



ELECTORAL AREA F ISSUES IDENTIFICATION STUDY

REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The *Electoral Area F Issues Identification Study* was undertaken to:

- document and explain the local governance system and local services in place in Electoral Area F of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSR)
- engage residents throughout Area F to understand their concerns with local governance or services, as well as their service and governance needs
- identify, assess and recommend changes the CSR could make to address the issues and needs brought forward

The study was focused on changes that may be pursued within the existing CSR system in which the North Shuswap exists as an electoral area of the Regional District. Municipal incorporation, which would result in a change to the existing system, was outside of the scope of the study.

The study was undertaken by Neilson Strategies Inc. in collaboration with Leftside Partners Inc. The majority of funding for the study was provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in the form of a restructure planning grant. The study began in May 2023 and was originally intended to be completed in October of the same year. In August 2023, however, the Bush Creek East Wildfire struck the North Shuswap, causing widespread evacuation from, and significant property damage to, Electoral Area F and the Skw'xw'w'w' Secwepemculecw First Nation. The Wildfire and its impact on the community resulted in a five-month hiatus in the study. Community engagement opportunities, originally scheduled for August and September 2023, did not occur until January and February 2024.

This document constitutes the *Electoral Area F Issues Identification Study Report*. The report begins with an overview of British Columbia's system of regional district governance. The North Shuswap is then profiled. Individual local government services provided to Area F by the CSR are outlined next, followed by local services provided by other service bodies. The report then reviews in detail the community engagement process and its findings. Options for the CSR to consider to address the issues identified through community engagement are outlined, followed by recommendations to the CSR Board of Directors.

Materials produced during the community engagement process are attached as appendices.

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CHAPTER 1

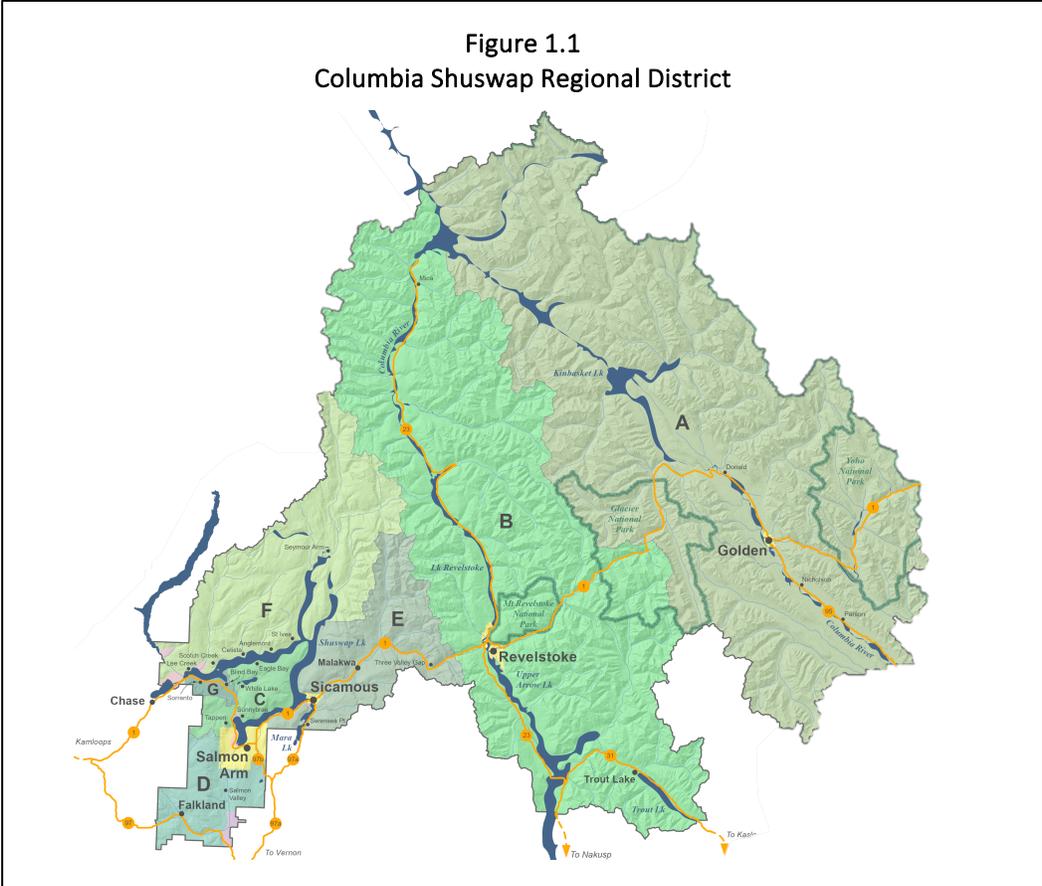
REGIONAL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE

There are 27 regional districts in British Columbia, including the CSR. As a general rule, regional districts cover vast geographies — the CSR, with an area measuring 28,929 km², is no exception to this rule (see Figure 1.1). Regional districts include municipalities and unincorporated electoral areas.¹ The CSR has a total of four municipalities — Salmon Arm, Sicamous, Golden and Revelstoke — and seven electoral areas, including Electoral Area F (North Shuswap).

Regional districts exist, fundamentally, to provide local government services in response to the needs and instructions of their members. In their role as service providers, regional districts:

- serve as the local government for electoral areas, providing them with basic local services such as community planning, plus a range of other services that areas choose to receive

Figure 1.1
Columbia Shuswap Regional District



¹ The sole exception is the Central Coast Regional District, which has only electoral areas.

- provide region-wide services to all member electoral areas and municipalities
- provide a framework for different combinations of municipalities and electoral areas to participate in sub-regional services

Each regional district is governed by a board of directors, which consists of:

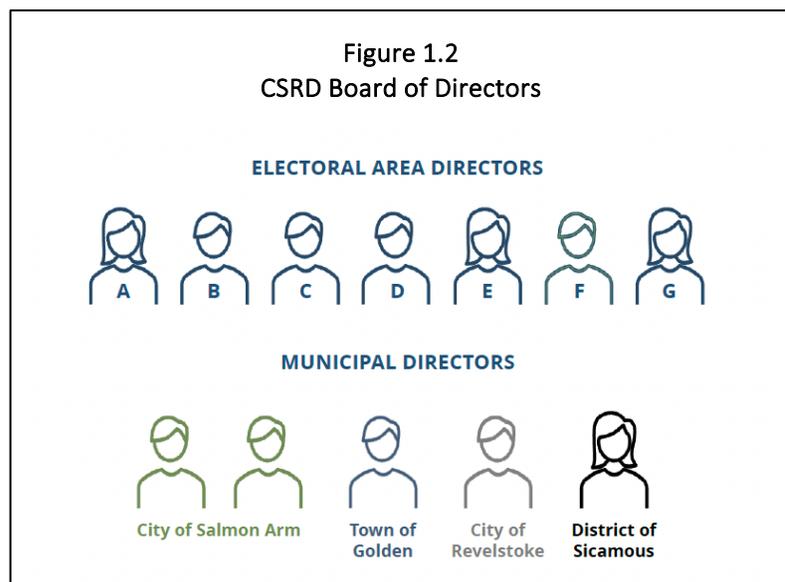
- electoral area directors, each of whom is elected directly for a four-year term by the voters in his or her electoral area
- municipal directors, each of whom is a member of a municipal council, appointed by his or her council to the regional board on an annual basis

The board selects its own chair. The chair has the authority to create standing committees to study and give advice on specific subject matters or areas of business. In the CSR D the chair has established two such committees: an Administration and Finance Committee, and an Electoral Area Directors Committee.

The voting strength of each municipality or electoral area in a regional district is a function of the jurisdiction's population size and the regional district's voting unit. In the CSR D the voting unit is 2,500, which means that each jurisdiction receives one vote for every 2,500 residents. Municipalities receive one municipal director place for every five votes or portion thereof. Electoral areas can have only one director, irrespective of size or voting strength. The CSR D Board consists of 12 directors – one from each of the seven electoral areas, and one from each of Sicamous, Revelstoke and Golden. The City of Salmon Arm, with a population that exceeds 12,500, appoints two directors (see Figure 1.2). Electoral Area F, similar to every electoral area, has one director on the Board.

Some decisions at the regional district board table are made by the entire board of directors; other decisions, specific to individual services, are made only by the directors from the local jurisdictions that participate in the services. Consider the following points:

- *Corporate Votes* — This type of vote involves all directors of the board. In some cases the votes are unweighted, which means



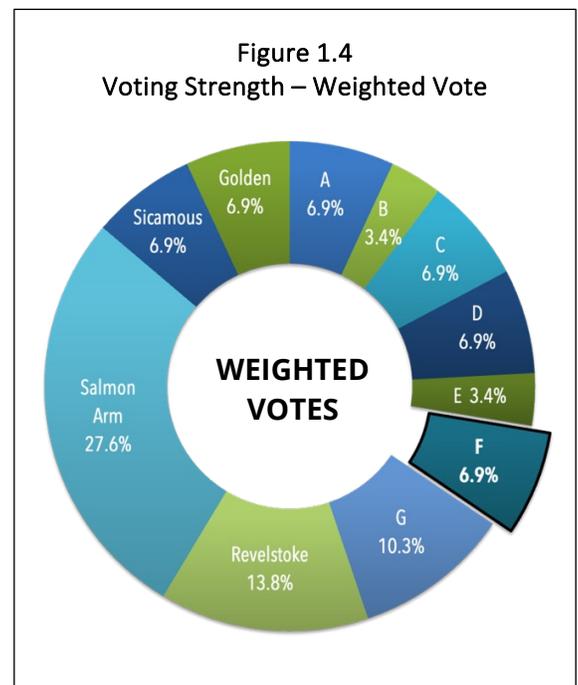
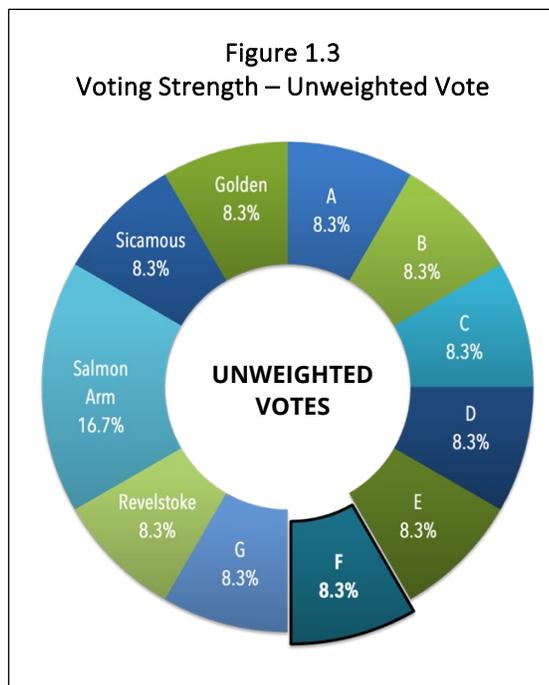
that each director at the table votes, and each director receives one vote. Unweighted corporate votes are used to establish new services, pass regulatory bylaws and decide a variety of other matters. Weighted corporate votes are used for money matters, such as the financial plan, borrowing or buying property. On these matters, the number of votes allotted to directors varies based on the jurisdictions' voting strengths.

