

# **WHERE TO FROM HERE:**

**A Discussion Paper on  
Salt Spring Island Governance**

**Prepared by the  
Salt Spring Community Alliance  
Governance Working Group**

**September 2018**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND DISCLAIMER**

This is a report of the Salt Spring Community Alliance Governance Working Group<sup>1</sup>. Written in plain language, we often use the terms ‘we’ and ‘our’ in this document. When we do that, we mean the working group.

We are indebted to the countless individuals and organizations who, over the past decades, worked to improve local government on Salt Spring Island. Their efforts helped us in our attempts to identify and evaluate promising governance options.

We do not intend this discussion paper to be the last word on island governance. We recognize that change will require broad community participation and the commitment of government agencies and non-governmental organizations. There is much to be done to reach a community consensus.

This document is an attempt to restart a discussion on possible improvements to island governance and to encourage others to participate in the process. It is the work of community volunteers who, like so many Salt Springers, love the island and believe in its future.

While neither the participants of the Community Alliance nor the community at large have had an opportunity to review this document prior to its release, we are hoping it will spark many fruitful discussions throughout the Alliance and the community.

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<sup>1</sup> Regular participants in the working group’s discussions included Linda Adams, Gayle Baker, Howard Baker, Ian Clement, John Gauld, Wayne Glover, Peter Grove, Gary Holman, Richard Kerr, Maxine Leichter, Bob MacKie, Darryl Martin, Donald McClennan, Bob Moffatt, Maggie Squires and Brian Webster.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Governance Working Group, one of six working groups of the Salt Spring Community Alliance, includes volunteers who supported both sides in the 2017 incorporation referendum and some who remained neutral. We came together believing there were ways we could enhance how local government works within our current unincorporated system. We believe it is important to enhance democratic participation and decision-making on Salt Spring and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery.

In February 2018, we began researching and analyzing governance options in hopes of spurring an-island-wide discussion of Salt Spring's future. We identified a range of options for improvement and developed criteria to assess them. We discussed each option in depth, first testing it against three "screening criteria" to identify which options were feasible. Options that passed these criteria were scored using 17 evaluation criteria.

The highest-scoring option was a Local Community Commission (LCC), an elected body charged with the responsibility for addressing regional district services. This option scored well partly due to its potential for strengthening local decision-making by adding locally-elected commissioners and providing a structure within which additional local government services could be consolidated in the future.

Members of the Working Groups also recommend the establishment of an Inter-Agency Working Group, comprised of elected officials and decision-making agencies. Regularly-scheduled meetings open to the community would focus on a coordinated approach to solving island-wide issues. While not a decision-making body, this group would provide a forum for enhanced communication and integration among Salt Spring's decision-making agencies.

We also discussed and analyzed a variety of other initiatives that could enhance local governance on Salt Spring. The initiatives that appeared to have the greatest merit are included in our recommendations.

### Recommendations

1. We recommend that Salt Spring Island's locally-elected representatives convene a multi-agency meeting shortly after 2018 local government elections to identify actions that can be taken immediately to enhance local government decision-making and coordination. Such actions might include:
  - Creating an Inter-Agency Working Group
  - Implementing an annual survey of community needs and local government performance
  
2. We recommend that Salt Spring Island's locally-elected representatives seek provincial funding for a community-led action plan for longer-term enhancements to Salt Spring Island governance and service delivery. This work should begin as soon as possible after the 2018 local government elections, have its scope and terms of reference developed in consultation with the community, target completion within 12 months and include the full involvement of the Capital Regional District, the Islands Trust and other relevant agencies. Development of the action plan should determine whether the Province is open to legislative and policy changes in the areas mentioned in this report and should include consideration of:
  - Establishing a Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission
  - Enhancing the role of non-profit agencies in local government service delivery on Salt Spring
  - Strengthening CRD collaboration with and support for existing improvement districts
  
3. We recommend that the Province of British Columbia fund and support a community-led process to develop an action plan for longer-term enhancements to Salt Spring Island governance and service delivery.
  
4. We recommend that Islands Trust Council:
  - Follow through on its proposed review of Trust governance and service delivery, including examination of ways to substantially reduce or eliminate Salt Spring's subsidization of local planning services on other islands
  - Commission an independent evaluation of the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance to determine whether its current tax requisition is delivering value for money
  
5. We recommend that the Capital Regional District and the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director:
  - Facilitate dedicated administrative support for the Salt Spring CRD Director
  - Involve commissioners and community members at an early stage of any consideration of restructuring CRD commissions

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose of this Report**

Governance is about who has a voice in making decisions for our community, how decisions are made and how people making and implementing those decisions are held accountable. Local government includes the structures that are created to formalize governance decisions and carry them out.

The Governance Working Group began meeting in February 2018 and, through the Salt Spring Island Community Alliance, welcomed Salt Spring residents to attend meetings and contribute to the discussions. This report explores governance and local government options for Salt Spring Island in light of the 2017 decision of island residents to not incorporate as a municipality.

We expect that many Salt Spring residents believe our existing local government system meets their needs, while others may feel that significant improvements need to be made to achieve our community's potential. Our purpose in developing, writing and sharing this report is to help the community focus on where to go from here and begin the process of building a consensus on how we should be governed in the future.

### **Why Another Look at Salt Spring Island Governance?**

During the multi-year process that led up to the 2017 incorporation referendum, island residents on both sides of the referendum question said there were ways we could and should enhance how local government works on the island. Even as people differed over the merits of incorporation as a solution, we observed widespread agreement on one key point: Salt Spring Island's current system of local government can be improved.

Numerous studies and reports over the years have discussed these issues in some detail. However, over the last 20 years, little research focused on possible improvements to our island's existing rural, unincorporated governance system. This report sets out to remedy that.

We have identified two broad issues that most members of the working group believe are deficiencies of our current system.

#### **Accessible Democratic Decision-making**

Salt Spring Island has many people involved in decision-making, some elected and some appointed. For many island residents, there are four elected bodies making local government decisions that affect them: Islands Trust, Capital Regional District, Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District and North Salt Spring Waterworks District. Each of these has its own elected board, with elections taking place on three different cycles. Participation of island residents in improvement

district elections is generally very low and these bodies have sometimes had difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates to fill all open positions.

Despite the many decision-makers, most regional district decisions -- which cover a wide range of local government services -- are ultimately made by the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board on the recommendation of a single locally-elected individual, the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director. Many island residents are concerned that this may impose too much responsibility and too heavy a workload on the Director.

The development of CRD initiatives often involves input from commissions, which meet with varying frequency and -- with the exception of the Director, who sits on all of them -- are populated entirely by appointed community members. Commission meetings often take place with very few or no other community members in attendance.

### **Efficient and Effective Service Delivery**

Many people on both sides of the 2017 referendum question believe that local government decision-making and service delivery, with its numerous agencies and decision-makers, can be confusing and inefficient. Consolidation of some of these bodies, and better coordination among all of them, is possible within our unincorporated local governance model.

Local government decisions on Salt Spring Island are sometimes made without consideration of other agencies' directions and plans and often are not reflective of a clear set of overall community priorities. While the 2017 referendum result indicates that many island residents likely support maintaining the island's longstanding separation of land use decision-making from other local government decision-making, we believe it is possible to improve the coordination of decision-making on Salt Spring within our unincorporated local government model.

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**In our opinion, these issues are important and deserve attention. We believe that significant improvements to local government on Salt Spring are possible without revisiting incorporation. And we believe the process of developing and implementing such changes should be community-led. Those improvements are precisely what this discussion paper attempts to identify and explore.**

## **REVIEWING POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR CHANGE**

### **Involvement of the Salt Spring Community Alliance**

The Salt Spring Community Alliance began meeting shortly before the 2017 incorporation referendum. Its purpose is to support a broad and diverse group of islanders to address community concerns by:

- identifying, researching and prioritizing issues
- informing Salt Springers
- initiating conversations on community issues
- identifying strategic solutions

In its early meetings, Alliance participants identified six categories of important local issues and formed working groups to address each of them. One of these categories is governance.

The Alliance has met monthly throughout the year, offering information and regular community conversations. It is also beginning to identify solutions to complex issues. Having recently achieved non-profit status, the Alliance hopes to acquire funding to expand community participation through outreach, a greatly-improved website and an expanded social media presence.

Although still in a formative period, we believe the Community Alliance has the potential to become an organization that plays a significant role gathering community input and seeking solutions to important Salt Spring issues.

### **The Community Alliance Governance Working Group**

The Governance Working Group was formed in early 2018 to gather and present fact-based information to the community on options and possible solutions for improving island governance and service delivery.

Participation in the working group arose from the Community Alliance meetings and through those meetings, we invited Salt Spring residents to take part. It included members who supported both sides in the 2017 incorporation referendum as well as some who remained neutral. The working group welcomed new participants to join at any point in its work. Many brought with them extensive experience in public or private sector governance, including here on Salt Spring.

Between 17 and 20 people attended most of the working group's meetings, which often took place weekly over the seven-month period of research, analysis, discussion and report development.

## IDENTIFYING & ASSESSING GOVERNANCE OPTIONS

### The Process

The working group set out to discuss governance on Salt Spring Island and identify strategies that might address improvements. Through this process, we identified a range of options and developed criteria on which to comparatively assess them.

The group discussed each option in depth, first testing it against three “screening criteria.” We then went through a detailed assessment of each option that met those initial criteria.

In all of our discussions, we sought to achieve consensus. On some points where there were differing views, we did our best to find common ground and - where there were still differences - made a choice through a majority vote.

This report shares the information we gained through our work with the Community Alliance and the community. Our intent is to generate discussion and help work toward a community consensus on options to enhance governance on Salt Spring.

### Identifying Options

The working group set out to define issues that currently exist with Salt Spring’s system of governance and then identify solutions that may be able to address them.

While a comprehensive study of all possible governance options was beyond the scope of our work, we did make efforts to consider as many possibilities as time and information permitted. We cast our net wide, agreeing that it was best to identify all options and then focus on those we believe are feasible by testing them against clear screening criteria.

### Review of Past Proposals

Several members of the working group reviewed past reports and discussions of governance issues on Salt Spring, looking to extract from them past issues and ideas that appear to remain relevant. This review included documents going back to the early 1990s.

### Review of Other Jurisdictions

Working group members also looked at what some other jurisdictions have done to address their own governance issues. For example, we looked at the use of a non-

#### Note

Some members of the working group believe that incorporation is the best option for Salt Spring. The will of the majority was followed by setting aside incorporation and other options that did not meet all three screening criteria. However, some members of the working group believe this report would be stronger if it had fully evaluated options that did not meet those criteria.

profit group to deliver services on Hornby Island and at how the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen has considered using Local Community Commissions.

### **Committee Members' Brainstorming**

In addition to discussing the results of research and analyses, there were also free-wheeling discussions during which all were welcomed to offer options or propose tweaks to options that had already been identified. This brainstorming was highly productive. It helped all members of the working group gain greater understanding of the potential strengths and weaknesses of the various options as well as the concerns and priorities of the other working group members.

### **Outreach to the Community**

As part of the process of developing this report, we reached out to the community, both through meetings with organizations and a presentation at one of the monthly Community Alliance meetings. More information on this part of the process is described in Appendix 1.

## **Assessing Options**

Throughout the process of comparative assessment, we identified a variety of options. Through lengthy discussions of their characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, we sought to identify important elements of any possible changes to the status quo.

This led us to develop two sets of criteria:

- Screening criteria - Three fundamental requirements that an option would need to meet in order to receive further consideration in our development of this report.
- Evaluation criteria - A set of 17 specific points against which to score each option that met all three screening criteria.

### **Screening Criteria**

Our assessment of each option began by testing it against three criteria designed to identify its general feasibility and determine whether it warrants detailed assessment as part of the development of this report.

The three screening criteria are:

#### **1. Can the option be implemented without change to Provincial legislation?**

British Columbia's local government system defines the roles and responsibilities of 27 regional districts, 162 municipalities and numerous other local government bodies, including the Islands Trust. In our view, any option requiring Provincial legislative change -- particularly if it would apply only to Salt Spring Island -- is

less realistic. Therefore, we set aside any option that would require change to Provincial legislation.

**2. Does the option maintain the role of the Islands Trust and separate land use planning from local government service delivery?**

Our assessment of the 2017 incorporation referendum, which resulted in a 61.9 percent 'NO' vote, is that many voters supported land use control by a body separated from decision-making on other local government services. Therefore, we set aside any option that would combine the current role of the Islands Trust with other local government decision-making.

**3. Is it realistic to expect that the option would be acceptable to the Province?**

We believe it is essential for our community to move forward with tangible, positive change to local government on Salt Spring Island. We concluded that options that are contrary to longstanding provincial government policy or otherwise are unlikely to be acceptable to the B.C. government would be set aside. Options that were set aside included several incorporation options, joining a different regional district or creating a new one, a multi-service Improvement District and additional Islands Trust Trustees.

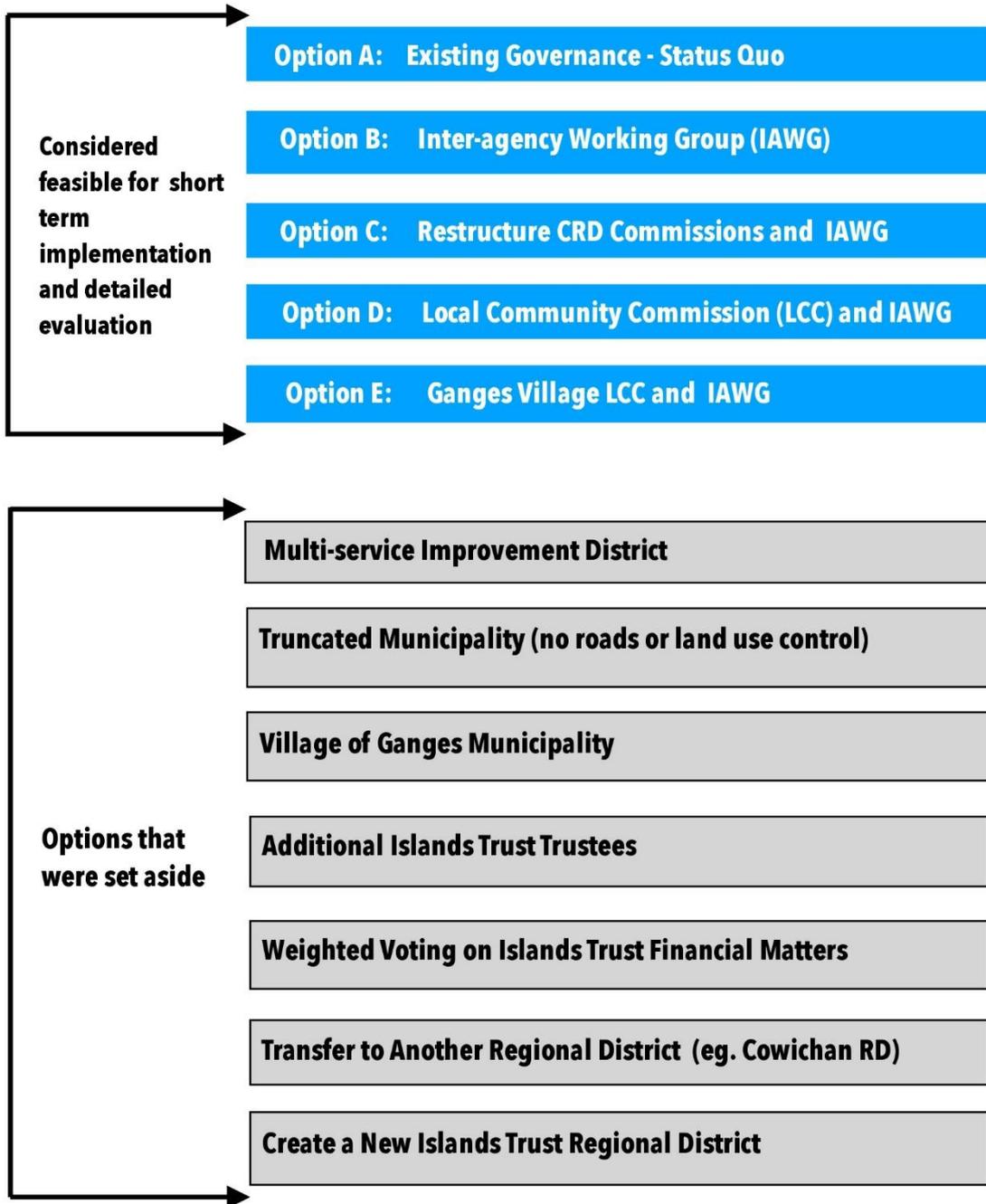
**Evaluation Criteria**

After setting aside options that did not meet the screening criteria, we scored the remaining options on 17 specific evaluation criteria. We organized these criteria under four general categories:

1. Representation/democratic decision-making
2. Accessibility
3. Efficient and effective service delivery
4. Feasibility and sustainability

These evaluation criteria are described in detail in Appendix 2.

### Summary of Identified Options



*Note: The options are listed in no particular order*

## **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

In addition to options set aside because they did not meet the three screening criteria, others were identified as not being full-fledged governance options. These were not subjected to full evaluation, but are described later in this report. That left four options that are described in this section, plus the status quo.

The fully assessed options are:

- Status Quo
- Inter-Agency Working Group
- Restructure Regional District Commissions
- Local Community Commission
- Local Community Commission for Ganges Only

These options differ primarily in how they address CRD services (current and potential), as a wide range of local government services are within the purview of the regional district.

The following pages describe each of these options in turn, concluding with a summary of how the option scored on the evaluation criteria and a graphic representation that looks similar to an organizational chart. Detailed information on the scoring of most of these options can be found in Appendix 3.

## **OPTION A: Status Quo**

### **Key Characteristics of this Option**

- No changes to local government on Salt Spring
- No implementation costs
- No action to address deficiencies of the current system

The working group assessed and scored the status quo in order to provide a baseline against which to compare other governance options and in acknowledgement of the fact that our community has achieved a great deal under our current system of governance. For example, the island's library and indoor swimming pool were developed under our current governance system, along with other initiatives.

Some members of the working group believe that this success has been at least partly due to our unique system of governance, while others believe our successes have largely been in spite of our current governance system.

The status quo involves local government services that are the responsibility of Capital Regional District (CRD), the Islands Trust, the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District, North Salt Spring Waterworks District and others. As an unincorporated area, roads are the responsibility of the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. Policing is funded by the Province and the federal government and delivered by the RCMP. Salt Spring taxpayers contribute toward funding both roads and policing through the Provincial Rural Tax and the Police Tax.

Currently, some local community services on the island are delivered directly by the agencies responsible for them (such as the CRD, Islands Trust, Fire Protection District and North Salt Spring Waterworks District, for example), while others are provided through a variety of volunteer, not-for-profit and other associations.

Non-profit agencies providing services partially paid for by local taxes and other funds channelled through the CRD include, but are not limited to Salt Spring Island Community Services Society (recycling depot), the Salt Spring Island Public Library, Island Arts Centre Society (ArtSpring) and the Salt Spring Island Arts Council. Island Pathways and the Trail and Nature Club have partnered with the CRD and other agencies on pathway construction.

The CRD has a variety of commissions on the island, which are appointed, volunteer groups that also include our CRD Electoral Area Director. They provide advice to the CRD on local government services in several areas, such as parks and recreation, transportation, community economic development and others. Each commission has its own terms of reference, as provided for in a CRD bylaw.

There is one locally-elected person (the Electoral Area Director) responsible for CRD decision-making on the island. This person sits on the 24-member CRD Board. Regional district-related agenda items introduced by the Salt Spring CRD Director are considered by the Electoral Area Services Committee prior to the CRD Board. Voting at the CRD Board on items that pertain to finances and bylaws are decided by weighted voting (by population).

There are two locally-elected Islands Trust representatives, who sit on the Local Trust Committee with one other Trustee from another island. These representatives also sit on the Trust Council, which provides overall guidance for the Trust. Voting at the Island Trust Council is not weighted by population.

The electors for the CRD Director and the Islands Trust Trustees include all qualified island property owners and residents; elections are held every four years coincidental with local government elections throughout B.C.

Each of the two large improvement districts has a governing board. These hold separate elections, with one-third of each board elected annually, to three-year terms. The electors for the Fire Protection District Board include property owners only within the boundaries of the district, which includes the entire island except for offshore islands and the Musgrave area. The electors for the North Salt Spring Waterworks District Board include property owners only within the boundaries of the district, which includes just over 2,000 properties (about 40 per cent of the properties on the island).

#### **Scoring of this Option**

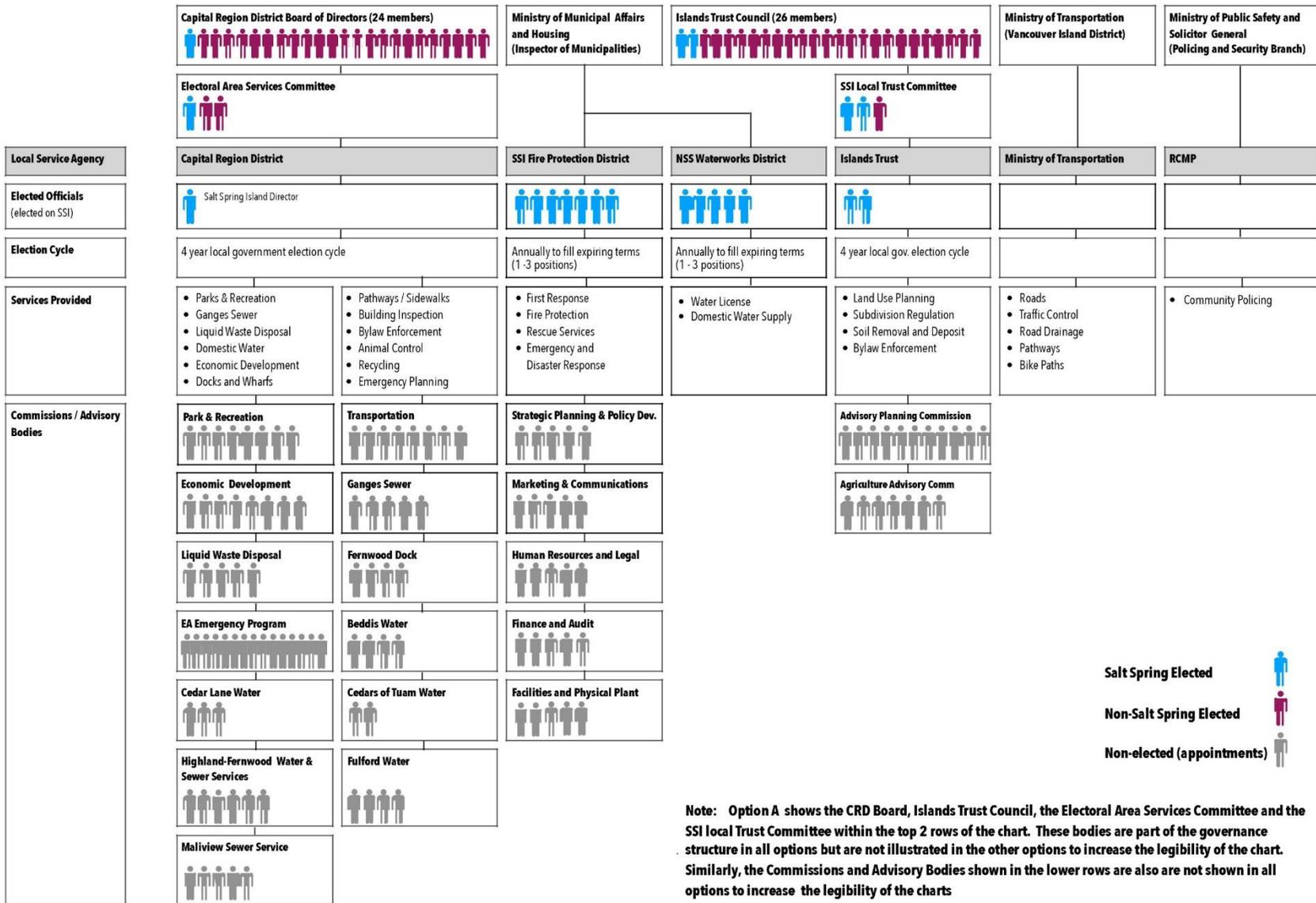
The status quo scored lower than any of the other four options that were scored. It scored particularly poorly in the areas of representation and democratic decision-making.

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## Governance Option A - Status Quo

Prepared by the Governance Working Group of the Salt Spring Island Community Alliance



## **OPTION B: Inter-Agency Working Group**

### **Key Characteristics of this Option**

- Regular public meetings of decision-makers
- Participation of agencies would be voluntary
- Low cost and easy to implement
- Focused on coordination
- Not directly able to make legally-binding decisions

The Inter-Agency Working Group would be a regularly-scheduled meeting of elected officials and others involved with local government service decision-making and delivery to address island-wide issues. Focused on integration and coordination among agencies, this working group would not have decision-making authority, but would provide a forum for inter-agency communication and shared problem-solving.

The Working Group's discussions could lead into agreements to follow through with joint initiatives, such as strategic planning, communications or resource-sharing, although this would need the separate approval of each agency.

The working group's meetings would be open to the public, include a 'town hall' portion and have minutes taken and made publicly available. The Inter-Agency Working Group would involve limited costs for items such as meeting room rental, coordination and record-keeping.

Inter-Agency Working Group meetings would provide an opportunity for community members to be informed by their local service agencies and to directly address their local service representatives in an open public meeting. Items of business raised at the working group would return with agency representatives to their respective decision-making bodies and those bodies' decisions could return to subsequent working group meetings as information items.

Members would include the CRD Director, Islands Trust Trustees, chairs of the Improvement District Boards and representatives of the Ministry of Transportation and the RCMP. The membership of the working group might also include other local agency representatives such as the school board, Island Health, ambulance service and library board. Alternatively, other agencies might be invited to attend as guests when inter-agency coordination would be beneficial. Agency staff would typically attend the meetings to support elected officials.

Establishing an Inter-Agency Working Group requires no legislative or structural changes to existing agencies. The terms of reference and procedures for the working group would be established by consensus of the participating agencies. The agencies may choose to enter into a memorandum of understanding and/or

approve bylaws to establish their commitment to the working group and any financial or human resources they may contribute to the working group. Working group meetings might be held quarterly or bi-monthly.

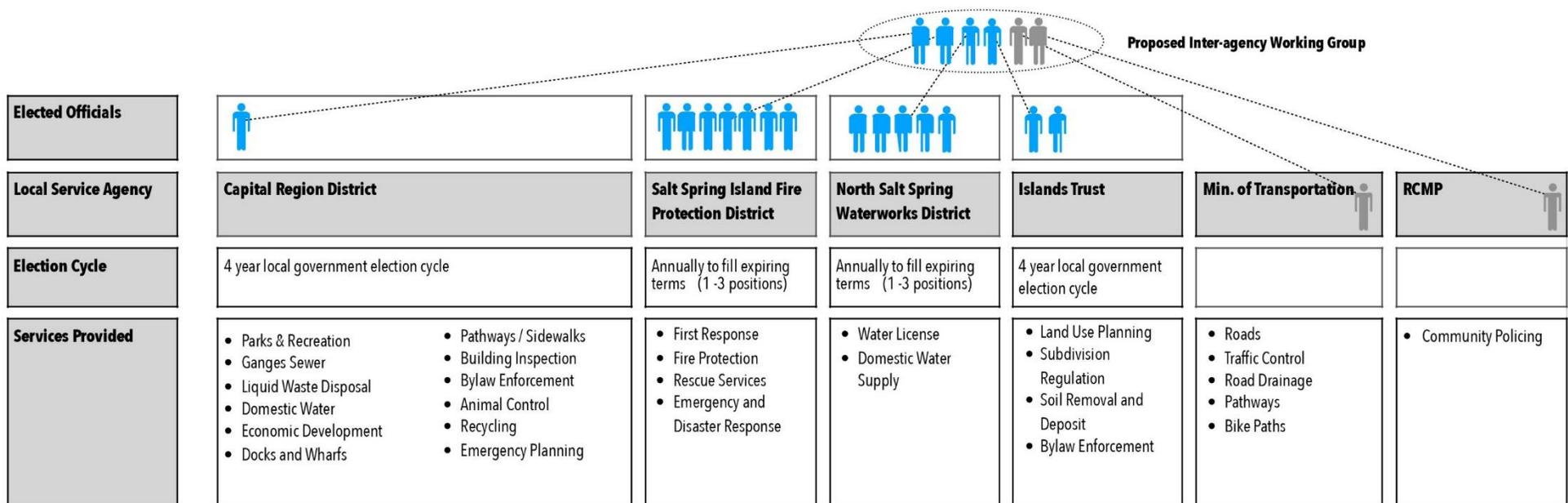
#### **Scoring of this Option**

We assessed the Inter-Agency Working Group option both as a stand-alone option added to the status quo and as a component of the other scored options. We did this because working group members saw merit to this option while recognizing that, in the absence of other changes, it would provide only modest improvements to local government decision-making and service delivery. Therefore, while this option scored only slightly better than the status quo, we believe it deserves consideration for implementation as part of a more comprehensive package of governance improvements.

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## Governance Option B - Inter-agency Working Group

Prepared by the Governance Working Group of the Salt Spring Island Community Alliance



## **OPTION C: Restructuring of Regional District Commissions**

### **Characteristics of this Option**

- Involves reorganizing and amalgamating current regional district commissions
- A CRD local services board could be comprised of the chairs of the restructured commissions to provide a forum for coordination of CRD services and support for the Director
- Would require bylaw changes and potentially one or more referenda, depending on the nature of changes
- Would not otherwise change elected representation or local government services

Commission restructuring would involve changes to the existing Capital Regional District commissions on Salt Spring Island in order to provide for greater coordination of services and decision-making. It would require the CRD Board to approve bylaw amendments to restructure commissions. More research is required to determine if referenda are required to restructure the existing commissions.

In our discussions, we noted that some existing commissions are inactive and some areas of regional district activity on the island are not the responsibility of any commission. We saw potential for restructuring commissions, potentially amalgamating some current commissions and adjusting the responsibilities of others.

