



## Subdivision Bylaw

# What We Heard Report

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**URBAN**  
SYSTEMS

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is undertaking an update to its Subdivision Bylaw to ensure that subdivision standards are aligned with current provincial legislation, best practices and the Regional District's servicing capacity, environmental, and regional approach to growth. The Subdivision Bylaw applies to the RDCK's eleven electoral areas (A-K) and sets out the standards and servicing requirements that must be met when land is subdivided. For a regional district, these standards help ensure new lots are created in a way that is safe, serviceable, and appropriate for local conditions. In areas with a Zoning Bylaw or Official Community Plan policies, the Subdivision Bylaw helps implement adopted land use directions. In areas without land use regulation, the Subdivision Bylaw often serves as the primary tool guiding land use, subdivision decisions, servicing expectations, and protection of public health and the environment.

Phase 1 of this project was undertaken to better understand the issues, opportunities, and challenges associated with the current Subdivision Bylaw. Phase 1 tasks included:

- A technical review of the existing Subdivision Bylaw;
- Comparative analysis of subdivision standards used in comparable communities;
- Review of current best practices; and
- Review of current applicable provincial legislation.

Internal engagement with RDCK staff across multiple departments took place in Phase 1 and detailed staff comments across all subject areas are included in the Background Review Summary Report.

The insights from the Background Review Summary Report informed Phase 2 of the project, which included external engagement with elected officials and key stakeholders, culminating in the drafting of this engagement summary. This report presents the feedback collected during Phase 2 engagement with external stakeholders and the RDCK Board to support both the technical and contextual understanding of the RDCK Subdivision Bylaw. The engagement summary serves as a critical tool in supporting the drafting of the updated Subdivision Bylaw, which will be undertaken in Phase 3.

The rationale for undertaking engagement was grounded in the need to:

- Gather input on how the Subdivision Bylaw is currently functioning across the RDCK, including highlighting any challenges or areas where improvements can be made;
- Target feedback from industry experts, agencies, and elected officials to support the technical nature of the bylaw.
- Confirm alignment between RDCK servicing requirements and provincial agency mandates;
- Understand local context and conditions that influence subdivision across the region; and
- Identify operational, cost, and feasibility considerations associated with different servicing approaches.

## 2.0 Outreach and Engagement Opportunities

From November 2025 to February 2026, the project team undertook a range of outreach and engagement activities with elected officials and key stakeholders, including:

- The RDCK Board;
- Local qualified professionals and developers;
- Interior Health Authority;
- Ministry of Transportation and Transit;
- Provincial Approving Officer; and
- Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship.

Given the technical and regulatory nature of a Subdivision Bylaw, the project team focused on engagement with groups with direct experience in subdivision design, approval, and administration rather than broad public consultation. Additional outreach included:

- Letters sent to local First Nations to invite members to meet with the project team and share feedback related to the Subdivision Bylaw update; and
- Creation of a project page on <https://engage.rdck.ca/> to inform the public and provide an overview of the project, and access to key information, documents, and resources related to the Bylaw update.

### ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

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Ongoing  
Engagement

#### RDCK Staff

Throughout the Subdivision Bylaw project, RDCK staff have contributed ongoing input on the bylaw, identifying gaps, opportunities, and key issues for discussion with external stakeholders. Initial feedback from staff was collected through review of redlined versions of the Subdivision Bylaw, background reports prepared by staff, and an internal survey on the bylaw conducted in 2024.

21  
participants

#### Qualified Professionals and Developers

A total of 21 qualified professionals and developers participated in two webinar sessions held on November 25, 2025, with one session at 12:00 pm and a second at 6:30 pm. Participants included contractors, surveyors, engineers, architects, registered wastewater practitioners, and land management consultants. The purpose of these sessions was to gather feedback from individuals who regularly work with the RDCK's Subdivision Bylaw when planning and delivering development within the Regional District. The webinars highlighted key themes related to subdivision and servicing and provided opportunities for participants to share practical experience, insights, and feedback, including perspectives on local context and conditions that influence the subdivision process. Email invitations were distributed to qualified professionals and developers who undertake work in the RDCK, and information about the webinars was also posted publicly on [engage.rdck.ca](https://engage.rdck.ca/).

