

Trust the citizens' assembly in the amalgamation process

I've read many letters recently expressing various degrees of concern, dismay, skepticism, sarcasm and outright hostility toward the idea of Victoria-Saanich amalgamation (and perhaps further amalgamation of other municipalities in future).

I share some of the more thoughtful concerns, but I want to remind all fellow citizens of one crucial piece of advice: Trust the process. Please.

A citizens' assembly will be convened to study, deliberate, prioritize and make recommendations regarding all facets of amalgamation, from council size to municipal services to emergency preparedness and tackling climate change at a local level.

They will listen to concerns, carefully regard the values and needs of their fellow citizens whom they represent, and ultimately select solutions that are practical and thoughtful.

A citizens' assembly is a truly democratic process. And in a world where democracy is crumbling everywhere around us, where trust in government is at an all-time low, where ideology divides us more than ever, where more people question the value of even living in a democracy, it's processes like these that truly strengthen our democratic society and lead to equitable outcomes.

Plus, whatever comes of the citizens' assembly will wind up before all voters in a referendum. Let's not pre-judge that outcome. Trust the process. Trust citizens.

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