



**CCRD Governance & Service Delivery Study
Fact Sheets
September 2016**

REGIONAL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE

➤ What is a regional district?

The Central Coast Regional District (CCRD) is one of 28 regional districts in BC. The boundaries of regional districts are vast – the CCRD spans 24,560 km² along the coast of BC, north of Mount Waddington and Vancouver Island, and inland east to the Cariboo Region, encompassing communities of Ocean Falls, Denny Island, Bella Bella and Bella Coola, as well as the Nuxalk, Heiltsuk and Wuikinuxv First Nations. Most regional district boundaries encompass municipalities as well as unincorporated lands, which are divided into smaller areas called electoral areas. Regional districts were modeled as a federation of municipalities and electoral areas, each of which has representation on the regional board. However, the CCRD is the only regional district in the province that has no municipalities within its boundaries. The CCRD encompasses 5 electoral areas.

Regional districts:

- Are the local government for rural (electoral) areas, providing them with basic local services such as community planning, but also providing area specific services such as water, solid waste, or recreation services.
- Provide region-wide services to all electoral areas within a region, such as emergency management.
- Provide a framework for sub-regional services, either to multiple electoral areas (such as solid waste to Areas C, D and E), or partnering with other forms of government, such as First Nations or Improvement Districts to provide services.

➤ Who makes decisions?

While most regional districts share a combination of municipal directors and electoral area directors, the CCRD is governed by a board consisting only of electoral area directors. The CCRD's 5 directors (one from each of the 5 electoral areas) are elected directly by voters, and serve 4-year terms. Where there are no candidates within an electoral area, the local government must appoint a person to the vacant position.

The Board selects its own chairperson, who has the authority to create committees to deal with issues such as planning, environmental management, and regional growth. Given the small size of the CCRD Board, there are no committees, and the entire Board deals with all topics and issues.

Each electoral area in a regional district has a voting strength on the board based on population. The voting strength is intended to address differences between electoral areas with respect to population. In the CCRD, each jurisdiction has one vote for every 1,500 residents. In the CCRD the voting unit of 1,500 persons means that each director has one vote, and therefore there are no "weighted votes." However, if the population of any one electoral area (which includes populations of people living on any First Nations reserve lands) exceeds 1,500, then they will receive a weighted vote of 2. The populations will be updated subsequent to the 2016 Census.

Some decisions are made by the entire Board of Directors, and others are made only by the directors from the areas participating in the service. There are two types of votes at the board:

- **Corporate votes**, in which all directors vote.
- **Stakeholder votes**, in which only those directors participating in a service are entitled to vote. These votes are for the operations of existing

services. If there is only one participating area, the entire board will vote on the service.

➤ **What services does a regional district provide?**

Regional districts can provide a broad range of services. With the exception of a few provincially mandated services, the services are determined by the regional board, with the support of residents. Because the board only provides services that their members, or residents, agree the regional district should provide, 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, or to a combination of electoral areas (such as the operation of the Thorsen Creek Waste and Recycling Centre). Regional services are those that are provided to all electoral areas, such as emergency management.

Services are established to respond to needs identified by the board, electoral area directors, staff or residents. A proposed service must go through a process to determine its feasibility, including scope, cost, and delivery options. If deemed feasible, a service establishing bylaw must receive support from the regional board. The bylaw must also be approved by the province's Inspector of Municipalities, and supported by the residents that will participate in and pay for the service. Support can be demonstrated through a petition, alternative-approval process, referendum, or approval by an electoral area director on behalf of residents of that jurisdiction.

➤ **What services does a regional district NOT provide?**

The provincial government provides some services to rural areas, including roads and policing. These services are not the responsibility of the regional district and regional districts do not have control over how these services are provided.

Just because a regional district *can* provide a service, does not mean that it *does*. There are many organizations that provide services. Some services are provided by Improvement Districts, which are another form of government, designed to provide specific services such as water and fire protection, and often act as a service provider in remote communities. In the CCRD there are 3 improvement districts providing water and fire protection service,

including Hagensborg Waterworks District, Noosatsum Waterworks, and Ocean Falls Improvement District. The Ocean Falls Improvement District also provides sewer, storm sewer, recreation, street lighting, garbage collection and disposal, and cemetery services. The area's First Nations communities also provide services to their members, and in some cases also service non-native residents.

➤ **How do regional districts pay for services?**

Unlike a municipality, which has the flexibility to allocate "general revenues" to its services, each service provided by the regional district is budgeted for separately. Costs are recovered by billing those who benefit from the service. The expense of providing a service must be covered by revenue generated for that same service; one service cannot subsidize another. For instance taxes raised for a recreation service must fund the recreation facility and operations, and no unrelated activity.

Regional districts raise funds primarily through property taxation – parcel taxes (a set amount per parcel, land area, or metre of frontage), or property taxes that are based on the assessed value of the property (land, improvements, or land and improvements combined). Regional districts also generate revenues from user fees and charges, such as garbage tipping fees, recreation user fees, as well as provincial or federal government grants.

In electoral areas, the Province collects property taxes. The Province then transfer funds to the regional districts to cover the cost of the local, sub-regional and regional services that the regional district provides.