

Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation

Interim Report

December 2024

**VICTORIA SAANICH
CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY**

victoriasaanich.ca

Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly | Interim Report | 1

In this Report:

Acknowledgement of Territory	4
Executive Summary	5
Note from the Chair	7
About the Assembly	9
Background	9
Assembly Mandate	10
Civic Lottery & Member Selection	11
Assembly Sessions	12
Public Meetings and Submissions	13
Citizens' Assembly at a Glance	15
Fast Facts	17
Citizens' Assembly Guiding Principles as determined by the District of Saanich and City of Victoria	19
Cost Breakdown of the Citizens' Assembly	20
Citizens' Assembly Program	22
Session 1: September 21, 2024	22
Session 2: October 19, 2024	23
Session 3: November 2, 2024	26
Session 4: November 30, 2024	27
Public Meetings: November 20–21, 2024	29
Values	31
Key Issues & Questions	32
Assembly Member Profiles	36
Appendices	43
Advisory & Oversight Group	43
Guest Speakers & Presenters	44
Technical Study	45
The Assembly Team	46
About Citizens' Assemblies	47
Resources	48



Acknowledgement of Territory

The Victoria–Saanich Citizens' Assembly acknowledges that the District of Saanich and City of Victoria lie within the territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples represented by the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) Nations and the WSÁNEĆ Peoples represented by the WJOLĒLP (Tsartlip), BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), SṪÁUTW (Tsawout), WSIKEM (Tseycum) and MÁLEXEL (Malahat) Nations.

We also acknowledge that Citizens' Assemblies operate within a framework that is a product of colonial systems of governance. These systems have historically excluded and marginalized the voices of the original stewards of these lands. The Assembly will work to honour the land, respect all its peoples, and contribute to the healing and strengthening of our communities for generations to come.

Executive Summary

This interim report is a summary and account of the first phase of the Victoria–Saanich Citizens’ Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation, an independent process commissioned by the elected councils of the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich and funded by the municipalities and the Province of British Columbia. The mandate of the Assembly is to explore the costs, benefits, and disadvantages of potential amalgamation between the two municipalities and make a recommendation to councils.

The Assembly is composed of 48 residents selected by “Civic Lottery” in a way that broadly matches the demographics of the two communities. Twenty-seven members of the Assembly reside in Saanich and 21 reside in Victoria. Other factors considered in the lottery include gender, age, ethnic identity, housing status, and secondary geography. A summary of the civic lottery process and representation model is included in this report along with profiles of each of the 48 Assembly members.

After Assembly members were selected in June 2024, they commenced their work with the first four of eight full-day sessions held between September and November 2024. Detailed summaries of these sessions including guest speakers, presentations, and other resources provided to the Assembly are included in this report. Members have further considered a number of public submissions made to the Assembly as well as input from two public meetings held in November.

The Assembly is guided by nine principles provided by the municipalities in their terms of reference.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Openness and Transparency | 6. Well-informed |
| 2. Accountability and Legitimacy | 7. Balance |
| 3. Effective Representation | 8. Collaborative |
| 4. Accessibility | Decision-making |
| 5. Independence | 9. Respect |

The Assembly has drafted eight values about local government which they believe should guide their work and their ultimate recommendation for or against amalgamation.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Collaborative | 5. Representative |
| 2. Effective | 6. Communicative |
| 3. Sustainable | 7. Humane |
| 4. Fiscally Responsible | 8. Accountable |

The Assembly has articulated a set of issues and questions they believe deserve consideration during the next phase of the process as they prepare to make a recommendation to councils. These issues and questions fall into eleven general themes that remain fluid and open to further consideration as the Assembly continues its work.

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|--|--|
| 1. Affordability & Quality of Life | 6. Housing & Homelessness |
| 2. Climate Change Planning & Resilience | 7. Indigenous Relations |
| 3. Democratic Representation in Local Government | 8. Local Culture & Identity |
| 4. Economic Development | 9. Planning for & Managing Future Growth |
| 5. Financial & Resource Management | 10. Social & Municipal Services |
| | 11. Transit, Transportation & Infrastructure |

In the final phase of the Assembly, members will convene for four more full-day sessions between January and April 2025. They will convene two more public meetings in February 2025 and further consider additional public submissions until the end of February.

As part of its deliberations, the Assembly will also analyze the technical study report of the two municipalities, scheduled to be received in January 2025. The technical study is being undertaken independently by the accounting firm MNP. The goals of the technical study are to summarize and clarify the current state of the two municipalities, and to identify the implications of various governance models and the potential impact on integrating different municipal functions and services like engineering, public safety, finance, planning, human resources, and more. The technical study report will be presented to councils and made available to the public by the end of January 2025.

The Assembly will deliver its final report to councils in June 2025. The report will include a clear recommendation on whether and under what conditions amalgamation should take place, and may include suggestions related to service integration.

Note from the Chair

It's not every day that you receive a letter inviting you to help shape the future of your city. Yet, this is precisely how this process began — a simple invitation to step forward, bring your perspective, and work alongside neighbours to tackle a question that will impact this region for generations to come.

At this midpoint in the Victoria–Saanich Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation, I am inspired by the dedication and passion of the 48 Assembly members who answered that call and were selected to serve. These residents, representing the diversity of their communities, have taken on the challenge of exploring how Saanich and Victoria might evolve to best serve the people who live here.

Over the past few months, Assembly members have rolled up their sleeves and learned a lot — both from our guest experts and from one another. They've considered the technical complexities of amalgamation, listened to a wide range of public submissions, and engaged with residents in thoughtful discussions at public meetings. Along the way, they've identified shared principles — collaboration, accountability, sustainability, and inclusivity, among them — that are guiding their work.

The Assembly is proof positive of the willingness and ability of everyday people to play an active role in shaping their local government. It also demonstrates the trust we can place in each other to grapple with complex issues in a fair, balanced, and thorough way.

As the Assembly moves into its next phase, I believe that all residents of Victoria and Saanich can be confident that their fellow citizens are carefully considering every angle, every option, and every voice. They are asking big questions and envisioning a future that reflects the best of these communities.

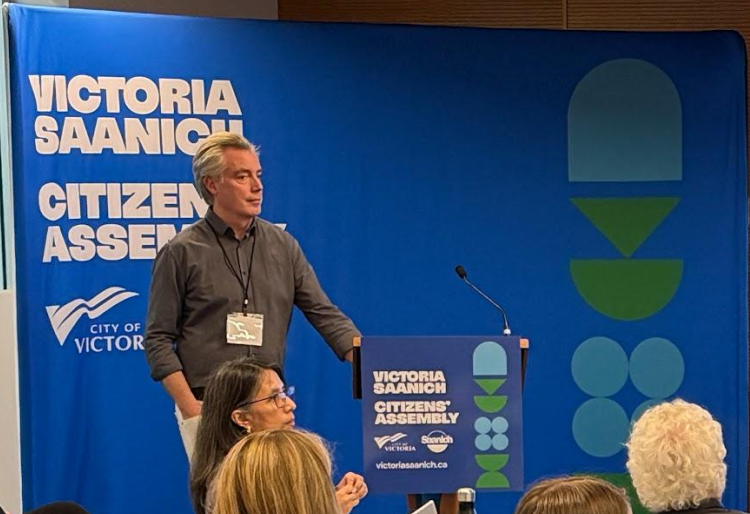
This Assembly is not just about governance — it's about what it means to care for the places we call home.

On behalf of the members, I want to thank you for your interest and continued contributions to our work.



Peter MacLeod

Chair, Victoria–Saanich Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation



About the Assembly

The Victoria–Saanich Citizens’ Assembly is a unique exercise in municipal democracy in which a representative group of 48 residents, randomly selected from a pool of volunteers, studies the issues of amalgamation, deliberates together, and reaches consensus recommendations for the councils of both municipalities to consider. The Citizens’ Assembly is an independent process commissioned by the elected councils of Victoria and Saanich, and funded by the municipalities and the Province of British Columbia.

The Assembly strives to represent all residents and exemplify high standards of transparency, accountability, and robust civic participation. The Assembly’s final report (June 2025) will include recommendations on whether and under what conditions amalgamation should take place, and may include suggestions related to service integration.

Background

As they grow, municipalities sometimes consider whether they should merge with neighbouring jurisdictions. This process, called amalgamation, means combining the governments, geographic boundaries, municipal services, and identities of two or more jurisdictions.

During the 2018 General and Local School Board Elections, the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria each asked a “Community Opinion Question” to gauge public support for establishing and funding a Citizens’ Assembly to study the issue of amalgamation and reach consensus on a recommendation. A majority of voters in both municipalities approved the measure and, after being delayed by the pandemic, the Citizens’ Assembly moved forward in 2023. A joint committee comprising members of both councils supported by municipal staff developed terms of reference to guide the Citizens’ Assembly’s work.

The municipalities of Victoria and Saanich announced in November 2023 the appointment of MASS LBP, a Canadian democracy organization, to lead their Citizens’ Assembly following a competitive tender. MASS will operate the Assembly at arm’s length from both municipalities to safeguard the independence of the process. MASS staff members, including the Assembly Chair, will design and lead each session, and report to a project team comprising staff from both municipalities.

Assembly Mandate

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. The Assembly will make fact-based, evidence-based, and informed recommendations to the councils in order to determine a path forward.

Specifically, the Assembly will:

1. Identify common aspirations for good local governance to provide a basis for evaluating the costs, benefits, and disadvantages of amalgamation and the status quo of the municipalities relative to their current independent status.
2. List the issues that the Assembly believes need to be resolved for amalgamation to merit consideration, including issues related to the implementation and integration of the municipalities under amalgamation.

Civic Lottery & Member Selection

In April 2024, invitation letters were mailed to 10,000 households in Victoria and Saanich randomly selected by Canada Post. Any resident of Victoria or Saanich whose household received an invitation and who was aged at least 16 years was eligible to volunteer and serve on the Citizens' Assembly. Approximately one in twelve households in the two municipalities received an invitation. Fifty invitations were reserved and distributed to unhoused residents with the support of a local organization, Our Place Society. The deadline to respond to the invitation letter was May 30, 2024. More than 300 residents responded Yes to the invitation.