## 2 Interviews

### Provincial Ministry and Agency Interviews

Two interviews, along with follow-up email correspondence, were conducted with provincial ministries and agencies that participate in the subdivision review process in the RDCK. A set of discussion questions was developed and shared with the agencies in advance of the interviews to support feedback and input. Interviews provided insight into how the Subdivision Bylaw is currently functioning, opportunities to improve alignment with provincial legislation and agency mandates, and broader trends related to subdivision servicing within the RDCK.

- Email feedback received from the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship
- Interior Health Authority Interview
  - January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 10:30 am to 11:30 am, meeting conducted virtually
- Ministry of Transportation and Transit and Approving Officer Interview
  - January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm, meeting conducted virtually

## 1 Workshop

### RDCK Board Workshop

A workshop was held with the RDCK Board to provide an overview of the project, discuss the role of the Subdivision Bylaw within the broader land use planning framework, and gather Board input on key issues and concerns affecting subdivision across the RDCK's electoral areas. The workshop was held in a hybrid format (online and in-person) on February 17, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

## 3.0 Key Themes

The following section provides a high-level overview of the key themes that emerged through the engagement process for the Subdivision Bylaw update. These themes capture the primary subjects addressed throughout the engagement and cover common areas of interest and concerns identified by RDCK staff and stakeholder groups. A more detailed summary of the feedback received is provided in Section 4.0.

### 3.1 Water Supply

- Surface water is a recurring concern due to reliability issues, drought and climate change impacts, and complexity in provincial approval processes. This reinforces interest in improving baseline information without expanding RDCK oversight or duplicating regulatory roles.
- Potable water testing is generally supported, with emphasis on applying testing requirements at the most practical stage to avoid creating barriers to subdivision.
- Differences in access to surface water across electoral areas were noted, underscoring the importance of tailored approaches and recognizing data limitations when confirming water source availability.

### **3.2 Sewerage Systems**

- Type 1 septic systems are generally supported as an appropriate baseline at the subdivision stage; however, modern development patterns and an increasing number of dwelling units per lot are making feasibility more difficult to demonstrate in some cases.
- Higher maintenance requirements and associated risks were identified for Type 2 and 3 systems if maintenance is not carried out, emphasizing the need for mechanisms to support long-term system performance. Views varied on whether responsibility and risk associated with ongoing maintenance should rest with the property owner or the Regional District (through a maintenance bylaw).
- Striking a balance between risk management and affordability was highlighted when considering requirements such as hydrogeological assessments or strict 1-hectare minimum parcel size thresholds. It was highlighted that consideration needs to be given to managing risk without placing undue burden on applicants or RDCK resources.
- Subdivision standards that protect public health and environmental integrity with consideration of cumulative impacts and vulnerable aquifers while avoiding unnecessary barriers to housing delivery were supported.

### **3.3 Property Access**

- Support for clear role definition between the RDCK and the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, with support for maintaining alignment and avoiding duplication of provincial authority within the Subdivision Bylaw.
- Safety and emergency access identified as key considerations, particularly for subdivisions with a single access point and in rural or remote areas.

### **3.4 Subdivision Bylaw Administration and Process**

- Support for alignment with provincial legislation and agency roles.
- Clear jurisdictional roles and responsibilities, including clarification of the respective roles of the RDCK, provincial agencies, and the Provincial Approving Officer to reduce duplication, confusion, and inconsistency.
- Streamlined bylaw provisions with opportunities identified to modernize the bylaw text and remove or revise provisions that the RDCK does not actively enforce to support clearer expectations and administration.
- New reporting or testing requirements were generally supported where they are clearly justified, risk-based, and aligned with existing professional or provincial standards.
- Opportunity to improve clarity around the subdivision referral process, including when and how Directors and advisory bodies are notified and/or engaged.

