



ELECTORAL AREA F BOUNDARY STUDY

FINAL REPORT

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Neilson Strategies Inc.
Innovation Centre
106-460 Doyle Avenue, Kelowna, BC, V1Y 0C2
neilsonstrategies.ca

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Over a 12-month period beginning in the spring of 2022, the Electoral Area F Governance & Services Study Committee undertook the *Electoral Area F Governance & Services Study*. The purpose of the Study was to document and assess the current state of local governance and service delivery in Electoral Area F of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN), understand the concerns and interests of Area F residents with respect to governance and service delivery, and identify future governance and service delivery options for the Electoral Area.

The Study Committee presented its final report to the RDN Board of Directors in April 2023. The report ended with the following passage:

The Committee made a recommendation to the RDN Board of Directors at its April 26, 2023 final meeting. Only one motion was made by the Committee, although the merits of other options were raised by Committee members during the discussion on the motion.

The adopted Committee recommendation is as follows:

The Electoral Area F Governance & Services Study Committee recommends to the RDN Board of Directors that an incorporation study proceed.

The Committee is aware that if an incorporation study is pursued, there may be interim step to determine the specific boundaries of the incorporation study area.

The RDN Board of Directors endorsed the Committee's recommendation, and requested funding from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs¹ for an incorporation study. The Minister responded with funding and the terms of reference for a *Boundary Study* to define the potential study area as a precursor for any future study.

BOUNDARY ANALYSIS

The terms of reference for the *Boundary Study* (see Appendix I) identified the following objectives:

- outline the criteria used to decide on a future study area boundary including, but not limited to population, settlement patterns, roads, and land use regulation;

¹ The Ministry is now the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

- recommend a potential study area boundary scenario reflecting the outlined criteria;
- identify, at a high level, restructure implications resulting from the recommended study area boundary that could be explored further by a future incorporation study;
- if appropriate, identify secondary boundaries that could also be suitable for a study area;
- if secondary boundaries are identified, describe the differences between the recommended boundary and the secondary boundaries.

The terms of reference further specified some of the criteria to be considered, including:

- services and infrastructure (e.g. existing infrastructure, including water and sewer; complete service areas; future infrastructure needs and development plans; current and projected future local services and standard demands; existing local roads);
- settlement patterns (e.g. zoning; OCP land use designations; ALR status; lot sizes; area population, population density, and dispersion);
- existing infrastructure needs and development plans;
- property class composition and assessed property values;
- existing local roads and designated highways;
- tax revenue capacity (e.g. property class composition and assessed property values);
- a diverse demographic profile;
- a shared sense of community identity;
- a population of at least 3,000 to 5,000 people;
- the exclusion of Crown land from the prospective boundaries, where practical, to ensure that the majority of the land within the boundaries would be primarily under local government jurisdiction;
- community input and perspectives collected during the previous *Governance and Services Study* and this study;
- other factors determined relevant based on data gathered during the study process.

Ultimately the *Boundary Study* is intended to recommend a study area(s) — that is, at least one potential boundary (and possibly secondary areas). The recommendations are to be based on an assessment of quantitative and qualitative data, driven by a set of boundary criteria. For each scenario, the *Study* is to identify, at a high level, the implications that would be explored further under a full restructure study. If the Minister and RDN Board decide to move forward with an incorporation study following the *Boundary Study*, a detailed technical examination of the impacts of incorporation will be explored at that time.

It is important to note that this *Study* is focused on recommending one or more feasible boundaries, and is not intended to examine the impacts on areas that are not

included within the boundary options. Impacts to areas outside of any incorporation boundary are typically considered by a regional district once an incorporation study has been approved by the province.

Independent Analysis

The terms of reference specified that the Boundary Study was to be completed by an independent consultant retained by the RDN. The RDN retained a consulting team of Neilson Strategies Inc. and Leftside Partners Inc. to undertake the analysis, and Horsman Strategies Inc. to lead the community engagement component of the Study. Neilson Strategies Inc. and Leftside Partners Inc. prepared the previous *Electoral Area F Governance and Services Study* that concluded in 2023.

REPORT

This document presents the results of the *Boundary Study*, including the options analysis and summary of the engagement process. The remainder of the document consists of the following chapters:

- *Chapter 2: Approach and Criteria* — Chapter 2 outlines the approach followed in undertaking the study. The chapter introduces and explains the factors that were considered in developing potential boundaries, and the specific criteria on which the boundary options were based.
- *Chapter 3: Boundary Options* — Chapter 3 presents the Boundary Options, based on the parameters referenced in Chapter 2. Data regarding each boundary option is shared, and each boundary is assessed against the evaluation criteria.
- *Chapter 4: Option Impacts* — This chapter presents a high-level overview of the potential implications for residents and the RDN associated with the boundary options. Implications related to service finances, governance and property taxes are explored.
- *Chapter 5: Engagement Summary* — This chapter presents a summary of the public engagement process, including feedback received through the two community meetings and survey.
- *Chapter 6: Recommendation* — This chapter provides a recommendation based on the combination of technical criteria and engagement input.

RDN Geographic Information System Assistance

All of the maps, including the many iterations that preceded the final versions, and much of the data that enabled the boundary analysis, were produced and collected by RDN's geographic information system (GIS). The consultants wish to thank both the RDN's Strategy and Intergovernmental Services group and the GIS team who spent significant time and effort responding to the consultants' many mapping and data requests.

CHAPTER 2

APPROACH AND CRITERIA

This chapter begins by reviewing the approach that was followed to conduct the Boundary Study. The chapter then introduces and explains the specific criteria that were used to develop the recommended boundaries.

APPROACH

The consultants followed a seven-stage approach to complete the *Boundary Study*. Each stage is described as follows:

- *Stage 1: Data Collection and Review* — The consultants began by collecting and reviewing data and other information on a wide range of factors that are important, or may be important, to the development of boundaries. Factors that were examined include:
 - future community development plans and land use categories, as outlined in the 2024 Regional Growth Strategy, the Electoral Area F Official Community Plan (including drafts of updates) and Zoning Bylaw
 - population and population density for Area F and its communities, as collected by Statistics Canada in the 2021 Census,
 - BC Population projections
 - local government services (all types) and service areas
 - watershed and water region mapping
 - local road networks and BC road structures database
 - property assessment classes
 - property assessment values
 - Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and farm class property inventories in Area F
 - Treaty Settlement Lands identified as part of the Te'mexw Treaty process
 - Review of community input provided in the previous *Electoral Area F Governance and Services Study*

Some of the data and information had been collected in 2022 and 2023 as part of the Electoral Area F Governance Study. Staff at the RDN provided updated information to the consultants to supplement their review of the Governance & Services Study materials. Other information sources —

Agricultural Land Commission, Statistics Canada, BC's Ministry of Transportation and Transit — were also contacted.

- *Stage 2: Evaluation Criteria* — Specific evaluation criteria, related to and drawn from the boundary factors, were developed in stage two of the study.
- *Stage 3: Boundary Options* — The criteria and data from the earlier stages were used in stage three to develop draft boundaries. Several iterations of the boundaries were drafted, mapped and reviewed. Refinements were made to every iteration to arrive at the options for discussion with the RDN, province and Area F residents.
- *Stage 4: High-Level Incorporation Implications* — Potential service finance, governance and property tax implications associated with each of the options were identified in stage four.
- *Stage 5: Options Impact Analysis Draft* — The boundaries and supporting materials were brought together to create the *Electoral Area F Options Impact Analysis Draft* for review by the RDN and Ministry. The boundary options are intended to form the basis of subsequent engagement.
- *Stage 6: Community Engagement*— A core purpose of the *Boundary Study* is to provide an opportunity for the residents in Area F to learn about the *Study* process, and to share feedback on the resulting scenarios. The consultants prepared a mailout to the community, held two well-attended community meetings, and created a survey to obtain community input.
- *Stage 7: Draft and Final Report*— Following the engagement process, the consultants prepared a *Communications and Engagement Summary* and combined the community input with the options analysis to recommend a boundary. The observations and conclusions were provided in a draft of the *Boundary Study Final Report* that was reviewed by RDN and the Ministry prior to submission of the final report, and a presentation to the Regional District Board in July.

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FACTORS AND CRITERIA

The factors considered in developing potential boundaries were identified under the outline of the consultants' approach to the study. Figure 2.1 on the following page summarizes the guiding considerations, followed by a broader explanation of each of the categories and the relevance within the Area F context.

Land Area

While BC municipalities vary in size from 62 ha (0.62 km²) (Silverton) to 86,365 km² (Regional municipality of Northern Rockies), ideally municipalities are large enough that the municipality is not constrained in growing, but compact enough that the road network isn't a burden for taxpayers. As a comparison, the Town of Qualicum

Figure 2.1
Boundary Criteria

CATEGORIES	CONSIDERATIONS	CRITERIA
Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big enough to allow for growth • Compact enough to facilitate efficient servicing and minimize servicing/road costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land area (compare to existing municipalities)
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient population to ensure a pool of candidates to share in responsibilities in governing and servicing the community (volunteer roles, council positions) • Larger populations are generally associated with economic viability and resiliency • Minimum of 3,000 population • Municipalities over 5,000 population pay 70% of policing costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated population (compare to existing municipalities)
Tax Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient tax base to minimize the burden of operational and capital costs of servicing the municipality, contribute toward resiliency and sufficient borrowing power • Sufficient diversity in the tax base to reduce the burden on residents • Minimize Crown land parcels over which the municipality has no control, and no taxation • Minimize Class 9 Farm properties, due to the loss of tax exemptions after incorporation • Minimize Private Managed Forest Lands from which the municipality receives little tax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total assessment value • % Non-residential assessment • Number of Crown land parcels • Area of Crown land • Number of Class 9 (Farm) parcels • Area of Class 9 (Farm) parcels • Area of Private Managed Forest
Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encompass a mix of land uses to support economic diversity, promote community and resiliency • Include existing settlement areas, community hubs and Village Centres • Include a mix of housing unit types and range of affordable options (if available) • Minimizing the inclusion of lands in the ALR to reduce the tax impact on properties and to ensure opportunities for growth • Assess ability for growth with infill opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes Village Centre • Includes Rural Residential • Includes Rural • Land Area outside the ALR (%) • Assessment of development potential
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encompass entire service areas, particularly for infrastructure such as water systems to facilitate transition to being provided by a municipality. • Service planning, governance, finance and operation are easier to manage when service areas under the responsibility of one local government that has responsibility for land use and utilities • Consider watershed boundaries as an indicator of common water management interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local services • Water Region (and watershed)
Infrastructure and Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the length of roads and number of bridges. The longer the road network, the greater the operation and maintenance cost borne by the community • Minimize orphan roads and ensure an efficient network of local roads to simplify road maintenance and servicing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of local roads • Number of bridges/significant creek crossings
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encompass existing settlements, and areas with shared community assets, and community identity, often following natural or physical community divisions • Shared identity and community definition will help the community unite and work toward common goals or and overcome challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community assets included • Boundary logic • Shared interests • Community interest or issues

Beach is 20.1 km², Parksville is 17.5 km², and Lantzville is 29.8 km². Some other rural municipalities on the Island include Highlands (40.9 km²), North Saanich (47.0 km²) and Metchosin (77.5 km²).

Area F Considerations

- The Area F land base — 264.11 km² — is considerable, and land availability is not a constraint. While it was always anticipated that any boundary would reflect a rural community, the rural land use patterns and ALR designation present a challenge to creating a compact community.

Population

While many municipalities in BC exist with low population, it is generally preferred to establish new municipalities with larger populations. It is almost always the case that economic viability and resiliency are easier to achieve with larger numbers of people, and the greater level of activity that accompanies them. The guidance provided by the Province as part of the terms for this study noted a preference for options with population of at least 3,000.²

Although higher population thresholds are equated with more resilient communities,³ it is important to be aware of the 5,000-person threshold as the tipping point, above which municipalities become responsible for paying for police services. Municipalities with populations that exceed 5,000 (as per the Census) must provide policing services. In the instances where the RCMP is contracted (through agreement with the province), the municipality becomes responsible for paying 70% of most services, and 100% of some services such as the detachment building, holding cells, furniture and civilian support staff.⁴ The impact of exceeding 5,000 in population is referenced in more detail in Chapter 4.

Population density is another important consideration in the development of potential boundaries. Typically, municipalities encompass the more densely developed and populated areas. Higher population density typically correlates with a greater demand for services, including utilities, amenities and services such as planning, bylaw enforcement and building. For comparison purposes, the Town of Qualicum Beach has a population density of 468.21 per km², and a large rural municipality of Metchosin has a population density of 66.34 km².

² As at the 2021 Census, 64 municipalities in BC had less than 3,000 population.

³ The Terms of Reference from the Ministry referenced a need to identify a boundary with “a population of at least 3,000 to 5,000 people”

⁴ Note that the detachment does not need to be a new building, and does not necessarily need to be located within the municipality in order to serve the community. For example, the detachment cost could be the amount to lease space within a shared detachment in a neighbouring jurisdiction.

Area F Considerations

- Given the 2021 population of Area F (8,216), there are options to exceed the 3,000 person threshold. The overall population density of Area F is quite low, at 31.1 persons per km² which is to be expected with such a large undeveloped forested component. The populated portions of the electoral area have densities that are much higher. Population density is most relevant where there are shared costs for fixed services such as water or sewer systems, but is also a consideration for roads.
- In the 2021 Census, Statistics Canada provides population and population density figures for the Hilliers, Coombs and Errington "designated places".⁵ The number and concentration of people in these places help to define the places as communities, and help to distinguish them from surrounding parts of Area F (see Figure 2.2)

Figure 2.2
Designated Place Census Characteristics

Designated Place	2021 Population	Land Area (km ²)	Population Density (population per km ²)
Errington	2,907	27.44	105.9
Coombs	1,672	15.57	107.4
Hilliers	1,590	29.05	54.7

- It is important to note that population figures used in the analysis of the boundary options represent estimates based on a combination of Census population information, and some estimates based on dwelling counts and average household size. Furthermore, given that the most recent Census was four years ago, the numbers could be significantly different now.

Tax Base

BC Assessment classifies all real property in the province into nine different classes for the purpose of assessment. Properties in each class are taxed at a particular rate to generate the revenues to fund local services.

⁵ For Statistics Canada, a "population centre" is a community with at least 1,000 people and a density of 400 persons or more per km². A "designated place" is a small, distinct community of no more than 10 km², but with fewer people and less density than a population centre.

In unincorporated areas, regional district boards each year determine the Class 1 (residential) tax rate for each service provided. Rates for the other eight property classes are determined using ratios that are set by the province, pursuant to the *Regional District Tax Regulation* (see Figure 2.3). These ratios result in tax rates that are higher than the residential rate in five classes.

In municipalities, the tax rates for all classes — not only residential — are set each year by the municipal council. 2024 provincial data show that councils in almost every municipality set tax rates for several of the non-residential property classes above the Class 1 level. Indeed, for properties assessed as Utilities (Class 2), Industrial (Classes 4 and 5), and Business (Class 6), rates are higher (often considerably higher) than Class 1 rates in all but three of the 160 municipalities in the province.⁶

When selecting potential boundaries for incorporation scenarios, attention should be paid to the range and size of property classes present. If possible, it is useful for jurisdictions to have a good level of diversity in property types. Such diversity enables jurisdictions to spread their local tax burdens across more than just residential properties. In areas with Class 2, 4, 5 and 6 properties, the significance of diversity is heightened. A range of assessment classes is important in electoral areas as well as municipalities. The need is greater in municipalities, however, given their broader range of funding responsibilities (e.g., roads).

It should be noted that property assessment classes are a factor in boundary setting not only from the perspective of property taxation, but also because of the local economy. Properties are categorized by BC Assessment based on their existing use. Thus, a Class 5 property describes a site with an industrial use, and a Class 6 property is a site with a business. These land uses are important to the local economy as wealth and employment generators. Jurisdictions with properties in these classes may have more robust local economies than other centres.

Figure 2.3
Property Assessment Classes

Class	Description	Ratio to Class 1
Class 1	Residential	1
Class 2	Utilities	3.5
Class 3	Supportive Housing	1
Class 4	Major Industry	3.4
Class 5	Light Industry	3.4
Class 6	Business/Other	2.45
Class 7	Managed Forest Land	3
Class 8	Recreational/Non-profit	1
Class 9	Farm	1

* Section 1, *Regional District Tax Regulation*

⁶ Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs, Schedule 702 – 2024 Tax Rates.

Each property in every class is assessed annually by BC Assessment to determine the property's value.⁷ In each local jurisdiction, the values for all properties in a given class are added together to determine the total assessed value for that class. The totals for all classes combine to equal the jurisdiction's total assessment base.

