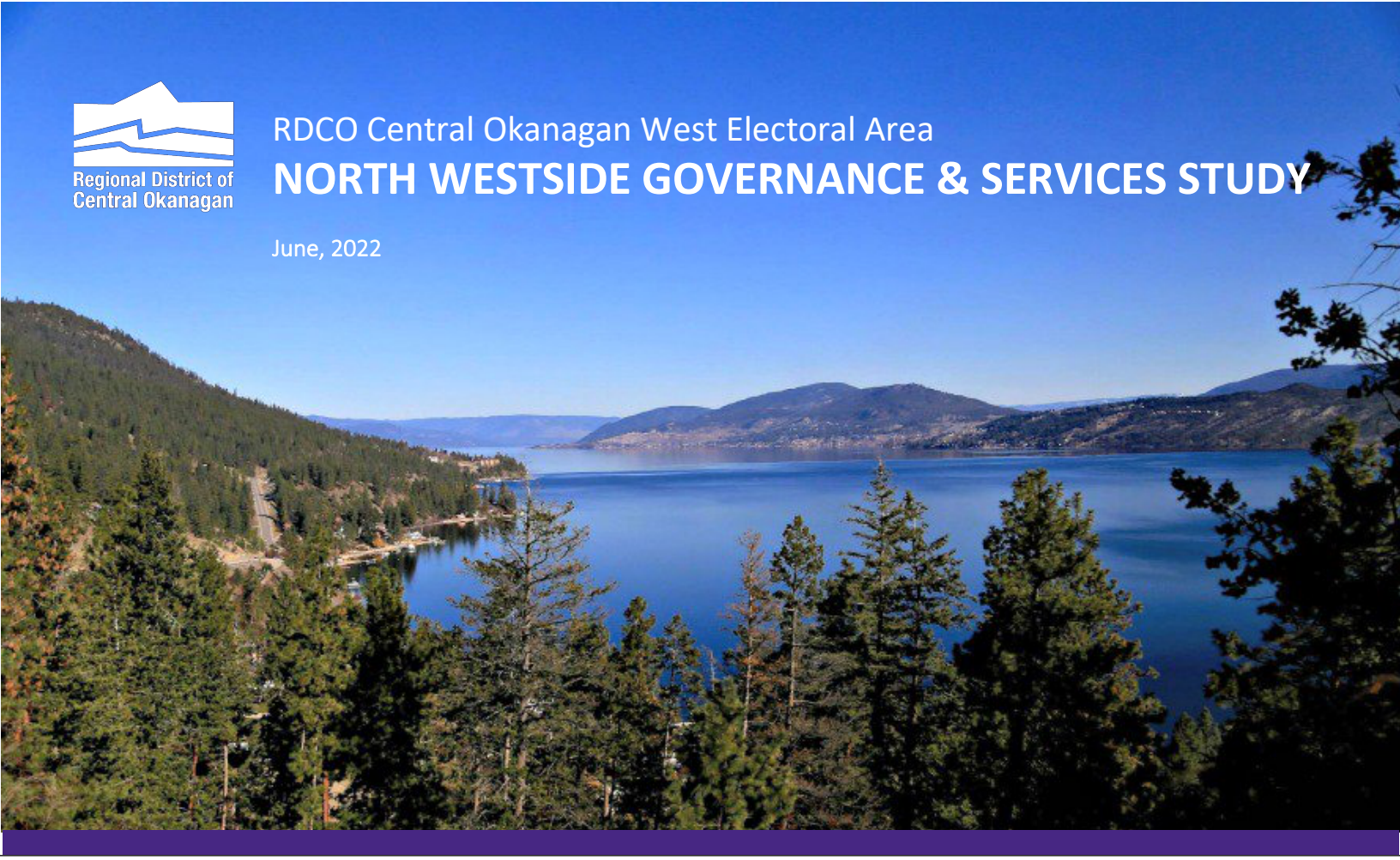
Regional District of Central Okanagan

RDCO Central Okanagan West Electoral Area

NORTH WESTSIDE GOVERNANCE & SERVICES STUDY

June, 2022



INTRODUCTION

The North Westside Governance & Services Study is underway in the Central Okanagan West Electoral Area of the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO). The purpose of the study is threefold:

- to document the local governance and service provision in place today in the North Westside
- to understand the interests and concerns of residents related to governance and services
- to identify governance and service provision options to address the most pressing concerns brought forward

The study is guided by the RDCO's North Westside Governance & Services Study Committee. The Committee is made up of 12 residents who, taken together, represent the diversity of the communities in the North Westside. Central Okanagan West Electoral Area Director, Wayne Carson, sits on the Committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity. A team of local government consultants supports the Committee in its work.

