



Would My Services Change if Okanagan Falls Incorporates?

How does service delivery work under RDOS?

Regional districts can provide a broad range of services. The menu of services varies by regional district, and can be different within each electoral area or community.

Some services, such as street lighting, may be provided to a portion of an electoral area; some, such as environmental conservation, may be provided to a combination of electoral areas and municipalities. Other services, such as solid waste management, are provided to all member municipalities and electoral areas.

Services respond to needs identified by the RDOS Board of Directors, electoral area directors, member municipalities, staff or residents. A proposed service must go through a process to determine its feasibility. If deemed feasible, a service establishing bylaw must receive support from the regional district, the province's Inspector of Municipalities, and the residents who will receive and pay for the service.

Service costs are recovered from those who benefit from a service. As a result, property taxes and fees can be different from one electoral area to another and even within an electoral area.

The provincial government provides roads, policing, sub-division approval and tax collection services in electoral areas. Local residents have limited input into and ability to influence the province's decision-making process, even where they are willing to pay for higher levels of service.

How would service delivery work if Okanagan Falls incorporates?

If Okanagan Falls were to incorporate, a mayor and 4 councillors¹ would be elected to represent the community and make decisions about services and programs and the annual financial plan (i.e., budget).

The municipality would have authority for key local services such as sewer, water, land use planning, and parks and recreation.

Some services would continue to be provided by the RDOS (region-wide services such as the 911 call system, mosquito control and regional transit).

The provincial government would no longer have authority over local roads or sub-division approvals; these services would become the responsibility of the municipality. The Province would retain authority over local policing.

If Okanagan Falls wished to create a new service or significantly modify an existing service, the municipal council would make the decision, not the 20-person RDOS Board.

Okanagan Falls council would have control over local service levels and priorities, and residents would have more direct input into and influence over service levels and priorities, and the community's finances.

The trade off for increased flexibility and local control would be slightly higher local property taxes. On a residential property with an assessed value of \$500,000, incorporation would be expected to increase taxes by approximately \$289.

¹ The analysis endorsed by the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Committee assumes a Council size of 5, which is consistent with legislated guidance for a Village or Town. District municipalities or Cities have 1 mayor and 6 councillors, which is also an option. Regardless of the initial size, once formed, the municipal council may, by bylaw, change the size of council to make it larger or smaller.

Local Services Currently Provided to Area “D” Residents

If Okanagan Falls were to incorporate, the new municipality would be responsible for providing most of these services. Services with an asterisks (*) would continue to be provided by RDOS.

- Library services (provided by ORL in both scenarios)
- Mosquito control*
- Invasive species*
- Environmental conservation*
- Nuisance Starling*
- Okanagan – Kootenay Sterile Insect Release program
- Planning and subdivision
- Regional growth strategy*
- Building inspection
- Subdivision servicing
- Animal control*
- Bylaw enforcement
- Business licencing
- Okanagan Falls fire protection
- Emergency planning*
- 911 Call System*
- Victim services
- Regional transit*
- Area “D” transit*
- Regional economic development*
- Garbage*
- Waste management*
- Illegal dumping*
- Regional parks & trails*
- Okanagan Falls parks and recreation
- Okanagan Falls cemetery
- Okanagan Basin Water Board
- Septic Waste Receiving/Dumping
- Okanagan Falls street lights
- Region-wide General government*
- Electoral Area administration
- Rural projects
- Grants-in-Aid
- Roads (currently Provincial)
- Policing (Provincial)
- Local area services (delivered to specific areas only):
 - OK Falls Water
 - Sun Valley Water
 - Rolling Hills (service provided by Rolling Hills Improvement District)
 - Okanagan Falls Sewer



Comparison Table: Services under RDOS Electoral Area “D” and under a New Municipality

	RDOS Electoral Area “D”	New Municipality
How are new services added or existing services modified?	The decision to establish a new local service in Area “D” is made by the full 20-person RDOS Board. In most instances, approval by the taxpayers affected by the service (i.e. referendum) is also required. Decisions on the budget, operation and administration of most services, including those provided only to Area “D”, are also made by the full 20-person RDOS Board. Operational and administrative decisions for sub-regional services are made only by the directors who represent the participating jurisdictions.	The local Council would make decisions about new services or changes to existing services provided by the municipality. The local Council could also decide whether the municipality would participate in regional services.
How is the Province involved?	The provincial government has authority to deliver and make decisions regarding roads, policing, and subdivision approval in Electoral Area “D.” The Province also collects taxes in electoral areas.	The municipality would have authority over local roads (not the provincial highway) and subdivision approval and would be responsible for collecting taxes. The Province would still make decisions concerning local policing.
How are budgets set and managed?	Budgets are set through the financial plan that covers the entire regional district. Costs are recovered primarily through taxes paid by those who benefit from each service, so fees can be different from one electoral area to another and even within an electoral area, reflecting the unique services received.	Budgets are set through the municipality’s financial plan. Municipalities can allocate money from their “general revenues” to support different services or initiatives and have more financial flexibility to respond to local needs and demands.





