

A Case for Local Governance: Community Feedback from Electoral Area F

Community Desires for Greater Autonomy and Local Decision-Making in Area F (North Shuswap)

Summary based on the Electoral Area F Issues Identification Study (2024)

Residents of Electoral Area F have clearly expressed a desire for **greater local control over services and decisions** that impact their communities. Engagement through open houses, surveys, and written submissions revealed recurring themes of frustration with the current governance model and a strong call for **more meaningful local input and oversight**.

◆ Key Themes Identified:

- **Lack of Trust in the CSRD:** Many residents conveyed **mistrust in the CSRD's responsiveness and fairness**, citing slow processes, poor communication, and a feeling of neglect. Concerns were raised about perceived inefficiencies, high administrative costs, and inconsistent service delivery.
- **Desire for Local Representation:** There is significant concern over the **limited influence of Area F's single Director** on the CSRD Board. Area F residents want **more say in service decisions**—especially when representatives from outside jurisdictions vote on matters that only affect Area F.
- **Calls for Local Governance Structures:** Many residents strongly support the creation of a **Local Advisory Committee or a Local Community Commission (LCC)** to ensure **decisions about services are made locally** and reflect the unique needs of North Shuswap communities. 83.7% of survey respondents indicated that **local services should be overseen by representatives from within Area F**.
- **Perceived Lack of Value for Taxes Paid:** Over two-thirds of survey respondents (67%) felt they do not receive good value for the taxes they pay to the CSRD. There is a widespread perception that funding does not adequately return in the form of visible or beneficial services.
- **Demand for Improved Engagement:** Residents expressed a desire for **regular town halls, improved transparency, and better access to decision-makers**. The need for proactive communication and genuine consultation was repeatedly emphasized.

◆ Supporting Data:

- 83.7% of residents preferred **local control of service decisions**
- 80.1% wanted **more opportunities for advisory input**
- 52.3% said the **Area F Director has insufficient input** into decisions affecting Area F
- High dissatisfaction levels were recorded for CSRD services like **Bylaw Enforcement, Planning, and Emergency Preparedness**

Local Advisory Council as proposed by CSRD

Document Summary

Board Report: Electoral Area Local Advisory Council (LAC)

Date: May 15, 2025

Prepared by: Crystal Robichaud, Deputy Corporate Officer

Purpose:

- Responds to the Electoral Area F Issues Identification Study recommendation for more local input.
- Proposes creation of an **LAC structure** that can be used in any electoral area, including Area F.
- Suggests replacing the **Area A Local Advisory Committee** with this new standardized model.

Key Points:

- The LAC is meant to **advise and support the EA Director** with input on services and local concerns.
- **No formal decision-making authority** is delegated to the LAC.
- Members are **volunteers**, selected by the **EA Director**.
- There is no requirement for quorum, no formal board appointments, and no formal CSRD staff support at meetings.
- LAC meetings are **at the discretion** of the Director and may occur with any number of available members.

Rationale for the New Model:

- Reduces administrative burden on CSRD staff.
- Increases scheduling flexibility for the EA Director.
- Allows informal consultation without needing board approval or structured meetings.

Terms of Reference (TOR): Local Advisory Council (LAC)

Purpose:

- The LAC exists **only to provide feedback and advice** to the Electoral Area Director.
- Its role is strictly **advisory and consultative**.

Membership & Structure:

- Up to 9 residents selected by the EA Director.
- Volunteer-based with no pay (except a \$25 honorarium for a meeting secretary).
- Members serve 1 to 3 years, at the Director's discretion.

Authority:

- **LAC has no financial, contractual, or policy-making power.**

- It **cannot communicate publicly** on behalf of the Director or the CSRD.
- The official public voice remains solely with the **EA Director**.

Meetings:

- Scheduled at the EA Director's discretion.
 - Informal, with notes provided only if requested.
 - Intended as a platform for discussion and input only.
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Why This Does Not Provide More Control or Decision Authority for Area F

1. **No Legislative or Decision-Making Power:**

The LAC cannot vote on service delivery, budgets, bylaws, or capital projects. It serves solely as an internal advisory group to the Director. This is the **same level of influence** residents have now when they email, call, or attend a town hall.

