



**RDOS Area “D” Governance Study**  
**Options Sheets**  
**June 2016**

# ELECTORAL AREA BOUNDARY OPTIONS

➤ **How are electoral area boundaries created?**

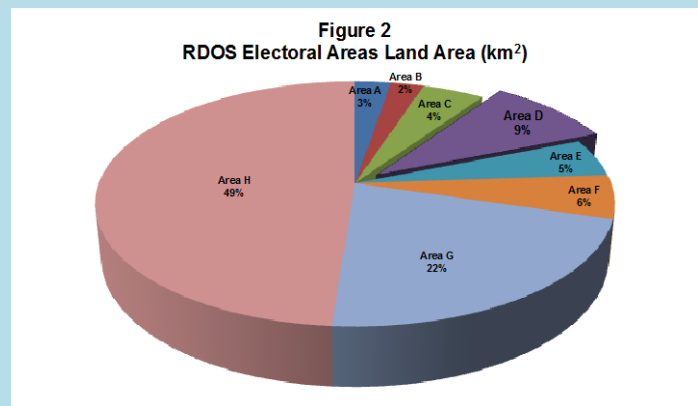
The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen was created in 1966. The region’s eight electoral areas were created at that time. Population was one of the key considerations because of the impact on representation at the regional board. When the RDOS was created, the total population of the region was 33,228 (it was generally thought at the time that regional districts should be no larger than

approximately 30,000 persons). The eight electoral areas ranged in population from 670 (Area “B”) to 2,520 (Area “C”), with an average of 1,193. To account for the variances in population, the province implemented a weighted vote system for some regional district votes (financial, budget, borrowing, service establishment) where each director has a number of votes based on the population in the area he or she represents. A “voting unit” is determined for each regional district, and the number of weighted votes, or voting strength, for each electoral area and municipality is calculated by dividing the population by the voting unit. Initially the voting unit for the RDOS was 1,400. At that time six of the electoral areas had one vote, and two of them had two votes. In 1977, the voting unit was increased to 1,800.

**Figure 1**

RDOS	2011 Population	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Area A	1,892	259.70
Area B	1,285	238.30
Area C	4,101	446.56
<b>Area D*</b>	<b>7,384</b>	<b>919.17</b>
Area E	1,844	492.05
Area F	2,100	569.00
Area G	2,488	2,122.37
Area H	1,768	4,808.60
City of Penticton	32,877	42.10
District of Summerland	11,280	74.06
Town of Oliver	4,824	5.50
Town of Osoyoos	4,845	8.56
Town of Princeton	2,724	10.47
Village of Keremeos	1,330	2.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,742</b>	<b>10,414</b>

*\* includes 1,667 on PIB land*



Since the RDOS was created, the electoral area boundaries have remained largely unchanged, with the exception of municipal boundary expansions. However, the populations have changed significantly. Currently the RDOS electoral areas range in population from Area “B” at 1,285 to Area “D” which has 5,717, (but rises to 7,384 when the 1,667 people living on Penticton Indian Band lands are included). The average is now 2,858, and the difference between the smallest



At the RDOS Board table, instead of 18 regional directors (including municipal directors and electoral area directors), there would be 19. A total of 9 directors would be from electoral areas and 10 from municipalities. Some issues at the Board table are decided upon by unweighted corporate votes (1 director, 1 vote). The current Area “D” director has one of the 18 unweighted votes at the table, but a divided Area “D” would result in 2 votes (1 each for D1 and D2) of the 19.

On issues that are decided by corporate weighted votes (e.g. budget, borrowing money, buying property), there are currently a total of 53 weighted votes, of which Area “D” has 5 (see Figure 3 below). Each director receives one vote per 1,800 persons. All votes from a single director must be cast in the same manner. Therefore the Area “D” director cannot split his vote (e.g. split his 5 votes into 3 yes and 2 no). If Area “D” was divided into 2 areas, one of the electoral area directors would have 3 votes, and the other would receive 2 votes. The total weighted vote count (53) would not change.

The reduction in the weighted vote (from 5 to 2 or 3), and the relative influence, will be more pronounced for sub-regional services with fewer participating areas (rather than the entire Board). For example, decisions regarding the building inspection service are made by the 6 participating electoral areas. Within those participating areas, Area “D” currently has 5 of the total 15 weighted votes for that service. If Area “D” is split into two, then each of the resulting electoral areas will have either 3 or 2 votes, resulting in less influence from the individual area directors (i.e. 3 or 2 out of 15 votes), but the number of votes from the total of Area “D” would remain the same (and there would be the opportunity to represent two different opinions). Creating 2 electoral areas therefore does not increase the overall weighted votes or influence of the director relative to the remainder of the Board, but it does provide the potential for different votes and opinions to be expressed on any given issue (i.e. 1 vote for, 1 opposed) from the different electoral areas.

