



Public information meeting for the residents of Duncan and Electoral Areas D and E

Preliminary results are in

We have received the draft technical findings in our look at expanding the City of Duncan’s boundary to include an area south of the Cowichan River (see map on reverse), and we’d like to share them with you. We’re sending you this newsletter as part of that process, and you’re invited to an informal meeting on September 12, 2006 to discuss the work (see details on next page).

Why do the study?

The City and Areas D and E share a number of services but there is uneven representation on the decision bodies and uneven funding for local services. Extending the City boundary could address these issues. There is no requirement for a change in the City boundary. *This is only a study. If changes are sought, the provincial legislation will direct the process.*

Who is doing this study?

We are the Boundary Restructure Public Steering Committee – a volunteer group of local residents representing various areas (see below). Our technical review has been prepared by Sussex Consultants, an independent firm that specializes in assessing the impacts of boundary extension.

Name ...	Representing ...
• John Campbell (Chair)	• Area E
• Joanne Gardiner (Vice Chair)	• Area D
• Calvin Fee	• Area E
• Sheila Hobbs	• City of Duncan
• Peter Holmes	• Area D
• Tracey King	• City of Duncan
• Rob Laver	• City of Duncan
• Chip Seymour	• Cowichan Tribes
• Mark Turner	• District of N. Cowichan
• Henry Wikkerink	• Area E
• Alternates: Cathy Basskin	• Area D
Renee Leger	• District of N. Cowichan

How is the area governed now?

Most of it is part of Electoral Area E of the regional district (the CVRD); the smaller portion northeast of the highway is part of Area D. Note that Areas D and E cover much larger areas too, but these are not in the study and would remain part of the CVRD system. There are about 1000 residents in the proposed expansion area.

The properties share some services with the City (like water and fire) but do not help fund others (like the pool). Area D and Area E each have one director on the CVRD board. The CVRD is the

main local government body for the expansion area, though the province also provides local services like road maintenance, tax policies and subdivision approval.

The City is a municipality, with its own elected body (City Council). It has a broader array of services and makes its own decisions about service standards, taxes, and community policies.

If the expansion area joins the City

For the expansion area, the roles of the regional district and the province would be lessened, replaced by the City’s role. Residents could see some service improvements (for example, more frequent garbage collection, more road maintenance, para-transit, and potentially sidewalks and street lights). They would not have to pay the proposed pool fee surcharge or the sewer parcel tax. They could have an assured seat on the City Council. City regulations, including business licences, would apply in the expansion area (some, like zoning, noise control, and unsightly premises bylaws already exist under the CVRD).

Expanding the City would increase the City’s costs (more roads, for example), but it would also increase its tax base. After restructure, all properties (City and expansion area) could pay the same basic taxes – but because they *start* from different tax levels, the *change* is not the same for all homes. By 2010, the difference between “current system” taxes and “expanded City” taxes could be as follows *if no corrective steps are taken (and some steps can be taken – see below)*.

	In Duncan	In Area D	In Area E
Taxes on a \$200,000 home	down \$113	up \$17	up \$172
Taxes on a \$200,000 business	down \$438 (7%)	up \$602 (12%)	up \$1,002 (23%)
Taxes on a \$200,000 industry	None (no industry)	up \$72 (1%)	up \$628 (12%)

Tax impacts before any mitigation steps

Note: These tax impacts could change as more information about start-up grants is received from the province. Also, steps can be taken to reduce or eliminate the tax impacts (see over).

With or without expansion, City taxpayers will likely be facing higher taxes soon due to policing costs. For expansion area taxpayers, staying outside the City offers little protection from tax rises, as CVRD taxes have risen faster than inflation; soon, residents there will face higher user fees for the

pool than City residents; and they will soon pay a new policing tax. However, joining the City could mean a larger tax rise *unless steps are taken to reduce the impacts.*

What steps can be taken to reduce taxes?

Expansion area taxes could be phased in over five or even ten years. Keeping the current two-tiered garbage collection schedule could save about \$60. Also, surplus start-up funds could be used to reduce taxes in the expansion area.

What would not change significantly

Eagle Heights could continue to have a separate sewer system and would not have to pay the City parcel tax. The large sewer reserve fund would be protected for Eagle Heights alone. The water system would not be affected (though the user fee could fall). The fire department would not be affected.

What about the rest of Area D and E?

The CVRD would lose tax revenues (though it could also reduce some costs, as there would be fewer people needing CVRD services). *Note:* The

province could require the City to help fund the CVRD to reduce or eliminate these lost revenues.

The boundary

The area south of Glenora Road has farms and ALR land and doesn't receive either water or sewer. The boundary could be limited to the area north of Glenora Road without any meaningful financial impacts for the expanded City.

What happens next?

After hearing your comments and finalizing our work, we will make recommendations to the Elected Officials Committee, to City Council, and to the province about boundary extension. If the issue proceeds further, expansion area residents will have a say in the outcome.

Public meeting

We'll be holding several informal public meetings to explain the findings and hear your questions and comments. The first is on September 12th. *Please plan to attend.*

Come to the public information meeting
7:30 PM September 12, 2006
at the fire hall (468 Duncan St)

Want to learn more?
 You can see the whole technical report and a 7-page summary at:
 ✓Duncan City hall (200 Craig Street)
 ✓The Cowichan Valley Regional District (175 Ingram Street)
 ✓The library (2687 James Street)
 ✓The Cowichan Tribes office (5762 Allenby Road)
 ✓On the web at
www.city.duncan.bc.ca/duncan_city_hall/boundary_restructure.htm