On June 3, 2024, a Civic Lottery was conducted in which the 48 members of the Assembly were selected in a way that broadly matched the demographics of the two communities. By mandate, and proportional to their populations, 27 members of the Assembly reside in Saanich and 21 reside in Victoria. Other factors considered in the lottery included gender, age, ethnic identity, housing status, and secondary geography (i.e., to achieve proportional representation among each municipality's sub-geographies or neighbourhoods).

Residents selected by the Civic Lottery received an email and phone call to confirm their selection. After confirming their availability and eligibility to serve on the Assembly, members submitted a short personal profile for the general public to learn about who they are and why they volunteered.

Serving on a Citizens' Assembly is considered an act of voluntary public service. Each member of the Citizens' Assembly has signed a pledge, affirming their commitment to provide representative and impartial advice to the Councils of Victoria and Saanich on behalf and to the benefit of all residents of both municipalities.

Assembly Sessions

The Victoria–Saanich Citizens’ Assembly meets for eight day-long, in-person sessions on Saturdays between September 2024 and April 2025. Camosun College provides the venues hosting the Assembly’s regular sessions. Each session consists of a combination of plenary discussions, presentations (including Q&A) with experts and other invited speakers, and small-group deliberations that eventually include drafting the contents of their final report.

There are also four public roundtable meetings — two in November 2024 and two in February 2025 — in which members of the public may learn about the Assembly’s work, meet members of the Assembly, ask questions, and provide their perspective on the issues.

Much like a jury or task force, the deliberations of a Citizens’ Assembly are generally confidential and closed to the public. However, Assembly organizers take care to ensure that copies of the presentations, materials, and submissions received by the Assembly are posted on the website for public review. Summaries of the Assembly’s sessions are also posted. Members of the public are encouraged to attend any of four public roundtable meetings as well as to make a public submission to the Assembly for its members to consider as part of their deliberations.

After its final session, the Citizens’ Assembly will issue its final, public report to councils by June 2025.

Public Meetings and Submissions

The Victoria–Saanich Citizens’ Assembly hosted two public meetings on November 20 and 21, the first online via Zoom and the second in-person at Crystal Garden, part of the Victoria Conference Centre. The public meetings provide opportunities for residents of the region to learn about the Assembly’s work, to meet members of the Assembly, and to offer their perspectives on the issues that bear on the question of amalgamation. The public meetings also serve an important function for the Assembly members, who serve as representatives of all residents of Victoria and Saanich whose futures they are considering as they conduct their work.

More than 120 members of the public attended one or other of the public meetings held in November. There will be two more public meetings in February 2025, which will focus on the technical study report to be released in the new year.

Starting in September 2024, the Citizens’ Assembly began accepting submissions from members of the public and community groups. A submission to the Citizens’ Assembly is defined as a perspective, opinion, or issue of concern that a resident of Victoria or Saanich would like the Assembly members, as representatives of the public, to consider as they work to fulfill their mandate. Submissions are made available to Assembly members and posted on the Assembly website for public review. Nineteen submissions were received and reviewed by the Assembly as of November 30, 2024. Public submissions will continue to be accepted by the Assembly until February 28, 2025.

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Public meetings summary

Take moment with your
group to review the
summary of the public
meetings and circle
anything you think is
interesting or worth
discussing further



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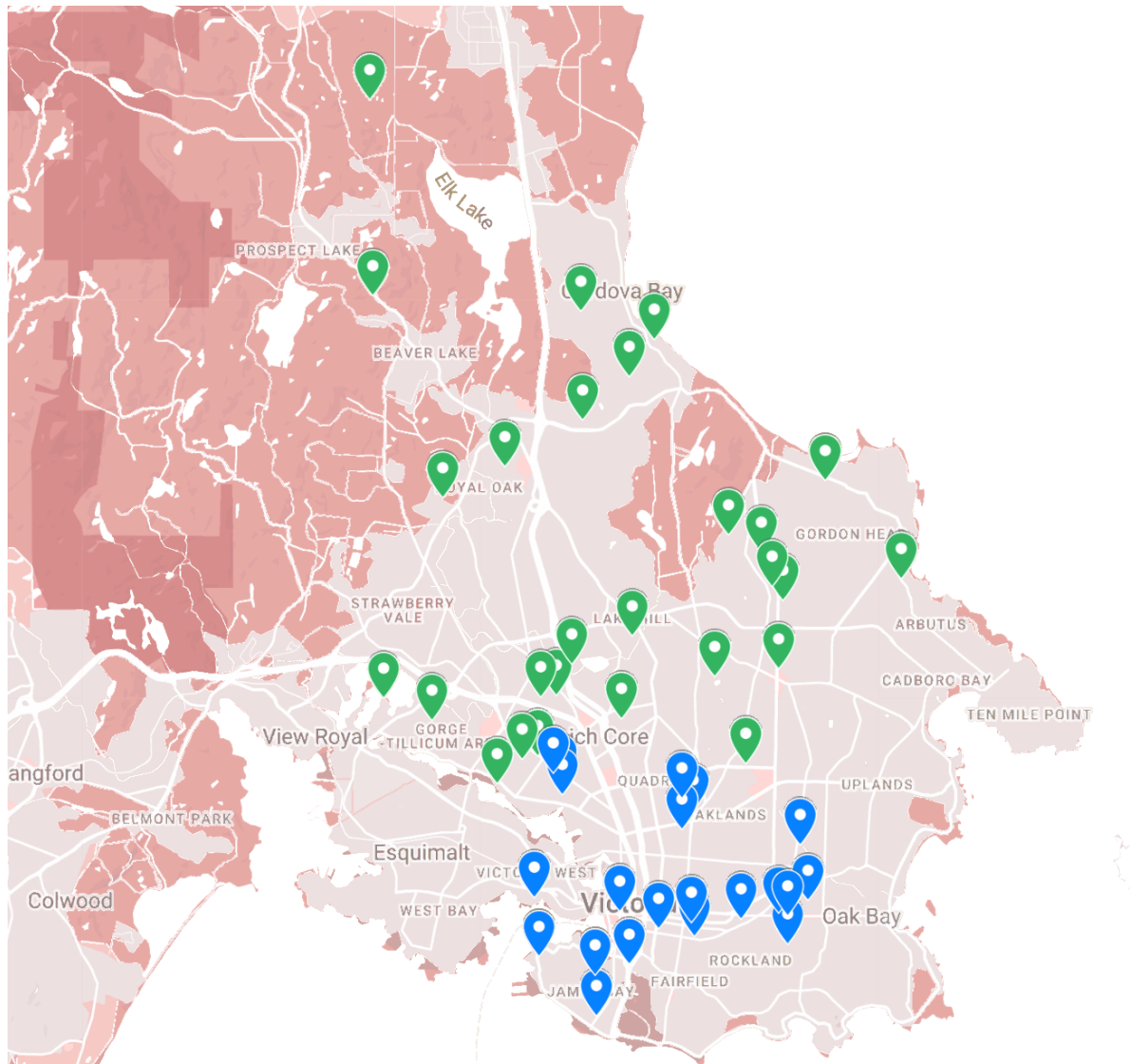
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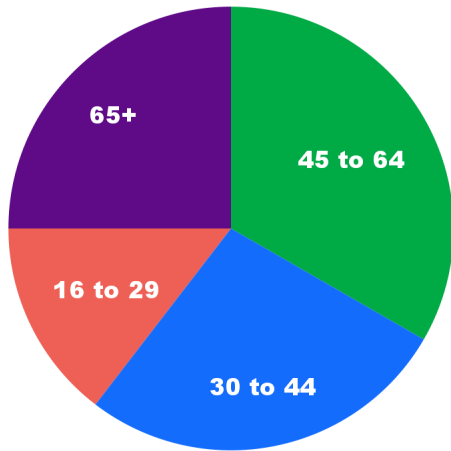
Citizens' Assembly at a Glance

Geography and Neighbourhood

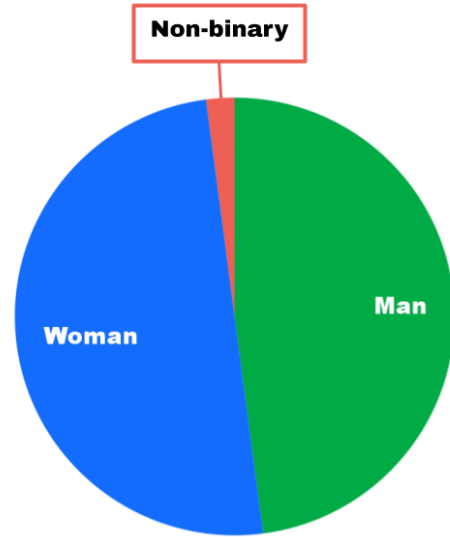
District of Saanich	27	City of Victoria	21
Cordova Bay, Royal Oak & Blenkinsop	5	James Bay, Downtown & Fairfield	6
Saanich Core, Quadra & Shelbourne	7	West, Burnside & North Park	5
Tillicum, Carey & North Quadra	7	Quadra, Oaklands & Fernwood	6
Gordon Head & Cadboro Bay	6	Jubilee, Rocklands & Gonzales	4
Rural Saanich	2		



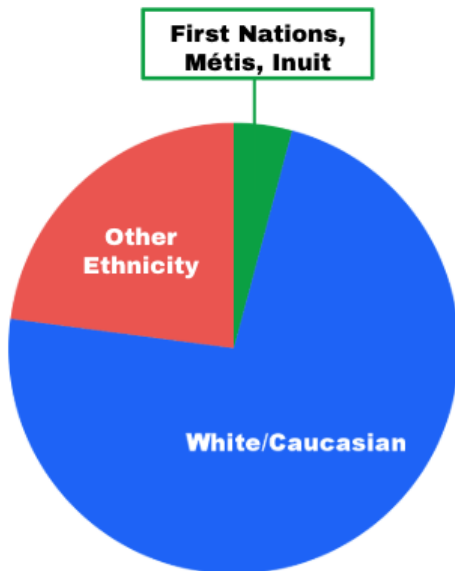
Age



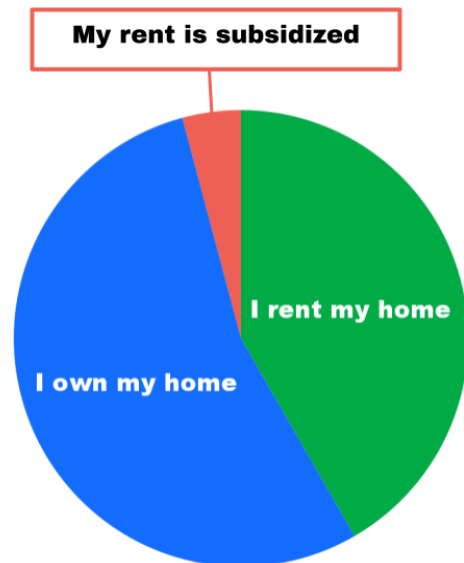
Gender



Race & Ethnicity



Housing



Fast Facts

What is municipal amalgamation?

