

**2020 Victoria By-election Questionnaire**  
**Capital Region Municipal Amalgamation Society (Amalgamation Yes)**  
<http://www.amalgamationyes.ca>

TO EACH CANDIDATE STANDING FOR ELECTION TO PUBLIC OFFICE in the City of Victoria By-Election, April 4, 2020.

Please complete and return to [amalgamateyes@gmail.com](mailto:amalgamateyes@gmail.com) by March 15, 2020. Responses will be posted on the <http://www.amalgamationyes.ca> website.

**Candidate Name: Stefanie Hardman**

1. The electorate-approved Citizens' Assembly (CA), which is well underway in Saanich and Victoria, will be tasked to make recommendations to those respective councils on the potential for unification. If the CA recommends that the two municipalities merge, what will you do to facilitate this process and ensure the voters have an opportunity to vote on the recommendations in a binding referendum?

I am encouraged by the cooperative approach of Victoria and Saanich towards developing the terms of reference for the Citizens' Assembly. I am hopeful that the province will approve the request for funding and a terms of reference soon so the process can continue to advance. It's much too early to speculate on the eventual recommendations coming out of this process, as the mandate of the Citizens' Assembly covers a variety of topics with amalgamation being only one of many options under consideration. I look forward to seeing the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly and facilitating their implementation, including a referendum if required.

2. Notwithstanding a municipal merger, do you agree that combining critical services, such as policing and fire fighting, would provide more effective and efficient public safety for the residents of Greater Victoria? Yes or no. Please explain.

Yes. It's clear from the recurring debates over the City of Victoria's police budget that the current policing funding and governance model is broken. The City of Victoria is the urban hub of our metropolitan area and the provincial capital, both of which contributes to the unequitable burden borne by the City of Victoria with regard to policing. To improve public safety and reduce costs, I personally support amalgamating the Victoria, Oak Bay, Saanich, and other local police departments. Combining policing services would be the most effective and efficient use of our resources. That said, I recognize that a change of this nature would involve negotiations with the other municipalities and discussions with the provincial government.

3. 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 could be better served if the entire CRD Board was directly elected by voters region-wide? Why or why not? Please explain.

The City of Victoria allows voters to select its CRD Directors on the municipal election ballot and there is nothing to prevent other South Island municipalities from taking the same approach. 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. I'm open to any suggestions on how to improve regional governance in the South Island, but I think we should wait for the outcome of the Victoria/Saanich Citizens' Assembly process before considering changes to the method of selecting CRD Directors.