CITY OF VICTORIA

Council Member Report
For the Joint Committee of the Whole Meeting June 26, 2018

To:	Joint Committee of the Whole	**Date:**	June 13, 2018
From:	Mayor Richard Atwell (Saanich) and Mayor Lisa Helps (Victoria)		
Subject:	Non-binding Amalgamation Referendum Question		

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Saanich and Victoria both place the following question on the October 20, 2018 municipal election ballot:

"Are you in favour of establishing a Citizen's Assembly to explore the costs, benefits and disadvantages of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria?"

2. Co-develop and disseminate educational information in advance of the October 20, 2018 general election as an inclusive election expense.

3. Direct the Mayors to write to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing informing the Hon. Selena Robinson of the intention to pose a ballot question, sharing the wording of the question.

INTRODUCTION

The upcoming municipal election once again affords both communities the opportunity to sample public opinion through the posing of a non-binding referendum ballot question.

During the 2014 elections, the ballot question took the form of a dissimilar questions asked by several municipalities.

The City of Victoria placed the following question on the municipal ballot with these results:

"Are you in favour of reducing the number of municipalities in Greater Victoria through amalgamation?"

	YES	NO
Ballots Cast:	18,351 (80.0%)	4,601 (20.0%)

The District of Saanich, however placed an alternate question on its municipal ballot with these results:

"Do you support Council initiating a community-based review of the governance structures and policies with Saanich and our partnerships within the Region?"

	YES	NO
Ballots Cast:	21,437 (88.5%)	2,780 (11.5%)

Following the 2014 election, Saanich Council established a Governance Review Citizen Advisory Committee (GRCAC) to undertake this work which reported to council on October 23, 2017 with 30 recommendations addressing a variety of issues including the specific recommended action:

Call on the Province to establish and fund a Citizens' Assembly on Amalgamation with interested municipalities in the Greater Victoria Region and actively support and participate in the Assembly.

To inform the citizens participating in this process a study would be conducted to provide a baseline set of facts on the costs of service delivery and governance across the region.

By agreeing to support the Citizens' Assembly process, Saanich and the other municipalities should be required to take the findings of the process to referendum directly.

Saanich Council followed through on this recommendation by extending an invitation to interested municipalities to which Victoria Council responded. These events further led to the scheduling of a joint committee of the whole meeting between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria.

CONCLUSION

As evidenced by the Saanich Governance Review Citizen Advisory Committee (GRCAC), citizens-led initiatives have proven to be a useful empowerment tool to gather decision making information that affects the very same electors from whose ranks these citizen-based committees are comprised.

In addition, the Duncan-North Cowichan Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation has completed its work and exists as a model from which to base a Citizens' Assembly specific to Saanich and Victoria.

However for any such initiative to be successful, it is essential that a clearly defined objective be established from the start and one approach to ensure this would be to establish a joint steering committee, post-election, to develop a terms of reference and budget for the assembly.

Time to complete this would be significant and costs would have to be established by the 2019-2022 councils through the normal course of budgeting, statutory notification and public consultation.

However, given the considerable momentum to date to initiate a comprehensive amalgamation study, the success of the Saanich citizen-led process and its recommendations and with the upcoming opportunity to poll the electorate through a non-binding referendum question, the opportunity to advance an understanding of amalgamation between these two municipalities should not be allowed to slip by.

ABBREVIATED TIMELINE

On January 8, 2018 Saanich Council passed the following motion:

> *"The Council call on the Province of British Columbia to establish and fund a Citizens'*
> *Assembly on amalgamation with interested municipalities."*

On January 11, 2018, Victoria Council reciprocated and passed the same motion.

On April 11, 2011 Mayor Atwell and Mayor Helps met with Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs staff to gather information about what steps both Saanich and Victoria Councils could take should they collectively wish to spend time and resources to study the costs and benefits of amalgamation between our two municipalities.

In April 2018, both Saanich and Victoria Councils committed to holding a joint meeting for the purpose of placing a ballot question at the next general election by each passing the previous motions:

District of Saanich
April 23, 2018 Council Meeting minutes:

> *MOVED by Councillor Harper and Seconded by Councillor Plant: "That*
> *Council approve that Saanich and Victoria hold a joint Committee of the*
> *Whole meeting to determine which question both local governments will*
> *place on the October 20, 2018 General Local Election ballot."*

City of Victoria
April 26, 2018 Council Meeting minutes:

That Saanich and Victoria hold a joint Committee of the Whole meeting to determine which question both local governments will place on the October 20, 2018 municipal election ballot in order to receive elector assent to explore the costs and benefits of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria.

CARRIED

NEXT STEPS (POST-ELECTION)

1. Write to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing informing the Hon. Selena Robinson of the results of the ballot question.

2. If a majority of the referendum ballot votes cast in both municipalities support moving forward, establish a joint steering committee comprised of elected officials and senior staff from both local governments.

3. Empower the joint steering committee to develop a clear proposal outlining a citizen-led "assembly" process and budget with terms of reference for studying the costs and benefits of amalgamation of Saanich and Victoria.

4. Forward the proposal to the Minister requesting that the Province co-fund a Saanich-Victoria Citizens' Assembly.

REFERENCES

Saanich Governance Review Citizen Advisory Committee Report:

http://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/local-government/committees-boards/governance-review-citizens-advisory-committeee.html

A Brief History of Referendums in Greater Victoria (with permission from Ross Crockford):

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B964ZZWzszEyV0NqUVJlaHhFeHM/view

PREPARED BY

MAYOR RICHARD ATWELL

MAYOR LISA HELPS (Victoria)

Attachments:

Examples of Duncan-North Cowichan mailed materials used to populate their citizens' assembly on municipal amalgamation.

A Brief History of Referendums in Greater Victoria (by Ross Crockford)

MUNICIPALITY OF

NORTH Cowichan

DUNCAN

Help shape the future of Duncan and North Cowichan

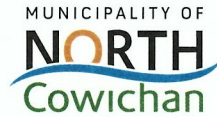Volunteer to serve on the Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation

Response required by

January 9

Please mail response
card today

Response required by January 9, 2017
C/O MASS LBP 3A Gilead Place, Toronto, ON M5A 3C8

November 23, 2016

Dear Resident,

This letter is a special invitation to volunteer to serve on the Duncan-North Cowichan **Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation.** The Assembly is a unique exercise in local democracy and as a member you will have an important opportunity to learn more about our community and shape its future.

Over the past decade, new growth has blurred the boundaries between Duncan and North Cowichan. Residents routinely drive between the two jurisdictions several times in the course of a normal day. Some municipal services are already jointly administered and others could be combined. This has prompted both councils to ask whether the time is right to consider amalgamation.

The creation of the Citizens' Assembly is a first step towards examining this issue.

With the assistance of senior staff, independent experts, as well as other advisers and stakeholders, the Assembly will examine the case for and against amalgamation before making a recommendation to both councils before May 31, 2017.

Before any amalgamation could proceed, it would need to be endorsed by both local councils as well as by a clear majority of voters in both municipalities during a referendum.

You do not need to be an expert to participate. It's your perspective as a local resident that matters most.

From among the pool of applicants who have registered as volunteers, thirty-six members will be randomly selected to ensure broad representation from across both communities.

Working together, Assembly members will learn about the area's history, the people who live here, and the needs of local businesses. They will also learn about how both municipalities are governed and financed, and the services they currently provide.

Please turn over ⇗

Response required by
January 9

Please mail response
card today

The Assembly will meet for six full-day sessions, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. To serve on the Assembly you must be able to attend each of the following sessions:

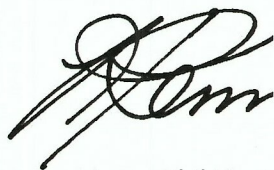|		
January 21, 2017	February 4, 2017	February 25, 2017
April 1, 2017	April 8, 2017	April 22, 2017

Members of the Assembly will also be asked to attend two public meetings open to all local residents on Thursday, February 2, 2017 and Friday, April 7, 2017, between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

To volunteer to serve on the Duncan-North Cowichan Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation, please phone 1-844-610-5672, mail the enclosed form, or register online at dnc-cama.ca by January 9, 2017.

