

# Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen – Electoral Area “D” Division

## Public Consultation Summary

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September 21, 2017*

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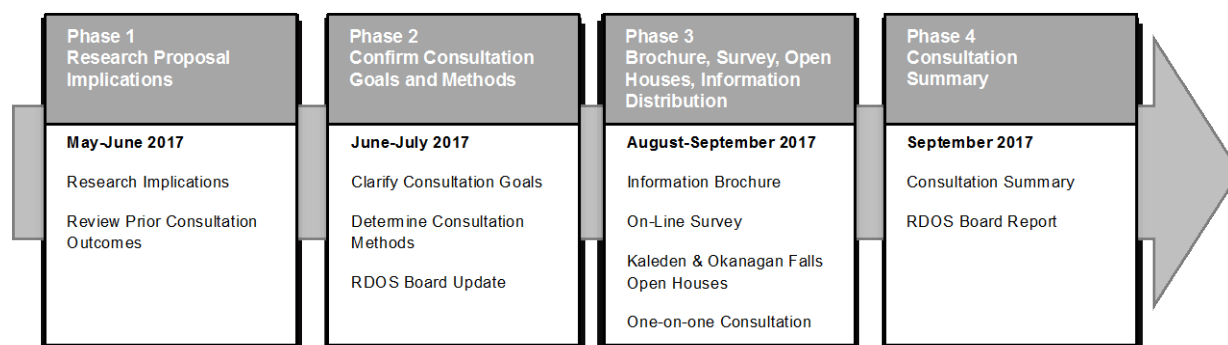
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) concluded the Electoral Area “D” Governance Study. One of the outcomes of the Governance Study was a recommendation by the Study Committee to consider a boundary change for Area “D”. In 2017, prior to moving forward with a request to the Province for such a change, the RDOS further investigated the implications of a division aligning with the current geographic boundaries of the D-1 and D-2 Official Community Plans. At this time, the RDOS also undertook a public involvement process to share information and understand public support for the proposed division. The following document, prepared by Juliet Anderton Consulting Inc., summarizes public input and provides background information on the consultation process, and the associated communication and notification methods.

## 2.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

The public consultation process was designed and implemented through four phases, over the course of approximately five months. Implementation began in May 2017 and was complete in September 2017. *Figure 1.0 – Public Consultation Process*, provides an overview of the process.

**Figure 1.0 – Public Consultation Process**



## 3.0 PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

### 3.1 Project Resource Team

The project resource team provided a focus for understanding the existing and proposed geographic, demographic and fiscal context for the proposed division of Area “D.” The team also assessed the impacts on RDOS services, supported the distribution of hard copy information and coordinated the on-line project presence.

The resource team included the:

- Manager of Legislative Services, Christy Malden
- Rural Services Manager, Shona Schleppe
- Legislative Services Administrative Assistant, Christie Lang
- Information Services Manager, Tim Bouwmeester
- Finance Supervisor, Noelle Evans-MacEwan
- Accountant, John Cote

### 3.2 Local Residents

Residents and property owners of Kaleden, Okanagan Falls, Twin Lakes, Lakeshore Highlands, Heritage Hills, Vintage Views, Upper Carmi, Skaha Estates, Vaseux Lake, St. Andrews, Apex and surrounding areas were invited to participate in the project through an information brochure, online survey, project website, two public open house events and a one-on-one information distribution event at the local IGA store. Approximately 4000 information brochures and open house invitations were mailed directly to property owners and residents and paid and unpaid advertising was posted in local papers. Open house events included a series of information boards, one-on-one discussions with RDOS staff and the project consultant, a PowerPoint presentation, a group question and answer period and an open house survey.

Approximately 26 people participated in the September 12, 2017 open house hosted at the Kaleden Community Hall and approximately 27 people participated in the September 12, 2017 open house hosted at the Okanagan Falls Community Hall. Approximately 20 people were engaged through the one-on-one event at the local IGA on September 6, 2017, and 50 people responded to the survey. *Figure 2.0 - Project Notification and Participation* lists the public consultation events, the feedback tools, the communication and notification methods, and the levels of participation achieved.

