

ELECTED VICTORIA COUNCILLORS' RESPONSES

Amalgamation Yes Questionnaire

2018 Municipal Election

www.amalgamationyes.ca

amalgamateyes@gmail.com

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.

Council members listed in alphabetic order.

Name	Q 1: Supporting the Citizens' Assembly Model?	Q 2: Electing CRD Board by all voters, region-wide?
Marianne Alto	NO RESPONSE	NO RESPONSE
Laurel Collins	Yes. A properly constituted citizen's assembly can be an effective way to examine this highly politicized issue. In addition to examining the costs and benefits of full amalgamation with Saanich, we support moving quickly to improve public safety and reduce costs by amalgamating the Victoria, Oak Bay, and Saanich police departments.	Direct elections of regional directors is a tricky question and we're certainly not experts in it. In the CRD's multi-governance, consensus-based system, it's sometimes hard to keep track of the long chain of accountability from CRD staff and sub-agencies to CRD directors to city councils and finally, to residents. With the current mandate and governance system, it is uncertain whether direct elections would resolve the governance issues at the CRD. The CRD belongs to all the residents of the region, and we need it to work if we're going to tackle our biggest regional challenges: housing affordability, transportation and climate change.

		<p>If the CRD were given an expanded mandate to make decisions on big regional issues, direct elections might make sense because than their would be direct accountability (and therefore greater democratic legitimacy) to the CRD's actions. Even then, we would be concerned about finding the right balance between between regional and municipal authority.</p> <p>We're interested in listening to the community and learning from the experts - we all agree that we need to make regional governance work better. Let's work together to find the best path forward.</p>
<p>Sharmarke Dubow</p>	<p>Yes. A properly constituted citizen's assembly can be an effective way to examine this highly politicized issue. In addition to examining the costs and benefits of full amalgamation with Saanich, we support moving quickly to improve public safety and reduce costs by amalgamating the Victoria, Oak Bay, and Saanich police departments.</p>	<p>Direct elections of regional directors is a tricky question and we're certainly not experts in it. In the CRD's multi-governance, consensus-based system, it's sometimes hard to keep track of the long chain of accountability from CRD staff and sub-agencies to CRD directors to city councils and finally, to residents. With the current mandate and governance system, it is uncertain whether direct elections would resolve the governance issues at the CRD.</p> <p>The CRD belongs to all the residents of the region, and we need it to work if we're going to tackle our biggest regional challenges: housing affordability, transportation and climate change. If the CRD were given an expanded mandate to make decisions on big regional issues, direct elections might make sense because than their would be direct accountability (and therefore greater democratic legitimacy) to the CRD's actions. Even then, we would be concerned about finding the right balance between between regional and municipal authority.</p>

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<p>Lisa Helps, MAYOR</p>	<p>I strongly support the initiative to form a Citizens' Assembly to study amalgamation of the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich. It is my firm view that for us to truly understand the pros and cons of amalgamating the two municipalities, we must start with a an independent, citizen-led process. A majority of the residents in both jurisdictions must have a clear understanding of the potential terms of an amalgamation and enough information to make a decision one way or the other, should the Citizens Assembly recommend amalgamation and the Councils decide to hold a binding referendum. Having meaningful citizen involvement at the outset of this initiative is not only prudent but absolutely necessary. Here is what my detailed four-year plan says on the matter:</p> <p>Year 1: Subject to the outcome of the October 20th question, convene a subcommittee of Victoria and Saanich Council and staff to convene a Citizens Assembly and commission a technical analysis, including seeking one third of the funding required from the Province to support the process.</p> <p>Year 2: Implement the recommendations of the Citizens Assembly including holding a binding referendum to amalgamate the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich, if this is what the Citizens Assembly recommends.</p> <p>Year 3: If there is a referendum and it passes, lay the</p>	<p>Some of our most challenging issues, such as transportation, affordability, economic development, and homelessness, mental health and addictions are best addressed through regional collaboration. For that reason alone, representatives on the CRD Board need to be willing to first consider what's best for the region. When a regional approach is applied effectively, it has worked well. For example, we have recently taken a united approach to funding a regional response to affordability and homelessness through the \$90 million Regional Housing First Program – all 13 municipalities and three electoral areas contribute to the program. This is a first for the region and a key reason we were able to get matching \$30 million in matching funds from the province and federal government as well, also a first. So unity does work.</p> <p>As for the Board's electoral process, I am not convinced that having members elected to the CRD Board directly by our local constituents would improve the chances of us acting in a more collaborative manner. However, if board members were elected by regional voters that would make a difference. This would need to be done carefully to ensure that there was truly regional representation at the board table. Maybe each regional voter could be asked to vote for the requisite number of directors from each local</p>