Every Duncan and North Cowichan resident who is 18 years of age or older is eligible to volunteer to serve on the Citizens' Assembly. You do not need to be a Canadian citizen and there is no cost to participate.

This is an opportunity to serve your community and shape the future of Duncan and North Cowichan. We sincerely hope you will join us.

Sincerely,

Mayor Phil Kent
City of Duncan

Mayor Jon Lefebure
Municipality of North Cowichan

How to register as a volunteer for the Citizens' Assembly:

Please ensure you register in one of the following ways by **January 9, 2017**:

1. Phone 1-844-610-5672
2. Register securely online at dnc-cama.ca
3. Complete the enclosed candidate response card and mail it back in the prepaid envelope

The Citizens' Assembly will meet on the following dates between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.:

January 21, 2017	February 4, 2017	February 25, 2017
April 1, 2017	April 8, 2017	April 22, 2017

There is no cost to serve on the Citizens' Assembly. Lunch and snacks will be provided and basic travel costs, including parking, will be reimbursed. Childcare and eldercare costs will also be provided as needed. We are committed to assisting all eligible members who have physical, auditory, or visual impairments to participate successfully. If you have any concerns about your ability to participate, please phone 1-844-610-5672.

If you are selected, you will be notified by the evening of January 11, 2017.

Frequently Asked Questions:
Duncan-North Cowichan Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation

What is a Citizens' Assembly?

A Citizens' Assembly is a representative body of citizens tasked by a government to study, deliberate, and develop recommendations on a specific issue. Typically, members of a Citizens' Assembly are randomly selected from among a pool of volunteers who pledge to work on behalf of all members of a community over a period of several weeks or months. The Assembly's recommendations are generally developed by consensus and are intended to represent the best interests of the community.

Why have a Citizens' Assembly in Duncan and North Cowichan?

The Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation is a deliberative process intended to provide local residents with an opportunity to actively participate in developing and evaluating the case for amalgamating the City of Duncan and the Municipality of North Cowichan. The Citizens' Assembly will be an impartial advisory body charged with providing detailed recommendations representing a broad consensus concerning the proposed amalgamation. The Assembly will work to represent all residents and exemplify high standards of transparency, accountability, and robust civic participation.

The decision to amalgamate has far-reaching consequences, and both councils believe they will benefit from the perspective of area residents participating in an informed arm's-length process.

What is the mandate of the Citizens' Assembly?

The Citizens' Assembly is tasked by the City of Duncan and the Municipality of North Cowichan to learn about the needs and interests of local residents, examine the implications of creating a new, amalgamated municipal government, and advise local councillors and their administrations on the conditions under which the municipalities should proceed. Specifically, the Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation will develop:

- a set of values which describe their aspirations for good local governance;
- a list of issues which they believe need to be satisfactorily resolved for municipal amalgamation to merit consideration; and
- a detailed recommendation concerning municipal amalgamation, including any conditions which would need to be satisfied if a merger were to proceed.

What would be my role as a Citizens' Assembly member?

Over six Saturdays beginning in January and ending in April 2017, you and your fellow Citizens' Assembly members will work together to develop a public report that provides guidance to both councils concerning the prospect for amalgamating the two municipalities. To assist the members of the Assembly with their task, a thorough learning program will provide each member with the opportunity:

- to examine the municipalities' respective infrastructure, services, operations, and governance;
- to inform and review the Amalgamation Study being undertaken concurrently with the Citizens' Assembly;
- to learn from past municipal amalgamations; and
- to consult with and learn from independent experts as well as local residents.

How do I become a member of the Citizens' Assembly?

First, you must respond to this invitation no later than January 9, 2017. You can register over the phone, online at dnc-cama.ca, or by prepaid envelope found in this invitation.

On January 11, 2017, members of the Citizens' Assembly will be randomly selected from among those who have registered as volunteers. If you are selected, you will receive a phone call notifying you.

How will members of the Citizens' Assembly be chosen?

