

Flexibility proves to be the key in resolving differences between Adams Lake Indian Band and the District of Shuswap **3**



Local and First Nation governments are using planning exercises to map future community vision **4**



Preparing for emergency planning together: New programs facilitate collaboration **6**



A Primer on the differences between First Nation and Local governments **8**



Co-published by the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Municipalities, C2C Connect features stories on First Nations and local governments working together.

no.4 | FALL | 07

# C2C connect

COMMUNITY to COMMUNITY

## » From the Ground Up! Building Sub-regional Governance in Lytton

**LYTTON >** In 2002, Chris O'Connor, the newly elected mayor of the Village of Lytton, was frustrated. In his words, "There was no place to formally talk to chiefs and councils. We needed to find a structure and a way for First Nations and local governments to talk." Lytton's area population of approximately 2,500 people is 80 percent First Nations, and includes five local First Nation communities: Siska, Skuppa, Lytton, Kanaka Bar, and Nicomen.

Six different communities are attempting to deliver similar services to their respective citizens. This has led to duplication and an inefficient use of resources. From the different communities' perspectives, it made sense to look at ways of pooling resources and reducing duplication for the region's small population.

At the 2002 Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Convention, Mayor O'Connor brought his concern to Premier Gordon Campbell, and presented a vision for a sub-regional governance model. This vision would ultimately see services such as health, education, protective services (fire, emergency services) and utilities (water & sewer) delivered by single agencies to better serve all six communities.

Sub-regional governance could help to create joint service areas to include the Village of Lytton and some or all of the five First Nation communities. The Premier suggested that Mayor



*On December 19, 2006, the Village of Lytton and five First Nations (Siska, Skuppa, Lytton, Kanaka Bar and Nicomen) signed a Protocol Agreement on Cooperation and Communication as a first step to achieving sub-regional governance.*

O'Connor explore the idea with his First Nation neighbours to develop a joint recommendation.

The first step was to develop trust and cooperation between local government representatives and First Nation leaders. According to Tom Dall, Chief Administrative Officer, Village of Lytton, personal introductions led to increased communication

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**“The best advice I ever got was from Chief Sampson. Everything has to start from the ground up. Don’t come to us with a project. We need input into it. Everyone has to have input to make it happen.”**

*Tom Dall, Chief Administrative Officer,  
Village of Lytton*

to identify community needs and projects that could be built together ‘from the ground up.’

This led to a Community to Community forum, a provincial and federal funded program, administered by the UBCM and the First Nations Summit. At this forum, community leaders and senior staff learned about each other’s governance models, priorities and strategic plans. “The best advice I ever got was from Chief Sampson,” says Dall, “Everything has to start from the ground up. Don’t come to us with a project. We need input into it. Everyone has to have input to make it happen.”

After two years of building understanding between the First Nations and the local government about governance and service structures, the Province provided funds to study sub-regional governance models. In 2005, a consultant was hired and researched the needs of the six Lytton area communities and their overlapping service delivery. The goal was to determine what projects were good candidates for cooperative ventures and what were community priorities.

Mayor O’Connor gives the example of fire protection. “The Village (currently) provides services to the Siska, Skuppa and Lytton First Nations on a fee-for-service basis, but the other two First Nations don’t have fire coverage because of the distance. We could develop a regional fire department to deliver fire coverage throughout and between the communities.”

Another area of collaboration could be snow removal. Rather than each community doing their own snow removal, one community might purchase the expensive removal equipment and provide service to the other communities.

Other possible joint opportunities were identified, including water and sewer management, health services and education.

In October 2006, the consultant’s report was released. The report outlined six possible governance structures for joint service delivery projects. In December 2006, the Village of Lytton and the five First Nations signed a Protocol Agreement on Cooperation and Communication, with all parties agreeing to work together to develop a model to share resources.

The communities will now decide which governance structure will work best. Dall explains, “The protocol agreement itself is phase one. Provincial funding is released in phases, so if steps don’t work, no further funding is released.” The key to successful

implementation, he believes, is to start small, making sure projects are feasible and demonstrate success to all interested parties. “The protocol is about mutual understanding without anyone losing their individual identity. No one is forced to participate in any initiative ... but the group is kept aware and can opt out at any time.”

If the project is successful, it could serve as a model for cooperation around the province and across Canada. Janet Webster, former Chief of the Lytton First Nation, explains the importance of this agreement. “First Nations were never really honored and recognized, and our voice was not heard. Now we are going to be heard.”