➤ **How would two electoral areas impact cost?**

The cost to create an additional electoral area would be relatively low. There would be the added cost of the honorarium paid to the additional

electoral area director plus an alternate, including attendance at Board meetings, as well as any other expenses incurred (conferences attended, travel expenses, etc.). Average electoral area director honorarium and board travel costs from the 2014 Statement of Financial Information, and 2015 budget have been used in Figure 4 to calculate the impact on Area “D” residents’ taxes. There would also be an additional Advisory Planning Commission for the new electoral area, which would be a minor expense of the Electoral Area Planning function. These estimated costs of \$40,200 would result in an additional \$1.35 in taxes on a house assessed at \$325,000 as shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**  
**Cost of Additional Electoral Area on Typical Residence 2015**

Service	Tax Req. <sup>1</sup>	Res. Rate	Owing <sup>2</sup>
General Government	\$27,200	0.0016	\$0.51
EA Administration	\$12,800	0.0026	\$0.83
EA Planning (APC)	\$200	0.0000	\$0.01
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$1.35</b>

1 Tax requisition amount excludes 5.25% Surveyor of Taxes fee  
2 Impact is calculated on a home assessed at \$325,000

Other financial impacts would include changes to the allocation of the gas tax (each electoral area gets an allocation), which would be allocated to the new electoral areas based on population. Gas tax funds are allocated to “rural projects” budgets and spent on projects within the electoral area. Changes to the projects supported by that budget could also result in some minor financial impacts.

➤ **What boundary alignments make sense?**

Prior to creating new electoral areas, the RDOS would need to consider what options make sense, taking into account factors discussed previously, such as:

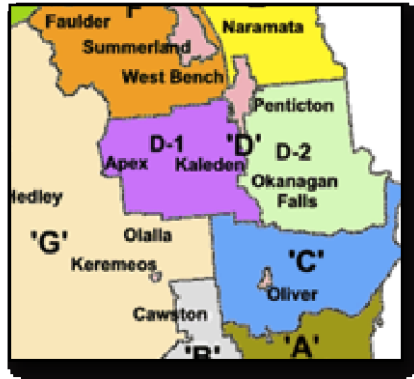
- Population
- Land area
- Number of communities, and nature of communities
- Service area boundaries

- Transportation corridors
- Topography and geographic features.

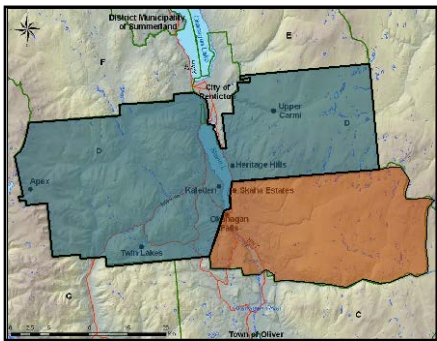
Electoral Area “D” is already divided into two sub-areas (D1 and D2) for purposes of creating Official Community Plans. That division places Okanagan Falls, Skaha

Estates, Heritage Hills, Upper Carmi and Vaseux Lake communities in the eastern portion (D2), and the communities on the west side of Skaha Lake (Kaleden, Twin

Lakes, St. Andrews, Apex) in D1. Given that these two areas have recently updated their OCPs, this boundary may make the most sense; however, just because that split exists for land use planning purposes does not mean it would necessarily be the best solution for dividing the electoral area.



Other suggestions have been for a southern electoral area that encompasses Okanagan Falls, Skaha Estates, Vaseux Lake into one, and everything else into another (Kaleden, Apex, Twin Lakes, St. Andrews, Heritage Hills



and Carmi). That approach would more closely approximate the boundary of the urban area (with the exception of Vaseux Lake) and the more rural and suburban areas. The larger “remaining” area would still be quite diverse and dispersed, with communities on both the west and east side of Skaha Lake, as well as a combination of suburban style areas (Heritage Hills), the resort community of Apex, and the more populated area of Kaleden. Having Kaleden (population of approximately 1,225) in a different electoral area than Okanagan Falls (population of approximately 2,650) helps to balance the population, compared to an approach

that would have an electoral area that included Okanagan Falls, Kaleden and Skaha Estates.

Another option might be to consider whether some changes with adjacent electoral areas might be warranted to better balance objectives of more equal representation, including consideration of including Upper Carmi in Electoral Area “E” (Naramata), Apex or Twin Lakes with Area “G” or Vaseux Lake with Area “C.”

### ➤ Share your perspective!

Creating more than one electoral area from the current Area “D” is just one of the restructuring tools available. Redrawing boundaries can help balance population, representation, communities and director workload.

If the RDOS determines that redrawing boundaries would have a positive impact on the Area, the RDOS would formally request the Province (through the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development) to make changes to its Letters Patent. A request would be accompanied with any preferences for where the boundaries would be drawn. The Ministry’s Local Government Structure Branch may examine the issue further (i.e. decide to review the boundaries of adjacent electoral areas at the same time, consider other options, ensure balance of population, confirm support from residents, etc.), or may be satisfied advancing the RDOS’s recommended boundaries. Ultimately decisions regarding changes to Letters Patent must be made by Cabinet. A decision would take into account the advice of the Local Government Structure Branch, the RDOS, affected communities and residents.

This *Options Sheet* has raised some ideas regarding boundary adjustments and whether that would help to address issues regarding representation and governance within Area “D.” Please take a minute to consider the ideas, and the questions below, and provide your feedback on this issue through our survey.

- ***Would having more than one director provide better representation for residents and their diverse issues and viewpoints?***
- ***If this option is pursued, what should the boundaries look like, in order to balance communities, director workload and population?***