Issues related to assessment base that are important to consider in the boundary-setting exercise include:

- **Total Value of Assessment Base** — A jurisdiction's total assessment base is one measure of financial strength and resiliency. In general, municipalities with a larger assessment base are better positioned to fund services and withstand economic shocks.
- **Percentage of Non-Residential Assessment** — Jurisdictions that contain almost all Class 1 assessment are forced to rely on residents to carry the bulk of the local tax burden. Conversely, places with a sizable percentage of Class 2, 4, 5, and/or 6 assessment are able to spread a portion of costs beyond residences.
- **Existence of Farm Class (Class 9) properties** — "Farm" is a property assessment class (Class 9) that is assigned by BC Assessment to land on ALR and non-ALR parcels that is actively used for farming practices, and that meets minimum income-generating and other requirements, as set out in the *Assessment Act*. Farm Class properties are assessed at a lower land value, which reduces the amount of taxes the owners pay (and the local government receives). Municipalities can set their farm class taxes at a rate that is higher than the residential rate to compensate for the reduced values (53% of municipalities with farm class properties had farm class tax rates that were higher than the rate than residential in 2024, and 36% used the same rate as residential; 11% set their farm tax at a lower rate than the residential tax rate).

What is perhaps more significant for Class 9 property owners is the loss of some tax exemptions (see Chapter 4) on the residence resulting from incorporation. The impact on farm class properties explains why it is preferred to leave Class 9 properties out of incorporation boundaries. Note that not all ALR land qualifies as Class 9 land, and properties that are not within the ALR can still be classified as Class 9 land. The Class 9 property class does not apply to the structures on the property, and does not always apply to all the land on a given parcel. Parcels can have multiple tax classes.

- **Class 7 Managed Forest Land** — Class 7 properties are privately owned forest lands that are used for timber production and harvesting. The assessed values for these lands are based upon the value of the trees on the land when

⁷ The assessment methodology varies by class.

harvested, and are set by regulation. The value is therefore not based on the highest and best use of the property, nor the market value. Like Class 9 farmland, the land has a value that is considerably lower than rural or residential land. For example, 63.5-hectare parcel of private managed forest in Area F had a total 2025 assessed value of \$156,000, compared to 64.8-hectare property within the ALR (but not farm class) land value of \$1,932,000 (or a similar-size vacant parcel not in the ALR for \$3,823,000).

In addition to providing less assessment base, municipalities are limited in their land use authority over private managed forest land and cannot pass a bylaw or issue a permit that would have the effect of restricting, directly or indirectly, a forest management activity on the lands. Of municipalities with private forest lands, 86% of municipalities charge higher tax rates than residential on these lands, 12% charge the same as residential rates and only two (2.5%) charge lower than residential tax rates.

- Crown land – Crown land is excluded in part because senior governments are exempt from property taxation under section 125 of the *Constitution Act*, although some crown properties contribute to the tax base through taxes in lieu (although not for most vacant lands).⁸ These lands were also excluded due in part to preferences expressed by the province in the Terms of this *Study*, and the fact that the municipality does not have jurisdiction over Crown lands.

Land Use

Land use is a broad category that is used to reference not only the use of property, such as residential, commercial, industrial and agriculture, but also the density, lot sizes, the opportunities for development and growth, and the guidance and policies embodied in the Official Community Plan.

Land use policy is generally established in a Regional Growth Strategy, as well as an Official Community Plan. The RDN adopted a new RGS in 2024 (*Regional Growth Strategy: Shaping Our Future 2040*), and Area F has an OCP that was adopted in 1999. The RDN began updating its OCP in 2019, but was stalled during COVID. Additional engagement and revisions were underway in 2022 and 2023; an updated bylaw has yet to be adopted. Information gathered as part of that process, including drafts of the updates and summaries of engagement, in addition to the current OCP bylaw, help to inform an understanding of the current land uses and the community's aspirations for future land use. The OCP is a policy document that sets out the community's vision for the future development of the Electoral Area and the settlements within it.

⁸ Where provincial Crown lands are leased, the leaseholders of provincial Crown land generally pay property taxes.

The ALR and associated legislation and regulations represent another land use consideration for boundaries. The ALR was established to protect agricultural land in the province from non-agricultural development. "Agriculture", which is broadly defined to include farming and ranching activities that produce crops and/or livestock, is the primary allowable use on all lands in the ALR. A variety of "farm uses" are also permitted, such as wineries and cideries, processing facilities for farm products, timber production, seasonal agri-tourism activities, and others.⁹ The constraints on the use and development of properties in ALR are the same in municipalities and electoral areas.

Area F Considerations

- Some of the core values emerging from the community engagement, included in the 2023 draft OCP update include:
 - Support for limited amounts of additional growth within growth containment boundaries to prevent sprawl and protect rural lands.
 - Support for local retail and commercial development in appropriately zoned areas to grow the local economy and to have amenities closer to home for residents.
 - Recognition of value in a mix of housing types and landscaping, including affordable housing, and owner-built dwelling units that preserve and enhance the rural character of Area F.
 - Support for maintaining low levels of regulation and consider the addition of regulations, enforcement, and clear, simple guidelines and bylaws in situations where good neighbour practices are not sufficient to address demonstrated community challenges.
 - Support for the creation of an integrated park and trail system with an emphasis on connectivity to Local Service Centres.
 - Recognition of the need to safeguard environmentally sensitive areas; protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitats.
 - Support for the protection, restoration and enhancement of watersheds and aquifers in recognition of the importance of water supply.
 - Protection of the supply of potable water to ensure water self-sufficiency and assure the provision of a clean, safe water supply.
 - Support for road design and construction standards that meet the safety and transportation needs of the community.
 - Support for road systems that include the development of multi-modal transportation options, including pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle paths as part of the transportation system.

⁹ Part 2, *Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation*

- the electoral area includes some separate communities, including Errington, Coombs, Hilliers, Whiskey Creek and Meadowood, but due to the rural nature of the area, not all of these communities are easily identified or segmented by geographic features or distinct land use or development patterns

Local Services

The RDN provides a broad range of local services to the communities in Electoral Area F. Some of the services are provided to all residents and properties throughout the entire jurisdiction; other services are provided to individual communities within, or to parts of, Area F. Local government incorporation would result in the transfer of responsibility for several of the RDN's local government services from the regional district to the municipal government. Typically municipal boundaries are drawn to ensure that the whole service area of any services that impact only part of an electoral area, are included. For instance, a boundary would not be drawn that includes only part of a water service area. Service planning, governance and finance are easier to manage when the entire service area is contained within one jurisdiction, under the responsibility of one government.

Some other service impacts to consider when drawing boundaries are not as obvious as regional district service areas. For instance, areas and uses that would impact on municipal services and not have obvious opportunities to contribute to that service (such as through a fee-for-service contract) should be considered. An example might be a gravel pit where heavy trucks are likely to be using the municipal (and not just provincial) road network.

Area F Considerations

- Aside from three RDN water service areas, and three main fire service areas, Area F does not have a significant number of local services that are delivered to only portions of the electoral area. Where water service areas are considered for inclusion, the entire service area is included.

Infrastructure and Roads

In Electoral Area F, similar to all unincorporated areas in BC, responsibility for constructing, upgrading and maintaining all local public roads falls to the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT). Within municipalities, MOTT is responsible for numbered provincial highways, all of which form part of the provincial highway network. All local roads in municipalities, however, are owned by, and under the responsibility of, the municipal governments. As the responsible authorities, municipalities:

- determine the standards (e.g., rural, urban) to which different types of local roads are constructed, upgraded and maintained
- integrate road capital projects with other servicing projects and priorities

- determine the amount of municipal capital and operating funding to allocate to road projects and maintenance
- integrate land-use planning and road planning decisions
- develop and execute financial strategies to pay for road improvements, including improvements required to accommodate growth

Control and responsibility over roads may be one reason that some communities seek to incorporate. The transfer of responsibility from the provincial to the local level, however, often comes at a significant price.

When setting potential incorporation boundaries, it is important to be sensitive to the road-related cost burden that would be transferred to the municipal government as a result of incorporation. Roads that are important to include within a boundary in order to create a strong local road network should be considered for inclusion. Roads that are not necessary should be studied carefully and, if possible, excluded. It is important, however, to avoid creating orphan roads that are isolated from the remainder of the jurisdiction and therefore difficult to service (by either the municipality or by MoTT).

Area F Considerations

- As a rural community, land uses are geographically distributed, and rely upon a longer road network to access the community. Area F has a considerable number of creeks and waterways, and associated bridges, culverts and creek crossings to consider, as well as areas that have experienced localized flooding or that require ditching and other stormwater management solutions.

Community

Community is one factor that is considered when determining boundaries. Community refers not only to areas with a shared identity, but also the areas that share common services, and community assets such as parks and community halls. Often there are no definite boundaries to the edges of communities, but sometimes they are reinforced through physical characteristics like rivers, mountains, or highways that help to define neighbourhoods and travel patterns.

Community input is also important in ensuring that the boundaries include residents that have an interest in pursuing incorporation, and the changes it brings for governance, services and taxes. Because incorporation only occurs when a community votes to incorporate in a referendum, the boundaries must include those who are interested in learning about, and potentially proceeding with the change. Encompassing communities that have not shown any interest in exploring incorporation within study area boundaries limits the chances of incorporation occurring. While Area F as a whole has demonstrated an interest in exploring incorporation, it is good to gauge interest in specific communities participating in

future studies. Residents are not expected to know if they support incorporation until they learn the full implications; however the Province likes to have assurances that the community is at least interested in the potential, before committing to the process. As part of this study, there were two community meetings and a survey to solicit feedback on the options.

Area F Considerations

- Area F includes some distinct communities with several village centres or neighbourhood focus areas, including Errington, Coombs, Hilliers, Whiskey Creek and Meadowood.
- Area F has some physical characteristics, infrastructure and landmarks that help to distinguish and define the areas — examples of such features are Englishman River, French Creek, Little Qualicum River, Little Mountain, Highway 4A, Highway 4 and the Island rail corridor. Significant forested areas and environmental features such as Hamilton Marsh also help to define the limits of the residential communities.
- Some feedback has already been provided by the Area F community through the *Electoral Area F Governance and Services Study* completed in 2022 - 2023. The *Study* featured a public engagement process to help understand the community's views and perceptions on governance and local government services. The views that emerged informed the Governance & Service Committee's recommendation to proceed with an incorporation study, and initiated the focus on boundary options in this study. The community's views did not, however, speak to specific factors to consider in the development of incorporation boundaries.
- Some of the feedback summarized in the *Governance and Services Study* included:
 - Many people expressed interest in a governance system that provides more local control and locally-based decision-making. Local decision-making was referenced as:
 - A way to protect rural character (by having local decision makers who best understand and value the community and rural lifestyle)
 - Key to responding to local concerns more quickly and with greater flexibility to address local needs or interests (as opposed to preferences for a one-size-fits all level of service that can be applied more broadly across several communities)
 - A way of addressing the concern that representatives from other jurisdictions (namely, the City of Nanaimo with its eight directors on the Board), and RDN staff may not fully appreciate the unique culture and rural character of Area F

- Many residents from each of the Area F communities expressed an interest in exploring incorporation (however, several others indicated they were not supportive of this approach). Feedback from Errington residents in particular revealed both strong support for an incorporation study, as well as strong opposition to that approach.
- Exploring incorporation through a subsequent study was offered as a potential solution from residents with markedly different, and potentially conflicting concerns or objectives:
 - Incorporation was referenced as a way to remove the community from the local governance and oversight of the RDN, and to have “self-governance” from residents who espoused less regulation, more independence, and a greater sense of freedom
 - Incorporation was suggested by some as a solution to help customize services, including a number of enhanced levels of service — for example, faster building permit processes, enhanced road maintenance and standards, more reliable garbage collection during the winter, increased bylaw enforcement, improved watershed protection, better emergency planning, transit service
 - Others were interested in exploring incorporation on principle alone, given objections with having local service decisions made with the involvement of other jurisdictions (primarily Nanaimo)

CHAPTER 3

BOUNDARY OPTIONS

This chapter of the report introduces and describes areas identified for inclusion, and the resulting boundary options, and assesses them using the evaluation criteria. Maps of each of the boundary areas are contained in Appendix II with the Option Maps included in Appendix III.

Based on the criteria and factors identified in the previous chapter, several potential boundary scenarios were developed. Successive iterations for each scenario were refined to better align with the evaluation criteria.

The preliminary options were based on technical criteria, together with a lens that attempted to minimize the costs that a future rural municipality would assume. The scenarios were not intended to reflect community preference in considering incorporation, nor were they an expression of what comprises any individual community. To help understand the specific perspectives of the various communities, three main areas were identified – Area 1, 2 and 3 – where each one represented a defined area that could be included within a potential Study Area boundary. Each individual area was refined based on the criteria, to limit the boundary to one that is feasible and sustainable. The areas were created prior to any public engagement — it was always intended that the community meetings and survey would help illuminate community preferences and gauge interest after boundary options were created. The boundary options were then created by combining each area together like a chain of puzzle pieces, creating successively larger options (i.e. Area 1, Area 1+2, and Area 1+2+3).

The following section describes the rationale for each component area and the resulting options.

OVERVIEW

The following reiterates some of the primary objectives:

- **Exclude lands identified as Treaty Settlement Lands (TSL)** — given the impending Te'mexw Treaty, TSL lands are neither in nor out of any municipality or electoral area. Even when surrounded by, or accessed through a proposed study area, the TSL lands will left outside boundary.
- **Exclude Crown land** — a municipality does not have jurisdiction over the land use of provincially- or federally-owned lands, nor does it have any taxation authority. Furthermore, the province provided guidance to avoid the inclusion of Crown lands.
- **Minimize Class 9 farm parcels** — Lands with farm tax class properties within the ALR lose some tax advantages upon incorporation; however, properties

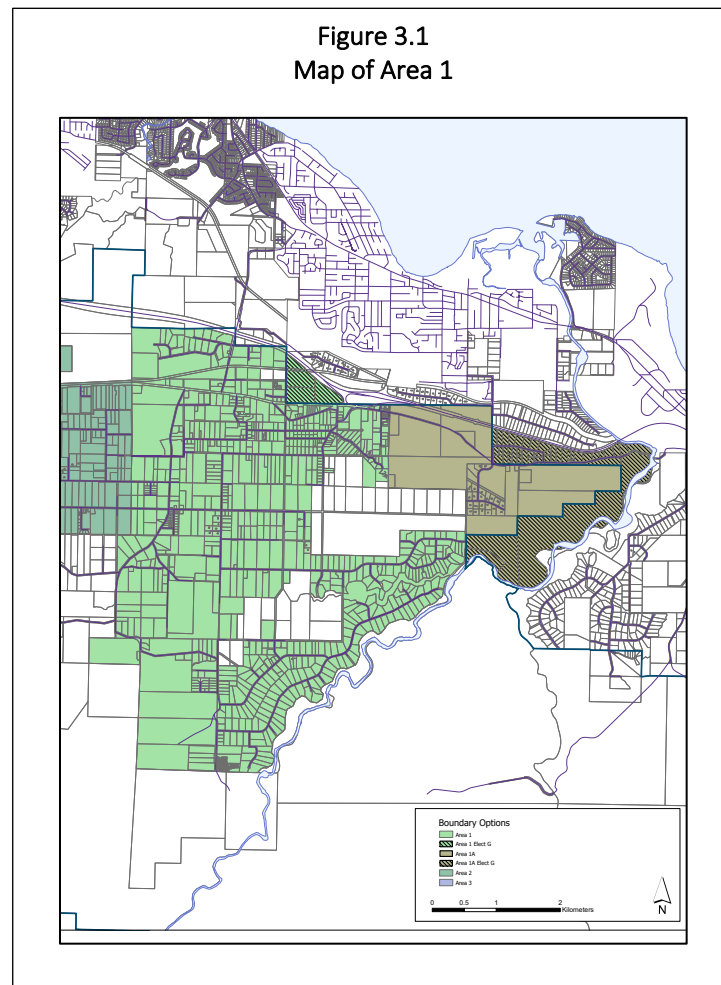
with Class 9 farm assessment experience a greater impact upon incorporation.

- **Minimize roads and bridge infrastructure** — Municipalities assume ownership of the local road network, and associated storm water infrastructure. Municipal costs can be minimized by limiting the length of roads included in the boundary, and by reducing the number of bridges and creek crossings, and areas with flooding and greater storm water costs. Provincial highway bridges remain the responsibility of the Province.
 - Orphan roads are all or part of a road located just outside the municipal boundary, that create an inefficient maintenance network
 - Where possible use property lines and not roads as boundaries, so that properties on both sides of a road contribute to maintenance costs of the municipal road. Railway, provincial highways or rear of lots are better boundaries so that everyone on a road contributes toward the cost of maintaining that road.
- **Identify potential for properties within Area G that could be considered, but do not include** — because this Study was approved for Area F, properties within Area G that make sense to be included in an incorporation study have been left out, but identified as having potential to be included. As a result, a specific area has been identified as a potential add on to any of the three options, with the caveat that it only makes sense if some properties within Area G are included within the boundary.
- **Minimize inclusion of Private Managed Forest Lands** — these properties generally represent very large parcels and are designated for forestry and resource uses. Local governments have limited control over the land use of lands with this designation, and the assessed values are set by regulation at values significantly below market value. There are a few parcels that may make sense to include, but the majority of these lands have been excluded from the boundary. Those located adjacent to borders could be considered for inclusion in the future if requested by the property owners.
- **Include village centres, comprehensive mixed-use areas, and industrial areas** — in addition to representing the hub of the communities, municipalities are considered to be more sustainable when they have a diverse tax base so that residents can share the burden of upgraded infrastructure and asset management (among other items).
- **Include residential neighbourhoods with higher population densities, including most rural and rural residential designated areas** — these clusters represent the main neighbourhoods and population base of the electoral area. While any proposed study area boundary will remain primarily rural, the

boundaries should encompass the existing higher density clusters. There are no specific areas identified for increased residential growth, although there are lands with potential for infill and/or additional subdivision

AREA 1

Area 1 is located in the community of Errington. This area is considered to be a viable municipal boundary option on its own, or in combination with other areas (Area 2 and 3). A map highlighting the area in light green is shown in Figure 3.1 below.



