



OUR PRESENTATION TO

Council and community

**Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly
on Municipal Amalgamation**

July 14 & 17, 2025

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1



Today

- An overview of our process: Assembly Chair
- An overview of our findings: Assembly members
- Assembly video

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2

We want to start by saying

Thank you

To council, residents, our advisors, municipal staff,
guest speakers and proponents

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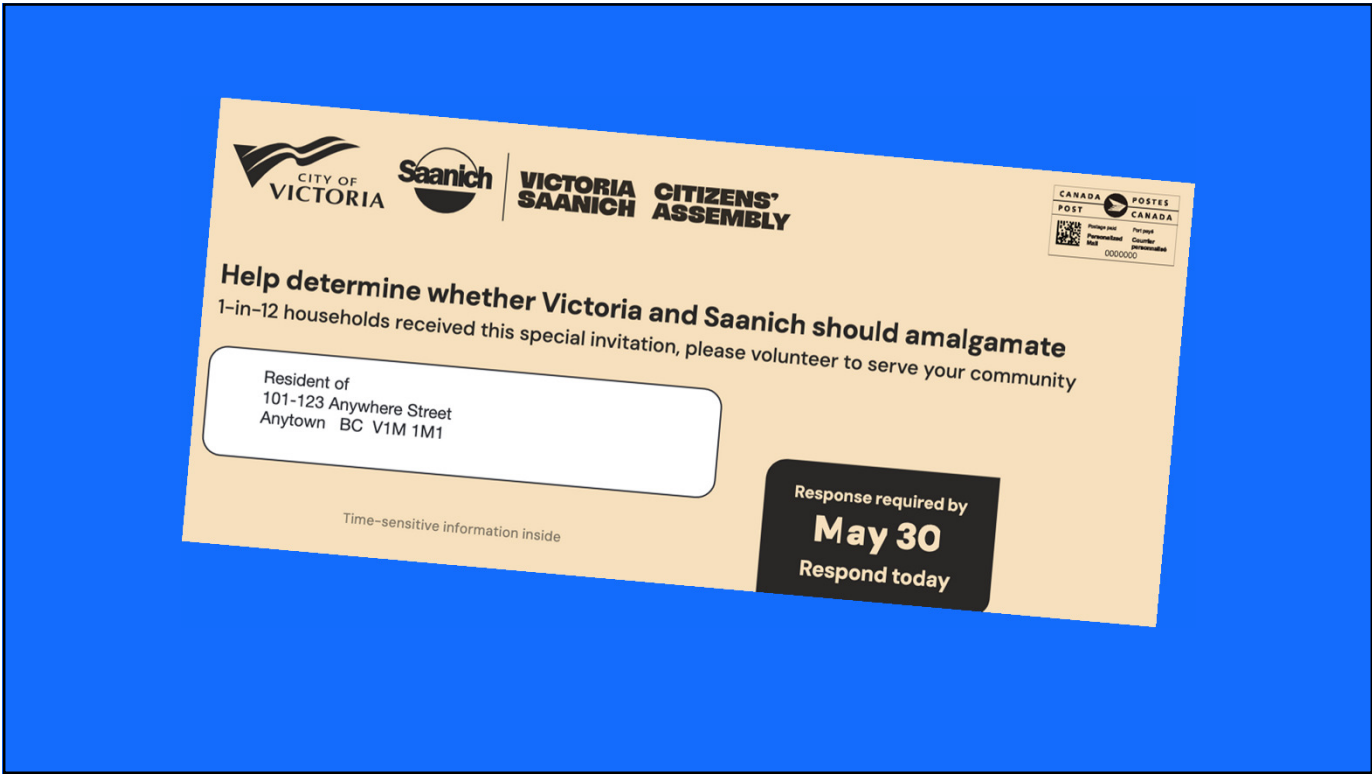
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3

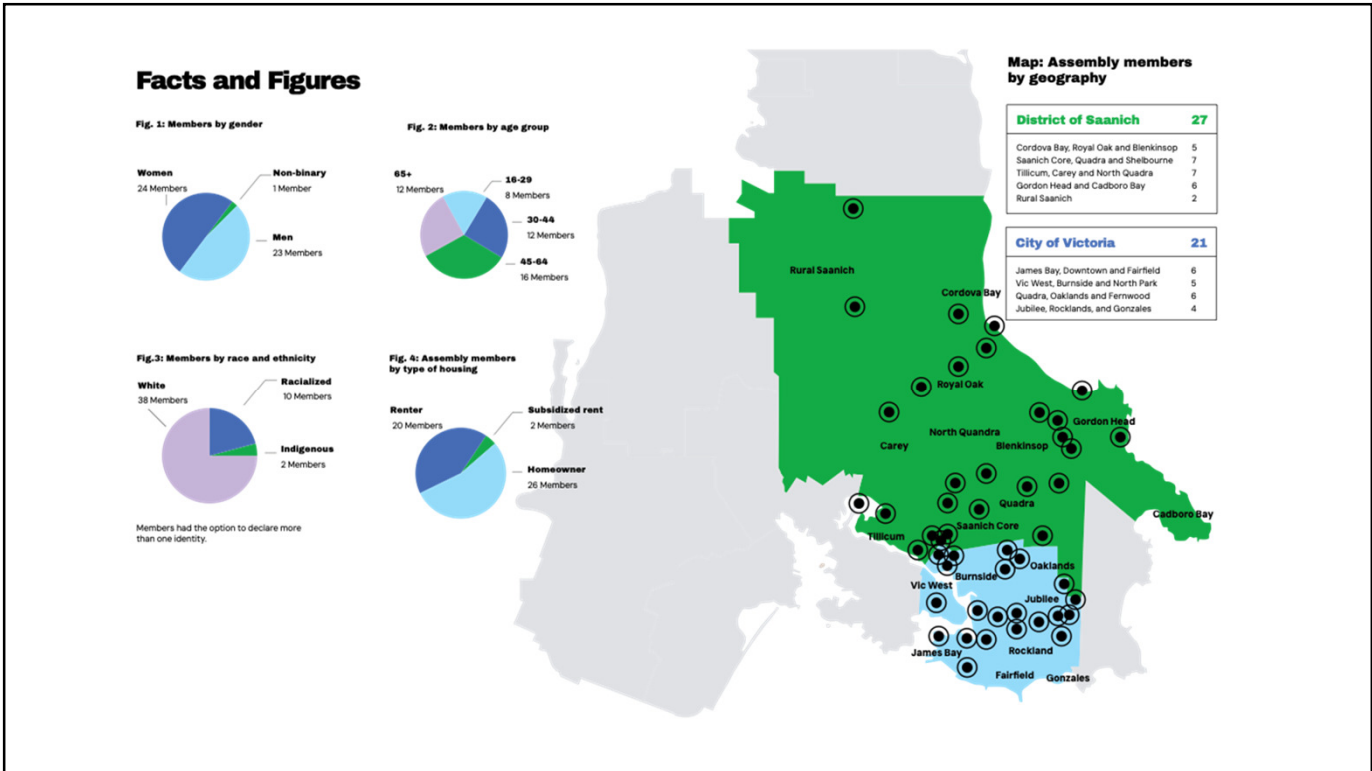
Municipality	Question	YES	NO	Total	% YES	% NO	Eligible Voters	% of Eligible Voters that
Central Saanich	Should the District of Central Saanich petition the Province to fund a cost/benefit analysis of an amalgamation of Central Saanich, North Saanich & Sidney?	3,548	3,489	7,037	70.7%	29.2%	34,242	35.8%
Esquimalt	QUESTION 1: Are you in favour of the Township of Esquimalt exploring options to achieve efficiencies by further sharing some services with other municipalities?	6,791	578	7,369	92.2%	7.8%	34,545	29.6%
	QUESTION 2: Are you in favour of exploring the reduction of the number of municipalities within Greater Victoria through amalgamation?	3,905	3,408	7,313	53.4%	46.6%		
Langford	Are you in favour of the City of Langford being amalgamated into a larger regional municipality?	2,222	2,209	4,431	50.1%	49.9%	23,864	18.8%
North Saanich	Are you in favour of a study, provincially funded, to investigate the feasibility, costs and implications of amalgamating the three municipalities on the Saanich Peninsula of Sidney, Central Saanich and North Saanich?	2,883	3,727	6,610	43.6%	56.4%	9,093	36.0%
Oak Bay	Are you in favour of the District of Oak Bay being amalgamated into a larger regional municipality?	2,384	2,594	4,978	47.9%	52.1%	34,107	40.8%
Saanich	Are you in favour of creating a community based review of the governance structure and policies within Saanich and our partnerships within the region?	23,427	2,780	26,207	89.4%	10.6%	40,886	29.8%
Sidney	Are you in favour of a provincially funded study to investigate the feasibility, costs and implications of amalgamating the three municipalities of the Saanich Peninsula?	2,344	3,237	5,581	42.0%	58.0%	9,100	43.7%
Victoria	Are you in favour of reducing the number of municipalities in Greater Victoria through amalgamation?	18,352	4,303	22,655	81.0%	19.0%	59,624	33.8%
TOTALS		56,334	26,808	83,142	67.8%	32.2%	249,524	33.3%

