



**RDOS Area “D” Governance Study
Fact Sheets
January 2016**

PLANNING & BUILDING SERVICES

► **What service is provided?**

Planning & building services consist of:

- Electoral area planning services
- Regional Growth Strategy plan preparation and monitoring
- Building inspection
- Subdivision servicing
- Heritage conservation
- Heritage Hills street lighting

Electoral Area Planning

This service consists of the preparation of land use plans, such as the Official Community Plan for each electoral area (Area “D” has 2 OCPs, one for D1 and one for D2), zoning bylaw, and dealing with applications such as rezonings, development permits and variance applications. Electoral Area Planning is supported by the bylaw enforcement department (land use infractions make up the majority of the enforcement issues), but enforcement is recovered as a separate service and department, and the costs and delivery of that service are detailed in the *Bylaw Enforcement & Animal Control Fact Sheet*.

Regional Growth Strategy

This service primarily involves the preparation of a regional growth strategy for the portion of the RDOS in the south Okanagan. The strategy, which is guided by regulations and requirements in the *Local Government Act*, was adopted in 2010 and is intended to guide growth in the region. The service involves cooperation to develop a vision for growth in 5 of the region’s electoral areas (including Area “D”) and 4 municipalities Valley (Electoral Area A, C, D, E, and F, Penticton, Summerland, Oliver and Osoyoos). Implementation, monitoring and updating is ongoing; a 5-year review is underway.

Building Inspection

Building Inspection is a sub-regional service delivered to 6 electoral areas (A, C, D, E, F, and H), and 2 municipalities (Keremeos and Princeton). It includes the processing of building permits and application of the Building Bylaw to ensure buildings are constructed to the BC Building Code and are safe for their intended use.

Subdivision Servicing

Subdivision servicing is the review and engineering to facilitate the creation of new subdivisions. Although the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) is the approving authority for subdivisions within the region’s electoral areas, subdivision applications are referred to the RDOS, and the RDOS has additional requirements, such as ensuring each lot has adequate water supply, an electrical connection and approved sewage disposal. Other service requirements may include storm water drainage, curb and gutter and street lighting. Subdivision referrals also involve a review of parkland dedication, OCP designations and zoning, and any other applicable subdivision standards. A subdivision application fee is required to cover the costs of the RDOS review.

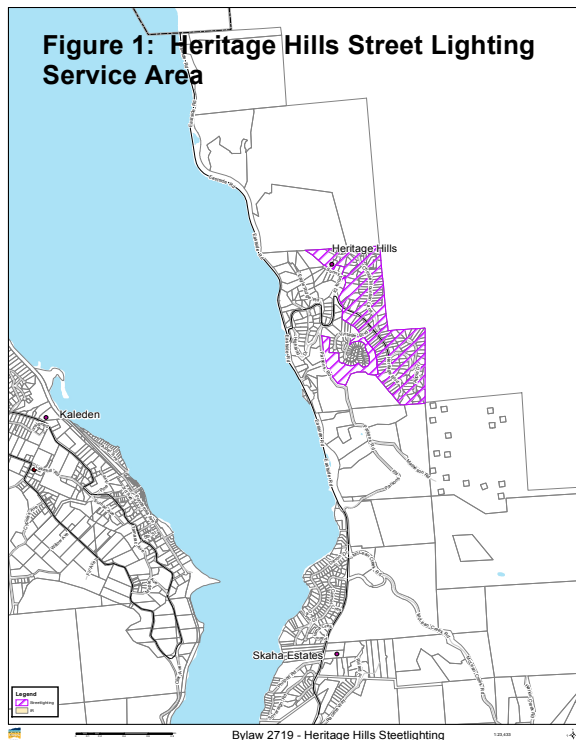
Heritage Conservation

The RDOS has a heritage register, adopted by the Board, that identifies sites that have heritage significance within the region’s participating areas (electoral Areas A, C, D, G and H). Having a register provides access to grant funding, and also forwards sites for inclusion on the BC and the Canadian Registers of Historic Places. To be included, heritage sites are typically identified by community groups. A statement of significance is drafted in consultation with the RDOS and the provincial Heritage Branch, and endorsed by the RDOS Board. As part of the service, a Regional Heritage Strategic Plan was prepared and adopted

by the Board in September 2015. One of the recommendations of the plan is to initiate the heritage conservation service as a region-wide program and service.

Heritage Hills Street Lighting

The community of Heritage Hills established a service to pay for ongoing operation and maintenance of street lights installed through the various phases of the development. The service area (see Figure 1) currently encompasses 46 street lights and costs are shared amongst 132 properties.



➤ Who makes decisions?

Operational and policy decisions on the individual planning services are made as follows:

- Electoral area planning service decisions are made jointly by all the electoral area directors;
- The 5 electoral areas and 4 municipalities that are part of the Regional Growth Strategy make decisions regarding the plan and its implementation (simple majority – each jurisdiction gets 1 vote); and,
- Building inspection operational decisions are made by the 6 electoral areas.

All decisions on budget matters, financial plan, regulatory bylaws or borrowing are made by the full Board of Directors (18 directors).

The electoral area planning service also draws upon the advice and input of Advisory Planning Commissions. Each electoral area has an Advisory Planning Commission (APC) comprised of local residents from the electoral area and provides input on matters relating to land use planning. The committees are independent bodies that give recommendations to the RDOS Board; the advice does not form policy or set direction for the RDOS. Members are appointed by the Board. RDOS staff provide reports and agendas for the APC meetings and act as a resource for the APC.

Residents and the general public also play a role in planning decisions. Key land use policies, such as the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaws, can only be adopted or changed with a public hearing. Public hearings are legislated opportunities for residents to provide opinions and viewpoints to the RDOS Board. Certain types of planning applications, such as variances, also provide opportunities for public input.

➤ Who delivers the service?

The RDOS delivers all of the planning and building services, with the exception of subdivision approval, which is undertaken by the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. The services are provided through multiple departments, including the Development Services (planning and building), Community Services (heritage) and Public Works (subdivision and street lighting) departments.

The Development Services Manager oversees both planning and building services. In addition to the supervisor, there is one planner, 2 planning technicians, a part-time environmental contractor, as well as an administration assistant and half-time clerk. The planning department delivers the electoral area planning, and regional planning. As noted previously, the Electoral Area Planning Service is supported by bylaw enforcement, but it is recovered as a separate service and department, and is referenced in its own *Fact Sheet*.

The building department includes a building supervisor and 4 building inspectors, an

administrative assistant and half-time clerk. The building department undertakes the building inspection service.

The subdivision review service and the street lighting service are delivered by the Public Works department. That department is staffed by a subdivision supervisor, 2 engineering technicians and a secretary.

The Community Services Department oversees the heritage conservation program. The Rural Projects Coordinator spends a portion of time on the service's yearly activities.

Some of the services are also complemented by efforts from volunteer groups or organizations. For instance the heritage conservation efforts are supplemented by organizations such as Okanagan Falls' Heritage And Museum Society. Typically community groups identify properties with heritage significance, and work in partnership with the RDOS draft a statement of significance. Heritage community groups are also involved in promotion of heritage, fundraising and maintaining heritage buildings.

► **What is spent by RDOS on the service?**

The total cost of planning services that impact Area “D” are shown in Figure 2, and can be broken down into:

- 2015 budgeted cost of electoral area planning;
- 2015 budgeted cost of the Regional Growth Strategy service (total is for entire region);
- 2015 budgeted cost of building inspection;
- 2015 budgeted cost of subdivision servicing;
- 2015 budgeted cost of heritage conservation; and,
- 2015 budgeted cost of Heritage Hills street lighting.

The amounts in Figure 2 represent the total cost of these services, and not the portion that Area “D” residences pay for through user fees or taxes.