**Figure 2.0 - Project Notification and Participation**

Public Involvement Events (2017)		Notification Methods	PARTICIPATION	Stakeholder Organizations Emails	Website Updates Website Calendar Website News Item	Facebook Twitter Updates	Penticton Western	Penticton Herald (2x)	Skaha Matters	Notice at Post Office Seniors Centre Community Centre Local Businesses
August	Brochure Distribution		4,000 (mailed)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
August	Grocery store one-on-one		20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
August/September	On-line Survey		50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
September	Open House/Presentation – Kaleden		26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
September	Open House/Presentation – Okanagan Falls		27	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

### 3.3 First Nations

At the onset of the public involvement process, a letter was sent to the Penticton Indian Band to notify the Band of the commencement of Electoral Area “D” division project and the engagement activities, and to invite the Band to participate in the process. Information brochures and surveys were provided to the Band’s Communication Coordinator to place in the Band office and distribute to the community at their discretion. A project advertisement was also placed in the Band newsletter notifying readers of the open houses and survey opportunity. Comments had not been received from the Penticton Indian Band at the time this report was prepared.

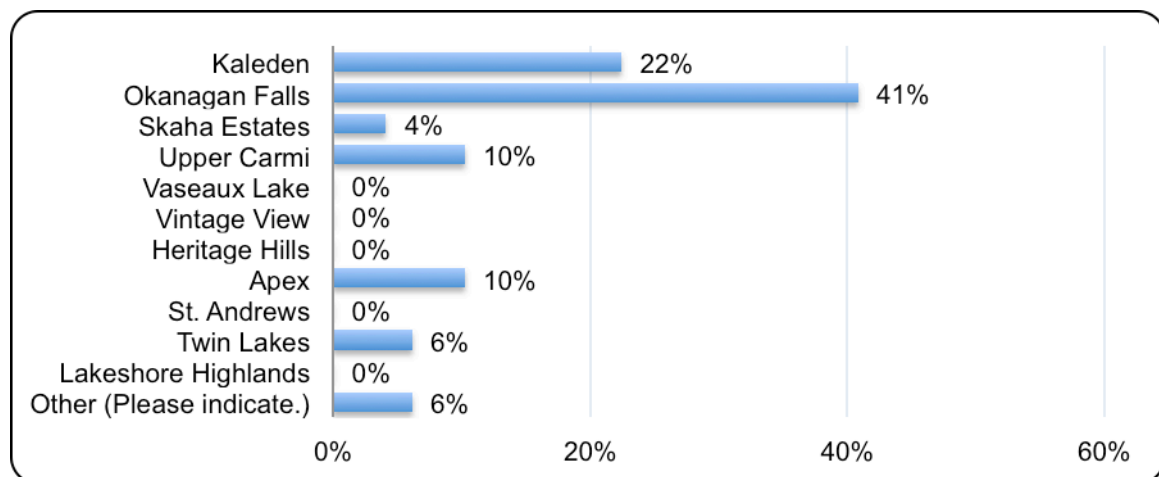
## 4.0 PUBLIC FEEDBACK

The majority of public feedback was received through the project online survey and the open house survey, the question and answer sessions at each of the open houses and the one-on-one consultations at the open houses and the local IGA. The online survey was open for six weeks, from Monday, August 7, 2017, until Friday, September 15, 2017. In total, 50 individual responses were received. The following sections summarize the survey results; the outcomes of the one-on-one conversations and group discussions are also summarized below.

### 4.1 Profile of Respondents

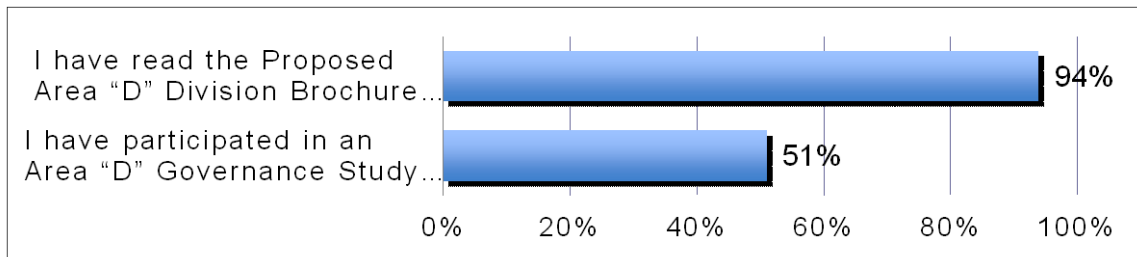
Together, Okanagan Falls and Kaleden accounted for 63% of all responses. Apex represented 10% of respondents, as did Upper Carmi. Twin Lakes accounted for 6% of respondents. Almost all respondents indicated they had read the Electoral Area “D” Division Brochure (summer 2017) and approximately half indicated they participated in the Electoral Area “D” Governance Study Open Houses that took place in the spring of 2016 and/or that they had read Governance Study background documents.

