RDOS Area "D" Service & Boundary Study
Fact Sheets
December 2021

TRANSIT SERVICES

➢ What service is provided?

Electoral Area "D" is serviced by BC Transit through the South Okanagan-Similkameen Transit system. There are two separate services that apply to Area "D" – regional transit, which all the RDOS municipalities and electoral areas contribute to, as well as Area "D" Transit services, which are only provided to and paid by a defined service area within Area "D".

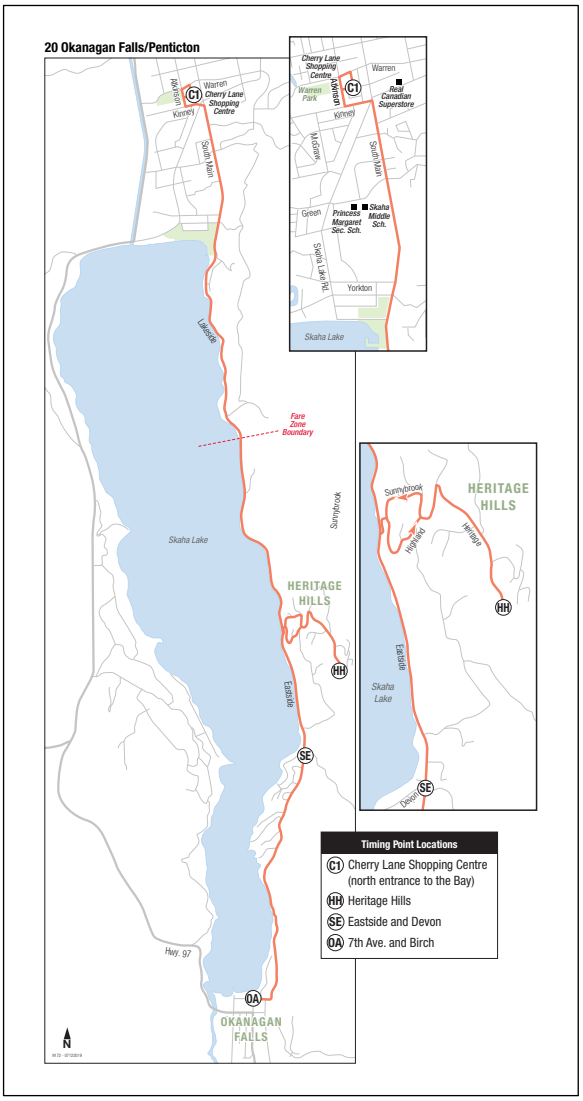
Area "D" Transit
The #20 bus provides five times daily return service between Penticton and Okanagan Falls along the east side of Skaha Lake via Eastside Road, with service extending into Heritage Hills subdivision. The #21 bus provides five daily local service loops within Okanagan Falls community, two of which extend service up to Peach Cliff estates. The Area "D" routes are shown in Figure 1.

Area "D" also benefits from the #40 route that provides twice daily return service between Osoyoos and Penticton, although it travels through Area "I" and not Area "D". That route does stop in Okanagan Falls, but is not funded by Area "D".

Regional Transit
BC Transit offers a route that helps to connect RDOS with the Central Okanagan. The #70 bus route connects Penticton to Kelowna via Summerland, Peachland, Westbank, and West Kelowna. That route is funded regionally.

In addition to connecting the southern Okanagan communities, this service is often referenced as "Health Connection" route, as it is funded in part Interior Health. BC Transit offers "Health Connections" service aimed at providing communities with accessible transportation options to non-emergency medical appointments. Passengers must call to arrange their trips. Generally this route is planned along the #40 route.

Figure 1: Route #20



➢ Who delivers the service?

BC Transit delivers the service on behalf of the regional district. Operation of buses, including management of drivers and vehicle maintenance is handled by Penticton Transit Service Ltd. on contract to the RDOS and BC Transit.

It is important to note that although the Area "D" Transit service is provided to and recovered from a portion of Area "D" residents, the delivery of the service is through BC Transit is tied together with the delivery of service in Area "E" in the Naramata. The contract with BC Transit is for both the Area "D" and Naramata services, making it challenging to change either of these two separate services.

➢ Who makes decisions?

Decisions about transit fares, routes and service levels are made by the RDOS Board of Directors. In making its decisions, the Board considers information and planning advice provided by BC Transit.

The Board is also guided by the Transit Future Plan, which was completed in 2015 in partnership with BC Transit. The plan sets out an implementation strategy for short and long-term transit investments. BC Transit and the RDOS are currently engaged in a planning process known as the Transit Future Action Plan. The goal of the South-Okanagan Similkameen Transit Future Action Plan is to update the 2015 Transit Future Plan to help guide decision-making for transit in the South Okanagan-Similkameen Regional Transit System. The update is currently in the engagement phase.

