

VICTORIA 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.

VICTORIA 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?
Gary Alberts	Yes - We should be looking at it. Are we being efficient with taxpayer money? In 2014 88% of Victoria residents voted yes to study amalgamation. No progress has been made in four years on this issue. Current Mayor and Council are again putting an Amalgamation question on the October ballot. It is time for a New Mayor and a New Council to deal with what 88% of the voters asked for. If on October 20, 2018 the voters are positive on the Citizen's Assembly question, then in November 2018 I would get the required funding from the Province, and begin the process.	The CRD is another layer of Government. Do the taxpayers want to change the current system for picking representatives? We should have engagement with them to find out?
Marianne Alto		
Saul Anderson - M		
Stephen Andrew		
Darlene Archibald		
Laurel Collins	Yes. A properly constituted citizen's assembly can be an effective way to examine this highly	Direct elections of regional directors is a tricky question and we're certainly not experts in it.

	<p>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>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>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.</p> <p>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</p>

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Rob Duncan - M		
Steve Filipovic		
Marg Gardiner	<p>I fully support the Citizens' Assembly process. A committee consisting of interested residents reflecting the demographic of the two municipalities would be at arm's length from elected Mayors/Councillors and municipal staff. A study of the possibility of two municipalities becoming one is doable.</p> <p>I have lived in Saanich and Victoria and believe that residents in both municipalities may benefit from amalgamating.</p> <p>Amalgamation could lead to better decision-making for the combined area, and for the Region as the two municipalities form the core.</p>	<p>We need more effective regional planning, including transportation and housing (especially supportive and transitional housing). However, I am not convinced that a directly elected CRD Board would be more effective. Rather than 91 elected officials in the region, we would have well over 100.</p> <p>Given the hundreds of agreements between the various municipalities, an elected CRD Board would have limited benefit over the current structure. Many, if not most, major projects/decisions would still have to go to the individual municipalities/districts involved with the project for approval. E.g. with wastewater project, Esquimalt would still have had veto power as rezoning was required.</p>
Michael Geoghegan - M	<p>I support any process that moves us forward in terms of giving the residents of Victoria and Saanich a chance to vote on amalgamation. A citizens assembly model does allow for a great deal of public input which would be useful in gauging the level of support out there prior to any referendum being held, as well as identifying key concerns the public may have.</p> <p>As Mayor of Victoria I would be quite willing to work cooperatively with the Mayor of Saanich to move amalgamation forward. One of the key concerns I have is that currently the Mayor and Council of Victoria are not overly concerned with consulting with small business owners. I suspect this is in large part because they know that many small business owners reside in Saanich. Amalgamation would solve this problem.</p> <p>Amalgamation would also lead to better land use and transportation planning. However, overall cost savings would significantly depend on whether amalgamation was done with an eye to identifying and implementing cost savings, or whether it was done as a means for further bureaucratic empire building.</p>	<p>I think the interests of voters and taxpayers would have best been served if historically the CRD had never been created by Premier WAC Bennett but instead he had moved ahead with amalgamation as he did with other municipalities, eg Kelowna and Rutland.</p> <p>With 13 different municipal governments governing a combined population less than that of Burnaby, I believe the public interest would be much better served by a CRD board consisting of Mayors plus CRD directors directly elected by the public. That way if people were unhappy with decisions made by the CRD Board they would have direct democratic recourse at the next election.</p>
Riga Godron		

James Harasymow		
Stephen Hammond – M		
Lisa Helps - M	<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 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.</p> <p>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 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>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 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>
Rose Henry		
Ben Isitt	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	Yes, I support direct election of the entire CRD Board, building on the current model in place in Victoria, Saanich

