

## PROVINCIAL STUDY OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE:.

### OVERVIEW

#### **Purpose and Scope:**

In response to November 2014 election, a Provincial led study is proposed which will provide an independent and comprehensive look at municipal governance across the greater Victoria region. It will include information on issues such as taxation/debt, land use/transportation and service delivery in order to facilitate public discussion and assess governance options to be considered for the 2018 municipal elections in the Capital Regional District (CRD).

#### **Structure and Role of Participants:**

**Province** will provide funding, terms of reference, guidelines, appoint a commission, contract a principal investigator, vet all reports and recommendations and approve ballot question.

**Principal Investigator (PI)** will provide a framework for the study, a situational assessment, identify issues and options, monitor and arrange public consultations, recommendations to the Commission on how to structure a regional binding vote in 2018.

**Commission** (an independent multi stakeholder group composed of community, business, academia, UBCM representative chaired by an eminent personage will provide oversight, monitor progress, ensure adequate public review and submit final report to the Province.

**Mayors Forum** will provide linkage to individual municipal councils, delegate staff to work with PI, and work with Province and local councils on question to be placed on the 2018 ballot.

**Technical Data Committee (TDC)** (staff from municipalities) will provide municipal data to PI.

#### **Study Process:**

1. **Data Collection:** The TDC will complete a Data Handbook with information on population, budgets, taxes, debt loads, staffing, assets currently held by municipalities. The PI will complete a Situational Analysis to understand municipal structures, administrative practices and service delivery arrangements, land use plans. Topics to include boundary anomalies, cross sharing funding arrangements, arts/culture/recreation, social/health/housing services and emergency services; impacts on business sector (regulations, taxation), regional planning, zoning/building by-laws; overview of present and future infrastructure needs at regional and local levels; summary of semi-independent

boards/commissions within the CRD and degree of accountability to Councils or CRD Board (transit, library, airport, housing, water, harbor, schools, hospitals, emergency communications etc.); and overview of relevant amalgamations.

The Data Handbook and the Situational Report will be vetted by the Commission and then issued as background information for consultations and the final report.

2. **Public Discussion Papers:** Prepared by the PI could include but not be limited to topics such as:
  - a. What can be learned from elsewhere?
  - b. Amalgamation and integration, what makes mergers work?
  - c. Are we ready for emergencies?
  - d. Governance and accountability-is 13 too many?
  - e. How do you ensure representation for communities/neighborhoods?
  - f. What are infrastructure gaps, needs, upgrades, replacements and priorities?
  - g. What do municipal administration services cost now versus other options?
  - h. What are the options, opportunities and choices for the future?
3. **Consultations:** Will involve community conversations with the public at regional/local/individual levels. Mayors Forum and their local councils may also engage their residences in public consultations.
4. **Final Report:** PI submits report to Commission using information from the Situational Report, Discussion Papers and the Consultation process. Includes issues, opportunities and recommendations on future direction including options for administrative reform. Commission vets and submits final report to the Province.

*February 13, 2015*

*AmalgamationYes*