

**To:** The Board of Directors of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen  
**From:** The Electoral Area “D” Governance Study Committee  
**Date:** September 8, 2016  
**Subject:** Electoral Area “D” Governance Study



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## **Background:**

The purpose of Electoral Area “D” Governance Study is to review and consider methods to improve governance and services to the communities of Area “D” and their surrounding areas.

Guided and managed by a committee of citizens from communities throughout Area “D,” the governance study process involved the selection of a consultant to research and analyze the current state of governance and services, and to prepare a report with options for improvement.

To that end, the committee and consultant developed an engagement plan designed to involve the citizens in each community in the study. The campaign, **“Get Informed, Get Involved, and Have Your Say”** brought information on governance and services to each community, held roundtable discussions and forums, conducted an area-wide survey to identify predominant issues in each community, suggested a range of options to address the issues, and presented a final survey to gauge the option preferences of the public. The result of the process is enclosed in the attached report.

The committee appreciates the thoroughness of the consultants’ work in gathering information from the public in each community and in the analysis and conclusions reached with each issue.

The Committee concurs with the findings in the consultants’ report and recommends the following:

### **Boundary Change**

Electoral Area “D” represents an anomaly in terms of the population and number of distinct communities within it relative to the other electoral districts. The concept of dividing the electoral area into two or more electoral areas in order to address the population disparity between Area “D” and the other electoral areas, as well as the load on directors in representing such a large and diverse population was supported by the public.

- **The Governance Study Committee recommends 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.**

While respondents showed a preference for an east-west rather than a north-south split, over one third of respondents provided other suggestions for boundary change. e.g. consider adjustments with neighbouring electoral areas or creation of a separate electoral area with Apex.

The strong support by the public for a division of Area “D” is clear, however, the manner in which the

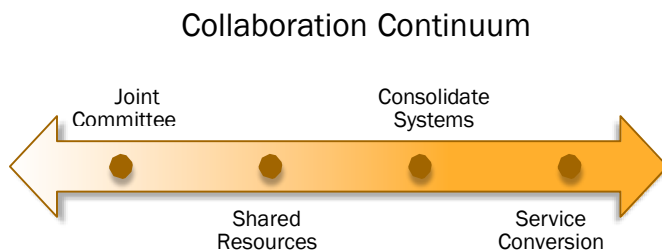
division should occur is not. The division of Area “D” presents a number of considerations which will require further investigation by the Board.

### Water

Water governance, including water quality and supply emerged through surveys and conversations with stakeholders as a key issue for Area “D”.

The number of separate water systems within Area “D” suggests there could be efficiencies of operations realized as well as a greater understanding of water issues by the public through some level of collaboration among the providers. Sharing knowledge, information, best practices, and supporting long-term asset management will benefit every system, and may enable the water authorities to discover opportunities for sharing resources, joint initiatives or achieving economies of scale.

- **The Governance Study Committee recommends 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 with a view to moving along the “Collaborative Continuum” as shown below.**



While the public showed strong support for the formation of a committee to share information, to share resources and even to consider the consolidation of smaller systems, there was not strong support for conversion to RDOS service, with the exception of Sun Valley and Heritage Hills.

### Fire Services

- **The Governance Study Committee recommends that the Board review fire services to determine options for areas that remain unprotected.**

More respondents to the study’s first survey rated fire service as “very important” than any other service.

### Roads

School and pedestrian crossing of Highway 97 is a serious concern to the citizens of Okanagan Falls, even though Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure studies do not warrant any adjustments to traffic flows at this time.

Other identified issues related to the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure include dealing with road maintenance, cars and campers parked for extended periods of time on road allowances, and lack of communication regarding major road projects at this time.

- **The Governance Study recommends 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.**

Continued exploration with MOTI of providing better service regarding local priorities or creating opportunities to influence the standards for communities within the Electoral Area might result in developing a Local Area Service or entering into a contract for enhanced services.

#### **Bylaw Enforcement**

- **The Governance Study Committee recommends that the Board review ways to improve the levels of bylaw enforcement to address bylaw enforcement issues.**

#### **Landfill**

- **The Governance Study Committee recommends that the Board review the demand for adding weekend hours to the Okanagan Falls landfill.**

#### **Policing**

- **The Governance Study Committee recommends that the Board work toward increasing police presence in Area “D”.**

#### **Committees & Commissions**

Throughout the study’s consultation process, respondents stated an interest in having more participation and input into services and service levels. This can be achieved through a committee or commission, whether it is advisory in nature or has a level of delegated authority.

- **The Governance Study Committee recommends 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 need for improved communication arose throughout the study, and may be indicative of a more widespread regional need for increased communication and public engagement.

- **The Governance Study Committee recommends 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.**

The Board may wish to continue their efforts with regard to public engagement and communications with citizens by improving regular messaging and promoting a broader understanding of the services overall as well as including citizens in periodic service reviews.

#### **Conclusion:**

The Electoral Area “D” Committee Members were proud to have the opportunity to work on behalf the citizens of each of the communities in Area “D.”

The Committee would like to thank Director Siddon for his willingness to engage his Area in a process of examination that will ultimately work toward the betterment of its citizens.

The Committee would also like to thank RDOS Staff for their work, and in particular, Christy Malden for her invaluable assistance and guidance throughout the study.

And lastly, the Committee recognizes the contributions of Myleen Mallach and Jerry Stewart, two Committee Members who worked tirelessly to keep the study out in front of the public.

**Bob Daly, Chair**  
**Electoral Area "D" Governance Study Committee**