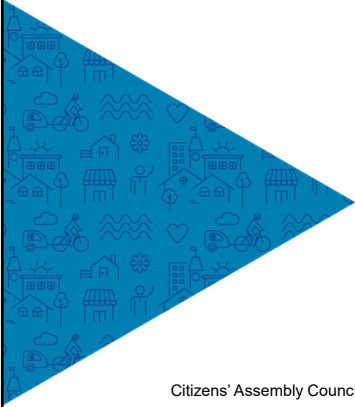



2023 | CITY OF VICTORIA | Legislative Services

Saanich-Victoria Citizens' Assembly on Amalgamation



Citizens' Assembly Council Committee Meeting – April 3, 2023



1

Background

2018

- Victoria and Saanich residents vote in favour of exploring the costs, benefits, and disadvantages of the amalgamation of Victoria and Saanich through a Citizens' Assembly process.
- Approximately 66 percent of Victoria voters and 56 percent of Saanich voters supported this process.

2019-20

- Both municipalities approve Terms of Reference for a Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly.

2021

- After delays due to COVID-19, a joint application is made to the Province for a local government restructure grant.

2022

- Victoria, Saanich, and the Province agree to contribute \$250,000 each for a total of \$750,000 toward the cost of a Citizens' Assembly.

2023

- The Minister of Municipal Affairs reconfirms the Province's commitment of \$250,000.

2

Citizens' Assembly

- A Citizens' Assembly is a body of citizens who come together to deliberate on a given issue and provide a set of recommendations, options, or a collective decision to the convening body.
- The members are generally selected to reflect the variety of backgrounds and experience found in the wider population.
- The typical Citizens' Assembly has three phases: Learning, Listening and Deliberation.
- In 2017, Duncan and North Cowichan explored municipal amalgamation through a Citizens' Assembly process.

3

Saanich-Victoria Citizens' Assembly

- The Saanich-Victoria Citizens' Assembly will be an impartial advisory body, free from political oversight.
- The Assembly will work in partnership with an independent consultant and will exemplify standards of transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement.

4

Saanich-Victoria Citizens' Assembly

Membership

- The Assembly will consist of 48 members:
 - A proportionate number of members from the two municipalities – 27 members from Saanich and 21 members from Victoria (based on BC Statistics population data).
 - An equal proportion of male and female members.
 - A proportionate number of:
 - members from different age cohorts.
 - renters and homeowners.
 - members of First Nations from the two municipalities.
 - urban and rural residents.



5

Saanich-Victoria Citizens' Assembly

Table 1 – Citizens' Assembly Draft Work Plan

PHASES	SUMMARY
PHASE 1: Procurement	Victoria will initiate a procurement process for this initiative to seek a consultant for the Citizens' Assembly.
PHASE 2: Recruitment and Scheduling	The consultant will initiate a civic lottery to randomly select the Citizens' Assembly. As per Terms of Reference, the Assembly will convene for 6-12 Saturday sessions. The consultant will also issue an RFP to develop an independent Oversight Committee.
PHASE 3: Technical Analysis	The consultant will collaborate with the Assembly and municipal staff and another RFP will be issued to undertake a technical review. The technical team will gather information for the Assembly to review and deliberate on in making their final recommendations.
PHASE 4: Recommendations	Once the mandate of the Citizens' Assembly is complete, recommendations and final reports will be presented to both Councils.
PHASE 5: Implementation	Depending on the outcome of both Council deliberations, Saanich and Victoria may request the Minister of Municipal Affairs to approve a ballot question. This would then initiate a final RFP for an Implementation Plan.

6

Saanich-Victoria Citizens' Assembly

Table 2 – Citizens' Assembly Oversight and Responsibilities

PROCESS/RFP	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY
Saanich and Victoria Citizens' Assembly Council Committees	Saanich and Victoria Council Members
Request for Proposal – Consultant/Facilitator of the Citizen's Assembly	Saanich and Victoria senior staff
Request for Proposal – Oversight Committee	Consultant/Facilitator
Request for Proposal – Technical Analysis for the District of Saanich and City of Victoria	Consultant/Facilitator
Request for Proposal – Consultant to develop Implementation Plan (pending outcome of Citizen's Assembly recommendations)	Saanich and Victoria senior staff

7

Next Steps

- Both Victoria and Saanich staff will report to their Councils to initiate the procurement process to hire a consultant.
- RFP will be issued.
- Once a consultant is selected, they will schedule next steps in accordance with the Terms of Reference.
- The Province is requesting a Progress Report, on or before **December 31, 2023**, comprised of confirmation of the Citizens' Assembly recruitment process and a preliminary work plan.

8

Recommendation

- That Saanich and Victoria staff report back to their respective Councils with background information and next steps on the Citizens' Assembly process prior to initiating the procurement process to hire a consultant.

9

Questions?

10