### **3.5 Long Term Planning**

- Emphasis on aligning long-term growth and density with the availability and reliability of servicing, recognizing different expectations and risks in community-serviced areas versus areas reliant on individual systems.
- Emphasis on coordinating long-term planning across municipal and Electoral Area boundaries to manage boundary-adjacent growth, anticipate servicing implications, and support measured development through appropriate regional and fringe-area planning tools.

## 4.0 What We Heard

This section provides a more detailed summary of the feedback collected from stakeholders across all engagement activities undertaken as part of the RDCK Subdivision Bylaw update. Feedback has been organized by key theme related to the Subdivision Bylaw, including water supply, sewerage systems, property access, subdivision bylaw administration and process, and long-term planning. Within each theme, the feedback is summarized by stakeholder group, highlighting perspectives and issues relevant to that subject area.

### 4.1 WATER SUPPLY

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#### **Qualified Professionals and Development Community**

Webinar participants generally supported the principle of potable water testing requirements but emphasized that potability testing is more appropriately undertaken at the building permit stage, rather than at subdivision. For individual home-based systems, water quality testing at the building permit stage was viewed as a more practical option by webinar participants, noting the ease of administration and better alignment with Interior Health Authority processes. Requiring water potability confirmation too early was deemed a barrier to subdivision, particularly in rural and infill contexts.

Some webinar participants expressed concern regarding the complexity and delays in provincial surface water licensing approval. Other webinar participants cautioned against introducing further regulations or restricting surface water as a source for subdivision, noting that there are already provincial regulations that address this. Some webinar participants stated that drilled wells are viewed as a more reliable and practical solution for water supply because they provide long-term access and control.

#### **Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship**

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) staff shared information on the Ministry's eligible surface water source list, which identifies approved surface water sources known to have sufficient supply to support domestic use. WLRS staff noted that this list is subject to change over time and suggested that the Subdivision Bylaw could reference the Ministry's approved water sources list as part of confirming whether a proposed subdivision has an available surface water supply.

WLRS staff also provided feedback on Part 8 (Water Supply) of the RDCK's Subdivision Bylaw, with their comments focused on aligning the Bylaw with the *Water Sustainability Act*, including updating water quantity requirements to reflect the current provincial practice of 2,000 cubic metres per day for domestic water supply.

#### **Interior Health Authority**

Interior Health Authority (IHA) staff stated approximately 40% of community water systems registered with Interior Health Authority are on a boil water notice, reinforcing the public-health value of consistent testing expectations. IHA staff recommended against new connections to community water systems on a boil water notice.

IHA staff also placed importance on clear, objective water quality verification at the point of proof of water for community water systems. Requirements for a source assessment that includes both chemical

and bacteriological analysis for potability were supported by the IHA to ensure there is no uncertainty or interpretation around whether a supply meets potable standards.

### **RDCK Staff**

RDCK staff emphasized the need to strengthen how a subdivision water supply is reviewed through the Subdivision Bylaw. Staff indicated that the RDCK's current approach is less rigorous than the Provincial Approving Officer's and supported stronger bylaw requirements to verify water access so that each new parcel is served by a legal and sufficient water source. This also relates to comments on gaps in the list of eligible surface water sources verified by the Province; RDCK staff noted that where a proposed water source is not listed, additional provincial confirmation is required before the supply can be relied upon for subdivision approval.

RDCK staff comments also emphasized potability as a fundamental gap in the current Subdivision Bylaw, noting the absence of clear definitions, testing standards for what constitutes potable water, and requirements for potable water. In relation to wells, staff highlighted that shallow and dug wells pose a higher contamination risk and emphasized the importance of clear expectations for well sealing and appropriate oversight.

RDCK staff feedback also focused on community water systems and the feasibility of connection requirements. Some RDCK staff expressed support for mandatory connection to community water systems for smaller lots (e.g., less than 0.2 ha) or where system capacity exists, while others pointed to the RDCK's limited enforcement capacity. RDCK staff observed that there is currently no clear connection requirement and that expectations are applied inconsistently across applications and areas.

### **RDCK Board**

Directors emphasized the need to strengthen the RDCK's baseline information related to water servicing across the region, including improved understanding of the different types of water systems in place (e.g., communal, co-operative, and private systems). Directors clarified that the intent was not to expand RDCK oversight of these systems, but rather to address an information gap by ensuring the RDCK has more reliable records and available drawings for community water systems.

Directors highlighted the importance of considering increasing drought conditions and the growing influence of climate change on surface water reliability. Surface water systems were identified as a key consideration for subdivision across the region, with Directors observing that if new connections to surface water are limited or restricted, this could become a barrier to subdivision in some electoral areas.

Discussion also focused on the feasibility and consistency of potable water requirements. Directors noted that water quality testing is not consistently undertaken and that obtaining a certificate of potable water can be challenging in practice.

In relation to the use of a provincially approved surface water sources list, Directors cautioned that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be workable across the RDCK given the region's variability. Directors also noted that water quality and quantity monitoring responsibilities have largely been downloaded from the Province without sufficient local capacity or consistent provincial data across all electoral areas. There was recognition of the need for a practical approach for very rural areas where data is

limited, alongside continued advocacy for improved provincial water data, acknowledging that there is no single method to confirm water source availability and potability.

Directors also raised questions regarding well testing standards and the potential role of covenants, noting that water treatment often occurs at the individual home level. It was emphasized that water quality testing should be clearly addressed at the point of proof of water in the subdivision process to better support long-term sustainability.

## 4.2 SEWERAGE SYSTEMS

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### **Qualified Professionals and Development Community**

There was general agreement from the webinar participants that reliance on Type 1 septic systems as the baseline standard is appropriate at the subdivision stage because of the increased maintenance requirements associated with Type 2 and 3 systems. However, several webinar participants noted that development patterns have changed, and that smaller dwellings such as secondary suites and alternative housing forms are making it difficult to demonstrate the feasibility of Type 1 systems on smaller lots due to space constraints.

Several webinar participants raised concerns about ensuring appropriate long-term maintenance for Type 2 and 3 sewerage systems. While some webinar participants noted that the Sewerage System Standard Practice Manual already provides comprehensive technical guidance and requires a maintenance plan, therefore placing responsibility on the property owner, webinar participants also observed that many owners are unaware of the type of system they have or the associated maintenance requirements. Some webinar participants suggested that some of these challenges could be addressed at the subdivision stage through stronger checks and balances, such as maintenance bylaws, inspection requirements, and restrictive covenants to support ongoing compliance. Additionally, it was noted that the limited number and availability of professionals to support maintenance could make it more challenging to maintain these systems to the necessary standards, leading to increased environmental and contamination risks.

Webinar participants also raised concerns about current standard capacity assumptions used to calculate domestic sewage flows for Type 1 systems, including the standard assumption of a four-bedroom home requiring 1,600 litres of sewage per day. It was noted that this assumption does not align well with emerging development trends that include multiple dwelling units on a single lot. One webinar participant observed that most new residential designs now feature either a secondary suite or provisions for a rental cabin or tiny home. These additional units can add about 700 litres daily to the design flow, which is an increase of approximately 44% compared to the required design flow of 1,600 litres per day.

### **Interior Health Authority**

IHA staff noted that the standard assumption for domestic demand, a four-bedroom home requiring 1,600 litres of sewer capacity per day, is considered sufficient, and there is no anticipated change in this requirement in the near term.

IHA staff highlighted a key limitation of the current professional reliance approach. While Authorized Persons can demonstrate that a proposal for a Type 2 or 3 system meets subdivision-stage regulatory

requirements, this does not necessarily address long-term performance or cumulative impacts once systems are operating over time.