Boundary Description

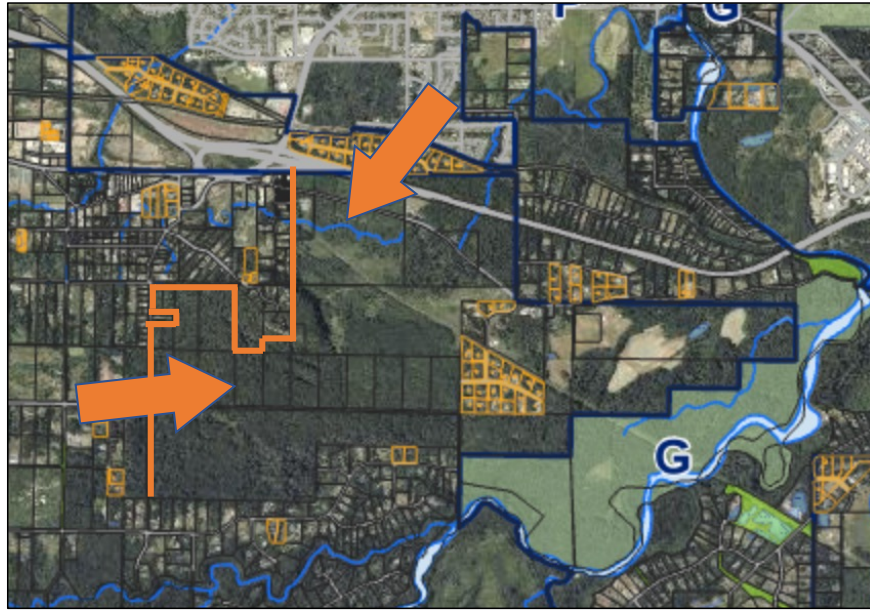
This boundary includes the Errington Village, and much of the Errington community, generally using Highway 19 as the northern boundary, Englishman River to the east, properties accessed from Errington Road as the western boundary, and Englishman River Falls Provincial Park to the south. The river, the provincial park to the south, and Highway 19 to the north provide recognizable physical landmarks for defining the community. Silver Meadows Farm, and Errington Road are used to help define the western edge of the area. The eastern limits of this area abut

undeveloped lands that are TSL lands, as well as parcels that are private managed forest, and Crown land. The edge created by this undeveloped corridor is more obvious through an aerial view of the community, as shown in Figure 3.2 on the following page. The expanse of forested lands separate the residential and commercial areas located to the west from the pockets of residential uses located further east.

Key characteristics

- Errington is the most populous of the village area and designated places within Electoral Area F

Figure 3.2
Eastern Boundary – Area 1



- Good diversity of tax base, with industrial and commercial uses concentrated in the Bellevue/Church Road area adjacent to Highway 4A
- Includes Errington Village Centre, Errington Elementary School, Errington War Memorial Hall, Errington community park
- Majority of lands outside the ALR are already developed (although some lots may have infill potential), so limited growth potential (without land use regulation changes)
- Includes the majority of the Bellevue-Church Road industrial area (with TSL lands at the western boundary)
- Population (2021 Census) is approximately 2,670 (based on BC Population projected growth, this could be closer to 2,850 by 2025)
- A portion of the area is within the French Creek Water Region, and the remainder is in the Englishman River Water Region
- The proposed boundary encompasses 17 farm class parcel (684 acres), primarily located on large farm parcels. Iterations were examined to exclude these parcels, but resulted in unusual configurations with more complicated road network arrangements (requiring servicing agreements)

- Several creeks run through the community, and Errington Road has two bridge crossings at the south end of the boundary

AREA 1A

As noted previously, the area to the east of Area 1 was contemplated for inclusion within the Area 1 boundary. However, this area is only logical to include if portions of Electoral Area G (located on, or accessed from Allsbrook Road) are also included. Because the Study was limited to Electoral Area F, this area has therefore been identified separately as having potential to being added. Area 1A is highlighted in khaki brown in Figure 3.1.

Boundary Description

With Englishman River as the east boundary and Highway 19 as the northern boundary, including this area helps to provide logical community boundaries that are well defined and create a sense of place. As noted above, this option is only logical if Area G lands are part of the boundary. The addition of this area eliminates Allsbrook Road as an orphan road.

Key characteristics

- This area encompasses approximately 40 dwellings within Area F, and potentially a similar number within Area G.¹⁰
- This area includes five farm class properties, as well as a regional park, an Area G community park (Top Bridge), some provincial Crown land used for the provincial coastal fire centre and the BC Hydro Parksville substation, as well as some private managed forest lands.
- Adding this area to Area 1 would create a second “donut” for some of the TSL lands, which are excluded from municipal boundaries.
- Due to the provincially-owned properties, TSL, regional park, farm land and private managed forest land, the area does not add significant tax base, although some of the residential properties in this area have relatively high assessed values.
- The area adds an estimated population of 187.

AREA 2

Area 2 is located primarily in the community of Coombs, although there is some overlap with the Errington community. Area 2 is included in two of the three options. A map highlighting Area 2 in darker green is shown in Figure 3.3 on the next page.

¹⁰ The Terms of Reference for the Study were to consider boundaries within Area F, and did not contemplate the inclusion of lands within Area G, nor the engagement of Area G residents.

Boundary Description

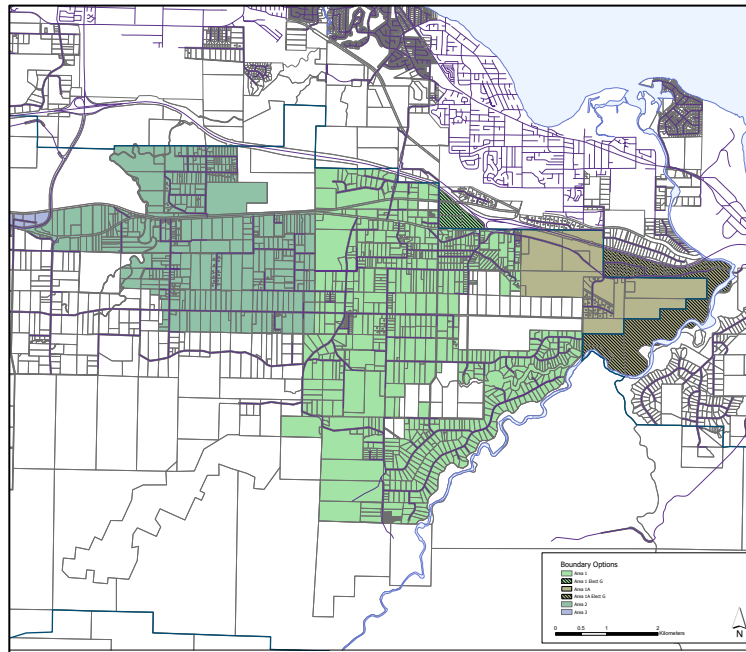
Area 2 includes the village centre of Coombs, as well as the remainder of Highway 4A, and the mixed commercial /industrial uses along the highway. Area 2 includes some properties that likely identify as part of the Errington community, and others that consider Coombs to be their community hub. The western boundary for most of Area 2 is French Creek, and encompasses properties accessed from Station Road south to Grafton Road. Properties that front Grafton Road represent the southern boundary of Area 2.

On the north side of Highway 4A, the lands between French Creek and the TSL lands are included in the Area 2 boundary. The lands to the west of French Creek are part of private managed forest lands, beyond which is Hamilton Marsh wetland (west side of Highway 4). Although privately owned, there have been many requests to preserve the Marsh and surrounding area.

Key Characteristics

- When combined with Area 1, the entirety of Highway 4A (which is less than 10 km long) and all of its commercial, industrial and community amenities, would be encompassed in one jurisdiction, and Highway 4A would act as the east/west spine of the community
- Area 2 includes community-oriented facilities such as the Bradley Centre, the Arrowsmith Hall, Coombs fairgrounds, French Creek Community School park, as well as the Coombs market
- Area 2 includes the residential area to the north of Highway 4A, as well as the lands south of Highway 4A that are outside the ALR, and avoids including farms located south of Grafton Road

Figure 3.3
Map of Area 2



- When combined with Area 1, the population of the combined community would be close to 4,220 (4,427 if Area 1A is used). While still beneath the 5,000 person threshold for policing costs, using previous growth projections, the combined total may be closer to 4,400 (4,600 if Area A1 is used)
- Area 2 includes 20 additional farm class properties (189 hectares), perhaps most significantly along Highway 4A (both sides of the highway)
- Area 2 encompasses one fire hall of the Coombs-Hilliers Fire department. Fire services within the boundary would need to be coordinated (given that Area 1 is serviced by Errington Fire Department)
- French Creek offers a recognizable boundary for the west of Area 2 (north of Highway 4a), but using that boundary includes eight parcels within the ALR, as well as a 104-acre parcel of Private Managed Forest Land
- The boundary encompasses a portion of Crown land currently used informally as trails in the middle of the Coombs area.

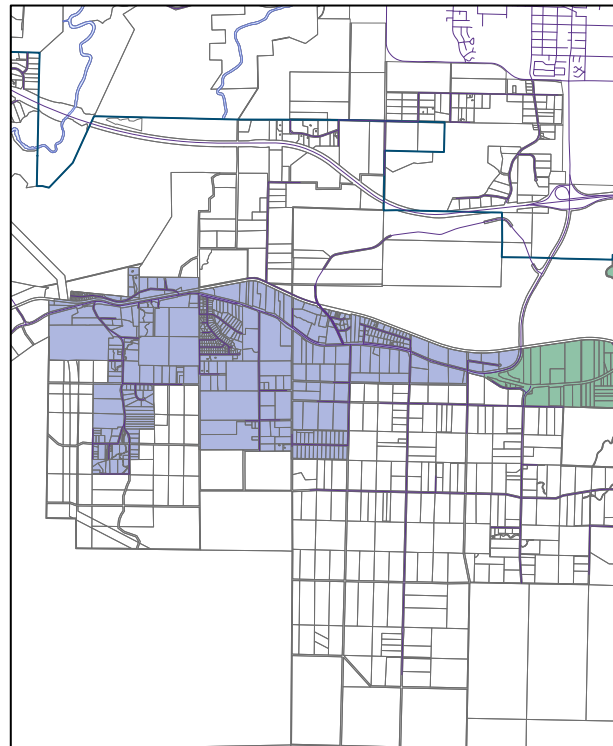
AREA 3

Area 3 includes some of the community of Hilliers as well as Whiskey Creek and the Chatsworth Road area. This area is included in one of the three options. A map highlighting Area 3 in purple is shown in Figure 3.4.

Boundary Description

Area 3 extends west of the Highway 4 and 4a intersection to encompass the Hilliers and Whiskey Creek areas, and as far west as the Chatsworth Road residential areas and industrial lands. The Vancouver Island Rail Corridor to the north of Highway 4 represents the boundary for most of Area 3, with an exception for the residential properties along Melrose Terrace (close to 40 dwellings including a 28-lot strata), and the associated Melrose water system. Area 3

Figure 3.4
Map of Area 3



includes lands that represent some of Area F's most dense residential areas, and includes fewer ALR properties (and less area within the ALR) than Areas 1 or 2.

Key Characteristics

- The majority of the residential lands within the Hilliers and Whiskey creek area are outside the ALR
- The areas with RDN water services (Whiskey Creek, Westurne Heights, Melrose Terrace) reflect some of the highest residential densities within Area F. If Area 3 was included an incorporation boundary, the three RDN water systems would be transferred to the municipality
- The Hilliers area has less obvious connections to Errington, and Area 3 has direct highway access (10 km) to the Town of Qualicum Beach via Highway 4, whereas residents of Errington are more closely connected to Parksville (via Highway 4A) for services not available locally
- Area 3 encompasses some significant industrial lands, both in size and value
- Area 3 includes Area F's largest community park (Malcolm Park)
- While most of the Crown lands in this area have been left outside the boundary, some are included in the Chatsworth Road area to enable a more logical boundary
- The Hilliers area is almost exclusively within the Little Qualicum Water Region, and has less obvious connection to Areas 1 and 2, with Highway 4 (and not Highway 4A) being the main artery
- When Area 3 is combined with Areas 1 and 2, the resulting option has a population (2021 Census) that exceeds 5,000. If this boundary option was used for an incorporation, the resulting municipality would be responsible for at least 70% of policing costs¹¹
- Area 3 includes an additional 18 farm class properties (79.1 ha)
- The Vancouver Island Railway corridor represents the northern boundary for Area 3 because it encompasses the Hilliers Village centre and provides a simple delineation for roads and parcels, while excluding Hamilton Marsh and the agricultural and forest lands between the railway corridor and Highway 19

¹¹ Assuming the municipality uses an RCMP contract to deliver policing services, the municipality would be responsible for 70% of some costs, and 100% of others. If delivered through a municipal police force, they would be responsible for 100% of the associated costs.

Figure 3.5 on the next two pages applies the boundary criteria to each of the separate boundary components (Areas 1, 2 and 3) to help illuminate the characteristics of each of the “building blocks” of the options.

OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES

One of the most obvious exclusions from the areas and the associated options is the community of Meadowood. Qualicum River Estates within the Meadowood area is the only part of Area F designated within the OCP as comprehensive mixed-use that is not within any of the boundary options. The primary reason Meadowood is not included is the lack of connection to the remainder of the electoral area communities. It would be very unusual if not unprecedented to have an area included within a municipality where access is through a route that takes residents 20 km through another municipality. The lack of access and connection as well as the physical barriers such as Little Qualicum River separate this community from the remainder of Area F, and indeed the shared sense of community identity that helps to establish a new municipality

Figure 3.5
Area Criteria and Characteristics

CRITERIA	AREA 1	AREA 2	AREA 3	AREA 1A
Land Area	21.72 km ²	11.84 km ²	9.07 km ²	3.88 km ²
Estimated Population (2021)	2,670	1,550	1,307	187
Population Density	122.93	130.91	144.10	48.20
Dwellings	1159	783	619	85
Total Assessment	Gross: 1,100,491,523 Net: 1,002,949,908	Gross: 513,394,378 Net: 464,011,034	Gross: 388,388,330 Net: 356,284,397	Gross: 51,288,271 Net: 47,903,435
Non-residential Tax Base (%)	25.0%	14.3%	8.1%	0%
Crown Land (Parcels and Land Area)	9 parcels (33.87 ha)	1 parcel (56.63 ha)	9 parcels (94.64 ha)	2 parcels. (104.80 ha)
Farm Class Properties* (Parcels and Land Area)	17 (276.97 ha)	20 (188.81 ha)	18 (79.10 ha)	5 (133.37 ha)
Area of Private Managed Forest*	97.24 ha	42.10 ha	0 ha	117.80 ha
ALR Land (Parcels and Land Area)	207 parcels. (808.65 ha)	129 parcels. (661.67 ha)	89 parcels. (400.92 ha)	10 parcels. (170.29 ha)
% of Land Outside the ALR	62.8%	44.1%	55.8%	
Land Uses (Village Centres, density, opportunity for infill and growth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes Errington Village Centre Bellevue-Church industrial area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coombs commercial area/tourist area Remainder of Bellevue-Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional industrial uses Higher density residential uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural, farm, Area G residential, Coastal Fire Service, BC Hydro substation
Local Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington fire service (3 parcels served by Coombs-Hilliers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington fire service and Coombs-Hilliers fire service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whiskey Creek water (RDN) Westurne Heights water (RDN) Melrose Terrace water (RDN) Coombs-Hilliers fire service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington fire service
Water Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Englishman River and French Creek Water Regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> French Creek Water Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little Qualicum Water Region (small portion in French Creek) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Englishman River Water Region
Local Road Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 63.19 km 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25.16 km 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 29.50 km 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.78 km