Senior CRD staff have said publicly that they have been working on changes to some Salt Spring commissions, but have not indicated whether that process will involve consultation with potentially affected commissions or the larger Salt Spring community. We consider such local involvement to be an important aspect of any restructuring.

While we discussed various specific ideas as to how commissions might be restructured, we recognized that a detailed proposal for such changes would require consultation with existing commission members and regional district staff, which was beyond the scope of this project.

As a result, the option that we assessed is conceptual and did not include specific proposals for the restructuring that could take place. The chart on the following page is intended to be illustrative in nature and does not represent a specific proposal for restructuring.

### **Scoring of this Option**

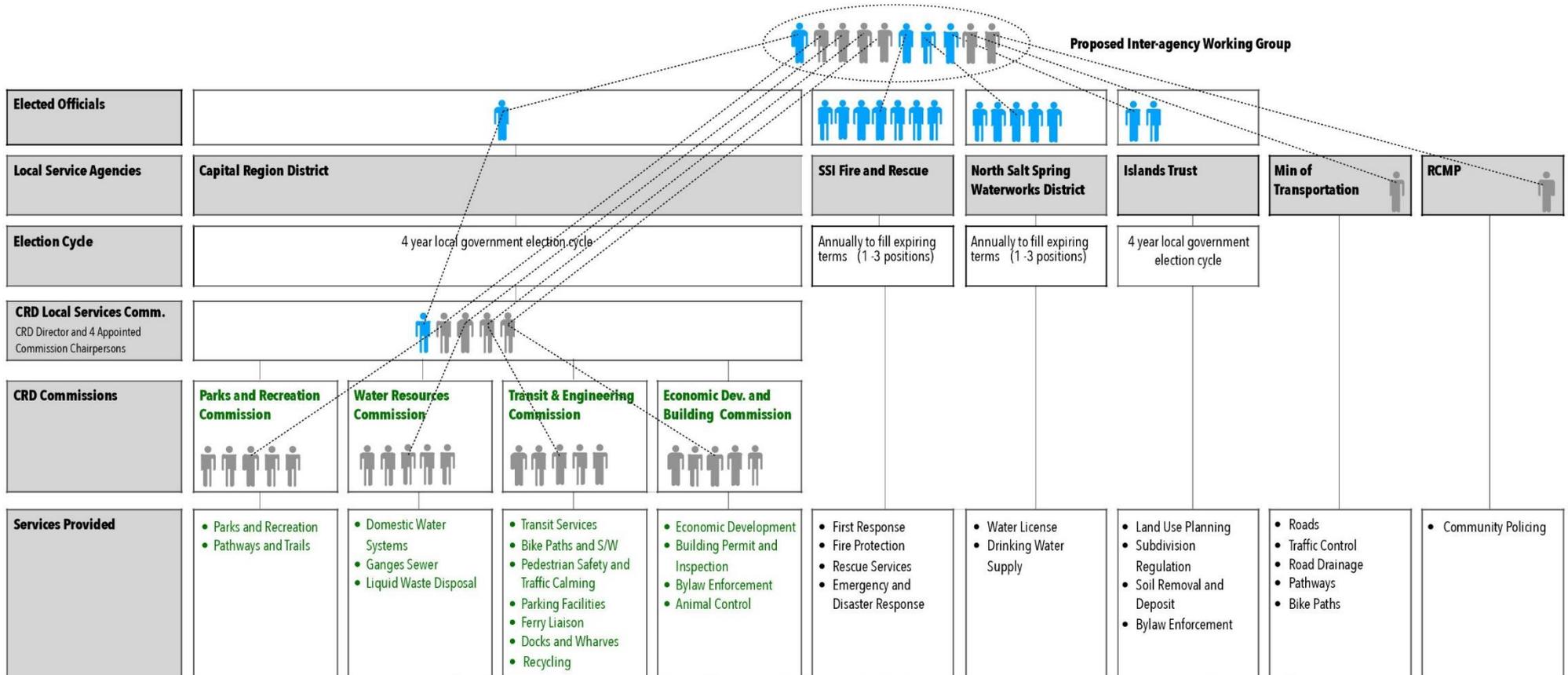
We assessed this option on the assumption that it would be implemented in combination with the Inter-Agency Working Group. While it scored higher than the

status quo and slightly higher than implementing just an Inter-Agency Working Group, its score was significantly lower than the highest-scoring option, in large part because it did not score as well on criteria relating to representation and democratic decision-making.

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## Governance Option C - Restructure CRD Commissions and Inter-agency Working Group

Prepared by the Governance Working Group of the Salt Spring Island Community Alliance



The restructured CRD Commissions and Services Provided as shown here are illustrative only. The restructuring of the existing Commissions would be decided by the CRD Board in consultation with the CRD Director, existing commissions and the community

## **OPTION D: Local Community Commission**

### **Key Characteristics of this Option**

- Four locally-elected commissioners elected every four years
- Would work with our Electoral Area Director on regional-district-related matters
- Implementation would require a referendum and regional district bylaws
- Its authority would be negotiated with the CRD, with a final decision by the regional district board, which may or may not meet community expectations
- The addition of other services is possible, but could be a complex process

A Local Community Commission (LCC) would be an elected body dealing with Salt Spring Island-related matters within the responsibility of our regional district. It would add additional locally-elected voices to decision-making and provide a structure within which additional local government services could be consolidated in the future.

Under an LCC, Commissioners would be elected island-wide at the same time as the CRD Director and Islands Trust Trustees. Commissioners could be paid or voluntary.

To establish an LCC, the Capital Regional District would need to pass an establishment bylaw and a delegation bylaw. Salt Spring residents would need to pass a referendum to approve its establishment. The commission would include either four or six commissioners elected island-wide, plus Salt Spring's Electoral Area Director. The working group agreed that four members would be most appropriate, at least initially.

The authority of the LCC would be negotiated between the community and the Capital Regional District, as the legislation provides for it to be anywhere from a purely advisory body to one with extensive delegated authority.

This option could include restructured and/or additional CRD commissions such as a Ganges Village Commission and would provide a structure within which improvement districts could amalgamate with the regional district and be governed by the LCC, should they choose to do so in the future. CRD commissions would become advisory to the LCC, with one or two elected LCC Commissioners assigned responsibility for serving as liaison with each advisory commission.

An LCC would serve as a 'clearinghouse' for all regional district-related decisions for Salt Spring Island. Its potential areas of responsibility could include:

- Setting overall priorities for local services provided by the regional district

- Holding public meetings, listening to and considering input and communicating with local residents
- Allocating Salt Spring's share of gas tax funding (currently \$600,000 per year)
- Establishing, structuring and managing Salt Spring's CRD-appointed advisory commissions (parks and recreation, transportation, economic development and others)
- Endorsing budgets for CRD Board approval
- Monitoring the delivery of local services
- Recommending new bylaws or amendments to the regional district board

Other powers could be delegated to the Local Community Commission over time, particularly if additional services came under the regional district. For example, it could potentially take responsibility for planning local service delivery, contracting, developing or supervising grant applications and approving expenditures within approved budgets.

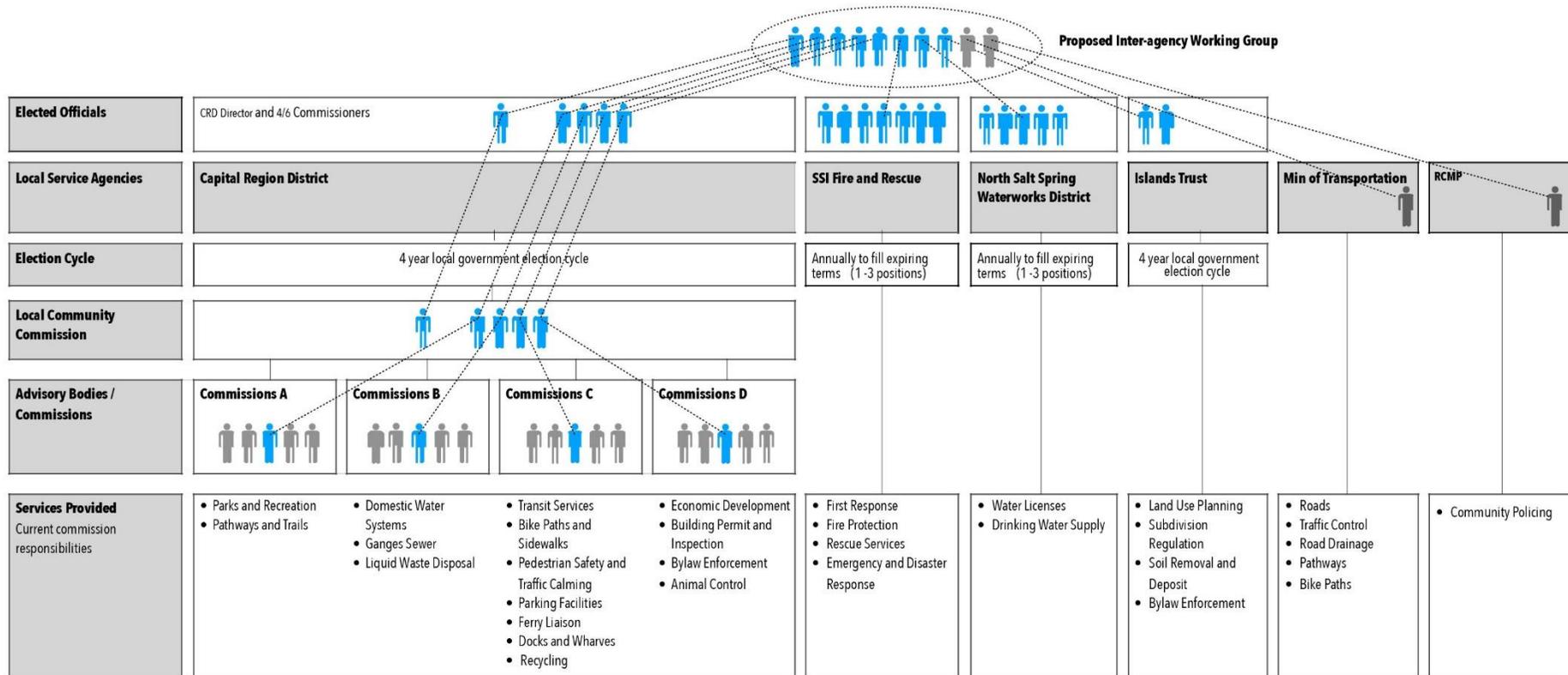
#### **Scoring of this Option**

We assessed this option on the assumption that it would be implemented in combination with the Inter-Agency Working Group. This was the highest-scoring option among the five that we fully assessed, scoring relatively well in most areas, except those relating to implementation challenges and costs.