2. **All Authority Remains with the CSRD Board:**

No powers are delegated to the LAC. All service decisions still go through the CSRD Board, where Area F holds just **1 of 12 votes** — often outweighed by urban jurisdictions.

3. **The EA Director Remains the Sole CSRD Representative:**

While the LAC may offer advice, the Director decides what input to act on. The LAC has **no mechanism to compel action** or elevate community priorities.

4. **Less Formal, Not More Empowered:**

This model is less structured than previous Area Advisory Committees. It prioritizes **administrative flexibility over governance authority**, which may reduce transparency and public accountability.

5. **Not a Pathway to Local Control:**

Unlike a **Local Community Commission (LCC)**, which can receive **legally delegated powers** under the Local Government Act, the LAC is not a governance body. It cannot manage services, set priorities, or direct spending.

Conclusion

The proposed **Local Advisory Council** is a useful tool for the EA Director to gather feedback — but **it does not provide Area F residents with any new governance powers or autonomy**. It does not address the **core concerns identified in the Issues Identification Study**, such as the need for **greater influence, local oversight, and transparency** in CSRD service delivery.

Select Committees under the Local Government Act (LGA)

◆ What Is a Select Committee?

Under **Section 218 of the LGA**, a **Regional District Board** may establish a **Select Committee** to consider or investigate a specific matter and report back to the Board. These are typically temporary or task-specific but can be ongoing.

Key feature: A Select Committee is **appointed** by the Board and usually includes **Board members and/or community representatives**.

Delegation of Authority to Select Committees

◆ Delegation Bylaw — Section 229

To empower a Select Committee beyond its typical advisory role, a Regional District must pass a **delegation bylaw** under **Section 229 of the LGA**, which allows the Board to:

- Delegate its authority over **certain local services** (e.g., parks, fire protection, community halls)
- Empower the Select Committee to make **binding decisions** within the scope defined in the bylaw
- Specify limits or conditions (e.g., budget ceilings, types of decisions, requirement for staff reports)

✓ **Important:** The Board *cannot* delegate the power to adopt bylaws, impose taxes, or borrow money.

✓ When a Select Committee with Delegated Authority Makes Sense

- When a **community wants greater input and limited decision-making**, but not full elections or a permanent structure
 - As a **transitional model** toward an LCC or other governance model
 - For **specialized services** or time-limited initiatives (e.g., a trail system, recovery fund oversight)
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Final Thoughts

While an LCC provides democratic legitimacy and a formal governance structure, a **Select Committee with delegated authority** can be:

- **Faster to implement**
- **More flexible**
- **Easier to dissolve or restructure**

Local Community Commission (LCC) – Overview & Evaluation for Area F

◆ What is a Local Community Commission (LCC)?

A **Local Community Commission (LCC)** is a formal local governance body under **Section 243 of the *Local Government Act (LGA)***. It provides **unincorporated communities** with direct, elected decision-making authority over specific **local services** — while still operating within the umbrella of a regional district.

Unlike informal advisory committees, an LCC is a **legally constituted, democratic body**. It offers **real control** over how certain services are delivered, managed, and funded, without the need for full municipal incorporation.

◆ Examples of Services an LCC Can Manage

An LCC can be delegated control over **any local CSRD service** that is confined to a specific geographic area. In the case of **Area F**, the following are ideal candidates:

- **Tourism promotion**
- **Economic development**
- **Community parks**
- **Community grants (e.g., Chamber, Health Centre, Events)**

The CSRD Board determines what powers are delegated through the LCC bylaw — but once approved, the Commission holds **binding authority** over those areas.

◆ Structure and Operation

- **Composition:**
 - 4 or 6 **elected commissioners** (by eligible voters in the service area)
 - **Electoral Area Director** (serves as Chair)
 - **Authority:**
 - Make **binding decisions** on operations, budgets, and service priorities
 - Communicate directly with residents, staff, and external partners
 - Work with CSRD staff who carry out implementation
 - Can have staff support and public meetings, similar to municipal committees
 - **Accountability:**
 - Elected by the public
 - Meetings open to the community
 - Decisions recorded and reported to the CSRD
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◆ How is an LCC Created?

