

## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**TO:** Corporate Services Committee  
**FROM:** B. Newell, Chief Administrative Officer  
**DATE:** October 6, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** Electoral Area “D” Governance Study



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**THAT the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen proceed with an application for a boundary change for Electoral Area “D”; dividing the area into two parts consistent with Official Community Plan Service Areas D1 and D2.**

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### Reference

1. [Electoral Area “D” Governance Study Committee Report](#)
2. [LeftSide Partners Consultants Report](#)

### Background

At UBCM in 2014, the Board met with Minister for Community, Sport and Cultural Development to discuss concerns over the future governance for the residents of Okanagan Falls, and the Minister confirmed support for a governance study process. In the spring of 2015, administration and the Electoral Area Director and Alternate met with Ministry staff to outline the process and guidelines for the study and expanded the scope to include the entire electoral area. The Board endorsed a terms of reference for a governance study committee, and appointed 10 citizens from within that electoral area. A consultant was retained and work began.

The goal of the study was to inform the RDOS Board of Directors of the range of issues that are of greatest concern to citizens in Area “D”, how citizens envision future governance and services provision, and the nature of citizen feedback on proposed future options.

Early in the process, the Committee and the Consultants developed a public engagement strategy which involved a combination of approaches including a webpage, surveys, newsletters, three governance forums (in various communities) and a summary of community input/survey results for the public.

The involvement objectives of the public engagement strategy were to ensure participants had the opportunity to clearly understand the current Area “D” governance and service provision framework and to encourage input that would shape the development of options for future governance and service provision, within the regional district framework.

To ensure that residents in all parts of Electoral Area “D” were provided the information and materials needed to take part in the process, the committee appointed ‘Community Champions’ for each area. The ‘Community Champion’ efforts involve each committee member taking on responsibility for a designated community and/or outlying area, distributing Fact Sheets and surveys, making contacts

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and established themselves as a willing sounding board for any questions or comments from those citizens. The Community Champions spent a significant amount of time talking with different groups in those areas, attending community associations and other meetings to relay the information about the purpose and goals of the study.

### **Analysis**

The Committee concurred with the findings in the consultants' report and included the following recommendations in their report to the Board.

***Boundary Change*** - the committee recommended that the Board consider a boundary change involving Area "D" that creates at least one additional electoral area, and addresses the imbalance of representation, and the diversity of communities encompassed within one electoral area.

Electoral Area "D" has the highest population of the eight electoral areas which range from 1,140 (Electoral Area "B" – Cawston) to Area "D" at 5,717, based on 2011 census data.

While various options were proposed, including a north-south split, adjustments to neighbouring electoral areas, the creation of a separate electoral area for Okanagan Falls and for Apex, the preferred public option was to use the planning division of D1 and D2.

Changes to the boundaries of an electoral area may have significant impacts to neighbouring electoral areas and municipalities, and the Board may want to consider requesting funds for a region wide boundary study to determine the best fit for each of the small outlying areas which have been identified in the governance study such as Upper Carmi and Apex.

Consideration could be given to reviewing the current boundary between Electoral Area "D" and "F" with regard to the Penticton Indian Band.

***Water*** - The committee recommended that a committee be created to facilitate collaboration on water, with a representative from the RDOS, Interior Health Authority, Improvement Districts and private water purveyors.

The Regional District has one small water system within Electoral Area "D" at this time (Sun Valley) and may see a value in partnering in this type of collaborative arrangement. However, improvement/irrigation districts and Interior Health are their own forms of government, each with their own regulations; therefore, the Regional District would not be an overseer.

The consultant's report identified options with respect to improved service delivery which would be achieved simply with the creation of new services or adjustments of existing services. The committee formulated recommendations based on community input and the consultant's report, and these should be explored by staff to ensure feasibility.

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**Fire Services** - *The committee recommended that the Board review fire services to determine options for areas that remain unprotected.*

**Roads** – *the committee recommended that the Board work together with the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure to identify some key safety projects that are possible in Okanagan Falls and other projects that align with the Revitalization Plan and other community initiatives; and that the Board develop a stronger form of leverage in dealing with the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure with regard to roads and highways issues throughout Electoral Area “D”.*

**Policing** – *the committee recommended that the Board work toward increasing police presence in Area “D”.*

**Bylaw Enforcement** – *the committee recommended that the Board review ways to improve the levels of bylaw enforcement to address bylaw enforcement issues.*

**Landfill** – *the committee recommended that the Board review the demand for adding weekend hours to the Okanagan Falls landfill.*

**Committees/Commissions** - *the committee recommended that the Board consult with the communities of Okanagan Falls and Apex regarding the feasibility of creating a committee or commission for each of these communities as a tool to provide opportunities for community input, identify local concerns, enhance local control and seek resolution to multi-jurisdictional issues.*

**Communications** – *the committee recommended that the Board focus the Region’s communication efforts to clarify roles, educate residents on what services they receive (and from which agency) and how the residents may influence that process.*

### **Summary**

Administration would like to commend the Electoral Area “D” Governance Committee and Leftside Partners for their tireless efforts to bring awareness of the services and governance to the citizens of Electoral Area “D” and their work in formulating recommendations to the Board. Acknowledgement and thanks are also extended to the citizens of Electoral Area “D” who came out to the open houses, participated in the surveys and attended the monthly meetings of the committee.

### **Alternatives:**

THAT status quo be maintained.

### **Respectfully submitted:**

*“Christy Malden”*

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C. Malden, Manager of Legislative Services