IHA staff further noted that more complex Type 2 and 3 systems require more frequent ongoing maintenance than Type 1, and if maintenance is neglected, the systems may treat wastewater less efficiently than a Type 1 system. IHA staff identified that failures in the Type 2 and 3 systems could result in poorly treated effluent being sent into the ground, which can cause higher levels of phosphorus and nitrates entering the environment.

From a process and risk-management perspective, IHA staff expressed a preference to rely on the provincial 1-hectare standard for on-site servicing, or to pursue a Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP) in areas where smaller lot sizes or higher servicing complexity are being considered. IHA staff indicated that support for Type 2 and 3 systems would generally require a clear mechanism to mandate and enforce ongoing maintenance, such as a maintenance bylaw and/or LWMP.

IHA staff emphasized the importance of a maintenance bylaw, noting that system modifications can occur after subdivision approval. They also highlighted that the RDCK includes areas with shallow groundwater and vulnerable aquifers, and that inadequate maintenance presents real contamination risks. An example was referenced from Armstrong, where nitrate and fecal contamination of an aquifer occurred due to insufficient control and oversight of septic systems.

### **Ministry of Transportation and Transit and Provincial Approving Officer**

Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT) staff and the Provincial Approving Officer noted that the Provincial Approving Officer may require the use of restrictive covenants to protect and reserve areas needed for on-site sewerage systems, as part of the subdivision approval process. It was noted that this authority is applied on a case-by-case basis.

### **RDCK Staff**

RDCK staff noted that Type 1 septic systems remain an appropriate baseline at the subdivision stage. However, they noted that the current Subdivision Bylaw does not clearly reference the Sewerage System Regulation, which creates uncertainty around how provincial standards are intended to be applied through RDCK requirements. This uncertainty also then applies to Type 2 and 3 systems, which are not referenced in the current Subdivision Bylaw.

RDCK staff expressed caution about including Type 2 and 3 septic systems as a standard subdivision solution, referring to limited local capacity to perform required periodic maintenance and the increased potential for failure if systems are not properly maintained. Staff also identified a lack of clarity in the Subdivision Bylaw regarding when Type 2 and 3 systems may be considered and what maintenance expectations would apply over time.

Discussion also focused on community wastewater systems, with RDCK staff noting that there is currently no consistent standardization of design or performance criteria to guide implementation. RDCK staff indicated that clearer baseline expectations could improve consistency and reduce uncertainty for both applicants and RDCK staff when community sewer solutions are proposed as part of subdivision.

## **RDCK Board**

Discussion focused on what enforceable long-term sewer system maintenance could realistically look like in the RDCK context for Type 2 and 3 systems. Directors discussed potential tools including maintenance bylaws enforced by the Regional District and the use of notices on title to support knowledge transfer and ongoing maintenance of sewerage systems. While the potential creation of a maintenance bylaw was discussed, several Directors noted that additional staff capacity would be required to administer and enforce such a bylaw, and that there is existing capacity limitations related to bylaw enforcement within the RDCK.

Some Directors expressed a preference for leaving long-term maintenance responsibility with the landowner, rather than introducing additional RDCK regulatory requirements related to ongoing system maintenance. Directors also raised concerns about the 1-hectare minimum parcel size requirement for onsite sewerage servicing, noting potential implications for housing affordability if all parcels are required to meet this size threshold.

## **4.3 PROPERTY ACCESS**

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### **Qualified Professionals and Development Community**

Participants indicated that property access and roadway standards are appropriately addressed by the MoTT, and there was limited support for introducing additional RDCK-specific access requirements that could duplicate or conflict with provincial oversight.

Participants suggested that the Provincial Approving Officer should retain flexibility to exercise discretion based on site-specific conditions and supporting technical reports, without the need for additional access or roadway requirements imposed through the RDCK Subdivision Bylaw.

### **Ministry of Transportation and Transit and Provincial Approving Officer**

The Provincial Approving Officer and MoTT staff clarified that authority over property access and highway-related requirements for subdivision rests with the Provincial Approving Officer, not MoTT. It was noted that the Provincial Approving Officer operates independently in a quasi-judicial role away from MoTT when reviewing and considering subdivision applications.