Source: - chivweb.bc.ca website

4



5



6



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7

Our program

Orientation and introductions	Understanding municipal services and administration Introducing the technical study Determining our values	Understanding community planning Academic perspectives Discussing pertinent issues	Understanding community perspectives Understanding emergency services Reviewing public submissions	Identifying priorities and developing scenarios Hearing from local advocates	Receiving the technical report Economic and community perspectives	Revising scenarios and a preferred direction	Determining a preferred direction Drafting and presenting our recommendations
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8

What the Assembly has done so far...

- Heard from 20 guest speakers/experts
- Developed draft values
- Identified a range of issues and considerations
- Produced an interim report
- Received and reviewed the Technical Study
- Received and reviewed 55 public submissions
- Heard from the public at four public meetings
- Spent 60+ hours in discussion/deliberation

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9

Our guest speakers

- Tracy Underwood, WSA NEC historian
- John Lutz, UVic historian
- Robert Bish, municipal economist
- Jocelyn Jenkyns, Victoria City Mgr
- Brent Reems, Saanich CAO
- Lindsay Chase, Saanich Planning
- Andrea Hudson, Victoria Planning
- Ted Robbins, CAO of the CRD
- Clayton Pecknold, fmr Police Complaints Commissioner
- Julian Daly, Our Place Society
- Enid Slack, Institute for Municipal Affairs & Governance
- Dallas Gislason, SIPP
- Jonathan Dyck, Victoria Foundation
- Leo Spalteholz, Homes for Living
- Joanne Peake, PLDCA (Rural Saanich)
- Andrew Duffy, Times Colonist
- James Legh + James Anderson, Amalgamation Yes
- Allison Habkirk, fmr Mayor Central Saanich
- Agricultural Land Commission
- Susanne Thompson, Victoria CFO

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10

Our oversight and advisory committee

- Evert Lindquist
- Ansley Tucker
- Marjan Ehsassi
- Paul Hames
- Warren Magnusson

