

Frequently Asked Questions on Service Areas

A service area can be established in a neighborhood or defined area to undertake a specific service for the benefit of the owners of those properties determined to be within the boundaries of the service area. It is paid for by the owners of those properties.

There are two ways to initiate this process:

1. Petition - Property owners may petition the Board or their Electoral Area Director for a specific service and service area. Petition forms may be produced by the Regional District office.
2. By Board Initiative – the Board may decide to establish a service area and undertake a specific service on its own initiative. Notices are published in the local newspaper.

How do I start the Petition process?

- Discuss among the neighborhood to determine the support for the project.
- Define the project boundary – from where to where the service is to be provided.
- If at least ½ of the property owners within the boundaries of the proposed Service area seem to be in support, it may be in everyone's best interest to circulate a preliminary petition to determine the level of interest before proceeding. Obtain the Preliminary Petition Form from the Corporate Officer, poll your neighbors, and return the completed petition to the Corporate Officer. A contact person (Leader) should be nominated by the owners and indicated in the Preliminary Petition Form. This individual will be the "contact" person that the Regional District will work primarily with throughout the process.
- If a preliminary petition signifies sufficient interest, the Regional District will proceed to determine the feasibility, scope and cost estimate for the work, as well as prepare a formal petition for signing by the residents within the service area boundaries. A public meeting will be scheduled to provide information to those residents who would be impacted by the proposed service.
- This process of formal petition provides a property owner benefiting from (or impacted by) the project, an opportunity to express support (or opposition) to the project.
- Sufficient support for the petition means that of all the owners within the service area boundaries, at least 50% of the owners with an aggregate assessed property value of more than 50%, have signed the petition, effectively committing to pay their share of the service.
- When a formal petition is certified 'sufficient' by the Corporate Officer and the Board adopts the appropriate bylaws, all owners of the properties within the service boundaries become liable to pay their appropriate share of the costs.

Is signing the Preliminary Petition Form binding?

No, it is only an expression of interest. Your commitment will be expressed through "Formal Petition", which will be prepared and sent to you by the Local Government on receipt of the Preliminary Petition.

Should I be an owner to sign the petitions? What if multiple owners exist? Are multiple owners getting more than one vote?

Only owners can sign. Each property has a single vote irrespective of the number of owners. In the case of multiple owners, the majority (more than 50%) of the owners must sign for a property to be considered in favor.

The petition for each residence will be mailed to the name and address on the property based on BC Assessment data.

How do I know my cost?

Once the Corporate Officer receives the Preliminary Petition, a Formal Petition Form will be prepared with details such as properties benefiting, cost attributed to each property, etc., and will be forwarded to each benefiting owner.

Is the cost given through the Formal Petition Form final?

The cost provided through the formal petition process is a maximum amount expected and will be the cost which will be requisitioned under in a service establishment bylaw.

What are my choices? If I do not sign, should I pay?

If you favor the project, you will sign and return the Formal Petition Form – then you are committed to the project. If you choose not to favor the project, you can disregard the Formal Petition. However, if sufficient property owners sign the petition and project is approved by the Board, irrespective of signed or not, every property owner in the Service Area boundaries will have to pay.

How is the total cost split between the properties?

The cost will be split proportionate to the benefiting properties. I