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## Governance Option D - CRD Local Community Commission and Inter-agency Working Group

Prepared by the Governance Working Group of the Salt Spring Island Community Alliance



Creation of an LCC could leave existing CRD Commissions in place or could be accompanied by a restructuring/consolidation of these commissions. This would be determined by the CRD Board following discussion with the community. Community approval could be required for some changes

## **OPTION E: Local Community Commission for Ganges Only**

### **Key Characteristics of this Option**

- Boundaries would be set dividing the area included within the commission from the rest of the island
- Could be a step toward establishing an island-wide LCC
- May require dividing some current regional district services between Ganges and the rest of the island
- Would require a referendum and regional district bylaws

We assessed the possibility of creating a Local Community Commission (LCC) that would cover just the area of Ganges, leaving the rest of the island under its current system of governance.

The nature of such a commission would be as described in the previous option for an island-wide Local Community Commission, except that only the area included within the to-be-defined boundary of Ganges would be included.

A Ganges Local Community Commission would require the CRD Board to prepare an LCC establishment bylaw, amalgamate service bylaws and conduct a local referendum on the question of establishing a Ganges LCC. The CRD bylaw could also restructure existing commissions and create new Ganges commissions at that time.

The Ganges and Rural Commissions shown in the chart are representative only; the restructuring of existing Commissions, creation of new Commissions and division of powers between the Ganges and Rural Commissions would be resolved among the CRD Director, CRD staff and Board, the new Ganges Local Community Commission and the existing island-wide Commissions.

This option anticipates that the services provided by the Ganges Local Community Commission would not duplicate existing services, however the scope of services might expand in the future.

Some of the same services may be provided by both the Ganges Local Community Commission and the CRD for the rest of the island, however the same CRD staff would support both entities, providing for potential efficiencies.

The CRD Director would be a member of the Ganges Local Community Commission as well as continuing to represent the entire electoral area at the CRD Board. More research is required to determine whether referenda are required to restructure existing commissions.

**Scoring of this Option**

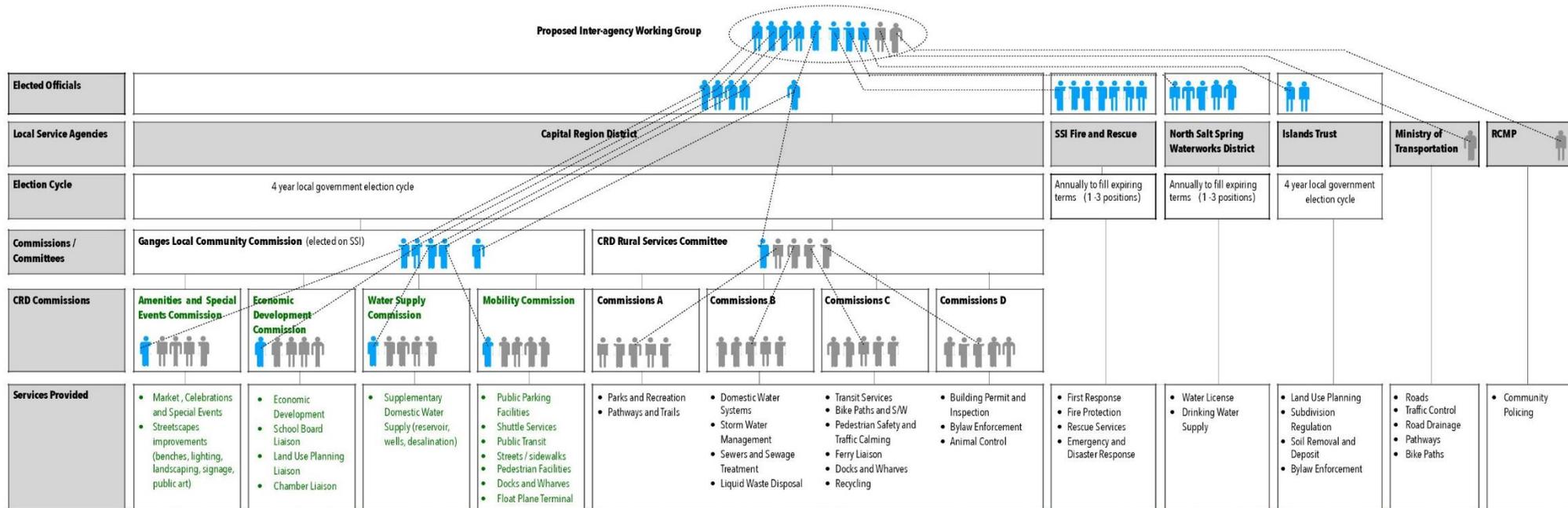
We assessed this option on the assumption that it would be implemented in combination with the Inter-Agency Working Group. This was the lowest-scoring option that we fully assessed, aside from the status quo, in part because of lower scoring in representation, democratic decision-making and efficiency of service delivery.

# A Discussion Paper on Salt Spring Island Governance

Preliminary DRAFT  
for Discussion Only  
August 30, 2018

## Governance Option E - Ganges Village Local Community Commission, Restructure CRD Commissions and Inter-agency Working Group

Prepared by the Governance Working Group of the Salt Spring Island Community Alliance



The CRD Commissions and Services Provided that are shown above are illustrative only. This Option could leave existing CRD Commissions in place or could be accompanied by a restructuring/consolidation of these commissions. This would be determined by the CRD Board following discussion with the community. Community approval could be required for some changes.

## SUMMARY OF OPTIONS SCORING

### Salt Spring Island Governance Options

Prepared by the Governance Working Group of the Salt Spring Island Community Alliance

Evaluation Criteria Preliminary Draft for Discussion August 30, 2018	Ranking/ Multiplier	Option A Statu Quo / Current Model	Option B Inter-agency Working Group (IAWG)	Option C Restructure CRD Commissions and IAWG	Option D Local Community Commission (LCC) and IAWG	Option E LCC for Ganges and IAWG
<b>Total Evaluation Score</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>99.5</b>	<b>63.5</b>
<b>1.0 Representation / Democratic Decision-making</b>	<b>35</b>					
1.1 Number of elected representatives relative to population and workload	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	5.0	2.5
1.2 Coordination and priority setting among agencies	1.0	0.5	2.5	3.0	4.0	2.5
1.3 Voicing community priorities to other levels of government	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	2.5
1.4 Potential for dispute resolution among local service providers	1.0	0.5	2.5	3.0	4.0	2.5
1.5 Voter participation rates in local elections (incl'd improvement districts)	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	4.0	2.0
1.6 Timely on-island decision making and financial controls	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.5	3.5	2.5
<b>2.0 Accessibility</b>	<b>25</b>					
2.1 Decision-making at open public meetings	2.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	4.0	2.5
2.2 Opportunity for community participation (input?) in local decisions	1.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	2.5
2.3 Access to elected representatives and staff	1.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	3.0
2.4 Clear(er) understanding of roles of local service providers	1.0	0.5	2.0	2.5	3.5	0.5
<b>3.0 Efficient and Effective Service Delivery</b>	<b>35</b>					
3.1 More cost effective, efficient local service delivery and potential for process streamlining (number of local agencies)	3.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	4.0	2.5
3.2 Ability to implement alternative and innovative "island" service delivery methods (volunteerism / non-profits) and adapt to future community needs	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	2.5
3.3 Ability to implement OCP and other Community Goals	1.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	4.0	2.5
<b>4.0 Feasibility and Sustainability</b>	<b>40</b>					
4.1 Feasibility of legislative changes and overall implementation	3.0	5.0	4.5	3.5	2.5	2.0
4.2 Cost of implementation of Option	1.0	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.0	2.0
4.3 Cost On-going operations	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.0	1.5
4.4 Model is robust and durable (entrenched in bylaws / legislation)	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	3.5

Evaluation Ranking/Score	
High	3.5 - 5.0
Moderate	2.0 - 3.0
Low	0.0 - 1.5

## OTHER POSSIBLE GOVERNANCE CHANGES

### Islands Trust Improvements

The working group discussed the role and functions of the Islands Trust at length, as this agency plays a critical role in delivering land use planning and regulation services on Salt Spring Island. While not considered a full-fledged local governance option, we did identify issues relating to the Trust that we believe deserve attention.

In September 2016, the Islands Trust Council approved a plan addressing the possibility that Salt Spring might vote “NO” to incorporation, which included the following action item:

***“ACTION 64: Upon delivery of a ‘NO’ result in an incorporation vote for Salt Spring Island for the Islands Trust to consider a governance and service delivery review.”***

Among the issues acknowledged by the Trust was possible ‘inequitable taxation levels,’ as the plan estimated that Salt Spring taxpayers contributed \$540,000 more to the Trust’s Local Planning Services than they received in planning services. We acknowledge that estimates of the subsidy may vary, but we are confident that it is substantial.

Eliminating this subsidy would lead to an estimated average \$40 property tax increase on the other islands. More efficient delivery of planning services might reduce this increase.

The working group briefly discussed the possibility of increasing the number of Trustees elected on Salt Spring from two to four, as was the subject of a failed referendum in the past. While several participants expressed enthusiasm for this idea, we set it aside, as it would require Provincial legislative change.

We also discussed the merits of implementing weighted voting (by population) for Islands Trust Council financial decisions. However, we did not reach consensus on the merits of this idea.

Another possibility for reducing the Trust’s tax impact on Salt Spring might be for the Province to restore its financial support for the Trust to its previous higher levels. The current \$180,000 Provincial grant to the Islands Trust covers only three per cent of its annual budget, significantly lower than in the 1990s, for example.

A potential additional source of funds could be the almost \$100,000 Salt Spring taxpayers currently pay annually through the Trust as a supplemental levy to support the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance. An independent

evaluation of that organization could help determine whether Salt Spring taxpayers are receiving good value for these tax dollars.

Attention to these funding issues could free up resources to implement other governance improvements on Salt Spring at reduced net cost or even at no net increase in cost to local taxpayers.