In addition to the service costs, there are also operating reserve accounts created for several of the services, and others require capital reserves for

**Figure 2
Cost of Services
2015**

Service Component	Cost ¹
EA Planning	\$1,028,579
Regional Growth Strategy	\$56,957
Building Inspection	\$822,088
Subdivision Servicing	\$112,931
Heritage Conservation ²	\$55,500
Heritage Hills Street Lighting	\$5,918
Total	\$2,081,973

1 Cost estimates are from adopted 2015 budget figures
2 2015 was estimated at a higher than usual cost for this service due to the completion of the Heritage Strategic Plan. Estimated cost in subsequent years is approximately \$20,500.

future expenditures. Reserve totals are included in Figure 3.

**Figure 3
Reserve Totals
2015**

Service	Reserve Total ¹
EA Planning	\$55,488
Building Inspection - Stabilization	\$191,716
Building Inspection - Equipment	\$1,017
Heritage Conservation	\$13,410
Heritage Hills Street Lighting	\$943

1 Reserve totals are as at the end of 2014.

► **How are the costs recovered?**

Planning and building services are recovered using a variety of means. In general, local governments typically aim to recover the costs of processing planning applications and building permits through application fees. Policy projects are recovered more through taxes.

Electoral Area Planning

The majority of the electoral area planning budget (86%) is recovered through property taxes levied on assessed values (land and improvements), with other sources including development application fees (4%), and grants and contracts (4%). Although bylaw enforcement is a separate service and department, 11% of the planning budget is

used to pay toward that department to cover the costs of enforcing land use bylaws (i.e. zoning infractions). Land use issues represent the majority of the bylaw enforcement activity. Bylaw enforcement is addressed in a separate *Fact Sheet*.

Regional Growth Strategy

The regional growth strategy budget is recovered solely through property taxes levied on the assessed value land and improvements.

Building Inspection

Unlike the electoral area planning, the majority of the building inspection service is paid for through permit fees (53%). Taxes make up approximately 27% of the revenues. The taxes are levied on assessed values (land and improvements), but each electoral area pays a portion of the overall department costs based on a 5-year moving average of construction value of permits within the service area. This formula ensures that those areas receiving the majority of the service are the ones paying the higher portion of the costs. In addition, the municipalities of Keremeos and Princeton contract the RDOS to provide building inspection, services through a separate agreement.

Subdivision Servicing

Subdivision servicing costs are covered through a combination of property taxes (levied on land and improvements) as well as the application fees, and any surpluses from previous years.

Heritage Conservation

The heritage conservation budget is recovered exclusively through property taxes levied on the assessed value of properties (land and improvements).

Street Lighting

The street lighting service is recovered through taxes on those properties within the Heritage Hills subdivision (land and improvements).

➤ **What is the cost to a typical residence?**

The net cost of the RDOS planning and building services is recovered from Area “D” taxpayers on the basis of property assessments, as well as through application and permit fees. A residence assessed at \$325,000 located outside the Heritage Hills community paid approximately \$79.54 in taxes in 2015 for planning and building services, as shown in Figure 4 Those within the Heritage Hills community paid a slightly higher fee of \$102.57, due to the street lighting service.

**Figure 4
Cost Impact on Typical Residence
2015**

Service	Tax Req. ¹	Res. Rate	Owing ²
EA Planning	\$888,579	0.178	\$57.82
Regional Growth Strategy	\$58,957	0.004	\$1.25
Area D Building Inspection	\$66,828	0.044	\$14.30
Subdivision Servicing	\$67,931	0.014	\$4.42
Heritage Conservation	\$20,500	0.005	\$1.74
Heritage Hills Street Lights ³	\$5,818	0.071	\$23.03
Total			\$79.54
Heritage Hills Total			\$102.57

1 Tax requisition amount excludes 5.25% Surveyor of Taxes fee
 2 Impact is calculated on a home assessed at \$325,000
 3 Service only provided and paid for in Heritage Hills