**Figure 3.0 – Place of Residence**



*“Other” communities included Willowbrook.*

**Figure 4.0 – Information and Education**

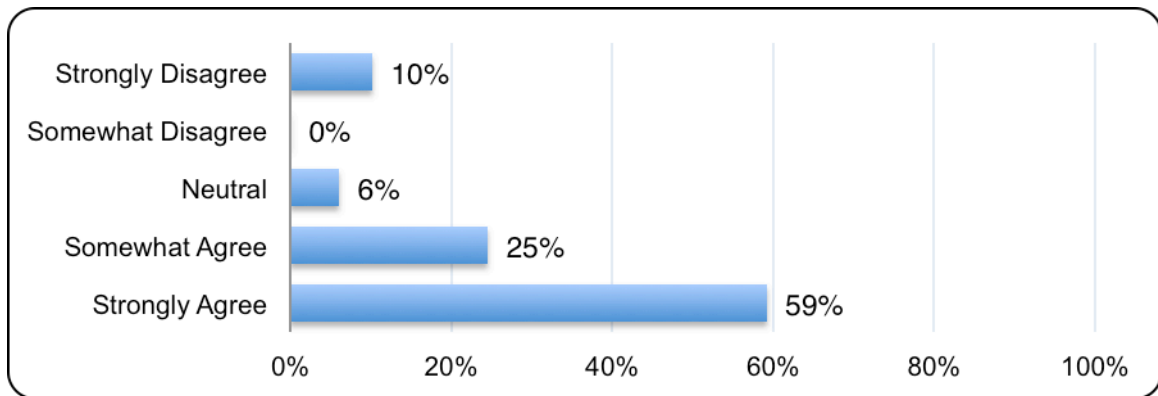


## 4.2 Representation

Respondents were asked about their views concerning fair representation in Electoral Area "D". Almost 85% of respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that Area "D" has reached a **population size** that is too large for one electoral area director to fairly represent the views and interests of all the communities; 10% strongly disagreed and 6% were neutral. Similar responses were received when respondents were asked about their views concerning the **unique interests** of the various Area "D" communities. 88% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the Area "D" the proposal would allow the unique interests to be better represented as decisions are made by the RDOS Board of Directors; 12% strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed.

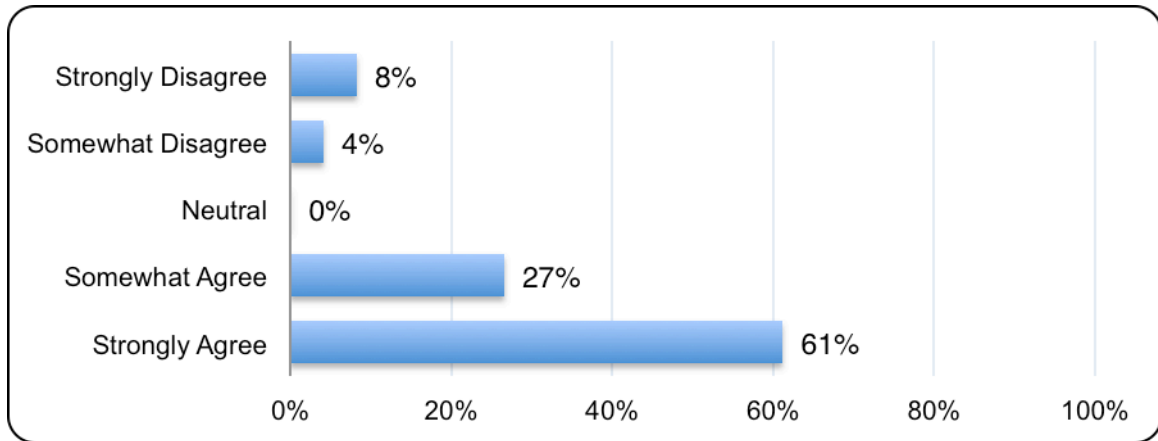
**Figure 5.0 – Population Size and Representation**

*The population of Electoral Area "D", at close to 6,600 residents, has reached a size that is too large for one area director to fairly represent the views and interests of all Area "D" communities.*



**Figure 6.0 – Unique Community Views and Representation**

The proposal to divide Electoral Area “D” into two new electoral areas, each with its own area director, will allow the unique interests and views of existing Area “D” communities to be better represented as decisions are made by the RDOS Board of Directors.

