



BY EMAIL

December 1, 2025

Mayor, Council, and CAO - Town of Gibsons
Mayor, Council, and CAO - District of Sechelt
Board and CAO - Sunshine Coast Regional District

Dear Local Government Partners

PROPOSAL TO FORM A JOINT AMALGAMATION EXPLORATION TASK FORCE

The Sunshine Coast Chamber of Commerce is writing to invite your municipality to participate in a Joint Amalgamation Exploration Task Force, a collaborative initiative to openly and responsibly examine whether municipal amalgamation could improve governance, service delivery, financial sustainability, and long-term planning for residents and businesses on the Sunshine Coast.

Why We Are Proposing This

The Sunshine Coast is facing well-known challenges:

- Rising infrastructure costs
- Increasing service demands
- Staffing shortages across local governments
- Fragmented planning and service delivery
- Duplication of administrative functions
- Development and permitting processes that differ across jurisdictions

These issues are structural, not political, and they affect local governments, businesses, and residents alike.

The Chamber believes that now is the time to have an honest, data-driven, transparent conversation about whether a more unified governance model, including amalgamation, could provide long-term benefits.

Purpose of the Task Force

The Task Force's mandate will be to:

1. Collect relevant municipal data relating to staffing, taxation, infrastructure, service delivery, and governance.
2. Identify duplication and inefficiencies across the three local governments.
3. Evaluate potential benefits, costs, risks, and impacts of municipal amalgamation.
4. Consider alternative governance models and coordinated service delivery approaches.
5. Produce a Joint Amalgamation Options Report outlining its findings and recommendations.

Participation Does Not Imply Support

Participation in the Task Force does not imply support for amalgamation. It simply reflects a commitment to transparency, responsible stewardship, and evidence-based decision-making.

Employment Considerations

A key concern in any amalgamation discussion is the potential impact on municipal employment. While improved efficiency is one of the primary reasons to consider amalgamation, the reality is that any structural changes would almost certainly be incremental - implemented department by department, over time, and in the most cost-effective and least disruptive manner. Given the persistent difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified staff on the Sunshine Coast, we do not anticipate, and the Chamber will not be advocating for, any rapid or large-scale staffing reductions. Any efficiency gains would more likely come through natural attrition, consolidation of overlapping administrative functions, and improved coordination, rather than job cuts. Support from municipal staff will be vital in this undertaking, both in providing accurate information and in helping shape practical, workable approaches. Our intention is to support a thoughtful, orderly process that strengthens local government capacity rather than destabilizing it.

Proposed Structure

- Membership: one to two representatives from each municipality, two Chamber representatives, and a neutral governance advisor.
- Duration: 6-12 months.
- Deliverable: A Joint Amalgamation Options Report.
- Funding: A modest contribution from each municipality and the Chamber.

Why Municipal Participation Matters

Only municipal governments have access to the data required for a meaningful analysis. Without your participation, any exploration would be incomplete. Moreover, participating ensures each jurisdiction:

- shapes the study;
- safeguards its interests; and
- contributes to a transparent, community-wide conversation.

Next Steps

We respectfully request that each municipality:

1. confirm willingness to participate by February 1, 2025; and
2. appoint up to two representatives to the Task Force.

The Chamber will convene the first meeting once all three municipalities have confirmed participation.

We look forward to working collaboratively to explore a question of long-term regional importance.

Sincerely



Arthur Cullinan
Director, Sunshine Coast Chamber of Commerce

CC:

Chief and Council, shíshálh Nation
Honourable Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs