Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Services

The Parks and Recreation Services Sheet was developed for presentation to the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Committee at its meeting on February 5, 2024. The sheet was prepared using information available at the time of writing. Changes will be made if new information becomes available.

Information presented on the Okanagan Falls Incorporation scenario is based on the following assumptions:

> *That an Okanagan Falls municipality would continue to participate in the existing regional trails service*

> *That an Okanagan Falls municipality would operate a municipal parks and recreation service, and provide the same service and service levels to the existing benefitting area, with outlying Area "D" properties contributing to the service at the same rate*

> *That the Okanagan Falls cemetery would be transferred to the municipality, with the entire municipality contributing to the service*

THE PRESENT

➤ What service is provided?

Okanagan Falls and the broader service area encompassing much of Electoral Area "D" receive three parks and recreation related services:

- regional parks and trails,
- Okanagan Falls parks and recreation, and
- Okanagan Falls cemetery

Regional Parks and Trails

The RDOS created a regional parks service, with every jurisdiction as participants. The RDOS has 9 regional parks featuring unique topography, flora and fauna; and offering sandy beaches, hiking trails, historic sites, picnic areas, playgrounds, spray parks and baseball diamonds. Two waterfront regional parks are located in the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Area — Lions Park and Kenyon Park. Although these two parks have been maintained, improved and supported by Okanagan Falls' and area residents over the years, and although the Okanagan Falls service area purchased a parcel of land to expand Kenyon Park, the parks are regional parks owned by the RDOS. Regional parks are identified as part of the regional parks service, established after supplementary letters patent enabled a regional parks service in 1974.

Regional trails include portions of the Kettle Valley Rail (KVR) Trail (through a licence of occupation and a partnership agreement with the Province), the Similkameen Rail Trail and other multi-use trails. As part of the service, the RDOS also provides the Click, Hike and Bike trail information database. The KVR trestle in Okanagan Falls is also part of the Regional Parks and Trails system.

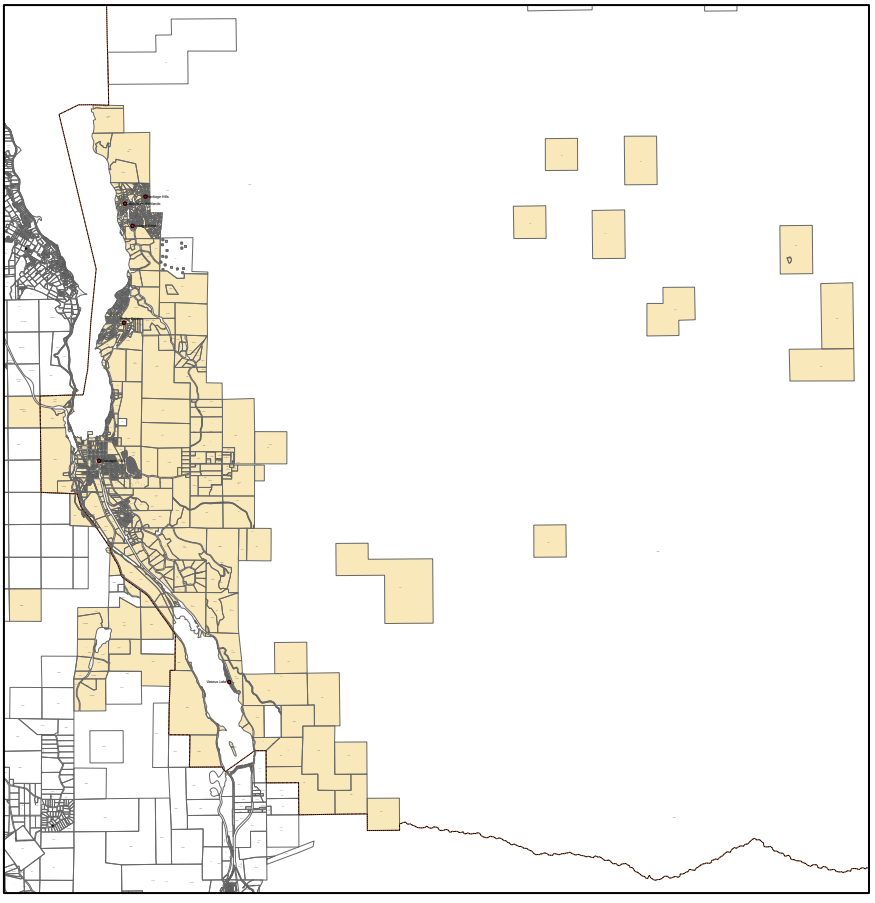
In 2023 the RDOS completed a *Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan* to guide decision-making over the next 10 years. The plan is intended to ensure the region has sufficient outdoor and indoor recreation facilities and services, while continuing to protect environmentally significant areas. The plan evaluated the broader inventory of regional district owned parks and facilities regardless of whether they were regional or local parks. The plan identified a target of 3-4 ha of park space for every 1,000 residents (excluding regional parks) as a common minimum provision target. Electoral Area "D" has 8 RDOS-owned parks,