Municipal amalgamation takes place when two or more municipalities merge to form one larger municipality. Proponents of amalgamation may suggest that larger municipalities can be more efficient and cost-effective by combining resources and services, but other reasons also exist, including ways to better manage growth that encroaches on shared boundaries. Opponents of amalgamation may suggest that the process comes at the cost of local decision-making and identity and fails to produce anticipated savings.

In British Columbia, municipal amalgamation can only occur with Provincial approval after a vote has been taken in each municipality and with more than 50% of the votes in favour of the proposed amalgamation in each municipality.

What happens if the Citizens' Assembly **recommends** amalgamation?

The Citizens' Assembly is one stage in a process. The Assembly's role is to study the issues, identify common aspirations, and make a consensus recommendation to the elected councils of Saanich and Victoria concerning whether and under what conditions the municipalities should amalgamate. If the Assembly ultimately recommends amalgamation, then both municipalities have committed to deliberating on this outcome, and working with the Province of British Columbia to initiate a public referendum at the next municipal election. If a majority of residents in both municipalities vote in favour of amalgamation, the plan would still require the provincial government's approval. The elected councils of both municipalities would then oversee the transition towards a single unified city which would take effect at a date to be determined by Victoria, Saanich, and the province.

What happens if the Citizens' Assembly **does not recommend** amalgamation?

The Citizens' Assembly is tasked with making a clear recommendation on the question of whether the municipalities of Saanich and Victoria should pursue amalgamation. If the Assembly ultimately decides not to recommend amalgamation, they may still make recommendations to councils regarding specific opportunities they see for the two municipalities to pursue deeper service integration, shared agreements, and/or other improvements to municipal governance and planning. Such recommendations would carry the weight of the Assembly's deliberations and consensus but would likely not be subject to a public referendum. It would be up to councils to determine whether and how to pursue these recommendations of the Assembly.

What is a Citizens' Assembly?

A Citizens' Assembly is a deliberative process where a demographically representative group of randomly selected volunteers study an issue in order to make one or more consensus recommendations to government on behalf of a wider community.

Since the first Citizens' Assembly took place in British Columbia in 2004, the model has been used by governments and public agencies throughout the world to help examine and find agreement on complex policy issues.

To date, more than 1,000 Citizens' Assemblies — including more than 50 here in Canada — have taken place. Each Assembly is typically made up of several dozen randomly selected participants who together represent a range of perspectives as well as the demography of a specific jurisdiction. Participation is voluntary.

What is a Civic Lottery?

The selection of Citizens' Assembly members employs an innovative "Civic Lottery" process designed to ensure broad demographic representation while maintaining the fundamental principles of randomness and fairness. The traditional name for the Civic Lottery is sortition.

The Civic Lottery recruitment approach represents a significant departure from traditional 'open' public consultation recruitment methods, such as town halls or focus groups, which primarily attract stakeholders with specific interests. Instead, the Civic Lottery process seeks to recruit and engage a truly representative cross-section of a given population according to factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, housing status, geography, and others.

The Civic Lottery process begins with the distribution of carefully designed invitation packages to 10,000 or more randomly selected addresses within the Assembly's target communities. Addresses are provided by Canada Post's civic mailing address database. Respondents who indicate they are willing to volunteer are then added to a secure database. From this list of respondents, the Assembly is selected by an algorithmic model that ensures the composition of members broadly matches the demographics of the communities it represents.

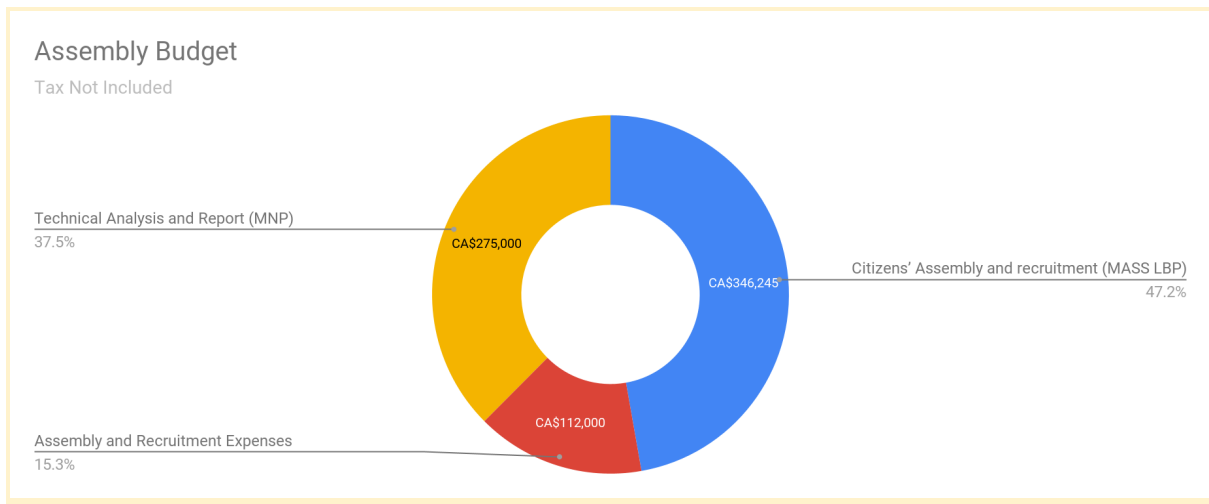
Citizens' Assembly Guiding Principles as determined by the District of Saanich and City of Victoria

Both municipalities determined that the following nine principles should guide the work of the Assembly:

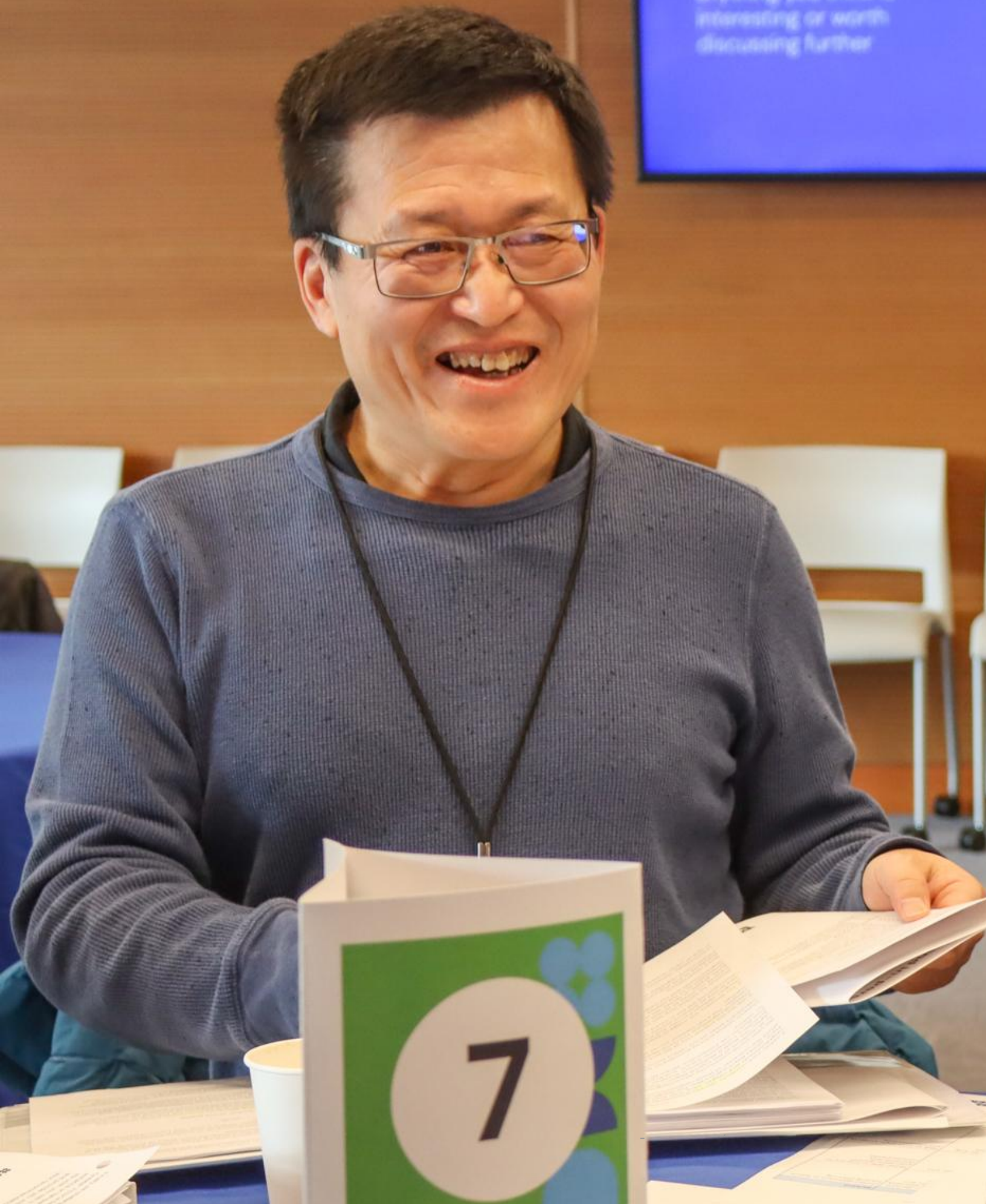
1. **Openness and Transparency** – The Assembly will regularly share its learnings and deliberations with the public on an ongoing and predictable basis.
2. **Accountability and Legitimacy** – The Assembly will work within a defined mandate and budget on behalf of the residents of Saanich and Victoria. The Assembly will deliver its Final Report directly to the Municipal Councils of Saanich and Victoria.
3. **Effective Representation** – The Assembly will be charged with the responsibility of representing the needs and interests of the residents of Saanich and Victoria. The members of the Assembly will be selected to broadly represent the demographics of the municipalities.
4. **Accessibility** – The Assembly will provide reasonable supports to address barriers that may prevent a member of the Assembly from participating successfully.
5. **Independence** – The Assembly will have full independence to determine how to best fulfill its mandate, under the advisement of an experienced, third-party consultant who will facilitate the Assembly process.
6. **Well-Informed** – The Assembly's recommendations will be informed by a range of perspectives and sources of expertise including the technical report.
7. **Balance** – The Assembly will consider a diversity of voices and perspectives in its deliberations. The Chair will work to ensure that there is room for all voices.
8. **Collaborative Decision-Making** – The Assembly will work towards consensus when drafting their recommendations, while also respecting and documenting differing perspectives among its members.
9. **Respect** – The Assembly will strive to be conscientious and fair-minded in their deliberations and in their consultations with the residents of Saanich and Victoria.

Cost Breakdown of the Citizens' Assembly

The full cost of the Victoria–Saanich Citizens' Assembly is \$750,000, with the City of Victoria, the District of Saanich, and the Province of British Columbia each providing one-third of the budgeted funds. The budget was approved by voters as part of the Community Opinion Question on the ballot in Victoria and Saanich during the 2018 municipal elections, and subsequently approved by the Province of British Columbia.



summary of the public
meetings and circle
anything you think is
interesting or worth
discussing further



Citizens' Assembly Program

Between September and November 2024, the Citizens' Assembly met four times at Saturday all-day sessions and participated in two evening public meetings. What follows is a summary of each of these sessions and meetings. All presentations, videos, and materials are available on the Assembly's website at victoriasaanich.ca/resources.

Session 1: September 21, 2024

On Saturday, September 21, 2024, the 48 members of the Victoria–Saanich Citizens' Assembly walked into the Atrium at the Centre for Trades, Education and Innovation at Camosun College's Interurban Campus for their first of eight full-day sessions together. Over the course of seven and a half hours on Day 1, the Assembly members heard from three experts, two mayors, and the Assembly Chair about the special character of their mandate, the significance of their role, and the history of the region including its unique structural and governance models.

The day began with W̱JOŁŁP (Tsartlip) Elder **Ivy Seward** welcoming the Assembly to the territories traditionally inhabited by the ɫək ʷəŋən Peoples, represented by the Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations, and the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples, represented by the W̱JOŁŁP (Tsartlip), BOKEĆEN (Pauquachin), S̱ÁUTW̱ (Tsawout), W̱ SIKEM (Tseycum), and MÁLEXEL (Malahat) Nations.

Next, Victoria Mayor **Marianne Alto** and Saanich Mayor **Dean Murdock** jointly addressed the Assembly, expressing their gratitude on behalf of their governments to the members for volunteering for this historic civic duty. They emphasized the importance of Assembly members as representatives of their fellow residents of Saanich and Victoria as they deliberate on issues that affect everyone. And they pledged to accept the Assembly's final report and take up their recommendations in their respective councils when the report is delivered next spring.

Chair **Peter MacLeod** led the members through an overview of the process and mandate of the Assembly, speaking from the experience of having designed and led more than 60 Citizens' Assemblies in Canada over the past 17 years through his organization, MASS LBP. After the 48 Assembly members had the opportunity to stand and introduce themselves formally to each other, Peter welcomed the first of three speakers of the day.

Tracy Underwood is a Matriarch of the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations and a PhD candidate and assistant professor of Indigenous Studies at the University of Victoria. To the Assembly she delivered a “living presentation” she calls “JÁELNONET,” which means to acknowledge and to thank. The presentation intertwined her story as someone who has grown up on W̱SÁNEĆ lands and explored the impact of cultural genocide on Indigenous language, culture, and history. She implored listeners to think beyond reconciliation to reconstruction, and to envision a reciprocal framework for respectful relationships and living on Indigenous land.

The Assembly next welcomed **John Lutz**, a professor of history at the University of Victoria, where he teaches courses on the history of British Columbia, the Pacific Northwest, and Indigenous-settler relations. Professor Lutz gave a presentation called “Harrowing Eden” about the legacy of colonial settlement and land division in the region and how that legacy impacts the cities we live in today, weaving in colourful anecdotes of history that illuminate what is special about this region we share.

Finally, the Assembly heard from **Robert Bish**, an economist and emeritus professor at the University of Victoria’s School of Public Administration, who has researched, consulted, and written about the organization and operation of local governments since 1968. Professor Bish spoke to Assembly members about the broad structure of local government in British Columbia, how municipal services are managed and delivered, and the historical factors that sometimes lead the province and cities to consider amalgamation. Like the two speakers before him, Professor Bish engaged in a question-and-answer session with members following his talk.

Among all of these presentations, the Assembly members, working together in groups of six or seven at their tables, discussed what they hope to learn during the Assembly process, how they’ve seen the region change over the course of their lives, and what they value about local government.

Session 2: October 19, 2024

On Saturday, October 19, 2024, the 48 members of the Victoria-Saanich Citizens’ Assembly gathered at Sherri Bell Hall at Camosun College’s Lansdowne Campus for their second of eight full-day sessions together. Situated at a unique junction within the capital region’s geography – inside the District of Saanich but with the boundaries of both the City of Victoria and the District of Oak Bay in sight from the hall’s grand

windows – the venue is an apt location for a group of citizens tasked with discussing the future of the area.

(It was also Election Day in British Columbia. Most Assembly members said they participated in early voting, but organizers ensured there was enough time for members to head to the polls after the session concluded.)

After an introduction and recap of Session 1 from Assembly Chair **Peter MacLeod**, the Assembly members welcomed **Jocelyn Jenkyns**, City Manager of Victoria, and **Brent Reems**, Chief Administrative Officer of Saanich. In back-to-back presentations, each administrator presented an overview of their municipality's demographics, economy, workforce, services, transportation, policing, community plans, budget and fiscal outlook, and the major issues facing local government and residents. Each speaker answered questions from the Assembly members seated in front of them at round tables.

Next, the Assembly welcomed **Ted Robbins**, Chief Administrative Officer of the Capital Regional District (CRD), who introduced the members to the history, structure, governance, budget, and distribution of services which the CRD is responsible for. Following the presentation, Chair Peter MacLeod welcomed all three of the morning's guests to sit together at the front of the room and take further questions from members.

After lunch, the Assembly welcomed **Bonnie Chan-Maier** and **James Richardson** of MNP, the consulting firm tasked with producing a Technical Study of the two municipalities, which, when it is completed and published in January 2025, will serve as a key submission for both the Assembly and the broader public to consider. Chan-Maier and Richardson led Assembly members through an overview of the key methodology of the study, their process of data collection, and what members should expect when they see the final report.

After a robust Q&A with the MNP guests, Assembly members spent the bulk of the afternoon working in small groups to consider whether there were additional elements or areas of analysis they felt the Technical Study should consider. They then provided that feedback in dialogue with the guests in a collaborative effort to ensure the study provides them with the information they'll need to help make their recommendations next spring.



Session 3: November 2, 2024

On a cool and drizzly Saturday, November 2, 2024, the members of the Victoria–Saanich Citizens’ Assembly reconvened at Sherri Bell Hall at Camosun College, Lansdowne Campus, for their third of eight full-day sessions together.

Assembly Chair **Peter MacLeod** welcomed members back to their task by inviting them to share their reflections on what they’d learned in the previous session and the issues they’d been thinking about over the past few weeks.

Following this plenary discussion, the theme of the morning turned to municipal planning, and how cities prepare for the changes and challenges of the future. The Assembly members welcomed **Lindsay Chase**, Director of Planning for the District of Saanich, and **Andrea Hudson**, Assistant Director of Citywide Planning for the City of Victoria. In back-to-back presentations, the two planners helped members understand each municipality’s planning contexts: boundaries, demographics, population projections, future housing needs, zoning, land-use policies, resilience against climate change, the tools and challenges of urban planning, and how official community plans are developed with public input. The Saanich presentation also included an introduction to the Urban Containment Boundary, the Agricultural Land Reserve, and the special character of Rural Saanich.

Following the two presentations, Assembly members engaged in a question-and-answer period with the speakers, after which they spent time working in small groups at their tables refining their draft values.

After lunch, the Assembly welcomed, via Zoom from her office in Toronto, **Enid Slack**, Executive Director at the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance at the University of Toronto. Slack presented a high-level overview of why cities and provinces sometimes consider amalgamation. She provided examples of municipal mergers (and de-mergers) in Canada, an overview of metropolitan governance models, a summary of municipal fiscal pressures, and some key advantages and disadvantages of amalgamation, including what the research literature says.

Following a robust Q&A, the Assembly members spent the remainder of the afternoon working in small groups, discussing with each other what they considered to be the most important reasons that Victoria and Saanich should, and should not, amalgamate and/or pursue greater service integration, based on what they had learned so far. They

also articulated the questions they felt still needed to be answered for them to feel adequately ready to consider recommendations.

Session 4: November 30, 2024

On the last day of November, the members of the Victoria–Saanich Citizens' Assembly gathered once more at Sherri Bell Hall at Camosun College, Lansdowne Campus, for their fourth and final meeting of 2024.

The day began with breakfast and reflections on the public meetings, which took place on November 20 and 21. During those meetings, more than 100 members of the public had the opportunity to learn about the Assembly's work, share their perspectives and questions about civic issues including potential amalgamation, and meet and interact with members of the Assembly.

