



August 22, 2018

Ref: 239593

MAYOR'S OFFICE

AUG 27 2018

His Worship Mayor Richard Atwell
District of Saanich
770 Vernon Ave
Victoria BC V8X 2W7

Dear Mayor Atwell:

Thank you for your letter advising me of the outcome of the joint Committee of the Whole meeting with the City of Victoria. I appreciate the commitment of the two municipalities to collaborate in this endeavour and to clarify the interest of their electorates in studying the potential for municipal amalgamation. I apologize for the delay in responding.

I am supportive of a shared-cost approach. I understand that the councils anticipate seeking a one-third sharing arrangement between the two municipalities and the Province of British Columbia and that you have identified a maximum budgetary implication for your voters. As you are aware, the Province contributed a one-third share to the Duncan-North Cowichan amalgamation study process. If the new councils and voters of Saanich and Victoria share a desire for an amalgamation study process, I am open to considering a funding request for a specific study proposal, once we share a common understanding as to the process scope, budget and timeline.

I understand that the two municipalities will continue to work on the proposal details. I would encourage this work to address details such as:

- how the councils and municipal staff will work together to administer the study process;
- what preliminary assessment, if any, of services, relationships, and public views would be undertaken;
- what will be the role, mandate, and timeframe for a Citizens' Assembly in evaluating a technical analysis of governance, service and financial impacts of amalgamation;
- which methods will be used to engage the local electorates and potentially impacted jurisdictions (e.g. the Capital Regional District; First Nations);
- whether the study will include development of a transition/implementation plan; and,
- how the councils anticipate approaching the question of whether to request an amalgamation vote once the study is completed.

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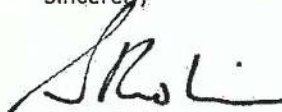
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When the municipalities agree on a proposal, their councils may then jointly apply for a funding contribution from the Province to a study. At that point, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will review the proposal and I, as Minister, will consider the funding request. A grant for a study is contingent on the availability of funding, other commitments already in place and the framework for such grants established by regulation.

In the meantime, Ministry staff are always available to provide further information if the municipalities are interested in learning about processes related to governance/services studies.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



Selina Robinson
Minister

pc: ✓ Her Worship Mayor Lisa Helps
City of Victoria

Paul Thorkelsson, Chief Administrative Officer
District of Saanich

Jacqueline Dawes, Deputy Minister
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing