



BC Homeowners Solar Power Incentive Program



Lack of solar or battery storage incentive scheme for interior residents

On June 27, 2024, the Government of B.C. announced new rebates for customers within the BC Hydro Service area to install solar panels and battery energy storage systems. No rebate service was indicated for residential customers in the Interior serviced by FortisBC, City of Penticton, and City of Nelson electrical utilities.

The FortisBC service area includes the following major regions:

- Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (Princeton, Penticton, Oliver, Osoyoos, Summerland, Keremeos)
- Regional District of Central Okanagan (Kelowna, West Kelowna, Peachland)
- Regional District of Kootenay-Boundary (Trail, Grand Forks)
- Regional District of Central Kootenay (Creston, Castlegar, Nelson, Kaslo)



Figure 1 - Map of FortisBC Electrical Service Area

With the 2024 Call for Power from BC Hydro, seeking to acquire approximately 3,000GWh/year by 2028, there is a scope for small-scale renewable generation to contribute to the electrical grid within B.C.

1. Renewables in the Interior

No data is publicly available to quantify residential solar uptake in B.C.

Current incentives in place for residents in the Interior are as follows:

- Net Metering with the utility provider, energy generated by renewables is only used to offset the service usage with no payment made for excess energy provided to the grid.

- The Canada Greener Homes Loan program (Government of Canada) is in place, allowing residents to apply for a loan to install solar energy systems in their homes. Previously, a complimentary Canada Greener Homes Grant program was in place but closed in early 2024.

The Interior region serviced by FortisBC Electricity is located in a geographical region that provides some of the best Photovoltaic potential within B.C. This potential can be seen in the map generated by Natural Resources Canada, which shows a range of 900-1100 kWh/kWp of Photovoltaic potential per year.

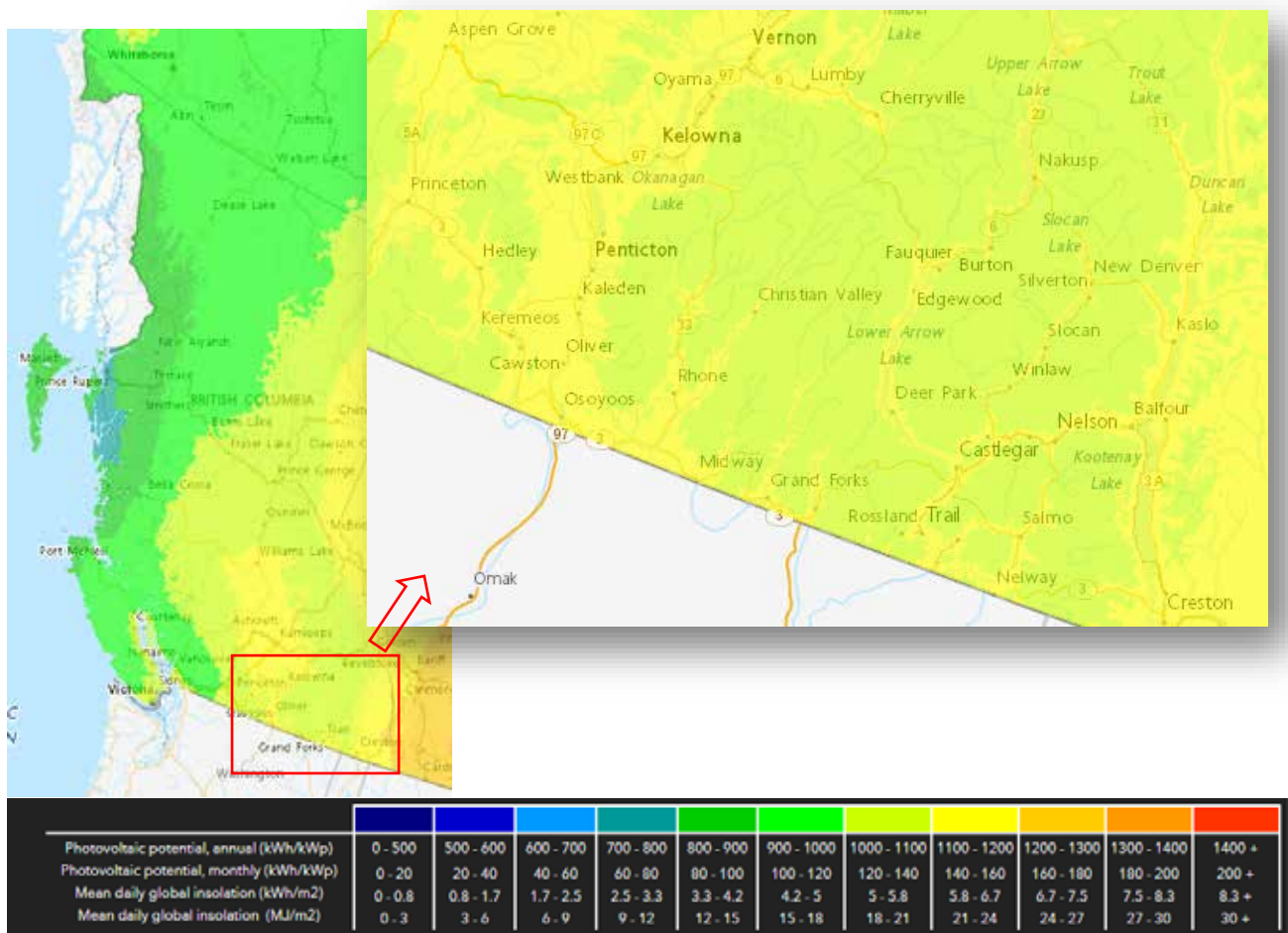


Figure 2 - Photovoltaic Potential of the Interior Region of BC

Recommendation:

1. Expand the incentive program to include the FortisBC utility areas to encourage uptake of solar energy generation.



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

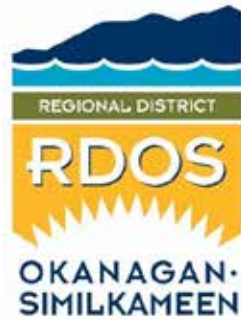
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Mark Pendergraft, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237

2024



Regional Districts allowed to be Taxing Authorities



Regional Districts are not Taxing Authorities

Not being a taxing authority results in two inequities.

1. The Province of British Columbia charges a collection fee of 5.25% for the rural tax requisitioned each year.
2. Regional Districts do not have the authority to adjust the tax multiplier, which municipalities use to adjust the mill rates.

This report discusses the disadvantages of not being able to change the tax multiplier, and also the collection fee charged to the Regional District's rural taxpayer (client).

1. Collection Charges

Regional Districts do not have direct taxing authority. Instead, tax rates for each service are set by the Regional District but not collected. For rural areas, a collection charge of 5.25% is added to the tax requisition by the Surveyor of Taxes. For the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS), the 2024 charge to the rural tax payer is \$958,001.

Regional Districts should be given the option of becoming a taxing authority and be able to collect rural taxes directly. For those Regional Districts that would like to opt in, they would tax the rural taxpayer directly and continue to have municipalities collect taxes on their behalf. Some Regional Districts such as the RDOS, have the software and staff to be able to tax directly and save on the collection fee.

Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen Taxation Department Business Plan

Establishing a Tax Department	
2- Tax Clerks	\$ 200,000
1 - Cashier	\$ 100,000
Software License	\$ 25,000
Desk, Chair, Computer	\$ 10,000
	<hr/>
	\$ 335,000
2024 Surveyor of taxes charge	\$ 958,001
Start up expenses	\$(335,000)
	<hr/>
Net Savings per Year	\$ 623,001

The Board of Directors would be able to use the savings to either:

1. Reduce taxes
2. Increase reserves
3. Increase service levels

2. Municipal Powers that lesson tax impacts on property classes which Regional Districts do not have

How are Property Taxes Calculated?

All local governments must adopt a five-year financial plan with the current year's budget used to calculate the current tax mill rate. Local governments set mill rates based on the total value of properties within their jurisdiction to provide the necessary tax revenue to cover projected expenses.

A mill rate is a numerical multiplier attached to the value of a property and is used to calculate the local property taxes. It represents a dollar per thousand of a property's assessed value to calculate the taxes on the property. Municipalities can adjust the mill rate by increasing or decreasing the tax multiplier for each property class, Regional Districts cannot.

The tax rate, which will vary depending on the classification of the property, is then used to determine the property taxes on each property based on assessment which is provided to the local government by the BC Assessment Authority. The property tax rate formula is:

- Multiply the taxable assessed value of the property by the property tax rate for the property class.

Under section 165 (3.1), municipalities have the authority to adjust tax multipliers, so if the property assessment of a particular class increases materially, the tax burden on the property class does not increase materially. Regional Districts do not have the authority to adjust the tax multipliers, which leaves the rural property owners at a disadvantage.