1. **Initiation** – A proposal is brought to the CSRD Board (e.g., from the Electoral Area Director or community petition)
2. **Bylaw Development** – CSRD drafts a bylaw defining:
 - Commission boundaries
 - Delegated services
 - Structure and powers

3. **Public Approval** – The bylaw must be approved by:
 - **Voters** in the service area (via referendum)
 - The **Inspector of Municipalities**
 4. **Implementation** – Once passed, elections are held and the Commission begins its work
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◆ **Where Have LCCs Been Used in BC?**

There are only a handful of LCCs in the province, making them rare but powerful tools. Examples include:

- **Salt Spring Island LCC (CRD)** – Oversees parks, transit, liquid waste, and economic development
- **Bear Lake LCC (Fraser-Fort George RD)** – Oversees fire protection and recreation facilities.
“I can say from my position that the Bear Lake community commission is very functional and we accomplish a lot. It gives me a great connection with the community.” Jerrilyn Kirk, EA-D RD Fraser-Ft. George and EA representative at UBCM.

These communities use LCCs to gain more **accountability, responsiveness, and community-directed investment**.

◆ **Why It Makes Sense for Area F – Especially for Economic Development & Tourism or Community Parks**

The 2024 *Issues Identification Study* made it clear: residents in the North Shuswap want **real decision-making authority**, not just advisory roles. Economic development and Parks are perfect starting points for an LCC because:

- Area F contributes to region-wide initiatives but often sees **less direct benefit**
 - Residents want greater focus on **local attributes including business support, destination attractions and recreation**
 - There's capacity and public interest in electing community leaders to take this on
 - These are **non-essential services** with flexible delivery options — making them ideal for localized oversight
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✓ **Conclusion: Why an LCC Offers *Real* Governance, Not Just Input**

Unlike the proposed **Local Advisory Council (LAC)** — which is informal, unelected, and purely advisory — an **LCC is a legislated governance tool**. It gives communities the **legal ability to direct services**, manage budgets, and define local priorities. It also enhances democratic engagement by electing community members to oversee these functions.

If the goal is to give the North Shuswap **a stronger voice, clear accountability, and greater control over how tax dollars are used**, the LCC is the only option under current law that actually delivers.

Comparison of LAC, Select Committee and LCC

| Feature | Local Advisory Council (LAC) | Select Committee (with Delegation Bylaw) | Local Community Commission (LCC) |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Legal Authority | None (informal committee) | LGA s.218 + s.229 (delegation) | LGA s.243 |
| Created By | CSRD Board resolution | CSRD Board + delegation bylaw | CSRD Board + voter approval + Inspector approval |
| Membership | Up to 9 local residents + EA Director | Appointed (Board, staff, residents) | 4-6 Elected Commissioners + EA Director |
| Public Representation | Appointed by Electoral Area Director | Appointed (Board and/or EA Director) | Elected by voters in service area |
| Decision-Making Power | Advisory only | Can have delegated authority | Yes - full authority over delegated services |
| Can Approve Budgets/Spending | No | Yes (if delegated) | Yes |
| Can Direct Staff | No | Limited to scope in bylaw | Yes (within service scope) |
| Service Delegation Allowed | No | Yes | Yes |
| Formal Elections | No | No (appointed) | Yes |
| Meetings Required | Optional | If delegated, yes | Yes |
| Formality of Meetings | Informal, at Director's discretion | Structured with quorum, agenda, minutes | Structured with quorum, agenda, minutes |
| Staff Support | Minimal (Secretary only, if any) | Supported by CSRD staff | Supported by CSRD staff |
| Transparency (Public Access) | Moderate | Moderate - High | High |
| Best Use Case | Community feedback or public sounding board | Short-term projects or transition governance | Full-service delivery & public accountability |