



- the online survey (*Appendix IV*), advertised in early January to residents, and made available through the end of February
- the *Area F Issues Identification Website* (csrd.civilspace.io), which remained available throughout the hiatus as a one-stop online shop for residents to find copies of all materials produced for the study

The eight-page *Overview* (*Appendix V*) was distributed by Canada Post to all addresses in Area F in the first half of January, complete with an insert to list the new open house and survey dates.

Further outreach to the Community Champions was not undertaken post-hiatus; nor was further outreach to the Adams Lake Indian Band, Skwłax te Secwepemculecw First Nation, or Neskonlith Indian Band.

Website Resources and Advertising

As noted, the study website served as a one-stop online shop for residents to see updates on the study, learn about community engagement events and download supporting documents. Residents could also register for notifications through the website, and access the online virtual open house and the *Electoral Area F Issues Identification Survey*.

Key supporting documents on the site included:

- the Electoral Area F Information Poster Boards
- the full *Overview – Electoral Area F Issues Identification Study*
- the January 2024, open house presentation

All community engagement events, both pre-hiatus and post-hiatus, were advertised on the website, as well as through CSRD social media channels and in successive editions of the *North Shuswap Kicker*. All events were also listed in the *Overview* booklet which was delivered by Canada Post to each address in Area F.

OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

Each of the two in-person open houses, and the one virtual online open house, was presented as an opportunity for members of the community to ask questions of the consultants. Residents were prompted to engage on governance and service issues by a set of questions posed at the beginning of each presentation, then again at the beginning of the Q&A portion of the open houses. Similar questions were posed at the back of the *Overview*. Included in the questions were the following examples:

- Do you receive all of the local services you need?
- Do you feel that you receive good value for the property taxes you pay?
- Are current service levels appropriate?
- Do you have concerns with any specific service(s)?



- Do you think that North Shuswap residents have enough input into service decisions?
- What could the CSR D do to help address your service and governance concerns?

The questions were posed simply to prompt discussion. They were neither intended nor used to limit the range of topics on which the community could provide input.

Close to 40 residents attended a January 20, 2024, morning open house at the Lakeview Centre in Anglemont; approximately 55 participated in an afternoon workshop on the same day at the North Shuswap Hall in Celista. Residents at both events were interested in the poster boards, engaged in the presentation and thoughtful in their comments. Not surprisingly, comments related to the recent Bush Creek East Wildfire and ongoing recovery efforts were raised by a number of participants. Participants were advised that the CSR D would be undertaking a separate community conversation in March on the Wildfire response.⁸

Other service- and governance-related topics raised by residents at the Anglemont open house included:

- bylaw enforcement — particularly in Anglemont — to support building and zoning bylaws, and to address illegal dumping, the placement of trailers on properties, the presence of unregistered vehicles, onsite sewage concerns, unsightly premises and other matters
- the desire for a new fire hall in Anglemont, along with additional assistance from the CSR D to facilitate response to motor vehicle incidents
- CSR D administration costs, perceived by some to be high
- the management of funds by the CSR D in providing services
- the concern that taxes paid towards services (CSR D and provincial) are not adequately benefitting the area
- concerns about the responsiveness of the CSR D to service and community needs
- concerns over increased water bills, which residents had believed were to be going down
- a desire for greater input into land use and planning decisions
- the use of temporary use permits
- building permits and the time required to obtain them⁹
- a lack of trust in the CSR D as the local government and service provider, and frustration over a perceived lack of respect for the North Shuswap and a lack of accountability

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⁸ The process, referred to as the *Community Conversation – Bush Creek East Wildfire*, included four in-person information sessions and two online events. A *What We Heard* report, produced by Monogram Communications, was released in early April 2024.

⁹ One participant felt that the building permit process was very good and user-friendly, with good turnaround times. A number of others reported a different experience.



- a desire for greater access to CSR D decision-makers (Board and senior management), including through town halls and meetings in the North Shuswap

Residents who attended the Celistra open house provided comments on some of the same topics, but also raised new points. The full scope of comments included:

- a lack of trust in the CSR D
- challenges in receiving building permits
- bylaw enforcement, and the view that bylaws should be enforced proactively and not only in response to complaints
- sewer and water constraints on development
- a perceived inactivity in liquid waste management services
- a desire to have the library rebuilt as quickly as possible
- the alternative approval process mechanism
- a perceived lack of value for funds spent on emergency preparedness
- a lack of affordable housing in the area, and the implications of this lack for businesses that are trying to hire staff
- the view that residents do not receive value for property taxes paid
- concerns over the maintenance of local parks and beaches
- the need for a local advisory committee, or even a local community commission, to give residents a greater voice in local decision-making
- concerns with the level of service received by the North Shuswap through Shuswap Economic Development