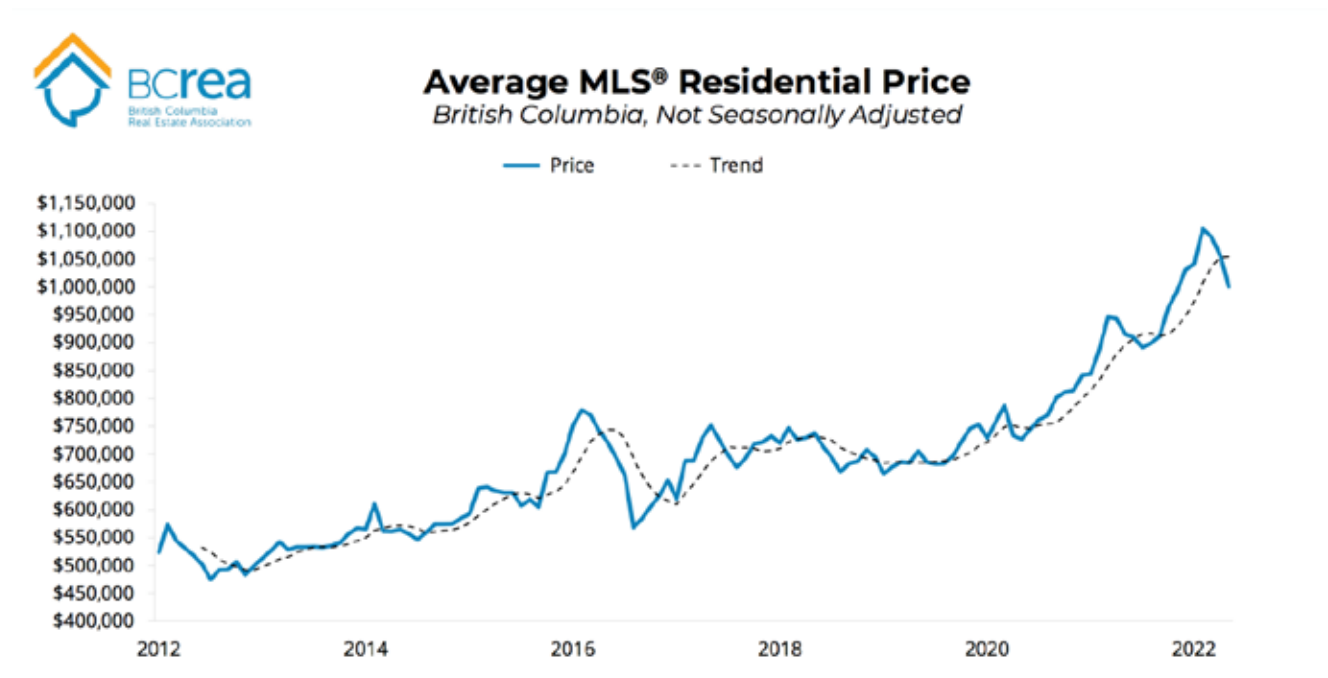
In the past few years, residential assessments have increased materially, which increases the residential owner's taxes while owners of the other classes would have been reduced. While municipal councils have the authority to adjust the taxes multiplier, Regional District Boards do not.

The ability to adjust the tax requisition for each class allows municipalities the ability to lessen the tax impact for the affected property class, Regional District property owners do not have this advantage.

The Regional District tax multiplier has been set by the province and cannot be changed by the Regional District.

The province recognizes the tax burden may change materially for each property class section 166 of the Community Charter requires councils to review and consider tax rates proposed for each property class and adjust the tax burden by adjusting the multiplier to reduce material increases.

Graph produced by British Columbia Real Estate Association



The graph above, which came from the British Columbia Real Estate Association, shows the market impact on residential properties in B.C.

If the property assessment decreased below the 2016 average, the grant would decrease by \$5.00 per \$1,000 to a maximum of \$250.00.

Using the information obtained from the British Columbian Real Estate Association, the average residential assessment from 2016 to 2022 increased by 27.3%. The increase in assessment from 2012 to 2022 is 109.5%.

Example of Increased Assessment in the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, which results in an unfair distribution of taxes.

Of the 15 jurisdictions within the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, seven (7) rural areas have the largest assessment increases. The increases ranged from 38.94% to a high of 52.09%.

The following lists the municipal and rural average price of property by jurisdiction:

No of Properties	DESCRIPTION	Average Res Property 2022	Average Res Property 2021	% Change
<u>MUNICIPALITIES (RG734)</u>				
14,902	PENTICTON	611,810	475,314	28.72%
5,363	SUMMERLAND	725,606	547,333	32.57%
807	KEREMEOS	390,009	287,279	35.76%
2,349	OLIVER	506,923	382,781	32.43%
3,937	OSOYOOS	524,919	402,916	30.28%
1,532	PRINCETON	321,312	242,158	32.69%
<u>ELECTORAL AREAS</u>				
1,358	ELECTORAL AREA A	714,554	469,815	52.09%
497	ELECTORAL AREA B	377,885	271,977	38.94%
1,760	ELECTORAL AREA C	501,476	355,675	40.99%
2,259	ELECTORAL AREA D	674,723	466,048	44.78%
1,382	ELECTORAL AREA E	897,915	621,235	44.54%
935	ELECTORAL AREA F	835,019	600,838	38.98%
1,241	ELECTORAL AREA G	307,416	231,908	32.56%
2,477	ELECTORAL AREA H	457,993	349,574	31.01%
1,752	ELECTORAL AREA I	618,460	444,506	39.13%



Recommendations:

1. Allow each electoral area to set their own tax multiplier similar to municipal governments. This will allow for Regional Districts to adjust for market increases that have affected a specific tax classification, and;
2. Allow each Regional District to opt in at their discursion to become a taxing authority.





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Board of Directors

Mark Pendergraft, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237



Emergency Services Use of Drones



Introduction

Search and Rescue (SAR) and Volunteer Fire Departments are not currently permitted to use drones as a resource in the course of their operations.

This has placed restrictions on the potential for quick and efficient locations of individuals in need of SAR assistance, as well as hindered the ability of Volunteer Fire Departments to assess and tackle fires. There have been instances of SAR teams having to request drone assistance from the RCMP in locating individuals in crisis, leading to delays that could have had tragic consequences.

1. Potential Emergency Uses for Drones

Should SAR and Volunteer Fire Departments be permitted to use drones, there are a number of possible uses for this technology, including:

- Precisely locating lost or injured children and hikers
- Using thermal cameras to locate hot spots in grass and building fires
- Wildfire assessment and monitoring prior to BC Wildfire Services arrival on scene
- Drones with voice technology can provide information and assurance to lost or injured hikers

2. Request

SAR and Volunteer Fire Departments be allowed to use of drones in the course of their operations to potentially save lives and lessen damage or loss of structures; and funding be made available to these groups to assist with:

- Purchasing drone equipment
- Training staff

3. Conclusion

The continued inability of SAR and Volunteer Fire Departments to use drones could lead to otherwise preventable loss of life and property. Providing teams with the ability to use drones is a natural step toward more efficient and successful emergency service operations.



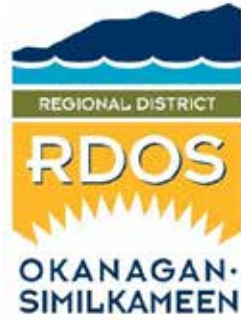
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Flooding in Keremeos (Dike in Hedley)



Introduction

The Village of Keremeos (VoK) is protected by a dike along the Similkameen River, but the current structure may not handle a 1-in-200-year flood event adequately, especially upstream. The dike within the VoK's boundary is the village's responsibility, while the dike outside its boundary is an "orphan dike" with no owner. This orphan dike is at risk of failure, which could lead to significant flooding exacerbated by poor internal drainage. Although the VoK's dike section might also breach, it is less likely due to having more freeboard.



The orange line indicates the dyke that if compromised would lead to inundation of the Village of Keremeos. Once the dyke is compromised the subsequent dyke would retain the water in the Village causing catastrophic damage, as well as increased risk to life and health of residents in the Village.

1. Flooding in Keremeos

The orphan dike upstream of Keremeos in question is 2425 m in length. Upgrading offers the best solution to reduce the flood risk. Until a governing body assumes responsibility for this section of dike, it will continue to pose a risk to health and infrastructure.



2. Dike upgrade



The Similkameen River Dike outside of the municipal area requires the following upgrades:

- Raise Boundary Road
- Floodplain Drainage Improvement
- Infrastructure Flood Protection

3. Deterioration over time



With many of the orphan dykes having been constructed under emergent conditions and being located on private property, there is a lingering risk of compromised dikes resulting in the possibility of loss of life and catastrophic impact to infrastructure.

Conclusion

The RDOS is requesting the province reclaim and maintain these orphan dikes and associated structures.

Due to increased regulatory requirements, the cost to provide ongoing maintenance and oversight of these dikes and structures is significant.



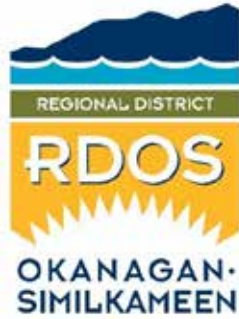
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Funding for Rural and Remote Volunteer Fire Department First Responder Programs



Introduction

A society-operated Volunteer Fire Brigade (VFB) provides firefighting and emergency response services within electoral areas that are typically less populated. Sparsely populated areas are unable to sustain the taxation required to support a fully resourced fire department.

Unlike career, composite and volunteer fire departments that are publicly funded through taxation, society-operated VFBs operate either independently or are funded by Irrigation Districts.

1. Background

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) has eight (8) Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs) publically funded through taxation, one (1) VFD funded through an Irrigation District, and three (3) privately funded VFBs.

Privately funded VFBs generate funds through grants, donations, contracts with local residents, insurance companies, BC Wildfire Service deployments, and commercial property owners. By billing for their services and relying on grants and donations, VFBs attempt to generate revenue to train their volunteers and purchase necessary apparatus, tools, and personal protective equipment (PPE). This is an ongoing struggle for the VFBs to maintain billing and collection, fundraising activities, and grant applications while also maintaining training, apparatus, and equipment.

Private VFBs play a crucial role in safeguarding lives and property during emergencies. In most cases, they do not have enough funds to meet their needs. Volunteers are responding with little or no PPE, outdated apparatus, and inadequate training, risking their lives to support their community.