All residents the City of Duncan and the Municipality of North Cowichan are invited to volunteer to serve on the Citizens' Assembly. The deadline to volunteer is January 9, 2017. On January 11, the 36 members of the Citizens' Assembly will be selected by random draw from the pool of registered volunteers. We will ensure that this random draw selects:

- 18 men and 18 women;
- 12 members from Duncan, and 24 members from North Cowichan, representing its four distinct communities and its rural areas;
- a proportionate number of members from each of four age groups; and
- two members who self-identify as Indigenous.

Why are the members of the Assembly randomly selected?

In 2003, British Columbia created the first Citizens' Assembly in Canada to examine the issue of electoral reform. Its 161 members *were randomly* selected to participate from among more than 1,400 volunteers. Today, similar selection processes are routinely used to ensure that the membership of an Assembly broadly reflects the diversity of thought and experience within a community.

Who is eligible for the Citizens' Assembly?

To be a member of the Citizens' Assembly, you must be age 18 or over. You must be a resident of either Duncan or North Cowichan and be able to attend all six of the Assembly meetings. The working language of the Assembly is English and we regret that translation services will not be provided.

Although all residents of a household may *volunteer, no more* than one member of any household will be selected to serve on the Assembly. You do not need to be a Canadian citizen to participate. Municipal, provincial, and *federal elected* officials as well as individuals employed by either municipality are not eligible to participate.

I am not very familiar with this issue — can I still be involved?

Absolutely. We do not expect you to have any specialized knowledge about municipal governance. Your perspective and experience as a resident of Duncan or North Cowichan is what matters most. Facilitators and experts will be on hand to answer any questions you may have throughout the sessions.

Will I get paid to serve on the Assembly?

No. Members of the Assembly serve *on* a voluntary basis. Lunches and snacks will be provided, and basic travel costs, including parking, transit, and taxis, will be reimbursed. Childcare and eldercare costs will also be covered as required. There is no cost to participate.

If I do not get chosen for the Citizens' Assembly, can I still be involved?

Yes. If you are not randomly selected as a member of the Assembly, we hope you will attend one of two public meetings taking place on Thursday, February 2, 2017 and Friday, April 7, 2017, both between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Who is running the Citizens' Assembly?

In order to ensure the impartiality of the process, the municipalities have hired a consultant with significant expertise in the design and execution of deliberative processes.

Following a competitive tender, the contract was awarded to MASS LBP. MASS staff members will design and lead each session and report to the Chief Administrative Officer of each municipality as well as a special committee of both councils.

How to register as a volunteer for the Citizens' Assembly:

Please ensure you register in one of the following ways by January 9, 2017:
1. Phone 1-844-610-5672
2. Register securely online at dnc-cama.ca
3. Complete the enclosed candidate response card and mail it back in the prepaid envelope

The Citizens' Assembly will meet on the following dates between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.:

January 21, 2017	February 4, 2017	February 25, 2017
April 1, 2017	April 8, 2017	April 22, 2017

There is no cost to serve on the Citizens' Assembly. Lunch and snacks will be provided and basic travel costs, including parking, will be reimbursed. Childcare and eldercare costs will also be provided as needed. We are committed to assisting all eligible members who have physical, auditory, or visual impairments to participate successfully. If you have any concerns about your ability to participate, please phone 1-844-610-5672.

If you are selected, you will be notified by the evening of January 11, 2017.

1) Do you identify as an Indigenous person? ❑ Yes ❑ No

2) Do you identify as a member of a visible minority? ❑ Yes ❑ No

3) I am available and committed to attending <u>all six</u> Assembly sessions, between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. as listed below: ❑ Yes ❑ No

Saturday, January 21, 2017
Saturday, April 1, 2017

Saturday, February 4, 2017
Saturday, April 8, 2017

Saturday, February 25, 2017
Saturday, April 22, 2017

MUNICIPALITY OF
NORTH
Cowichan

DUNCAN

Personal information provided will be used to select a representative sample of residents for the Duncan-North Cowichan Citizens' Assembly.

If you have any questions about the collection, use, and disclosure of your personal information, please call 1-844-610-5672.