A small number of residents provided written input to the consultants following the open houses. One resident raised concerns with the CSR D's bylaw enforcement service, and a lack of response to several complaints submitted through the CSR D's online complaint submission process. The resident stated that bylaw complaints submitted two years ago about an RV Park in Area F went unanswered, as did complaints submitted by neighbours. Another resident raised a series of concerns related to:

- a mistrust of the CSR D
- an inadequate level of influence for individual electoral area directors at the CSR D Board table, particularly on decisions that impact the electoral area
- the perceived need for a local advisory committee to provide input to the Area F Director
- a desire for the CSR D to focus on basic services
- perceived inherent inequities in the local government tax system which equates assessed values with an ability to pay
- the lack of voice in local decision-making for seasonal residents
- reliance on the alternative approval process
- difficulty in navigating the CSR D website, and related concerns about transparency



ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey posed a number of service-related questions to residents, including whether residents receive sufficient services, whether there is a need for different types of services or levels of service, and whether residents feel they receive good value for services. Residents were asked to identify any services they currently do not receive, but would be interested in receiving. Input on residents' satisfaction with individual services, including those provided by the CSRD and those provided by the province, was also sought.

Governance-related questions were included in the survey. Residents were asked, for example, if they felt comfortable with their ability to provide input to decision-making, if they felt well-represented in the current system, and if new opportunities for input should be considered.

In total, 582 respondents partially completed the online survey; 383 respondents completed the survey in full. Most respondents accessed the survey between January 1, 2024, and February 29, 2024; a relatively small number completed the survey in the pre-hiatus period in August 2024. The detailed account and assessment of responses to all questions is presented in *Appendix IV*. Key observations from the responses are summarized in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1
Key Observations from the Online Survey

Observation	Explanation
Respondents	<p>The highest number of survey respondents came from Scotch Creek (24.8%), followed by respondents who selected "other" for their home community (21.7%). Based on comments submitted, it can be assumed that most residents who identified "other" are from Anglemont.</p> <p>The largest demographic group among respondents was the 60-79 age group (56.5%), followed by the 40-59 age demographic (34.3%). Only 6.0% of respondents identified as being younger than 40 years old.</p>
High-Satisfaction Services	<p>With 81.3% in favour, Area F First Responders recorded the highest percentage of "very satisfied" respondents (48.6%) and "satisfied" respondents (32.7%). Community Parks recorded an overall satisfaction rate of 74.0%.</p> <p>Garbage and Recycling also rated highly, with 62.4% expressing some level of satisfaction. This figure, however, has to be balanced against comments later in the survey about a lack of garbage and recycling services.</p>



Observation	Explanation
Low-Satisfaction Services	<p>The highest level of dissatisfaction (62.5%) was assigned to Shuswap Emergency Preparedness by respondents — a grade that almost certainly is related to the response to the Bush Creek East Wildfire.</p> <p>Development Services (Planning) recorded a dissatisfaction of 52.4% — the second least popular service. Administration (48.4%) and Bylaw Enforcement (46.7%) also received significant responses. Importantly, Bylaw Enforcement also received a low satisfaction rating (16.2%) — a lower percentage than that assigned to other less-popular services.</p>
Contact with CSRD	<p>Contact with the CSRD initiated by respondents concerned Development Services (27.0%) followed by Bylaw Enforcement (19.2%). Building Inspection has also been a key target of inquiries (19.0%). Respondents with a location identified as "other" (believed to be Anglemont) were the ones most likely to have contacted the CSRD for these services.</p>
Service Levels	<p>The North Shuswap Health Centre stands out as the service with the highest percentage of respondents (71.4%) seeking increased service levels. Increased service levels for Shuswap Emergency Preparedness and Fire Protection received high support as well — 68.7% and 66.4% respectively.</p> <p>For all services together, respondents were almost evenly split in their preferences among "Higher Service Level" (31.4%), "Maintain Current Service Level" (33.7%), and "No Opinion" (30.6%). Only 4.3% of respondents felt that overall service levels should be reduced.</p>
Perceived Value for Taxes Paid	<p>In all, 67.0% of respondents disagreed with the notion that they receive good value for the taxes paid for CSRD services.</p>
Trade-offs	<p>Respondents were asked for their views on trade-offs between service levels and cost. If faced with trade-offs to make, 40.6% of respondents would choose to maintain current service levels and minimize future tax and/or user fee increases. Approximately 21.2% would prefer to pay reduced taxes, and are comfortable receiving lower levels of service. A total of 27.8% of respondents would favour service level and/or service scope increases, and would be willing to pay higher taxes and/or user fees.</p>
New Services	<p>Respondents identified Crime Prevention (58.8%), Seniors' Housing (39.8%) Community Sewer and Sewage Treatment (38.5%) and Broadband Internet (37.6%) as new desired services.</p>

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Observation	Explanation
Services to Improve	Respondents identified Fire Protection (42.1%), the North Shuswap Health Society (31.5%) and 911 Emergency (28.6%) as the top three services to improve. An usually high concentration from "other" neighbourhoods (believed primarily to be Anglemont) identified Bylaw Enforcement as a service in need to improvement. For respondents as a whole, the need to improve Bylaw Enforcement did not make the top three services, but was identified by a sizable percentage (18.5%).
Provincial Services	The two provincial services that recorded the highest level of dissatisfaction were Healthcare (74.1%) and the Maintenance and Standards of Local Roads (67.6%). Provincial Parks received the highest level of satisfaction (69.3%).
Community Engagement	Several respondents (65.3%) reported that they have participated in a CSR D survey in the past two years. Several others (61.2%) have been on the CSR D website; 57.7% of respondents voted in the 2022 local election.
Representation	A majority of respondents (59.5%) reported being satisfied with having only one representative on the CSR D Board of Directors. Several respondents (52.3%), however, reported that the Area F Director does not have sufficient input into decisions that affect Area F. Several (53.4%) reported disliking the feature of regional districts that involves representatives from other jurisdictions in making decisions that affect Area F. Respondents identified a strong desire (80.1%) for more opportunities to provide advice and recommendations on local services. A total of 83.7% of respondents identified a preference to have decisions on local services to be made by representatives from the local Area F communities.

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A total of 204 respondents provided written input on services and governance in Area F. Input put forward by these respondents can be categorized under the following themes:

- *Enforcement of Bylaws* — Many respondents are concerned that existing bylaws are not being adequately enforced. Concerns related to property uses, business operations, unsightly premises, and onsite storage of trailers and industrial equipment were noted.
- *Infrastructure Maintenance* — There appears to be a strong desire for improved maintenance of roads (a provincial government responsibility),



water, sewer systems and parks. Respondents from Seymour Arm noted a strong need for improved electricity.

- *Building Permit Process* — Respondents desire a streamlined building permit process to facilitate development, and to expedite Wildfire recovery and reconstruction.
- *Community Engagement and Governance* — Respondents desire greater involvement in decision-making processes, including through public meetings.
- *Emergency Services* — Concerns were raised about the adequacy and responsiveness of emergency services such as policing, ambulance and fire rescue, particularly during high-demand periods of the summer season.
- *Tourism and Economic Development* — Some respondents expressed a desire for increased tourism promotion, support for local businesses, and new efforts to attract economic investment to the North Shuswap.
- *Healthcare and Seniors' Services* — Improved access to healthcare services, family doctors, emergency care and support for seniors was noted by some respondents.
- *Environment* — Wildfire preparedness, invasive species control and waste management were raised as areas in need of attention.
- *Representation and Taxation* — Some seasonal residents raised concerns about the inability to vote in local elections, despite paying local property taxes.
- *Communication and Accessibility* — Respondents expressed frustration with existing CSR D communication channels, including the CSR D's website.

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CSR D AREA F REPORT CARD

A report card (*Appendix III*) was produced as a tool to seek written input from residents who attended one of the in-person open houses. In all, 16 cards were completed. Two major takeaways from the input can be highlighted. The first concerns Bylaw Enforcement. This service was graded with an "F" (fail), and was identified as one that in need of improvement, more than any other CSR D service. The second takeaway concerns opportunities for input. Eleven of the 16 cards identified a desire for more opportunities for input from Area F residents in local decision-making.



CHAPTER 6 OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

This chapter introduces potential options to address the issues and concerns that emerged over the course of the study, in particular during the community engagement process. In keeping with the purpose of the study, all options outlined in this chapter speak to changes that may be pursued within the existing regional district system which features Electoral Area F as an electoral area of the CSR D. Options, such as municipal incorporation, that would result in a change to the existing system are not presented for consideration.

CITIZEN ADVISORY BODIES

A desire for greater community input into local decision-making for the North Shuswap emerged during the community engagement process. To meet this need, the CSR D could re-establish the two citizen advisory bodies that were in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic — namely, the Area F Advisory Planning Commission, and the Area F Parks Advisory Committee. The Advisory Planning Commission would be established by the CSR D Board of Directors, by bylaw, under section 461(2) of the *Local Government Act*. The Commission would provide the Board of Director advice on matters of land use, community planning, proposed bylaws and permits. The Parks Advisory Committee would be established by the Board under the *CSR D Community Parks and Recreation Committee Bylaw No. 5706*. The Committee would provide advice to the CSR D Operations Manager on a broad range of parks and recreation policies for Area F.