The increase in wildfires throughout the province has had a devastating impact on rural communities. BC Wildfire Service has struggled to provide adequate staff and resources during significant wildfire years. Having VFBs available to respond to help protect lives, property, and infrastructure in the sparsely populated electoral areas is critical. BC Wildfire Service also benefits from working with VFBs, identifying them as a resource that can support their response. VFBs need to be adequately funded to provide these services.

2. Request

Ensure adequate funding for privately funded VFB's.

Government grants and funding guaranteed on an annual basis will benefit privately funded VFBs in the following ways:

- Acquire and maintain adequate training and PPE, protecting the health and safety of responders and the community.
- Support VFBs to provide public education programs on fire safety and prevention and disaster preparedness.
- Allow VFB's to attract and retain skilled personnel to ensure they have the volunteers required to respond safely.
- Ensure VFBs acquire and maintain essential firefighting equipment, such as apparatus and hoses, to respond effectively to fires in and around the community. This will enable VFBs to work with BC Wildfire Service and generate additional revenue to help achieve the above-outlined goals.

3. Conclusion

Ensuring adequate funding for rural and remote volunteer fire department first responder programs is a crucial step in helping protect lives, property, and infrastructure in rural communities.

This is especially important as Emergency Operations Centres and fire brigades are increasingly responding to wildfires, floods, and other emergencies due to the impacts of climate change.



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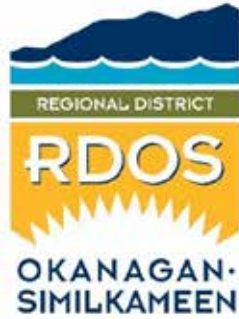
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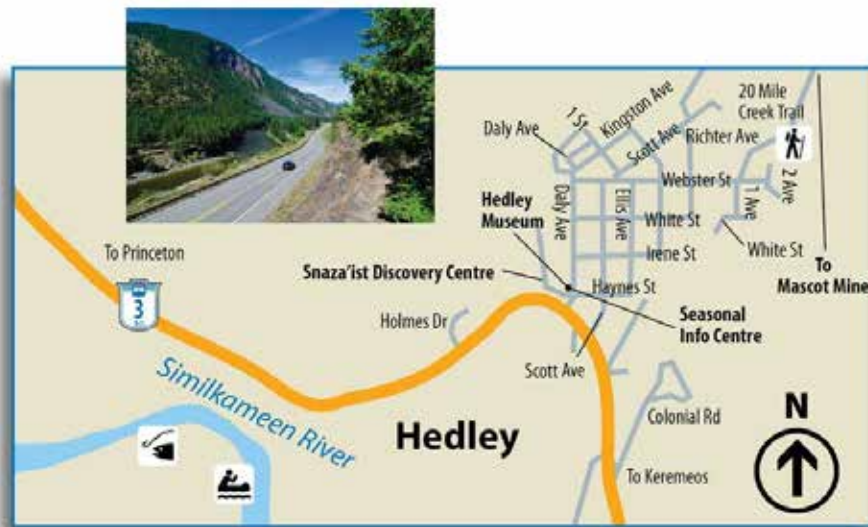
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Hedley Improvement District (Director Roberts)



Introduction

The groundwater in Hedley in Electoral Area "G" is being impacted by the historical mining activities in the area. Large tailing areas are contributing to higher than normal amounts of arsenic in the drinking water extracted from the aquifer in Hedley. When demand is high in the water system and the larger pump is required to meet demands, the arsenic concentration jumps to more than double the maximum allowable concentrations, thereby causing a ***Do Not Consume*** order on the water system.

The water supply for this small rural community is measuring a slow increase in average arsenic concentrations over the past 20 years. The anticipated timeline for a permanent ***Do Not Consume*** order could be within the next one-to-two years when the arsenic concentration consistently exceeds the maximum for potable drinking water.

In efforts to be proactive, the new administration for the improvement district is looking into options for changing sources for the potable water supply. The historical mining activities have caused the deterioration of the aquifer water quality. The community is asking for assistance from the province in finding and implementing a new water source to provide safe drinking water for the rural users.

1. Water System

The Hedley water system was constructed in the early 1900s and was maintained by Hedley Mascot Gold Mines Ltd. The original system took water from Hedley Creek for use in milling operations, as well as residential and commercial occupants of the town site. In 1952, the mine shut down and it turned the water works over to the Hedley Improvement District (HID), which was established under letters patent from the provincial government.

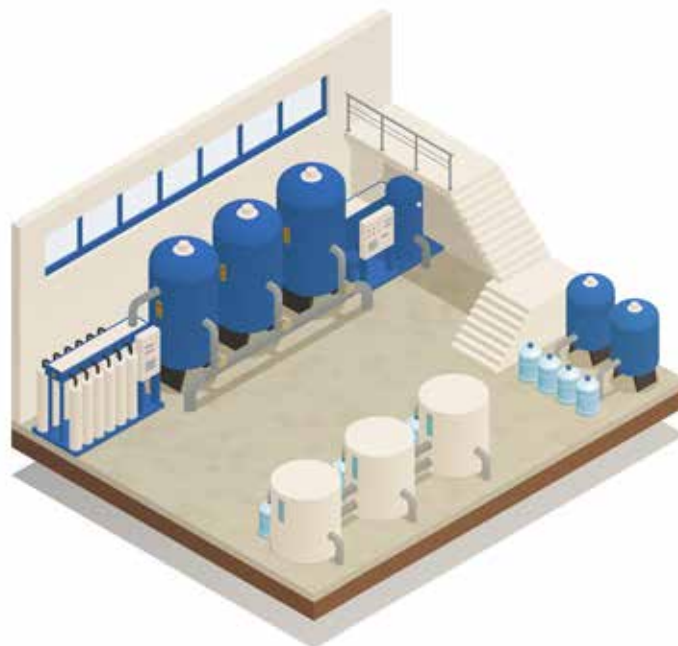
Then in 1970, a flood wiped out the dam and the wood stave water lines from the creek. As a result, the HID decided to bore wells, rather than trying to repair the damaged lines. A test well was dug at the site of the present pump house and the findings showed enough sustainable water to justify drilling a larger well.

In 2000, HID built a new 100,000-gallon concrete reservoir on Hospital Hill to replace the aging wood stave tank that had served as a reservoir. Later, in 2002, a new well was built adjacent to the pump house.

The HID distribution system is comprised of older steel and newer PVC pipes, which require replacement.

2. Source and Treatment:

The existing well is yielding higher than safe levels of arsenic. There are several treatment options to remove arsenic, including reverse osmosis filters, distillation and some specialized media filters. Chlorination and mechanical filters do not remove arsenic from water and boiling water may increase the concentration of arsenic. As such, a suitable solution must be sought.



3. Next Steps

As a possible option, the existing well could be rehabilitated. However, it is not known how long the rehabilitation effort will yield positive results in terms of providing adequate water quantity and quality. Therefore, a new well should be explored. Location and sites are limited, but some options do exist within the area. Test wells would need to be drilled and water quality and quantity testing will need to be performed.

Conclusion

The HID continues to encounter an increased amount of arsenic in the water and is seeking provincial support to explore and implement a new water source for the community.

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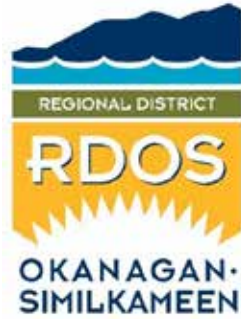
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101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237



Rental and Supportive Housing Options within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)



1. Local Zoning Bylaws

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) regulates land use, including housing development, by way of the Okanagan Valley Zoning Bylaw No. 2800, 2022, Electoral Area "G" Zoning Bylaw No. 2781, 2017, and Electoral Area "H" Zoning Bylaw No. 3065, 2024.

As it relates to housing development, these bylaws set out permitted forms of housing, density allowances, and building envelope requirements based on established zoning districts.

While the Regional District largely consists of lands that are zoned, the entirety of Electoral Area "B" (Cawston) and a majority of Electoral Area "G" (Keremeos Rural, Hedley & Olalla) are **not** zoned, and are subsequently **not** subject to local land use regulations which would ordinarily set out allowances and requirements for housing developments.

2. Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

A notable amount of lands within the Regional District are located within the ALR, and are subsequently subject to both local bylaws administered by the Regional District and the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and its regulations.

As it relates to the use of ALR lands for residential purposes, Section 34.3 of the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation sets out residential density and floor area allowances dependent on parcel size:

- For parcels 40 ha or less: one principal residence with a maximum total floor area of 500 m² and one additional residence with a maximum total floor area of 90 m².
- For parcels more than 40 ha: one principal residence with a maximum total floor area of 500 m² and one additional residence with a maximum total floor area of 186 m².

Furthermore, Section 31 stipulates that one secondary suite is permitted within a principal residence.

In this regard, residential uses within the ALR are limited to a maximum density of three dwelling units per parcel, with the form of such development generally being limited to a single detached dwelling, accessory dwelling, and secondary suite.

3. Relationship between Local Zoning Bylaws and ALR Regulations

Section 46(4) of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* states that a local government bylaw that is inconsistent with the Act, its regulations, or an order of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC; the “Commission”) has, to the extent of the inconsistency, no force or effect.

That is to say, and as it relates to housing development, in cases where a zoning bylaw permits a greater residential density or total floor area, the provisions of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and its regulations would prevail.

In this regard, zoning provisions which facilitate the Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) density requirements in accordance with the recent amendments to the *Local Government Act* only apply on ALR lands to the extent to which they remain consistent with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and its regulations.

