

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

# REGIONAL COOPERATION

This *Fact Sheet* gives an overview of the number of different governments involved in local service provision on the Central Coast, what services they provide and how they partner and cooperate on service delivery. Although the federal and provincial government deliver several services to Central Coast residents, and cooperate in others, the focus of this study is on local governments, and local government services.

► **What governments deliver services on the Central Coast?**

The Central Coast Region is home to a variety of governments, authorities and agencies that look after services for the region’s residents. Some governments look after multiple services in a specific area or community, while others are responsible for providing one or two services. Some provide different services to the same community. However, many provide the same services as other governments, but to different communities or residents. For instance, the CCRD, three improvement districts, and three first nations and several private water companies all provide water services to different residents or communities. Due to the number of different service providers, there are many opportunities to cooperate on service provision.

Each of these governments, agencies and service providers plays a role in providing services to

residents of the Central Coast. This *Fact Sheet* is intended to provide an overview of how the different agencies and governing bodies involved in service delivery on the Central Coast cooperate in service delivery.

► **Who does what?**

Figure 1 below provides an overview of which local government authorities look after which local government services. The list references many of the services that are commonly provided by local governments, but is not exhaustive. The table illustrates the fact that many of the local governments provide the same services, albeit in different parts of the region, creating a foundation and opportunity for cooperation. Highlights of the services provided by the primary local governments on the Central Coast are reiterated below.

***First Nations Governments***

The three First Nations within the region – Nuxalk, Wuikinuxv and Heiltsuk – each deliver a range of services to their communities, located primarily on reserve lands. Services are governed by Band Councils elected by each Band membership. The Council is generally responsible for the day to day management of the Band, and administers services funded primarily through the federal government, including public and capital works, housing, health and wellness, social services as well as fisheries, forestry and land and marine use planning. In

**Figure 1: Local Services Provided to Central Coast Residents by Local Governments**

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	WATER	SEWER	AIRPORTS	FIRE PROTECTION	LAND USE PLANNING	SOLID WASTE	ECON. D'VLPMT	PARKS & REC.
Central Coast Regional District	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nuxalk First Nation	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heiltsuk First Nation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wuikinuxv First Nation	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ocean Falls Improvement District	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓
Hagensborg Waterworks District	✓			✓				
Noosatsum Waterworks District	✓			✓				

addition to the elected Band Councils, the Bands also have a traditional government of hereditary chiefs that is relied upon for guidance and leadership.

The Heiltsuk Tribal Council has 1 Chief and 11 Councillors, the Nuxalk Nation Band has 1 Chief and 12 Councillors, and the Wuikinuxv Nation Council has a Chief and 2 Councillors.

### ***Central Coast Regional District***

The CCRD provides a variety of services throughout the region, including land use planning, library and emergency services, then provides others such as recreation, water, solid waste, and fire protection to specific areas in the region. The Regional District is governed by a Board of Directors, which includes one director elected from each of the 5 electoral areas.

### ***Improvement Districts***

There are 3 improvement districts on the Central Coast. The Hagensborg Waterworks and Noosatsum Waterworks districts both provide water and fire protection to specific areas in the Bella Coola Valley. The Ocean Falls Improvement District (OFID) is unique in that it has been delegated authority for a wide variety of services, due in part to the remote location of the community, and amount of infrastructure. The OFID provides a range of services, including water, sewer, storm sewer, recreation, street lighting, fire protection, garbage collection and disposal, and building maintenance services within the Ocean Falls community. Each improvement district has a board of trustees that is elected by those who own property within the boundaries of the improvement district.

### **➤ What service cooperation exists?**

Although each jurisdiction has its own niche and services that it is responsible for, given that several jurisdictions are responsible for the same service (but in different communities or areas) there are some areas where service providers cooperate in order to share resources, improve efficiency, or achieve economies of scale.

The Bella Coola Valley is an area where cooperation is most prevalent, because there are multiple communities and jurisdictions clustered within the same geographic area.