Response required by

January 9

Please mail response
card today

Please turn over ↑

Candidate Response Card

☐ **YES**, I would like to volunteer as a member of the Duncan-North Cowichan Citizens' Assembly

☐ No, I do not wish to volunteer as a member of the Citizens' Assembly, but would like to receive updates

First Name: ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚   Last Name: ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚

Gender: Male / Female / _____   Age: 18 to 29   30 to 44   45 to 64   65+

Primary Phone Number: ⬚⬚⬚–⬚⬚⬚–⬚⬚⬚⬚   Secondary Phone Number: ⬚⬚⬚–⬚⬚⬚–⬚⬚⬚⬚

Email: ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚

Resident(s) of
123 Anywhere St
Anytown ON   M1M 1M1

Keycode: SAMPLE

Response required by

January 9

**Please mail response
card today**

Please turn over ➔

If you have any questions about the Assembly, please call 1-844-610-5672

Return Address

**Response required by:
January 9, 2017**

Register by mailing the
response card enclosed
or by calling 1-844-610-5672

1000071167-M5A3C8-BR01

DUNCAN-NORTH COWICHAN
CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY
3A GILEAD PLACE
TORONTO ON   M5A 9Z9

A Brief History of Referendums in Greater Victoria

Canada's federal government has only held three referendums in its entire history, on prohibition (1898), military conscription (1942), and the constitution-altering Charlettown Accord (1992). Among the provinces, British Columbia has been keen to use referendums, holding at least 14 since B.C.'s founding, including votes on prohibition (1916), public health insurance (1937), and whether to give citizens the power to recall MLAs and initiate legislation (1991). In the autumn of 2018, British Columbians will vote — as they did in 2005 and 2009 — on whether to change their "first-past-the-post" electoral system to one of proportional representation.

The greatest use of direct democracy in Canada, however, has been at the municipal level of government. Victoria was once at the forefront of this movement.

For most of B.C.'s history, provincial law required municipalities to get taxpayer approval whenever they borrowed money. Consequently, many referendums in Victoria were votes on major capital projects that determined the course of development of the city — in 1887, for example, residents approved buying a collection of books from the Mechanics' Institute, leading to the creation of Victoria's first public library.

Currently, the provincial *Community Charter* and *Local Government Act* only require municipalities to get voter "assent" via a referendum for major decisions, such as whether to incorporate (s.4 LGA) or extend municipal boundaries (s. 12 LGA), sell off water or sewer works (s. 28 CC), or add fluoride to the water supply (s. 68 CC). In many other cases, municipalities require voter "approval", which they can get via a referendum, or the Alternative Approval Process identified in s. 86 of the *Charter*, in which a civic measure is deemed approved unless 10% of eligible voters sign petitions against it. Actions requiring voter approval include granting franchises to private companies to provide services (s. 22 CC), exchanging or disposing of park land (s. 27 CC), removing the dedication of civic property as a public park or square (s. 30 CC), incurring debt lasting longer than five years (s. 175 CC), most loan authorization bylaws, except for legal or emergency needs (s. 180 CC), and using borrowed money for another purpose (s. 190 CC).

Muncipal councils may also seek "community opinion" on any matter, under s. 83 of the *Community Charter*, via a non-binding vote (a "plebiscite").

The following is a list of (most of) the referendums and plebiscites held in greater Victoria over the past century. As you can see, direct democracy has long been a part of Victoria politics, and right up to the present day.

— Ross Crockford
Originally drafted 2008, revised 2018

January 16, 1908: Victoria residents approve bylaws to get the city's water supply from Sooke Lake (1,357 votes to 609 against), and to buy an incinerator for the city (1,178 to 589).

January 13, 1909: Victorians vote on two bylaw and two referendum questions, agreeing to sewer improvements (many of the city's current pipes date to this decision) and a ban on Sunday shopping, but turn down making $85,000 alterations to city hall and granting $7,500 to the local tourist association.

January 12, 1911: Five bylaws and three referendum questions are presented to Victoria voters. They approve of acquiring further water rights at Sooke Lake, burying the downtown's telephone lines underground, turning the jobs of police commissioner and licence commissioner into elected positions, and changing the liquor laws so that retail booze may only be sold by hotels. They reject a proposal for a new theatre, to be built by Simon Leiser, at the site of today's Crystal Garden.