CRITERIA	AREA 1	AREA 2	AREA 3	AREA 1A
Number of Bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 bridges on Errington Rd over Morison Creek, Swayne Creek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Highway 4A French Creek bridge (provincial responsibility) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0
Community Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington Elementary School Errington War Memorial Hall Errington Fire Hall Little Mountain Viewpoint Allsbrook Rd Community Park Romain Rd Community Park Errington Community Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coombs-Hilliers Fire Hall Bradley Centre Hall Arrowsmith Hall and Coombs fairgrounds French Creek Community School Park Kerr Rd Community Park Coombs Station Community Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coombs-Hilliers Fire Hall Old Alberni Hwy Park Hilliers Community Park Brooklin Community Park Harris Cres Community Park Malcolm Community Park Little Qualicum Falls Community Park Wild Rd Community Park Melon Community Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top Bridge Community Park (Area G) Englishman River Regional Park (Area G)
Boundary Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundaries are well defined with the exception of the western boundary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway 4A provides the common denominator, with French Creek as a defining boundary to the west 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railway corridor provides northern boundary Includes densest neighbourhoods and commercial/industrial areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps to create a unified community with physical barriers as borders (River to the east, highway 19 to the north)
Community Identity & Shared Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely does not capture entirety of community that identifies as part of Errington, but densest areas are included, and community hub Connections via Highway 4A to Parksville for services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington and Coombs included, all of Highway 4A although both these communities extend beyond the boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes the majority of the more suburban and smaller lot developments in the Hilliers, Whiskey Creek, Chatsworth and Melrose Terrace areas Less connected to Errington More directly connected to Town of Qualicum Beach for services 	

** Note that the Managed Forest and Farm Class land area pertains to the area of the parcel, not necessarily the portion assessed as that Class (there may be more than one Class of land on a parcel).*

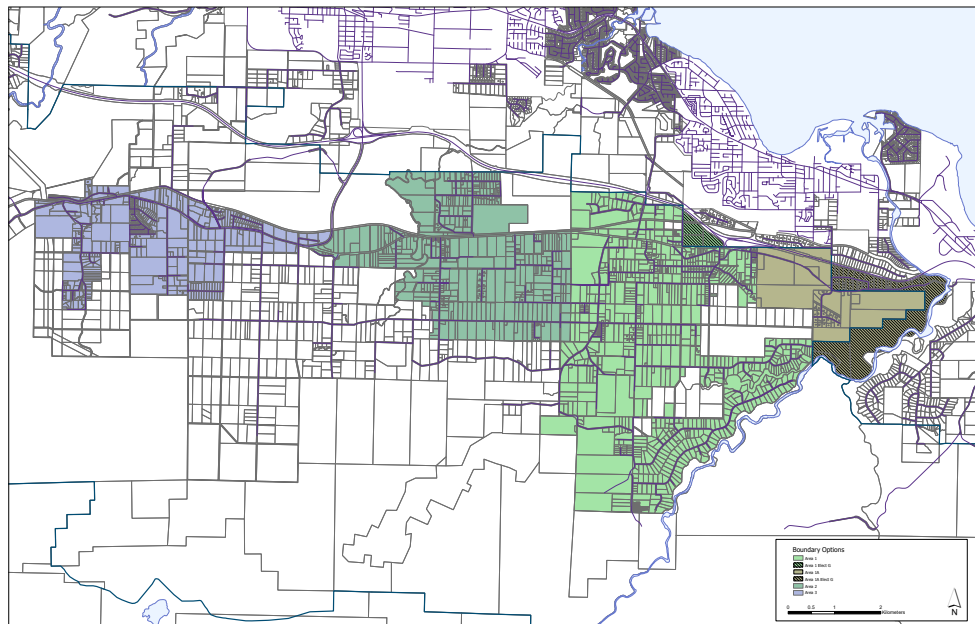
OPTIONS

Based on Areas 1 and 1a, 2 and 3, shown together in Figure 3.6, the following options were created:

- Option A (Includes Area 1 in light green)
- Option B (Includes Area 1 light green + Area 2 dark green)
- Option C (Includes Area 1 light green + Area 2 dark green + Area 3 purple)

** Note that if Area G properties are included as part of the Study Area, Area 1A becomes part of all three options*

Figure 3.6
Area F Option Areas



BOUNDARY REFINEMENTS

As part of the *Study* process, refinements were made to the boundary options as input was received from the community. The initial options presented at the community meetings were refined based on feedback through comment cards and discussions at the community meetings. The refinements included the addition of two contiguous areas, increasing the size of Option A and B and by six properties, and increasing Option C by 17 properties. The revised boundaries were used in the survey to gather further feedback. Copies of the initial and the revised boundaries are included in Appendix III.

The adjustments added almost 26 ha to Options A and B (nine dwellings, estimated population of 20) and just over 89 ha to Option C (24 dwellings, estimated population of 53). Figure 3.7 on the following pages presents the criteria applied to the three adjusted options.

Figure 3.7
Options Criteria

CRITERIA	OPTION A (Area 1)	OPTION B (Area 1+2)	OPTION C (Area 1+2+3)	AREA 1A
Land Area	21.98 km ²	33.82 km ²	43.52 km ²	3.88 km ²
Estimated Population (2021)	2,690 (2021)	4,240 (2021)	5,580 (2021)	187
Population Density	122.38	125.37	128.22	48.20
Dwellings	1,168	1,951	2,585	85
Total Assessment	Gross: 1,110,068,523 Net: 1,012,526,908	Gross: 1,623,462,901 Net: 1,476,537,942	Gross: 2,019,900,592 Net: 1,840,832,919	Gross: 51,288,271 Net: 47,903,435
Non-residential Tax Base (%)	24.8%	21.5%	18.8%	0%
Crown Land (Parcels and Land Area)	9 parcels (33.87 ha)	10 parcels (90.5 ha)	19 parcels (185.14 ha)	2 parcels (104.8 ha)
Farm Class Properties* (Parcels and Land Area)	17 properties 276.97 ha	37 properties 465.77 ha	57 properties 557.16 ha	5 properties 329.55 acres
Area of Private Managed Forest*	97.24 ha	139.34 ha	139.34 ha	291.09 acres
ALR Land (Parcels and Land Area)	207 parcels (808.65 ha)	336 parcels (1,470.32 ha)	425 parcels (1,871.24 ha)	10 parcels (170.29 ha)
% of Land Outside the ALR	62.8%	56.2%	56.1%	
Areas Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington Village, Bellevue-Church industrial area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington Village, Coombs Village, all of Bellevue-Church industrial area, all of Highway 4A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington Village, Coombs Village, all of Bellevue-Church industrial area, all of Highway 4A, portion of Highway 4, Hilliers Village, Whiskey Creek, Melrose Terrace, additional industrial (Chatsworth) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural, farm, Area G residential, Coastal Fire Service, BC Hydro substation
Local Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington fire service (3 parcels served by Coombs-Hilliers VFD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington fire service and Coombs-Hilliers (2 fire halls) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whiskey Creek water (RDN) Westurne Hts. water (RDN) Melrose Tce. water (RDN) Errington and Coombs-Hilliers fire service (3 fire halls) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington Fire Service

CRITERIA	OPTION A (Area 1)	OPTION B (Area 1+2)	OPTION C (Area 1+2+3)	AREA 1A
Water Region/Watershed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Englishman River and French Creek Water regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Englishman River and French Creek Water Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Englishman River, French Creek and Little Qualicum Water Regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Englishman River Water Region
Road Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 63.19 km 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88.35 km 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 117.85 km 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.78 km
Number of Bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 (Errington Rd – Morrison Creek, Swayne Creek) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Errington Rd, 1 on Highway 4A French Creek bridge (provincial responsibility) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Errington Rd, 1 on Highway 4A French Creek bridge (provincial responsibility) 	
Community Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errington Elementary School Errington War Memorial Hall Errington Fire Hall Little Mountain Viewpoint Allsbrook Rd Community Park Romain Rd Community Park Errington Community Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those in Option 1 plus: Coombs-Hilliers Fire Hall Bradley Centre Hall Arrowsmith Hall and Coombs fairgrounds French Creek Community School Park Kerr Rd Community Park Coombs Station Community Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those in Option 1 & 2 plus: Coombs-Hilliers Fire Hall Old Alberni Hwy Park Hilliers Community Park Brooklin Community Park Harris Cres. Community Park Malcolm Community Park Little Qualicum Falls Community Park Wild Rd Community Park Melon Community Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top Bridge Cmty Park (Area G) Englishman River Regional Park (Area G)
Boundary Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundaries are well defined with the exception of the western boundary Southern boundary excludes Class 9 farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway 4A provides the common denominator, recognizes the overlap between Coombs and Errington 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railway corridor provides northern boundary Includes densest neighbourhoods and commercial/industrial areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps to create a unified community with physical barriers as borders (River and Highway 19)
Community Identity & Shared Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely does not capture entirety of community that identifies as part of Errington, but densest areas are included, and community hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of Errington and Coombs included, although both these communities extend beyond the boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes the majority of the village centres and denser residential neighbourhoods in Area F, but perhaps a less cohesive shared identity 	

CHAPTER 4

POTENTIAL INCORPORATION IMPLICATIONS

Each of the boundary options represents a potential feasible incorporation study area. A decision to pursue an incorporation based on one of the proposed scenarios would result in implications for the proposed new jurisdiction, and for the remainder of Electoral Area F. If an incorporation study were to proceed, all the implications for the study area (not necessarily the remainder) would be identified and assessed in detail. This *Boundary Study*, by contrast, presents a high-level overview of the type of impacts that can be anticipated.

This chapter of the report begins with a general overview of the implications of incorporation on:

- Governance
- Services
- Finance and property taxation

The chapter references implications that can be anticipated in any incorporation, as well as some impacts that relate more specifically to individual boundary options. It is important to note that not all the changes that occur in a new municipality can or should be understood as impacts that are directly attributable to incorporation itself, nor should they be expected in all incorporation scenarios. Many changes occur because the locally-elected Council makes decisions for the municipality that are different than those made under the electoral area model. This chapter focuses on those changes that occur as a result of incorporation, and not due to the change in decision-makers.

GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

If incorporation occurs, a new municipality would replace the RDN as the local government for the area within the chosen boundary. The Municipal Council would replace the RDN Board as the primary local governing body, responsible for setting service levels, and for all other key local decisions in the community. Although the population and population density would depend upon the boundary option selected, the municipality would be a District Municipality, and the Council would consist of seven members, including one mayor and six councillors.¹²

¹² Section 10(1) of the *Local Government Act* notes that municipalities that have more than 800 ha, and population density of less than 5 persons per ha, are incorporated (unless otherwise requested) as a District municipality. The *Community Charter* indicates that a District with a population of less than 50,000 people would have six councillors and one Mayor (Council of 7). Notwithstanding those clauses, the municipality could choose to request a different Council size (i.e. 5-person Council).

The new municipality would automatically become a member municipality of the RDN, with one municipal director. The number of weighted corporate votes the director would have on RDN financial and other matters would be at least two, and three if the population exceeded 5,000. Assuming the boundary for the remainder of Area F was left as is, the Area F director would receive either two or three votes instead of the four that are currently allotted.¹³

Development services (local planning) is one of the important areas of local service over which the new Council would assume decision-making authority. Local decisions concerning long-term land use planning matters, in particular, would determine future settlement patterns within the new boundary. Following incorporation, existing RDN electoral area OCP, zoning and building regulations would remain in effect as municipal bylaws. The new Council, however, would have the authority to review, modify or completely replace these legislative documents.

It is worth noting that the Ministry of Transportation and Transit would continue to have jurisdiction and authority over Highway 4A and Highway 4, regardless of any incorporation, and would continue to make decisions regarding improvements, maintenance and development standards along these corridors.

SERVICE IMPLICATIONS

Council has the flexibility to determine services and service levels for its own community. How those changes in governance and authority are exercised is ultimately what determines the impacts for any individual municipality. Consider the following points:

- Once incorporated, a new municipality would assume responsibility for providing several local government services within the boundary area, including several services currently provided by the regional district¹⁴. As noted above, there are a few services that would automatically become required (municipalities are required to have Official Community Plan, Housing Needs Assessment, financial plan and emergency plan), but most municipalities provide a handful of other core services such as bylaw enforcement, building inspection and parks.
- Within its boundary, the new municipality could choose to directly deliver the services for which it assumed responsibility. The jurisdiction could, however, choose to have services delivered on contract through other local governments, such as another municipality or the RDN, or by using private contractors.

¹³ Based on the current population estimates, Area F director would retain 3 votes if Option A was the basis for the municipal boundary, but 2 votes if Option B or C was used.

¹⁴ There are some exceptions for services that are required, by statute, to be provided by the regional district, such as regional growth strategies and solid waste management planning.

- A municipality would remain part of several sub-regional services provided through the RDN, such as services that are provided to all Oceanside jurisdictions (northern recreation, Ravensong pool, Oceanside Place, 911, search and rescue), as well as regional services that are delivered to the entire region (regional growth strategy, regional parks, solid waste management).¹⁵
- RDN local services that are encompassed by and contained within the municipal boundary, would likely be transferred to a new municipality upon incorporation. As an example, if Option C was incorporated as a municipality (Areas 1, 2 and 3), incorporation of the area would trigger the transfer of the three water services – Whiskey Creek, Westurne Heights and Melrose Terrace – from the RDN to the new municipality.
- Incorporation would trigger the transfer of some services from the province to the new municipality, including the authority for local roads (not provincial highways) and for subdivision approval. Municipalities do not have the option to refuse – transfer of the ownership and responsibility for local roads happens automatically upon incorporation. In addition to owning the roads, the municipality would become responsible for the construction, improvement and maintenance. The province would retain authority for numbered highways such as Highway 4 and 4a.
- After incorporation policing would become a municipal responsibility if the municipality's population exceeds 5,000. Municipalities over 5,000 (as identified in the Census) have the option of providing their own police department, contracting with an adjacent municipality that has an existing municipal police department, or entering into an agreement with the Province to contract the RCMP as the municipal police service. Virtually all communities proceed with the RCMP contract due to the costs associated with the alternatives.
 - If a municipality enters into an agreement with the province, the federal government would pay 30% of the RCMP cost-base to the municipality's 70%. A municipality would be responsible for 100% of certain costs, such as the detachment building, holding cells, furniture and civilian support staff. These facilities would not have to be provided in the municipality – they can be shared with adjacent communities. In those instances the municipality would share in the costs of the detachment and pay a lease for the space for the municipal officers. Municipalities with more than 5,000 people that are policed by a municipal police department, or that

¹⁵ Over the longer-term, a municipality could choose to review the terms of its ongoing participation in sub-regional services.

contract with the municipal department in an adjacent municipality, must pay 100% of their policing costs.

- The transfer of policing costs would not come with a significant shift in authority; municipalities do not have significant control over RCMP policing services, even once they pay 70% (they are able to provide a municipal police force, but that option is rarely followed due to the costs associated with standalone departments).
- An incorporated community would also become responsible for providing tax notices to residents, collecting taxes and, where applicable, remitting the balances to the various authorities (e.g., RDN, Province, BC Assessment authority). That same service is provided to electoral area residents by the Provincial Surveyor of Taxes. Residents in municipalities do not have to pay the Surveyor of Taxes fee (5.25% on all taxes collected).
- In addition to tax collection, there are financial, corporate and administrative functions that municipalities are required to fulfill. The majority of these tasks are also required of regional districts, which prepare the reports and manage the administrative processes on behalf of the broader region; however, the creation of a new municipality means that separate processes and documents would be needed specifically for the new municipality. This list includes general government procedures like agendas, minutes, record keeping, running elections, applying for grants, as well as annual audit, budgets and financial reporting, freedom of information and other services.
- For each of the boundary options, fire service is currently provided by more than one fire department (note that for Option A only six parcels are currently serviced by Coombs-Hilliers department, with the remainder serviced through the Errington department). There is nothing to stop a municipality from receiving fire suppression through either a regional district fire service, or contracts with societies, but it is more typical that there would be a municipal fire department that could then provides services to lands beyond its borders (portions of Area F). Depending on the boundary option, an incorporation may trigger some restructuring of fire services to the municipality and potentially to areas in the remaining Area F.

FINANCE AND TAXATION IMPLICATIONS

Costs incurred to provide the various local services to the new municipality would be a function, in part, of the service delivery model chosen (i.e., who delivers the services, how they are delivered). Costs would also be influenced by economies — or diseconomies — of scale, and assumptions regarding service levels. A decision by the new municipality to become a service participant, and to leave service delivery with the RDN, would limit any potential cost impacts.

- Some of the local services provided by agencies other than the RDN would be unaffected by an incorporation. For instance contributions to Nanaimo Regional Hospital District and BC Assessment Authority and school taxes.
- One of the changes after incorporation is that municipal councils have the ability to set their own municipal tax rates for each property class, and determine the “multiples” or ratios between property classes (as noted in Chapter 2). In regional districts the ratios between classes are determined by the province (*Regional District Tax Regulation*) and are consistent in all electoral areas across the province. Municipalities can therefore determine if it’s appropriate, for instance, to levy a much higher business tax, or to lower rates to encourage more businesses. Rates are generally reflective of the type of tax classes in the municipality, the amount the municipality needs to recover, and municipal policies about the relative importance and service demands of different property classes.
- As noted, if a municipality’s population is fewer than 5,000 people upon incorporation, local policing would not be impacted by any structural change. However municipalities under 5,000 would pay a slightly higher police tax rate than that in electoral areas.¹⁶
 - Exceeding a Census population of 5,000 triggers a significant additional cost for any municipality. Most municipalities reach the threshold after years of planning and establishing reserves for the additional burden.
 - Based on the experience of other communities, even rural ones, that have exceeded the 5,000 population threshold, the costs have been significant. The District of Metchosin is a rural municipality that exceeded the 5,000 population (5,067) at the 2021 Census, and was required to pay 70% of the policing costs as of April 1, 2022. The municipality’s residents are now responsible for policing costs that exceed \$1,000,000 per year.¹⁷
- As noted, responsibility for, and the costs associated with, local road construction, improvement and maintenance would be automatically transferred from the province to the new jurisdiction. Based on restructure experiences elsewhere in the province, these costs could be substantial. While the maintenance does not have to be delivered by the municipality (it could be done on contract), municipalities do not have the same economies

¹⁶ Unincorporated areas receive a \$0.10 per \$1,000 assessed value reduction in the Police Tax relative to incorporated municipalities. This reduction reflects the fact that unincorporated areas also pay the provincial rural area tax, some of which could be considered a contribution to rural police services.

¹⁷ Metchosin’s policing costs are budgeted at \$1,046,464 in each year from 2025 to 2028 in the District’s 2024-2028 5-year plan.

of scale as the province enjoys in its rural area maintenance contracts.¹⁸ Even providing services at the same service level typically results in higher costs for a municipality compared to the province.

- All local governments receive a Community Works Fund allocation through the Canada Building Fund (formerly gas tax) determined using a base amount plus an amount related to population, with higher population communities receiving more grant funding. Monies, however, can only be expended on eligible projects as outlined in the program requirements. Local governments must also report annually on the projects and their outcomes.
- A municipality would incur some administration costs, over and above any service costs, to function as a separate jurisdiction. A municipal hall, a core staff, vehicles, annual budgets and audits, municipal insurance, information technology and other start-up costs are typical examples. Small municipalities receive a “small community protection grant” to assist with administrative costs. There is a base amount, a portion based on assessment, and a portion of the grant based on population. The per capita grant amount is higher for municipalities under 5,000 population. The per capita grant is not expected to fully cover all a municipality’s administration costs.
- Every municipality must fill at least two required officer roles – corporate administration and financial administration – but a variety of staff roles and positions are needed to provide services and implement the policies and decisions made by council.
- The remainder of Electoral Area F, outside of a municipal boundary, could also face potential financial implications as a result of incorporation. Specifically, the loss of population and tax base in affected local RDN services could result in changed costs for remaining taxpayers. The ultimate financial impact would depend on the ability of the RDN to offset losses in revenue with reductions in service cost.
- Properties within the ALR, as well as properties assessed as Class 9 farms (regardless of whether they are in the ALR) are more significantly impacted by incorporation, due to the loss of some exemptions that help to reduce the tax burden as part of an electoral area. Consider the following:
 - Properties in the ALR that are not farms (do not have Class 9 farm assessment) receive 50% exemptions on their land value for school and police tax, regional district services, hospital district and as well as BC Assessment and Municipal Finance Authority. The exemption applies only

¹⁸ The Central Vancouver Island is serviced by a 10-year contract (initially signed at \$14.75 million before annual escalations) with Mainroad Mid-Island Contracting LP.

to the land value (not the value of their residence or other structures). After incorporation, while those same exemptions remain, many of the local government services are no longer provided by the regional district, and the ALR properties do not receive the same 50% exemptions on the municipal taxes. When ALR properties are within municipalities, they receive more local government services from the municipality (for which there is no exemption), than the regional district.

- The greater tax impact is experienced by properties with Farm Class (Class 9) assessment. In electoral areas, properties assessed as Class 9 Farm Class not only have exemptions for their land (the 50% exemptions referenced above) but they also have the value of their residence exempted from the Provincial Rural Rate tax (a tax levied in electoral areas to cover some of the services provided by the province, such as roads. The provincial rural rate in 2024 was 0.36 for every \$1,000 of assessed value). Once incorporated, residents no longer pay the provincial rural rate, but they do pay a general municipal tax. There is no exemption for the residence (from municipal taxes or any other tax) after incorporation. The impact of the loss of this exemption depends upon the assessed value of the residence on the farm.
- Municipalities can determine what tax rates to charge farm class properties, which could help to minimize the impact on farm class properties, but farm class taxes are only levied on the value of farmland (not residences).¹⁹ Farm residences are identified as Class 1 (residential), and municipalities can only create a residential tax rate (not a specific farm residential tax rate). All residences are taxed at the same rate, and there are no exemptions.

IMPACTS RELATING TO SPECIFIC OPTIONS

Some impacts would differ, depending upon the boundary option. Consider:

- Ultimately the tax burden on residents will depend upon the tax base. Each boundary scenario represents a slightly different overall tax base, as well as a different composition of property classes. In general, the scenarios with more properties and higher assessment help to distribute municipal operating costs across the broader tax base. A high non-residential tax base enables a greater proportion of the municipal operating costs to be recovered from non-residential uses (reducing the burden or proportion recovered from residents). However, in some cases adding more properties and higher populations also increases the service costs.

¹⁹ Most municipalities charge a higher farm tax than the residential rate given that land with farm class status reflects very low land values.

- Options A and B do not include any community water systems that the municipality would become responsible for, which may have implications for the need to have municipal staff or water operation contracts.
- Options A and B are both estimated to be under the 5,000 population threshold, whereas Option C would exceed 5,000 population, triggering additional policing costs for a municipality resulting from that boundary option. Although Option B is below 5,000, estimated changes since the 2021 Census indicate that Option B is closer to that threshold (potentially closer to 4,600 if area 1A is included), which may impact support for that Option. Based on historical growth rates, Option B would not exceed 5,000 until the 2036 Census.
- Based on the length of the local road network within each option, and assuming a cost per linear metre of roads, Option B offers the lowest road costs relative to the tax base.

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This chapter summarizes the communication and engagement that occurred during the *Area F Boundary Study*. The summary includes an overview of the methods of public engagement, and the input shared by residents through the public meetings, comment cards and survey.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Figure 5.1 highlights the public engagement levels achieved through the primary public engagement activities. Figure 5.2 on the following page provides further detail on each of the communication and community engagement activities. The engagement process involved three stages:

- provide opportunities to learn about the technical criteria used to identify initial boundary options through the community mailout (see Appendix IV)
- introduce residents to the initial boundary options at the community meetings, and provide comment cards for initial feedback
- use the comment card feedback to consider modifications to the boundary option maps prior to initiating the survey, which sought option preferences (and reasons why), tested the relative importance of different boundary criteria, and asked about support for a future incorporation study.

Figure 5.1
Public Communication and Engagement Highlights

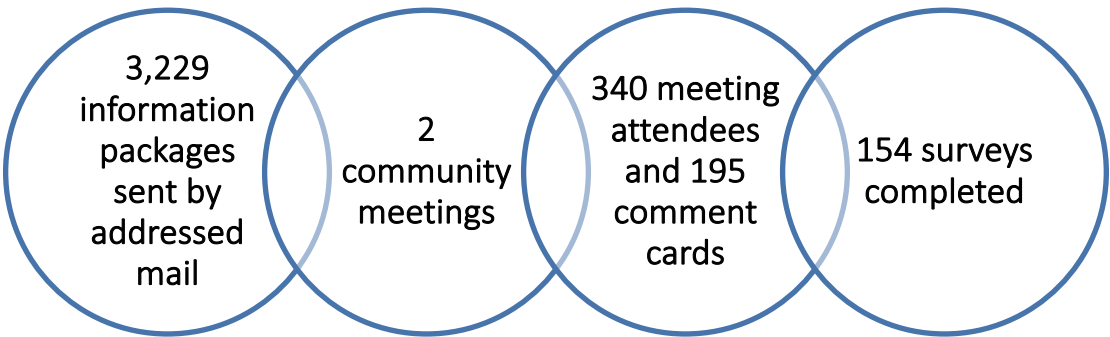


Figure 5.2
Public Communication and Engagement Methods

METHOD
<p>Project page on Get Involved RDN engagement platform</p> <p>A project page was maintained through the duration of this project to provide a single place for residents to find information. The page contained links to all documents generated through the project, as well as background documents.</p> <p>Data on webpage activity indicate that as of June 30, 2025, there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 928 visits • 88 engaged participants — that is, visitors who participated in the survey (note that one participant was RDN staff member who entered the 67 surveys that were completed in paper form, for a total of 154 surveys) • 583 informed participants — visitors who downloaded a document, visited the key dates page, visited the FAQ page, or visited multiple project pages • 1,653 aware participants — visitors who visited the site at least once
<p>Newsletter through Get Involved RDN</p> <p>The project webpage allowed residents to sign up to receive email updates from the project team on the project.</p>
<p>Mailout to all addresses within Electoral Area F</p> <p>A mailout was sent by addressed mail to all properties in Area F in April 2025 (3,229 addresses). The mailout described the purpose of the Boundary Study, the criteria for developing boundary options, and invited residents to attend a public meeting and submit a detailed survey response. A copy of the Mailout is provided in Appendix IV.</p>
<p>Posters</p> <p>Posters advertising the project and the community meetings were distributed around Area F in late April 2025.</p>
<p>Newspaper advertisements</p> <p>A number of newspaper ads were run in the <i>Parksville-Qualicum Bay News</i> through April and May 2025 advertising the project and community meetings, and in June advertising the survey.</p>
<p>News releases</p> <p>A news release was issued in June 2024 informing residents that RDN had received approval to conduct the Boundary Study. A second news release was issued in April 2025 inviting residents to participate in the community meetings and community survey.</p>

METHOD

RDN social media

The Boundary Study was announced on the RDN's Facebook page in June 2024, and the community meetings were advertised in April and May 2025.

Two (2) community meetings

Two community meetings were held in Area F:

- May 8, 2025: attended by 227 people
- May 13, 2025: attended by 113 people

The meetings included an open time for attendees to review information posterboards, a presentation from the consulting team, and audience questions and answers. The presentation slides and a video from the meeting was available on the project website.

Comment cards were available at the meetings asking which boundary option they preferred and whether they support a detailed incorporation study. A total of 195 comment cards were received, including:

- 51 cards at the May 8 meeting
- 41 cards at the May 13 meeting
- 41 cards collected from the community drop-off on June 5 and June 9
- 62 cards were collected on June 20

A copy of the Presentation Slides is included in Appendix V, the Community Meeting Poster Boards are provided in Appendix VI, and the Comment Card is provided in Appendix VII. A record of the questions asked by participants at the meetings is contained in the *What We Learned – Communications & Engagement Summary* in Appendix IX.

It is important to note that an Area F Town Hall meeting was held on June 12, 2025, at which the Electoral Area F Boundary Study was discussed. This meeting, it should be emphasized, was not initiated or attended by the project consulting team, and was not part of the Study. The consulting team is not responsible for, and cannot comment on the consistency or accuracy of any information presented on the Boundary Study at the meeting.

Survey

154 surveys were submitted between June 1 – June 15, 2025. The survey asked detailed questions to gather input about boundary criteria and preferences. Hard copies of the survey were made available at a local store, 125 copies of the survey were provided to the Area Director for distribution, and RDN staff at recreation facilities printed surveys for residents upon request. Residents were able to drop-off hard copy surveys at four locations (the Errington Post Office, the Meadowood store, Ravensong Aquatic Centre, and Oceanside Place Arena). The survey could also be completed online through RDN's Get Involved platform or submitted to the RDN by email.

METHOD

A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix VIII, and a record of the feedback received through the surveys is contained within the *What We Learned – Communications & Engagement Summary* in Appendix IX.

FAQ

A Frequently Asked Questions resource was prepared in response to some of the questions raised by residents at the two Community Meetings, and to help ensure consistent information was available after the two community meetings, particularly for residents who had not attended either of the meetings. The FAQ was available on the project webpage. The FAQs were viewed 312 times as of June 30, and the FAQ document resource was downloaded 43 times. The FAQ is included in Appendix X.

COMMENT CARDS

Comment cards (see Appendix VII) were intended as a quick way for residents to provide feedback on option preferences during the community meetings, and provided an area on the reverse asking for reasons for their selection, and asking if the resident supported seeking provincial approval for a detailed incorporation study. While initially intended as a quick form of feedback at meetings, some residents preferred to submit comments at a later date. Extra copies of the comment cards were provided to the Area Director, and community drop-off points were made available for residents to submit comment cards, and the cards were made available on the website for download. Figure 5.3 provides a summary of the preferences identified, and comments received.

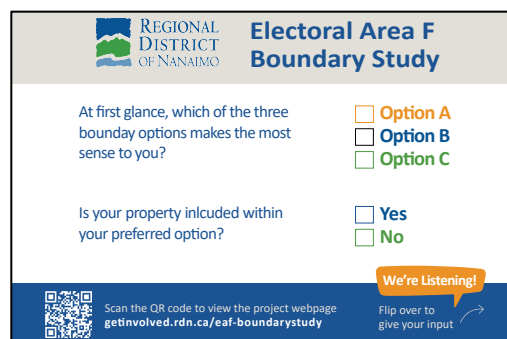


Figure 5.3 Comment Card Feedback

Collected from	Option A	Option B	Option C	None	Notes
May 8 and May 13 Community Meetings	27	24	17	27	92 cards (3 participants chose 2 options)
June 5 and June 9 (community drop-off)	7	8	23	6	41 cards (3 participants chose 2 options)
June 20 (community drop-off)	10	11	37	5	62 cards (1 participant chose 2 options)
Total	44 (21.8%)	43 (21.3%)	77 (38.1%)	38 18.8%	Total of 195 Cards (202 options selected)

Of the 195 comment cards, 176 answered the question: *Do you support seeking provincial approval for a detailed incorporation study?* Responses were 75% in favour, as shown in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.5 captures the majority of the reasons provided for selecting the preferences. Full text of the comment cards is provided in Appendix IX.

Figure 5.4: Support for seeking provincial approval for a detailed incorporation study (176 responses)

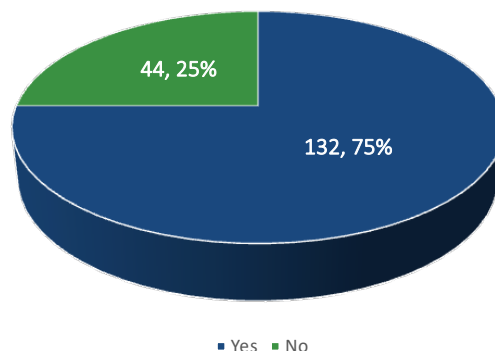


Figure 5.5: Reasons for Option Preferences (Comment Cards)

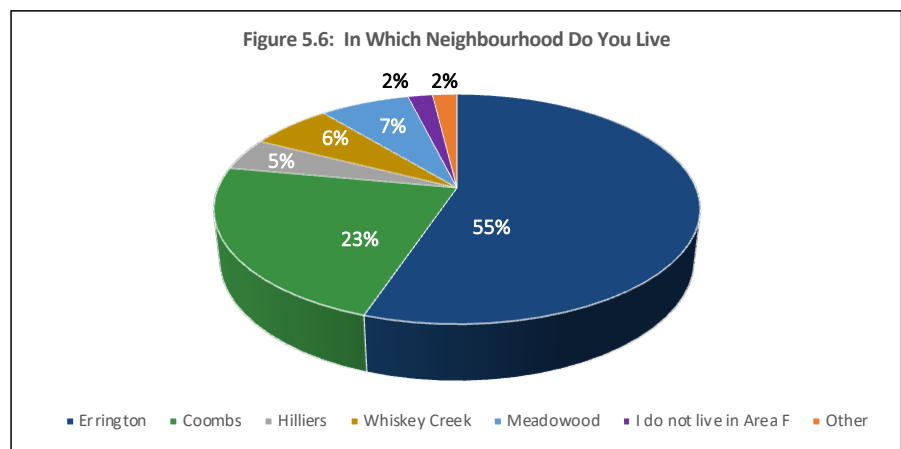
Option	Key Reasons for Preference
Option A (Errington)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the most practical and manageable • Start small with potential to expand to include others in the future • Avoids the 5,000 population threshold for policing costs • Concern regarding annexation by Parksville • Most viable with best tax base and compact road network • Makes the most sense financially • Most like-minded area • More localized • Less impact on the remainder of Area F
Option B (Errington & Coombs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes communities with shared interests and services • Avoids the 5,000 population policing cost threshold, but not too small • Most economically feasible option • Enables local control over development for my area • Including the industrial area would improve the tax base and less cost as population would be below 5,000. • If there is future growth, then we could add more land to the area • Most balanced option • Better option because Option A divides the community in half • Fewer roads and farm class properties than Option C
Option C (Errington, Coombs, Hilliers & Whiskey Creek)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largest population and tax base with large industrial component • Greater pool of people for potential council members • The most inclusive to allow for long-term planning • Option C is larger and most people want self-government • Includes all fire departments

Option	Key Reasons for Preference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers more people independence from the RD governance model • It is the most inclusive option that recognizes the broader community with shared values • No one should be left out unless they want to opt out (should include all of Area F) • Other options could create unnecessary conflict within the community • It has more village centres • It should include both fire protection districts
None of the options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No interest in incorporation and preference to remain with status quo/RDN • Concern about potential for tax increases with no increase in service • Perception that incorporation could ruin what is special about Area F • Concern that incorporation does not solve what residents see as the governance issues or “foundational issues” at RDN (some noted preferences for different solutions) • Concern that Incorporation would result in more government and less control • Desire for the lowest possible taxes • Some expressed desire for alternative options (larger ones or ones that include different properties) • Concern that no cost analysis had been provided

SURVEY

A total of 154 people submitted surveys, including 87 online and 67 hard (paper) copies. Just over 55% of the surveys were completed by residents who live in Errington. Figure 5.6 shows the communities where survey respondents live. 63% of those filling out the survey indicated that they had been to one of the two project community meetings, and another 15 (9.7%) indicated that they had watched the recording of the meeting online.