The Committee's inaugural meeting was on March 17, 2022, at the Killiney Beach Community Hall. On May 19, 2022, the Committee met again to review the consultants' *DRAFT Interim Report*. The report outlines in detail the current state of governance and services in the North Westside, as well as in the broader Central Okanagan Area West Electoral Area. A profile of the North Westside communities is also in the report, as is a sample 2022 property tax notice for a North Westside residence.

With the *Interim Report* in hand, the Committee is ready to kick-off the community engagement phase of the study. Engagement includes:

- three Community Open Houses in June at the Killiney Community Hall
- a survey available in person and online for community feedback
- a study website (yoursay.rdco.com)
- this overview booklet

WHAT'S INSIDE

This overview booklet provides information on the current approaches to governance and local service provision in the North Westside. The booklet covers four themes:

- local government in place today
- local services
- service governance (i.e., decision-making)
- service cost to taxpayers

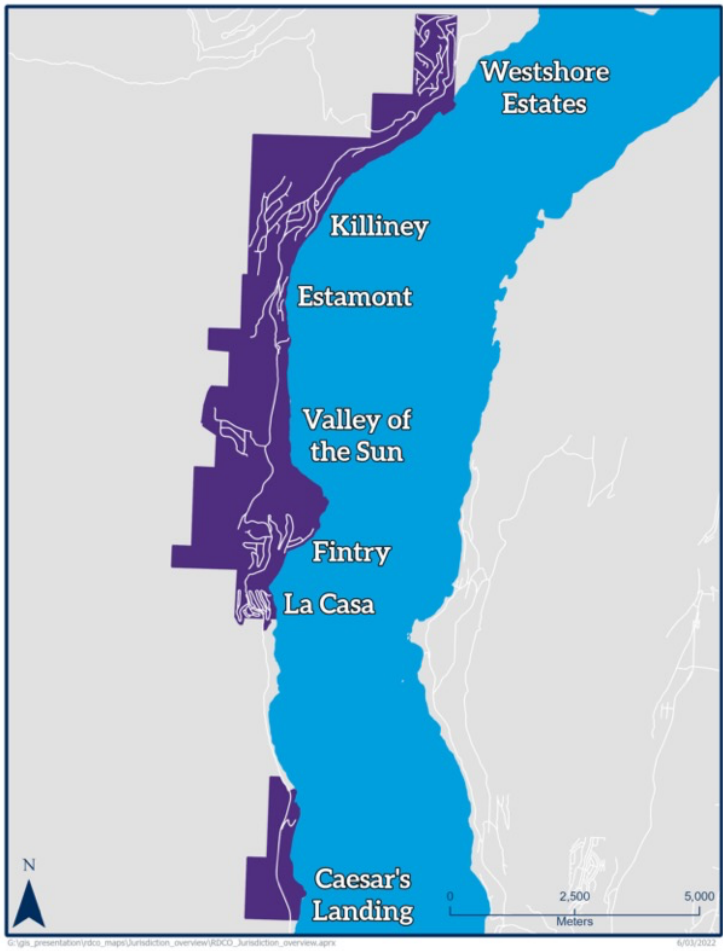
The booklet also provides information on how to get involved, and presents some questions to consider.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT TODAY

The North Westside is a collection of communities along the western shore of Lake Okanagan, stretching from Caesar's Landing north through Nahun, La Casa, Upper Fintry, Fintry Delta, Fintry Park, Valley of the Sun, Fintry North, Muirallen Estates, Ewings Landing, Estamont, Summersands, Aspen Shores, Forest House, Killiney Beach, Marshbank, Wainman Cove, and Evely, as far north as Westshore Estates. The communities are unincorporated, which means that they do not exist as municipalities with their own councils. Instead, the local government for the area is the Regional District, governed by the Board of Directors.