totalling 12.65 ha, or 3.15 ha per 1,000 residents[1]. All but one of those parks (Garnett Family Park, 2.3 ha) are within the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Area. The ratio of RDOS park space within the study area to the estimated population is therefore 3.75 ha per 1,000 residents. Notably both these numbers include two regional RDOS parks (Lions and Kenyon).

Okanagan Falls Parks and Recreation

Okanagan Falls Parks and Recreation service provides maintenance to RDOS-owned parks, including the two regional parks referenced above, as well as local parks such as Keogan Sports Park, Christie Memorial Park, Centennial Park within Okanagan Falls as well as Garnett Family Park in Heritage Hills. Outdoor amenities at those parks include playgrounds, washrooms, a spray park, skateboard parks, ball fields, a cricket pitch, and beach volleyball. In addition, Area "D" includes beach accesses (classified as roads under Provincial Highways) in Okanagan Falls and Skaha Estates (including the Skaha Lake Dog Park and the Skaha Lake boat launch) — sites that are owned at present by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI). An *Area "D" Parks Plan* is currently being developed to direct and guide funding, planning, and upgrading of park assets in Area "D" for the next ten years. The plan will encompass location-specific assessments of current assets, identify user needs and desires specific to the parks and recreational spaces and provide programming and design recommendations at a conceptual design level.

Figure 1: Okanagan Falls Parks & Recreation Service Area



Recreation programs offered in Okanagan Falls include activities for seniors, children and families. The RDOS has a long-term use agreement with School District 53 for the elementary school during weekends and evenings as a community centre, including the activity room and gym. The Zen and Fitness Centre and Tennis/Pickleball courts are also leased from the School District for recreational purposes.

The service area that contributes to the Okanagan Falls parks and recreation service is shown in Figure 1.

Okanagan Falls Cemetery

When the Okanagan Falls Irrigation District (OFID) was dissolved as of January 1, 2023, one of the assets that was transferred to the RDOS from the OFID was the Okanagan Falls Cemetery. Maintaining and operating the cemetery became a regional district service, funded through the same service area as the former OFID.

[1] Centennial Park, which is now a RDOS park, is included in this calculation. All population figures are from the 2021 Census.

Provincial and Private Recreation
Residents of Okanagan Falls also have access to local provincial parks in Area "D" and beyond, including Vaseux Lake Park, sx̌ wəx̌ wnitkw (Okanagan Falls) Park, Skaha Bluffs Park, as well as the Vaseux Protected Areas.

➢ Who makes decisions?

The RDOS Board of Directors (Board) is responsible for the operational decisions related to regional parks and trails. The Board also makes decisions for the Okanagan Falls parks and recreation service, given that it only serves one electoral area.

The Board has a Community Services Committee (made up of the full Board) to advise on service decisions related, but not limited to, the operation and control of all public parks, trails, public recreation grounds and facilities.

The RDOS Board has established the Okanagan Falls Parks and Recreation Commission. Commission Directors are appointed by the RDOS Board for a term of 2 years; the Area "D" Director participates as a non-voting member. The Okanagan Falls Parks and Recreation Commission is comprised of 7 voting members. Meetings are open to the public and all questions before the Commission are decided by a majority vote.

The Commission provides guidance and advice on behalf of Okanagan Falls and the surrounding communities to the RDOS on operational matters related to parks and recreation.

All parkland acquisitions are approved by the Board on the advice of staff and the Commission.

➢ Who delivers the service?

The parks, recreation and trail services and the cemetery service are managed by the Community Services Department of the RDOS. Staff make recommendations to the Board considering both local interests and regional perspectives.