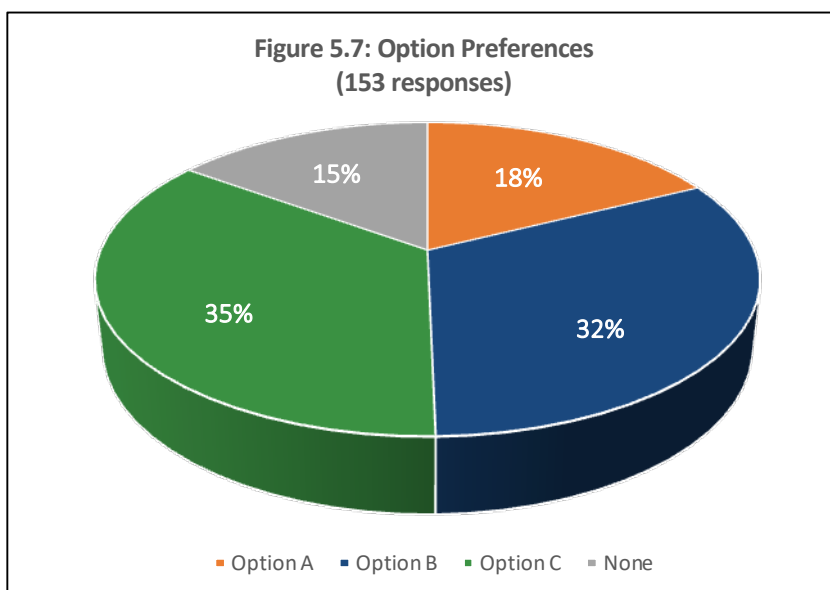
The survey
asked



residents to indicate the relative importance of some boundary criteria. The criteria with the highest priorities included:

- minimizing the costs for a future municipality and its taxpayers (50% said very important, and 13% said important)
- Including an area that identifies as a cohesive community (46% said very important, and 22% said important)
- Including the entirety of Highway 4a as the community's service hub and transportation corridor (36% said very important, and 24% said important).

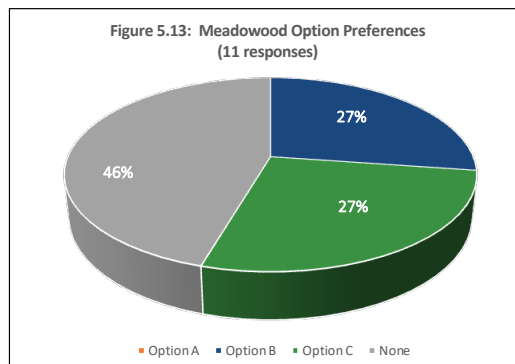
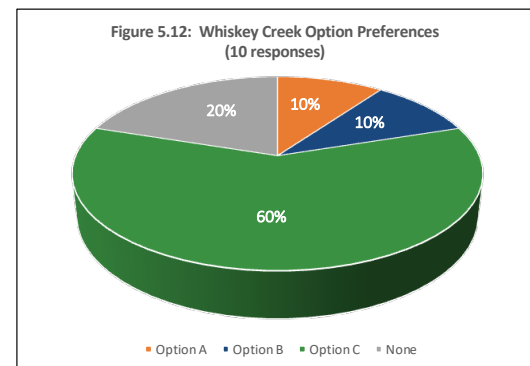
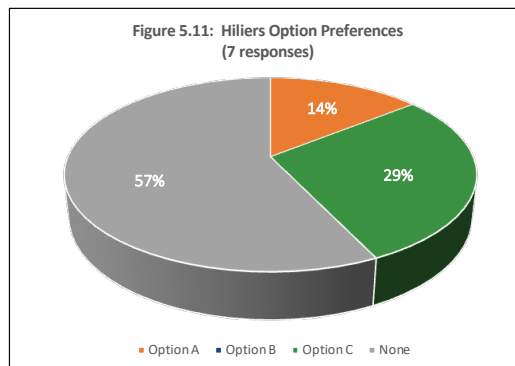
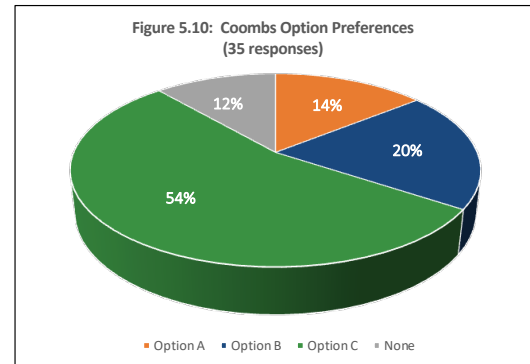
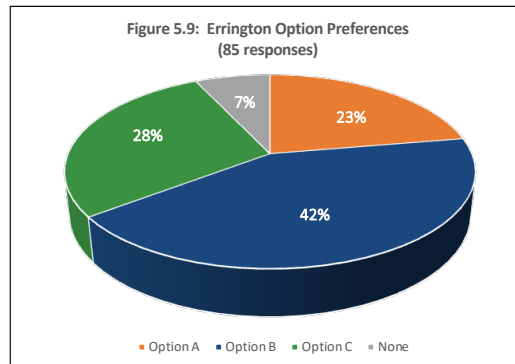
As with the comment cards, the survey asked participants to select their preferred options. Note that Options B and C were adjusted slightly after the Community Meetings to reflect some of the input received from those meetings. All but one respondent answered this question. The following represents the feedback provided through the survey, including overall option preferences



(Figure 5.7), as well as the preferences expressed by neighbourhood (Figures 5.8 through 5.13), and associated reasons for the stated preferences (Figure 5.14).

Figure 5.8: Results by Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood	Option A	Option B	Option C	None	Total Responses
Errington	19	36	24	6	85
Coombs	5	7	19	4	35
Hilliers	1	0	2	4	7
Whiskey Creek	1	1	6	2	10
Meadowood	0	3	3	5	11
I do not live in Area F	0	2	0	0	2
Other	1	0	0	2	3



* Note that 3 responses from those who indicated "other" and two responses who indicated "I do not live in Area F" are not shown in a pie chart due to the small number of responses.

Figure 5.14: Reasons for Option Preferences (Survey)

Option	Key Reasons for Preference
Option A (Errington)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller, more manageable boundary • Seen as a cautious or practical starting point • Avoids reaching the 5,000 population threshold (and associated policing costs) • Easier to expand later than shrink • Includes like-minded and local communities • Excludes many farm class properties • Helps avoid annexation by Parksville • Lower financial risk; more compact and cohesive
Option B (Errington & Coombs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered a good compromise between Options A and C • Balance of land uses • Includes communities with shared interests and the core community • Includes commercial/industrial areas, which improves the tax base • Includes all of Hwy 4A for tax base and community identity • Limits inclusion of farm properties • Keeps population under 5,000 to avoid policing costs • Is more inclusive than Option A • Offers potential for future expansion • Some supported B as a second choice if A was too small
Option C (Errington, Coombs, Hilliers & Whiskey Creek)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most inclusive of residents, communities, and services (e.g., more of fire protection districts) • Highest tax base due to inclusion of additional industrial lands • Largest population • Offers potential independence from RDN and improved local representation for more people in the community • Aligns with existing community identity and long-term planning
None of the Above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to maintain the status quo and stay in RDN • Concern about increased taxes without improved services • Distrust about the incorporation process and motivations • View that incorporation won't solve underlying issues at the RDN • Preference for regional governance reform rather than incorporation • Belief that proposed boundaries exclude key properties or communities

The survey also asked if residents were in support of seeking provincial approval for a detailed incorporation study. 75% of survey participants were in favour (Figure 5.15). The survey ended with an option to share any additional comments. A summary of the main themes and sample comments if provided in Figure 5.16.

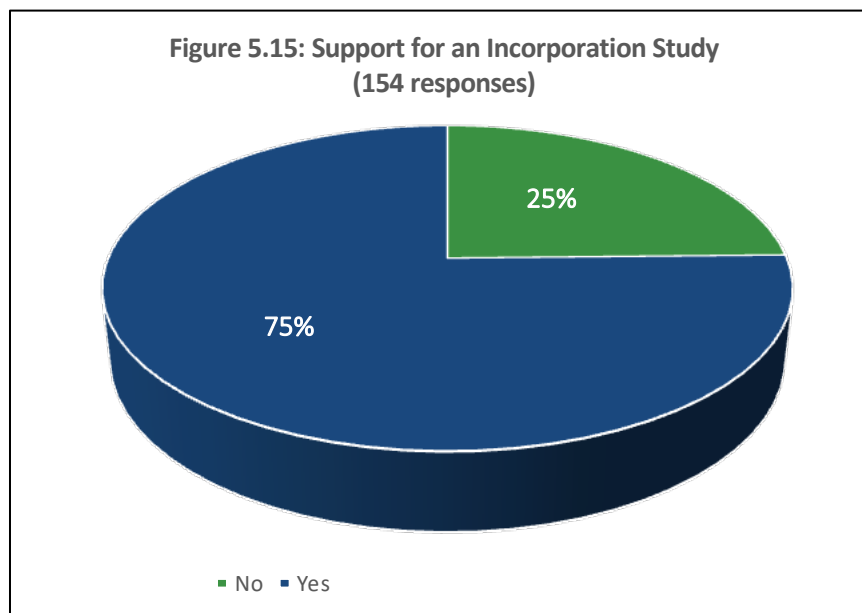


Figure 5.16: Other Survey Comments (Themes)

Theme	Comments (# reference repeat occurrences)
Farm class properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm class properties should be removed from the boundary options and do not belong inside any future proposed municipalities More farms should be included in potential municipality boundary
Incorporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several indicated that they do not wish to be incorporated (or for incorporation to proceed) (5) In favour of whatever option helps this study proceed Incorporation is not the right solution (recommended other options) (3)
Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the boundaries as large as possible to include all of Area F (2) Include both fire protection areas (3) Start small and expand later (2) Option A (3), and minimize the impact on the rest of Area F (2) Coombs/Hilliers is very different from Errington
Meadowood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that the options do not include or impact Meadowood, and propose alternatives for Meadowood (join other electoral

Theme	Comments (# reference repeat occurrences)
	areas, create their own boundary, join a future municipality in the future) (4)
Information on cost impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about cost (7) • Costs will show that incorporation does not make sense • Benefits will outweigh the costs • Do not believe it is as expensive as presented • Hope for transparent info moving forward
Bias to current governance model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that the Study and information shared is intended to maintain the current model of governance (4)
Bias towards incorporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that incorporation is promoted by only a select group, and worry about biased in how information is shared (4) • Discomfort with separate Area F Town Hall meeting held outside the Study process (2)
Tax base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose options that have greatest tax base • Include all industrial properties
Keep community together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep our community together - Allow for areas that can be developed to support our financial base (2) • Concern that the options are creating unnecessary fractures in community
Protection of rural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect rural areas from development (3)

OBSERVATIONS

The following observations were drawn from the community feedback:

- While the meetings were well attended, the total combined comment card and survey responses reflect a small sample of the broader Area F community, and of those areas that have the potential to be directly affected by the boundary (if an incorporation study were to proceed), including residents in Hilliers, Whiskey Creek, Coombs, and Errington.
- Based on the survey, where residents in Errington and Coombs represented 78% of the responses to the survey, residents in these two communities seem to have a greater interest in engaging in the *Study*. While some comments noted a cohesiveness identity in Area F, others characterized Errington as “very different” from other parts of Area F.
- While Option C received the most support in the survey, only 17% of the total survey responses were from the Whiskey Creek and Hilliers area that

represent the difference between Option B and Option C. Of those 17 responses, 8 preferred Option C. The rest of the support for Option C was expressed by residents from Errington (24) and Coombs (17). The desire for Option C (as expressed through the survey), is therefore not driven from properties in the Hilliers and Whiskey Creek area (although three of the responses from Hilliers identified interest a larger area that included the fire protection areas from both the Hilliers and the Errington fire departments).

- Combined preferences for Options A and B suggest there is also interest for a smaller option from residents within Errington and Coombs, particularly given the fact that there were few survey responses from residents within the Hilliers and Whiskey Creek areas.
- The 25% percent of residents from that did not support seeking an incorporation study (as per the survey results) were relatively evenly spread across each of the communities; the percentage of residents who did not support seeking an incorporation study on the comment cards was also 25%
- The reasons for supporting different options indicated a wide range of factors. There was significant interest in an inclusive approach that allowed everyone to benefit from a different form of governance, and others who preferred to contain any changes to the smallest boundary possible.
- Fifteen percent of the survey participants chose “none of the above” as their option preference. Most of these residents selected that option because they did not want incorporation study to proceed, or felt there was no justification for one; but others had different boundary suggestions, most of which were larger than those proposed (or included areas that were left off some of the boundaries). A total of 19% of residents indicated “none” on the comment cards, even though this option was not added on the card itself.
- Comments in both the comment cards and survey highlighted divergent opinions regarding incorporation, but also common desire to support and retain the area’s rural character and community connection.
- Community feedback indicated a desire to have more complete information regarding cost and tax impacts of incorporation. While that level of detail is outside the scope of this *Study*, it would be provided in an incorporation study if one proceeds. Some residents were wary of the broad references to cost impacts of policing, roads and farm exemptions in particular; others were equally skeptical of information shared by residents advocating for incorporation. There was a shared desire for a detailed and transparent process, should any future study proceed.

- As noted in the previous *Electoral Area F Governance and Services Study*, Area F has a strong rural history, values and identity, with farms representing an integral part of the community. There was mixed feedback regarding the importance of excluding farms from a potential municipal boundary. It was noted that boundaries are typically drawn to exclude farms that have farm class tax status because of the loss of tax exemptions experienced by farm class properties upon incorporation, and in particular the loss of the tax exemption on residential dwellings on farm properties. Avoiding farm class properties in municipalities was therefore referenced as an approach intended to support the economic viability of farms, in recognition of the economic challenges of farming, and the impacts incorporation would have on their property tax bill. For some farm owners, the desire for local governance and control through a municipality may outweigh the loss of tax exemptions, but it is difficult to assume this point is true for all those whose farmlands would be affected by any future incorporation. It is also challenging to illustrate the extent of the tax impacts (for farms and for other properties) without additional financial and tax analysis that is provided as part of an incorporation study. The survey indicated a desire from some residents to include more farms within the boundary (including some farm class property owners who identified themselves as wanting to be included). The survey also recorded others who requested that farm class properties be kept out of the boundary.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted previously, the purpose of the report is to prepare the technical analysis to support boundaries that position any future municipality for resilience, minimizing the future costs to the community, ensuring a sufficient population and robust tax base, and combining that information with input from the community on shared identity, and relative interest in pursuing incorporation.

The technical analysis identified three boundary options, each of which represents a potential feasible incorporation study area with sufficient population and tax base to support a rural municipality. Each option has slightly different features, and associated impacts. The options were then shared with the Area F residents through two well-attended community meetings (340 residents), and generated 195 comment cards. After a few minor changes to the options, a survey was shared and completed by 154 residents. The majority of those who provided input demonstrated an interest in pursuing an incorporation study, although it is acknowledged that the feedback represents only a small proportion of the wider community.

Figure 6.1 on the following two pages highlights key points from both the technical analysis and the community input with respect to the three boundary options. It does not reiterate the rationale and feedback, captured in Chapter 5, from those who did not select one of the three options.