Regional districts are local government federations that include unincorporated electoral areas and incorporated municipalities. In the Central Okanagan there are two electoral areas — Central Okanagan West, which includes the North Westside, and Central Okanagan East. There are also four municipalities: the Cities of Kelowna and West Kelowna, and the Districts of Lake Country and Peachland. The entire Regional District is situated on the unceded traditional territory of the syilx people.

North Westside
RDCO Central Okanagan West Electoral Area



Regional districts exist to provide local government services in response to the needs of their members. Regional districts play three service-related roles:

- they are the local government for electoral areas, responsible for providing basic local services
- they provide region-wide services to all electoral areas and municipalities
- they provide sub-regional services to different combinations of municipalities and electoral areas that wish to receive the services

LOCAL SERVICE PROVISION

The RDCO, as the local government for the North Westside, is the primary local service provider. The Regional District provides 36 services to North Westside residents.

- *Region-wide* — Fifteen services are provided across the entire RDCO to all municipalities and electoral areas, including North Westside in Central Okanagan West. Examples include Regional Parks, Regional Planning, Dog Control, Economic Development and Regional Rescue.

- *Sub-Regional* — Thirteen services are sub-regional in nature, provided to Central Okanagan West and at least one other jurisdiction. Examples of sub-regional services include Building Inspection, Weed Control, Insect Control, Bylaw Enforcement and Air Quality.

- *Local* — Three services — Westside Community Parks, Central Okanagan West Grants in Aid and Central Okanagan West Administration — are provided only to the Central Okanagan West Electoral Area (including North Westside). Five other services are specified-area local services, provided just within the North Westside. These services include North Westside Fire Protection, along with Killiney Community Hall and different Regional District water systems.

The RDCO is the primary local service provider, but not the only provider. In unincorporated areas of British Columbia, local roads and local police are provided by the provincial government, not regional districts. The province also operates Fintry Provincial Park, oversees the Fintry Protected Area, and runs the Evely Recreation Site in North Westside. Finally, the province provides ambulance, education and health care.

A number of private water utilities exist in the North Westside, including La Casa on the Lake, Watson Waterworks and Fintry Utilities Ltd. These systems are provided to neighbourhoods not serviced by RDCO's water systems.

SERVICE GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors

Every regional district is governed by a board of directors with two types of directors:

- electoral area directors, each of whom is elected directly for a four-year term by voters in his or her electoral area
- municipal directors, each of whom is a member of a municipal council, appointed by the council to the regional board on an annual basis

Every municipality and electoral area is assigned a specific voting strength based on its population size and the regional district's voting unit. In the RDCO, the current voting unit is 4,000 people, which means that each jurisdiction receives one vote for every 4,000 residents (or portion thereof), including people who live on Frist Nations Reserves. For municipalities, the resulting voting strength is divided by five to determine the number of directors appointed to the board.

The RDCO Board consists of 13 voting directors, including one from each of Central Okanagan East and Central Okanagan West Electoral Areas, one from the District of Peachland, one from the District of Lake Country, two from the City of West Kelowna, and seven from the City of Kelowna. The Westbank First Nation, which (by choice) is not a member jurisdiction, appoints one non-voting member to the Board, for a total of 14. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the Board today. Figure 2 shows the number of directors and voting strength for each jurisdiction.

At present, the 2016 Census numbers and voting unit of 4,000 are used to allocate decision-making power.

Figure 1
RDCO Board of Directors Today
(voting unit of 4,000)