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11



12



13



14

Considering each option

To support more closely integrating service provision, we would need to be reassured that...		
Integration would be durable and	Neither municipality would dominate the	Integration process and outcomes are
To support remaining as two separate municipalities, we would need to be reassured that...		
Amalgamation would be cost prohibitive	Services are still being delivered at a high	Limiting short-term political risk (with
To support amalgamation of both municipalities, we would need to be reassured that...		
The full cost of amalgamation is as clear as possible.	Amalgamation would not negatively impact existing agreements and collaboration between Victoria and/or Saanich and other municipalities in the region.	Amalgamation leads to better cohesion of emergency services to better address people across both rural and urban areas.
The cost of amalgamation is reasonable to achieve the short and long term benefits.	The amalgamated city would be able to work towards resiliency and address large scale challenges more effectively than separate municipalities.	Specific planning priorities of each municipality are not lost
There would be provincial funding to support the amalgamation process.	There is willingness to invest in shared liabilities and equity of quality infrastructure.	The amalgamated city would not lose representation on the CRD.
The distinctiveness and identities of neighbourhoods are not lost and that there would be some control over localized identities and policies.	There will be a dynamic department in place for long-term planning with resiliency as a key goal.	There is fairness & flexibility in the application of new zoning and other bylaws across the new municipality.
Amalgamation would provide the new municipality with increased power and influence with respect to federal and provincial governments, including funding opportunities.	There will be an integrated and adaptable approach to planning, and a commitment to a shared community vision with long-term goals.	There remains appropriate representation in elected officials, of the people they represent, so that everyone still feels that they have a voice.
Amalgamation would be an opportunity to make progress with reconciliation and that First Nations perspectives, values, and opinions would also be considered.	There is a clear understanding of how amalgamation will impact local taxes, and that no single group or type of taxpayer will be adversely affected.	The potential for developing a ward system to ensure local representation is considered by councils.
Amalgamation will support improved housing, transit, land use, climate change, and other key regional planning.	That there would be plans in place to prevent amalgamation distracting from other local issues.	The uniformity of a single government leads to higher quality and economic benefit for businesses.
There is equitable distribution of service levels in the new municipality.		There would be a single accountable organization that deals with social issues.

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15

Looking for consensus



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16

Final vote

A. Should Victoria and Saanich:

Amalgamate

39

Remain separate municipalities
but pursue opportunities for
deeper service integration

7

Remain separate municipalities
and maintain their existing approach
to providing services

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B. Do you agree
that the draft report
appropriately reflects
our deliberations and
should be submitted to
the municipal councils
for their consideration?"

Yes

45

No

1

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17

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Members' report

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18

Introduction

Who we are and why we volunteered
What we learned
The issues we considered
Our values
Our recommendation

Further recommendations and considerations

Climate change planning and resilience
Municipal planning
Service levels and delivery
Police and Fire
Housing affordability
Agricultural and rural lands
Indigenous relationships
Governance and representation
Referendum

Our values

Accountable	We value local government that holds transparency as a core principle allowing for the measurement of progress and building public trust.	Effective	We value local government that delivers high-quality public services through timely and innovative measures.
Caring	We value local government that contributes to the community's vibrancy by prioritizing people to have their core needs met.	Fiscally responsible	We value local government that uses the communities' resources wisely, today and in the future, to provide the best value in services and infrastructure.
Collaborative	We value local government that fosters inclusive and adaptable decision-making that balances community needs and perspectives.	Forward Thinking	We value local government that takes a holistic and regenerative approach to decision-making to improve the quality of life of current and future generations.
Communicative	We value local government that prioritizes communication, respect and reciprocal relationships.	Representative	We value local government that enables inclusive participation and supports having public influence on decisions being made at the neighbourhood level and with other communities.

Our Recommendation

Having considered the costs, benefits, and disadvantages to the best of our abilities and with the information available to us, we recommend the amalgamation of Victoria and Saanich.

In the course of our deliberations, we ultimately concluded that amalgamation as a unified city would be the best form of government for our two municipalities.

The administrative border between the two municipalities is invisible, our lives as residents of Victoria and Saanich are intertwined, and it's time for the governance structure to reflect this reality.

We found no significant barriers to amalgamation in the materials presented to us.

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21

Further recommendations and considerations

Climate change planning and resilience

Municipal planning

Service levels and delivery

Police and Fire

Housing affordability

Agricultural and rural lands

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22



23



24