Figure 2: Service Decision-making

SERVICE	DECISION-MAKERS
Regional Parks & Trails	Decisions made by the entire RDOS Board because it is a regional service
Okanagan Falls Parks and Recreation	Decisions made by the full Board because the service area is contained to only one electoral area. However decisions are made on the advice of the Okanagan Falls Parks and Recreation Commission.
Okanagan Falls Cemetery	Decisions made by the Board because the service area is contained to only one electoral area.

Regional Trails
RDOS staff maintain all Okanagan Falls and Area "D" parks and trails. The recreation commission in Okanagan Falls advises on the local and regional parks in their area, including initiation of volunteer projects. RDOS allocates approximately 2.0 FTE to the Regional Trails service, of which Area "D" accounts for approximately 0.25. RDOS staff that deliver the parks and trails services include the Parks Manager, Parks Lead Hand, Labourers and Summer Students.

Okanagan Falls Parks and Recreation
RDOS staff deliver recreation programing with the Commission providing guidance. Each year the Parks and Recreation Commission identifies the projects it wishes to pursue (in consultation with RDOS staff) and a budget for RDOS staff time is established to pursue the projects. The service is supported by full and part-time staff, including the Recreation Manager, Recreation Coordinator, assistants, instructors and summer staff. The Okanagan Falls parks and recreation services reflects 3.78 FTE.

A private contractor delivers custodial services to the Okanagan Falls community centre, and other facilities associated with the service. Volunteer organizations and park user groups also contribute significantly to Okanagan Falls parks and recreation. Community organizations and individuals played a significant role

in establishing the ball fields, skateboard park and cricket pitch in Keogan Sports Park; benches and picnic tables in Lions Park and Kenyon Park; and the playground and water fountain in Kenyon Park.

➢ What is spent by the RDOS on the service?

The total cost of regional trails, the Okanagan Falls parks and recreation service and Okanagan Falls cemetery can be broken down into:

- 2023 budgeted operating cost of the RDOS regional trails service,
- 2023 budgeted capital cost of the RDOS regional trails service,
- 2023 budgeted operating cost of Okanagan Falls parks and recreation service,
- 2023 budgeted capital cost for the Okanagan Falls parks and recreation service, and
- 2023 budgeted operating cost of the Okanagan Falls cemetery.

Figure 3: Service Capital Costs (2023)

SERVICE	2023 CAPITAL ITEMS	COST
Regional Trails	KVR-Similkameen trail signage, trestle redeck/rails, Adra tunnel, purchase of vehicles (2 electric, pick-up truck and dump truck) and trailer	$612,111
OK Falls Parks and Recreation	Area "D" Parks Plan, waterfront plan, Keogan Park plan, Cedar Road Spit erosion mitigation, Christie Memorial Park beach enhancements, work on boat launch/Lamb property, improvements to Garnett Family Park	$314,422

The majority of the regional trails capital projects are funded through transfers from capital reserves, debenture proceeds, grants and donations. The OK Falls parks and recreation capital expenses were funded primarily from Gas Tax monies, with some funds from grants and reserve transfers. The capital costs budgeted in 2023 for the regional parks and OK Falls parks services are shown in Figure 3. Tax requisition amounts for 2023 operating costs are shown in Figure 4.

In addition to service costs, there are also operating and capital reserve accounts for these services. It is useful to consider the amounts set aside for future expenditures. Reserve totals are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 4: Service Operating Costs (2023)

SERVICE	COST[1]	TAX REQ
Regional Trails	$476,682	$414,052
OK Falls Parks & Recreation	$825,668	$719,405
Ok Falls Cemetery	$43,293	$33,093
Total	**$1,345,643**	**$1,166,550**

[1] *Cost and tax requisition figures are from RDOS 2023 budget for entire service area (not just OK Falls or Area D). Administration allocation is not included*

Figure 5: Service Reserves (2022)

SERVICE/RESERVE	TOTAL[1]
Regional Trails (Capital)	$100,960
Regional Trails (Equip)	$19,342
Regional Recreation (Oper)	$6,190
OK Falls Recreation	$209,468
OK Falls Park Acquisition	$2,261
Area "D" Park Acquisition	$2,061
OK Falls Cemetery Care	$53,752
OK Falls Cemetery (Operating)	$19,336

[1] *Reserve totals are as at the end of 2022*

➤ How are the costs recovered?