The Provincial Approving Officer outlined the criteria considered when assessing property access, including the form of access (easement, common lot, or right-of-way), existing conditions, topography, cost, emergency vehicle access (including comments from local fire chiefs) and future subdivision potential. The Provincial Approving Officer expressed in some cases, a common lot access arrangement can make more sense than a private access held under one owner because it can be structured to accommodate future development and subdivision opportunities, provided it is laid out appropriately from the start. Issues related to easement and common lot access identified during the Subdivision Bylaw background review, including access and maintenance challenges, were acknowledged by the Provincial Approving Officer.

The Provincial Approving Officer and MoTT staff noted that embedding detailed driveway or access standards within the Subdivision Bylaw could unintentionally limit the Provincial Approving Officer's discretion. Concerns were raised about how the RDCK would determine appropriate technical standards such as maximum driveway grades and how existing access arrangements that function effectively but

do not meet new standards would be treated; this is of particular concern as the RDCK does not have engineers on staff to make these determinations

Staff emphasized that the Subdivision Bylaw should allow for discretion, rather than prescribing fixed or mandatory access requirements, to ensure decisions can respond to site-specific conditions, constraints, and supporting technical information.

MoTT staff and the Provincial Approving Officer supported the potential inclusion of new bylaw language to clarify the treatment of statutory rights-of-way, noting that the statutory rights-of-way documents should be reviewed, accepted and approved by the Regional District and not Provincial Approving Officer.

MoTT staff also noted that panhandle access is best managed through the discretion of the Provincial Approving Officer and questioned whether an RDCK-specific access section in the Subdivision Bylaw is necessary where it may duplicate or conflict with the roles of the Provincial Approving Officer and MoTT.

### **RDCK Staff**

RDCK staff emphasized that discretionary bylaw language related to property access can be inconsistently interpreted by applicants, contributing to variable outcomes and ongoing clarification during review. Staff also noted that road naming is not consistently standardized, which can create administrative and wayfinding challenges.

In terms of lot configuration, Staff highlighted that panhandle and narrow-frontage lots can create ongoing access and emergency-service challenges. Staff observed that panhandle access is sometimes approved by the Provincial Approving Officer contrary to the considerations set out in the Subdivision Bylaw, which can contribute to inconsistency in expectations.

Feedback from RDCK staff also focused on shared-access parcels and easement access, with staff noting persistent maintenance issues, property owner conflict, and, in some cases, constraints for future subdivision. Staff noted that access to multiple lots by easement or a common lot can lead to recurring maintenance challenges over time. Staff also referenced requests from elected officials to limit the number of lots served by an easement or common lot, while recognizing that the RDCK's authority to impose such limits may be constrained.

RDCK staff also identified the lack of driveway standards as a safety concern, noting that steep, narrow, or poorly graded access can be unsuitable for emergency access. This was framed as a key consideration for rural properties where driveway conditions can directly affect emergency response and long-term usability.

### **RDCK Board**

The directors raised concerns about subdivision proposals that rely on a single access point, particularly where the subdivision is remote and far away from emergency services. Directors emphasized the importance of access road safety, noting that heightened risk can arise where existing access routes are not constructed to Transportation Association of Canada standards or proposed access routes have limited visibility or are not sufficient for emergency vehicle access. These conditions were identified as posing potential challenges for both resident safety and emergency response.

Directors discussed whether the Subdivision Bylaw could play a role in addressing these risks by establishing baseline safety expectations for access, particularly in rural and semi-rural subdivisions. There was acknowledgement that incorporating baseline safety access regulations in the Subdivision Bylaw could help improve consistency and reduce risk across the RDCK; however, Directors also noted this could add additional onerous regulatory requirements and step into the territory that MoTT already regulates.