- *Stakeholder Votes* — In stakeholder votes, only directors from jurisdictions that participate in a given service are entitled to vote. Stakeholder votes, all of which are weighted, are used for matters that relate to the operations and administration of existing services. If there is only one participating area, the entire board votes.

Figures 1.3 and 1.4 show the voting strength for each CSR D electoral area and municipality on corporate unweighted and weighted votes. At present, the Director for Area F has one vote on corporate matters, which represents 8.3% of the Board’s voting (assuming all Board members are present), and two votes (6.9%) on matters that are decided using the weighted vote approach.

The type of voting, and the relative “say” that Area F has in the administration of each service, is also impacted by the number and nature of the other participants. In general, the greatest opportunity to influence services is provided through sub-regional services — that is through services that are provided to Area F plus a few other jurisdictions, but not to the entire region. Consider the following:

- Fifteen (15) of the 36 services, or 42%, in which Area F participates, are local





services delivered only to Area F, or to a part of Area F. As noted previously, where there is only one participant in a service, decisions must be made by the entire Board.²

- Four (4) of the 36 services, or 11%, are regional services that are provided to the entire region. Decisions on these services are made by the entire Board.
- Seventeen (17) of the 36 services (47%) are sub-regional services; however several of these services — land use planning, bylaw enforcement, and animal control are examples — are constrained by other voting rules including the legislative requirement for regulatory services to be voted on by the full Board. Further, for some Area F services the service itself is just a vehicle to provide funding to another agency. Examples of these services include Shuswap Volunteer Search and Rescue, the SPCA or the Okanagan Regional Library. There are no real administration or service operation decisions on these services; as such, there are rarely any stakeholder votes.

The result is that in practice the weighted stakeholder votes on service operations are infrequent. When they do occur, Salmon Arm is also a participant in several of the same sub-regional services. Salmon Arm’s population and its eight weighted votes impacts, as does the involvement of other electoral areas, the amount of direct influence Area F’s

Electoral Area Director has over service decisions. The voting for all jurisdictions is shown in table format in Figure 1.5.

Advisory Committees & Citizen Involvement
 Many regional districts make use of advisory committees to examine issues or services, seek a broader range of community perspectives and share ideas and

Figure 1.5
Voting Strength (all jurisdictions)

Jurisdiction	Pop	Directors	Strength
Electoral Area A	3,325	1	2
Electoral Area B	663	1	1
Electoral Area C	3,245	1	2
Electoral Area D	4,491	1	2
Electoral Area E	1,388	1	1
Electoral Area F	3,611	1	2
Electoral Area G	5,719	1	3
District of Sicamous	2,613	1	2
Town of Golden	3,986	1	2
City of Revelstoke	8,275	1	4
City of Salmon Arm	19,705	2	8
Total	57,021	12	29

² Prior to February 3, 2024, there were 37 services; a referendum on an establishing bylaw that would have continue the Shuswap Watershed Council was turned down in February, effectively eliminating one of the sub-regional services in which Area F participated.



recommendations to the Board. Advisory committees, as the name suggests, provide advice to the Board; they do not make decisions on the services. The advice of advisory committees is often heeded given that it reflects local perspectives held by the community.

The CSR D has had several committees in the past to involve residents of Area F. Several of these initiatives, however, were placed on hold with the COVID 19 pandemic that curtailed in-person meetings. The CSR D may re-start some of these Committees, including the Area F Parks Advisory Committee and the Area F Advisory Planning Commission to provide more residents with opportunities to share input and guide the services they receive.



Area F Advisory Planning Commission

- APCs have between 5 and 9 members, ideally representing geographically, demographically, and professionally diverse mix of residents
- Discuss development applications, and make recommendations to CSR D Board
- Advise on matters of land use, community planning, proposed bylaws and permits
- 4-year terms (2023 - 2027)



Area F Community Parks Advisory Committee

- Maximum of 5 residents
- Provides input and advice on financial plans, policies, new services and procurement for maintenance and equipment
- Assists in communications between the CSR D and the public, and shares parks issues raised by the public
- 3-year term

Coming Soon!

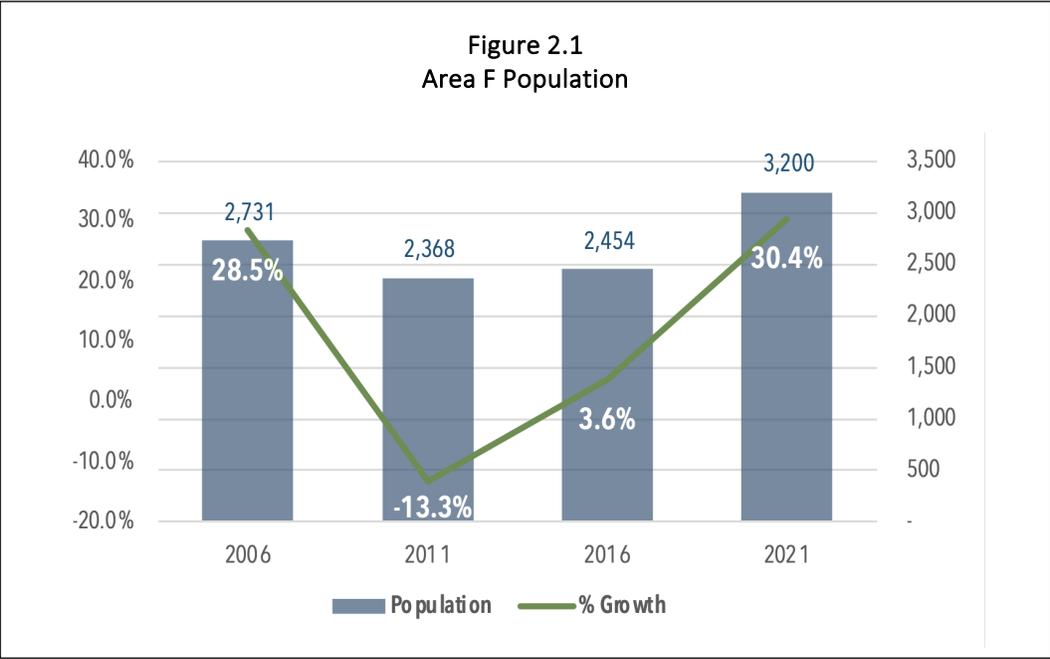


CHAPTER 2 COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Electoral Area F is a collection of unincorporated communities located along the north shore of Shuswap Lake on the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwépemc People. The list of communities begins with Lee Creek at the far west end of Area F. To the east are Scotch Creek, Celistá, Magna Bay, Anglemont, St. Ives and Seymour Arm. The local government for the entire Electoral Area is the CSR D.

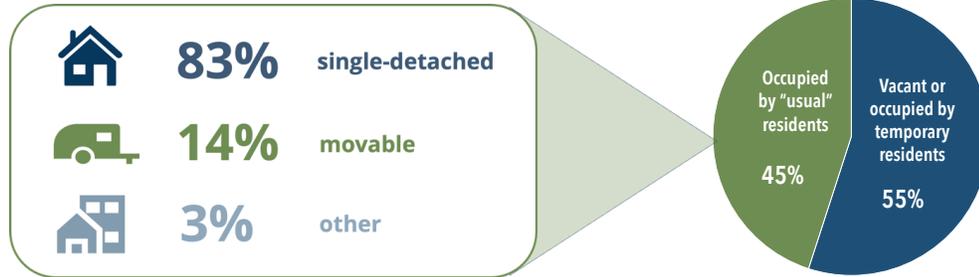
POPULATION

The 2021 Census reported the population for the whole Electoral Area F as 3,200. Between the 2016 and 2021 census years, Area F grew by 30.4%. (See Figure 2.1). When First Nations reserves are included, the population of Area F increases to 3,611.



HOUSING

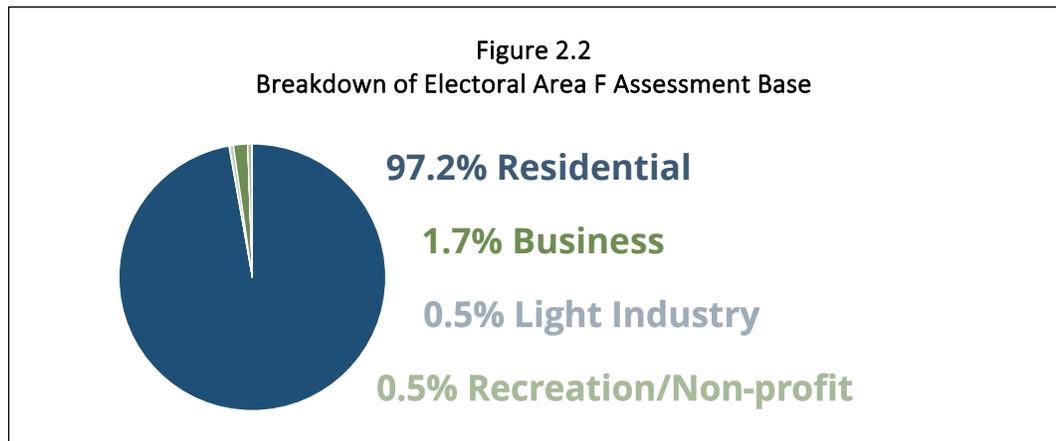
The 2021 Census reported 3,456 private dwellings in Area F. More than half of these units are either vacant or occupied by temporary residents; 45% are occupied by “usual” residents. Single-detached houses comprise the vast majority of housing in the CSR D, including throughout Area F. A higher proportion of movable dwellings, such as mobile homes, is reflective of a desire for more affordable housing choices and the relatively high number of vacation properties.



PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

For 2023, BC Assessment data show 4,637 folios in Area F as a whole, valued at \$2.46 billion, with a converted assessment value of \$255,522,255. The residential assessment for Area F in 2023 was \$2,390,692,539, which represents 97.2 % of the total assessment for the electoral area. The average residential property is valued at approximately \$515,569, an increase of approximately 14% from the 2022 average.

Figure 2.2 provides details on the percentage of assessed values represented by each of the property classes.



2023 WILDFIRE

In the summer of 2023 parts of Area F were devastated by the Bush Creek East Wildfire that burned more than 45,000 hectares. The community lost 176 structures, including the Scotch Creek Fire Hall; another 50 buildings were damaged. The Skwłax te Secwepemculecw First Nation had at least 85 five structures destroyed.

The Wildfire had a deep impact on the community and its residents; the focus is now on supporting the community in its rebuilding efforts. The CSRD remains focused on assisting with recovery through various initiatives, including in streamlining the building permits process, exploring partnerships on recovery efforts with Skwłax te Secwepemcu'ł?ecw (Skwłax), participating in working groups focused on specific aspects of recovery, and engaging with the community through "community conversations" to identify lessons learned that can be used to improve emergency



management responses in the future. The CSR D recently received a grant to extend its FireSmart program for another two years.

PLANNING & RECOVERY

The *Electoral Area F (North Shuswap) Official Community Plan* (Bylaw No. 830), adopted in 2009, outlines land use, development and community objectives over a 20-year timeframe. The *Plan* serves as the guiding land use policy for the area. A 2024 update is planned; however, the CSR D's more urgent priority is its focus on rebuilding efforts underway in parts of the community impacted by the Wildfire. Some of the rebuilding priorities for 2024 are as follows:

- In anticipation of an increase in development and building permit applications connecting to post-Wildfire rebuilding efforts, the CSR D has made approaches to the province for funding to hire additional staffing and to fund overtime.
- The CSR D is reviewing options for the redevelopment of the Scotch Creek Fire Hall.
- Development Services staff participate in several Recovery Working Groups, and continue to liaise with provincial staff and legal counsel on land use and building issues related to Wildfire recovery.
- One Planner and one Building Official have been assigned as the primary contacts for community members on rebuilding matters, including permit applications. Additional staff will be assigned as required to manage the rebuilding workload.
- The CSR D has developed information on health and site safety concerns for returning residents, along with demolition permit requirements and exemptions, step-by-step application process guides, rebuilding FAQs, and other guidance documents.
- Staff continue to undertake outreach and consultation with organizations — the Shuswap Construction Industry Professionals is an example of one group — and qualified professionals practicing in the North Shuswap, including surveyors, architects, structural and geotechnical engineers, designers, and contractors.
- A review of the existing commercial zoning in the Scotch Creek Village Centre is planned to assist in the rebuilding process.

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CHAPTER 3

ELECTORAL AREA F SERVICES

REGIONAL DISTRICT SERVICES

Regional districts provide a broad range of services to residents. With the exception of certain provincially-mandated services that regional districts are required to provide, the range of regional district services is determined by the board in response to the wishes and instructions of individual jurisdictions. This feature of regional district service provision results in a different set of services in each regional district, and in each electoral area within a regional district.

As noted in Chapter 1, all regional districts including the CSRD provides three types of services. Local services are those which are provided to electoral areas, or to portions of electoral areas, in response to local needs and interests. Sub-regional services are provided to combinations of jurisdictions — electoral areas and municipalities — that choose to participate in the services. Regional services are those that are provided to all member municipalities and electoral areas throughout the region.

Potential services that are identified by the board, electoral area directors, member municipalities, staff or residents must be studied prior to establishment to determine their feasibility. Factors such as service scope, cost and service delivery are assessed. If deemed feasible, a service establishing bylaw must be developed and adopted by the board. Ultimately, the bylaw must also be approved by the province’s Inspector of Municipalities, as well as by the electors who will receive and pay for the service. Elector approval can be demonstrated through a petition, an alternative approval process, or a referendum. In some cases, approval can be given on behalf of electors by the participating municipality's Council, or the participating electoral area's director.

Periodic service reviews can be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of a service, as well as elements of a service's structure such as the method of cost allocation among participating jurisdictions, the service governance model, the scope (or definition) of the service, and the method of service delivery. Some services have provisions for reviews written into their establishing bylaws; others have "sunset" clauses that trigger dissolution of the service unless all participants agree to an extension. The *Local Government Act* has provisions to allow for, and to govern, formal statutory reviews. These provisions address the need for third-party involvement to resolve disputes, and provide the ability for jurisdictions to seek withdrawal from services in cases where reviews do not adequately address concerns raised.³

³ Service withdrawal is possible, under the *Local Government Act*, for most services. The process of withdrawal, however, is onerous on jurisdictions that seek withdrawal.



ELECTORAL AREA F SERVICES

Columbia Shuswap Regional District

The CSR D, in its capacity as local government for Electoral Area F, provides 36 services to residents in the North Shuswap. These services are identified in Figure 3.1 on the following page, under seven categories. Each category is profiled here, as follows:

➤ **Administration**

This area of services supports the CSR D Board in its work, as well as the overall management of the CSR D organization. The main services include general government, which supports all areas, and electoral area administration, which focuses specifically on the needs and services of the electoral areas. Together, these services encompass all administration functions, including property management, the purchasing of office supplies and equipment, records management, financial services such as budgeting and accounting, legal services, communications, computers and software purchasing and management, administrative support for the Board, elections, and several others. Also included in this category are services that fund regional and electoral area feasibility studies to investigate the feasibility of new services desired by electoral areas or the broader region.



➤ **Development Services**

The CSR D provides land use planning, development regulation and building inspection services to the electoral areas through its Development Services department. In Area F, building inspection is provided to only a portion of the electoral area, while planning, GIS mapping and house numbering are provided throughout the entire area. A separate service is created to support “special projects” which include initiatives that are outside the scope of the typical day-to-day activities under development services. Larger projects, such as updates to zoning bylaws and OCPs, are included under special projects, but so, too, are studies that are not strictly planning related, such as parks master plans, and governance studies.

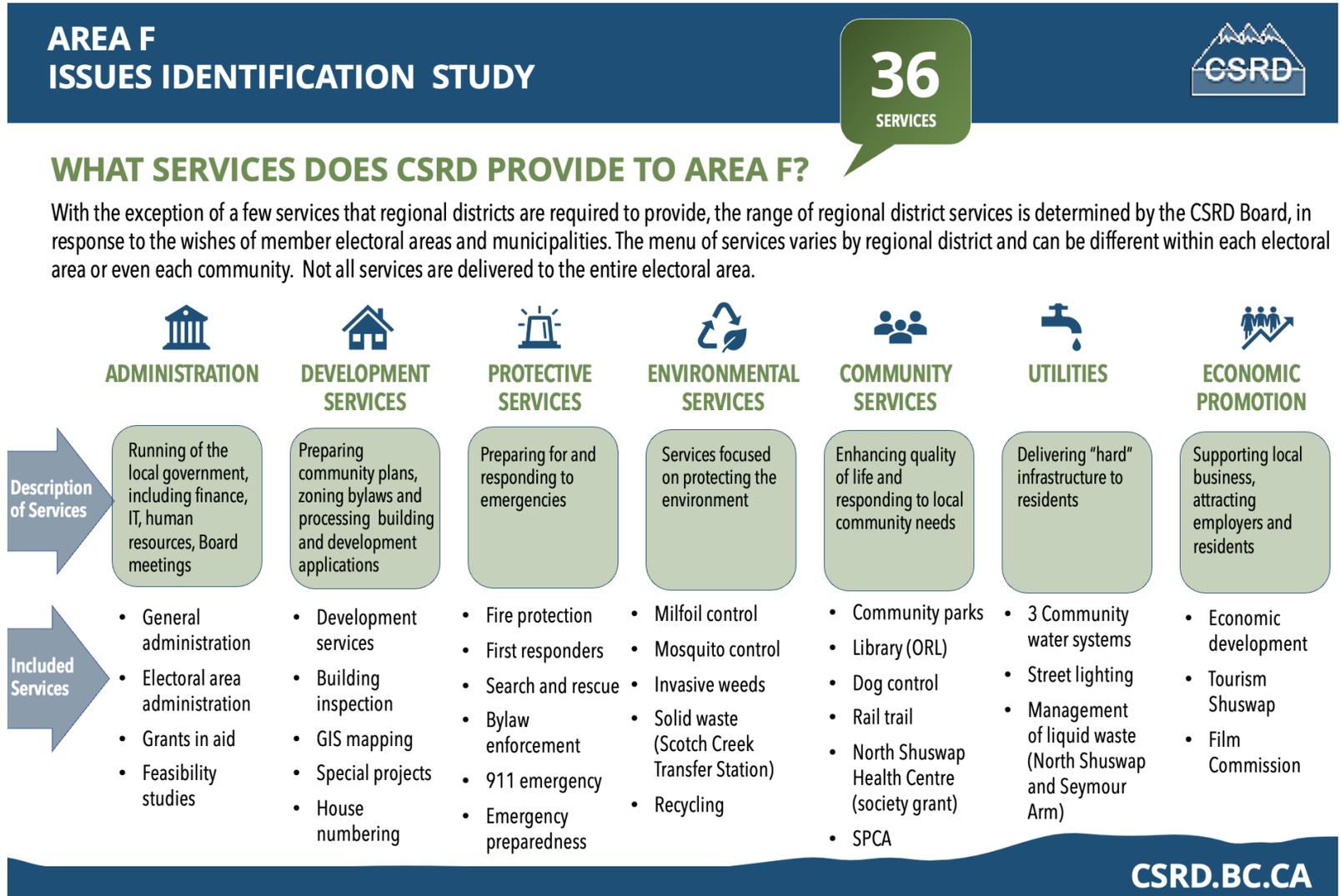


➤ **Protective Services**

The CSR D provides a number of emergency and protective services to residents and properties in Area F, either directly or through CSR D-funded organizations. Services include fire protection delivered to a portion of Area F by the Scotch Creek/Lee Creek, Celistia and Anglemont Volunteer Fire Departments. First responder service is provided to a portion of the electoral area; emergency planning and response, 911 call service, and Shuswap Search and Rescue are provided throughout the whole of Area F. The CSR D delivers bylaw enforcement services to Area F (and all electoral areas) to achieve



Figure 3.1
Electoral Area F Services Provided by the CSR D



compliance with the region’s regulatory bylaws, including zoning and other land use bylaws.