A property owner who wishes to pursue additional residential density or a greater total floor area beyond that which is permitted within the ALR would require the Commission’s approval of a Non-Adhering Residential Use application. Where a proposal also requests a use or density not permitted under the applicable zoning bylaw, a zoning and/or Official Community Plan bylaw amendment would also need to be approved by the Regional District Board of Directors.

4. Request

In light of the recent amendments to the *Local Government Act* enacted under the *Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023* (Bill 44), which are intended to facilitate the delivery of “more small-scale, multi-unit housing for people, including townhomes, triplexes and laneway homes, and fix outdated zoning rules to help build more homes faster”, the Regional District is seeking clarity from the province with respect to its position on the provision of rental and supportive housing within the ALR.



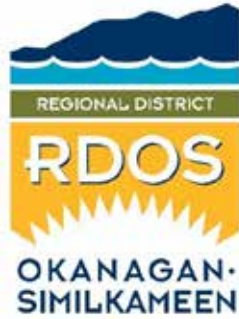
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Mark Pendergraft, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237



Implementation of Franchise Fees for Regional Districts



Introduction

A franchise fee is a levy on utility companies using public rights-of-way the fee is passed directly to customers, itemized on their bills as a city fee. The utility would collect the fee and remit it to the city. This approach is supported by the benefits it offers in terms of equitable cost distribution, proactive maintenance scheduling, and financial support for city services without increasing property taxes.

Currently Regional Districts do not have the authority to enter into a franchise fee, while municipal governments do.

1. Background

A franchise fee is a charge levied by local governments on utility companies for the use of public rights-of-way for their infrastructure. This fee is typically part of a franchise agreement, which outlines the expectations between a city and a utility company regarding the construction, operation, and maintenance of equipment located on public grounds and rights-of-way.

Benefits of Implementing a Franchise Fee:

Equitable Cost Distribution: A franchise fee ensures that all users of the utility system contribute to the maintenance of the public infrastructure they utilize.

Proactive Maintenance: By collecting a consistent fee, the city can maintain a regular schedule for necessary infrastructure upkeep, reducing the likelihood of emergency repairs.

Financial Stability: Franchise fees provide a stable revenue stream that can support city services currently funded by the general fund, potentially reducing the need for property tax increases.

Enhanced City-Utility Cooperation: The process of establishing a franchise fee fosters a collaborative relationship between the city and utility providers, leading to improved service and operations.

2. Request

Based on the information gathered and the benefits outlined, it is requested that the province permit regional districts to establish franchise fees. This fee will support regional district's financial stability, ensure equitable cost-sharing among utility users, and promote efficient and effective infrastructure maintenance.

3. Conclusion

The implementation of a franchise fee is a strategic move that aligns with regional district's goals of financial responsibility and infrastructure reliability. It is a fair and effective method to fund the management of public rights-of-way used by utility companies, benefiting both the region and its residents.



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101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

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Lower Nipit Improvement District



Lower Nipit well pumphouse during flood event 2021



Houses on Twin Lakes impacted by flooding in 2021



Floodwater rising on Twin Lakes in 2021

Introduction

The Lower Nipit Improvement District (LNID), established in the 1950s to manage water levels in Twin Lakes and provide agricultural irrigation, faces challenges with its outdated infrastructure.

Recent flooding has highlighted the inadequacies of the current system, prompting LNID to propose dissolving and transferring responsibility to the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS).

The RDOS has engaged Ecora Engineering Ltd. to assess the situation and recommend necessary upgrades.

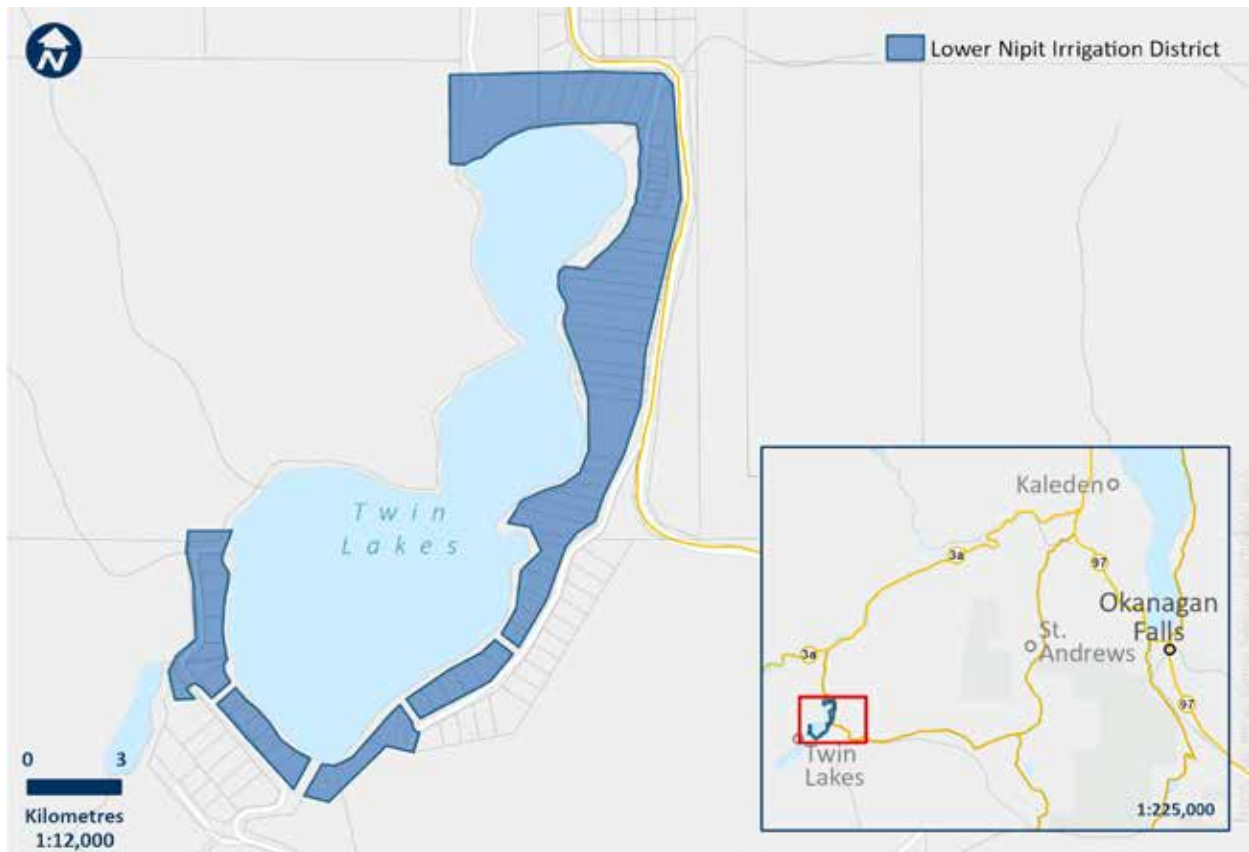
The existing infrastructure includes:

- 15 horsepower Grindex pump urgently needs replacement
- 670 meters of HDPE piping
- Various monitoring and access components

1. Infrastructure

ECORA's hydraulic modeling indicates that to manage a 1-in-200-year flood event, a new system must drain water at 1.9 m³/s. While upgrading to a larger pump is an option, ECORA recommends installing 300 metres of 1800 mm diameter culvert, which despite higher initial costs, offers lower long-term operational costs and fewer potential points of failure.

The estimated capital cost for the culvert is approximately \$1.6 million, with annual maintenance of an estimated \$5,500. With no current grant funding, the cost to each of the 68 properties is projected to be about \$1,325 per year for 25 years.



2. Provincial Control

Established in the 1950s to regulate water levels in Twin Lakes and provide irrigation for surrounding properties, the LNID's aging infrastructure has proven inadequate, as highlighted by recent flooding incidents.

With the existing system failing to meet modern standards and the financial and operational burden becoming increasingly challenging, the RDOS is proposing the provincial government take over the oversight and maintenance of the waterways.

This request aims to ensure necessary upgrades and management practices are implemented effectively and sustainably, leveraging provincial resources and expertise to address the critical need for improved flood management and water level control.

3. Next Steps

Studies have shown Twin Lakes water flows through Willowbrook, Park Rill, and Sportsmans' Bowl before reaching the channel and recommend addressing issues at the system's lower end first with an estimated cost of \$10 million to \$15 million.

Provincial ownership of this and other waterways can reduce the risks to health and infrastructure, by implementing a consistent approach to maintenance and flood prevention structures.



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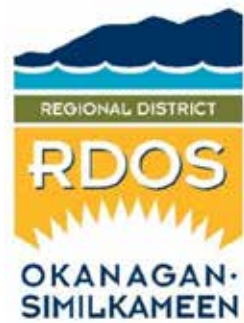
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Rural Storm Drain Flood Issues



Storm Drain concerns

The purpose of this report is to address and highlight concerns regarding the conditions of storm drains in rural areas. The objective is to provide an analysis of the issues observed, their potential impacts on the environment and infrastructure, and to recommend actionable solutions to ensure compliance with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) road and storm drain maintenance contract.

In British Columbia, the definition of a highway is broad. According to the *Transportation Act*, a highway includes all public streets, roads, ways, trails, lanes, bridges, trestles, ferry landings and approaches, and any other public way.

Additionally, the Motor Vehicle Act expands on this definition to include every road, street, lane, or right of way designed or intended for or used by the public for the passage of vehicles. It also includes every private place or passageway to which the public has access or is invited to park or service vehicles.