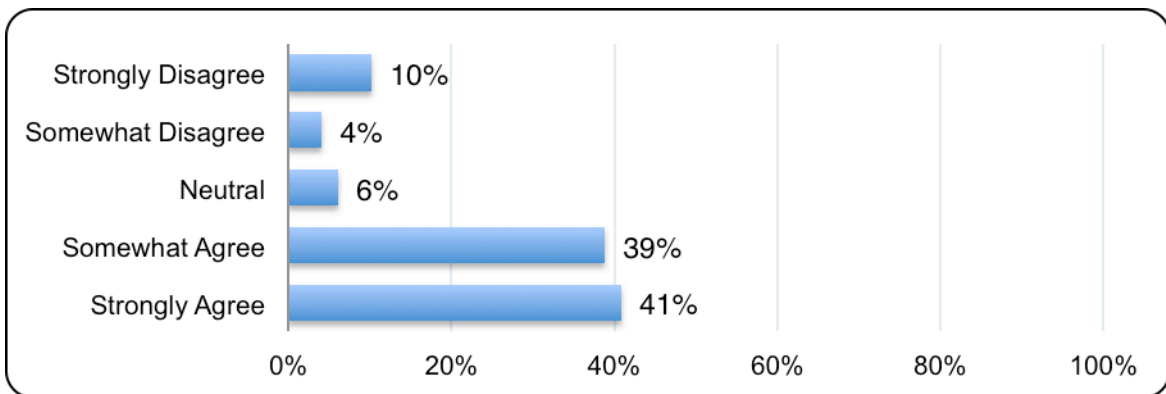


**4.3 Communication with Staff**

Respondents were asked about their views concerning communication with RDOS staff. 80% of respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that a division would improve communication between local residents and RDOS staff; 14% strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed and 6% were neutral.

**Figure 7.0 – Communication with Staff**

The proposal to divide Electoral Area “D” into two new electoral areas, each with its own area director, will improve communication between local residents and RDOS staff.

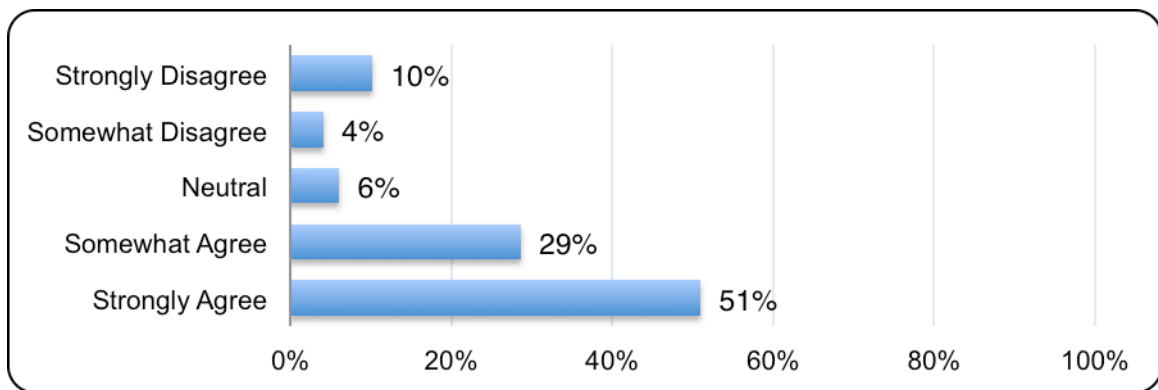


#### 4.4 Cost - Benefit

When respondents were asked about whether they believed that the cost of the proposed division justified the benefits, again 80% of respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed additional costs were justified; 14% strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed and 6% were neutral.