Chief James Frank of the Kanaka Bar Indian Band is also hopeful. “What we agreed to work on together is to improve [the situation] for the entire community,” he says. He points to the possibility of creating better economic opportunities and a local education authority.

Mayor O’Connor aims for deeper cooperation. Citing current resistance towards joint economic development he says, “We are in competition with each other for a limited resource and people become protective. We need to break [that] down and work together.” Still, O’Connor views the protocol as an important first step in changing the relationship between local governments and First Nations, not only in Lytton, but throughout the entire province. “The community of Lytton is simply a small social laboratory. Each community agreement will manifest itself differently depending on community resources, individuals negotiating agreement, etc. And, that’s the way it should be!” He recognizes that what comes next will be crucial to the success of this process. “Right now this is just words on paper. We need to turn this into something that is tangible to this community.”

The negotiation process for the protocol agreement paralleled the Bridging the Canyon initiative. Bridging the Canyon was developed through the Siska Band and included all the communities from Spences Bridge to Boston Bar. It was directed to specific needs in the community and was successful in helping improve communications within the Lytton area. Bridging the Canyon played a large role in showing how the communities could work together. According to Dall, “Both initiatives demonstrate the real need for small communities to work together, to provide the economies of scale needed to fund events and partnerships which we could not normally afford.”

# New Leadership Brings Fresh Perspective to the Shuswap

**SALMON ARM >** The Adams Lake Indian Band and District of Salmon Arm spent years in court before deciding to try something new. They were locked in argument over how the First Nation collected tax for their on-reserve properties, and how to determine reasonable cost for services provided by the District. "We wanted the ability to choose services delivered to the reserve," states Adams Lake Indian Band Chief Councillor Nelson Leon. "Certain things were not applicable."

In searching for a resolution, both Parties needed to be flexible to come to a place of greater understanding and agreement on what fee was reasonable to pay for services. This required both Parties to build their capacity and give greater latitudes to complete the work. It also meant that the District and the Band needed to understand the roles of each other's government.

The City was sensitive to the reality that the Band leadership and staff carried a very heavy workload. "First Nations offer a wider array of services than a municipality," states former District Chief Administrative Officer, Doug Lagore. "If you don't appreciate that, you don't get anywhere."



Both Parties signed a service agreement in 1998 for the road maintenance, fire protection, water, and sewer. Amendments in 2001 and 2003 included storm sewer issues, with the most significant amendment being the expansion of the City's water system onto the First Nation's lands.

"[We were] adamant that the politics stay out of it," Lagore says. "It can make it a bureaucratic process, when it is better as an administrative process. We have to work administratively with political support and keep them informed."

Chief Councillor Leon felt it was also important to develop a relationship that was not necessarily just business. "Our kids go to the same schools," he says. "We have things in common. Through exploration we can build understanding of our neighbour's values and goals and see there is not much difference in what we want."

**>>> "Through exploration we can build understanding of our neighbour's values and goals and see there is not much difference in what we want."**

**- Adams Lake Chief Councillor Leon**

When a 1996 municipal election brought new leadership, a dialogue to resolve long standing issues began. "We decided to meet half way, on neutral ground," says former Mayor Colin Mayes. "We sat down and started discussing issues, misunderstandings, and problems. We showed that we were a new council and wanted to resolve issues and not be in conflict."

By the third meeting, the First Nation was expressing confidence in the Mayor and Council. "They thought, 'Hey, these guys are taking time and listening to us. They are our equals and we need to respect their opinions.' We treated the First Nation like any other developer. It became a business agreement and good business agreements require good business partners," said Mayes.

Doug Lagore concurs. "[We] built a level of trust. We were treating [the First Nation] the same as the residents of the community. We only got money to cover the cost and administration. Once that was understood we had to keep it positive and move forward."



The economic spin-offs of developing lands and community ventures are visible in the entire community. "One benefit to the First Nation is the water upgrade, as it opens the door to higher density growth on reserve and an enhanced economy," states Chief Leon. The communities are also now working on a transit system to provide transportation to Adams Lake Indian Band members at a fee.

Regular informal meetings take place with a willingness to talk about mutual issues. "Part of the success is the shift to be open to negotiations," states Leon. "Old positional negotiations are coming to an end. It is now interest-based with respect for both parties' long-term goals."

**connect : salmonarm.ca**

*The Adams Lake Indian Band logos represent a future built upon strong ancestral teachings.*

# The Value of Neighbours Sharing their Dreams

Increasingly, First Nations and local governments are undertaking planning exercises to help chart their futures and build sustainable communities. These processes provide important opportunities for First Nations and local governments to communicate, collaborate and define shared priorities and values.

## Planning for First Nations

Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP) is a recent initiative of the last few years supported by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), under its Sustainable Development Strategy. INAC BC Region began the current intensive efforts to support CCP with five First Nations (Okanagan Indian Band, Lytton First Nation, Squiala First Nation, We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge) First Nation and Yekooche First Nation). To date, over 40 First Nations have received support from federal agencies to do comprehensive community planning projects.

CCP is a community-based and holistic planning process used by First Nations to plan for key areas in their community such as governance, land and resources, culture, health, education, infrastructure development, social issues and the economy. The process includes broad community input and enables community members to establish an action-orientated vision for the future. A comprehensive community plan identifies projects, infrastructure and the resources required to achieve that long-term vision, and includes an implementation strategy. Comprehensive Community Planning allows communities to work towards increased economic development and self-determination, while protecting culturally sensitive areas and resources.

INAC has also developed several resource tools to support First Nations in CCP. Tools such as the Comprehensive Community Planning Handbook are available on INAC's website at:

[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc/proser/fna/ccp/ccp\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc/proser/fna/ccp/ccp_e.html).

## Planning for Local Governments

Local governments routinely engage in planning processes for a variety of reasons that are similar to the reasons First Nations also plan. As part of recent infrastructure programs, local governments are considering sustainability planning principles that mirror many of the holistic objectives in the CCP process. This planning focuses on four key areas: environmental, economic, social and cultural. Please see website at:

[www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/lgd/intergov\\_relations/icsp.htm](http://www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/lgd/intergov_relations/icsp.htm).

A local government's long-term vision for its community is generally found in an Official Community Plan (OCP). An OCP is defined in provincial legislation (*Local Government Act*) as "a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on

planning and land use management, within the area covered by the plan." If a local government chooses to prepare an OCP, the plan must identify areas for:

- > Residential development (including affordable, rental and special needs housing)
- > Commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility uses
- > Location of infrastructure
- > Sand and gravel deposits

It must also include policies on land use restrictions due to hazardous conditions, and address agricultural and environmental concerns.

While developing an OCP, local governments are required to consult with people, organizations, authorities, local governments adjacent to the plan area, First Nations, school boards, the provincial and federal governments, and any of their agencies that will be affected by the plan.

	<i>Required by Legislation?</i>	<i>Long Term Vision</i>	<i>Ability to Revise &amp; Review?</i>
<b>Official Community Plan (OCP)</b>	No. The <i>Local Government Act</i> Section 875 permits OCPs, but if they are developed they must follow legislative and policy guidelines.	Produces a long-term vision that has been primarily a land use plan. Increasingly, local governments are looking at incorporating broader sustainability principles.	No set time frame. Can be revised and reviewed periodically. Process requires consultation. OCP must address housing needs over period of five years.
<b>Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP)</b>	No. CCP is not legislated under the <i>Indian Act</i> . Voluntary for communities to undertake with support from INAC.	Produces a long-term action-oriented vision for the future, a holistic approach including a focus on the social landscape.	No set time frame. Plan can provide for periodic review determined by community.

*Planning addresses ways in which the community wants to develop and respond to change in the future. This may include protecting green space access for families and recreation.*

An OCP must also be compatible with a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), if the regional district has one. An RGS is a voluntary strategic plan agreed to by all of the members of a regional district. According to the *Local Government Act*, an RGS is “to promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources.”

The table below illustrates the similarities and differences between OCPs and CCPs.

Planning processes by First Nations and local governments provide mutually beneficial opportunities to identify land values and culturally significant land. Increased awareness of a community’s priorities assists in identifying areas of common interest and becomes a catalyst for building relationships. A number of local governments and First Nations have completed joint planning exercises and are profiled in previous C2C Connect Newsletters.