## 4.4 SUBDIVISION BYLAW ADMINISTRATION AND PROCESS

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### **Qualified Professionals and Development Community**

Webinar participants emphasized the importance of maintaining a clear and predictable subdivision process, particularly considering recent zoning changes and provincial housing legislation intended to support infill development. Webinar participants noted that additional reporting or testing requirements were generally viewed as acceptable only where they clearly address identified risks and are aligned with existing provincial requirements or professional standards, rather than introducing new or duplicative local processes.

### **Interior Health Authority**

IHA staff noted that they have not observed notable gaps or challenges with the RDCK Subdivision Bylaw through recent work. However, IHA staff indicated that they do encounter issues with the quality and completeness of technical septic report submissions from Authorized Persons, including missing the criteria for layout plans or a clear statement outlining their understanding of the guidelines.

IHA staff also noted that, in practice, they routinely encounter water and sewer systems that lack construction permits and are not fully permitted, and that these are discovered on an ongoing basis. Where such systems are discovered, staff indicated that they are not necessarily rejected outright. Instead, systems are assessed against the intent of the *Drinking Water Protection Act*, which staff described as more restrictive and generally better suited to larger systems than to smaller systems.

### **Ministry of Transportation and Transit and Provincial Approving Officer**

MoTT staff and the Provincial Approving Officer highlighted the importance of ensuring that the Subdivision Bylaw clearly reflects what the RDCK is able and intended to administer. Staff noted that provisions that are not meant to be actively enforced can create confusion and inconsistency and should be reconsidered or removed.

MoTT staff and the Provincial Approving Officer highlighted several opportunities to improve overall clarity, consistency, and administrative alignment, including:

- Updating the bylaw to reflect legislative changes and current agency roles.
- Clarifying the scope and applicability of the bylaw, including how it applies to boundary adjustments and limited subdivision scenarios.
- Improving alignment of access-related provisions with the respective roles of the Provincial Approving Officer and MoTT.
- Reducing ambiguous or subjective language and aligning wording with best practices.
- Reviewing and refining sections that overlap and do not align with provincial legislation, including references to amendments that can be made in sections including for example:

Section 3.2 (b) to clarify that some boundary adjustments will not apply due to overlap with the *Strata Property Act*, Section and Section 9.03 (a) on ownership of a community water system by a strata corporation of a bare land strata subdivision when considering Section 506 (6) of the *Local Government Act*.

### **RDCK Staff**

RDCK staff emphasized that several Subdivision Bylaw standards and definitions are now out of date, including the water standards, because of recent changes to provincial legislation. All references to legislation and regulation in the bylaw will need to be reviewed and updated to align with new legislation.

In relation to process, RDCK staff noted that the Regional District's subdivision review operates under a professional reliance model that places adherence to technical subdivision requirements on the owner's or applicant's hired professionals. Staff indicated that this approach is embedded in the current Subdivision Bylaw framework through certification and documentation requirements. This model is due to the RDCK not having dedicated internal engineering staff to independently review engineering submissions and technical submissions. These constraints have been identified, and RDCK staff note that the Subdivision Bylaw should be tailored to reflect the RDCK's available staffing capacity and expertise.

**RDCK staff also noted opportunities to improve bylaw language to reduce discretionary interpretation and support more consistent application throughout the bylaw (e.g. the word "preference" used in Section 6.02). This included clarifying requirements and focusing RDCK requirements on standards that can be realistically administered within available capacity.**

### **RDCK Board**

Directors asked for clarification on when and how they are notified of subdivision applications throughout the subdivision referral process. In particular, Directors inquired about the points at which subdivision applications are referred to the Advisory Planning and Heritage Commission (APHC) as part of the review and referral process. In response, RDCK staff provided an overview of the subdivision process following referral of an application to the Regional District by the Provincial Approving Officer, including when and how information is shared with Directors and advisory bodies, in accordance with RDCK Planning Procedures and Fees Bylaw's Schedule L.

## **4.5 LONG TERM PLANNING**

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### **Interior Health Authority**

From a planning and risk perspective, IHA staff expressed support for increased density in areas served by community water and sewer systems. They noted that in areas reliant on individual private services, larger parcel sizes remain important to support long-term public health protection and system sustainability.