Alternatively, the CSR D Board could establish a broader Electoral Area F Local Advisory Committee to assist the Area F Director in assessing the delivery of existing services, reviewing the need for new services, and advising on local concerns. The Committee would be responsible for bringing forward to the Director issues, concerns, ideas and views raised by Area F residents. The Committee would also be responsible for assisting the Director in assessing the items brought forward. The Committee would be established as a select committee of the CSR D Board of Directors, pursuant to section 218(1) of the *Local Government Act*. The CSR D currently has an Electoral Area A (Rural Golden) Local Advisory Committee in place.

An Electoral Area F Local Advisory Committee would, as its name suggests, provide advice and recommendations only. All decisions would be made by the CSR D Board unless the Board chose to delegate authority for certain types of decisions to the Committee. Delegation would require the Board to pass a special delegation bylaw.

LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION

A local community commission (LCC) is a unique type of citizen body with a degree of delegated decision-making authority over specified local services. LCCs are comprised of either four or six commissioners, directly elected from and by the



community they represent. The local electoral area director is automatically appointed to an LCC.

A North Shuswap LCC could be established by bylaw, pursuant to section 243 of the *Local Government Act*, to oversee and make certain decisions for CSR services delivered to Area F. Local matters assigned to the LCC would receive a level of attention that would be greater than that which is possible in the present situation involving a single electoral area director at the CSR Board. The bylaw to create a North Shuswap LCC would need to be approved by Area F electors through a referendum; the approval of the Inspector of Municipalities would also be required. Authority delegated to the LCC would enable the Commission to determine how the specified CSR services were to be managed, within a policy framework created by the CSR Board. The LCC could also be empowered to make decisions on the spending of funds allocated by the CSR Board. CSR staff would execute the decisions of the Commission (the Commission would not have its own staff).

Only six LCCs exist in the province today; and only four of these bodies remain active. The newest LCC is Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission established by the Capital Regional District (CRD). This LCC has been given administrative authority over parks and recreation, transportation and transit, economic development, liquid waste disposal, street lighting, and approval of grant-in-aid applications. The body also reviews and provides advice to the CRD Board on services that receive CRD funding, including the Arts service, Public Library and Search and Rescue.

Local community commissions are considered feasible in a community that:

- is geographically separated from other communities and relatively easy to define
- receives a range of local regional district services that are separate from other services provided
- demonstrates a high level of interest in the delivery of local services, and would be able to consistently put forward individuals willing to stand for election and serve on the commission
- shares some of the characteristics of a municipality, but is not ready for incorporation
- seeks greater involvement in the governance of local services than is possible through an advisory committee

Some of these conditions exist in the North Shuswap. It is not clear, however, that all of the conditions are in place. An LCC for the North Shuswap, if pursued, would likely focus on and be defined by a specific community or set of contiguous communities in the Electoral Area.

SERVICE REVIEWS

Bylaw Enforcement, Shuswap Emergency Preparedness, Development Services (Planning) and Building Inspection were identified through the community



engagement process as four CSR D services in need of change. To address this need and the community sentiment behind it, the CSR D could initiate one or more service review.

In plain terms, a service review is an exercise through the elements of one or more local, sub-regional or regional services are assessed, concerns and interests are identified, and changes are proposed. All jurisdictions that participate in services take part in service reviews on the services.

There are two types of service reviews:

- *Non-Statutory Reviews* — Non-statutory service reviews are assessments of services that may be undertaken in response to an issue (or issues) that arises, or in accordance with a pre-determined service review schedule. They may examine all service elements, including service definition (i.e., scope of service), service governance, service cost and tax burden, and service delivery. Alternatively, they may focus on a specific concern raised by one or more participant, by local government staff, or by the public that receives the service.

Non-statutory reviews are overseen by the regional district board. They may be conducted by regional district staff or by an outside, independent consultant. Recommendations for changes to the service(s), designed to address issues raised, are provided to the board for consideration.

- *Statutory Reviews* — Statutory reviews, as their name implies, are authorized and guided by statute — specifically, the *Local Government Act*. Pursuant to section 357 of the *Act*, any jurisdiction that participates in a service has the right to initiate a statutory review of the terms of participation in the service (or services), including service definition and scope of activities, cost and cost-sharing method, governance model, service delivery, and other factors. The goal of a statutory review is to resolve inter-jurisdictional concerns and create a new service arrangement that will set the stage for success and cooperation moving forward.