Regional Parks and Trails

In 2023, the costs of the regional parks and trails service were recovered primarily through property taxes, provincial contribution to KVR management and previous year's surplus. The property tax portion of the service is shared by all local governments in the region, allocated on the basis of converted assessment for land and improvements. The tax requisition for the service was $414,052, which translated into $5.57 for a representative residential property ($500,000 assessment).

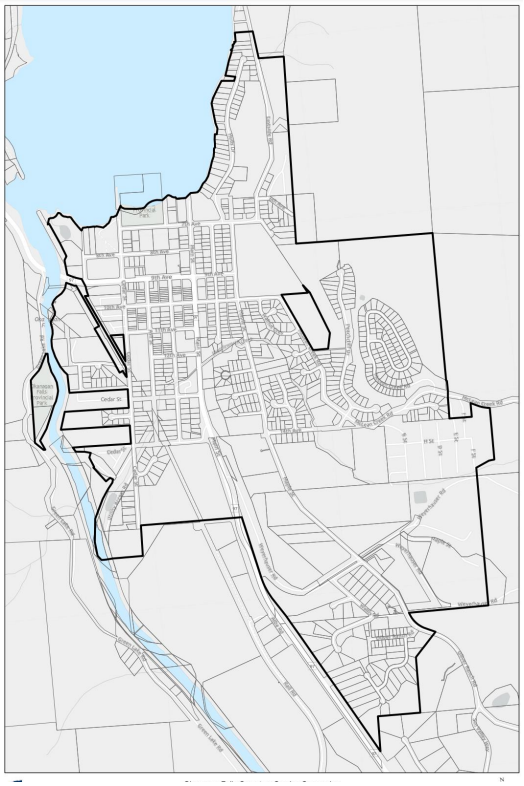
Okanagan Falls Parks and Recreation

In 2023, the costs of the Okanagan Falls parks and recreation service were recovered primarily through property taxes allocated to the specified area (see Figure 1). Fees and charges, grants, rental revenue, and donations made up the remainder. The tax requisition amount was $719,405 which translates into a residential tax rate of 0.4014 per $1,000 of assessed value (land and improvements) for properties within the service area boundary. Area "D" residents outside the service area do not contribute taxes to the Okanagan Falls parks and recreation service.

Okanagan Falls Cemetery

2023 was the first year that the Okanagan Falls Cemetery was owned and operated by the RDOS. The cost of operating the cemetery was recovered primarily through property taxes; a portion is recovered through user fees. The property taxes are currently only paid by those in the former OFID service area, shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Cemetery Service Area



➤ What is the cost to a typical residence?

The cost of RDOS parks, trails, recreation and cemetery services in the Okanagan Falls area (Figure 1) on a typical residence within the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study area are shown in Figure 7. User fees in relation to specific recreational programs, would apply in addition to the tax amount referenced in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Cost Impact on a Typical Residence (2023)

SERVICE	RES RATE	OWING[1]
Regional Trails	0.0111	$5.57
OK Falls Parks & Recreation	0.4014	$200.72
OK Falls Cemetery[2]	0.0395	$19.75
	Total	**$226.04**

[1] *Impact is calculated on a home assessed at $500,000. Amount excludes 5.25% Surveyor of Taxes fee charged in unincorporated areas*

[2] *This tax is recovered from a subset of the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Area*

INCORPORATION

➢ What impact would incorporation have on these services?

The regional trails service would continue to be provided by the RDOS, and funded by all local governments within the RDOS, with any new incorporated municipality as a participant in the service (with tax contributions on the same basis as is currently provided).

The new municipality would have options on how to provide the parks and recreation service to residents, specifically:

a) continue to be provided by and paid for through the RDOS
b) be provided and delivered by the new municipality, with the outlying Area D contributing to the service

Both options assume that the service would continue to be provided to and paid for by the current service area (Figure 1), given that the broader area has agreed to contribute to cooperatively funding recreation programming, parks and facility maintenance of the parks dating back to the service establishment in 1990. The primary difference between the two options is who would be responsible for making decisions regarding the service. Given that the majority of park assets and associated programs are located within Okanagan Falls, it is assumed that the new municipality would choose to provide this service (option b above). Having outlying areas contribute toward municipal recreation facilities and programming in neighbouring jurisdictions is common in RDOS, and indeed many regions, and is a model that acknowledges the fact that recreational programs and facilities benefit catchment areas that are often well beyond administrative boundaries. It is noted that approximately 17% of the budget associated with the service represents debt that was agreed to by the entire service area.[2]

While the Province, in discussions with the RDOS, would determine the ownership of the parks through Letters Patent, new municipalities typically receive ownership of, and take responsibility for, the local parks within the municipal boundary. Ownership and responsibility could also be transferred to the new municipality for Kenyon and Lions parks, given the land acquisition, as well as the improvements and maintenance of the parks by the Okanagan Falls service area. In addition, the beach access (road end) and boat launch currently owned by the Ministry of Transportation would be transferred to the new municipality from the Province.

