

Joint Victoria -Saanich Citizens Assembly Process.

In review of the March 1st draft Terms of Reference prepared for Saanich Comm I acknowledge this is an excellent start to the process of establishing a joint CA process. But let me offer you two perspectives that suggest some aspects are missing and even misleading in the draft document.

First I strongly support the *Guiding Principles* as per Section 2 but wonder about in terms of the Scope of the document as per sections 5 thru 8.. After general approval of an general approach and draft budget by the respective Councils and ratification by the Province the first step is to issue a RFP with a RFEOI to solicit bid for a contractor who after initial review of the situation here (as opposed to Duncan or Toronto))would submit a proposal as to how they would facilitate the CA process here. As such you use the RFEOI route to solicit advice to how to approach the task based on their qualification and experience. After you selected a contractor to serve as Facilitator they will access the local situation and present to your Joint Committee a draft outline of how and time lines they would propose to proceed.

At this point I would suggest prospective Facilitators need to understand your expectations but do not expect to be told how to carry out the task!! In that sense I would suggest much of which you have offered in your draft in Sec 5 thru 8 is both presumptive and premature to offer as T of R for any RFP but will only evolve as the process gets underway.

It is only at that time *the work plan* as proposed by the Facilitator or would be reviewed by the joint Steering Committee and presented to Council(s) for final approval. It should be well understood that the CA process is more flexible and innovative and less prescriptive than usual public consultation process as defined in municipal legislation. As it is being led by a third party this will certainly have implication for the manner in which your municipal staff will be obligated to provide administrative services to facilitate the information gathering and communications needs of the Facilitator and deliberations of the CA. And almost certainly a second RFP will be needed to solicit a contractor to provide the *municipal information background data* needs as required by the CA members.

Second I have a concern with the Sec 1 and 3 in your draft that seems to offers a narrow focus as the possible Mandate of the CA. the text of pages 1 thru 4 are necessary measures but not sufficient.

Let me explain; in one sense the study of a possible merger is much like a boxing match between two rivals and you expect that CA will assess the necessary data to compare the strengths weaknesses of the two boxers in the ring. Sec 6.3 to Sec 6.17 list compendium of items to be reviewed i.e. compare tax rates, capital debt, per capita tax burden etc.

However valid; this list is still a bit myopic and fails to acknowledge an opportunity for the CA to also assess other aspects of your shared circumstance and future prospects. Recognize the reality that your municipalities have contingent and invisible boundaries and you share 2/3 of the population. Yet in the CRD you are merely the largest of "equals".

Further because of your central core location residents of the region cannot travel to most of the major destinations whether airport, ferries, UVic, Downtown , RJH, Inner Harbor , Dockyard without traveling on your road and bridges . In that respect residents of your two municipalities and indeed the entire region are oblivious to municipal boundaries! . Unfortunately while the travel is seamless the actual

burden of costs to supply and maintain urban core services is unequal and unfair to your resident and business taxpayers. There is grievous “free rider “ issue that should be identified and reviewed during the CA process .

Consider that as the urban core you offer and fund a wide variety of community, health, charitable, .arts/cultural service and facilities used by all residents. Additionally you share a relationship with central agencies and service providers i.e. CRD, BC Transit , Crest, GVLB. GVHA that should be explored. Do residents currently get good value for your membership?

In that sense I suggest you need to broaden the Objectives and Mandate to ensure that CA process is obligated to consider these instances of your “**common cause.**’ These might include:

- i) identify current anomalies and consider possible boundary adjustments with your adjacent neighbors.
- ii) identify numerous instances where the two urban areas collectively share the burden of cost in relation to how community services funded by them are actually regional scale service, infrastructure and facilities and perpetuate a *fiscal inequity* compared to tax burden funded by non residents.

These include but are not limited to :

- a- provision of *shared service delivery* funded by the urban core. A rough estimate is that you provide over \$10 million in *property tax exemptions and community service grants* to various agencies, charities, arts/cultural /sports etc. that provide dozens of services available to all residents of the region.
- b- Conversely on the revenue side, particularly PILT grants that are captured by individual municipalities. *In contrast casino revenues must be shared!*. This inequity is most evident when considering the municipal roads/bridges that are critical elements of the regional transportation grid yet these are funded by capital /core residents.
- c- *Emergency services* (fires, floods, spills, earthquakes don’t respect municipal borders) and acknowledge reality that most of the other municipalities are dependent on the trained professional services and specialized equipment available only from Victoria and Saanich for mutual aid.

I trust these observations and suggestion are viewed not as critique but positive input to ensure the CA process is holistic and able to realize the expectations we have for it. Thank you for your consideration.

Submitted by James Anderson 250 477 8255 (submitted March 11/2019)