➤ **Environmental Services**

Environmental Services include milfoil removal services for Shuswap Lake, removal of invasive species provided through the Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society, and mosquito control in Scotch Creek and Lee Creek. The Regional District's solid waste and recycling programs are also included in this category. The CSRD receives and handles garbage and recycling throughout the entire region through a system of CSRD transfer stations, recycling depots and landfills. Electoral Area F has one waste transfer station in Scotch Creek. The CSRD also undertakes solid waste management planning function for the region. Solid waste management planning is a statutory requirement for regional districts in BC. The CSRD is currently in the midst of an update to its *Solid Waste Management Plan*.



➤ **Community Services**

This group of services includes the community parks in Area F, as well as the Rail Trail initiative, library services, animal control and SPCA. Some of these services, such as Rail Trail and library are provided to a broader range of electoral areas; the community parks service is specific to Area F. Electoral Area F’s parks service includes the acquisition of park land, as well as the development, maintenance and operation of the Area’s eight community parks, its boat launches and its trails. The Area has a *Parks Master Plan* that is scheduled to be updated; the previous update was postponed during the pandemic to allow for broader consultation. The Rail Trail is a service that was established to support the establishment of a rail trail from Sicamous to Armstrong. It involves the Regional District of North Okanagan as well as the CSRD's Areas C, D, E, and F, Salmon Arm and Sicamous. Library services are provided through the Okanagan Regional Library at the North Shuswap branch.⁴ Also included in this grouping is the support for a North Shuswap Health Centre. Area F voted to establish a service, created in 2022, to contribute grants to support the community-owned and -operated primary care centre in Scotch Creek. The centre provides access to doctors, public health staff and bi-weekly lab services.



➤ **Utilities**

This group of services includes management of the utilities owned and operated by the CSRD. The CSRD operates three water systems in Area F — Saratoga, Anglemont Estates and



⁴ The North Shuswap branch was destroyed during the 2023 Wildfire, and has yet to be rebuilt.



Cottonwood waterworks. Anglemont Estates is the largest of the three systems, with 499 connections, followed by Saratoga with 145. The Cottonwood system serves 80 properties in the Cottonwood Cove RV Park. The CSR D is working on the Scotch Creek water system, which will become another water service area once complete. The Scotch Creek project includes building a water treatment plant, installing a trunk watermain and constructing a new water intake to increase treatment capacity and improve water services, funded in part through federal and provincial grant contributions. The first phase will serve 84 properties. The CSR D operates a street lighting service in St. Ives. The hydro pole-mounted street lights are owned and maintained by BC Hydro, but are leased to the CSR D. The CSR D taxes beneficiaries to operate the lights, and reports equipment issues to BC Hydro on behalf of the public. The individual water systems and street lighting service are only delivered to and paid for by properties that are connected to, and that benefit directly from, the services.

The other service in this grouping involves development of liquid waste management plans (LWMP) for both the North Shuswap and the Seymour Arm areas. Updates to the LWMPs are exploring the potential of combining the two into one plan.

➤ **Economic Promotion**

This group of services includes economic development, tourism promotion and support for the film commission. The Shuswap Economic Development and Tourism Shuswap are both services that involve the broader Shuswap area, including electoral areas C, D, E, F and G as well as Salmon Arm. Sicamous is also part of the Tourism Shuswap service, and contributions are also made from jurisdictions outside CSR D, including Chase, Armstrong and Enderby. Economic development services are provided through a separate society, the Shuswap Economic Development Society, created in 2020. The Society focuses on programs that building support community and economic development goals, attract and retain businesses. The Society is also a partner in the Shuswap Economic Recovery Taskforce created to support businesses, sole proprietors and non-profits impacted by the Bush Creek East Wildfire.



Tourism is delivered through Tourism Shuswap. Shuswap tourism is focused on the marketing and promotion of the Shuswap region, including through the production of videos, regional signage, the website, social media, trail guide, experience guide and support for many of the region's events and activities. The Columbia Shuswap Film Commission promotes film and television production activity. Area F also has a specific service created to support the North Shuswap Chamber of Commerce.



Figure 3.2 on the following page identifies for each of the CSR D's services provided to Area F the full set of participating jurisdictions, along with the agency that delivers the service.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY OTHERS

Not all local services provided to residents in Electoral Area F are provided by the CSR D — private utilities and the provincial government also provide certain services. This section reviews the services of these other providers.

Private Utilities

In addition to the water systems owned and operated by the Regional District, there are three large private water systems that are neither owned nor operated by the CSR D, and more than 50 small water systems owned and operated privately through strata councils in Area F.

A private water utility is a business that owns and/or operates equipment and facilities for the delivery of domestic water service to five or more persons, in exchange for compensation. Private water utilities are usually created by developers to service development in rural areas where community water service is required for subdivision approval, but where no other water purveyor is present. Private utilities are regulated by the province through the Comptroller of Water Rights.

Other utilities that serve Area F residents include electricity, gas, phone, cable and internet companies. These companies are either private corporations or Crown corporations (e.g., BC Hydro).

Provincial Government

The Province of British Columbia provides a number of services to Electoral Area F, including Roads and Subdivision, Provincial Parks, Police, Schools and Health.

➤ **Roads and Subdivision**

Within Area F — indeed, in all unincorporated areas of the province — the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) is responsible for providing and maintaining roads, highways and bridges, and for approving subdivisions.

All work is performed by private contractors. The contractor for Service Area 13, which includes Area F, is Aim Roads Inc. All MOTI contractors sign a *Highway Maintenance Agreement* which includes specifications related to maintenance of road surfaces, control of roadside vegetation, drainage, winter clearing, traffic signs and other items. The standard maintenance specifications describe what services are to be provided, and set out minimum acceptable standards for completed work as well as performance timelines.

Figure 3.2
Service Participants and Service Delivery

SERVICE (By Category)	PARTICIPANTS (CSR D JURISDICTIONS)	DELIVERY (2023)
 Protective Services		
Shuswap Emergency Preparedness	Sub-regional (Areas C, D, E, F, G, Salmon Arm, Sicamous)	CSR D
Shuswap Search & Rescue (grant)	Sub-regional (Areas C, D, E, F, G, Salmon Arm, Sicamous)	Shuswap Volunteer Search & Rescue
Area F First Responders (grant)	Area F	Area F First Responders
Area F Sub-regional Fire Protection	Part of Area F	CSR D Fire Depts
Bylaw Enforcement	All Electoral Areas	CSR D
911 Emergency	Region-wide	E-Comm
 Development Services		
Development Services	All Electoral Areas	CSR D
Special Projects	All Electoral Areas	CSR D
Area F Building Inspection	Part of Area F	CSR D
House Numbering	All Electoral Areas	CSR D
GIS/Mapping	All Electoral Areas	CSR D
 Economic Promotion		
Shuswap Economic Development	Sub-regional (Areas C, D, E, F, G, Salmon Arm)	Shuswap Economic Development Society
Shuswap Tourism	Sub-regional (Areas C, D, E, F, G, Salmon Arm, Sicamous)	Tourism Shuswap
Film Commission	Sub-regional (All areas except Area A & Golden)	CSR D
Area F Tourism Promotion	Area F	North Shuswap Chamber of Commerce
 Environmental Services		
Solid Waste - Recycling & Waste	Region-wide	CSR D
Milfoil Control Program	Sub-Regional (Areas C, D, E, F, G, Salmon Arm, Sicamous)	CSR D
Weed Control & Enforcement	All Electoral Areas	Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society
Shuswap Watershed Council	Sub-Regional (Areas C, D, E, F, G)	Fraser Basin Council
Mosquito Control (Scotch/Lee Creek)	Part of Area F	CSR D
North Shuswap LWMP	Part of Area F	CSR D
Seymour Arm LWMP	Part of Area F	CSR D
 Community Services		
Electoral Area F Community Parks	Area F	CSR D
Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail	Sub-Regional (Areas C, D, E, F, G, Salmon Arm, Sicamous)	Splatsin te Secwépmc, CSR D, RDNO
Health Centre (Grant-in-aid)	Area F	North Shuswap Health Society
Shuswap SPCA (Grant-in-aid)	Sub-Regional (Areas C, D, E, F, G, Sicamous)	Shuswap SPCA
Dangerous Dog Control	Area F	BC Commissionaires
EA Grants-in-Aid	All Electoral Areas	CSR D
Okanagan Regional Library	Sub-Regional (All electoral areas except Area A)	Okanagan Regional Library
 Administration		
General Government	Region-wide	CSR D
Electoral Area Administration	All Electoral Areas	CSR D
Feasibility Studies (Regional)	Region-wide	CSR D
Feasibility Studies (Electoral Areas)	All Electoral Areas	CSR D
 Utilities		
St. Ives Street Lighting	Part of Area F	CSR D
Anglemont Waterworks	Part of Area F	CSR D & Interior Utility Management Ltd.
Cottonwood Waterworks	Part of Area F	CSR D & Interior Utility Management Ltd.
Saratoga Waterworks	Part of Area F	CSR D & Interior Utility Management Ltd.



The services are funded by the province; costs are recovered from property owners, in part, through the provincial rural tax. In 2023 the Provincial Rural tax rate was \$0.34 per \$1,000.00 of assessed value, or approximately \$175.00 on a residential property assessed at \$515,000.00.

➤ **Provincial Parks**

The Province provides provincial parks and recreational areas, which supplement the local and community parks provided by the CSR. There are eight provincial parks within Area F, including Tsútswecw Provincial Park, Shuswap Lake Provincial Park, Shuswap Lake Marine Provincial Park (with several landing sites), Silver Beach Provincial Park, Pukeashun Provincial Park, Anstey Hunakwa Provincial Park, a portion of Cinnemousun Narrows Provincial Park, and Upper Seymour River Park.