RECOMMENDATION

The consultants recommend Option B, as shown in Figure 6.2, which encompasses most of Coombs and Errington, as the basis for a future incorporation study, should such a study be approved by the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs

The recommendation reflects a desire to:

- Minimize costs for a new municipality and its taxpayers
- Provide sufficient tax and population base to promote resiliency
- Encompass areas that relate to and service an identifiable and cohesive community
- Include those who are most interested in evaluating incorporation and engaging in a future incorporation process

Figure 6.1: Option Comparison, Technical Criteria and Community Input

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Technical Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option is the most compact of the three options, and has the highest % non-residential tax base • This option is focused on the community of Errington, which is where the majority of the survey participants are from • Population is well under the threshold for triggering policing costs, and the smaller area minimizes the road length • With the “additional area” (Area 1a) included as part of this boundary, the population is estimated at 2,857 people (2021 Census), which is slightly below the provincial minimum for ensuring a resilient municipal base. Based on historical growth rates, the 2026 population would be slightly over 3,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encompasses the denser areas of both Errington and Coombs • Provides a robust population base (estimated at 4,427 based on 2021 Census if Area 1a is included) for volunteering and political involvement required of a municipality • Includes all of Highway 4a, providing a logical commercial/industrial centre for a potential municipality and a high non-residential tax base (21.5%) • Has the lowest road costs based on the local road network and tax base • Is an identifiable area, relying upon Highways 4 & 19, French Creek and Englishman River as boundaries • The actual population may be higher than the estimates for the boundary area, and should be confirmed prior to any incorporation study proceeding. Based on the estimates, and historical growth rates, the population would not exceed 5,000 in either of the next two Census periods (2026 or 2031) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population (including Area 1a) is 5,714 (2021 Census) • The municipal operating costs for this option will be greater than the other two options due to the community exceeding the 5,000 population policing threshold (and therefore being allocated 70% of the RCMP police agreement operating costs), but also the increased road network. • The option includes all village centres in Area F identified in the OCP, with the exception of Qualicum River Estates in Meadowood • Option includes the densest residential neighbourhood in Area F (Whiskey Creek) • Larger overall tax base, but lower percentage non-residential compared to other 2 options • More Crown land parcels and farm class properties than other 2 options

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Community Input Highlights (Reasons in support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the survey, Option A received the lowest support as participants' top preference (18%) and in the comment cards it was slightly higher (22% noted it as top preference) • Some residents indicated that the impetus for incorporation is from Errington • Some support "starting small" with the potential to expand over time • Cost effective option • Like-minded cohesive community • Some like that this option has less impact on the remainder of Area F • Less farm land affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the survey, Option B was identified by 32% of participants as their top preference and in the comment cards it received the lowest support (21%) of the three options • This option has been noted by several as representing a "fair balance" between control, financial viability, land uses • Has a starting population below 5,000 to minimize initial costs to a new municipality (without precluding the opportunity to expand in the future) • The majority of those who responded to the survey from Errington (42%) selected this option • Considered more inclusive of broader community with shared interests • Reflects the importance of Highway 4a in defining our community identity • Leaves out most of the farm class properties • Avoids policing costs in short term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the survey, Option c was identified by 35% of participants as their top preference and in the comment cards it received the highest support (38%) of the three options • Only 17 survey responses were from residents of Hilliers and Whiskey Creek (which represent the only additional area in Option C compared to Option B). 8 residents from those communities selected Option C as their top preference. • Those who preferred it identified it as being the most inclusive option and a stronger community, and the sentiment that everyone deserves to be a part of the municipality • Wanted the most people possible to benefit from an alternative governance to the RD model • Higher population • Covers more farms • Best mix of land uses and tax base

In support of the recommendation, the consultants emphasize the following points:

- One of the advantages of Option A and B over Option C is the avoidance of the impact of having to pay for 70% of the community's policing costs, over and above any costs associated with other services and responsibilities transferred as a result of incorporation. Policing has the potential to represent a significant portion of a rural municipality's operating budget and perhaps more importantly, creates an option where property tax amounts would increase. While cost may not be the deciding factor for many residents, minimizing the cost differential between the status quo and incorporation generally provides a referendum with a better chance of success.
- Given the context referenced above, it is recommended that if an incorporation study were to proceed, consideration of more refined population estimates be prepared (with updated Census figures if available) to better predict the timing of exceeding the 5,000 population threshold (based on historical growth rates, it is not likely to occur until the 2036 Census). Having the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General prepare an estimate of the anticipated policing costs (for when that threshold is triggered) in advance of an incorporation study would promote clarity and confidence in the study analysis and findings.
- While any engagement or consideration of Area G was not part of the scope of this *Study*, it is recommended that discussions and engagement regarding the inclusion of the adjacent Area G properties identified on Figure 6.2 in hatched area be considered with the intention of including the "Possible Addition" lands (Area 1a) within the Study Area. It is emphasized that some of the lands within Area F (shown in Area 1a) only make sense to be included if the adjoining Area G lands are part of the boundary. The combination of the "Possible Addition" and Area G properties enables a more logical and cohesive boundary.
- It is emphasized that the recommendation is based on a combination of technical criteria and community input, but that other factors such as engagement with Indigenous communities, are the responsibility of the Province and could impact the lands included, and in particular any Crown lands.

The map illustrates the proposed electoral boundaries for the City of Regina. The central and largest portion of the city is shaded in dark blue, representing 'Option B'. To the east, a large area is shaded in light blue, labeled as 'Possible Addition'. Further east, a green-shaded area is designated as 'Electoral Area G'. Hatched patterns are used to delineate specific 'Properties' within the city. The map also shows major roads, including highways 1 and 4, and the city's proximity to the South Saskatchewan River. A legend in the bottom right corner provides a key for the colors and patterns used, and a scale bar indicates distances from 0 to 2 kilometers.



APPENDICES

ELECTORAL AREA F
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APPENDIX I

Terms of Reference

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Terms of Reference:

Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area F Boundary Study

1.0 BACKGROUND

In 2022, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (Ministry) contributed funding for a Governance and Services Study within Electoral Area F of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) to document service delivery and governance arrangements, engage with local community members to understand their concerns and interests, and identify potential future governance and service delivery options for the area.

The resident Electoral Area F Governance and Services Study Committee established to oversee the study presented their final report to the RDN Board in May 2023. The report recommended undertaking an incorporation study for Electoral Area F. The RDN Board subsequently requested approval and sought funding from the Ministry for such a study.

In its evaluation of the request, the Ministry identified several reasons why proceeding directly to an incorporation study was not appropriate for Electoral Area F:

- The findings from the governance study included residents' desire to have robust land use and planning bylaws in place to protect the rural environment. Many of these issues can be addressed through the Official Community Plan, which is currently being updated.
- Public participation rates for community outreach events held during the governance study were low.
- Incorporation of the entire Electoral Area is not viable due to the number of farms that would be impacted (e.g., farms are taxed at a higher rate in municipalities).
- There is not a strong sense of shared identity across the communities in Electoral Area F.
- The Electoral Area F Governance and Services Study did not specify which portion of the Electoral Area is most suitable for incorporation.

The Ministry recognizes there is a strong desire from the RDN to build on the momentum of the Governance and Services Study. To address some of the above concerns, the Ministry provided a \$45,000 grant to the RDN to undertake a boundary study in Electoral Area F. Such a study would help determine any viable boundaries within the Electoral Area that would be mapped to identify, at a high-level, some of the implications of the proposed boundaries on any future incorporation of that area. It would also provide opportunities for additional public engagement to solicit community input on the boundary scenarios.

2.0 SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Electoral Area F boundary study are to:

- outline the criteria used to decide on a future study area boundary including, but not limited to population, settlement patterns, roads, and land use regulation;
- recommend a potential study area boundary scenario reflecting the outlined criteria;
- identify, at a high level, restructure implications resulting from the recommended study area boundary that could be explored further by a future incorporation study;
- if appropriate, identify secondary boundaries that could also be suitable for a study area;
- if secondary boundaries are identified, describe the differences between the recommended boundary and the secondary boundaries.

2.2 Components for a viable boundary

When assessing boundary options, the following factors should be considered:

- services and infrastructure (e.g. existing infrastructure, including water and sewer; complete service areas; future infrastructure needs and development plans; current and projected future local services and standard demands; existing local roads);
- settlement patterns (e.g. zoning; OCP land use designations; ALR status; lot sizes; area population, population density, and dispersion);
- existing infrastructure needs and development plans;
- property class composition and assessed property values;
- existing local roads and designated highways;
- tax revenue capacity (e.g. property class composition and assessed property values);
- a diverse demographic profile;
- a shared sense of community identity;
- a population of at least 3,000 to 5,000 people;
- the exclusion of Crown land from the prospective boundaries, where practical, to ensure that the majority of the land within the boundaries would be primarily under local government jurisdiction;
- community input and perspectives collected during the previous Governance and Services Study and this study;
- other factors determined relevant based on data gathered during the study process.

The boundary study will provide a comprehensive assessment of quantitative and qualitative data in sufficient detail and rigour to make recommendations for the study area(s). The analysis is expected to consider, at a high-level, implications of any proposed boundaries on a potential future incorporation scenario, but it is not expected to analyze the impacts of each restructure scenario on residents in the area or the RDN (e.g. impacts on taxation). If the Minister and RDN Board decide to move forward with an incorporation study following the boundary study, a detailed technical examination of the impacts of incorporation will be explored at that time.

The boundary study will be completed by a consultant retained by the RDN. The RDN will lead the procurement process and administer the contract. As this study is mostly technical in nature, it will not include the re-establishment of the committee that was used for the Governance and Services Study. Instead, the RDN will update past committee members and solicit feedback as needed. Targeted public engagement will be undertaken after the boundary scenarios have been defined and analyzed by the consultant, to solicit community views and feedback on the data provided about the implications

relating to each boundary in the event of a restructure, to determine whether there is a desire to proceed with an incorporation study for a more in-depth analysis.

If the boundary study leads to an incorporation study, a study committee would be re-established at that time.

2.3 Study Area

A map of Electoral Area F is provided as Appendix A, but it is expected that the study itself will identify various boundaries for future study areas within the overall Electoral Area.

2.4 Study Outputs

The final study report should align with the objectives of the boundary study. The report should present observations and analysis in a form that is legible and understandable to a broad public audience. The contents should include, but are not limited to:

- Background and context: overview of the purpose of the study and report contents; and evaluation criteria used with the service analysis and to decide on the various boundaries;
- Results of analysis: analysis of community and area services, description of each boundary configuration scenario, including detailed maps; high-level overview of potential restructure implications for each boundary; and associated analysis of available data and identification of data 'gaps';
- Summary of public engagement results;
- Observations and conclusions: clear summary of services, finance, governance and property tax implications, or other conclusions; GIS based maps depicting recommended and alternative (if appropriate) study boundaries;
- Supporting evidence for conclusions and options: data collection methodologies, technical or aggregated data (as necessary).

2.5 Public Engagement

The consultant must develop a public engagement strategy and outline how best to engage with the public and other participants directly affected in the study process. It is important to establish parameters for public participation so that residents and property owners understand the opportunities to participate in the study.

The public engagement strategy should include, at a minimum:

- a communication plan for reporting out to the public on the study progress;
- one or more community meetings to present information to the public and to solicit community views and feedback on the data provided about the implications relating to each boundary in the event of a restructure. This will be done to aid the consultant in identifying a recommended boundary, and to determine whether there is a desire to proceed with an incorporation study for a more in-depth analysis of that boundary.

First Nations consultation will be undertaken on a government-to-government basis by the Ministry. Engagement with First Nations, including, but not limited to, information sharing for any community

meetings or other events related to the study will be undertaken by RDN staff on a government-to-government basis, rather than by the consultant.

Linkages

The study should consider linkages with:

- The previous 2023 study report completed by the RDN Governance and Services Study committee;
- The Electoral Area F Official Community Plan;
- A potential future incorporation study for the recommended boundary.

2.6 Out of Scope

Detailed technical and financial information on the impact of municipal incorporation within a proposed boundary. This analysis would be found in an incorporation study, which may follow this study.

3.0 ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Timeline

It is recommended that the project be completed within the following timelines:

Task/Deliverable	Completion Date
Copy of the consultant's proposal and/or a preliminary outline of the study and workplan delivered to the Ministry	October 1, 2024
Interim progress report delivered to the Ministry	November 1, 2024
Draft report provided to RDN and Ministry staff for review/comment	April 1, 2025
Public Engagement	May 26, 2025
Final formatted report delivered to RDN and the Ministry	June 24, 2025
Final account of project expenses delivered to the Ministry	July 31, 2025

This timeline will become more certain after a consultant is selected and agreement is reached with the consultant on a feasible study completion schedule. Timelines may be flexible, to factor in unanticipated delays, and may be adjusted with mutual consent of the Ministry and the RDN.

3.2 Role of Ministry

RDN and Ministry staff will undertake engagement and outreach with First Nations who may have an interest in the boundary study and in providing their input and views in addition to their participation in the public engagement component of this boundary study.

Ministry staff will be available as a resource to RDN staff and the consultant and will provide additional input including review of the draft materials and provision of comments prior to completion of the final report.

Funding for the boundary study and public engagement is via the Restructure Planning Grant Program, pursuant to the *Local Government Grants Act* and Regulation to the RDN from the Ministry.

3.3 Role of the RDN

The RDN Board will oversee the boundary study and consider the study findings and any recommendations to determine how to proceed. Ensuring the boundary study process is carried out in an inclusive, open, and transparent manner, the study consultant will provide an important link between the community and the Board.

The RDN will procure a consultant, or consultants, in accordance with its procurement policy and process. The consultant will be sought to undertake this study with sufficient experience and expertise in local government boundary extension/restructure, service delivery and governance studies and public consultation to effectively identify restructure implications arising from the selection of study boundaries. The consultant must also demonstrate the ability to work with and generate GIS data and mapping.

The consultant will report directly to the RDN, who will administer the contract. In supervising the work of the consultant, the RDN is responsible for ensuring that the expected outputs completed by the consultant meet the requirements outlined in this Terms of Reference.

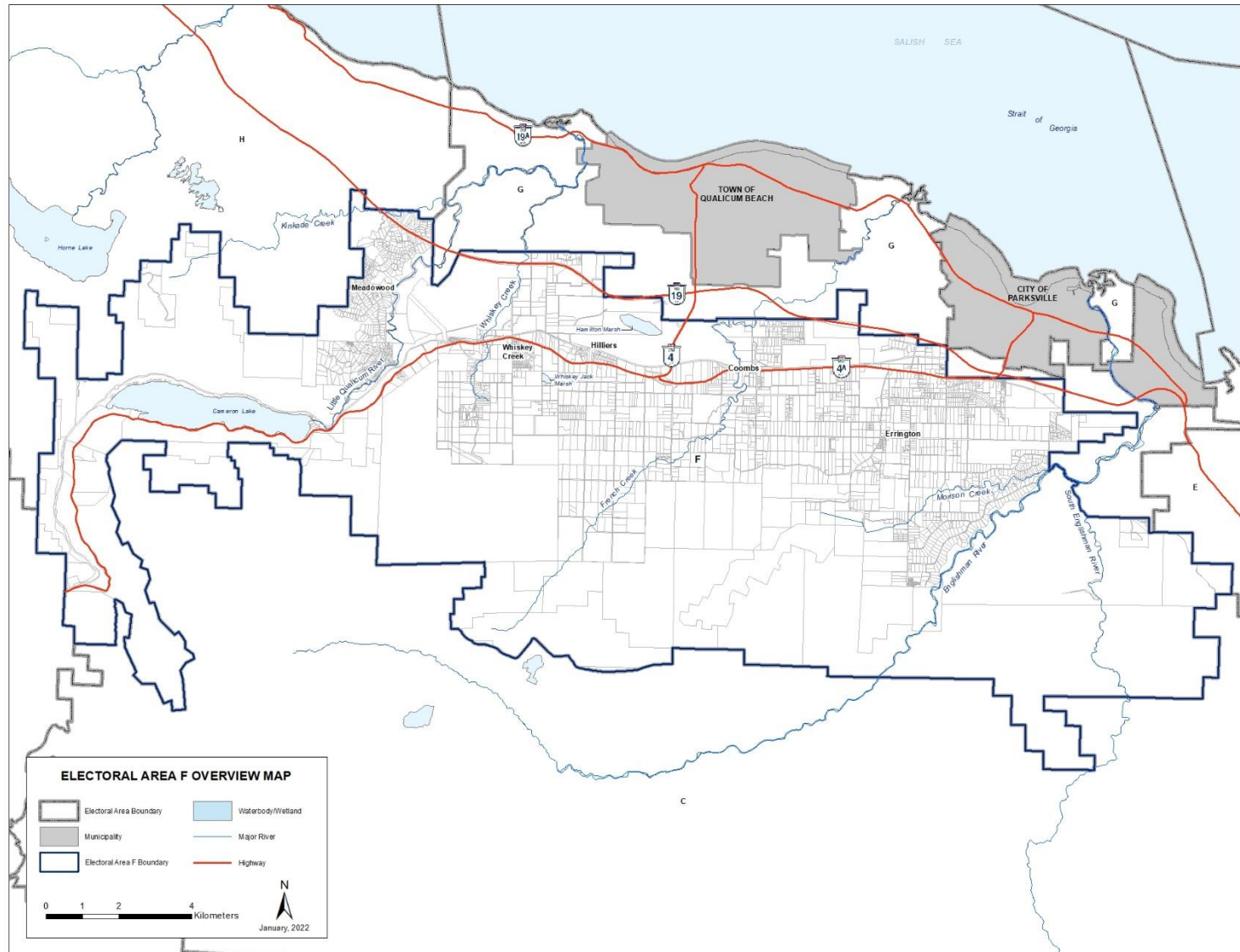
The total funding available for the boundary study and associated public engagement will be determined by the RDN; the Ministry's contribution is \$45,000. Disbursements under contract(s) will be made by the RDN.