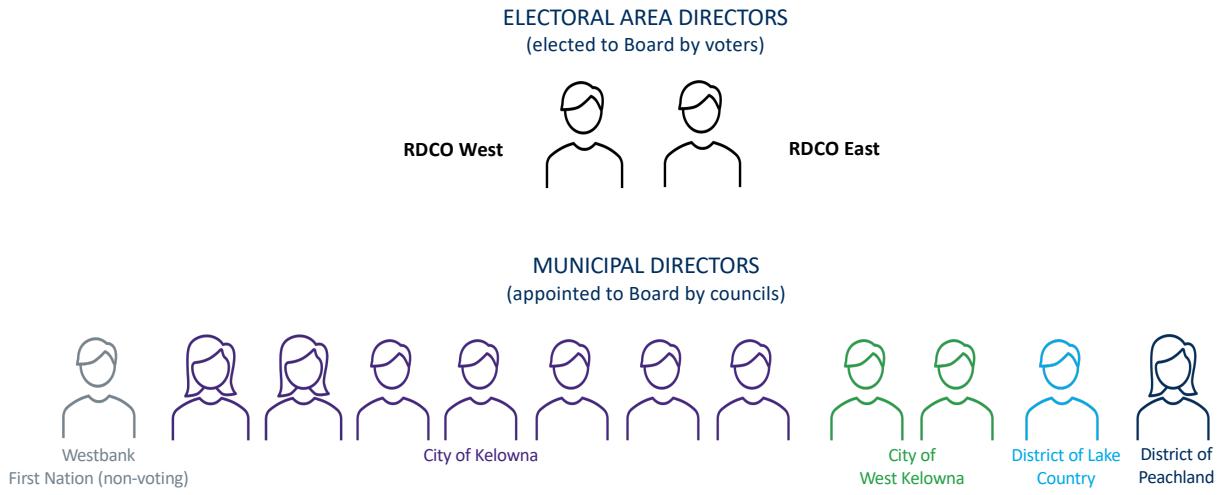


Figure 2
Voting Strength for RDCO Jurisdictions

	Today *2016 Census; Voting Unit 4,000*			Post-2022 Election *2021 Census; Voting Unit 5,500*		
Jurisdiction	Pop	Directors	Strength	Pop	Directors	Strength
Central OK West	11,009	1	3	13,797	1	3
Central OK East	3,824	1	1	4,258	1	1
City of Kelowna	129,044	7	33	144,576	6	27
City of West Kelowna	32,655	2	9	36,078	2	7
District of Lake Country	12,922	1	4	15,817	1	3
District of Peachland	5,428	1	2	5,789	1	2
Total	194,882	13	52	220,315	12	43

After the next local government election in October 2022, the 2021 Census figures will be used along with an adjusted voting unit of 5,500. The adjustment to the voting unit will change the number of directors and voting strength for each jurisdiction. Figure 2 previews the changes to expect.

Voting Rules

In municipalities, voting rules are simple: each member of the municipal council, including the mayor, votes on every question and receives one vote. Voting rules in regional districts are much different. Some decisions are made by the entire board of directors; other decisions are made by only the directors from the jurisdictions that participate in the particular service.

Decisions that involve all directors are made using *corporate votes*, of which there are two types:

- *Corporate Unweighted Votes* — These votes are those in which every director votes, and every director receives one vote. They are used to establish new services, make bylaws to exercise a regulatory authority, set rules to govern the conduct of the board's business, and take certain other actions.

- *Corporate Weighted Votes* — All directors vote on these matters but receive different numbers of votes based on their jurisdictions' voting strength. Corporate weighted votes are used to buy and sell property, pass budgets and approve borrowing.

Decisions on services in which only a portion of the region's jurisdictions participate are made using *stakeholder votes*. These votes are used to make decisions, including bylaws, to guide the administration and operation of a service. Directors from all participating jurisdictions — i.e., stakeholder jurisdictions — are entitled to vote; others are not. All stakeholder votes are weighted, with directors receiving different numbers of votes based on their jurisdictions' voting strength.

When there is only one jurisdiction in a regional district service, decisions are made by the entire board of directors. This rule applies to decisions on services that are provided only to the Central Okanagan West Electoral Area, or only to the North Westside portion of the Electoral Area.

Decisions for North Westside

The communities of North Westside receive 36 different services from the RDCO. As noted earlier, 15 of these services are region-wide, 13 are sub-regional, and eight are local in nature, provided within Central Okanagan West only. The regional district voting rules mean that every decision involving a service in the North Westside involves directors from at least one other jurisdiction. In region-wide services, and on corporate decisions (e.g., budgets, service establishment) that involve the entire board, directors from all jurisdictions have a say.

It is important to emphasize that the voting rules in

place in the RDCO apply to all regional districts in the province. The involvement of directors from other jurisdictions in North Westside service decisions, therefore, would occur even if North Westside belonged to a different regional district. What differs among regional districts, however, is the level of influence that individual jurisdictions, based on their voting strength, have in decision-making.

