addressed by a diverse group of Directors from a diverse geographical area.</p> <p>While the idea of having a more directly elected CRD Board has merit, interests me and deserves exploration, a better method would be for other jurisdictions in the CRD to emulate Saanich where this already occurs. Thank you for asking for my thoughts on this matter.</p>
<p>Art Pollard</p>	<p>I support the use the ballot to form a Citizens assembly on the</p>	<p>I support direct election within the individual municipalities for the CRD</p>

	<p>question of Amalgamation. It is important this assembly be non partisan and randomly selected so grass roots feelings can be heard.</p>	<p>board. Each municipality has their own unique needs and culture.</p>
Rishi Sharma		
David Shebib - M		
Ned Taylor	<p>I would prefer to have a Citizens Assembly in all 13 Municipalities, rather than only Victoria and Saanich. There are so many ways we can go about amalgamation and it's important that we look at all the options and take all CRD Municipalities into consideration. I would have also preferred one simple question on every ballot in the CRD, rather than the misleading array of questions that we had in 2014.</p>	<p>I think this is a really interesting idea and I'm certainly open to it. Right now the CRD Board is incredibly dysfunctional. We are seeing a lot more of Directors working against each other, rather than working together for the betterment of the entire region. If elected to the CRD, I will do everything I can to ensure collaboration and good public policy for the entire Greater Victoria region.</p>
Rob Wickson - M	<p>Yes, I fully support citizen's assembly model. Since my time as incoming president to the Victoria Chamber of Commerce in 1999 the amalgamation question has been debated without any real local evidence. I am an evidence-based person and provide evidence to the BC Supreme Court as an economic expert so understand the role good evidence plays in the decision-making process. I am looking forward to leading Saanich Council through this process as it will be important to ensure the citizens of Saanich have answers to all their questions on this topic.</p>	<p>I would support a directly elected regional board that is smaller and focused on regional issues. I have looked at the Portland model and can see the advantages of separating the local politics from the regional responsibilities. There have been too many occasions in the past, most recently over the issue of transportation planning, that local interests are a barrier to responsible actions. For example, who oversees managing our local watershed? It should be the CRD but because of our political structure they have no real authority and therefore our watershed is suffering and in danger of becoming a significant liability.</p>