How Would Representation and Decision-Making Work if Okanagan Falls Incorporates?

How does governance currently work?

Right now, Okanagan Falls is part of Electoral Area “D” in the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS). There are 9 electoral areas in RDOS (including Area “D”) and 6 municipalities.

Residents in Area “D” elect one Electoral Area Director who serves a 4-year term on the RDOS Board, alongside 8 other Electoral Area Directors and 11 Municipal Directors (20 directors in total). As the governing body, the RDOS Board is responsible for making a wide range of decisions for Area “D.”

All decisions on RDOS services provided to Area “D” involve directors from other jurisdictions in the regional district. In some cases directors from all municipalities and electoral areas of the RDOS are involved; in other cases, directors from only a sub-set of jurisdictions are involved. In every case, however, the Area “D” Director shares decision-making authority over local matters with elected officials from other parts of the region.

The provincial government has a direct role in (and ultimate authority over) decision-making for certain local services in all unincorporated areas of British Columbia, including Electoral Area “D.” Roads, policing, and subdivision approval are three key local services for which the province is the principal decision-maker.

How would governance work in a municipality?

If a new Okanagan Falls municipality were created, the RDOS's Board of Directors would be replaced as the local governing body by a Municipal Council for the newly incorporated area.

Council would consist of a mayor and 4 councillors¹, who would be elected to represent the community. Council would be responsible for making all major decisions, including establishing new services and programs, review and approval of major development applications, and the annual financial plan (i.e., budget). Council would determine local road and maintenance standards and other road-related matters (instead of the Province).

A new municipality would become a RDOS member municipality, along with Penticton, Summerland, Oliver, Osoyoos, Keremeos and Princeton. Council would appoint one of its members to the RDOS Board of Directors as a Municipal Director.

The provincial government would have reduced authority over local services in a new municipality and would no longer make decisions related to local roads or subdivision approvals.² The transfer of decision-making authority from the Province to the municipality also includes a transfer in the cost to municipal taxpayers. Local taxpayers would become fully responsible for the cost of maintaining local roads and responding to service levels desired by residents. However, the Province would still make decisions concerning local policing.

¹ Council size would depend in part on population, and be determined during the incorporation process.

² The province would remain in control of Highway 97, which is designated a provincial highway.

Comparison Table: Governance under RDOS Electoral Area “D” and under a New Municipality

	RDOS Electoral Area “D”	New Municipality
Who would be elected?	One (1) Electoral Area “D” Director is elected to represent Okanagan Falls and the rest of Area “D” on the RDOS Board.	A Council would be elected to make decisions for Okanagan Falls, consisting of a mayor and 4 councillors.
Who makes decisions on behalf of Okanagan Falls?	There are 20 Regional Directors on the RDOS Board and the Area “D” Director shares decision-making authority over local matters with elected officials from other parts of the region.	The locally elected Council would be responsible for making decisions over local government services. Some regional and sub-regional services would continue to be provided by the RDOS. One Council member would participate as a Municipal Director on the expanded (21 member) RDOS Board.
What services are provided by the Regional District (RDOS)?	The RDOS is responsible for providing Okanagan Falls and all of Area “D” with local government services (aside from those provided by the Province). Local services are generally established by bylaw, and approved by the participants that receive (and pay for) the service.	The RDOS would no longer provide local services to Okanagan Falls such as sewer, water, planning and building inspection. The RDOS would continue to provide regional services such as mosquito control and 911 call system, as well as sub-regional services such as environmental conservation and Area “D” transit in which the new municipality would remain as a participant, although the municipality would have the authority to withdraw.
How is the Province involved?	The provincial government has authority over decision-making for roads, policing, and subdivision approval in Electoral Area “D.”	The municipality would have authority over (and ownership of) roads, as well as the responsibility for subdivision approval. The Province would still make decisions concerning local policing.
How are budgets set and managed?	Budgets are set through the financial plan that covers the entire regional district. Costs are recovered by billing those who benefit from each service. Each service is funded separately — the expense of providing each service must be covered by the revenue generated for that same service. Area “D” residents only pay for the RDOS services they receive.	Budgets are set through the municipality’s financial plan. Municipalities use a single municipal property tax rate to fund a variety of local services. Municipalities can allocate money from their “general revenues” to support different services or initiatives (without having to approve or establish individual service bylaws) and have more flexibility to respond to local priorities.