➤ **Policing**

Under the *Police Act*, responsibility for policing unincorporated areas of British Columbia rests with the provincial government. The province contracts delivery to the RCMP. Services include uniformed patrols, response-to-call duties, investigative services, community-based policing, traffic enforcement and administrative support to provincial detachments.

Electoral Area F is served by the Chase RCMP detachment, which services North Shuswap as well as the Village of Chase, and communities of Sorrento, Chase Creek, Monte Creek, Pritchard, Seymour Arm, Turtle Valley and the Little Shuswap Lake and Neskonlith First Nations. In 2022 the provincial portion of the Chase detachment had an authorized strength of nine officers servicing a population of 9,164 (including Area F). The nine officers carry an average case load (number of criminal code offences per authorized officer) of 79. The case load has increased since 2017, when it was 54 for the same detachment.

The province pays 70% of the total RCMP cost for Area F; the federal government pays the remaining 30%. The provincial government recovers approximately 50% of its portion through the Police Tax, which all unincorporated areas, including Area F, began to pay in 2007. The tax is collected as a property value tax (land and improvements). In 2023 the police tax rate in Area F was \$0.0576 per \$1,000.00 assessed value, or a total of \$29.66 on a residential home assessed at \$515,000.00 in Area F. The total amount collected from Area F from the police tax was \$146,849.00. Expressed differently, the amount recovered for policing represents \$46.00 per capita (based on 2021 Census numbers).

➤ **Schools**

The province is responsible for education services, which are delivered by the North Okanagan Shuswap School District #83. The Board of Trustees that governs the School District is comprised of five trustees. The Board was elected in October 2018 for a four-year term. Board duties and responsibilities include public oversight of education, finance, facility management, human resources,



and policy, as well as conducting public meetings and community consultation. There is one school located in Area F — North Shuswap Elementary, located in Celista, with 129 students. Funding for schools is recovered through school taxes levied on all properties. The school tax rate for Area F was \$1.4669 per \$1,000.00 in assessed value in 2023, or \$755.45 on a residential home valued at \$515,000.00. The school tax raised a total of \$3.74 million from all the properties in Area F in 2023.

➤ **Health**

Interior Health is the authority mandated (and funded) by the province to deliver health care programs and services to residents of Area F. Interior Health delivers a wide range of services, including:

- implementation of drinking water quality regulations
- monitoring of the environmental health of the lake
- prevention and health promotion
- mental health and substance abuse treatment
- public health
- residential care

Almost all areas of the province are located within regional hospital districts (the exception is the Stikine Region in northern BC). A hospital district property (value) tax is levied in every regional hospital district to help pay for healthcare facilities in the district. Hospital district boundaries often share the same boundaries as regional districts. In the CSR D, however, the regional district boundaries and hospital district boundaries do not align. Area F is within the Thompson Nicola Regional Hospital District (TNRHD), which means that the hospital taxes levied in the North Shuswap are directed to local healthcare facilities in that region. Area F is the only electoral area within CSR D that is part of a different hospital district; the majority of the CSR D is located Okanagan Columbia Shuswap Regional Hospital District (NOC SRHD). The tax rate for the TNRHD in 2023 was \$0.4127, or \$213.00 on a home with an assessed value of \$515,000.00 in Area F. The total funds raised from Area F toward hospital facilities in 2023 was \$1,052,160.00.

Federal Government

The federal government has a limited service role in Area F. One matter on which the federal government is active concerns navigation on Lake Shuswap. Transport Canada regulates the placement and condition of mooring buoys. The CSR D has been working with Transport Canada to address the proliferation of illegal buoys since 2018. Between 2018 and 2023, 969 non-compliant buoys were tagged; 166 were removed.



CHAPTER 4 REGIONAL DISTRICT FINANCE

REGIONAL DISTRICT FINANCE

Regional district services must be accounted in individual, separate accounts. All costs attributable to each service must be identified and contained in that service's account. Similarly, revenues (including taxes) must be raised for each service and contained in the service account. Costs incurred by, and revenues generated for, individual services cannot be applied to other services. Revenues raised for a fire protection service, for example, can only be used to fund the delivery of the fire service. No other service can be funded using these resources. The use of separate accounts for each service is a feature of regional district finance. It sets regional districts apart from municipalities, which are able to levy general property taxes and allocate general tax revenues across a range of services.

The use of separate service accounts by regional districts reflects two key points:

- not all jurisdictions in a regional district participate in every service provided by the regional district
- jurisdictions pay only towards the cost of the services in which they participate

The total tax requisition assigned to an electoral area (or municipality) by its regional district will depend on the types and number of regional district services in which the jurisdiction participates, as well as on the size of the jurisdiction's assessment base relative to that of others. Electoral Area F participates in a broad range of CSRD services and has a relatively large tax base (see Chapter 2).

PROPERTY TAXES

Regional districts raise funds primarily through property taxation. There are two types of property taxes:

- parcel taxes, which are applied as set amounts per parcel, land area or metre of property frontage
- value taxes, which are based on the assessed value of the land, improvements on the land, or both

Regional districts determine how to recover the costs of each service, as well as the portion of overall cost recovery to raise through property taxes. Regional districts are not, however, taxing jurisdictions. The province sets property tax rates, levies the taxes and collects the tax revenues on behalf of regional districts, based on the regional district's tax requisition instructions. The province also determines the tax rate multiples for regional districts — specifically, the tax rates paid by the various non-residential classes of property, expressed as ratios to the residential property tax



rate. The involvement of the province in setting tax rate ratios is a key difference between regional districts and municipalities. Municipalities have the flexibility to set municipal tax rates and to adjust the tax ratios among property classes as determined in an annual property taxation bylaw. Determining and changing tax rate ratios allows municipal councils to decide how to best allocate the local property tax burden across property classes.

Electoral area residents receive property tax bills that itemize the services received and, for each service, the associated parcel tax or tax rate. The provincial Surveyor of Taxes collects property taxes from individual property owners, based on the regional district requisitions. A fee of 5.25% on top of the regional district tax rate is included in the tax bills to cover the Surveyor's fee. In municipalities, property taxes for regional district services are included in municipal property tax bills, based on service requisitions provided to the municipalities by their regional districts. The taxes are then collected by the municipalities and remitted to the regional districts by August 1 of each year. Because municipalities collect their own taxes, they are not subject to the 5.25% surcharge that applies to electoral area tax requisitions. They do, however, need to have the software systems and staffing necessary to run their tax collection functions.

OTHER REVENUES

In addition to property taxes, regional districts generate revenues from user fees and charges, such as dog licenses, application fees, and recreation admissions. Regional districts also receive revenue in the form of grants from other levels of government — grants that are particularly important for small communities, and are becoming increasingly important sources of funding for costly infrastructure renewal projects in communities of all sizes.

In general, there are two types of grants from other levels of government: unconditional grants and conditional grants. Unconditional grants are direct transfers of money with few (if any) restrictions on their use. Local governments are free to set their own priorities for the use of these funds. Conditional grants are competitive, application-based grants awarded for specific projects, or are provided to a local government to assist with a specific service.

Provincial Unconditional Grants

All regional districts in BC receive the provincial Regional District Basic Grant on an annual basis. The purpose of this grant is to assist regional districts with administration costs for service delivery based on local needs and priorities. As per the *Local Government Grants Act and Regulation*, the amount of the grant is calculated based on three factors with a bias towards smaller and more regional districts:

- regional district total population
- regional district electoral area population



- the number of local community commissions, if any (the CSR D does not have any local community commissions)

The amount transferred to the CSR D for all electoral areas in 2023 under the Regional District Basic Grant was \$160,000.00.

Municipalities have a similar grant — the Small Community Grant — that is intended to assist in providing basic services, including services that regional districts do not provide, such as local roads. Grant amounts are based on a formula that factors in a base amount, population and assessment values. These grants generally apply to municipalities with populations up to 19,000. In addition, municipalities with a population greater than 5,000 receive a traffic fine revenue sharing grant to assist with policing costs. The traffic fine revenue sharing grant returns 100% of net revenues from traffic violations to municipalities that are directly responsible for paying for policing. Given that regional districts and unincorporated communities do not pay directly for policing costs, they are not eligible to receive this assistance.

Federal Unconditional Grants

In September 2005, the federal and provincial governments, joined by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) signed The Agreement on the *Transfer of Federal Gas Tax Revenue Under the New Deal for Cities and Communities (2005-2015)*. The agreement was subsequently renewed in 2014 (*Renewed Gas Tax Agreement*) for a further 10 years, representing a transfer of an estimated \$21.8 billion in funding across Canada for local government infrastructure.

The Community Works Fund is a funding agreement through which the UBCM provides Gas Tax funding to all municipalities and regional districts (except those within the Metro Vancouver region) through a direct annual allocation. The grant is meant to support local projects that align with the program objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and creating cleaner air and water. Community Works funding is delivered twice annually. Each local government receives a “floor amount” plus an amount calculated on the basis of population using Census data.

The CSR D received \$977,738.00 in Community Works Funding in 2023; Electoral Area F received \$139,826.00 of this total. Combined with reserve amounts, it was estimated that Area F would have \$557,483.00 (uncommitted) by the end of 2023. Local governments may accumulate the funds, along with any interest earned, to support larger regional district projects.⁵

Conditional Grants

Conditional grants are competitive, application-based grants awarded to local governments under federal and provincial programs to help fund specific projects. The bulk of conditional grant funding is earmarked for local government capital

⁵ In BC, the Gas Tax program also includes an application-based conditional grant program, known as the Strategic Priorities Fund.



projects (e.g., sewer, water, roads). Some programs involve cost sharing among all three levels of government (an example is the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program), while others, such as the Gas Tax Strategic Priorities Fund, can provide up to 100% of federal government funding. Local governments submit project proposals based on local priorities and funding program objectives.

Area F Requisition

In Area F, the regional district services are paid through user fees, parcel taxes and property (value) taxes. User fees and parcel taxes are used together to recover the cost of the three water services (Saratoga, Anglemont Estates and Cotttonwood). Parcel taxes are also used for the Liquid Waste Management Plan services (both the North Shuswap and Seymour Arm LWMPs) and the St. Ives Street Lighting service. The Shuswap Watershed Council service was recovered through a parcel tax in 2023; in a February 2024 approval process residents chose to discontinue this service.