In British Columbia, MoTI contracts out road and storm drain maintenance to private contractors. These contractors are responsible for maintaining highways and structures across the province. The contracts cover a range of services, including winter maintenance, surface maintenance, drainage maintenance, roadside maintenance, traffic maintenance, bridge maintenance, and highway patrol.

The contract includes specific requirements for storm drain maintenance. These requirements are outlined in the Highway Maintenance Agreement and the Highway Maintenance Specifications.

The Highway Maintenance Agreement details the services to be provided, standards of work, and terms of payment. It includes various schedules that specify the maintenance services required, including drainage maintenance.

The highway maintenance specifications provide the minimum acceptable standards for completed work on all provincially-owned highways and side roads.

These documents ensure contractors are responsible for maintaining storm drains to prevent flooding and ensure proper drainage, which is crucial for road safety and longevity.

A rural storm drain system is essentially a network of ditches dug along the sides of roadways. These ditches are designed to manage stormwater runoff by channeling it away from the road and surrounding areas, thereby reducing and eliminating the risk of flooding.

This report focuses on Okanagan Falls in Electoral Area "D", however, the storm drain concerns are present throughout all nine RDOS Electoral Areas.

Concerns:

1. A major concern is storm drain ditches in rural areas are often not maintained or dug out on a regular basis. This lack of regular maintenance can and has, led to the accumulation of debris, sediment, and vegetation within the ditches. When these ditches become clogged, they are unable to effectively channel stormwater away from roads and surrounding areas. As a result, during heavy rainfall, the water can overflow, leading to localized flooding. This flooding can damage infrastructure, create hazardous driving conditions, and negatively impact the environment. Regular maintenance, including the clearing and digging out of these ditches, is essential to ensure they function properly and prevent flooding. In addition, property values are being impacted.
2. Municipalities have control of their storm drain systems and are encouraged to integrate stormwater management objectives into their land use planning. Inadequate maintenance can hinder the effectiveness of these plans. However, Regional Districts do not have authority over storm drains and cannot control the quality and usefulness of the system. Regional Districts must rely on the MoTI to maintain the storm drains.

As municipalities are responsible for the maintenance of their storm drain systems, they are also responsible for the funding. The funding comes from the property taxes. The rural taxpayer also pays for road maintenance, which also includes storm drain maintenance, and the municipalities are funded by property taxes.

The following photographs show storm drain issues in Okanagan Falls in Electoral Area "D". These issues are indicative of the rural storm drain system issues throughout the Regional District.



The area to the right in the photograph below is the storm drain system. Soil build-up along with the vegetation show that maintenance of this storm drain system has not been maintained.

The rock pile and dirt is part of the storm drain system. This is and has been a flood hazard.



The following is a complaint submitted to the Regional District. The complainant is aware the RDOS does not have authority over this service.



“On May 22, 2023, and Aug 05, 2024, the Museum Office had water enter the building on two sides, extremely heavy downpour of rains caused this flooding. (rear of 1145 Main Street).

The deluge of rain water runs off Birch Street directly onto the Museum property behind and on the side of the building, the huge build up of water flow then enters the building before draining away.

There is a Drain Grate at the front of 1113 Birch Street that could alleviate much of the runoff, this Drain requires that the rocks on the drain and soil in front of the Drain be removed so as to allow for water to enter the drain.

I request that this drain be cleared ASAP before another severe rainstorm occurs.

This would be a partial solution to the flooding issue. There is a huge drainage situation on Birch Street which affects the Okanagan Falls Museum property.

Please follow up with a solution to alleviate future flooding of the Museum buildings. See photos attached.”

The photographs above are indicative of the rural storm drain system throughout the Regional District.

Recommendation

Enforce the contract, which includes a schedule for regular inspections and cleaning of storm drains to prevent blockages and flooding and ensure proper functioning.



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

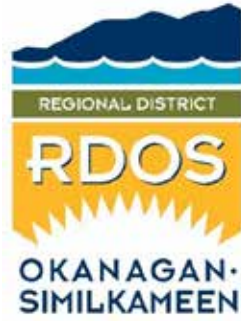
Board of Directors

Mark Pendergraft, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237

2024



Provincial Campfire Permitting Process



Implementation of a Provincial Campfire Permitting Process

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) would like to encourage the province to implement a 'Campfire Permit' to help control the use of campfires and provide public education on how to build and manage a campfire safely.

In British Columbia, camping and recreating on the landscape are popular activities. Along with these popular activities, many people want to enjoy campfires. Unfortunately, campfires that are not properly managed or during extreme dry conditions, can be an ignition source for wildfires.

BC Wildfire Service announces Fire Bans provincially, which is intended to prevent people from having campfires in specified areas, however, this does not control the activity outside those bans. The concern with the free campfire use when no restrictions are in place, is that there are people who do not know how to safely build and manage campfires. There is also limited knowledge of where people are building campfires.

Currently, there is no permitting process in place to control the use of campfires, however, the province does have a process to obtain a Christmas tree permit. The Christmas tree permit requires residents to register their name and where they intend to take the tree. It also clearly lays out where they cannot cut trees and the maximum height of the tree they can cut. In addition, the permit website provides information on age requirements, what to do and not do when cutting a tree, and other related resources. The applicant is required to carry the permit with them when going out to cut down the tree.

Applying the Christmas tree permit process to campfires would provide the province with information on who will be responsible for the campfire and when and where they want to have the campfire. The permit also provides the province with an opportunity to educate people on how to build and manage campfires safely. The permit also allows provincial staff at parks and on Crown Lands to know who is responsible and whether the person has the authority to have a campfire at that location.

Understanding applicants would be applying for a time while they are on vacation, a further suggestion is to add the applicant's email address and cellular number. When circumstances, change such as a Fire Ban for the area the person intends to build a campfire, an automated email is sent to them voiding the permit.

Christmas tree permits site

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/natural-resource-use/natural-resource-permits/christmas-tree-permits>

Christmas tree permits site for reference

The screenshot shows the 'Christmas tree permits' page on the British Columbia government website. The page includes a navigation menu with links to Home, Ecosystems, natural resources and industry, Working on the Land Base, Natural resource permits, and Christmas tree permits. The main content area is titled 'Christmas tree permits' and features a 'Last updated on December 6, 2023' notice. It explains that public members wishing to cut a Christmas tree on Crown land for personal use must obtain a 'Free Live Permit for a Christmas Tree' from their local Natural Resource District. The page also provides instructions on how to contact the appropriate District Manager or designate. Below this, there are expandable sections for 'What you need to know', 'Safety and natural resource roads', and 'Pet safety'. A 'Permits listed by region' section allows users to filter permits by region, with a list of regions including Northeast, Omineca, Skeena, Cariboo, Kootenay - Boundary, Thompson - Okanagan, South Coast, and West Coast. The page also includes sections for 'Tree cutting etiquette', 'Safety', and 'Related links'.

Christmas tree permits
Last updated on December 6, 2023

Members of the public who wish to cut a Christmas Tree on Crown land for personal use must have a [Free Live Permit for a Christmas Tree](#) from each Natural Resource District where they intend to cut, signed by the appropriate District Manager or designate.

Each district is operated differently so please [contact the individual districts](#) where you plan on cutting for more information, and remember to carry your permit with you at all times.

Expand all Collapse all

What you need to know

Safety and natural resource roads

Pet safety

Permits listed by region

To determine which district you are interested in a permit from, refer to the [district region map](#).

Expand all Collapse all

Northeast

Omineca

Skeena

Cariboo

Kootenay - Boundary

Thompson - Okanagan

South Coast

West Coast

Tree cutting etiquette

Most permits allow only one tree to be cut.

- **Do:** Pick the perfect tree before cutting.
- **Do:** Ensure it fits on your vehicle to avoid trimming.
- **Do:** Cut cleanly at the base.
- **Don't:** Leave unsafe, pointed stumps.
- **Don't:** Leave debris to fuel summer fires.

Safety

- [Resource Road Safety Information](#)
- [Resource Road User Safety Guide](#)
- [Resource Road Orientation](#)

Related links

- [British Columbia Christmas Tree Council](#)
- [Guide for Rough Harvesting \(PDF 429 KB\)](#)
- [Free Live Fireweed Permits](#)
- [ForestCounter BC](#)
- [Natural Resources Online Services](#)

If you have any questions, please contact RDOS Protective Services at 250-490-0237.



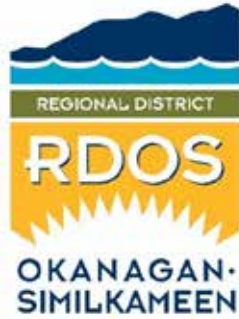
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

Board of Directors

Mark Pendergraft, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237



Quality of Rural Roads and Corresponding Repair Costs



Rural Roads

It has been found the quality of certain roads within the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS), specifically in Okanagan Fall in Electoral Area "D", are at a lower standard.

The quality of these road is resulting in high repair costs when a water or wastewater main has to be upgraded or repaired. During the 2024 water infrastructure upgrades, the RDOS Public Works division found the roads of poor quality.

In addition, an incorporation study is currently being conducted in Okanagan Falls. If the incorporation is successful, the new municipality would be responsible for all road repairs and these costs will be materially higher. This is due to the fact some roads have a gravel base rather than dirt.

When some of the roads were constructed, a decision was made to opt for less expensive materials. While construction costs may have been reduced, the cost-cutting measures have resulted in more frequent maintenance and repairs, leading to higher cumulative costs over time.

The overall lifespan of these roads is reduced, necessitating earlier and more frequent renewals. Poorly constructed roads can develop potholes, cracks, and other hazards more quickly, increasing the risk of accidents.