January 14, 1920: Victorians vote 2,986 to 445 in favour of construction of today's Johnson Street Bridge. A proposal to buy land from the Hudson's Bay Company for a public golf course fails to get enough votes to reach the required 60% majority. (Today that land is the Uplands Golf Club.) Victorians also vote for a "commission" form of municipal government, using proportional representation, but the results are not binding.

December 29, 1923: Following a massive advertising campaign in the press and local cinemas, Victorians vote 2,909 to 352 in favour of an agreement between the City and the Canadian Pacific Railway, allowing the latter to build the Crystal Garden and operate it for 20 years. The CPR gets free water for the facility, leases the land for $1 per year, and pays no property taxes.

December 8, 1927: Victorians approve upgrades to the Ogden Point grain terminal, and authorize a financial guarantee for construction of a textile mill on Montreal Street.

December 12, 1935: Victorians turn down a proposal to switch to daylight savings time (1,943 in favor to 2,625 against) because neither Vancouver or Seattle have instituted it, even though many citizens expressed a desire for "more leisure during the hours of daylight."

December 8, 1938: Victorians approve borrowing $150,000 from the Dominion government for construction of a civic auditorium and sports arena, and agree to continue streetcar service in the city for another five years.

December 10, 1943: Oak Bay residents reject chlorination of their municipal water.

December 15, 1944: Victorians approve borrwing $150,000 to build Memorial Arena after the Willows Arena burned down earlier in the year. The project later runs out of money, and voters have to approve two more borrowing bylaws – for $325,000 in May 1948, and $265,000 in December 1948 – to finish the building.

July 26, 1946: Victorians approve spending $108,000 on waterworks improvement and $108,000 on street lighting, but turn down a bylaw to authorize sale of the Willows fairgrounds to Colwood Park Racing Association for $100,000 (12.3% voter turnout).

December 12, 1946: Victorians reject a plan to replace the city's streetcars with buses. Oak Bay votes in favour of spending $65,000 to buy Uplands Park and Cattle Point.

June 19, 1947: Victoria, Saanich, Oak Bay and Esquimalt residents approve a new transit scheme removing the city's streetcars and replacing them with buses. The votes total 11,847 in favour to 1,225 opposed.

December 4, 1947: Victorians approve construction of a new city hall in the block bounded by Blanshard, Cormorant, and Pandora. (They were also given the option of a location at Quadra and Cook). Victorians also approve negotiations to amalgamate with other municipalities (6,097 votes to 585) and agree, along with Oak Bay and Saanich voters, in favour of formation of a metropolitan water board.

December 18, 1948: Saanich voters shoot down a proposal to turn the Gordon Head military base (today's UVic campus) into an "airpark" for light planes, 3,437 votes to 1,706. Oak Bay residents approve spending $120,000 to buy the Willows fairgrounds.

December 8, 1949: Victorians approve creation of the position of city manager, and spending $350,000 for renovations to the Carnegie Library.

December 13, 1951: Victorians vote 7,056 to 1,499 to reduce the number of city councillors from 10 to eight.

December 14, 1952: Saanich voters approve construction of a $2.5-million race track and exhibition buildings in the Strawberry Vale area.

December 15, 1956: Voters in four municipalites turn down a $5.6-million school construction program. Saanich residents votes in favour of refinancing their waterworks, and building another library. Oak Bay voters approve construction of a new municipal hall, and ban the sale of raw milk.

December 12, 1957: Victorians approve a new library agreement with surrounding municipalities, and establishment of a royal commission on amalgamation. The *Colonist* notes that "The Junior Chamber of Commerce asked for the referendum and sought referendums in adjoining municipalities too. But when the municipal councils hung back and rejected the idea, the junior chamber indicated it would seek to obtain names on petitions for a royal commission through the area, and take the petitions directly to the government."

December 11, 1958: Victoria residents vote 3,992 to 1,994 in favour of negotiating amalgamation with Saanich, but Saanich residents are 65% opposed, 5,090 votes to 2,731. Victorians also approve construction of the View Street parkade and pedestrian malls. "This bylaw will insure the future health of our city," says mayor Percy Scurrah, "and it places us first in Canada to install malls and among the leaders in this field on the North American continent."