Assembly Chair **Peter MacLeod** invited members to share in plenary what they had heard and learned from their conversations with the public, after which they continued their discussions in smaller groups to identify the issues raised by the public that deserve further study or consideration by the Assembly. Members next spent time reviewing the 19 public submissions made to the Assembly between September and November. They discussed the issues and considerations raised in the public submissions and identified those that they should carry forward in their deliberations.

Following a mid-morning break, the Assembly welcomed its first guest speaker of the day, **Julian Daly**, chief executive officer of Our Place Society, which provides services to the region's most vulnerable communities, including people struggling with homelessness, mental health challenges, substance use issues, and others. Daly shared the stories of some of the people who come to use services of organizations like Our Place and provided an overview of the issues of homelessness, poverty, and addiction currently facing the capital region. He emphasized the need for communities to work together to overcome not only the challenges of solving housing and addiction crises but also the fear and stigma surrounding these issues. Members engaged in a robust question-and-answer period with Daly, including clarifying how municipalities should tackle these issues in the future, before breaking for lunch.

After lunch, members returned to their tables, and Chair Peter MacLeod directed them to resume their discussions from Session 3 around the various potential scenarios for the future of the two municipalities: amalgamation, further service integration, or

maintaining two separate municipalities. Members spent time in conversation identifying the gaps between what they know and what they still need to know about the key issues bearing on their mandate, and what assurances they would need to support each of the various potential outcomes.

Following the afternoon break, members welcomed **Clayton Pecknold**, the former Police Complaints Commissioner of British Columbia and former Assistant Deputy Minister and Director of Police Services for the province. Pecknold's presentation included an overview of municipal policing in British Columbia, the various models and service agreements in effect, and the costs of policing borne by different levels of government. He clarified the differences between services provided by the RCMP and municipal police departments, discussed ways in which municipalities and jurisdictions currently share services and coordinate their work, and also provided members with the framework of oversight and regulation in police services. Members then engaged Pecknold in a vigorous Q&A to further understand how questions of police services, funding, and further integration should bear on their work.

Session 4 of the Victoria–Saanich Citizens' Assembly closed with a look ahead to the Assembly's interim report, which will be released before the end of December, and the Technical Study Report, which will be presented to the Assembly at their January session and released to the public shortly thereafter.

Public Meetings: November 20-21, 2024

On Wednesday, November 20, 2024, the Assembly hosted an online public meeting, via Zoom. Assembly Chair **Peter MacLeod** provided an overview of the Citizens' Assembly process, including member selection and work to date.

Following a Q&A, guests and Assembly members broke into virtual breakout rooms on Zoom, where a facilitator guided a one-hour conversation in which guests shared their thoughts on each of the following questions:

1. What are the most important issues that will affect this region in the next 25 years?
2. What do you think is important to consider when deciding whether or not Victoria and Saanich should amalgamate?
3. What do you think are the potential benefits of amalgamation or deeper integration?
4. What do you think are the potential disadvantages?
5. What advice would you like to give the members of the Assembly?

Members of the public and members of the Assembly engaged with each other thoughtfully and respectfully about issues of civic governance as well as hopes and concerns about the future of the two municipalities and the region at large.

The following evening, Thursday, November 21, 2024, the Assembly hosted an in-person public meeting at the historic Crystal Garden at the Victoria Conference Centre, following the same format. Attendees sat at round tables with Assembly members and facilitators and engaged in similar discussions on the issues and potential future scenarios.

Assembly members expressed their deep appreciation to guests for the opportunity to hear directly from the public on the considerations that bear on their work.



Values

The 48 members of the Victoria–Saanich Citizens’ Assembly have worked collaboratively to identify and define the following values, which they believe should both inform their work as an Assembly as well as the work of local government in the region. These values remain in draft form and will be further refined before the Assembly’s final report in June 2025.

Collaborative

We value local government that fosters inclusive and flexible decision-making that balances community needs and perspectives.

Effective

We value local government that efficiently delivers high-quality public services through innovative and timely measures.

Sustainable

We value local government that takes a holistic and regenerative approach to decision-making to improve the quality of life of current and future generations.

Fiscally responsible

We value local government that understands it has a duty to utilize the communities’ resources wisely, to provide the best value in services and infrastructure, today and in the future.

Representative

We value local government that enables grassroots participation, inclusivity, and having influence on decisions being made at the neighbourhood level and with other communities.

Communicative

We value local government that ensures effective, accessible, respectful, and reciprocal relationships.

Humane

We value local government that contributes to the community’s vibrancy by ensuring that people have their core needs met.

Accountable

We value local government that knows it must be accountable as an overarching principle that informs our ability to measure progress.

Key Issues & Questions

The 48 members of the Victoria–Saanich Citizens’ Assembly have identified a number of key issues and questions facing the present and future of the region and its residents. Different from the Values above, this section has been drafted by the Assembly team as a summary of the Assembly’s thoughtful deliberations as well as its interactions with the broader community through the public meetings and submissions. The Assembly will continue to consider and study these and possibly other issues as they work towards making a consensus recommendation on the question of amalgamation in their final report.

Affordability & Quality of Life

Residents of Saanich and Victoria are concerned about rising costs associated with living in this great region and the ability of residents of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy a safe and sustainable environment in which to live, work, and play.

- *How can we best ensure a future in which all residents enjoy a high quality of life in this great region?*

Climate Change Planning & Resilience

Residents of Victoria and Saanich are concerned about the challenges to the region and our quality of life posed by a changing and warming climate.

- *How can we best ensure our region plans for and is resilient to climate change?*

Democratic Representation in Local Government

Residents of Saanich and Victoria want to see the interests and needs of our diverse communities and neighbourhoods adequately represented in local government.

- *How can we best ensure effective local government that is representative of and responsive to local needs and communities?*

Economic Development

Residents of Victoria and Saanich want to see a region characterized by a vibrant business community and employment opportunities that maximize the strengths of the region while also prioritizing affordability and quality of life.

- *How can we best ensure a successful economic future for businesses, workers, and residents of this region?*

Financial & Resource Management

Residents of Saanich and Victoria are concerned about matters of taxation, fiscal and resource management, and cost effectiveness in local government.

- *How can we best ensure that local government makes the best use of resources and is fiscally responsible to its residents?*

Housing & Homelessness

Residents of Saanich and Victoria are concerned about the availability and affordability of housing for all residents, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized among us, in light of the rapid growth and needs facing the region in the coming years.

- *How can we best ensure we meet the housing needs of all residents considering the growth and development of the region?*

Indigenous Relations

Residents of Victoria and Saanich want to continue to develop strong and supportive relations with area First Nations and to meet our commitments to Truth and Reconciliation in a way that respects and honours Indigenous culture, identity, and history on the lands and waters of this region.

- *How can we best ensure we are meeting our commitments to and respecting Indigenous peoples, honouring the land, and contributing to the healing and strengthening of our communities for generations to come?*

Local Culture & Identity

Residents of Saanich and Victoria recognize and celebrate the diversity and richness of local culture found in the distinct communities across this region, from rural areas to the city centre, from historic neighbourhoods to new developments.

- *How can we best ensure that our local culture and identities are recognized, celebrated, and represented in local government?*

Planning for & Managing Future Growth

Residents of Victoria and Saanich are concerned about challenges associated with the growth that is forecast for this region in the coming years – including infrastructure, land use, service delivery, food security, and sustainability – and how our region can have a strong voice at provincial and federal levels of government.

- *How can we best ensure we are planning for and managing the anticipated growth in our region?*

Social & Municipal Services

Residents of Saanich and Victoria want to see a region characterized by high-quality and well-managed social and municipal services that provide for the needs of all residents and contribute to affordable and sustainable living.

- *How can we best ensure all residents of the region have access to quality social and municipal services?*

Transit, Transportation & Infrastructure

Residents of Victoria and Saanich want to see a region characterized by a world-class transit and transportation network that fosters connectivity, active transportation, efficiency, and environmental sustainability while respecting the needs and capacities of local communities and neighbourhoods.

- *How can we best ensure our transit and transportation infrastructure meets the needs of a diverse and growing region?*



Assembly Member Profiles

Meet the members of the Victoria–Saanich Citizens’ Assembly. Each member responded to the Civic Lottery invitation sent to randomly selected homes across Victoria and Saanich. Each was then randomly selected through a Civic Lottery to ensure that the Assembly broadly represents the residents of Victoria and Saanich. Each member confirmed availability, eligibility, demographic details, and an Assembly Member Pledge of Public Service. Members are listed with first name and last initial during the process — full names will appear on the final report.

Adam A., Saanich

I’m Adam, and I’ve lived in Saanich for three years after moving from Fiji. My wife and I were drawn to Victoria for its mild climate and community atmosphere. I am the executive director of a local branch of an international charity, Youth With a Mission. I enjoy being active in the homeschooling community and exploring sustainable farming practices. I joined the Assembly to help improve our community for my children.

Adam S., Saanich

I’m Adam, and I’ve been living in Saanich for 12 years. Originally from Ontario, I’m a health researcher and epidemiologist. I live on a small farm in rural Saanich, which I run with my wife and our two young sons. I enjoy hiking, backpacking, and playing soccer in my spare time. My involvement in the Assembly is driven by a desire to understand the potential benefits and challenges of amalgamation and to contribute to informed civic discussions.

Alli D., Saanich

I’m Alli, born and raised in Saanich, where my husband and I now get to raise our baby. I have been a resident for over 30 years, and I have seen many shifts in our community. The reason I joined the Assembly is to be engaged in how we should best direct the changes to Saanich and Victoria for our future. There are various stakeholder groups the municipalities need to consider, and I look forward to being a voice of reason and change. Professionally, I obtained my Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Victoria and focused my employment efforts in accounting and business management. My family is deeply involved in outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing, and I treasure the outdoor pursuits we have available in our community. I currently volunteer as the Treasurer for the B.C. Wildlife Federation and the Island Rangers Society to ensure future generations get to experience the same opportunities with fish and wildlife, and land access as I did. I aim to bring a well-rounded, youthful voice and a different perspective to my community.

Ana C., Saanich

I’m Ana, and I am a mom of three boys who has lived in Saanich for over a decade and Oak Bay and Victoria previously. I love the sense of community, recreational services, and natural beauty here. I currently work at Island Health and I love the people I work with. I look forward to the commitment of the Assembly to help our leaders make an important decision.

Ava L., Saanich

I’m Ava, and I’ve lived in both Victoria and Saanich since I was four. Currently a student at UVic studying biology and environmental studies, I volunteer with nature and food security initiatives. The community’s cooperative spirit and natural beauty are what I love most. I joined the Assembly to share my perspective on community living and engage in civic duty.

Bill B., Saanich

I’m Bill, and I’ve lived in Saanich since the mid-1950s and previously in Victoria since the late 1930s. A retired high school teacher, I enjoy following politics, travelling, and staying informed through international news. The community’s vibrant academic and natural environment keeps me engaged. I joined the Assembly to ensure local decisions reflect the genuine needs and voices of the people.

Brandon Y., Saanich

Hi, I'm Brandon, and I've had the pleasure of calling Saanich my home for the past three years, following two great years in Esquimalt. Originally from Vancouver, I work as a naval officer in Esquimalt. Victoria's unique blend of urban life and natural beauty is one reason I am proud to call this place my home. I joined the Assembly to transform my concerns into proactive solutions and to contribute meaningfully to the betterment of our community.

Brenna A., Victoria

I'm Brenna, and I've been living in Victoria since October 2021, moving here from Calgary. I work remotely for a global social impact consulting firm, helping to build trust and collaboration among diverse stakeholders. The vibrant outdoor lifestyle and welcoming community drew me back here after completing my undergraduate degree in Victoria. I joined the Assembly to engage with local issues and meet more people in the community.

Cameron S., Saanich

I'm Cameron, and I've called Saanich home for the past 25 years. After a fulfilling career with the Pacific Pilotage Authority, I am now passionate about fitness and nutrition. The island's natural beauty and active lifestyle are perfect for me. I joined the Assembly to engage with fellow residents and contribute to regional development discussions.

Camille M., Victoria

My name is Camille, a resident of Victoria since January 2023. Originally from the Philippines, I moved here to pursue my studies and currently work as an IT Business Analyst. I am passionate about exploring local art, food, coffee, and music and supporting community events. Joining the Assembly gives me the opportunity to engage with local issues and contribute to the growth of our community. In my leisure time, I enjoy travelling to new places, both within Victoria and beyond.

Daniel P., Saanich

I'm Dan, a resident of Greater Victoria since 2010. Originally from Ontario, I've lived in various places including Europe, Seattle, and Alberta. Currently, I work as a forest research scientist with Natural Resources Canada, focusing on wildfire behaviour and management. My interest in municipal affairs motivated me to join the Assembly. Having lived in both Victoria and Saanich, I hope to bring a balanced perspective to the discussions. I look forward to engaging with diverse viewpoints and contributing to decisions that will shape the future of our community.

David H., Victoria

I'm David, and I've lived in Victoria since 1985, after moving here from the BC Interior to attend University. I hold an undergraduate degree in English and psychology from UVic, and have spent my career in communications and consulting. I joined the Assembly to deepen my understanding of local governance and contribute to the community I love.

David V., Victoria

I'm David, and I came to Victoria in 2021 to study marketing at Camosun College. I work as a rope access technician, and recently opened a company of painting and maintenance. I love Victoria's vibrant atmosphere and natural beauty. My daily walks through Beacon Hill Park and past the parliament buildings are highlights of my day. I've been a goodwill ambassador for Mexico and volunteered in my mother's charity back home. These experiences instilled strong values in me. I joined the Assembly to learn more about my new home and to contribute meaningfully to the community. I also speak three languages fluently (Spanish, Portuguese, and English).

Edward C., Saanich

I'm Edward, and I've lived in Saanich since 2003, after moving from Vancouver. Currently I work as a senior data solutions specialist for the BC government. I joined the Assembly to contribute my data analysis expertise and help create a more comfortable community for everyone.

Fabrizio C., Victoria

I'm Fabrizio, and I've lived in Victoria since 2012, with a previous stint from 1998 to 2003. My wife's work has brought us around the world before returning to Victoria to raise our children. I am a graphic designer and am very involved in the region's mountain biking community, serving as the Executive Director of the Hornby Island Mountain Bike Association. I

joined the Assembly to expand my community involvement and explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of municipal amalgamation.

Gary R., Saanich

I'm Gary, originally from Saanich, and I returned a decade ago to care for my mother. Retired from accounting and real estate, I now volunteer with hospice care and enjoy local activities. I joined the Assembly to understand the implications of amalgamation and to contribute to the region's decision-making process.

Geri H., Saanich

I'm Geri, and at 84, I've lived 50 years in Saanich. I'm a retired nurse and former director of the Office for Seniors. Now, I focus on housing security for low-income seniors, volunteering extensively to support this cause. I enjoy playing cello in an amateur group. Inspired by my grandmother's civic engagement, I joined the Assembly to contribute my extensive knowledge and help address the region's growth and development challenges.

Janet K., Saanich

I'm Janet, and I moved to Saanich in 2021 after spending nearly seven decades in Alberta and other regions in British Columbia. Originally from Saanich, I returned to enjoy the mountains and water. I have two children and six grandchildren, with my daughter and one grandson living nearby. In my leisure time, I enjoy knitting, crocheting, and making toys for children of family and friends. Passionate about community involvement, I joined the Assembly to learn more about local governance and to contribute to discussions on amalgamation.

Jennifer C., Saanich

I'm Jennifer, and I've lived in Victoria for 25 years before moving to Saanich where I've been since 2019. I work full-time as a transit supervisor for BC Transit and am a dedicated volunteer, currently helping a refugee couple from Afghanistan. I enjoy outdoor activities, CrossFit, and collecting vinyl records. I'm excited to join the Assembly to contribute to my community with an open mind.

Jeremy S., Saanich

I'm Jeremy, and I've lived in Saanich for four years since moving from Pennsylvania. I work as an engineering manager in semiconductor design. The region's outdoor activities and welcoming community have made it easy to settle in. I joined the Assembly to actively participate in local governance and help shape the community's future.

Jerry K., Victoria

I'm Jerry, and I've been living in Victoria for the past two years, having moved here from Edmonton. My career spans over five decades as a producer, writer, director, editor, and sound designer/mixer in the film and television industry. I joined the Assembly to explore the viability of small cities in today's climate and contribute my governance experience from various board positions.

Jordan S., Saanich

I'm Jordan, a lifelong resident of Saanich. Over the past 21 years, I've come to deeply appreciate the natural beauty and climate of our region, from the ocean to the mountains. Currently, I work at an escape room business and enjoy reading, playing and designing video games, and writing. I joined the Assembly to stay informed and contribute to the future of my community.

Justin G., Victoria

I'm Justin, and I've been living in Victoria since 1995, with a brief stint in Vancouver. I am an architect specializing in residential, affordable, and seniors housing. I enjoy hiking, live music, and watercolour painting. I joined the Assembly to deepen my connection to the community and share ideas on local issues.

Karen M., Victoria

I'm Karen and I was born and raised in Oak Bay. I moved to Calgary in 1986 to pursue a career as a librarian, then human resources advisor – always knowing that I would retire here. Since returning to BC to live in Victoria in 2016, I have become more aware of the 13 municipalities that comprise Greater Victoria. Retirement life includes family, friends, volunteering,

reading, and lots of coastal walks. As a member of the Assembly, I am excited to learn more about local governance and to make a contribution to the community.

Kati E., Victoria

I'm Kati, and I moved to Victoria from Shuswap Lake ten years ago to attend the University of Victoria and now work in the communications field. I love the area's natural beauty and enjoy exploring urban spaces, hiking, and relaxing in revitalized parks. Motivated by curiosity about municipal governance, I joined the Assembly to learn and engage with diverse community members, hoping to make a positive impact.

Keith W., Saanich

I'm Keith, and I've lived in Saanich for 29 years after moving from Calgary. Now retired, I enjoy golfing, dragon boating, and volunteering in the community. The accessibility and connectivity of this region are what I appreciate most. I joined the Assembly to engage with the process of local governance and contribute to meaningful decisions.

Kyle H., Saanich

I'm Kyle. I grew up in Greater Victoria and I've been back in Saanich for a year after living in Vancouver, Nanaimo, Toronto, and Hong Kong. I work in law and have a passion for urban issues, especially transportation and planning. I joined the Assembly to engage in discussions about regional planning and contribute to the future of the region.

Kylie H., Victoria

I'm Kylie, and I've been living on Vancouver Island for nine years. Originally from Manitoba, I work as a Class 1 driver locally. I love the weather here and enjoy biking, camping, and walking on our paths and trails with my boyfriend. I joined the Assembly to contribute to the community and better understand the differences in local governance compared to Manitoba.

Lara H., Victoria

I'm Lara, originally from Terrace. I moved to Vancouver Island to attend UVic law school and now work as an articling student in Oak Bay. I appreciate Victoria's community spirit, diverse neighbourhoods, and pleasant weather. My interest in civic engagement stems from a belief in active participation for positive change. With a background in sociology, I joined the Assembly to understand city dynamics and contribute to regional development.

Laura G., Victoria

I'm Laura, and I've lived in the Greater Victoria area for over 20 years, with the last nine years in Victoria. I work at a homeless shelter and enjoy walks and spending time with family. I joined the Assembly to learn more about local governance and to contribute my perspective to the community.

Lisa M., Victoria

I'm Lisa, and I've been living in Victoria and Saanich for 33 years and currently reside in Victoria. I have a background as a lab technologist and currently manage computer systems at Island Health. I enjoy spending time at home with my husband and our two Havanese dogs, Dyson and Riley. I'm passionate about gardening and hope to travel more in the future. I joined the Assembly to explore new perspectives on local governance and community engagement, particularly around the topic of amalgamation.