If Okanagan Falls incorporates, the quality of the roads will directly impact future property taxes.

Recommendation

If incorporation occurs, the province fund a major upgrade of the roads within Okanagan Falls or provide a one-time grant. The grant would be limited to road repairs or upgrades. The incorporation study, as outlined below, states that 11% of the roads are in poor condition.

Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study

Currently, local roads in Okanagan Falls are owned by the provincial government and managed by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

There are almost 34 km of roads (excluding Highway 97) in the incorporation Study Area, as well as two bridges, drainage infrastructure, and road signage.

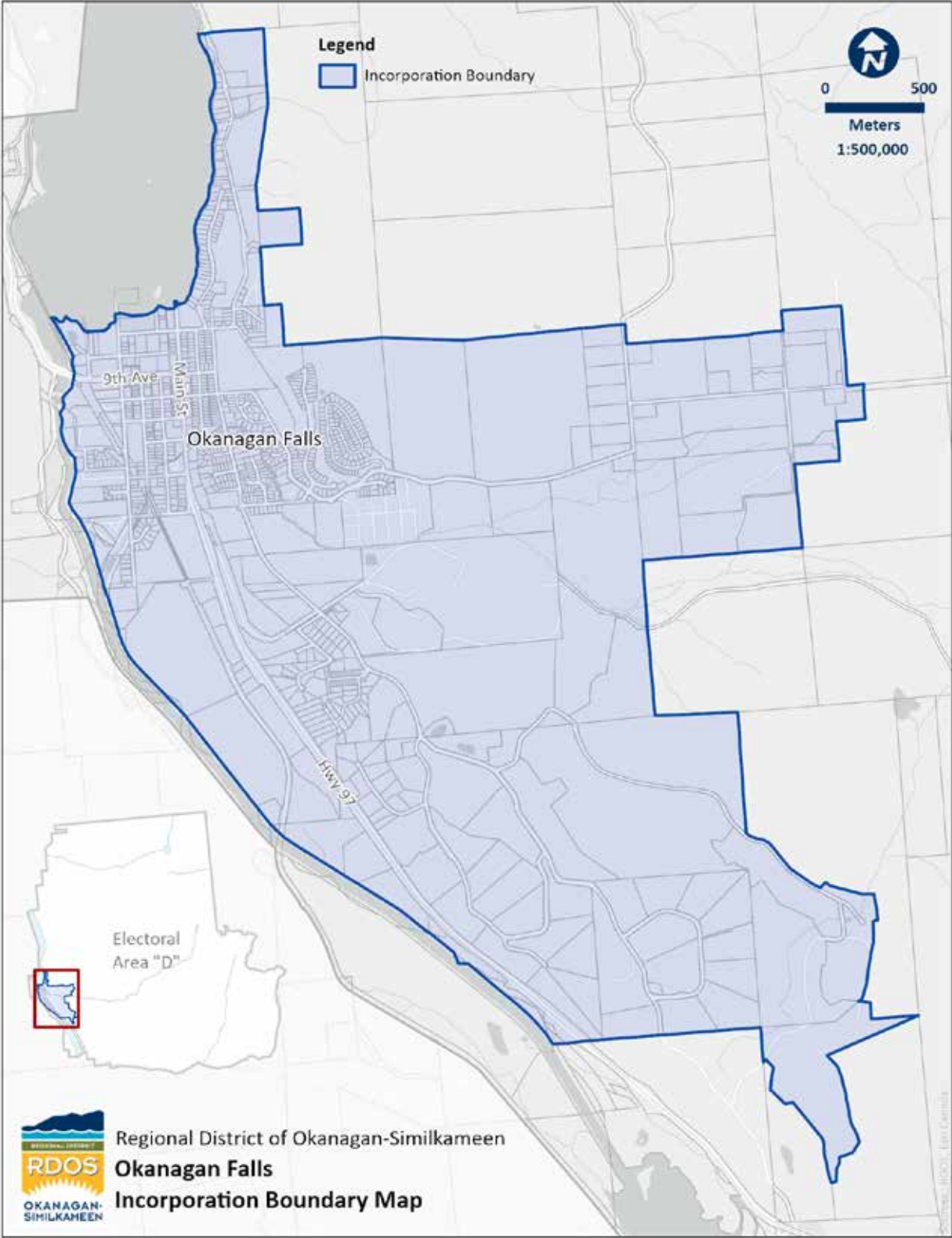
As part of the incorporation study, engineering consultants (Urban Systems Ltd.) conducted a Road Investment Review that assessed the physical condition of road surfaces within the Study Area and found that 11% are in good condition, 78% are in fair condition, and 11% are in poor condition.

If Okanagan Falls were to incorporate, local roads in the Study Area would become the responsibility of the new municipality. The municipality would have the power to change local road maintenance standards, plan capital road works, and give priority to walking and cycling. A new municipality would evaluate whether to have its own public works and roads crew or to contract the service out (or a combination).

The Road Investment Review, along with analysis on all the other local services, will help the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Committee understand the costs and benefits related to potential incorporation.

The Committee met in May 2024 prior to the engagement phase. The Study analysis and other information was shared with residents via mail outs and community events.

You can find the full Road Investment Review in the [April 16, 2024 Committee agenda](#).





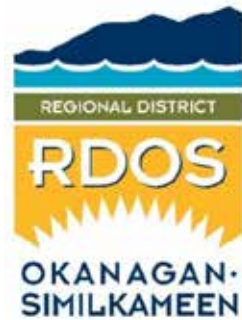
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

Board of Directors

Mark Pendergraft, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237



Recruitment and Retention of Healthcare Workers for Rural Communities



Okanagan Similkameen Regional Hospital Board (OSRHD)

British Columbia has had to temporarily close various emergency rooms on an ongoing basis for several reasons:

Staffing shortage

The most significant reason is a **shortage of healthcare staff**, including doctors and nurses. This issue has been exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to increased sick leaves and difficulties in the recruitment and retention of healthcare workers for rural communities.

The closures have predominantly affected rural areas where healthcare resources are already limited. Hospitals in these regions are facing more frequent closures.

The demand for healthcare services, is putting additional strain on emergency rooms. This has led to situations where hospitals cannot maintain adequate staffing levels to keep emergency rooms open.

In some cases an unhealthy work environments and the cascading effects of a primary healthcare crisis have further contributed to the staffing issues. In addition, **lack of housing** for the staff within the rural community is a factor.

These factors have created a challenging situation for B.C.'s healthcare system, which is the contributing factor to the temporary closure of emergency rooms. Patient safety is materially compromised due to these factors.

Potential Solutions

The province has recognized the issue of healthcare staff shortages and has come up with one solution, putting doctors on salary when working in the emergency rooms. The salary provides doctors with a guaranteed wage while working in emergency rooms rather than being paid only when patients are treated.

While this is a way to start resolving the problem, it did not solve it completely, as the shortages are still occurring.

Addressing staffing shortages in B.C.'s healthcare system requires a multifaceted approach. The following are some strategies that could be considered.

- A provincial tax credit can be given to any healthcare worker who works in emergency rooms and must have worked in the emergency room at least 15 weekends in the tax year.
- Providing competitive salaries and benefits can make the healthcare sector more attractive to potential employees.
- Subsidize healthcare student fees for those students, doctors, and nurses who are willing to commit a percentage of their career to rural areas with a specific commitment to emergency room service.
- Student loan forgiveness for those students who commit to working a specific amount of time in rural areas will also help address the disparities between urban and rural healthcare.
- Waiving application and assessment fees for internationally educated nurses and doctors will attract more qualified professionals to the province.
- There is a common perception that rural areas have lower housing costs. Older homes in rural areas may be more affordable, however, this is not true for the newer homes, which healthcare workers would be attracted to.

Offering additional incentives for healthcare professionals to work in rural areas, such as housing allowances, can help address the disparities between urban and rural healthcare.

The following information was taken from an article in Vancouver City News (August 2024).

“In 2024, several emergency rooms (ERs) in British Columbia have faced temporary closures due to staffing shortages and other issues. Here are some notable closures:

- Mission Memorial Hospital, implemented service adaptations (limited service) August 10 -11, 2024.
- South Okanagan General Hospital (Oliver), closed from August 9 – 10, 2024.
- Mackenzie Hospital, Closed from August 9 – 10. 2024.
- Chetwynd Hospital, Closed from August 10 – 11, 2024.
- Cariboo Memorial Hospital (Williams Lake), closed multiple time in July 2024.

- Hospitals in Merritt, Williams Lake, Clearwater and Lillooet, experienced closures in July 2024.

These closures highlight the ongoing challenges in the healthcare system particularly in the rural and interior regions of the province”.

When an emergency room is closed, it creates issues with local government fire departments and paramedics. These emergency professionals would be called upon to handle healthcare issues in the absence of a functioning emergency room.

Capital Funding Provincial and Local Government

In British Columbia, local governments (through regional hospital districts) contribute to the capital equipment needs of the regional health authorities.