December 10, 1959: Although numerous dentists call for adding fluoride to the city's water, Victorians vote against it, 6,833 to 4,031. A week later, Saanich, Esquimalt and Oak Bay residents also refuse fluoridation.

December 7, 1961: Saanich residents approve sale of beer by the glass. (A previous vote failed in 1954.) Sidney residents vote to extend the town's boundaries.

December 7, 1962: An amalgamation referendum fails in Saanich again, but by a smaller margin than in 1958, with 55% against. (Mount Tolmie, Cadboro Bay and Gordon Head neighbourhoods vote in favour, but north and western districts of Saanich are strongly opposed.) Central Saanich voters approve spending $40,000 to build a new municipal hall. Sidney residents approve more boundary extensions and a waterfront park dedication, but reject a regional library.

December 14, 1962: Victorians approve spending $950,000 to create the Centennial Square civic plaza, including renovations of city hall, conversion of the Pantages Theatre (now the Macpherson Playhouse), and construction of a seniors' centre (Silver Threads).

December 13, 1963: Victorians approve the $375,000 reconstruction of the Fisgard Street police station.

December 13, 1964: Esquimalt residents vote 1,137 to 351 in favour of amalgamating the "panhandle" region of View Royal into their municipality, even though people living there vow to fight it.

June 18, 1965: North Saanich residents approve beer parlours, cocktail lounges and liquor in restaurants and dining rooms. The referendum stems from an application for full liquor privileges by the Deep Cove Chalet.

December 11, 1965: Voters in five out of the region's seven incorporated municipalities reject creation of a regional hospital district, limiting the power of the new Capital Regional District. Oak Bay residents vote 58% in favour of fluoridation of their water, not enough to pass the 60% requirement.

December 11, 1966: Oak Bay votes 52.3% in favour of fluoridation of its water, again not enough to pass. Residents of View Royal's "panhandle" reject amalgamation with Esquimalt. Sooke voters approve spending $2 million on school construction.

December 9, 1968: Saanich voters approve year-round weekly garbage collection.

December 6, 1969: Citizens of Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Saanich and Victoria approve of paid-admission sport and entertainment being allowed on Sundays. Oak Bay voters approve construction of a new recreation centre.

December 14, 1970: Victorians reject spending $2 million to buy waterfront land on Wharf Street, allowing the controversial Reid Centre development to continue. Colwood voters reject a proposed ice arena. Sidney voters reject a $40,000 swimming pool but approves a $55,000 seniors' centre.

November 29, 1971: Saanich voters approve an increase of municipal grants to local tourist promotion agencies. Sidney authorizes Sunday sports and entertainment.

November 20, 1978: Saanich voters approve construction of an industrial park, choosing Royal Oak over Interurban as a preferable area. Colwood, Langford, and Metchosin residents vote against incorporating their districts as municipalities.

November 15, 1980: After the province leaves it up to municipalities to determine their own "blue laws," Saanich voters turn down Sunday shopping (7,158 votes to 5,704) while Central Saanich, Colwood, Esquimalt, Langford, Metchosin, Sidney, Sooke and View Royal residents all vote in favour.

May 3, 1981: Victorians vote 71% in favour (8,488 to 3,438) of Sunday shopping (29.4% turnout).

November 23, 1981: Saanich voters approve construction of a new police building, and changes to garbage pickup. Oak Bay residents agree to allow Sunday shopping.

November 20, 1982: Saanich, Oak Bay and Victoria residents all vote overwhelmingly in favour of telling the federal government to push for global nuclear disarmament, following similiar municipal referendums across Canada. Victorians also approve borrowing $21 million for a major update of its underground services and roads. Saanich voters reject a bid to change the garbage collection system. East Sooke voters turn town an $80,000 firehall for their community.

November 18, 1989: Victorians vote 56% against a $54-million capital works program that would include a new police station, firehall, and upgrades to City Hall and Memorial Arena.