*An OCP identifies areas for residential development, and commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility uses.*

<i>Consultation Required?</i>	<i>Approval Process</i>	<i>Scope</i>
Required to consider local government adjacent to the plan area, First Nations, school boards, the provincial and federal governments and their agencies.	<p><i>Incorporated Area (Municipality):</i> OCP presented at a public hearing. Council must consider public input prior to approving.</p> <p><i>Unincorporated Area (Electoral Areas/Regional Districts):</i> OCP presented at a public hearing, and reviewed by the Minister prior to Regional District Board approving.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy oriented</li> <li>• Guiding decisions made on planning and land use management</li> <li>• Move to encourage sustainability planning principles including environmental, economic, cultural and social elements of community</li> </ul>
Not required to consult or consider the needs of adjacent local governments or stakeholders but consultation with local government can provide opportunity to build relationship.	Draft plan made available to community for review. Council must consider comments prior to submitting plan for a ratification vote by members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based and holistic planning process</li> <li>• Project oriented - Guiding decisions on land use, with additional focus on social landscape including governance, economic development, culture, health and education</li> <li>• Identifies projects, resources and infrastructure to achieve vision</li> </ul>

**connect : [ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc](http://ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc)  
: [cserv.gov.bc.ca/lgd/planning/  
official\\_community\\_plans.htm](http://cserv.gov.bc.ca/lgd/planning/official_community_plans.htm)**

# Collaboration Bears Fruit in the Fight to Be Prepared

Recent windstorms, power outages and forest fire events have made emergency preparedness a top priority for BC's local governments. A provincially funded program called the Integrated Emergency Planning Program (IEPP), administered by UBCM, facilitated collaborative emergency planning between First Nations and local governments. The program, now complete, was designed to encourage a regional approach to emergency planning.

Through the IEPP, First Nations and local governments worked together to develop pilot projects that address local planning concerns of regional or provincial significance. "Large events often affect more than one community," said Sue Clark, UBCM Programs Officer. "An integrated plan assists staff from across a region to clarify roles and work together to efficiently manage the event."

The IEPP required governments to collaborate in two phases. Phase one supported initial work to pull communities together, identify common hazards and determine what kind of project would benefit both the local area and region. Phase two provided the resources for the community partners to undertake an approved pilot project. Twenty-five proposals were submitted to the IEPP for phase one and 18 were approved for phase two. The groups included a combination of municipalities, regional districts and First Nation band councils.

## Sample Programs

Since the program was announced in September 2006, the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) developed a joint proposal together with four municipalities and three local First Nations.

The project focuses on establishing new emergency reception centres, updating existing centres and standardizing and increasing emergency communications capacity, as well as other services and needs.

"I approached the First Nations with the concept of the grant and got an overwhelming yes," states Jani Thomas, RDN Emergency Coordinator. "Disasters don't recognize boundaries – this grant project provides the opportunity to work together as regional partners and level the playing field for emergency response and recovery."

**"Large events often affect more than one community. An integrated plan assists staff from across a region to clarify roles and work together to efficiently manage the event."** - Sue Clark, UBCM Programs Officer.

The Cariboo Regional District (CRD) submitted a proposal along with three tribal councils to undertake collaborative emergency planning. The partners are working on an information guide for emergency response and the development of integrated emergency plans.

"The CRD has the resources and the emergency coordinator to organize and access this kind of UBCM funding," says Laurie Vaughan, Carrier Chilkotin Tribal Council representative. "We formed the group early on, and applied to create the information guide brochures for First Nations communities and local rural communities."

If you would like more information about integrated emergency planning please contact:  
Sue Clark, Programs Officer  
Union of BC Municipalities  
sclark@civicnet.bc.ca  
(250) 356-5134

connect : [civicnet.bc.ca](http://civicnet.bc.ca)

## First Nations Emergency Services Society

The First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) is a non-profit society that assists First Nations in developing and sustaining safer and healthier communities by providing emergency-related programs, services and training. The Society provides services to First Nations and supports those First Nations wanting to work with neighbouring local governments.

"Stand-alone plans are a good start, but they don't work because disasters don't recognize jurisdictions," states Ruth Harding, Collaborative Emergency Coordinator, FNESS. "Emergency response is more effective if there is collaborative planning to start with. In times of emergency, you need to be able to fend for yourself for the first 72 hours or more in rural areas. Often the first responder is your neighbour."

FNESS can introduce First Nations to regional emergency coordinators through a regional district's emergency planning program. The Society can also facilitate meetings between parties or assist with the steps leading to a collaborative process. Ruth Harding said she welcomes calls and inquiries from both First Nations and local governments to provide support on the first steps in collaborative emergency planning.