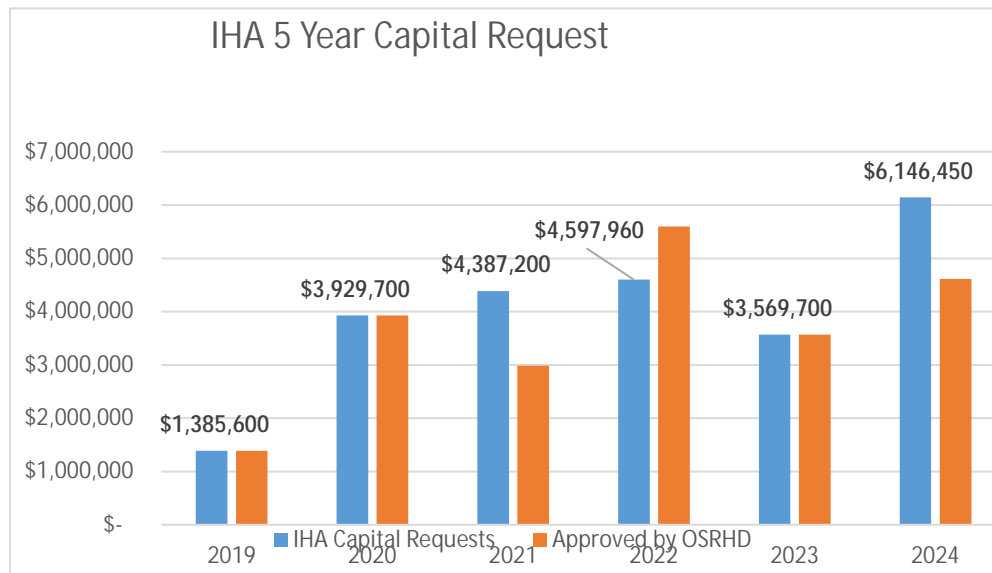
In principle, the regional hospital districts should work in cooperation with health authorities to determine the annual contribution required from the regional hospital districts for health-related capital costs. The health authority submits a list to the regional hospital districts with the regional health authority asking for the 40% contribution.

In the past few years, the amount requested by Interior Health has increased materially. The regional hospital district directors are concerned with the increase and would like to have input on the funding request and setting of priorities.

The amount requested in 2019 increased by 344% in 2024.

Interior Health Authority Five Year Capital Requests

Year	IHA Capital Requests	Approved by OSRHD
2019	\$ 1,385,600	\$ 1,385,600
2020	\$ 3,929,700	\$ 3,929,700
2021	\$ 4,387,200	\$ 2,987,200
2022	\$ 4,597,960	\$ 5,597,960
2023	\$ 3,569,700	\$ 3,569,700
2024	\$ 6,146,450	\$ 4,609,838



The Okanagan Similkameen Regional Hospital District Board of Directors are concerned with the material increase in funding of equipment and the resulting increase in property taxes. For the 2024 request, the board authorized 30% of the funding instead of the requested 40%.

The request is that the province consider increasing the provincial share of the equipment funding formula from 60% to 70%, with the Regional Hospital District Board share reduced to 30%.

Funding Justification

In British Columbia, it's common for citizens to seek healthcare services at various hospitals and clinics across the province. This movement across different healthcare facilities helps ensure patients receive the best possible care. This practice is influenced by several factors, including the equipment a hospital may have available. Thus, the province should share a higher amount of the equipment costs.

Summary of Requests

- A provincial tax credit given to healthcare workers.
- Provide competitive salaries and benefits.
- Subsidize healthcare student fees.
- Student loan forgiveness.
- Waive application and assessment fees for internationally educated nurses and doctors.
- Offer additional incentives to healthcare professionals who work in rural areas, such as housing allowances to help address the disparities between urban and rural healthcare.
- Consider increasing the provincial share of the equipment funding formula from 60% to 70% with the Regional Hospital Board share reduced to 30%.
- The lack of housing for nurses and doctors in the area is a contributing factor to the closures.





REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

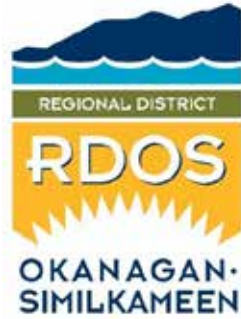
Okanagan Similkameen Regional Hospital District

Board of Directors

Martin Johansen, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-485-6200



Rural Fire Departments' Response to Motor Vehicle Incidents



Medical First Responders and Motor Vehicle Incidents

In order to emphasize the importance of finding alternative funding streams for volunteer fire departments, it is important to understand the volume of calls for medical first responder (FR) and motor vehicle incidents (MVI) within the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS). RDOS Volunteer Fire Departments include Anarchist Mountain, Apex, Kaleden, Keremeos, Naramata, Okanagan Falls, Tulameen, and Willowbrook.

Medical emergencies, including heart attacks, strokes, vehicle crashes, and other medical crises, make up the majority of the calls for service for fire crews.

As recently as five years ago, most RDOS volunteer fire departments responded to fewer than 40% of calls falling into the two categories of FR and MVI. Based on the latest available data sets, RDOS Volunteer Fire Departments responded to **50.18%** FR calls and **13.58%** MVI calls between January 1, 2023, and September 11, 2024. The combined total is **63.76%** or **1,216** total calls for this time period.

The burden this volume of calls places on small fire departments is tremendous, especially considering the departments are funded by local fire district taxpayers, not the province.

Some FR and MVI calls can consume hours of firefighter and truck time, depending on the extent of the call. This often includes waiting for BC Ambulance Service paramedics (who have busy workloads) to arrive and the challenges reaching some remote locations. Volunteer fire departments are, to a degree, subsidizing BC Ambulance, which is a provincially funded service.

Conclusion

In most, if not all provinces, MVI expenses are recoverable from insurance providers, but ICBC does not allow this reimbursement in British Columbia, making it the responsibility of local fire area taxpayers.

While Volunteer Fire Departments are not required to provide these services, the RDOS would be negligent in not doing so because it can be the difference between life and death.



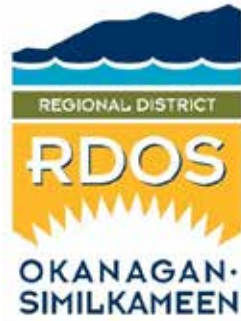
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

Board of Directors

Mark Pendergraft, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237



Short-Rayed Alkali Aster (SRAA)



Introduction

The Short-Rayed Alkali Aster (SRAA) is a native annual plant species known for its short ray flowers found along sandy shorelines from British Columbia to California. While this species is generally beneficial to the environment, its presence on the beach at Christie Memorial Park in Okanagan Falls has raised concerns among residents and visitors.

The plant's recovery strategy for this specific area has led to issues such as reduced beach accessibility and hindered recreational use, while missing the opportunity to truly enhance beach ecosystem management objectives.



(September 19, 2024) Shoreline conditions at Christie Memorial Park.

1. Background

The South Okanagan is the northern extent of this pioneer species habitat. It is protected under the Federal Species at Risk Act and is a red-listed species in B.C., due to its low identified populations in Canada.

The Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) looks to the province and local governments to provide protection of critical habitats. In 2013, Critical Habitat for the SRAA was designated at Christie Memorial Park and occupies 60% of the lake front at Christie Memorial park and a total of 40% of the available public lake access in Okanagan Falls in Electoral Area "D".

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) entered into a voluntary stewardship agreement for the critical habitat area in 2017 to collaborate with Provincial Ecosystems, to maintain the site following best practices while looking to find some compromises to better meet the community's expectations for the recreational use of the space.



2024 aerial photo of Christie Memorial Park showing beach maintenance activities and recent CPR Spit Rehabilitation Project.

2. Current Status

Through the five year period of the agreement, there were a few minor adjustments to practices, the critical habitat area did not meet the function or aesthetics that the community desired as one of their most valued assets.

Although expired, the RDOS continues to honour the stewardship agreement terms which allow for the removal of vegetation by mechanical tilling in October and May.

This practice falsely maintains the population of SRAA through the agitation of the sand and seasonal removal of competitive vegetation which would otherwise displace the population of this pioneer species over time.

Given the local desire to see a more holistic approach to this site management opposed to the alternatives which are:

- Stop all maintenance of the Critical Habitat area, allowing the site to naturalize ultimately displacing the SRAA.
 - Without management this will be primarily overrun by invasive species.
 - The outcome will not meet local, provincial or federal objectives.
- Install fencing and manually weed all competitive vegetation.
 - Fencing is required to minimize recreational access during the summer.
 - Aesthetically most appealing.
 - Significant increase to local service area budget.
- Ignore the Critical Habitat designation and maintain it as a beach recreation asset.
 - Reduction of biodiversity in the region.
 - Potential of fines against the RDOS for destruction of critical habitat.
 - This is actively occurring after hours by community members.



(July 2024) Current conditions showing unauthorized removal of vegetation in Critical Habitat Area by residents.



(July 2024) Looking at Christie Memorial Park from the recently rehabilitated CPR Spit.

3. Opportunity

The RDOS believes there is an opportunity to increase bio-diversity and improve lake health while providing recreational access to the lake in a way that promotes stewardship and public education. For this to succeed, the province would need to be a participating partner in a project to enhance the beachfront in Okanagan Falls.

There have been many initiatives over the years through the RDOS and the community looking for a path forward on this matter. Without the support of provincial or federal environment staff, these initiatives have not gained traction. The RDOS has a budget in place to initiate a meaningful project.

The RDOS is a responsible government land manager promoting a balance of outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship. Examples include ongoing RDOS projects such as the Pioneer Park Beach enhancements and CPR Spit Rehabilitation adjacent to Christie Memorial Park.



(April 2024) Pioneer Park shoreline restoration installation project to improve recreation and riparian conditions.



(July 2024) Christie Memorial Park looking south to Skaha Lake.



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

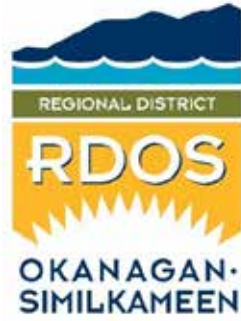
Board of Directors

Mark Pendergraft, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237

2024



Traffic Fine Revenues for Regional Districts



Introduction

The B.C. government transfers 100% of net revenues from traffic violations to municipalities that are directly responsible for paying for policing. This provides municipalities with additional funds to support community safety and address local policing priorities.