November 21, 1992: In a non-binding vote, Capital Region residents are given three options for sewage treatment: A) source control, at the annual taxpayer cost of $4 per $100,000 of assessed property; B) primary treatment at $231 per; or C) secondary treatment at $336 per. Option A gets 57% of the vote region-wide, B gets 21% and C gets 22% — effectively killing the CRD's treatment project, and drawing nationwide criticism. Victoria residents also vote in favour of

building a new $18.5-million police station and spending $6.15-million to prevent shoreline erosion, but oppose $9-million in updgrades to City Hall, Memorial Arena, Crystal Pool and Craigdarroch Castle.

June 13, 1999: Sooke residents agree to incorporate as a municipality (40% turnout).

November 21, 1999: Voters in six CRD municipalities agree in a plebiscite to a 10-year, $10-per household levy to acquire regional parkland. North Saanich residents approve connecting to a new peninsula sewer system.

December 7, 2001: Western Communities voters reject borrowing $8.5-million for water system upgrades (less than 10% turnout).

April 20, 2002: Victorians vote 71.5% in favour of replacing Memorial Arena, borrowing $30 million and creating a partnership with RG Properties to build a new arena (27.65% turnout). Oak Bay voters approve borrowing $4.6 million for upgrades to the Oak Bay recreation centre.

November 16, 2002: Colwood and Langford residents approve a $12.8-million Westshore arena, but Metchosin voters reject it, killing the plan. (The region quickly regroups and builds Bear Mountain Arena, now called The Q Centre, for $10.5 million.)

October 5, 2003: Esquimalt voters approve upgrades to the muncipality's sewers.

December 13, 2003: Sooke approves borrowing $8.8 million for sewers and secondary sewage treatment.

June 19, 2004: Sidney rejects spending $800,000 to put power lines underground along a five-block section of Lochside Drive (10% turnout).

November 6, 2004: North Saanich residents approve of putting slot machines at Sandown Raceway, voting 2,102 to 1,641 (48% turnout).

January 23, 2005: Sooke voters reject spending $2.6 million to upgrade local roads.

November 19, 2005: Langford residents reject borrowing $750,000 to build a public outdoor ice rink at Bear Mountain, but approve borrowing $750,000 to equip the new Happy Valley elementary school and the new Eagle Ridge Arena as emergency reception centres, and borrowing $1.9 million for soccer fields and softball diamonds in the new City Centre Park. Sooke voters approve annexation of Kemp Lake and Gillespie Road areas. Sidney and North Saanich voters agree to borrow $2.5 million to upgrade the Panorama rec centre. Sidney residents vote in favour of slot machines at Sandown.

November 15, 2008: Central Saanich residents approve contributing financially to the expansion of the Panorama rec centre and giving priority to a new public safety building, but reject higher property taxes to maintain current municipal services or build infrastructure. Colwood and Langford residents resoundingly agree that governments should pay for upgrades to the E&N railway tracks and that BC Transit should provide commuter rail service. Sooke residents approve directing the CRD to allocate funds to the Sooke Region Museum.

November 20, 2010: City of Victoria residents approve borrowing $49.2 million to replace the Johnson Street Bridge, by a margin of 10,020 votes (60.6%) to 6,522 (39.4%). The referendum was required because 9,872 residents (more than 10% of the population) signed petitions in late 2009, opposing the City's attempt to borrow $42 million for the project via the Alternative Approval Process.

November 15, 2014: On this year's civic election ballots, most Victoria municipalities include non-binding questions relating to amalgamation. Nearly all the results are in favour of exploring amalgamation, from Saanich ("Do you support council initiating a community-based review of the governance structure and policies within Saanich and our partnerships within the region?" Yes: 21,437 No: 2,780) to Langford ("Are you in favour of the City of Langford being amalgamated into a larger regional municipality?" Yes: 2,222 No: 2,209). Oak Bay is the only municipality where voters reject the question ("Are you in favour of the District of Oak Bay being amalgamated into a larger regional municipality?"), with 2,184 voting Yes and 3,594 voting No. (Amalgamation questions were not asked in Colwood, Highlands, Metchosin, Sooke, or View Royal.) Sooke residents vote in favour of developing community-centre facilities, and oppose the expansion of oil-tanker traffic along the B.C. coast.

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