FNESS also provides supports to First Nations communities during times of emergency. During the 2003 forest fires in Anahim Lake, the largest community in the west Chilkotin region, FNESS provided a first responder on the ground at the Emergency Operations Centre. It also provided support in negotiations with INAC for the funds to cover costs incurred by the fire emergency.

The 2003 fire took the Ulkatcho First Nation community by surprise. When the fire was less than 20 km away from the Ulkatcho reserve, Ulkatcho Emergency Coordinator, Laurie Vaughan, needed to evacuate 20 to 30 people who were elderly or had respiratory problems. With their fire preparedness plan in draft stages, the Ulkatcho experienced a steep learning curve during this emergency.

In 2005, another forest fire approached the heart of Ulkatcho territory. With their experience in working with FNESS to evacuate members, the Ulkatcho community was ready to provide support to their own membership as well as supporting and collaborating with the new emergency coordinator at the CRD by assisting with the setting up of emergency centres.

The result was a fast response with improved outcomes over the 2003 forest fire.

While providing insight into the benefits of working with a neighbouring community during an emergency, the Ulkatcho and CRD example also highlights the need for collaborative planning prior to an emergency.

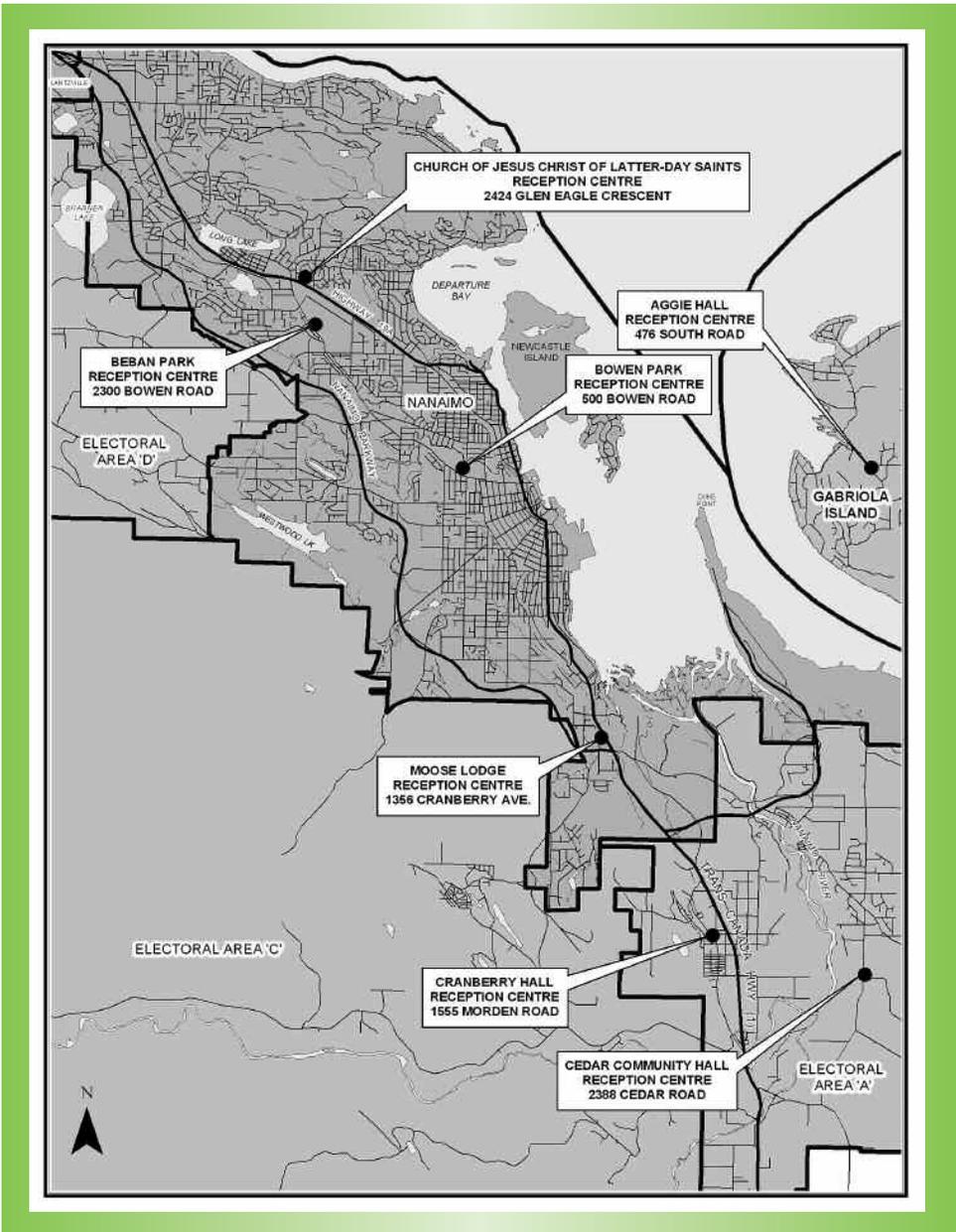
If you would like more information about collaborative emergency planning, please contact:  
 First Nations Emergency Services Society  
 Tel: (604) 669-7305  
 Emergency Only Toll Free 1(888) 822-3388