The RDOS electoral area directors and board make decisions on whether to create or participate in specific services. Decisions regarding both the regional service and the local Area "D" service are made by the full Board. It has been noted that the Area "D" Transit service agreement ties the service to the Area "E" transit service, making the service and agreement for any one electoral area more challenging to alter.

➢ What is spent by RDOS on the services?

The cost of the regional transit and the Area "D" transit services are provided in Figure 2. The amount of the Area "D" service was reduced in 2021 budget, due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic and decrease in ridership during this time. The budget forecast for future years for this service is closer to $130,000, rather than the $109,228 in 2021.

It is also useful to note that the RDOS has operating reserve accounts for most services. The Area "D" transit service has a reserve account balance of $18,852 at the end of 2020, and the regional transit service operating reserve balance was $5,108.

Figure 2
Cost of Services
2021

Service	Cost[1]
Regional Transit	$295,682
Area "D" Transit	$109,228
Total	**$404,910**

1 Cost estimates are from adopted 2021 budget figures

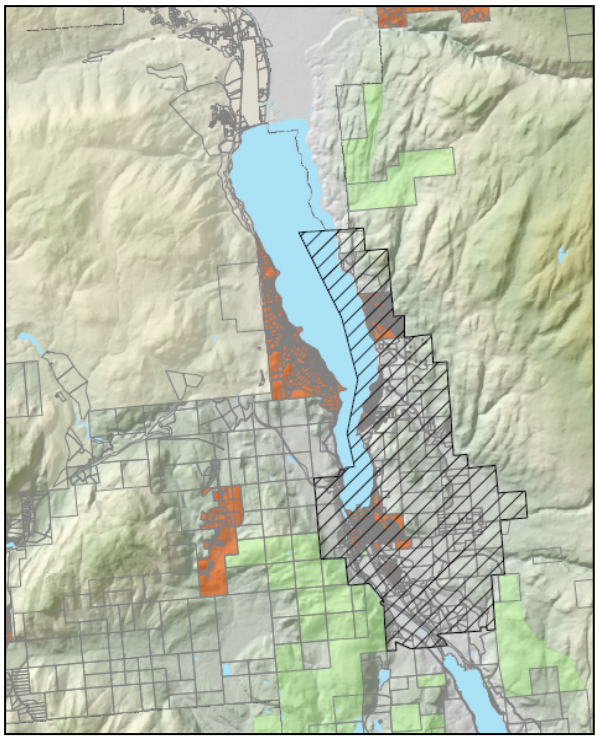
➢ How are the costs recovered?

Area "D" Transit
The Area "D" Transit system is recovered through a combination of tax requisition from the service area (see the crosshatched area in Figure 3), as well as passenger fares, and some grant funding. In 2021 a much lower rate than usual was anticipated to be recovered from passenger fares ($5,375 as opposed to $13,000). It should be noted that only those properties within the service area shown in Figure 3 contribute to the Area "D" Okanagan-Similkameen Transit System.

Regional Transit
The RDOS cost of the Okanagan-Similkameen Transit System is recovered through a combination of property taxes based on assessed value (land and improvements) throughout all of the RDOS, as well as transit fares, and some grant funding from

the Interior Health Authority and provincial government. The tax requisition, fare recovery and overall operational budget were lower for the service in 2021 than that budgeted for subsequent years. In 2021 the service also received a safe start provincial grant of close to $35,000 to help fund the service.

Figure 3: Area "D" Transit Service Area



➢ What is the cost to a typical residence?

Figure 4 provides the tax impacts to a typical Area "D" residence for transit service. Transit fares for service would be in addition to the amounts shown below. Fares for local service are $2.25 on the Okanagan-Similkameen Transit System (free for children under 12). The regional routes are $4, or $5 for route #70 which provides connection from Penticton through Summerland to Peachland, Westbank, West Kelowna and Kelowna.

Figure 4
Cost Impact on Typical Residence
2021

Service	Tax Req.[1]	Res. Rate	Owing[2]
Regional Transit	$216,008	0.0086	$3.88
Area "D" Transit[3]	$85,131	0.0774	$34.82
Total			**$38.70**

1 Tax requisition amount excludes 5.25% Surveyor of Taxes fee

2 Impact is calculated on a home assessed at $450,000

3 Rate only applies to a portion of Area "D" (within the service area only)

➢ What impact would incorporation have on these services?

A new municipality would become responsible for providing transit services; however, it is anticipated that the new municipality would continue to participate in the regional transit service, and would perhaps have their own contract or agreement directly with RDOS and City of Penticton to guide their own municipal service (similar to that of Area "D" transit service now). No changes to cost or service level would be required as a result of incorporation.

As noted with all services, there would be a change in governance. Within a municipality, it would be the municipal Council that would have the authority to make decisions regarding the transit service, and a municipal director would participate in discussions at the RDOS Board level regarding service levels and cost for regional services. The Ministry of Transportation indicated that incorporation could provide opportunities to change the current agreement with BC Transit, which ties the some service levels together with transit service in Area "E".