In our discussions, we agreed that Islands Trust Council should follow through on its earlier commitment to review its governance and service delivery, including the examination of ways to substantially reduce or eliminate Salt Spring's subsidization of local planning services on other islands.

We note that in September 2017, the Islands Trust Council created a Working Group on Service Integration under its Trust Programs Committee. This group met on Salt Spring in April 2018 and heard from community members, including members of the Community Alliance's Governance Working Group. We asked it not to implement any policy or process changes before this report was published.

## Improvement Districts

Improvement districts are legal entities with a long history of delivering local government services across British Columbia. Our island has two large improvement districts, the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District and the North Salt Spring Waterworks District. These account for a significant proportion of local government budgets on the island and are regulated by the Province under the provisions of the *Local Government Act*.

In our discussions, members of the working group had varying opinions on how effectively improvement districts are able to provide their important services.

Having served Salt Spring for more than 70 years, improvement districts have demonstrated strengths that include:

- Relatively small, organic and responsive administrations
- High levels of local knowledge and sensitivity to local needs
- A strong focus on results
- Timely, accessible local decision-makers.

However, while we recognized their strengths, some members of the working group were concerned about the ability of improvement districts to fully meet community needs in the future. We heard a range of concerns about improvement districts:

- Low voter turnout for board elections
- The ineligibility of renters to vote in those elections
- The general unavailability of provincial and federal funding for improvement district capital projects
- The fact that improvement district budgeting allows for unlimited property tax increases without taxpayer approval, unlike regional district services where there is a clear ceiling on tax increases that can be imposed without ratepayer approval

In addition, some members of the working group expressed concerns over how the existence of improvement districts in addition to the regional district, the Islands Trust and other agencies makes it even more challenging to coordinate local government services across the island.

For many years, the provincial government has been encouraging improvement districts to transfer their services to local governments. We recognize the sole authority of improvement districts to determine their future, however we did discuss the potential of various governance options to absorb improvement districts should they make a future decision to transfer their services to another agency.

In exploring their options, we hope the improvement districts, Capital Regional District and any other involved parties will consider the merits and challenges of a range of possible future approaches, including:

- Closer day-to-day links without formally amalgamating
- Co-locating of offices to achieve cost savings and improve communication
- Exploring the feasibility of providing improvement districts with access through the regional district to gas tax and other federal-provincial funding
- Contracting some regional district services to improvement districts, where that might lead to efficiencies and/or service improvements, as is done now with North Salt Spring Waterworks District
- Transferring services to the regional district under the administration of:
  - A locally-elected Local Community Commission, or
  - A CRD-supported non-profit using a model such as the Pender Islands Fire Protection Society, or
  - A commission such as those that exist elsewhere in the CRD

## **Enhanced Attention to Key Local Issues**

During our assessment of options, the working group identified several local issues deserving attention in considering governance changes. While these are not presented as discrete options, we believe that several of the options presented in this report would improve our community's ability to address these issues more effectively. Future governance changes should be assessed - in part - on their potential contribution to dealing with these issues.

### **Housing**

As we carried out our work, concerns over the island's inadequate supply of affordable housing gained an increasingly high profile. Several agencies are working on housing-related issues, but we believe the island would benefit from stronger and more coordinated leadership on housing. We discussed various ways this could be accomplished, from the establishment of a housing commission to strengthening of the existing Housing Council or the establishment of a new non-profit housing agency.

We did not attempt to reach a consensus on the specific measures that should be taken, but agreed that local government agencies should enhance their support for housing initiatives and coordination.

### **Drinking Water**

Salt Spring residents have long been aware that limitations on our water supply during the dry summer months are a significant issue. Currently, responsibility for drinking water is divided among multiple agencies, including our regional district and several improvement districts. Additionally, the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance is funded by local taxpayers. The largest water provider on Salt Spring is North Salt Spring Waterworks District, which has put limitations on new water connections for several years. Affordable housing projects and other initiatives have been delayed by this policy and/or forced to consider alternate water sources.

As with the housing issue, the working group did not attempt to prescribe how drinking water might be more effectively managed by local government agencies. However, we believe that this deserves attention and the assessment of future governance changes should consider the importance of effective coordinated water management.

### **Ganges Village**

We recognize that Ganges, as the village core of Salt Spring Island, is of vital importance to all island residents and deserves the focused attention of local government. Depending on other changes that take place to local governance, this could be in the form of a CRD commission or other changes to ensure that the particular issues and needs of Ganges receive coordinated attention in the future.

## **Other Tools to Enhance Local Government Service Delivery**

During our discussions, working group members brought many good ideas to the table. Several of these were not in the form of governance options but rather as ideas that should be considered regardless of what larger governance changes may ultimately be implemented.

### **Annual Citizen Survey**

Many B.C. communities undertake regular surveys to track resident satisfaction with local government services and help identify future priorities. Salt Spring currently has no such survey, except for the Vital Signs report, which is issued only once every four years.

Access to this kind of community input on a more frequent basis could be valuable to local government decision-makers, so we believe such a survey should be implemented.

### **Enhanced Role for Non-Profit Organizations**

Salt Spring, an island rich with volunteers, has a plethora of well-functioning non-profit organizations providing services as well as advocating for important island issues.

In our discussions, several working group members spoke passionately about the importance of non-profits both in service delivery and in directly engaging the community. Salt Spring's public library and recycling depot are frequently mentioned as examples of local government services that are successfully delivered by non-profit organizations under contract with the Capital Regional District.

Non-profit organizations and the volunteers that power them are a vital part of our community and our culture, and we consider it essential that future governance changes on Salt Spring recognize and make enhanced use of this tremendous resource in the future.

Issues of liability, budget approval and safeguarding of taxpayer resources have been successfully addressed in some past CRD contracts with non-profit service providers. These could provide models for further expansion of service delivery by non-profit organizations.

### **Improved Support for Elected Regional District Representative(s)**

We noted that Salt Spring's Electoral Area Director receives no dedicated administrative support. This is problematic, given the vital services delivered by the regional district and the importance of the Director's role in ensuring that community concerns and priorities are reflected in decision-making and service delivery.

Among the ideas that deserve consideration are the following:

- Dedicated part-time administrative support for the Director provided by an employee reporting to the Director
- Increased attention to annual service plan goals and performance measures specific to Salt Spring services
- Enhanced use of the Director's Alternate to ensure coverage of commission meetings and other duties
- Increased attention to commission member recruitment

## **OTHER INITIATIVES WE CONSIDERED**

The following ideas were considered by the working group and set aside because they did not pass our three screening criteria. Each of these was considered by at least one working group member to have merit, but none were determined by the working group to be a viable governance option at this time.

### **Improvement District Modifications**

As discussed previously, the working group discussed potential changes to improvement districts, including changes that might make them eligible for provincial and federal capital funding and changes to their election timing and voter eligibility. We also discussed the idea of creating one larger multi-service improvement district to efficiently deliver several services.

However, the B.C. Government has made clear over a period of many years that its focus is on assisting improvement districts wishing to transfer their services to their regional districts. Because the Province appears to not be open to establishing new improvement districts or changing its policy on capital funding, we set aside an option that would have required significant modification of improvement district letters patent.

Such modifications would require the Province to alter its general policy on improvement districts to recognize the unique history, scale, capabilities and context of the improvement districts on Salt Spring. Should the Province change its policy on improvement districts in the future, there could be value in taking another look at ideas for improvement district modifications.

### **Truncated Municipality**

This option contemplated a new model of incorporation under which Salt Spring Island would become a municipality, but with responsibility for land use planning and regulation left with the Islands Trust and responsibility for roads and policing left with the Province of B.C.

While this option addresses three of the major issues that were considered obstacles to incorporation, the working group felt that this option should be set aside because it would require changes to several provincial laws (*Local Government Act, Community Charter, Police Act*, among others) and would be contrary to longstanding provincial practice, which requires all municipalities to be responsible for land use planning and regulation, roads and policing.

Our decision to set aside this option was not unanimous, as some members of the working group believe that incorporation, whether in this form or another, should continue to be considered a viable option. In addition, several working group members believe that this option would deserve further exploration if the Province indicated a willingness to create a form of municipality that excluded responsibility

for land use planning, roads and policing. Alternatively, responsibility for roads and policing could be transferred to a Salt Spring Island municipality, but with greater recognition by the Province of the additional financial burden faced by the island due to its high per capita road length.

#### **Incorporation of Ganges as a Municipality**

This option would involve creating a municipality for the core village area of Ganges, while leaving the remainder of Salt Spring Island as an unincorporated area. In 1967, an unsuccessful referendum was held to incorporate Ganges as a municipality.

We determined that this option would not be evaluated because it would not protect the role of the Islands Trust by separating land use decisions from local service decisions. It also would be contrary to provincial policy, which requires any island contemplating incorporation to do so entirely or not at all.

Again, several working group members believe that this option would deserve further exploration if the Province indicated a willingness to change its policies on island incorporation.

#### **Change of Regional Districts**

Some members of the working group expressed dissatisfaction with Salt Spring Island being within the Capital Regional District. Because of this, we discussed three concepts of how Salt Spring might move to a different regional district:

- Moving to the Cowichan Valley Regional District
- Becoming part of a new Islands Trust Regional District
- Becoming part of a new regional district composed of the Southern Gulf islands and, possibly, portions of the Saanich Peninsula

We determined that the first concept had to be set aside because moving Salt Spring from one regional district to another would require change to provincial legislation and likely would not be acceptable to the Province. The idea of creating an Islands Trust Regional District also would require legislative change and would combine land use planning and regulation with other local government service delivery. The third concept - dividing a regional district - is provided for in provincial legislation, but since the Province has rarely changed the composition of regional districts over the past five decades, we deemed this as being unlikely to be acceptable to the Province.

#### **Multi-Service Society (the ‘Hornby Model’)**

Members of the working group looked into how Hornby Island has developed a well-functioning non-profit society that has taken on delivering many local government services on that island. We discussed whether we should develop a similar option for consideration.

We concluded that the creation of a single non-profit society to take on the wider range of local government services already provided on Salt Spring was not realistic. We based this assessment on Salt Spring's existing plethora of well-functioning non-profits, some already delivering local government services. In addition, the much larger size of Salt Spring's population would present challenges to establishing and operating a local non-profit society with potentially more than 10,000 members.

