



June 28, 2021

File: 1420-30

The Honourable Josie Osborne, MLA
Minister of Municipal Affairs
PO Box 9056 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

via email: MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister:

Re: Citizens' Assembly – District of Saanich and City of Victoria

In the 2018 General Local Election, the District of Saanich and City of Victoria jointly asked the following community opinion question by ballot to its electors:

“Are you in favour of spending up to \$250,000 for establishing a Citizens' Assembly to explore the cost, benefits, and disadvantages of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and City of Victoria.”

Both municipalities had a favourable response from its electors in establishing a Citizens' Assembly which lead to Saanich and Victoria working together to endorse and approve a Terms of Reference for a Citizens' Assembly.

Saanich and Victoria staff recently met with Ministry of Municipal Affairs staff and presented the approved Terms of Reference and other background documents in order to seek guidance in moving forward to request funding from the Province. Saanich and Victoria are requesting that the Province allocate funds to support 1/3 of the costs in undertaking the Citizens' Assembly which would include a civic lottery for membership, facilitation of the assembly, technical review, oversight panel and a final report. Staff have anticipated overall costs to be approximated at \$750,000.

Ministry staff felt the following questions should be addressed by Saanich and Victoria prior to the Province's consideration of any funding requests:

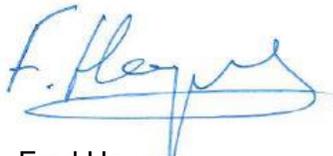
1. Scope of study, rationale for undertaking the study and description of processes.
2. Process for adjusting the scope of the approved Terms of Reference.
3. Preliminary budget.
4. Oversight - staff responsible for the funding agreement and any applicable Requests for Proposals.

5. Deliverables.
6. Process for determining next steps. (What will Councils receive from the Citizens' Assembly? How will they manage the Citizens' Assembly findings?)

Saanich and Victoria have addressed the information requested in an attached table and at this time are requesting that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs consider funding the Citizens' Assembly process either through a grant process or by approval of funds through the Treasury Board.

Should you require any further clarification or information on the process to date, Councils and staff are available to provide any clarity and welcome any feedback. We wish to ensure good relations with the Province and maintain an open and transparent process for our residents.

Sincerely,



Fred Haynes
Mayor, District of Saanich



Lisa Helps
Mayor, City of Victoria

Attachments:

Table A

Terms of Reference

Cc: Okenge Yuma Morisho, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs
Tara Faganello, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government Division
Marijke Edmondson, Director, Governance Structures
Karen Lynch, Senior Planning Analyst
Mayor and Council, City of Victoria
Mayor and Council, District of Saanich
Jocelyn Jenkins, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Victoria
Paul Thorkelsson, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Saanich
Gala Milne, Head of Strategic Operations, City of Victoria
Curt Kingsley, City Clerk, City of Victoria

TABLE A

<p>Scope of study, rationale for undertaking the study and description of processes.</p>	<p>Mandate of the Citizens' Assembly (Section 3 of the approved Terms of Reference)</p> <p>The Assembly is tasked by the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria to explore the costs, benefits and disadvantages of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria.</p> <p>Specifically, the Assembly will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify common aspirations for good local governance to provide a basis for evaluating costs, benefits and disadvantages of amalgamation and status quo of the municipalities relative to their current independent status. • List the issues which the Assembly believes needs to be resolved for amalgamation to merit consideration, including issues related to the implementation and integration of the municipalities under amalgamation. <p>In satisfying their mandate and developing recommendations, the Assembly will be expected to consider and analyze the positive and negative impacts of amalgamation (at a minimum) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assets and liabilities of Saanich and Victoria including any related impacts on local rate payers. • Cultural and land use priorities and similarities and differences of the two municipalities. Balance of the issues of economy of scale with community identity and representation. • Comparison of corporate structures and approaches to governance of the two municipalities. • All analysis and recommendations of the Assembly are informed and mindful of the ongoing work with local First Nations towards Reconciliation. • Neighbourhood level implications. • Congruency and alignment of strategic and political priorities of the municipalities (as expressed in Strategic Plans, Official Community Plans, Urban Containment Boundary policies and other significant strategic and planning documents). • Past investment in and future needs for capital assets, infrastructure replacement reserves including the analysis
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	<p>of anticipated impacts on an amalgamated municipality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variations in levels of service of the two municipalities including the development of clear recommendations on aligning service levels in an amalgamated municipality. • Clear delineation of advantages and disadvantages for the respective municipality in considering amalgamation versus those accruing solely to a combined municipality arising from amalgamation. • To the extent possible, consideration of costs, benefits and disadvantages of amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria over both the short and long terms (i.e. over 5 year, 20 year, and 50 year horizons). • Consideration of democratic representation and accessibility of elected officials to residents and other stakeholders. • Commentary from the Assembly on other opportunities for service integration is considered part of the Assembly's mandate. • If full amalgamation of Saanich and Victoria is recommended by the Assembly, commentary and recommendations from the Assembly on the integration of full municipal operations (both in the short and longer term) is expected as part of the Assembly's mandate. • In meeting its mandate and the expectations outlined in the Terms of Reference, the Assembly will, to the greatest extent possible, represent the consensus view of the members. Divergent views of Assembly members will be included in the Citizens' Assembly's Final Report.
<p>Stages of work</p>	<p>Stage 1 Once funding is secure, both municipalities will engage in a Request for Proposal for a consultant to oversee and facilitate the Citizens' Assembly process.</p> <p>Stage 2 The Consultant will schedule the next steps in accordance with the approved Terms of Reference:</p> <p>Schedule of the Citizens' Assembly (Section 5 of the approved Terms of Reference)</p> <p>The Assembly will convene during 6-12 Saturday sessions beginning in 2019 (to be updated),* and concluding in 2020 (to be updated)*. Additional meetings of the Assembly may be scheduled at the discretion of the Chair of the Assembly (see 8.2 for roles and responsibilities of the Chair). Meetings of the Assembly will not allow the public to attend in person but will be viewable by the public through webcast. The Assembly will also host multiple public roundtable meetings in both municipalities during the course of the Assembly schedule, with one of the meetings to discuss the</p>