The remaining service costs are recovered through property value taxes that are based upon the assessed value of the property (land and improvements). Figure 4.1 presents a sample Area F tax bill for a residential property valued at \$515,000.00. The bill uses the tax rates for each of the services provided to Area F in 2023 by the CSR D, the provincial government, and other agencies (e.g., Okanagan Regional Library).



Figure 4.1
2023 Sample Tax Bill
Electoral Area F Residential Property Assessed at \$515,000.00

Denotes Region-wide Service

Denotes Parcel Tax

1. Electoral Area F Services (Area Wide)

	Property Tax per \$515,000 residence	Total Recovered from Area F
Emergency Services		
Emergency 911 Telephone	\$4.27	\$21,093
Shuswap Emergency Preparedness	\$11.23	\$55,564
Shuswap Search and Rescue (Grant-in-aid)	\$3.86	\$19,155
Planning & Development		
Development Services	\$55.88	\$276,677
Special Projects	\$1.49	\$7,442
Bylaw Enforcement	\$21.01	\$104,065
House Numbering	\$1.44	\$7,181
GIS/Mapping	\$14.94	\$73,945
Economic Development		
Shuswap Economic Development	\$15.30	\$75,629
Shuswap Tourism	\$11.43	\$56,592
Film Commission	\$0.72	\$3,524
Area F Tourism Promotion (NS Chamber)	\$5.15	\$25,500
Parks and Trails		
Electoral Area F Community Parks	\$89.92	\$445,091
Rail Trail Corridor	\$2.52	\$12,483
Environmental Services		
Solid Waste - Recycling	\$25.54	\$126,327
Milfoil Control Program	\$9.01	\$44,681
Weed Control & Enforcement	\$3.35	\$16,639
Shuswap Watershed Council	\$9.02	\$40,788
Community Services		
North Shuswap Health Centre (Grant-in-aid)	\$20.75	\$102,852
Shuswap SPCA (Grant-in-aid)	\$0.57	\$2,901
EA Grants-in-aid	\$13.85	\$68,500
Okanagan Regional Library	\$49.59	\$245,390
Administration		
General Government Administration	\$43.93	\$217,393
Electoral Area Administration	\$25.90	\$128,185
Feasibility Studies (Regional)	\$0.62	\$2,996
Feasibility Studies (Electoral Areas)	\$2.01	\$8,740
Subtotal for area-wide taxes	\$443.32	\$2,189,333

2. Local Service Areas

	Property Tax per \$515,000 residence	Total Recovered from Area F
Area F First Responders (Grant-in-Aid)	\$6.23	\$27,540
Area F Sub-regional Fire Protection	\$192.82	\$853,032
Area F Building Inspection	\$27.71	\$107,189
Mosquito Control (Scotch/Lee Creek)	\$23.54	\$44,060
North Shuswap LWMP	\$6.93	\$28,000
Seymour Arm LWMP	\$7.65	\$3,700
Dangerous Dog Control *	\$1.00	\$4,178
St. Ives Street Lighting	\$29.25	\$4,280
Anglemont Waterworks	\$547.77	\$605,800
Cottonwood Waterworks	\$319.50	\$53,124
Saratoga Waterworks	\$246.46	\$24,822

* Dangerous Dog Control service taxes are applied to improvements only (assumed to be 50% of assessed value)

3. CSR D Water System User Fees

Anglemont Waterworks	\$700.00	\$408,750
Cottonwood Waterworks	\$204.00	\$35,648
Saratoga Waterworks	\$663.00	\$94,764

* User fees would not normally be included on a property tax bill, but are shown here

4. Provincial Services

Police Tax	\$29.66	\$146,849
Rural Tax	\$175.10	\$866,815
School Tax	\$755.45	\$3,739,797
Surveyor of Taxes *	\$23.27	\$102,057
Subtotal for provincial service taxes	\$983.49	\$4,855,518

* Plus 5.25% of local service area taxes

5. Other Agencies

Regional Hospital District	\$155.64	\$770,471
Municipal Finance Authority	\$0.10	\$510
BC Assessment Authority	\$17.30	\$85,662
Subtotal for agency taxes	\$173.05	\$856,643

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CHAPTER 5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This chapter provides an overview of the public engagement process undertaken by the consultants, as well as an account of the findings from the process.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Pre-Hiatus

As noted in the introduction to this report, the *Area F Issues Identification Study* experienced a five-month hiatus, beginning late August 2023, as a result of the Bush Creek East Wildfire that caused widespread evacuation from, and significant property damage to, the North Shuswap and the Skwax te Secwepemculecw First Nation. In the weeks leading up to the evacuation, the consultants published online an *Electoral Area F Issues Identification Study Overview*, and advertised through print, online and social media the list of community engagement opportunities. The full list of opportunities included:

- two (2) Information Booths in late August — one at the Seymour Arm Outdoor Market, the other at the Scotch Creek Farm and Craft Market — staffed by the consultants to engage with residents one-on-one, distribute copies of the *Overview*, and answer questions
- three (3) community open houses in the month of September — Celista, Scotch Creek and Anglemont — introduced by the Electoral Area Director and hosted by the consultants, with a series of information poster boards, a presentation on the study, a Q&A session to discuss issues and interests, and a *CSR D Area F Report Card* with space for additional input to be noted
- an online survey to collect residents' views on governance and services
- an *Area F Issues Identification Website* that served as a one-stop online shop for residents to find copies of all materials produced for the study, and for residents to register for notifications on the study

As noted, an eight-page *Overview* of the study was published in the weeks leading up to the North Shuswap evacuation. The *Overview* provided information on the current local services and governance in Area F, as well as costs to taxpayers. A QR link to the online survey was included in the *Overview*, as were details on all of the community engagement opportunities. At the time of the evacuation, printed copies of the *Overview* were with the CSR D awaiting delivery to each Area F household by Canada Post. Delivery was cancelled in the days leading up the evacuation order.

Twenty (20) "Community Champions" were identified in consultation with the North Shuswap Chamber of Commerce. The Champions were all individuals with strong

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connections in one or more of the North Shuswap communities who could help to draw attention to the study and raise the profile of the community's information sessions. In early August, three weeks' before the planned Information Booths, the consultants reached out to all twenty Champions with a request to help distribute information on the engagement events, and the study in general, through their community networks. A proposed email to send to contacts was provided.⁶

Finally, in July 2023 the consultants reached out to representatives, identified by the CSR D, of the Adams Lake Indian Band, Skwlaw te Secwepemculecw First Nation, and Neskonlith Indian Band. The consultants offered to meet with representatives of each First Nation to review the study, seek input on CSR D services and governance, and discuss any other issues of importance to the First Nation. The consultants stated that the study was not an incorporation study, and would not result in any changes to boundaries or to the underlying local governance structure in place. Finally, the consultants noted that the study was not focused on any local services provided by the First Nations in the area referred to as the North Shuswap. A digital copy of the *Overview* was included in the correspondence.⁷

The choice of the community engagement opportunities reflected a desire to provide a variety of ways for the community to learn about and provide input on Area F's services and governance. The timing reflected a desire to connect with as many Area F residents as possible, including summer seasonal residents who constitute a large demographic group in the North Shuswap.

Post-Hiatus

In the late fall of 2023 the CSR D determined that the study should re-start and proceed with the community engagement process. It was acknowledged that the timing of the re-start was not ideal given the absence of the many if not most of the Area's part-time, seasonal residents. Ongoing recovery efforts in parts of the Electoral Area also made the timing of the re-start less than perfect. Unfortunately, however, the option of postponing community engagement to the summer of 2024 was not deemed possible, in part because of the CSR D's obligations to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs under the restructure planning grant.

The post-hiatus process featured the following opportunities:

- two (2) community open houses in the second half of January 2024 — Celistia and Anglemont — hosted by the consultants, with a series of information poster boards (*Appendix I*), a presentation on the study (*Appendix II*), a Q&A session to discuss issues and interests, and an *Area F Report Card* (*Appendix III*) with space for additional input to be noted
- one (1) online, virtual open house in the second half of February 2024

⁶ Two (2) of the individuals contact as Community Champions responded to the outreach.

⁷ No responses to the outreach to First Nations were received by the consultants.



- the online survey (*Appendix IV*), advertised in early January to residents, and made available through the end of February
- the *Area F Issues Identification Website* (csrd.civilspace.io), which remained available throughout the hiatus as a one-stop online shop for residents to find copies of all materials produced for the study

The eight-page *Overview* (*Appendix V*) was distributed by Canada Post to all addresses in Area F in the first half of January, complete with an insert to list the new open house and survey dates.

Further outreach to the Community Champions was not undertaken post-hiatus; nor was further outreach to the Adams Lake Indian Band, Skwaxw te Secwepemculecw First Nation, or Neskonlith Indian Band.

Website Resources and Advertising

As noted, the study website served as a one-stop online shop for residents to see updates on the study, learn about community engagement events and download supporting documents. Residents could also register for notifications through the website, and access the online virtual open house and the *Electoral Area F Issues Identification Survey*.

Key supporting documents on the site included:

- the Electoral Area F Information Poster Boards
- the full *Overview – Electoral Area F Issues Identification Study*
- the January 2024, open house presentation

All community engagement events, both pre-hiatus and post-hiatus, were advertised on the website, as well as through CSR D social media channels and in successive editions of the *North Shuswap Kicker*. All events were also listed in the *Overview* booklet which was delivered by Canada Post to each address in Area F.

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

Each of the two in-person open houses, and the one virtual online open house, was presented as an opportunity for members of the community to ask questions of the consultants. Residents were prompted to engage on governance and service issues by a set of questions posed at the beginning of each presentation, then again at the beginning of the Q&A portion of the open houses. Similar questions were posed at the back of the *Overview*. Included in the questions were the following examples:

- Do you receive all of the local services you need?
- Do you feel that you receive good value for the property taxes you pay?
- Are current service levels appropriate?
- Do you have concerns with any specific service(s)?



- Do you think that North Shuswap residents have enough input into service decisions?
- What could the CSR D do to help address your service and governance concerns?

The questions were posed simply to prompt discussion. They were neither intended nor used to limit the range of topics on which the community could provide input.

