



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (January 14, 2018)

Saanich and Victoria have taken first steps on governance reform

The Councils of the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria have taken major first steps to begin a process of how policing and governance could be improved in the region, says Amalgamation Yes.

"By demonstrating leadership on these issues, so important to Greater Victorians, Saanich and Victoria have proved that they are listening to the electorate and committed to acting on the mandate they received in the last municipal election", said Shellie Gudgeon, Chair.

Together, Victoria and Saanich populations make up 85% of the four core municipalities. On January 8, the District of Saanich approved the many recommendations from their Saanich Governance Review Task Force Standing Committee, and **unanimously** passed the following motions:

"that Saanich.....request the mayor write to local mayors requesting participation in discussions on the potential of a regional police force" and

"that Council call on the Province of British Columbia to establish and fund a Citizens' Assembly on Amalgamation with interested municipalities".

The City of Victoria joined in that initiative, approving a similar motion on January 11, with only Councillor Isitt in opposition.

"It is important to remember that on the governance reform questions posed by Victoria and Saanich in 2014, residents voted 80% and 88% affirmatively", said Gudgeon, *"and polling by Angus Reid the same year showed a 84% approval for amalgamation region-wide. These motions by Saanich and Victoria are the first steps towards establishing a **process** to examine how we can govern ourselves more efficiently, effectively and with greater accountability.*

"We can also look to the open and transparent process of our neighbours to the north, where Duncan and North Cowichan municipalities have undergone a similar citizen led assembly in 2017. Based on that work, those municipalities are now poised to put the question of amalgamation to their residents in a binding referendum in 2018.

"This is how democracy is supposed to work. Better is possible". concluded Gudgeon.

On municipal policing, there have been numerous studies supporting a regional police service, along with former police chiefs, solicitors-general, and the BC Coroner all of whom have criticized the fractured policing in the region.

AY looks forward to the Province and interested municipalities moving forward in a timely manner on these initiatives.

Contact Information:

Shellie Gudgeon
Chair and Spokesperson,
Amalgamation Yes
250-532-0005
www.amalgamationyes.ca

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