



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (October 15, 2020)

Provincial candidates in the Capital Region must commit to governance reform in Greater Victoria

The cry of voices continues a decade long campaign for governance reform in the Capital Region. Yet there has been no appropriate response from the Provincial government. Local officials avoid the topic, despite several polls and electoral mandates of support by residents. And the independent Victoria - Saanich Citizens' Assembly process approved by the residents of Victoria and Saanich was in limbo even before the pandemic.

Many echo the need to review and reform municipal and regional governance.

A Grumpy Taxpayers group survey reported residents identified 'good governance' as their top priority.

It recalled the failure of the 2017 *Capital Integrated Services and Governance Initiative* report whose mandate was to "identify opportunities to better integrate services and governance in the Capital region". No action was taken by municipalities in response.

The Victoria Residential Builders Association asserts support for amalgamation as "our region's 13 municipalities and community plans are out of step with future needs".

While Amalgamation Yes is non-partisan, it is noteworthy that Green Party leader Sonia Furnstenau is calling for the reform of local government financial systems.

It echoes the most recent of numerous Victoria Times Colonist editorials that consistently affirms 13 is too many. The local columnist Jack Knox regularly laments the civic impairments that lead to Dysfunction by the Sea.

And 11 local mayors, in a letter to provincial political leaders and local candidates, collectively asserted that the South Island Transportation Strategy (SITS) falls far short of expectations that "a regional governance body is necessary". "We can just never get the

unanimity that we need to get it set up” said View Royal Mayor David Screech, referring to the 13 municipalities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the inability of local governments in Greater Victoria communities to deliver efficient and effective services. As all political parties outline proposals for a post-pandemic economic recovery there is an opportunity to reassess the role of public agencies, including municipalities.

Amalgamation Yes seeks a review to simplify the delivery of public services to the 400K residents of this polycentric area of 13 municipalities where localism supersedes regional interests. Surely we deserve better.

We call for party leaders and MLA candidates in the 7 local Electoral Districts around Greater Victoria to heed and lead the call for municipal reform suitable to the Provincial Capital.

Amalgamation Yes is a non-partisan organization committed to the review and reform of governance in Greater Victoria.

Media contact:

James (Jim) Anderson, Chair

AmalgamationYes

250.477.8255

anderson.jd@shaw.ca

amalgamateyes@gmail.com

www.amalgamationyes.ca