The RDCO is one of the few regional districts in which voting power is concentrated in the largest jurisdiction. On all matters, at present, the City of Kelowna's directors on the Board are able to determine the vote, provided they vote together. This dynamic applies today both to corporate and stakeholder votes. When the RDCO's voting unit changes after October's election, Kelowna directors (voting together) will continue to be able to determine the outcome of corporate weighted and stakeholder votes. On corporate unweighted votes, Kelowna's directors will be able to block any initiative, but will no longer be able to advance decisions without the support of at least one other director.

Citizen Advisory Bodies

Residents of North Westside are represented at the Board table by the Central Okanagan West Electoral Area Director. Residents also have opportunities for direct involvement in the decision-making process through citizen advisory bodies. Residents of the North Westside can apply to join the Central Okanagan West Advisory Planning Commission, which provides advice to the RDCO on regional and local land use planning matters. Residents can also apply to join the Environmental Advisory Commission, which advises the Board on environmental matters in the two electoral areas. Finally, residents may apply to serve on the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission Advisory Council.

SERVICE COST TO TAXPAYERS

Unlike municipalities, which collect and allocate general revenues to their services, regional districts must account for each individual service separately. The full cost (including a portion of overhead) to provide each service must be shown as a separate item, and must be recovered using revenue generated specifically for that service, and only that service. The full cost of providing fire protection, for example, must be raised through the fire protection service. Revenues raised for fire protection may only be used to fund the delivery of the fire service.

THE STUDY

The North Westside Governance & Services Study seeks to understand the views of residents related to local services and governance in the North Westside communities.

Based on the feedback received, the Study Committee will identify options that may be pursued to address concerns and interests raised. Some options may call for changes that can be undertaken within the existing RDCO service and governance frameworks. Other options may prompt a re-thinking of Regional District boundaries or structure.

Options identified as part of the study will inform any recommendations the Committee chooses to make at the end of the Governance & Services Study. The need for additional work to fully examine the feasibility of possible changes will be determined by the RDCO and Ministry of Municipal Affairs, based on their consideration of recommendations put forward.

Local government services are funded using three main sources of revenue:

- property taxes, including property value taxes (based on property assessments) and property parcel taxes
- user fees, such as utility charges and dog licences
- grants from other orders of government

Property value taxes are the most common revenue source for local services in the RDCO (and all other regional districts).

Figure 3 at the back of the booklet presents the 2022 residential property taxes for the North Westside. The left-hand column under the first subtitle lists all of the Regional District services. Most of the services are provided not only to the North Westside but to other jurisdictions in the region as well. For each service the total property tax revenue collected in the North Westside is listed — $1.68 million in 2022. Also listed

is the tax paid on an average North Westside residence assessed at $635,000.

Six services are identified under the second subtitle (top right column) as Local Area services. These services are provided only to certain communities within the North Westside. Some charge parcel taxes; others collect user fees. The services provided by the provincial government are listed next, followed by services provided by other agencies, including the Central Okanagan Hospital District (an agency that raises tax revenue to help pay for new health care facilities).

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Study Committee is working to ensure that all North Westside residents have the opportunity to learn about local governance and services, to ask questions, and to voice their concerns, issues and/or interests. The Committee is providing several opportunities for residents to get involved.

Open Houses

Three Community Open Houses are scheduled to take place in June, including:

- Wednesday, June 8, 2022
- Monday, June 13, 2022
- Wednesday, June 22, 2022

Doors will open at 6:00 pm for all of the Open Houses. Poster boards and handouts will be available to review from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm; Committee members and the consultants will be on hand to answer questions and participate in discussions. At 7:00 pm, the Committee's consultants will make a presentation followed by a facilitated Q&A session.

The same information will be presented at each of the events. Residents are encouraged to attend the *one* event that best suits their schedules.

Website

Go to yoursay.rdco.com and click on the link to the study under Current Projects. All background information on the study, and all materials produced for the Committee by the consultants is provided on the site. Recordings of the Committee meetings and meeting minutes are also available. Go to the site to register for study updates.

THE COMMITTEE

The North Westside Governance & Services Study Committee is an objective fact-finding body, in place to oversee the work of the consultants at all phases of the study, including the community engagement phase.

The Committee's 12 voting members collectively represent the communities of the North Westside, and include:

- Scott Graham (Chair)
- Josh Galloway (Vice Chair)
- Brian Arquilla
- Kerri Cooke
- Colin Copp
- Eric Dennison
- Donna Green
- Darryl Hordo
- Dwain Johanson
- Tim Jones
- Rick Sanderson
- Callie Simpson

Central Okanagan West Electoral Area Director Wayne Carson serves on the Committee in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity.