While we decided not to develop an option similar to 'the Hornby model,' we continue to see a very significant role for non-profit organizations in delivering local government services and gathering and disseminating community input on Salt Spring, which is described earlier in this report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

In the process of developing this discussion paper, the working group discussed at length the merits of providing specific recommendations for change versus identifying options and leaving others to act on them or not.

Our conclusion was that we believe there is a need for action to improve governance on Salt Spring, while we recognize that change will require the full participation and cooperation of our community as well as the Capital Regional District, Islands Trust and the Province of British Columbia.

With this in mind, we offer five recommendations in the hope that this discussion paper will provide a starting point for action:

- 1. We recommend that Salt Spring Island’s locally-elected representatives convene a multi-agency meeting shortly after 2018 local government elections to identify actions that can be taken immediately to enhance local government decision-making and coordination. Such actions might include:**
  - **Creation of an Inter-Agency Working Group**
  - **Implementation of an annual survey of community needs and local government performance**
  
- 2. We recommend that Salt Spring Island’s locally-elected representatives seek provincial funding for a community-led action plan for longer-term enhancements to Salt Spring Island governance and service delivery. This work should begin as soon as possible after the 2018 local government elections, have its scope and terms of reference developed in consultation with the community, target completion within 12 months and include the full involvement of the Capital Regional District, the Islands Trust and other relevant agencies. Development of the action plan should determine whether the Province is open to legislative and policy changes in the areas mentioned in this report and should include consideration of:**
  - **The establishment of a Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission**
  - **Enhancing the role of non-profit agencies in local government service delivery on Salt Spring**
  - **Strengthening CRD collaboration with and support for existing improvement districts**

3. **We recommend that the Province of British Columbia fund and support a community-led process to develop an action plan for longer-term enhancements to Salt Spring Island governance and service delivery.**
  
4. **We recommend that Islands Trust Council:**
  - **Follow through on its proposed review of Trust governance and service delivery, including examination of ways to substantially reduce or eliminate Salt Spring's subsidization of local planning services on other islands**
  - **Commission an independent evaluation of the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance to determine whether its current tax requisition is delivering value for money**
  
5. **We recommend that the Capital Regional District and the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director:**
  - **Facilitate dedicated administrative support for the Salt Spring CRD Director**
  - **Involve commissioners and community members at an early stage of any consideration of restructuring CRD commissions**

## APPENDIX 1: COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN DEVELOPING THIS REPORT

### Community Alliance

On June 25, 2018 at the regular Community Alliance meeting, the Governance Working Group presented its screening and evaluation criteria as well as some promising options, including the Inter-Agency Working Group and a Local Community Commission. While the group of 48 participants were interested and engaged in the discussion of options, there was confusion about the evaluation criteria. The detailed description of criteria in Appendix 2 of this report aims to address that confusion.

Participants expressed interest in decision-making silos being broken down, allowing for more inter-agency communication. Several criteria address this important concern:

- 1.2 Coordination and priority setting among agencies,*
- 1.4 Potential for dispute resolution among local service providers,*
- 2.4 Clearer understanding of roles of local service providers,*
- 3.0 Efficient and effective service delivery, and*
- 3.1 More cost-effective, efficient local service delivery and potential for process streamlining (number of local agencies).*

Diversity was another priority expressed at the meeting. While diversity and access to underserved populations is complex and requires concerted outreach efforts, we believe that two criteria assess a governance system on its ability to effectively reach out to all in its decision-making processes:

- 2.2 Opportunity for community participation in local decision-making, and*
- 2.3 Access to elected representatives and staff.*

Maintaining our unique Salt Spring culture as well as our strong system of volunteerism was also mentioned as an important consideration. Two criteria address these critical elements:

- 3.2 Ability to implement alternative and innovative “island” service delivery methods (such as volunteerism / non-profits) and adapt to future community needs, and*
- 3.3 Ability to implement our Official Community Plan and other community goals.*

This conversation with the community through the Alliance has only just begun. We have sought to work collaboratively with other Alliance working groups. Four members of this group regularly attend liaison meetings with the facilitators of other working groups. Members of this group have met with members of three

other working groups and some members of the Governance Working Group are also members of other working groups. The report of the June 25 meeting was sent to all Community Alliance participants, and this report will also be sent to them. Additionally, in September and October, Alliance participants - as well as all other interested community members - will be invited to workshops concerning this report.

### Consultation with Community Groups

During our analysis of governance options, members of the working group have communicated with a number of groups and individuals. These include:

- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- North Salt Spring Waterworks District
- Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District
- CRD Director and senior Salt Spring CRD staff
- Housing representatives
- Islands Trust Programs Working Group
- Islands Trust Chief Administrative Officer
- Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce
- *Positively Forward*
- Salt Spring Island Community Economic Development Commission
- CRD Forum, August 13, 2018

In addition to these outreach activities, members of this Governance Working Group serve also on a wide variety of other agencies and organizations in the community. They brought their knowledge of these groups and their priorities to working group meetings while also relaying information about this group to those organizations.

These other organizations include:

- Islands Trust (one Trustee, former CAO, former Regional Planning Manager, and one Advisory Planning Commissioner),
- CRD (alternate),
- CRD Commissioners from PARC (2), Economic Development, and Liquid Waste,
- Chamber of Commerce (a Board member and committee member),
- Fire Protection District (one trustee, two committee members, and three directors of the Fire Rescue Foundation),
- *Positively Forward* (4),
- Former MLA/CRD Director, and
- Former Transportation, PARC, Economic Development, water and sewer commissioners.

While we recognize that there could always have been more outreach, we believe these initial outreach activities have provided a solid foundation for the next steps.

## **APPENDIX 2: EVALUATION CRITERIA**

### **1.0 Representation/Democratic Decision-making**

These criteria relate to the extent to which the option advances democratic participation and decision-making on Salt Spring Island. We scored each assessed option on a scale of zero to five on each criterion and weighted them to reflect the working group's sense of their relative importance.

#### *1.1 Number of elected representatives relative to population and workload*

This criterion assesses the number of island-wide elected local government representatives that would exist under each option. Under our current system, there are three such positions: one Capital Regional District Director and two Islands Trust Trustees. Trustees for the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District and North Salt Spring Water Improvement District are also elected, but only property owners within the boundaries of each are eligible to vote.

In our discussions, many participants expressed concern regarding the challenging workload of the single elected regional director who is responsible for the full range of regional district services.

#### *1.2 Coordination and priority-setting among agencies*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option would enable effective priority-setting and coordination across a range of local government service areas, such as from land use planning through parks and recreation, from drinking water provision through emergency services and from transportation through fire protection. We took the view that greater coordination overall and island-wide priority-setting is desirable in order to provide services efficiently and ensure that the most important issues get priority.

#### *1.3 Voicing community priorities to other levels of government*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option would enable clear and effective communication of the Salt Spring community's priorities to government decision-makers. Our view was that the current system may hamper Islanders' ability to express community priorities to other levels of government.

#### *1.4 Potential for dispute resolution among local service providers*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option would make it possible for local government service providers to resolve differences. This could be achieved in several ways, including providing enhanced opportunities for them to communicate and discuss priorities or by making it easier and more feasible for them to come together in more substantial ways

#### *1.5 Increased voter participation rates in local elections*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option is likely to enhance the participation of all Salt Spring Island residents in local government elections.

Currently, the CRD director and Islands Trust trustees are elected once every four years as part of province-wide local government elections, while others (improvement districts) have more frequent elections in which only property owners are eligible to vote and turnout tends to be low. We took the view that more participation by more island residents in elections is desirable.

### *1.6 Timely on-island decision-making and financial controls*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option maximizes decision-making by Salt Spring Island residents and the extent to which they are able to ensure that adequate financial controls exist over the spending of local tax dollars. Our position is that greater on-island decision-making is good, as are more financial controls by island residents.

## **2.0 Accessibility**

These criteria relate to the extent to which the option enhances the accessibility of local government decision-making to Salt Spring Island residents. As with the other areas, we scored each assessed option on a scale of zero to five on each criterion and weighted them to reflect the working group's sense of their relative importance.

### *2.1 Decision-making at open public meetings*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option provides open public meetings on Salt Spring Island where local government decisions are made. In our view, it is desirable to maximize the amount of local government decision-making that is made on the island at public meetings.

### *2.2 Opportunity for community participation in local decision-making*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option allows for members of the community to provide input or otherwise participate directly in local government decision-making. It is our position that more, rather than less, community participation is desirable.

### *2.3 Access to elected representatives and staff*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option provides local residents with ease of access to services, elected representatives and local government staff. In our view, more, rather than less, accessibility to elected representatives and local government staff is desirable.

### *2.4 Clearer understanding of roles of local service providers*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option provides a local government system that is easy for local residents to understand and navigate. We believe that a system that is easy to understand and navigate offers the potential of a more accessible and responsive local government.

### **3.0 Efficient and Effective Service Delivery**

These criteria relate to the extent to which the option provides opportunities for more efficient and effective delivery of local government services to Salt Spring Island residents. As with the other areas, we scored each assessed option on a scale of zero to five on each criterion and weighted them to reflect the working group's sense of their relative importance.

#### *3.1 More cost-effective, efficient local service delivery and potential for process streamlining*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option has the potential to enhance the cost-effectiveness of local government services and provide opportunities for streamlining. We define cost-effectiveness as delivering the greatest possible benefit to the community for a given investment of tax dollars. By streamlining, we mean the potential for reducing duplication of effort and/or expense in delivering the same (or enhanced) local government services. We believe cost effectiveness, efficiency and streamlining are desirable because they have the potential to provide the same level of local government services at a lower cost to taxpayers or an enhanced level of service at the same cost.

#### *3.2 Ability to implement alternative and innovative "island" service delivery methods and adapt to future community needs*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option draws on the island's strong culture of innovation and volunteerism to adapt to new and different ways of delivering local government services. Our position is that it is desirable for local governance on Salt Spring to be flexible enough to reflect and take advantage of the community's strengths.

#### *3.3 Ability to implement our Official Community Plan and other community goals*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option is able to support and respond to the community's priorities. Although our Official Community Plan provides a foundation for expressing a range of land use-related community priorities, other priority areas are also critically important. It is our position that it is desirable for local government to respond effectively to a wide variety of community priorities.