### **Fire Services**

There are four fire departments within the Valley – the Bella Coola Fire Department (CCRD), the Nuxalk First Nation Fire Department (Nuxalk), as well as the Noosatsum and Hagensborg fire departments, which are delivered by the improvement districts. Each of these four fire departments has signed a mutual aid agreement that ensures that when there is a fire that exceeds the resources from any one department, the others will assist. The agreement allows them to share not only manpower, but also the equipment. Fire equipment is often expensive and it can be difficult for any one department to afford. Sharing of some major equipment is one aspect of mutual aid. For instance the Nuxalk First Nation fire department has the Valley’s snuffer truck with the jaws of life. While it is used wherever and whenever needed, it was funded through, and remains on the Nuxalk reserve lands. There have also been informal initiatives to coordinate training for volunteer firefighters, but no formal agreements.

### **Water Service**

The CCRD and Nuxalk have an agreement to share water. The Nuxalk had established wells and a water system to service its community and reserve lands, including the Bella Coola village and the Four Mile Village. When the Bella Coola Waterworks system, which the CCRD inherited in 1992, was in need of a new water source to address water quality issues, the Nuxalk agreed to supply the Bella Coola Waterworks system, and the CCRD and Nuxalk have an agreement regarding the water supply.

The water authorities also share maintenance resources. Both the Nuxalk and the CCRD use the same maintenance contractor, and the Noosatsum and Hagensborg Waterworks at times use the same maintenance contractor.

### **Solid Waste**

The Nuxalk and CCRD also cooperate on solid waste services, through an agreement signed in 2014. The contribution is approximately \$1,000 per residential unit, and equates to a similar contribution as that provided by the local residents who live in the Bella Coola Valley that are not on reserve lands. Like with the water agreement, the solid waste agreement recognizes that there is no need for two different jurisdictions to duplicate services (i.e. two landfills or recycling centres), and that for some services it is more efficient to cooperate to avoid unnecessary costs or duplication.

The Heiltsuk community in Bella Bella signed an agreement in 2015 with the Mount Waddington Regional District regarding the use of the 7 Mile Landfill and Recycling Centre located between Port McNeill and Port Hardy on Vancouver Island.

**Recreation**

The CCRD has a joint use agreement with the School District 49 to share facilities. In particular, Sir Alexander MacKenzie Secondary School (SAMSS) is used for a variety of recreation programs and activities for the community. CCRD Centennial Pool also has programming specifically for local school groups.

**Economic Development**

There are several different agencies involved in economic development in the region, including the CCRD, as well as economic development corporations for the Nuxalk, Heiltsuk and Wuikinuxv First Nations, in addition to local organizations that are focussed on specific sectors such as forestry, fisheries, agriculture or tourism. While there are no formal agreements, there is some cooperation on initiatives, sharing of ideas and communication between the various parties, including participation in an Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) that provides recommendations and advice to the CCRD Board regarding economic development matters. That committee has a voting membership of 10 people, including 1 CCRD Board director, 1 representative from each of the Heiltsuk and Nuxalk First Nations, 1 representative from each community of Ocean Falls and Denny Island, a member of the Bella Coola Harbour Authority and 4 members at large.

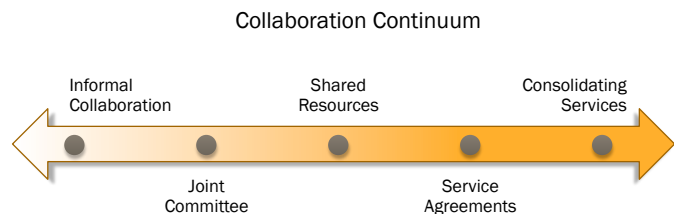
➤ **What are the opportunities to cooperate?**

There are often opportunities to cooperate either when the same service is offered by multiple providers (thereby offering opportunities to share ideas, expertise, equipment, purchasing), or when the same service is required in multiple areas, or when it makes better sense for just one provider to supply multiple communities. For instance, using water systems as an example, even though the systems themselves are separate, there are many common tasks, concerns and objectives, including:

- maintaining records of infrastructure and improvements to assist in assessments and planning;
- reliance upon expertise to assess the system, and recommend upgrades or changes;
- meeting Vancouver Coastal or First Nations Health authority water quality objectives;
- water sampling and testing;
- preparing an emergency response plan;
- financial planning for capital replacement and major upgrades;
- educating users about water conservation and restrictions, for long term water management;
- training of water operators; and,
- accessing funding or grants.

