

Frequently Asked Questions

Amalgamation Vote

Last updated: June 25, 2026

What will happen if Victoria and Saanich amalgamate?

- Amalgamation means combining the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich into one municipality with a single municipal government.
- This would involve integrating governance and municipal operations under one local government structure.

Why is amalgamation being discussed?

- The issue is being considered because during the 2018 General Local Election electors in both municipalities voted in favour of establishing a Citizens' Assembly to examine the costs, benefits and disadvantages of amalgamation.

What did the Citizens' Assembly recommend?

- The Citizens' Assembly recommended that Victoria and Saanich pursue amalgamation.
- The final report included analysis and recommendations on governance, service delivery, transportation, climate resilience, housing, public safety and other key issues.
- While the Assembly explored related costs, the final report did not include a comprehensive analysis of the cost of amalgamation, or the impact amalgamation could have on property tax rates.
- Its members concluded that a unified municipality could improve coordination, long-term planning, accountability and decision-making on shared regional issues such as housing, transportation, infrastructure and emergency services.

Will the amalgamation issue be decided after the 2026 General Local Election?

- The 2026 ballot question is non-binding and is intended to gauge public support for pursuing amalgamation further. It does not create an amalgamated municipality or authorize it to proceed. Future councils will determine next steps based on the level of public support.

Why was a binding referendum not approved for 2026?

- The Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs advised that a binding referendum would require more detailed analysis of financial implications, transition considerations and service impacts than was provided through the Citizens' Assembly process.
- Additionally, the Minister noted that any future binding amalgamation process would require the Province to undertake consultation with First Nations in the affected area as part of its obligations, alongside any further technical and financial analysis.
- The Ministry highlighted that this additional information is needed to support informed public decision-making before a binding vote could be considered.

What could amalgamation mean for municipal services?

- Service impacts are one of the central questions still requiring further analysis. The Citizens' Assembly and Technical Study considered areas such as policing, fire services, planning, infrastructure, finance and service delivery, and the Assembly concluded that amalgamation could improve coordination in several of these areas.
- The Province has indicated that more detailed work is still needed on actual service impacts before any binding referendum could be considered.

What could amalgamation mean for taxes and costs?

- There is no confirmed estimate showing exactly how property taxes would change if Victoria and Saanich amalgamated.

What happens after the 2026 vote?

- If electors support the non-binding question, the next step would be further technical and financial analysis, together with provincial involvement, before any future binding referendum could occur.
- If electors do not support the question, there would be no public mandate to continue pursuing amalgamation and no further work would take place.

I have questions, who should I contact?

- More information is available on saanich.ca/elections. Questions can be directed to elections@saanich.ca