**connect : [www.fness.bc.ca](http://www.fness.bc.ca)**

**Provincial Emergency Program**

Visit the PEP website to locate a Regional Emergency Office near you and to contact a Regional District Emergency Program Coordinator.

**connect : [pep.bc.ca](http://pep.bc.ca)**



*The Regional District of Nanaimo acknowledges that disasters don't recognize jurisdictions, and is now working on a pilot project to integrate First Nations communities in local emergency planning to ensure everyone receives the emergency services they require in the event of a disaster.*

# Community Governments with a Difference: A Primer on Local and First Nation Governments



**L**ocal governments and First Nation governments are as unique as the communities they represent. Although they are similar in that both are community governments providing services to their citizens, they are vastly different in how their governments are structured and their respective responsibilities. First Nations administer the services that a municipality or regional district provides in addition to programs such as education, housing and natural resource management.

In addition to the diversity between First Nations and local governments there is also diversity among them. The resulting challenge is for First Nations and local governments to learn

about the governance structures in their area. Greater awareness and understanding of how a neighboring community operates can lead to increased opportunities and partnerships.

First Nations systems of governance can vary widely based on the history and cultural practices of a particular First Nation. Today, the diverse First Nations governance structures include hereditary systems, elected systems and blended models. First Nations administrative models are just as diverse with differences reflecting the size of the First Nation, geographic location and the varied exercise of jurisdiction, among other factors. First Nations operating revenues come from several sources including economic development operations, taxing authority, federal and provincial funding arrangements, and others.

*First Nations systems of governance can vary widely based on the history and cultural practices of a particular First Nation. Local governments and First Nations both provide services to their citizens but are different in how their governments are organized. The challenge is for local governments and First Nations to learn about their neighbour's governance structure.*

There are two key types of local governments in BC: municipalities and regional districts. Both are created and granted powers by the provincial government under the *Local Government Act* and the *Community Charter*. The exception is the City of Vancouver, which is governed by the *Vancouver Charter*. The BC Ministry of Community Services is responsible for the legislative framework under which local governments operate. Day-to-day administration for local government services is done for municipalities and regional districts by professional staff. The provincial and federal governments help local governments with costly infrastructure (roads, sewer and water systems) through special grant programs.

Municipalities include cities, districts, towns and villages. BC municipalities are governed by an elected council that is made up of a mayor and several councillors (depending on population size). Services provided by municipalities can be anything the council decides is necessary or desirable. Examples include: land use planning and zoning, fire and police protection, libraries, parks and recreational facilities. Services are primarily paid for through property taxes and fees for services.

Regional districts are unique to BC and deliver local services to rural (electoral) areas outside municipalities and provide a way for municipalities and electoral areas to jointly fund services that benefit both areas or the whole regional district. Services include: regional planning, public transportation, water, sewer, waste management, fire protection, emergency programs, recreation and libraries. Each regional district is managed by a board of directors composed of appointees from municipalities and a director elected in each electoral area. The regional district board selects a chair annually.

Local government elections are held every three years (2008, 2011, 2014, etc.), and always on the third Saturday in November.

## C2C connect



**Your comments and story ideas are critical to our success. Please send them to:**

**Marlene Wells**  
**Union of BC Municipalities**  
60 - 10551 Shellbridge Way,  
Richmond, BC V6X 2W9  
mwells@civicnet.bc.ca  
604 270 8226 ext. 116

or:

**Colin Braker**  
**First Nations Summit**  
1200 - 100 Park Royal South,  
West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2  
cbraker@fns.bc.ca  
604 926 9903

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**Writing: White Raven Consulting**  
**Design & Layout: Michael Guy**