It also assumed that the Okanagan Falls cemetery would be transferred to the new municipality, and maintenance and operations of that facility would become a municipal responsibility.

➢ How would decision-making change?

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 local parks and recreation service, as well as the cemetery. A municipal director would participate in discussions at the RDOS Board level regarding service levels and cost for the regional parks and trail service.

If the recreation service were provided by the new municipality, but contributed to by outlying areas within Area “D” (i.e. the current service area), Area “D” residents would expect to have representation on a commission or similar type body that would be created to provide advice to the new Council, and, in some cases, to make service decisions. The creation of a commission it is assumed, would be a condition of continued financial contribution to the service.

[2] The entire service area is obligated to continue paying the debt and interest for the purchase of lands adjoining Kenyon Park until 2033, as well as purchase of lands at 605 Willow and Garnett Park until 2036.

➢ How would incorporation impact service delivery?

As noted previously, it is expected that the new municipality would want to take responsibility for the recreation service, given that the majority of the parks and recreational facilities are within Okanagan Falls. Given the assumption that the service levels and service area would remain the same, it is expected that the service would be delivered through a similar staff complement as currently allocated to the service.

The cemetery service could be provided by municipal staff or on contract.

➢ How would service costs change?

There is no obvious reason why the Okanagan Falls recreation or cemetery service operating costs would change as a result of a new municipality operating the services, assuming the service levels do not change and that the new municipality dedicates the same number of staff or FTE to each service. However, while the costs won't change, as a service of the municipality the costs of the cemetery service would likely be recovered from the entire municipality, not just the portion that represents the former OFID.

There may be an impact to establish a new municipal parks service in terms of capital costs. Equipment associated specifically with the service, and purchased by the existing service taxpayers, would be allocated to the new municipality on a proportional basis (based on the assessed value of the municipality relative to the broader service area). Equipment that is shared by other RDOS parks services would likely remain with the RDOS. Establishing a municipal service may therefore require the acquisition of equipment related to parks maintenance.

As long as the contributing area for the parks and recreation service remained the same, the reserve accounts associated with that service would continue to be allocated to that service. If Area "D" were no longer participating in the service, then the existing reserves would be allocated to the respective jurisdictions based on the converted tax base (land and improvements). It is noteworthy that both Okanagan Falls and Area "D" have separate parkland acquisition reserve accounts. Both accounts are depleted (less than $2,300 in each at the end of 2022). Typically, funds from parkland dedication (cash-in-lieu) accumulate in the parkland reserves, so in the event of an incorporation, even though Area "D" and Okanagan Falls municipality have a shared parks and recreation service, they can decide separately how best to spend their parkland acquisition funds. Acquisition of new properties would therefore remain outside of the shared service structure. Accordingly, while the Okanagan Falls recreation and parks acquisition reserves would transfer to the new municipality, the Area "D" parkland acquisition reserve would remain with the RDOS for the electoral area.

SUMMARY OF TAX IMPACTS

Figure 8 presents the tax impact of the two scenarios – the current situation (RDOS) and incorporation (MUNICIPAL). It is useful to note that the cemetery amount referenced in the RDOS scenario currently only applies to properties within the service boundary (Figure 6). In the Municipal scenario, the reduced amount would apply to the entire municipality – this would be a reduction for most Okanagan Falls residents, but for those who do not currently contribute, it would represent an increase.

Figure 8: Tax Comparison of Regional District and Incorporation Scenarios

SERVICE	RDOS[1]	MUNICIPAL[1]
Regional Trails	$5.57	$5.57
OK Falls Parks & Recreation	$200.72	$200.72
OK Falls Cemetery[2]	$19.75	$15.90
Total	**$226.04**	**$222.19**

[1] *Impact is calculated on a home assessed at $500,000.*

[2] *The contributing area for the cemetery service differs in each scenario; after incorporation the tax applies to all properties in the municipality*