### **4.0 Feasibility and Sustainability**

These criteria relate to the extent that the option is feasible and likely to be sustainable over the long-term. As with the other areas, we scored each assessed option on a scale of zero to five on each criterion and weighted them to reflect the working group's sense of their relative importance.

#### *4.1 Feasibility of legislative changes and overall implementation*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option is straightforward to implement and is already permitted in legislation. Where an option requires

changes to bylaws or agreements among agencies, we assessed their feasibility. In our view, it is desirable that changes to local government be easily implemented. Despite this, we recognize that options bringing the greatest benefits to the community are likely to be ones that involve more significant change and, therefore, could involve more complex implementation.

#### *4.2 Cost of implementation of option*

This criterion assesses the predicted additional cost of each option. While we did not carry out full costing of the options, we assessed each as to whether it would have relatively low, medium or high implementation costs. We believe that lower implementation costs are desirable, but also recognize that some options with the potential of substantial benefits may involve more significant implementation costs than other options that offer smaller benefits.

#### *4.3 Cost of ongoing operations*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option is likely to have low ongoing costs. Again, it was beyond the scope of our work to develop full costing for options, but we did assess each as to whether it would have relatively low, medium or high ongoing costs. We believe that lower ongoing costs are desirable, while also recognizing that an option may be desirable despite significant ongoing costs if the benefits to the community more than outweigh those costs.

#### *4.4 Option is robust and durable (entrenched in bylaws/legislation)*

This criterion assesses the extent to which each option is likely to provide lasting benefits through long-term sustainability. For example, an option may be relatively robust and durable if it is supported by legislation and/or bylaws, and it may be less robust and durable if it depends only on voluntary participation. In our view, it is desirable for solutions to be lasting.

## APPENDIX 3: NOTES ON THE SCORING OF OPTIONS

Note: Evaluation notes are not available for the status quo or Ganges LCC options.

### Inter-Agency Working Group

#### Evaluation Notes

Criteria	Rating	Notes/Rationale
1.1 Number of elected representatives relative to population and workload	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same rating as Option A (status quo)</li> </ul>
1.2 Coordination and priority setting among agencies	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There would be improvement over status quo because it would formalize inter-agency meetings.</li> </ul>
1.3 Voicing community priorities to other levels of government	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This criterion assumes that the Inter-Agency Working Group would continue with each successive group of elected officials, and it scores lower because of the risk that it might not last.</li> </ul>
1.4 Potential for dispute resolution among local service providers	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There would be a slight improvement over the status quo because it would formalize inter-agency meetings.</li> </ul>
1.5 Voter participation rates in local elections	0.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There would be a slight improvement over the status quo because it would formalize inter-agency meetings.</li> </ul>
1.6 Timely on island decision making and financial controls	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No change, or it may slow decision making down.</li> <li>• The assumption is that the Inter-Agency Working Group would meet bi-monthly and that meetings would be open to the community.</li> <li>• There may be a slight improvement in responsiveness if there are regular meetings with agencies such as the Ministry of Transportation (MOTI).</li> </ul>
2.1 Decision making at open public meetings	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There would be a slight improvement over the status quo because it would be a public process rather than staff-to-staff meetings.</li> </ul>
2.2 Opportunity for community participation in local decision-making	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The assumption would be that there would be a town hall session at each meeting</li> </ul>
2.3 Access to elected representatives	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may be a slight improvement over the status quo.</li> </ul>

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2.4 Clearer understanding of roles of local service providers	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There may be a slight improvement over the status quo.</li> </ul>
3.1 Cost effective efficient local service deliver and potential for process streamlining (number of local agencies)	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There would be a slight improvement over the status quo.</li> </ul>
3.2 Ability to implement alternative and innovative island service delivery methods (volunteerism / non – profits)	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same rating as Option A (status quo).</li> </ul>
4.1 Feasibility of legislative changes and overall implementation	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There would be a positive change, but there may be an agency that would not agree to attend.</li> </ul>
4.2 Cost of implementation of option	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There would be a modest increased cost due to admin costs (coordinator and/or minute taker).</li> </ul>
4.3 Cost of ongoing operations	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would cost slightly more than the status quo due extra administration costs for meetings.</li> </ul>
4.4 Change of model is robust and durable (entrenched in bylaws / legislation)	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Inter-Agency Working Group could break down at any time and then could be reduced to status quo.</li> <li>The Inter-Agency Working Group would have voluntary involvement – there is no binding contract.</li> <li>There would be a slight improvement if there was formal Memorandum of Understanding between agencies.</li> <li>Would likely not have bylaws or legislation so the changes would not be robust and durable.</li> <li>Option B includes the status quo because it is the current governance system with the working group added – the core is still robust and durable.</li> </ul>
4.5 OCP and other Community Goals	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rating to reflect potential gains compared to the status quo.</li> </ul>

## Restructuring of CRD Commissions

### Evaluation Notes

Criteria	Status Quo	Rating	Notes/Rationale
1.1 Number of elected representatives relative to population and workload	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change</li> </ul>
1.2 Coordination and priority setting among agencies	1.0	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marginal improvement due to regular meetings.</li> </ul>
1.3 Voicing community priorities to other levels of government	1.0	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This option retains the interagency group.</li> </ul>
1.4 Potential for dispute resolution among local service providers	0.5	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marginal improvement due to regular meetings of Commission chairs.</li> </ul>
1.5 Voter participation rates in local elections	0.5	0.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change</li> </ul>
1.6 Timely on island decision making and financial controls	2.0	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change</li> </ul>
2.1 Decision making at open public meetings	1.5	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marginal improvement could encourage cooperation due to meeting of the chairs.</li> </ul>
2.2 Opportunity for community participation (input?) in local decisions	2.5	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is an assumption that there would be a town hall portion.</li> <li>Marginal improvement due to it being a public process.</li> <li>There would be an opportunity to speak as a delegation.</li> </ul>
2.3 Access to elected representatives	2.5	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some improvement due to improved access to elected officials and staff.</li> </ul>
2.4 Clearer understanding of roles of local service providers	0.5	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open public meetings.</li> </ul>
3.1 Cost effective efficient local service deliver and potential for process streamlining (number of local agencies)	2.0	3.0	
3.2 Ability to implement alternative and innovative island service delivery methods	2.0	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No improvement</li> </ul>

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(volunteerism / non – profits)			
3.3 Ability to implement OCP and other Community Goals	2.0	3.0	
4.1 Feasibility of legislative changes and overall implementation	5.0	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a lot of moving parts.</li> <li>• A small benefit that may require a series of referenda.</li> <li>• May have a difficult time selling this to the community.</li> <li>• It would be less feasible due to requiring funding approval.</li> <li>• Need to clarify whether the CRD could internally merge commissions without referenda.</li> </ul>
4.2 Cost of implementation of option	5.0	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marginal costs due to additional administration support.</li> <li>• Could be savings if there is consolidation of commissions.</li> </ul>
4.3 Cost of ongoing operations	2.5	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as status quo.</li> </ul>
4.4 Change of model is Robust and durable (entrenched in bylaws / legislation)	2.5	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be an improvement.</li> </ul>

## Local Community Commission

### Evaluation Notes

Criteria	Rating	Notes/Rationale
1.1 Number of elected representatives relative to population and workload	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given the 2017 referendum result, there is no other currently available model that would provide this level of elected representation.</li> </ul>
1.2 Coordination and priority setting among agencies	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are still other agencies that would not initially be included in the LCC.</li> </ul>
1.3 Voicing community priorities to other levels of government	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant improvement due to public forum where decisions are made and services determined.</li> <li>Would become an opportunity for greater focus on priorities in the community.</li> <li>Provides a mechanism to broaden the ability to address issues.</li> <li>Not given the highest possible rating because other agencies such as Islands Trust, Improvement Districts, MOTI would not be included in the LCC.</li> </ul>
1.4 Potential for dispute resolution among local service providers	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of service delivery under one umbrella.</li> <li>Slight improvement due to broader elected group – it is clear that the authority would rest within the group of elected officials, and there would be less debate about who represents the community.</li> </ul>
1.5 Voter participation rates in local elections	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not the highest possible rating as there are still other agencies, such as Islands Trust, Improvement Districts, and MOTI that would not have representation on the LCC.</li> </ul>
1.6 Timely on island decision making and financial controls	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assuming significant delegation of powers by the CRD, the LCC would be making many local decisions on SSI.</li> </ul>
2.1 Decision making at open public meetings	4.0	
2.2 Opportunity for community participation (input?) in local decisions	4.0	
2.3 Access to elected representatives	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved over other options.</li> <li>Does not guarantee any change to the accessibility of staff.</li> </ul>

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2.4 Clearer understanding of roles of local service providers	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a higher rating due to the reality that Improvement Districts are not included.</li> <li>• There is the potential for clearer understanding.</li> </ul>
3.1 More cost effective, efficient local service deliver and potential for process streamlining (number of local agencies)	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved</li> <li>• An LCC offers a structure for more efficient and effective local services.</li> </ul>
3.2 Ability to implement alternative and innovative island service delivery methods (volunteerism / non – profits)	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved local control.</li> </ul>
3.3 Ability to implement OCP and other Community Goals	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would significantly increase the ability to meet community priorities.</li> <li>• Improved liaison with MOTI and Improvement Districts.</li> <li>• May be greater potential for conflict between Islands Trust and LCC regarding land use issues.</li> </ul>
4.1 Feasibility of legislative changes and overall implementation	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not require legislative change.</li> <li>• Would require a referendum.</li> <li>• The CRD would have significant work implementing an LCC.</li> </ul>
4.2 Cost of implementation of option	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There would be costs, such as consultant study costs, referendum costs and staff time to evaluate.</li> <li>• There could be cost sharing opportunities with the Province.</li> </ul>
4.3 Cost of ongoing operations	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rating is lower than the status quo because there are ongoing costs.</li> </ul>
4.4 Change of model is Robust and durable (entrenched in bylaws / legislation)	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCC would be entrenched in bylaws and legislation.</li> <li>• There is some risk that the CRD would have the power to change what authority is delegated.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 4: SELECTED REFERENCES

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