

Terms of Reference

Electoral Area D Governance Study

June 10, 2015

Overview

The purpose of the study is to review and consider methods of improvement of local governance in Electoral Area D of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS). The study will illustrate the manner in which communities in Electoral Area D receive or participate in:

- governance of the community,
- services and other things that are necessary or desirable for all or part of the community,
- stewardship of the public assets of the community, and
- fostering the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community.

The study will include research to describe these facets of local government in Electoral Area D, public engagement to discern both the issues that are of greatest concern to communities in Electoral Area D and how those communities envision future governance and service outcomes, and analysis to identify options, within the regional district framework, for addressing the most pressing interests of the communities.

Governance Study Process

The management and oversight of the governance study process rests with a local governance committee. The committee members are nominated by the Electoral Area Director and ultimately appointed by the RDOS Board.

Once established, the governance committee will advise the Regional District on the selection of a qualified consultant, providing direction to the consultant on the research, education, and analytical elements of the study work, and engaging the community in discussion of the study findings.

Working with RDOS staff, the committee will develop a request for proposals (RFP) for the consultant that builds upon the parameters set out in these terms of reference. The RFP will be issued by the RDOS, following its procurement policies and process. In supervising the consultant and managing the overall study process, the committee is responsible for ensuring that the study reports completed by the consultant meet the requirements outlined in the RFP and these terms of reference.

The study process is to include:

- a preliminary governance report, presenting the initial research and analysis on the current state of governance, services, asset management, and community well-being;
- a public engagement and stakeholder consultation process, utilizing the contents of the preliminary report to drive issues identification; and
- a final governance report, providing a synopsis of the current-state findings, a summary of the public engagement outcomes, and any supplementary synthesis, research and analysis that supports an assessment of options to address community interests identified in the public engagement process.

Following completion of the study, the committee will convey the study findings to the Board of the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen. The committee will also forward a copy to the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

Governance Study Area

The governance study area encompasses all of Electoral Area D, including the communities of Okanagan Falls, Kaleden, Skaha Estates, Heritage Hills, Upper Carmi, Vaseaux Lake, Twin Lakes, and Apex.



Governance Study Timeline

The study must be completed and delivered no later than December 31, 2016.

The committee will establish time lines for the study in discussion with MCSCD staff and the study consultant. MCSCD staff will have the opportunity to review drafts and to provide comments prior to completion of the final study.

Public Engagement

The committee should determine how best to engage with the public and other stakeholders directly affected in the governance study process.

It is important to establish and communicate parameters for public participation so that residents and property owners understand the opportunities to participate in the governance study. The committee may wish to have the study consultant assist in finalising the public engagement process.

The public engagement strategy should include:

- a communication plan for reporting out to the public on the study progress;
- one or more community meetings or other community engagement events to present information to the public and to seek community feedback; and
- a process to gather information from the public on subjects such as community issues.

Governance Committee

The committee guides the study process to ensure that the study and engagement with the community are neutral and balanced. The composition of the volunteer committee should be broadly representative of the various interests in the study area. The committee will ideally have between 7 and 12 members, including the Electoral Area Director in a non-voting capacity. The RDOS Board will select a chair from among the committee membership.

The committee is an objective fact-finding body; individual members of the committee should ensure that any expression of their personal opinions do not detract from the ability of the committee to function as a neutral and credible conduit for information to the community. Committee meetings are open to the public.

Governance Study Contents

The study must include the following:

1. Overview of community characteristics and socio-economic profile, including descriptions of:
 - a. history, overall and for each community or settlement node;
 - b. population trends, both historic and forecasted, by community if possible;
 - c. housing stock, household and dwelling characteristics across the study area;
 - d. tax base trends, by individual tax class and with respect to the mix of tax classes;
 - e. economic characteristics and growth trend indicators; and,
 - f. connectedness between the communities or settlement nodes.
2. Overview of the rural governance system, including explanation of the:
 - a. federated nature of regional districts, their three central roles, and the financial obligations of a regional district member (both electoral area and municipal).
 - b. powers, responsibilities, and functions of improvement districts and regional districts.
 - c. tax assessment system in BC and taxation in unincorporated jurisdictions, highlighting differences among relevant property tax classes and responsibilities for setting tax rates.
 - d. mechanisms available (under statute and common practice) for community participation in decision-making by regional districts and improvement districts.
3. Description of governance, services, and asset management in Electoral Area D, including the:
 - a. provision of services with reference to each of the major service providers (regional district, improvement districts, and the Province), including representative structure, service geography and methods of cost recovery.
 - b. decision-making processes and procedures of the service providers, in relation to the services and other matters.
 - c. relationship between different service providers (e.g. where water service is provided by one entity and sewer or fire protection by another), how those linkages are functionally managed, and how the service providers identify common interests and communicate;
 - d. level of cooperation/collaboration among governing bodies of service providers, with reference to their relative roles and responsibilities.
 - e. the use of commissions and their effectiveness in Area “D”, including but not limited to, Advisory Planning Commissions, Recreation Commissions, Recreation Societies, etc.
 - f. variations in governance and/or service features and levels across different sub-areas of Electoral Area D, and complexities or benefits that arise.
4. Synopsis of public engagement, including a:
 - a. summary of the public engagement activities undertaken.
 - b. report on results of stakeholder consultation meetings.
 - c. summary of community issues raised.
5. Conclusions on future community needs, including an analysis of the opportunities for local service providers to address issues or meet needs.
6. Appendices
 - a. Copies of public engagement materials.
 - b. Copies of foundational documents (e.g., Terms of Reference, Request for Proposals, etc.).

Out of Scope

The focus of this governance study is the governance and service situation and options for improvement in the context of a regional district electoral area. A governance study should not be confused with an incorporation study, and speculative information about municipal incorporation is out of scope for this project.

Administration of the Study

The consultant shall report directly to the committee, and disbursements will be provided by the RDOS.

The total funding available for the governance study will be determined by the RDOS. The Ministry's financial commitment to the governance study is \$50,000.