Currently regional districts are not included in the distribution of traffic fine revenues.

1. Background

In British Columbia, traffic fine revenue operates as follows:

When a driver commits a traffic violation (such as speeding, running a red light, or illegal parking), law enforcement officers issue a traffic ticket. The offender (driver) is required to pay the fine specified on the ticket. The amount varies based on the type of violation and severity.

The government collects fines through various channels, including online payments, in-person payments at service centers, and mail-in payments.

The fines are processed centrally.

Distribution of Revenue

After deducting administrative costs (such as processing fees), the remaining revenue is considered the “net revenue”, which is then distributed to municipalities (local governments) responsible for policing. These funds are intended to support community safety initiatives and address local policing priorities.

Each municipality decides how to allocate the funds. They may use the revenue for additional policing services, traffic safety programs, or other community needs.

2. Request

While Regional Districts do not pay directly for policing services, they do pay through their taxes. The request is that Regional Districts be treated similarly to municipalities and that a comparable gas tax distribution formula be used.

3. Conclusion

Including Regional Districts in the distribution of net revenues from traffic violations would contribute to increased community safety and place regional districts and municipalities on more equal footing with regards to policing and funding public safety initiatives.



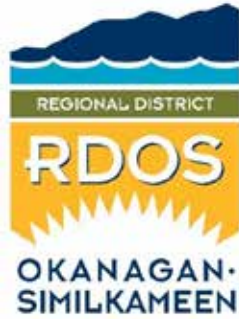
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

Board of Directors

Mark Pendergraft, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237



Multiple Funding Requests for Water & Sewer Systems (Directors Gettens & Taylor)



Introduction

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) respectfully requests the Province of British Columbia allocate available funding to upgrade the Sage Mesa and Lakeshore Water Systems and Vintage Views wastewater treatment systems. This request is to construct upgrades to ensure citizen health is protected by providing safe drinking water and to prevent additional environmental impacts due to the release of insufficiently treated sewage into the area.

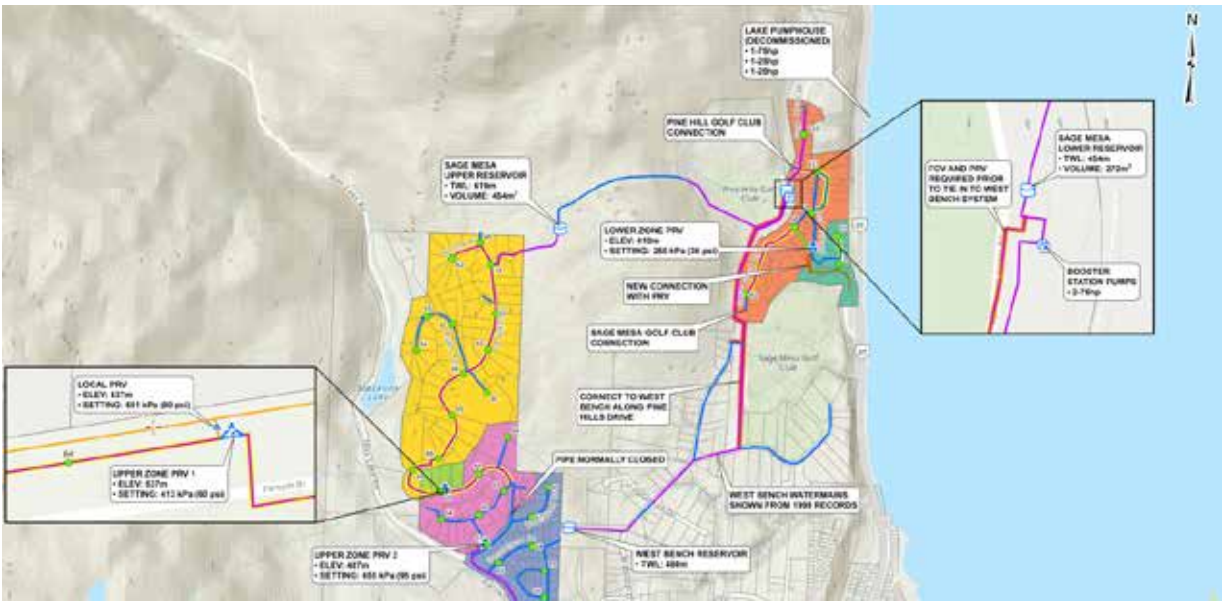
Upon the RDOS Board decision to consider the acquisition of any privately owned water or wastewater utility, a formal technical and financial assessment is performed by a qualified third party consultant. This assessment is in compliance with the RDOS Utility Acquisition Policy. The Assessment Report findings outline the state of the system, along with any need for upgrades to conform to current regulatory requirements and/or replacement due to aging.

The following utilities have been assessed and cost estimates have been generated to identify what needs to be done in order to make the system(s) compliant to regulatory, national, provincial and local standards and bylaws.

1. Sage Mesa Water System

The Sage Mesa Water System serves 244 parcels throughout two zones; both requiring significant upgrades and improvements.

Distribution system upgrades	\$10.2 M
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PRV's• Hydrants• Reservoir• Booster Station Power Accessories	
Water Source and Treatment	\$18.4 M
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raw Water Pumphouse• Treatment Plant• Connections to Distribution	
Additional Replacement of Aging Systems	\$14.6 M



Regardless of how the water source and distribution system is improved, most of the Sage Mesa upgrades are needed now, to replace ageing infrastructure which is at the end of its life, and which does not provide sufficient fire storage, and in some instances sufficient hydrant coverage.

Background

The RDOS is currently meeting with the Penticton Indian Band (PIB) to jointly operate the water treatment plant, which will supply water for West Bench, Sage Mesa, and Penticton Indian Band

For the past 15 years, the provincial government has taken control of the water system and contracted the operations to the RDOS. The province and the water system owner have requested the RDOS take over ownership and operation.

The Regional District Board is in the process of taking over the utility.

2. Lakeshore Water Works

The Lakeshore Water System serves a community of up to 311 connections and requires infrastructure upgrades and system improvements based on the following criteria.

- **Health and Safety:** water quality needs to meet regulatory standards
- **Infrastructure Condition:** prioritization of existing/deteriorating infrastructure
- **System Capacity:** ensuring capacity meets current and future demands
- **Vulnerability and Resilience:** maintain and/or improve resilience to natural disasters, climate change and other emergencies
- **Regulatory Requirement:** meeting regulatory obligations to address compliance
- **Operational Requirement:** the need to operate the system effectively and efficiently

The system is comprised of the following:

- Approximately 10,226 m of water mains installed between 1976 and 2010
- 33 fire hydrants
- Two concrete reservoirs and one steel tank with a total storage capacity of 936 m³
- Four pumphouses

Given the existing infrastructure's age/service life, upgrades need to be made.

Some of the most critical upgrades include the following:

- Christie Mountain Pumphouse structural
- Replacement intake line to Sunnybrook
- Water Treatment Plant
- New reservoir
- Pumphouse upgrades

\$13.1 million



3. Vintage Views Sewer System

The Vintage Views Sewer System serving a community of 112 connections requires the following infrastructure upgrades and system improvements to meet regulatory requirements.

- **Infiltration Field**
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant**
- **Health and Safety:** to meet regulatory standards.

\$6.2 million

Wastewater management is vital in watersheds. Inadequate treatment and dispersal of effluent is a threat to the natural environment; the health and safety of the public and could be detrimental to the water quality in Skaha Lake.

- For the Vintage Views Wastewater System, the potential for environmental threats is high and has been identified by the province and the recent engineering assessment.



Water and Health Risks

- Contaminants, coliform bacteria, and chemicals may infiltrate the aquifer. Drinking water wells can be impacted.
- Inadequately treated effluent can directly enter nearby streams, rivers, or lakes
- Nutrient pollution affects natural habitats, leading to changes in plant and animal communities
- Coliform bacteria, including E. coli, in inadequately treated wastewater can pose health risks to humans

Conclusion

The Regional District is seeking financial assistance to upgrade water and wastewater utilities to make them compliant with regulatory and RDOS standards, while delivering clean, safe, and sustainable water supply and wastewater infrastructure to our constituents, as well as protecting ecological integrity.

The Regional District requests this consideration for the following reasons:

- Environment, public health, and water resources at risk:
 - Government has a responsibility to ensure safe, reliable, and accessible drinking water for all people in British Columbia.
 - Water and wastewater systems are non-compliant.
 - § Wastewater treatment system does not produce treated effluent that complies with the current permit and the Municipal Wastewater Regulation (MWR).
- Resolve regulatory issues that have plagued the community for more than ten years:
 - Wastewater system is inadequate to service the needs of the current customers.
 - Empty lot owners cannot obtain building permits for homes due to Pollution Prevention Order 110871.
- Show the province has a stake in providing residents with a clean and healthy environment and are working with them to resolve matters
- The facility buildings are unsafe and not secure
- The owners of the systems have requested the RDOS to take ownership of the assets
- Support the Regional District to take ownership of the privately owned wastewater system assets and complete significant upgrades to achieve regulatory compliance
- Align with the provincial initiative to expand housing options; an upgraded wastewater system can have positive economic effects on the community and surrounding areas following the completion of developable lots with housing units



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

Board of Directors

Mark Pendergraft, Chair

101 Martin Street
Penticton B.C. V2A 5J9

250-492-0237