	<p>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>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>
Jesse Jimenez		
Randie Johal	<p>I am in favour of the Citizens Assembly to look at governance in our community. There is an opportunity for a group of individuals representing the 2 communities to analyze in depth the pros/cons. There should also be a commitment by both municipalities' mayors and councils to move forward with recommendations immediately.</p>	<p>The electing of the CRD Board should remain status quo until the Citizens Assembly report is completed. We have a 4 year window before the next election in which to get the citizens opinion as to their wanting change to the procedure or not.</p>
David Johnston		
Edison Kahakauwila		
Anna King	<p>Yes, I support the citizens' assembly model as a means to independent review local government structure. I think it would be of great benefit to hear from many individuals in both Victoria and Saanich on the important topic of amalgamation. Indeed, I understand amalgamation is a complex topic and it will take time to create an innovative solution that makes our community more effective and efficient.</p>	<p>Moving to have the CRD Board elected by voters is a logical change, particularly as board members must already be elected to their local council as a requirement for appointment and board and city council elections could be run at the same time to save on cost. It is important to me that the CRD Board, whose decisions affect so many municipalities and individuals, be accountable to the people they represent.</p>
Sean Leitenberg - M	<p>Yes I do support a citizens assembly. I believe we need a local government with more input from its constituents. People feel their voices are not being heard and this is a good way to meet those needs. Amalgamation is an important decision that requires as much input as possible. We choose to live where we do and have made those decisions partially based on local government policy. Changes in local policy through amalgamation must be handled carefully with public consultation to keep local residents satisfied in our municipal government.</p>	<p>No I do not believe in voting in the CRD board region wide. As we have so many municipalities I believe the voting in of the CRD board region wide would be to difficult for the voters to identify the best candidates for the job.</p>
Grade Lore		

Jeremy Loveday	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.	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.
Pam Madoff	I support the Citizens Assembly model as it provides an opportunity for facts, figures, statistics, etc, to be provided by a panel that is selected on a random basis. The random selection has been seen to be effective, in some jurisdictions, although there have been concerns expressed that the random nature of the selection process can result in an assembly that, through happenstance, does not contain a wide variety of views and experience.	No. I believe that familiarity with local areas and their specific issues is important, particularly when you are dealing with a diverse region of urban, suburban and rural areas. Value would be found in appointing CRD Directors who have demonstrated an interest/experience in thinking globally and acting locally. There is value in voters having the opportunity to vote on which Council candidates they wish to have sit on the CRD Boar
Delmar Martay		
Bruce McGuigan - M		
Ryan Moen - M		
Sara Potts	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

		<p>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 there 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 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>
Andrew Reeve	<p>Having served on the board of Amalgamation Yes, my position on this issue is clear. I am in favour of reducing the number of municipalities in the CRD by amalgamation. I applaud the Citizens Assembly initiative because it takes the power away from the politicians with vested interests, many of whom view supporting amalgamation as voting themselves out of a job. As someone who has studied this over the years, especially while on the board of Amalgamation Yes, I am confident that as the facts are presented to the Assembly, we will find overwhelming support.</p>	<p>The current CRD framework is not working. I believe that if we reduce the number of municipalities (ideally reduced to 3 or 4) then the decision-making body at the CRD should be a Mayor's Council. Those 3 or 4 mayors would be the face of the region and would be easily held accountable for their action or inaction at the regional level. Politicians would no longer be able to hide behind the confusing CRD board layout in order to avoid accountability.</p>
Jordan Reichert	<p>Yes. I support the concept of a citizen's assembly model for independent consideration of local government structure. However, I do not believe that undertaking this task in the interest of only considering a fragmented approach regionally is an efficient use of time and resources. I would prefer a broader assessment that considered a more unified approach of geographically situated areas and services to</p>	<p>Yes. I support the direct election of the CRD board of directors for greater regional representation and response to inter-municipal issues. An elected CRD board could empower a more unified approach to social, infrastructure, and environmental projects benefiting the region. This would also increase accountability at the</p>

	meet the interests of the public and their communities, but only if a clear need could be identified.	CRD level. However, independent review of the potential benefits or drawbacks over the current model of appointment would be worth pursuing.
Alexander Schmid - M		
Ted Smith		
Doug Stewart		
William Tate		
Charlayne Thornton-Joe		
Geoff Young	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.	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 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.
Krzysztop Zmuda - M		