Close to 40 residents attended a January 20, 2024, morning open house at the Lakeview Centre in Anglemont; approximately 55 participated in an afternoon workshop on the same day at the North Shuswap Hall in Celista. Residents at both events were interested in the poster boards, engaged in the presentation and thoughtful in their comments. Not surprisingly, comments related to the recent Bush Creek East Wildfire and ongoing recovery efforts were raised by a number of participants. Participants were advised that the CSR D would be undertaking a separate community conversation in March on the Wildfire response.⁸

Other service- and governance-related topics raised by residents at the Anglemont open house included:

- bylaw enforcement — particularly in Anglemont — to support building and zoning bylaws, and to address illegal dumping, the placement of trailers on properties, the presence of unregistered vehicles, onsite sewage concerns, unsightly premises and other matters
- the desire for a new fire hall in Anglemont, along with additional assistance from the CSR D to facilitate response to motor vehicle incidents
- CSR D administration costs, perceived by some to be high
- the management of funds by the CSR D in providing services
- the concern that taxes paid towards services (CSR D and provincial) are not adequately benefitting the area
- concerns about the responsiveness of the CSR D to service and community needs
- concerns over increased water bills, which residents had believed were to be going down
- a desire for greater input into land use and planning decisions
- the use of temporary use permits
- building permits and the time required to obtain them⁹
- a lack of trust in the CSR D as the local government and service provider, and frustration over a perceived lack of respect for the North Shuswap and a lack of accountability

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⁸ The process, referred to as the *Community Conversation – Bush Creek East Wildfire*, included four in-person information sessions and two online events. A *What We Heard* report, produced by Monogram Communications, was released in early April 2024.

⁹ One participant felt that the building permit process was very good and user-friendly, with good turnaround times. A number of others reported a different experience.



- a desire for greater access to CSR D decision-makers (Board and senior management), including through town halls and meetings in the North Shuswap

Residents who attended the Celistra open house provided comments on some of the same topics, but also raised new points. The full scope of comments included:

- a lack of trust in the CSR D
- challenges in receiving building permits
- bylaw enforcement, and the view that bylaws should be enforced proactively and not only in response to complaints
- sewer and water constraints on development
- a perceived inactivity in liquid waste management services
- a desire to have the library rebuilt as quickly as possible
- the alternative approval process mechanism
- a perceived lack of value for funds spent on emergency preparedness
- a lack of affordable housing in the area, and the implications of this lack for businesses that are trying to hire staff
- the view that residents do not receive value for property taxes paid
- concerns over the maintenance of local parks and beaches
- the need for a local advisory committee, or even a local community commission, to give residents a greater voice in local decision-making
- concerns with the level of service received by the North Shuswap through Shuswap Economic Development

A small number of residents provided written input to the consultants following the open houses. One resident raised concerns with the CSR D's bylaw enforcement service, and a lack of response to several complaints submitted through the CSR D's online complaint submission process. The resident stated that bylaw complaints submitted two years ago about an RV Park in Area F went unanswered, as did complaints submitted by neighbours. Another resident raised a series of concerns related to:

- a mistrust of the CSR D
- an inadequate level of influence for individual electoral area directors at the CSR D Board table, particularly on decisions that impact the electoral area
- the perceived need for a local advisory committee to provide input to the Area F Director
- a desire for the CSR D to focus on basic services
- perceived inherent inequities in the local government tax system which equates assessed values with an ability to pay
- the lack of voice in local decision-making for seasonal residents
- reliance on the alternative approval process
- difficulty in navigating the CSR D website, and related concerns about transparency



ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey posed a number of service-related questions to residents, including whether residents receive sufficient services, whether there is a need for different types of services or levels of service, and whether residents feel they receive good value for services. Residents were asked to identify any services they currently do not receive, but would be interested in receiving. Input on residents' satisfaction with individual services, including those provided by the CSRD and those provided by the province, was also sought.

Governance-related questions were included in the survey. Residents were asked, for example, if they felt comfortable with their ability to provide input to decision-making, if they felt well-represented in the current system, and if new opportunities for input should be considered.

In total, 582 respondents partially completed the online survey; 383 respondents completed the survey in full. Most respondents accessed the survey between January 1, 2024, and February 29, 2024; a relatively small number completed the survey in the pre-hiatus period in August 2024. The detailed account and assessment of responses to all questions is presented in *Appendix IV*. Key observations from the responses are summarized in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1
Key Observations from the Online Survey

Observation	Explanation
Respondents	<p>The highest number of survey respondents came from Scotch Creek (24.8%), followed by respondents who selected "other" for their home community (21.7%). Based on comments submitted, it can be assumed that most residents who identified "other" are from Anglemont.</p> <p>The largest demographic group among respondents was the 60-79 age group (56.5%), followed by the 40-59 age demographic (34.3%). Only 6.0% of respondents identified as being younger than 40 years old.</p>
High-Satisfaction Services	<p>With 81.3% in favour, Area F First Responders recorded the highest percentage of "very satisfied" respondents (48.6%) and "satisfied" respondents (32.7%). Community Parks recorded an overall satisfaction rate of 74.0%.</p> <p>Garbage and Recycling also rated highly, with 62.4% expressing some level of satisfaction. This figure, however, has to be balanced against comments later in the survey about a lack of garbage and recycling services.</p>



Observation	Explanation
Low-Satisfaction Services	<p>The highest level of dissatisfaction (62.5%) was assigned to Shuswap Emergency Preparedness by respondents — a grade that almost certainly is related to the response to the Bush Creek East Wildfire.</p> <p>Development Services (Planning) recorded a dissatisfaction of 52.4% — the second least popular service. Administration (48.4%) and Bylaw Enforcement (46.7%) also received significant responses. Importantly, Bylaw Enforcement also received a low satisfaction rating (16.2%) — a lower percentage than that assigned to other less-popular services.</p>
Contact with CSRD	<p>Contact with the CSRD initiated by respondents concerned Development Services (27.0%) followed by Bylaw Enforcement (19.2%). Building Inspection has also been a key target of inquiries (19.0%). Respondents with a location identified as "other" (believed to be Anglemont) were the ones most likely to have contacted the CSRD for these services.</p>
Service Levels	<p>The North Shuswap Health Centre stands out as the service with the highest percentage of respondents (71.4%) seeking increased service levels. Increased service levels for Shuswap Emergency Preparedness and Fire Protection received high support as well — 68.7% and 66.4% respectively.</p> <p>For all services together, respondents were almost evenly split in their preferences among "Higher Service Level" (31.4%), "Maintain Current Service Level" (33.7%), and "No Opinion" (30.6%). Only 4.3% of respondents felt that overall service levels should be reduced.</p>
Perceived Value for Taxes Paid	<p>In all, 67.0% of respondents disagreed with the notion that they receive good value for the taxes paid for CSRD services.</p>
Trade-offs	<p>Respondents were asked for their views on trade-offs between service levels and cost. If faced with trade-offs to make, 40.6% of respondents would choose to maintain current service levels and minimize future tax and/or user fee increases. Approximately 21.2% would prefer to pay reduced taxes, and are comfortable receiving lower levels of service. A total of 27.8% of respondents would favour service level and/or service scope increases, and would be willing to pay higher taxes and/or user fees.</p>
New Services	<p>Respondents identified Crime Prevention (58.8%), Seniors' Housing (39.8%) Community Sewer and Sewage Treatment (38.5%) and Broadband Internet (37.6%) as new desired services.</p>

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Observation	Explanation
Services to Improve	<p>Respondents identified Fire Protection (42.1%), the North Shuswap Health Society (31.5%) and 911 Emergency (28.6%) as the top three services to improve. An usually high concentration from "other" neighbourhoods (believed primarily to be Anglemont) identified Bylaw Enforcement as a service in need to improvement. For respondents as a whole, the need to improve Bylaw Enforcement did not make the top three services, but was identified by a sizable percentage (18.5%).</p>
Provincial Services	<p>The two provincial services that recorded the highest level of dissatisfaction were Healthcare (74.1%) and the Maintenance and Standards of Local Roads (67.6%).</p> <p>Provincial Parks received the highest level of satisfaction (69.3%).</p>
Community Engagement	<p>Several respondents (65.3%) reported that they have participated in a CSR D survey in the past two years. Several others (61.2%) have been on the CSR D website; 57.7% of respondents voted in the 2022 local election.</p>
Representation	<p>A majority of respondents (59.5%) reported being satisfied with having only one representative on the CSR D Board of Directors. Several respondents (52.3%), however, reported that the Area F Director does not have sufficient input into decisions that affect Area F. Several (53.4%) reported disliking the feature of regional districts that involves representatives from other jurisdictions in making decisions that affect Area F.</p> <p>Respondents identified a strong desire (80.1%) for more opportunities to provide advice and recommendations on local services. A total of 83.7% of respondents identified a preference to have decisions on local services to be made by representatives from the local Area F communities.</p>

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A total of 204 respondents provided written input on services and governance in Area F. Input put forward by these respondents can be categorized under the following themes:

- *Enforcement of Bylaws* — Many respondents are concerned that existing bylaws are not being adequately enforced. Concerns related to property uses, business operations, unsightly premises, and onsite storage of trailers and industrial equipment were noted.
- *Infrastructure Maintenance* — There appears to be a strong desire for improved maintenance of roads (a provincial government responsibility),



water, sewer systems and parks. Respondents from Seymour Arm noted a strong need for improved electricity.

- *Building Permit Process* — Respondents desire a streamlined building permit process to facilitate development, and to expedite Wildfire recovery and reconstruction.
- *Community Engagement and Governance* — Respondents desire greater involvement in decision-making processes, including through public meetings.
- *Emergency Services* — Concerns were raised about the adequacy and responsiveness of emergency services such as policing, ambulance and fire rescue, particularly during high-demand periods of the summer season.
- *Tourism and Economic Development* — Some respondents expressed a desire for increased tourism promotion, support for local businesses, and new efforts to attract economic investment to the North Shuswap.
- *Healthcare and Seniors' Services* — Improved access to healthcare services, family doctors, emergency care and support for seniors was noted by some respondents.
- *Environment* — Wildfire preparedness, invasive species control and waste management were raised as areas in need of attention.
- *Representation and Taxation* — Some seasonal residents raised concerns about the inability to vote in local elections, despite paying local property taxes.
- *Communication and Accessibility* — Respondents expressed frustration with existing CSR D communication channels, including the CSR D's website.