	<p>groundwork for the amalgamation of the two local governments as of the 2022 municipal election. If there is no referendum and the two local governments remain distinct, take lessons learned and information gleaned from the Citizens Assembly process to improve governance in the region and continue to work with local governments in the region on shared priorities such as transportation and better integration of police and fire.</p>	<p>government. For example, Victoria has four CRD directors. On the ballot regional voters would be asked to select four representatives from Victoria to serve on the CRD board, five from Saanich etc. This would truly revolutionize the CRD board as we'd then be accountable to people from across the region.</p>
<p>Ben Isitt</p>	<p>No, I do not support the proposed model, because I believe that the current proposal for the citizens' assembly is far too narrow for the type of governance and institutional changes that are required in this region to address social, ecological and fiscal challenges. I strongly believe that First Nations should be engaged directly from the outset in any discussion of changing our system of government here on the south island. I also believe that limiting the discussion to Victoria and Saanich precludes consideration of amalgamations that are more geographically focused, including a potential amalgamation of Victoria, Esquimalt and Oak Bay into a new City of Victoria. Finally, I believe that the citizens assembly proposal has the risk of delaying amalgamation of services that need to be pursued without delay, such as the amalgamation of policing services for cost-effectiveness and public safety.</p>	<p>Yes, I support direct election of the entire CRD Board, building on the current model in place in Victoria, Saanich and the three electoral areas. I believe there are benefits in having regional directors serve on the CRD Board as well as municipal councils, in order to harness the potential for linkages between the two levels of local government, and for cost-effectiveness and operational efficiency. However, providing greater accountability through amendments to the Local Government Act to allow for direct election of all CRD directors would strengthen the mandate of the CRD to respond to regional issues, including regional transportation and regional emergency services.</p>
<p>Jeremy Loveday</p>	<p>Yes, I do. I was happy to bring the motion forward which propelled the City of Victoria towards putting this question on the ballot. While I do not think an amalgamation between just Victoria and Saanich is a natural fit, I think it makes sense to start a citizen led process with municipalities that are willing participants. Amalgamation has been discussed for 100 years and it is worth finally having an independent, objective study of its benefits and drawbacks.</p>	<p>I favour more direct and representative forms of democracy, so I find this idea compelling. I support a regional review of governance that examines how we can strengthen regional cooperation, enhance democracy, and improve governance. I would hope that the idea of directly elected CRD board members would be part of that exploration.</p>

<p>Sara Potts</p>	<p>Yes. A properly constituted citizen’s assembly can be an effective way to examine this highly politicized issue. In addition to examining the costs and benefits of full amalgamation with Saanich, we support moving quickly to improve public safety and reduce costs by amalgamating the Victoria, Oak Bay, and Saanich police departments.</p>	<p>Direct elections of regional directors is a tricky question and we're certainly not experts in it. In the CRD’s multi-governance, consensus-based system, it’s sometimes hard to keep track of the long chain of accountability from CRD staff and sub-agencies to CRD directors to city councils and finally, to residents. With the current mandate and governance system, it is uncertain whether direct elections would resolve the governance issues at the CRD.</p> <p>The CRD belongs to all the residents of the region, and we need it to work if we’re going to tackle our biggest regional challenges: housing affordability, transportation and climate change. If the CRD were given an expanded mandate to make decisions on big regional issues, direct elections might make sense because then their would be direct accountability (and therefore greater democratic legitimacy) to the CRD’s actions. Even then, we would be concerned about finding the right balance between between regional and municipal authority.</p> <p>We're interested in listening to the community and learning from the experts - we all agree that we need to make regional governance work better. Let’s work together to find the best path forward.</p>
<p>Charlayne Thornton-Joe</p>	<p>NO RESPONSE</p>	<p>NO RESPONSE</p>
<p>Geoff Young</p>	<p>I do support the model, and hope that citizens will endorse it. Exploring amalgamation between Victoria and Saanich is a good first step, although to achieve full benefits a more inclusive grouping will be needed.</p>	<p>Yes, I think the entire CRD Board should be directly elected. A new board should be smaller than the current board, so voting districts would cut across municipal lines to achieve a board membership of perhaps 9 to 12 members. The</p>

		<p>responsibilities and authorities of the new Regional board would have to be carefully laid out in legislation to avoid a repeat of the outcome of the regional sewage treatment debate, when the disparity between the CRD board's responsibility and its ability to act has resulted in the loss of millions of dollars of grant funds and the need to find many millions of dollars to pay Esquimalt for "offsetting amenities", even though other municipalities will bear much greater burdens. Effective regional government with authority over planning, transportation and regional infrastructure would to a large degree reduce the need for full amalgamation, and thus represents an alternative approach.</p>
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