Statutory service reviews involve representatives from all participating jurisdictions, are overseen by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and are typically facilitated by an independent consultant. The reviews can be cumbersome and expensive; however, they can also help to address key inter-jurisdictional concerns related to the exercise of decision-making power, the allocation of costs and the setting of priorities.

Both non-statutory reviews can help to reset and/or reform regional district services. Non-statutory reviews are, in general, less formal, less contentious and less costly exercises than non-statutory reserves. For these reasons, the North Shuswap and the CSR D Board may wish to consider starting with the non-statutory option to examine



and address the community's concerns related to Bylaw Enforcement, Shuswap Emergency Preparedness, Development Services (Planning) and Building Inspection.

OTHER OPTIONS

There are other changes that Electoral Area F and the CSR D could consider making, within the existing CSR D framework, in an effort to address the key issues that emerged over the course of the study. A list of other possible changes includes as follows:

- *Communication and Advocacy* — This option would involve the CSR D engaging other local service providers in new ways, and perhaps on a more frequent basis, to communicate Area F's service needs and concerns, and to advocate for improvements. The two key service providers would be the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure on local road matters, and the RCMP on local policing.

Issues with local roads and policing in Area F were raised during the community engagement process. These issues, however, did not emerge as major concerns for the North Shuswap.

- *Changes to Stakeholder Votes* — Greater local control over Area F service decisions was highlighted as an issue by the community. One change to increase local influence would involve maximizing the opportunity for stakeholder voting.

As explained earlier in the report (and in the various engagement materials), stakeholder votes involve and are determined by directors from participating jurisdictions only. The votes are used for administrative and operational decisions, such as setting fees, contracting services, and creating, changing or repealing bylaws that govern the administration or operation of a service. Some of the CSR D services in which Electoral Area F participates are provided only to Electoral Area F, or to portions of the Electoral Area. In these instances, all directors, including those from the municipalities, are required to vote in stakeholder votes in accordance with the regional district voting rules outlined in the *Local Government Act*.

Efforts could be made to restructure services that are currently provided to (or within) Electoral Area F only to limit the number of outside directors involved in stakeholder votes. Specifically, efforts could be made to combine services such as Area F Parks and the three Area F CSR D water systems with similar services in other electoral areas. This change would not place decision-making solely under the Area F Director — such an outcome would not be possible under the *Local Government Act*. The change could, however, limit the number of directors from other jurisdictions from voting in stakeholder votes on Area F services.



The effort required to restructure services to limit the number of outside directors in stakeholder votes would be considerable, and may not result in much change for Area F. Service restructuring would only affect stakeholder votes on administrative and operational matters. Certain key decisions, including those dealing with money matters, would continue to involve the entire Board. It is also worth noting that other electoral area directors, whose involvement in restructuring would be necessary, may not support the need for such restructuring. Finally, efforts to restructure services could limit the number of outside directors from participating in decisions for Area F, but could not exclude all outside directors. The involvement of others in all votes, including stakeholder votes, is a feature of regional district governance for electoral areas.

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CHAPTER 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Electoral Area F Issues Identification Study* was undertaken to:

- document and explain the local governance system and local services in place in Electoral Area F of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSR D)
- engage residents throughout Area F to understand their concerns with local governance or services, as well as their service and governance needs
- identify, assess and recommend changes the CSR D could make to address the issues and needs brought forward

Several issues emerged over the course of the study — in particular through the community engagement opportunities, including the online survey. Two issues that emerged most strongly were the desire among residents for greater community input into decisions that affect Electoral Area F, and concerns with key CSR D services provided to the North Shuswap, including Bylaw Enforcement, Development Services (Planning), Building Inspection and Shuswap Emergency Preparedness. Changes for the Board to consider making within the existing Regional District system to address these issues were outlined.

The following recommendations are offered by the consultants for the Board's consideration:

- THAT the CSR D Board of Directors consider establishing an Electoral Area F Local Advisory Committee, comprised of North Shuswap residents, as a select committee of the Board to assist the Electoral Area F Director in assessing the delivery of existing services, reviewing the need for new services, and advising on local concerns.
- THAT the CSR D Board of Directors consider initiating a non-statutory service review of Bylaw Enforcement, Development Services (Planning) and Building Inspection services to examine and address the concerns of North Shuswap communities, as well as the concerns of communities in other participating jurisdictions.¹⁰

¹⁰ Shuswap Emergency Preparedness, it is understood, is already being examined by the CSR D to address concerns raised during the recent Wildfire.