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CSR D AREA F REPORT CARD

A report card (*Appendix III*) was produced as a tool to seek written input from residents who attended one of the in-person open houses. In all, 16 cards were completed. Two major takeaways from the input can be highlighted. The first concerns Bylaw Enforcement. This service was graded with an "F" (fail), and was identified as one that in need of improvement, more than any other CSR D service. The second takeaway concerns opportunities for input. Eleven of the 16 cards identified a desire for more opportunities for input from Area F residents in local decision-making.



CHAPTER 6 OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

This chapter introduces potential options to address the issues and concerns that emerged over the course of the study, in particular during the community engagement process. In keeping with the purpose of the study, all options outlined in this chapter speak to changes that may be pursued within the existing regional district system which features Electoral Area F as an electoral area of the CSR D. Options, such as municipal incorporation, that would result in a change to the existing system are not presented for consideration.

CITIZEN ADVISORY BODIES

A desire for greater community input into local decision-making for the North Shuswap emerged during the community engagement process. To meet this need, the CSR D could re-establish the two citizen advisory bodies that were in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic — namely, the Area F Advisory Planning Commission, and the Area F Parks Advisory Committee. The Advisory Planning Commission would be established by the CSR D Board of Directors, by bylaw, under section 461(2) of the *Local Government Act*. The Commission would provide the Board of Director advice on matters of land use, community planning, proposed bylaws and permits. The Parks Advisory Committee would be established by the Board under the *CSR D Community Parks and Recreation Committee Bylaw No. 5706*. The Committee would provide advice to the CSR D Operations Manager on a broad range of parks and recreation policies for Area F.

Alternatively, the CSR D Board could establish a broader Electoral Area F Local Advisory Committee to assist the Area F Director in assessing the delivery of existing services, reviewing the need for new services, and advising on local concerns. The Committee would be responsible for bringing forward to the Director issues, concerns, ideas and views raised by Area F residents. The Committee would also be responsible for assisting the Director in assessing the items brought forward. The Committee would be established as a select committee of the CSR D Board of Directors, pursuant to section 218(1) of the *Local Government Act*. The CSR D currently has an Electoral Area A (Rural Golden) Local Advisory Committee in place.

An Electoral Area F Local Advisory Committee would, as its name suggests, provide advice and recommendations only. All decisions would be made by the CSR D Board unless the Board chose to delegate authority for certain types of decisions to the Committee. Delegation would require the Board to pass a special delegation bylaw.

LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION

A local community commission (LCC) is a unique type of citizen body with a degree of delegated decision-making authority over specified local services. LCCs are comprised of either four or six commissioners, directly elected from and by the

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community they represent. The local electoral area director is automatically appointed to an LCC.

A North Shuswap LCC could be established by bylaw, pursuant to section 243 of the *Local Government Act*, to oversee and make certain decisions for CSR D services delivered to Area F. Local matters assigned to the LCC would receive a level of attention that would be greater than that which is possible in the present situation involving a single electoral area director at the CSR D Board. The bylaw to create a North Shuswap LCC would need to be approved by Area F electors through a referendum; the approval of the Inspector of Municipalities would also be required. Authority delegated to the LCC would enable the Commission to determine how the specified CSR D services were to be managed, within a policy framework created by the CSR D Board. The LCC could also be empowered to make decisions on the spending of funds allocated by the CSR D Board. CSR D staff would execute the decisions of the Commission (the Commission would not have its own staff).

Only six LCCs exist in the province today; and only four of these bodies remain active. The newest LCC is Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission established by the Capital Regional District (CRD). This LCC has been given administrative authority over parks and recreation, transportation and transit, economic development, liquid waste disposal, street lighting, and approval of grant-in-aid applications. The body also reviews and provides advice to the CRD Board on services that receive CRD funding, including the Arts service, Public Library and Search and Rescue.

Local community commissions are considered feasible in a community that:

- is geographically separated from other communities and relatively easy to define
- receives a range of local regional district services that are separate from other services provided
- demonstrates a high level of interest in the delivery of local services, and would be able to consistently put forward individuals willing to stand for election and serve on the commission
- shares some of the characteristics of a municipality, but is not ready for incorporation
- seeks greater involvement in the governance of local services than is possible through an advisory committee

Some of these conditions exist in the North Shuswap. It is not clear, however, that all of the conditions are in place. An LCC for the North Shuswap, if pursued, would likely focus on and be defined by a specific community or set of contiguous communities in the Electoral Area.

SERVICE REVIEWS

Bylaw Enforcement, Shuswap Emergency Preparedness, Development Services (Planning) and Building Inspection were identified through the community



engagement process as four CSR D services in need of change. To address this need and the community sentiment behind it, the CSR D could initiate one or more service review.

In plain terms, a service review is an exercise through the elements of one or more local, sub-regional or regional services are assessed, concerns and interests are identified, and changes are proposed. All jurisdictions that participate in services take part in service reviews on the services.

There are two types of service reviews:

- *Non-Statutory Reviews* — Non-statutory service reviews are assessments of services that may be undertaken in response to an issue (or issues) that arises, or in accordance with a pre-determined service review schedule. They may examine all service elements, including service definition (i.e., scope of service), service governance, service cost and tax burden, and service delivery. Alternatively, they may focus on a specific concern raised by one or more participant, by local government staff, or by the public that receives the service.

Non-statutory reviews are overseen by the regional district board. They may be conducted by regional district staff or by an outside, independent consultant. Recommendations for changes to the service(s), designed to address issues raised, are provided to the board for consideration.

- *Statutory Reviews* — Statutory reviews, as their name implies, are authorized and guided by statute — specifically, the *Local Government Act*. Pursuant to section 357 of the *Act*, any jurisdiction that participates in a service has the right to initiate a statutory review of the terms of participation in the service (or services), including service definition and scope of activities, cost and cost-sharing method, governance model, service delivery, and other factors. The goal of a statutory review is to resolve inter-jurisdictional concerns and create a new service arrangement that will set the stage for success and cooperation moving forward.

Statutory service reviews involve representatives from all participating jurisdictions, are overseen by the Minister of Municipal, and are typically facilitated by an independent consultant. The reviews can be cumbersome and expensive; however, they can also help to address key inter-jurisdictional concerns related to the exercise of decision-making power, the allocation of costs and the setting of priorities.

Both non-statutory reviews can help to reset and/or reform regional district services. Non-statutory reviews are, in general, less formal, less contentious and less costly exercises than non-statutory reserves. For these reasons, the North Shuswap and the CSR D Board may wish to consider starting with the non-statutory option to examine



and address the community's concerns related to Bylaw Enforcement, Shuswap Emergency Preparedness, Development Services (Planning) and Building Inspection.

OTHER OPTIONS

There are other changes that Electoral Area F and the CSR D could consider making, within the existing CSR D framework, in an effort to address the key issues that emerged over the course of the study. A list of other possible changes includes as follows:

- *Communication and Advocacy* — This option would involve the CSR D engaging other local service providers in new ways, and perhaps on a more frequent basis, to communicate Area F's service needs and concerns, and to advocate for improvements. The two key service providers would be the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure on local road matters, and the RCMP on local policing.

Issues with local roads and policing in Area F were raised during the community engagement process. These issues, however, did not emerge as major concerns for the North Shuswap.

- *Changes to Stakeholder Votes* — Greater local control over Area F service decisions was highlighted as an issue by the community. One change to increase local influence would involve maximizing the opportunity for stakeholder voting.

As explained earlier in the report (and in the various engagement materials), stakeholder votes involve and are determined by directors from participating jurisdictions only. The votes are used for administrative and operational decisions, such as setting fees, contracting services, and creating, changing or repealing bylaws that govern the administration or operation of a service. Some of the CSR D services in which Electoral Area F participates are provided only to Electoral Area F, or to portions of the Electoral Area. In these instances, all directors, including those from the municipalities, are required to vote in stakeholder votes in accordance with the regional district voting rules outlined in the *Local Government Act*.

Efforts could be made to restructure services that are currently provided to (or within) Electoral Area F only to limit the number of outside directors involved in stakeholder votes. Specifically, efforts could be made to combine services such as Area F Parks and the three Area F CSR D water systems with similar services in other electoral areas. This change would not place decision-making solely under the Area F Director — such an outcome would not be possible under the *Local Government Act*. The change could, however, limit the number of directors from other jurisdictions from voting in stakeholder votes on Area F services.



The effort required to restructure services to limit the number of outside directors in stakeholder votes would be considerable, and may not result in much change for Area F. Service restructuring would only affect stakeholder votes on administrative and operational matters. Certain key decisions, including those dealing with money matters, would continue to involve the entire Board. It is also worth noting that other electoral area directors, whose involvement in restructuring would be necessary, may not support the need for such restructuring. Finally, efforts to restructure services could limit the number of outside directors from participating in decisions for Area F, but could not exclude all outside directors. The involvement of others in all votes, including stakeholder votes, is a feature of regional district governance for electoral areas.

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CHAPTER 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Electoral Area F Issues Identification Study* was undertaken to:

- document and explain the local governance system and local services in place in Electoral Area F of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSR D)
- engage residents throughout Area F to understand their concerns with local governance or services, as well as their service and governance needs
- identify, assess and recommend changes the CSR D could make to address the issues and needs brought forward

Several issues emerged over the course of the study — in particular through the community engagement opportunities, including the online survey. Two issues that emerged most strongly were the desire among residents for greater community input into decisions that affect Electoral Area F, and concerns with key CSR D services provided to the North Shuswap, including Bylaw Enforcement, Development Services (Planning), Building Inspection and Shuswap Emergency Preparedness. Changes for the Board to consider making within the existing Regional District system to address these issues were outlined.

The following recommendations are offered by the consultants for the Board's consideration:

- THAT the CSR D Board of Directors consider establishing an Electoral Area F Local Advisory Committee, comprised of North Shuswap residents, as a select committee of the Board to assist the Electoral Area F Director in assessing the delivery of existing services, reviewing the need for new services, and advising on local concerns.
- THAT the CSR D Board of Directors consider initiating a non-statutory service review of Bylaw Enforcement, Development Services (Planning) and Building Inspection services to examine and address the concerns of North Shuswap communities, as well as the concerns of communities in other participating jurisdictions.¹⁰

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¹⁰ Shuswap Emergency Preparedness, it is understood, is already being examined by the CSR D to address concerns raised during the recent Wildfire.