	<p>technical report, which will be open to all local residents. The Assembly at the start of their process will set and define their schedule.</p> <p>*Note: Timelines were impacted due to both municipalities approving the Terms of Reference, COVID-19 and a By-Election conducted by the City of Victoria</p> <p>Stage 3 (will be concurrent with Stage 2) The consultant/facilitator will work concurrently with the Citizens' Assembly and another Request for Proposal will be issued to undertake a technical review. Once a firm has been selected the Citizens' Assembly will be in a position to make requests for particular technical information. The third party technical team will gather information for the assembly to review and deliberate on in making their final recommendations. This stage may have a natural pause in the process for the technical team to provide its findings to the Citizens' Assembly.</p> <p>Stage 4 The Citizens' Assembly provides its recommendations to both Council's. Council will then deliberate on the outcome and jointly accept, deny or provide other direction on the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly.</p> <p>Stage 5 Depending on the outcome of Council deliberations on the Citizens' Assembly recommendations, Saanich and Victoria may request the Minister to approve a ballot question which will then initiate the Request for Proposal on an Implementation Plan.</p> <p>Stage 6 Present referendum ballot with Implementation Plan to Saanich and Victoria Councils if it's the will of both Councils and approved by the Minister.</p> <p>Stage 7 Proceed based on referendum results.</p>
<p>2. Process for adjusting the scope of the approved Terms of Reference or terminating the process.</p>	<p>Section 10 of the Terms of Reference addresses process concerns:</p> <p>If the Chair or the majority of members of the Assembly lose confidence in the process, there will be an appeal for review at a joint Council meeting of Saanich and Victoria.</p> <p>Although not specifically noted in the Terms of Reference, if both Council's feel the need to adjust the scope of the approved Terms of Reference a joint resolution will be required.</p>
<p>3. Preliminary budget.</p>	<p>Staff undertook some preliminary work on providing costs associated with facilitating a citizens' assembly. The amounts noted are based on feedback from a consultant's experience of conducting assemblies throughout Canada. The following is a breakdown based on conservative estimates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Civic Lottery Process: \$20,000 – the process anticipates a 5% response rate on invitations sent out to the community. At a minimum 20,000 letters should be sent out from each municipality. 2) Printing/postage: \$40,000 (\$2.00/letter)

	<p>3) Facilitated Sessions: \$230,000 – this would include 13 staff for a 75 member assembly for up to 12 meeting sessions and 3 public input/roundtable meetings. Important for Council to note that it is recommended a 1-6 ratio of member to staff based on a 75 member assembly (note these costs would be reduced if the number of participants was reduced).</p> <p>4) Venue Costs: \$60,000 – this is strictly for the cost of webcasting for the Victoria Conference Centre (host location).</p> <p>5) Honorariums: \$90,000+ (based on 75 participants)</p> <p>6) Refreshments/breaks: \$30,000</p> <p>7) Technical Analysis – 250,000 – 350,000</p> <p>The total costs are estimated in the range of \$720,000 to \$820,000 and both Councils initially approved a maximum budget of \$750,000.</p> <p>The total costs may need to be adjusted. Once the Citizens’ Assembly is concluded and depending on outcome/recommendations both Council’s will need to consider funding a consultant to deliver an implementation plan prior to going to the public with a ballot question.</p>											
<p>4. Oversight - staff responsible for the funding agreement and any applicable Requests for Proposals.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="604 823 1016 919">Process/RFP</th> <th data-bbox="1016 823 1430 919">Primary Responsibility</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="604 919 1016 1016">Request for Proposal – Consultant/Facilitator of the Citizen’s Assembly</td> <td data-bbox="1016 919 1430 1016">Chief Administrative Officers of Saanich and Victoria</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="604 1016 1016 1167">Request for Proposal – Technical Analysis of Services for the District of Saanich and City of Victoria</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1016 1430 1167">Consultant/Facilitator</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="604 1167 1016 1264">Request for Proposal – Oversight Committee</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1167 1430 1264">Consultant/Facilitator</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="604 1264 1016 1444">Request for Proposal – Consultant to develop Implementation Plan (pending outcome of Citizen’s Assembly recommendations)</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1264 1430 1444">Chief Administrative Officers of Saanich and Victoria</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Process/RFP	Primary Responsibility	Request for Proposal – Consultant/Facilitator of the Citizen’s Assembly	Chief Administrative Officers of Saanich and Victoria	Request for Proposal – Technical Analysis of Services for the District of Saanich and City of Victoria	Consultant/Facilitator	Request for Proposal – Oversight Committee	Consultant/Facilitator	Request for Proposal – Consultant to develop Implementation Plan (pending outcome of Citizen’s Assembly recommendations)	Chief Administrative Officers of Saanich and Victoria
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<p>5. Deliverables.</p>	<p>(Section 6.3 of the approved Terms of Reference)</p> <p>The Assembly will deliver its Final Report to the Municipal Councils of Saanich and Victoria no later than 60 days after the last Assembly meeting. The report will include a letter from the Chair, an overview of the process, and the proposed values, identified issues and final recommendations of the Assembly. It will also include an Appendix that will contain copies of all materials considered by the Assembly, a list of the members of the Assembly, any correspondence provided by individual members, and a ‘Minority Report’ that documents any dissenting perspectives.</p>											
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