Lynda N., Saanich

I'm Lynda, and I've been living in Saanich since 2005. Originally from Kitchener, Ontario, I am a CPA and CMA in a financial leadership role at UVic. I'm passionate about creating intersections in our community to exchange ideas. My family and I are actively involved in the local soccer community as a player, parent, and former board member. My involvement in the Assembly is driven by a desire to contribute to the continuous improvement of our community.

Mackenzie B., Saanich

I'm Mackenzie, and I've lived in Saanich for a year, with previous experience living in other parts of BC. I work as a project manager for BC Assessment in the IT division. I enjoy writing poetry, doing yoga, and exploring nature. I joined the Assembly to be involved in my community and make a positive impact. My strong connection to the island and my family here motivates me to stay engaged with the community.

Mary S., Victoria

I'm Mary, and I've lived in Victoria for 23 years. I'm a retired social worker with 35 years of experience, primarily in mental health and addictions. I love kayaking, hiking, and attending local community events. My strong family ties to the area and my passion for community issues motivated me to join the Assembly.

Mike M., Victoria

I'm Mike, and have lived in Victoria off and on since 1990. Originally from Ontario, I'm now retired from a career in international development consulting. I enjoy spending time with my family, playing tennis, and travelling in our camper van. I joined the Assembly to contribute to discussions on improving local governance.

Nikki B., Saanich

I'm Nikki, and I emigrated from Punjab, India, to Saanich in 1975. A retired restaurateur, I am passionate about city affairs and democratic participation. I joined the Assembly to engage in local governance and contribute to community betterment.

Noa M., Victoria

I'm Noa, and although I was born in the Lower Mainland, I've called Victoria home since early childhood. As a computer science student at UVic, I enjoy designing systems and hope to work as a developer. Cycling is my primary mode of transportation, fostering an interest in municipal infrastructure. My concerns about housing costs led me to join the Assembly to learn more and contribute to potential solutions. Inspired by the book *Open Democracy* by Hélène Landemore, I am eager to engage in the Assembly's collaborative process and help shape the community's future.

Nora M., Saanich

I'm Nora, and I've lived in Saanich for five years after moving from Nova Scotia. Born and raised in Toronto, I now enjoy the slower pace and beautiful surroundings of Saanich. I am an avid knitter, needle pointer, and enjoy spending time with my dog. I joined the Assembly to have a voice in the community's future.

Perpetua N., Saanich

I'm Perpetua, a family doctor who moved to Saanich from England in 2020. Originally from Nigeria, I've lived and worked in multiple countries, including Zambia, where I volunteered in a rural hospital. That experience remains one of the most fulfilling experiences of my career. I joined the Assembly to engage with the community and help shape our city's future.

Peter F., Victoria

I'm Peter, a resident of Greater Victoria since 1987 with family in the area. With a background in organizational change management and extensive experience consulting for the government, non-profit, and private sectors, I look forward to bringing my experience to the Assembly. I'm excited by the opportunity to work with the Assembly, reviewing the potential for efficiencies in our local governance structures and improve services for our community.

Rick M., Saanich

I'm Rick, a Saskatchewan native from Moose Jaw. I spent my career in policing with the RCMP and Regina Police Service. In retirement, I moved to Saanich with my wife, who teaches at UVic. I enjoy the region's friendly atmosphere and slower pace. As a lifelong learner, I'm working towards a degree in philosophy and have completed a certificate in conflict resolution. I joined the Assembly to understand city governance and help develop informed recommendations for the future. I hope to build lasting relationships with fellow Assembly members. I continue to enjoy sailing and motorcycle touring.

Rolf S., Victoria

I'm Rolf, and I've lived in Victoria since 2016, having previously lived here from 2001 to 2008. I work at the University of Victoria in the physics department, maintaining computers and conducting some research. I enjoy skiing and spending time with my family. I joined the Assembly to contribute to the discussion on amalgamation, and help save money, and streamline local governance for the community.

Sam A., Victoria

I'm Sam, originally from the UK. I moved to British Columbia 15 years ago and have lived in Victoria for the past decade. As a self-employed carpenter, I appreciate the city's natural beauty and small size. Recently, I welcomed my first child. I have a diploma in city planning, and I value democratic participation. I joined the Assembly to learn more about city planning and governance. Despite not being able to vote as a permanent resident, I believe in contributing to the community through my Assembly involvement.

Sandra L., Saanich

I'm Sandra, and I've lived in Saanich since 1992. A former provincial government employee in human resources, I now enjoy sailing, gardening, and spending time with family. The mild climate and outdoor lifestyle make this an ideal place for me. I joined the Assembly out of curiosity about amalgamation and to contribute to my community.

Sarah B., Victoria

I'm Sarah, was born in Thunder Bay and later moved to Calgary. I studied Zoology at the University of Calgary but did my last semester at Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre on Vancouver Island. I fell in love with the West Coast and, after graduating, permanently moved to the Island. Since pivoting my career, I now work as a communications officer for the BC Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness. Identifying as genderqueer and bisexual, I feel welcomed in Victoria's inclusive community. I enjoy swing dancing, particularly Lindy Hop and Balboa, and engaging in creative storytelling through table-top role-playing games. Motivated by a growing interest in local politics and community issues, I joined the Assembly to learn about city governance and collaborate with other community members.

Sarah T., Saanich

I'm Sarah, and I've lived in Saanich since January 2020. Originally from Sidney, I moved back to the island after living in Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary. I work as a project director in the arts and culture division of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. My partner and I have a small urban farm, and I volunteer on the board of the Vancouver Island Visual Arts Society. I'm excited to join the Assembly to engage with my community and contribute to public service.

Tan E., Saanich

I'm Tan E., a lifelong resident of Saanich, with a recent five-year stint in Australia. I work in marketing at a software company and enjoy playing pickleball and board games with friends. I joined the Assembly to understand how policies could address issues like housing affordability and improve our community.

William B., Victoria

I'm William, and I've been a resident of Victoria since 1990, moving here from North Vancouver. Now retired from a career in Information Systems, I spend my time playing tennis, gardening, and playing drums in a jazz combo. The welcoming atmosphere and accessibility of Victoria make it an ideal place to live. I joined the Assembly to contribute my long-term resident's perspective to the examination of the social, economic, and efficiency opportunities presented by the possible amalgamation of Saanich and Victoria.



Appendices

Advisory & Oversight Group

The Advisory and Oversight Group provides advice to the Assembly Chair concerning the process and curriculum the Assembly will follow. It also responds to any concerns from Assembly members related to the conduct and impartiality of the Assembly itself.

Marjan H. Ehsassi is a lawyer, international governance expert, Executive Director of FIDE North America, and Strategic Director of the Democratic Action Fund. She serves on several boards including Healthy Democracy, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Meridian Council. As a Berggruen Renovating Democracy Fellow, Marjan supports programs that raise knowledge, build capacity, and test deliberative platforms in the United States, including the Global Innovations in Democracy Parliamentary Forum, the Summit of Democracy Working Group on Deliberative Democracy, the Future of Institutions on Deliberative Democracy, and the design and implementation of Citizens' Assemblies in the United States.

Paul Hames is currently serving as Vice-Chair on the Board of Directors for Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL), continuing his 21-year commitment to community building through strong governance in the cooperative movement. Paul is proud to have been a police officer for 41 years, beginning his career in the RCMP and then moving to municipal policing as Chief Constable in Central Saanich for 17 years. He has been awarded the Order of Merit of the Police Forces (MOM), the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and the RCMP Long Service Medal. Paul loves to travel with his family, hike and explore back roads on his motorcycle, and cruise the Gulf Islands.

Evert Lindquist is a professor in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, where his research interests include public sector and public service reform, designing and implementing policy interventions, digital and collaborative governance, the role and influence of think tanks in policy networks, and competing values in public sector leadership and reform. Professor Lindquist has been the Editor of *Canadian Public Administration*, the journal of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, since January 2012. He was awarded the BC Lieutenant Governor's Silver Medal Award for Excellence in Public Administration, Institute of Public Administration of Canada (Vancouver/Victoria Regional Groups), on June 23, 2016.

Warren Magnusson is professor emeritus of political science at the University of Victoria with an interest in the urban and the local as sites of politics and government. His most recent book, *Local Self-Government and the Right to the City*, completes a trilogy that began with *The Search for Political Space* (1996) and *Politics of Urbanism: Seeing Like a City* (2011). He has authored or edited numerous other books and articles on politics in British Columbia and Canada. He is a founding member of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Cultural, Social, and Political Thought (CSPT) at UVic, as well as of the Urban Studies Committee, which organizes the *CityTalks* in Victoria.

Ansley Tucker is the dean emerita of the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets, and now serves part-time to advance and coordinate the ministry of deacons. She took up her role as rector of Victoria's Christ Church Cathedral in 2015, having previously served in the Diocese of Toronto for 25 years, and in Calgary for ten. During her tenure, she led the church community's response to the Tent City encampment on the courthouse lawn, coming alongside the community in times of civic sorrow and indignation, and encouraged the church to make an "outward turn" in its sense of purpose. She brings extensive experience in the region's non-profit sector and is a champion of civic service and volunteerism.

Guest Speakers & Presenters

During the first four sessions of the Assembly, ten experts and invited guest speakers made presentations to the Assembly. We thank them for sharing their knowledge and perspectives with the Assembly.

Robert Bish is an economist who has researched, consulted, and written about the organization and operation of local governments since 1968. When he joined the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria in 1979, he was instrumental in bringing a service-based approach to the discipline, especially in his book *Local Government in British Columbia* (UBCM, 1987; latest edition 2008). A service-based approach also guides his work on amalgamation, including in *Local Government Amalgamations: Discredited Nineteenth-Century Ideals Alive in the Twenty-First* (C.D. Howe, 2001) and *Governing Greater Victoria: The Role of Elected Officials and Shared Services* (Fraser Institute, 2016). Now retired, he divides his time between Vancouver Island, Washington state, and Florida.

Lindsay Chase is the Director of Planning for the District of Saanich, and previously was the Director of Development Services for the Town of View Royal and Senior Planner with the City of Victoria. She's a PhD candidate in geography at the University of Victoria and also teaches planning as a professor at Vancouver Island University's Master of Community Planning program, educating the next generation of planners in the areas of theory, ethics, and planning in local and regional government. She currently serves on the Professional Standards Board for the planning profession in Canada and was previously Vice-President of the Canadian Institute of Planners. Mentoring students and young professionals is part of her contribution back to the profession. In her spare time she can be found travelling, or at the library!