IHA staff described their use of a professional reliance model, supported by technical reports prepared by Authorized Persons. While they acknowledged that Authorized Persons may, in some circumstances, justify parcel sizes below 1 hectare, IHA staff cautioned that smaller lots can limit long-term sustainability and future subdivision potential unless they are connected to community water and sewer

systems. For parcels under 1 hectare, IHA indicated they would expect a clear technical justification demonstrating sufficient usable area and the absence of hydrological constraints, such as shallow or vulnerable aquifers or proximity to existing wells.

In addition, IHA staff identified emerging pressures associated with recent Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing-related changes, including intensification of development within established settlement areas. From a public health perspective, they cautioned that even parcels of approximately 0.25 hectares serviced by on-site septic can present challenges, and that further reductions in lot size increase risk without appropriate servicing and planning safeguards in place.

### **RDCK Staff**

RDCK staff emphasized the importance of aligning long-term subdivision servicing expectations with evolving development patterns, including increasing density and associated design flows. Staff noted that technical assessments are typically based on a standard four-bedroom dwelling and often do not account for additional dwelling units or accessory units that may be permitted through the Regional District's land use bylaws and encouraged under the new Bill 44.

RDCK staff also noted mixed perspectives on whether to formalize a large-parcel exemption (e.g., parcels greater than 30 ha). Some staff supported clarifying this exemption in the bylaw, while others maintained that all new parcels should provide proof of potable water and sewer disposal regardless of size, to avoid transferring risk to future owners and to support consistent expectations.

In relation to lot size and future servicing pathways, RDCK staff highlighted that Interior Health Authority guidelines for minimum lot size (1 hectare for on-site services and 0.2 hectares where connected to a community water system) are not currently a requirement of the Subdivision Bylaw. RDCK staff cautioned that approving lots smaller than 1-hectare without a community sewer connection could create longer-term risks and may affect the RDCK's eligibility for provincial wastewater treatment infrastructure funding in the future.

RDCK staff identified a gap in how long-term servicing requirements are carried forward after subdivision approval, noting there is limited assurance that lots continue to meet water and sewer servicing requirements when buildings are constructed. This was framed as a broader sustainability issue, with staff emphasizing the need to consider cumulative impacts and long-term system performance when establishing subdivision standards.

RDCK staff have indicated that long-term RDCK planning documents, including the Regional Growth Strategy, Official Community Plans, and the Planning Procedure and Fees Bylaw, may require amendments to facilitate implementation of the Subdivision Bylaw. These updates may also be necessary to address subjects or issues not encompassed within the scope of the Subdivision Bylaw.

## **RDCK Board**

RDCK Directors discussed planning tools and pathways to support cross-jurisdictional consultation and alignment between member municipalities and electoral areas. This included the role of regional growth strategies, fringe area planning approaches to manage boundary-adjacent development pressures, and, in some cases, the potential exploration of municipal boundary extensions. Directors emphasized the importance of proactive coordination with neighbouring municipalities to anticipate servicing implications and to address potential concerns associated with municipal boundary-adjacent development, particularly where electoral areas rely on municipal infrastructure.

## **5.0 Next Steps**

The next step in the Subdivision Bylaw update project is the preparation of a first draft of the Subdivision Bylaw, informed by staff and Board input, stakeholder feedback, and technical expertise from RDCK interdepartmental staff and external partners, including best practices research. Input gathered through the qualified professional webinars, interviews with provincial ministries and agencies, and the Board workshop will directly inform this draft. Once the first draft of the Subdivision Bylaw is complete (targeted draft to be complete for June 2026), it will be brought to the Rural Affairs Committee for review, input, and direction. The RDCK will also re-engage qualified professionals, the development community, and provincial ministries and agencies to seek feedback on the draft bylaw. All feedback received will be considered and used to refine the Subdivision Bylaw.