Feedback Forms

A feedback form to collect residents' views on governance and services will be available at all of the Open Houses and online at the study website. All feedback provided will be shared with the Committee and will help to inform any recommendations the Committee chooses to make to the RDCO Board.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The overview booklet is intended to foster an understanding of, and encourage reflection on, governance and service provision in the North Westside today. To assist with reflection, consider the following questions:

- Does the North Westside receive all the local services it needs? Are there some that should be added or dropped?

- In general, do you feel that you receive good value for the taxes you pay to receive local services?

- Do you have concerns with any specific services? Which one(s)?

- Do you as a North Westside resident feel a sense of connection to the RDCO and its member jurisdictions?

- Do North Westside residents have sufficient input into, and influence over, decisions on services they receive?

- In all regional districts, decision-making authority is shared (along with service costs) among participating jurisdictions. Given this reality, is the involvement of other RDCO jurisdictions in North Westside service decisions a concern?

- What could the Regional District do to help address service and governance concerns in North Westside?

Figure 3
2022 Property Taxes — North Westside Residence

1. RDCO services for North Westside (2022)

Administration	Property Tax per $635,000 home	Total property tax collected in North Westside
Central Okanagan West Grants in Aid	$0.24	$397
Board	$5.25	$8,658
Electoral Area Administration	$0.47	$778
Central Okanagan West Administration	$9.34	$15,404
Regional Grants in Aid	$0.20	$323
Surveyor of Taxes	$46.38	n/a
Planning & Development		
Electoral Area Planning	$72.93	$120,324
Regional Planning	$4.84	$7,992
Building Inspection	$10.11	$16,681
Transportation Demand Management	$2.57	$4,247
Bylaw Enforcement		
Noise [1]	$1.56	$3,083
Untidy Premises [1]	$2.46	$4,878
Insect Control	$0.22	$367
Weed Control	$0.86	$1,415
Dog Control	$8.02	$13,228
Solid Waste		
Solid Waste Parcel Tax	$43.00	$59,727
Garbage Collection User Fee [2]	$167.06	$232,046
Economic Development		
Economic Development Commission	$9.29	$15,333
Parks & Recreation		
Regional Parks	$67.81	$111,865
Westside Community Parks	$89.74	$148,054
Okanagan Regional Library	$59.14	$97,558
Environmental Services		
Okanagan Basin Water Board	$17.93	$29,587
Air quality	$1.75	$2,893
Sterile Insect Release [3]	$6.94	$9,151
Emergency Services		
Regional Rescue	$21.95	$36,216
Victim Services	$2.73	$4,496
911 Emergency Call	$3.38	$5,580
Crime Stoppers	$2.40	$3,965
Crime Prevention	$3.77	$6,216
Electoral Area Fire	$19.26	$31,782
North Westside Fire Protection	$415.32	$685,176
Subtotal for area-wide taxes	$1,096.92	$1,677,420

2. Local area-specific services (2022)

Killiney Community Hall	$15.62	$25,385
La Casa fire service borrowing parcel tax	$18.84	$9,422
Fintry Water Parcel Tax	$850.72	$227,141
* Fintry Water User Fee [2]	$273.00	n/a
* Killiney Beach Water User Fee [2]	$311.00	n/a
* Westshore Estates Water User Fee [2]	$337.00	n/a
Subtotal for area-specific charges	N/A	

3. Provincial services (2022)

Police Tax	$28.07	$46,303
Rural Tax (roads, subdivision)	$228.60	$377,132
School Tax	$749.55	$1,236,573
Subtotal for provincial services	$1,006.22	$1,660,008

4. Other agencies (2022)

Central Okanagan Hospital District	$132.89	$219,239
Municipal Finance Authority	$0.13	$210
BC Assessment Authority	$22.16	$36,561
Subtotal for agency taxes	$155.18	$256,010

1. Tax rate is applied only to improvements. It is assumed the assessed value of the $635,000 home is split evenly (50/50) between land and improvement value.
2. Garbage collection and water user fees are itemized on utility bills (not on tax notice).
3. Tax rate is applied only to improvements. It is assumed the assessed value of the $635,000 home is split evenly (50/50) between land and improvement value.