Julian Daly is the Chief Executive Officer of Our Place Society, which serves Greater Victoria's most vulnerable, including people struggling with homelessness, mental health challenges, and substance use issues, the working poor, the LGBTQ+ community, and impoverished elderly. Previously he was Executive Director of Boyle Street Community Services, the largest organization for the homeless in Edmonton. Over a 35-year career, he has been a frontline worker and a manager in a wide range of programs and projects including housing, poverty reduction, community engagement, HIV/AIDS, harm reduction, the differently abled, employment, youth services, social enterprises, health, education, and children and family services.

Andrea Hudson is a registered professional planner with over twenty years of experience in local government. Andrea is currently the Assistant Director of Citywide Planning with the City of Victoria where she leads a team of planners responsible for delivering long range policies and strategies in land use planning, housing, climate action, urban design, heritage conservation, social planning and tenant assistance. She previously served in planning roles for the Cowichan Valley Regional District and the Government of the Northwest Territories. Andrea received a Masters in City Planning from the University of Manitoba and is a member of the Canadian Institute of Planners.

Jocelyn Jenkyns is the City Manager of Victoria and was formerly the Deputy City Manager and before that the General Manager of the Victoria Conference Centre. She received her Masters Certificate in Municipal Leadership from York University in 2018.

John Lutz is a professor of history at the University of Victoria, where he teaches courses on the history of British Columbia, the Pacific Northwest, and Indigenous-settler relations. He is the author or editor of six books, most recently *To Share, Not Surrender: Indigenous and Settler Visions of Treaty Making in the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia* (UBC Press, 2021). He is passionate about teaching history because he loves to help people find their roots, and when he's not teaching he's often exploring the hidden corners of the region on foot and by canoe or kayak.

Clayton Pecknold retired in 2024 after a five-year term as Police Complaints Commissioner of British Columbia. Prior to that, he was the Assistant Deputy Minister and Director of Police Services, Policing and Security Branch, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General from 2011 to 2019. A former RCMP officer, he also previously served as deputy chief of Saanich police and was president of the BC Association of Police Chiefs. He holds a law degree from Dalhousie University

and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. He is a recipient of the Order of Merit for the Police Forces (member), the Queen's Jubilee Medal, the King's Coronation Medal, and the Police Exemplary Service Medal.

Brent Reems is the Chief Administrative Officer of the District of Saanich. He joined Saanich as the Director of Building, Bylaw, Licensing and Legal Services in October 2017. Previously, he held roles at the Capital Regional District, the Office of the Ombudsperson, and a private law firm. He holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Victoria and a Master of Arts from Queen's University.

Ted Robbins is the Chief Administrative Officer of the Capital Regional District (CRD), which provides over 200 regional, sub-regional, and local services in the capital region, including regional parks, drinking water, wastewater treatment, and solid waste management. Ted is also responsible for the Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC) which provides affordable housing, and the Capital Regional Hospital District (CRHD) which provides capital funding for health care infrastructure in the region. Ted holds a BSc in Geography from the University of Victoria and has over 20 years of local government experience.

Enid Slack is the Executive Director of the Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance at the University of Toronto. She has published books and articles on property taxes, municipal fiscal health, intergovernmental transfers, development charges, financing municipal infrastructure, and metropolitan governance. She consults with governments and international agencies such as the World Bank, UN Habitat, Inter-American Development Bank, and the International Growth Centre, and chairs the Advisory Board of Local Public Sector Alliance. Enid received her BA in Economics from York University (Glendon College), and an MA and PhD in Economics from the University of Toronto. In 2012, she was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work on cities.

Tracy Underwood is a Matriarch of the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations and a PhD candidate and assistant professor of Indigenous Studies at the University of Victoria. She upholds daily her Matriarchal duties of protecting and preserving the children, land, language, and culture of her people. She's an expert in land-based learning, history, storytelling, and community care. As part of her PhD research, she developed a "living presentation" called JÁELNONET, which means to acknowledge and to thank, as a reciprocal framework for respectful relationships and living on Indigenous land. The presentation intertwines her story as someone who has grown up in W̱SÁNEĆ and explores the impact of cultural genocide on Indigenous language, culture, and history, while imploring listeners to think beyond reconciliation to reconstruction.

Technical Study

Both Councils determined that to ensure the Citizens' Assembly's deliberations are well-informed, a third-party consultant should be engaged to conduct a Technical Study of the proposed amalgamation. This study will help identify the implications of various governance models and the impact on integrating different municipal functions and services like engineering, public safety, finance, planning, human resources, and more.

In February 2024, following a competitive tender, MNP, a Canadian accounting and consulting firm, was selected to conduct the technical study. MNP works in collaboration with the two municipalities to gather and analyze information and data to present to the Assembly for their review and deliberation. During the first two sessions of the Assembly, members participated in a series of activities to help identify issues with some prioritization to provide a "residents' focus" to MNP's work. The Assembly

members also reviewed a draft table of contents and provided further input that will guide the final report.

The technical study report will be presented to the Assembly in January 2025 and then be published publicly and submitted to both municipal councils afterwards.

The Assembly Team

The Victoria–Saanich Citizens’ Assembly is led by MASS LBP, one of Canada’s leading firms in public engagement and deliberative democracy. Since its founding in 2007, MASS has completed more than 50 Citizens’ Assemblies and Reference Panels and is internationally recognized for its innovative efforts to popularize deliberative processes.

The organization has staff in Victoria, Edmonton, Toronto, and Montreal. It has led similar processes for governments and public sector organizations across Canada including with the Province of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver, as well as the municipalities of Duncan and North Cowichan, which previously explored amalgamation in 2017 and convened a Citizens’ Assembly. Find out more at masslbp.com.

Assembly Chair

Peter MacLeod is the founder and principal of MASS LBP. A leading expert in democratic innovation, he has pioneered the use of citizens' assemblies in Canada and abroad, helping governments involve citizens in policy-making through inclusive and structured methods. His work aims to enhance democratic governance by fostering dialogue between citizens and decision-makers. Peter frequently writes and speaks about the citizen’s experience of the state, the importance of public imagination, and the future of responsible government.

Project Team

Chris Ellis

Civic Lottery & Project Director

Kayte McKnight

Member Hospitality & Engagement

Richard Johnson

Lead Facilitator & Program Design

Facilitators

Matthew Creswick

Mary Heeg

Ryley Johnston

Corie Kielbiski

Maeve Maguire

Jacob Morel

Maya Nussbaum

Rosalie Sawrie

Tyler Tootle

Sarah Yaffe

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Logan Youngberg

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Manmitha Deepthi

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About Citizens' Assemblies

A Citizens' Assembly is a representative body of everyday people brought together to learn, deliberate, and issue consensus recommendations to policymakers on important public issues.

The world's first Citizens' Assembly was created in British Columbia in 2004, on Electoral Reform. Since then, Canada has become a global leader in the use of citizen deliberation in policymaking with over 50 similar processes held across the country in the last 20 years, and nearly 1,000 around the world.

Citizens' Assemblies, also known as Reference Panels or Citizens' Juries, can be made up of anywhere from 28 to 100+ members. They are:

- Randomly selected using a special "Civic Lottery" method;
- Representative, as the selection model also ensures the Assembly reflects the diversity of the population or community; and,
- Deliberative, due to a rigorous public learning curriculum, facilitated small table conversations, and a decision-making process that ensures broad consensus.

Citizens' Assemblies have prompted new policy on reproductive rights and same-sex marriage in Ireland, spurred ambition on climate policy in France, UK, and Scotland, and brought more voices into policymaking and governance in Iceland, Belgium, and Italy.

Here in Canada, Citizens' Assemblies have made recommendations on policy issues around digital identity and privacy, regional transportation priorities, housing legislation, supervised injection services, primary care reform, compensation for municipal councillors, airport noise mitigation, pharmaceutical insurance, mental health policy, cancer care, public housing, and more. One previous Assembly here on Vancouver Island, involving the communities of Duncan and North Cowichan, also considered municipal amalgamation.

Resources

[Citizens' Assembly Terms of Reference](#)

[Civic Lottery Invitation Package \(PDF\)](#)

[Representation Model \(google slides\)](#)

[Citizens' Assembly Media Kit \(PDF\)](#)

[Members Welcome Kit \(PDF\)](#)

[Members Pledge of Public Service \(web\)](#)

[Advisory & Oversight Group Terms of Reference \(PDF\)](#)

[Project Data Policy \(google doc\)](#)

[Assembly Resources & Documents \(web\)](#)

The photograph shows a worksheet titled "A First Session of Anger Management". It contains a table with columns for "Date", "Time", "Location", "Session Number", "Session Title", "Session Description", "Session Objectives", "Session Activities", "Session Evaluation", and "Session Notes". The table is partially filled with handwritten text, including "Date: 10/10/10", "Time: 10:00", "Location: 10:00", "Session Number: 1", "Session Title: 1", "Session Description: 1", "Session Objectives: 1", "Session Activities: 1", "Session Evaluation: 1", and "Session Notes: 1".

Summary of Public Meeting - Return

- Strong opinions - voting about municipal - where

ing further:

THEMES

- THEMES
1. Things worth discussing further:
- Fear of losing rural protection
 - Ward system could resolve that concern
 - Saanich still protects rural
 - ALC can't ~~not~~ develop without ALC approval
 - Protection is built in
 - Ward system - Assumes homogenous of an area
 - Communities aren't geographically defined
- More systematic approach for problem
- ... have ultimate ... citizens' ...

→ would ward system increase # of council at concern

- Should not have ultimate
 - Should include citizens' ad
 - Term in council
 - In advocating &
 - Government - Str
 - Transportation
 - vs. Victor

- Things wrong:
 - developer

...us' down'
...definition
what will happen
won't necessarily
Rooky' council
MAEL
TAP



victoriasaanich.ca