ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Electoral Area Services Committee

FROM: J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 19, 2026

RE: Electoral Area OCP & Zoning Bylaw Amendments – Bald Range Wildfire (F2024.012-ZONE)

Administrative Recommendation:

THAT the Electoral Area "F" Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment Bylaw No. 2790.07 and the Okanagan Valley Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 2800.44 be initiated.

Alternatives:

1. Status quo.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present options and seek direction from the Board regarding possible amendments to the Okanagan Valley Zoning Bylaw No. 2800, 2022, in relation to density regulations that apply to properties within the area affected by the Bald Range Wildfire.

Strategic Priorities: 5.2 Optimize Development Approval Function

Statutory Requirements:

Under Section 481.3 (Zoning bylaws and small-scale multi-family housing) of the *Local Government Act*, the Regional District is required to exercise its zoning powers to permit the use and density of the following:

a) at least one additional housing unit within a detached dwelling that would otherwise be a single-family dwelling;

b) at least one additional housing unit within another building on the same parcel or parcels of land on which a detached single-family dwelling is located.

Unless the subject of an exemption approved by the Minister, these zoning allowances were to be implemented by the Regional District by June 30, 2024 (subsequently extended to June 30, 2026).

Background:

The Faulder community relies on groundwater from the Meadow Valley Aquifer for their drinking water supply and, in 2015, a new community well was drilled into the Meadow Valley Aquifer to replace the existing well that supplied domestic water to an estimated 215 residents.

At that time, it was determined that the community's well was near capacity and not capable of accommodating unlimited growth, while the greater Meadow Valley Aquifer is subject to irregular recharge rates which can impact the provision of water to properties.

In response, the Board, at its meeting of June 15, 2023, adopted OCP and Zoning amendments that, amongst other things, limited densities within the Faulder Water Service Area to only one (1) principal dwelling per parcel (i.e. accessory dwellings and secondary suites are prohibited due to concerns about the demand from additional residential connection to the water system).

Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH):

On November 30, 2023, the provincial Legislature adopted Bill 44, which introduced a number of substantial amendments to the *Local Government Act*, the intent of which was 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 was required to approve a zoning bylaw(s) that complied with SSMUH requirements by June 30, 2024, and to notify the Minister of Housing, in writing, when the bylaw(s) had been adopted, the location(s) of any exempted land(s) and the legislative provisions supporting the exemptions.

On February 16, 2024, the provincial government announced the creation of a "time-based extension" wherein a local government could apply to have the deadline for SSMUH Compliance extended under the following circumstances:

1. *The local government is in the process of upgrading infrastructure that services the specific area or specific lots for which the extension is being requested;*
2. *The infrastructure that services the area where SSMUH would apply is such that compliance by June 30, 2024, is likely to increase a risk to health, public safety or the environment in that area; or*
3. *Extraordinary circumstances exist that otherwise prevent compliance in relation to the area.*

Requests for extensions related to infrastructure were to be submitted to the Minister of Housing by June 1, 2024, and could request a maximum extension of 6.5 years (i.e. to December 30, 2030).

At its subsequent meeting of May 9, 2024, the (then) Planning and Development (P&D) Committee of the Board resolved "that an "Application to Request an Extension to SSMUH Compliance Deadline" be submitted to the Minister of Housing in relation to those lands comprised within the Faulder Water System Service Area."

On September 16, 2024, the Minister of Housing advised the Regional District that its extension request for Faulder had been granted to **December 30, 2030**, in order to allow for "ongoing infrastructure projects already underway" (e.g. water metering). After this date, the Regional District is required to "adopt a zoning bylaw that complies with section 481.3 of the Act."

Universal Metering Pilot Program:

On May 6, 2025, the provincial government announced a $50 million water monitoring program that would cover the costs of water meter installations in 19 small, rural and First Nations communities.

The meters were part of a pilot program "to help small communities and local water suppliers track and manage water use and mitigate the impact of drought, while giving people confidence that they are only paying for what they use."

Within the Regional District, approximately $2.05 million was allocated to benefit the communities of Faulder, Willowbrook and Olalla. Installation in Faulder was anticipated to begin between October

and November of 2025 with the deadline to complete the installation phase of the project being March of 2027. At the time of the Bald Range Wildfire, all properties within the Faulder Water System had meters installed.

Bald Range Wildfire (2026):

On August 7, 2026, a wildfire sparked approximately 15 kilometres west of the District of Summerland and near the unincorporated community of Faulder.

As of September 25, 2026, the size of the fire was mapped at approximately 25,000 ha and primarily affected the communities of Faulder and Meadow Valley with 110 structures either damaged or destroyed.

It is understood that, of the approximately 80 dwelling units that were connected to the water system prior to the wildfire, approximately 5-8 remain.

Board Consideration:

At its meeting of September 24, 2026, the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC) of the Board resolved to initiate amendments to the Electoral Area "F" OCP Bylaw in order to remove the Environmentally Sensitive Development Permit (ESDP) Area designation from all parcels within the area of the Bald Range Wildfire.

At its meeting of October 8, 2026, the EASC of the Board resolved to initiate amendments to the Electoral Area OCP Bylaws in order to provide exemptions for site remediation works being undertaken on parcels affected by a wildfire and designated as Watercourse Development Permit (WDP) Areas.

The Committee further resolved, at this same meeting, to introduce an exemption to the Okanagan Valley Zoning Bylaw in order to allow for the placement of an "accessory building or structure" on a parcel rendered "vacant" by the Bald Range Wildfire.

Analysis:

Administration is aware of the Board's desire to reduce bureaucratic delays and financial burdens for residents displaced by the Bald Range Wildfire, especially where structures have been damaged or destroyed and reconstruction is required.

Administration is further aware of the delays that can occur in rebuilding a community that has been destroyed by a wildfire event due to contractor availability/shortages, under-insurance and financial issues (e.g. insurance covering the cost of replacing an old dwelling may not cover the cost of building new), loss of infrastructure (water mains, meters and septic fields), archaeological and environmental values and population displacement (e.g. residents choose to take an insurance payout rather than endure a multi-year rebuild).

An AI research assistant was used to identify and compare publicly available information regarding residential reconstruction following major wildfire events in Paradise, California; Lāhainā, Hawaii; Fort McMurray, Alberta; and Lytton, British Columbia.

From the experience of these communities, it is understood that achieving a 50% home rebuild threshold following a wildfire event typically requires 4 to 6 years in an urban area, and upwards of 10 years for smaller, rural communities with limited services (e.g. Lytton).

If a similar timeline is applied to Faulder, the re-construction of the community is likely to extend well beyond the December 30, 2030, deadline provided by the province for the zoning applied to Faulder to be brought into SSMUH Compliance.

In addition, with the installation of water meters on parcels within the Faulder Water System areas was complete, as of August 1, 2026, the main impetus for the Regional District seeking an SSMUH Exemption for Faulder has largely been addressed.

Finally, bringing the zoning that is applied to Faulder into SSMUH Compliance will allow for property owners within the Faulder Water System Service Area to reconstruct accessory dwelling units (e.g. secondary suites or accessory dwellings) lost to the wildfire without having to obtain the discretionary approval of the Board (e.g. through the submission of rezoning applications).

This is seen to be an important consideration as affected property owners begin to prepare re-construction plans and make decisions regarding the development of their properties.

Alternative:

Conversely, the option to retain the existing zoning which limits density on parcels within the Faulder Water System area is available to the Board.

Delaying any change to the zoning would allow for the replacement of water meters damaged by the wildfire, and would ensure that reconstruction does not exceed the capacity of the water system (which remains designed for 80 dwelling units).

Under this scenario, the zoning applied to Faulder could be revised immediately prior to December 31, 2030, or at such time as the water system fees for the Faulder Water System are amended from taxation to a rate based on usage (whichever occurs first). This later transition point would ensure that the water system is on a more sustainable footing.

Summary:

Administration supports amending the zoning that applies to parcels within the Faulder Water System to be SSMUH Compliance.

Financial Implications:

Financial implications have been considered and none were found.

Communication Strategy:

Any proposed bylaw amendments to the Electoral Area OCP and Zoning bylaws will be notified in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act* as well as the Regional District's Development Procedures Bylaw No. 2500, 2011.

Will a PowerPoint presentation be presented at the meeting? Yes

Respectfully submitted:

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Senior Manager of Planning

Endorsed By:

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Attachments:

No. 1 – Faulder Water System Service Area

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