Given the similar concerns and tasks, and shared responsibilities for delivery of the same services, it may be possible for some to seek partnerships and take advantage of economies of scale, not only in the example of water systems, but for a variety of tasks.

Collaboration between independent authorities can and currently does consist of everything from informal meetings to discuss topics of shared interest, to consolidation of services under one local government authority. The level of collaboration can be viewed as a continuum or spectrum, including some of the options detailed below.



**Informal Collaboration**

Informal collaboration happens between many agencies, and in particular between agencies that deliver the same or complementary services. For instance, one fire department may consult with another to see how they are addressing new training requirements, or recruitment strategies, or water purveyors may seek advice on where to order different supplies or hire expertise. Contact is often initiated by, and between staff. These types of relationships are particularly useful for service providers located in remote locations that have minimal opportunities to participate on joint committees or undertake service agreements or shared servicing options.

### ***Joint Committee***

A committee can be a more formalized way of achieving collaboration between multiple authorities with similar issues. For instance, a committee could be created with representatives from each water system to discuss topics of mutual interest, undertake joint public information campaigns (water conservation) or enable operators to understand the issues, common concerns, and identify opportunities for shared resources. An example of a committee formed to increase collaboration on a single service is the CCRD initiated Economic Development Advisory Committee. That committee has united various organizations including First Nations, the non-profit Harbour Authority, the CCRD, as well as others to share information and build partnerships to advance economic development in the region.

### ***Shared Resources***

Where more than one organization delivers the same service, there is the potential to share resources, particularly for aspects of the service that all operators must undertake, such as billings, record keeping, maintenance or sharing administrators or certified operators. As an example, the Nuxalk and CCRD both use the same person to maintain their water system. Likewise, the Noosatsum and Hagensborg Waterworks use the same maintenance contractor for their two systems. Another local example is the use of the snuffer truck and jaws of life rescue equipment, which is owned by the Nuxalk First Nation, but has been made available by the Nuxalk when needed. Sharing resources helps to build relationships and can create cost efficiencies.

### ***Service Agreements***

Service agreements are a way of formalizing a sharing arrangement. For instance, the Nuxalk First Nation has agreements with the CCRD for the provision of water to the Bella Coola town site water system, as well as an agreement regarding the shared cost of the solid waste landfill and recycling centre.

While agreements are not always necessary, they are helpful in acknowledging the terms of a deal, particularly where costs are apportioned between two or more parties. The agreement can spell out the understanding between the parties, and set out terms for renewing as well as terminating, allowing both organizations to plan ahead.

### ***Consolidating Services***

Consolidating a service under one authority is one way of collaborating on service delivery. For

instance, even though they currently serve different areas, the four fire departments in the Bella Coola Valley could be consolidated, leaving one fire department to provide services to the Valley. The Nuxalk First Nation fire department, for example, could be contracted to provide fire services to the CCRD and improvement districts (or alternately, another fire department could be contracted by the Nuxalk and improvement districts) to provide fire service. The consolidation of the departments does not necessarily mean the governing authority would not remain; rather the service would be provided by one, rather than four different departments, through a contract. Another option is to have only one authority responsible for providing the service to multiple communities.

The approach of having one service provider deliver services on contract to other jurisdictions is used in several other regions and communities. One example is the City of Penticton fire department provides fire services to the City, the neighbouring Penticton Indian Band, as well as to unincorporated areas through a contract and service agreement with the regional district.

### **► What are the benefits of cooperation?**

Collaboration and cooperation can provide a variety of benefits, including everything from sharing solutions and best practices, to achieving operational efficiencies, and saving money. Each local government or jurisdiction has different borrowing authority and access to grant opportunities. Strategic investments in infrastructure or equipment may therefore be best explored through collaboration, to take advantage of the available funding opportunities.