**Figure 8.0 – Cost-Benefit**

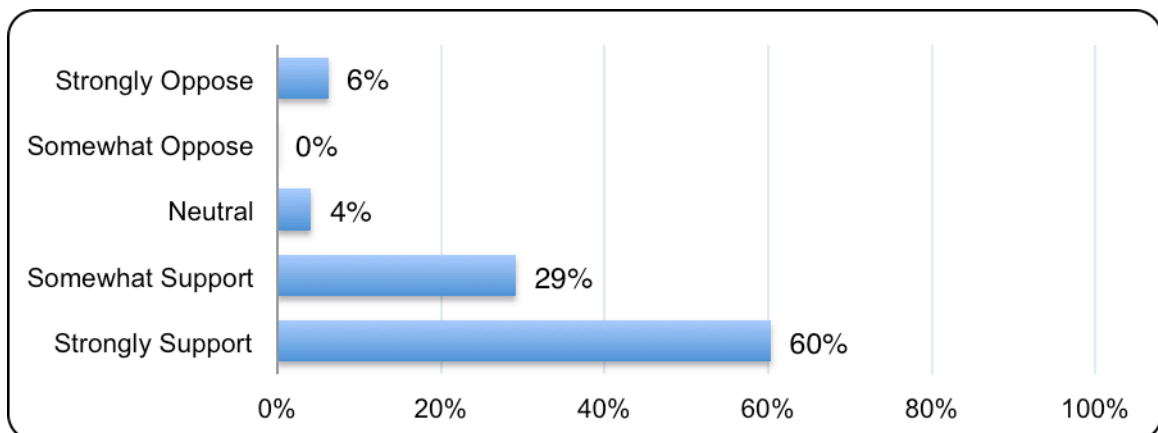
*The benefits of the proposed division of Electoral Area “D” into two new electoral areas justify the estimated cost of a new area director, a new alternate director, and a new advisory planning commission. Background: For an average residential property (valued at approx. \$370,000), the RDOS local service cost (based on estimated 2017 figures) to taxpayers who live in the existing Area “D” is estimated to be approximately \$1.68 to cover the cost of an additional electoral area director, a new alternate director and a new advisory planning commission.*



#### 4.5 Overall Support

The final multiple choice survey question asked respondents to indicate their overall level of support for the proposed division of Electoral Area “D” into two new electoral areas. Almost 90% of respondents indicated they strongly supported or somewhat supported the proposed division; only 6% strongly opposed or somewhat opposed the proposal and 4% were neutral.

**Figure 9.0 – Overall Support**





## **4.6 Comment Themes**

In addition to expressing their views on the structured multiple-choice questions outlined in the survey, respondents were provided an opportunity to express written comments on aspects of the proposal that were of particular importance to them. The following section highlights comments expressed by respondents through the written survey comments as well as the verbal comments expressed through the Q&A sessions at the open houses, and the one-on-one discussion at the open house and IGA.

### ***General Support for Proposal***

There were a number of comments in support of the proposed division. Some noted the effectiveness of the existing director in listening and acting on citizens concerns, despite of the vast area and population to be represented. Comments suggested that the effectiveness of future representatives would depend on the nature of the future Area “D” and “I” directors themselves and the future planning commissions. One respondent encouraged the new Area “I” director to familiarize themselves with the responsibilities of Apex Mountain Resort and the Provincial Resource Ministries, especially, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

### ***Cooperation Between the Two New Areas***

Some noted their hopes for continued cooperation on the major projects and issues that are of a concern to both areas (e.g. sewer projects, parks, water, fire protection, roads etc.).

### ***Support for Smaller Government***

Some respondents commented on the desire for smaller government and “bureaucracy”, noting the size of the RDOS Board as a detriment to getting things done and suggesting one director for Area “D” is currently right on target.

### ***Costs***

There was also some concern that the assessment base of the future Area “I” would be insufficient to support future services.

One respondent noted they were skeptical of only “slight” cost increases, while another noted that some efficiencies could result where communities could choose services that were more tailored to their needs. A third respondent stated that the RDOS should commit to practices that show tax dollars are spent to benefit local taxpayers not neighbouring communities (e.g., acquisition of parkland).

### ***Location of Divisions***

One respondent noted they believed that residents in Kaleden should remain a part of Area “D” and another noted residents along Green Lake Road should remain in Area “D”.

## **5.0 NEXT STEPS**

The Electoral Area “D” proposed division public consultation process was designed to provide opportunities for interested Area “D” residents and property owners to express their views prior to the RDOS Board of Directors moving forward with a request to the Province. RDOS staff and the Board will reference and consider these views as they move forward to evaluate next steps.