The RDN will provide a progress report to the Ministry on or before November 1, 2024, through program staff, that includes a copy of the selected consultants' proposal accepted as the basis of a contract for the study, and/or a preliminary outline of the work plan before substantive work begins. A draft report will be provided to the Ministry for review and comment prior to the report being finalized.

The RDN must ensure that the report and engagement with the community are neutral and balanced. The responsibility for ensuring the information collected by the consultant is appropriately shared with the public, RDN Board, community, and the Ministry rests with the RDN staff.

Following completion of the study, the RDN will convey the findings to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Depending on the results of the study and subsequent decisions by the RDN Board, further steps towards an incorporation study for Electoral Area F may be considered, if warranted.

Appendix A





APPENDIX II

Map of Areas 1, 1a, 2 and 3

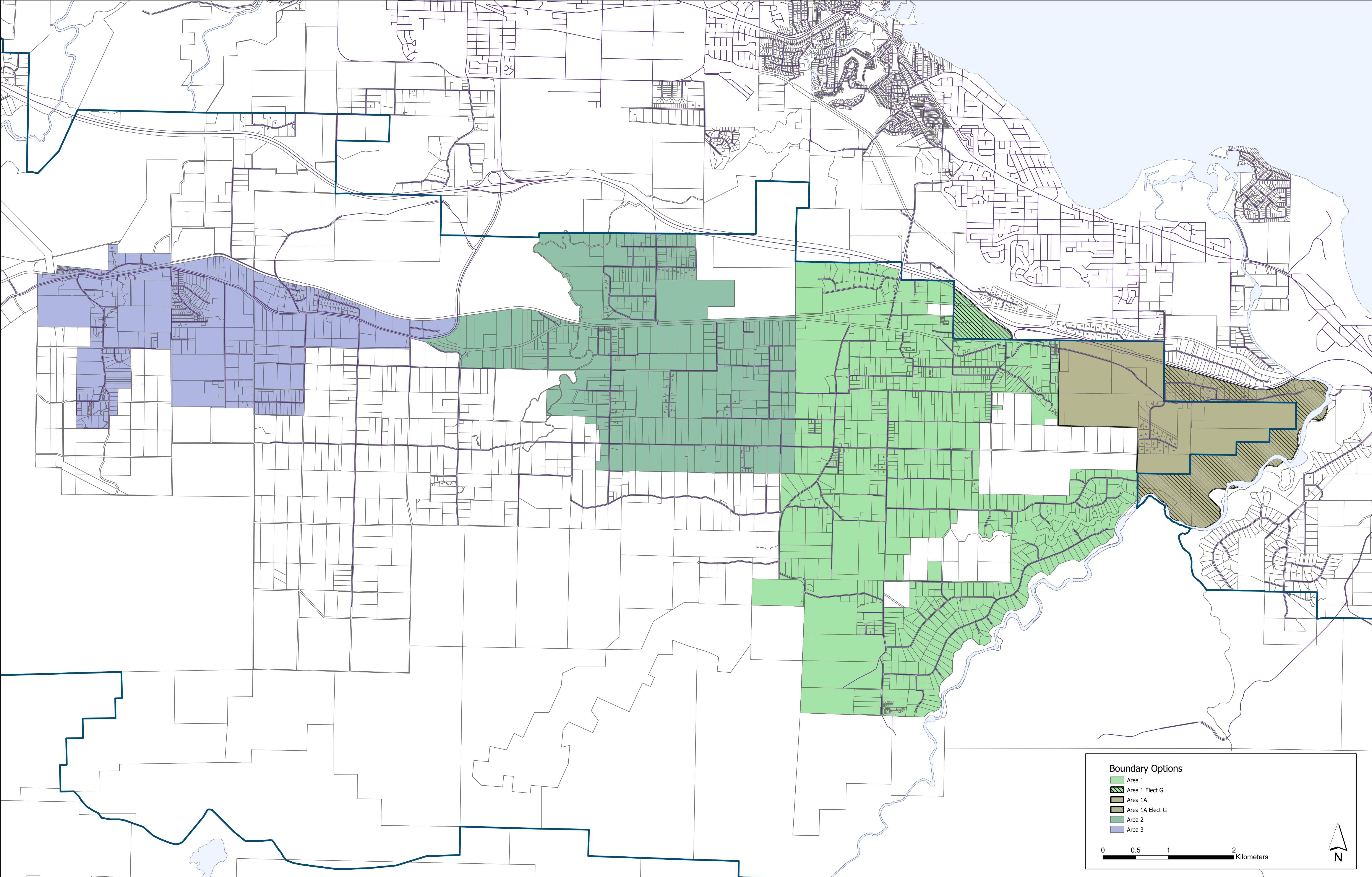
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Boundary Options

- Area 1
- Area 1 Elect G
- Area 1A
- Area 1A Elect G
- Area 2
- Area 3

0 0.5 1 2 Kilometers

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APPENDIX III

Initial & Revised Boundary Options A, B and C

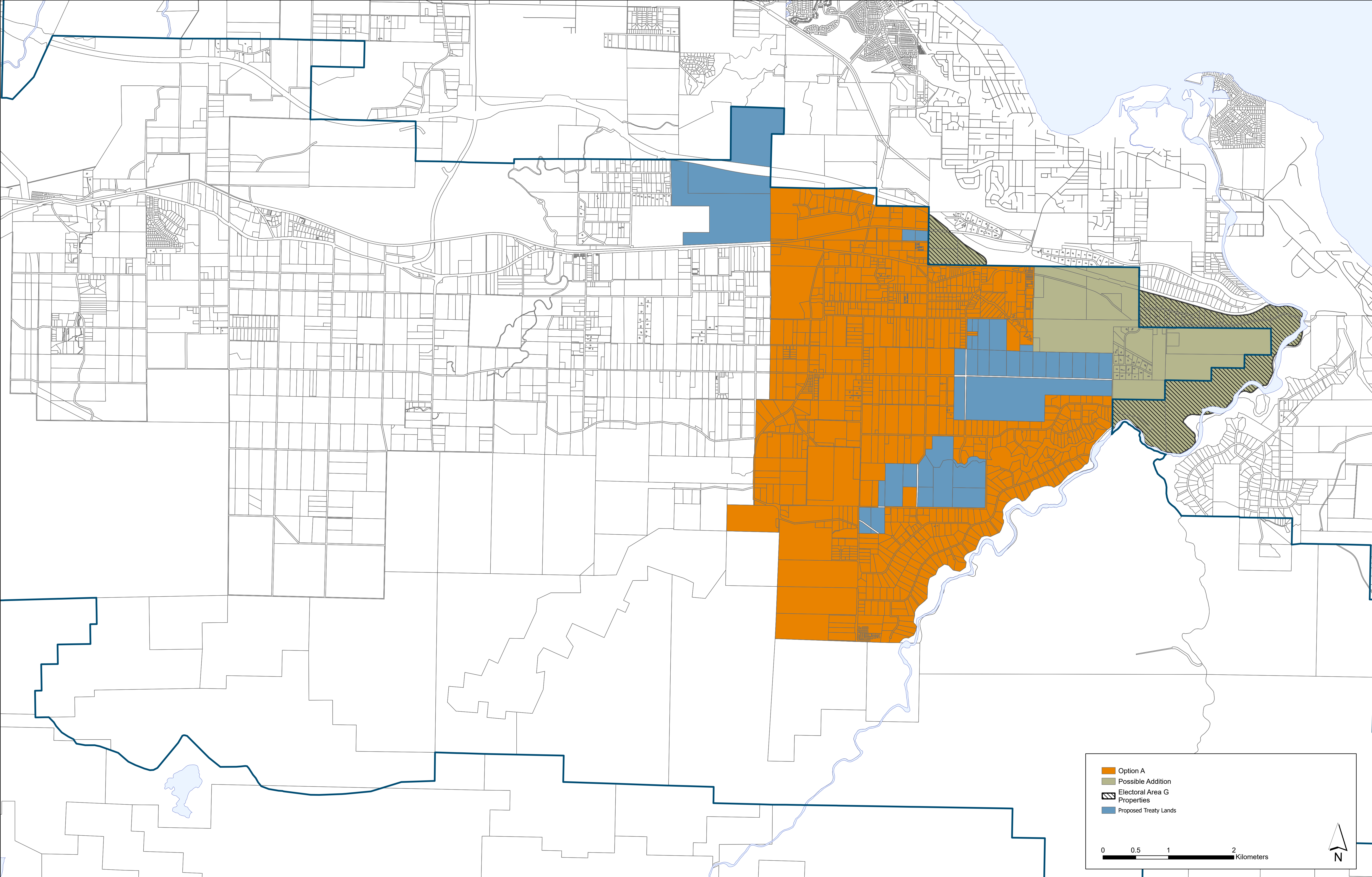
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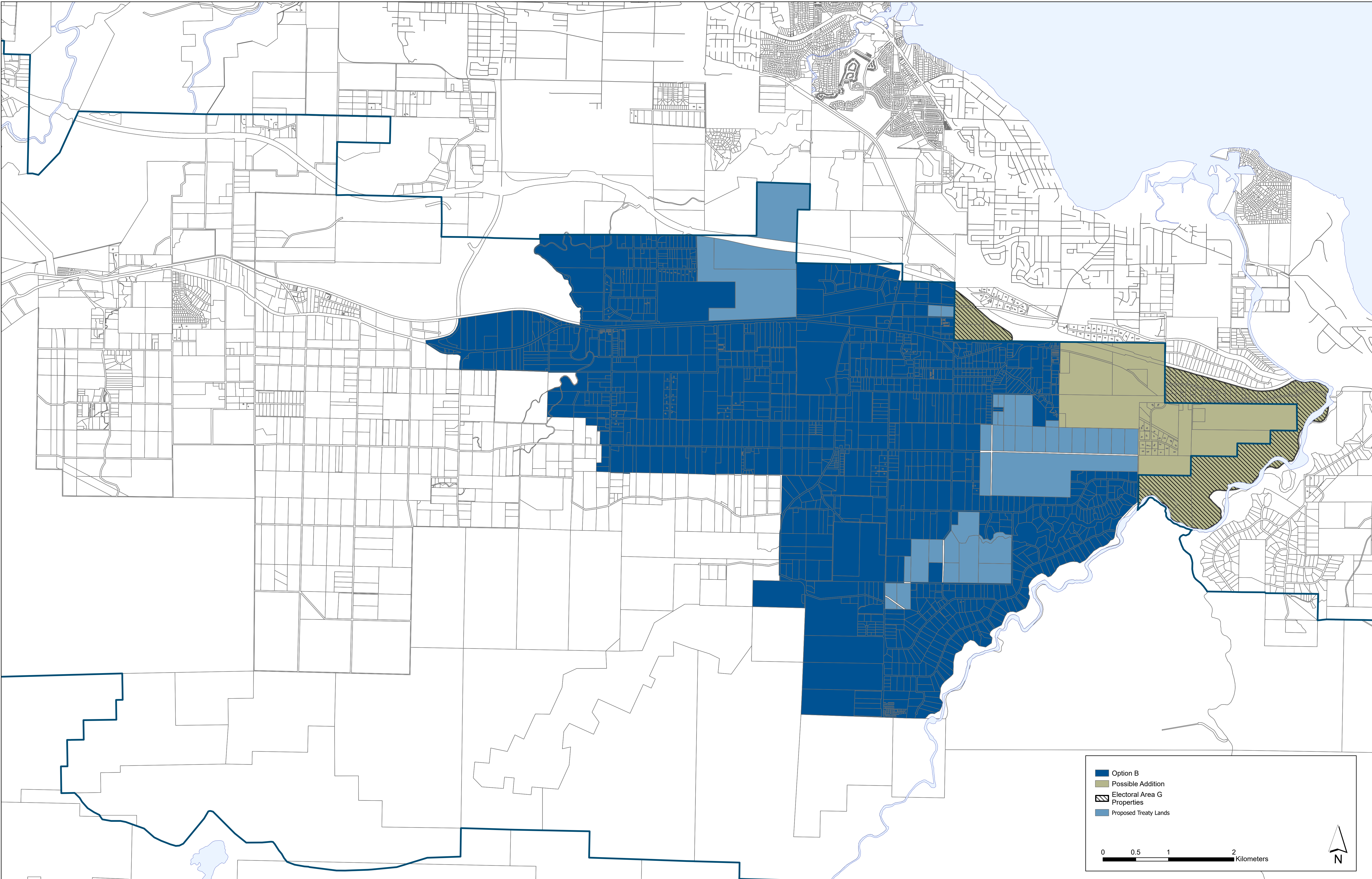
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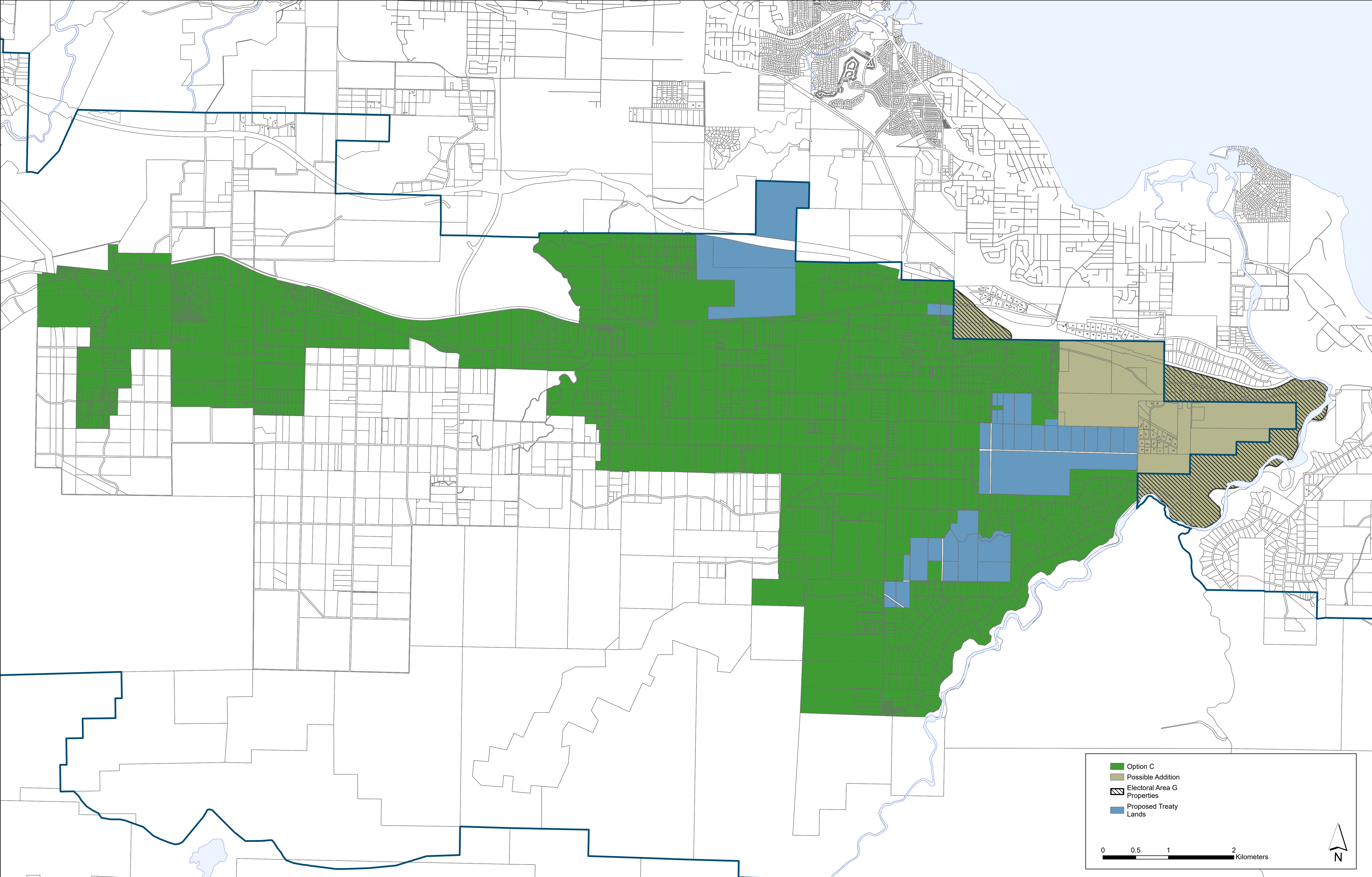


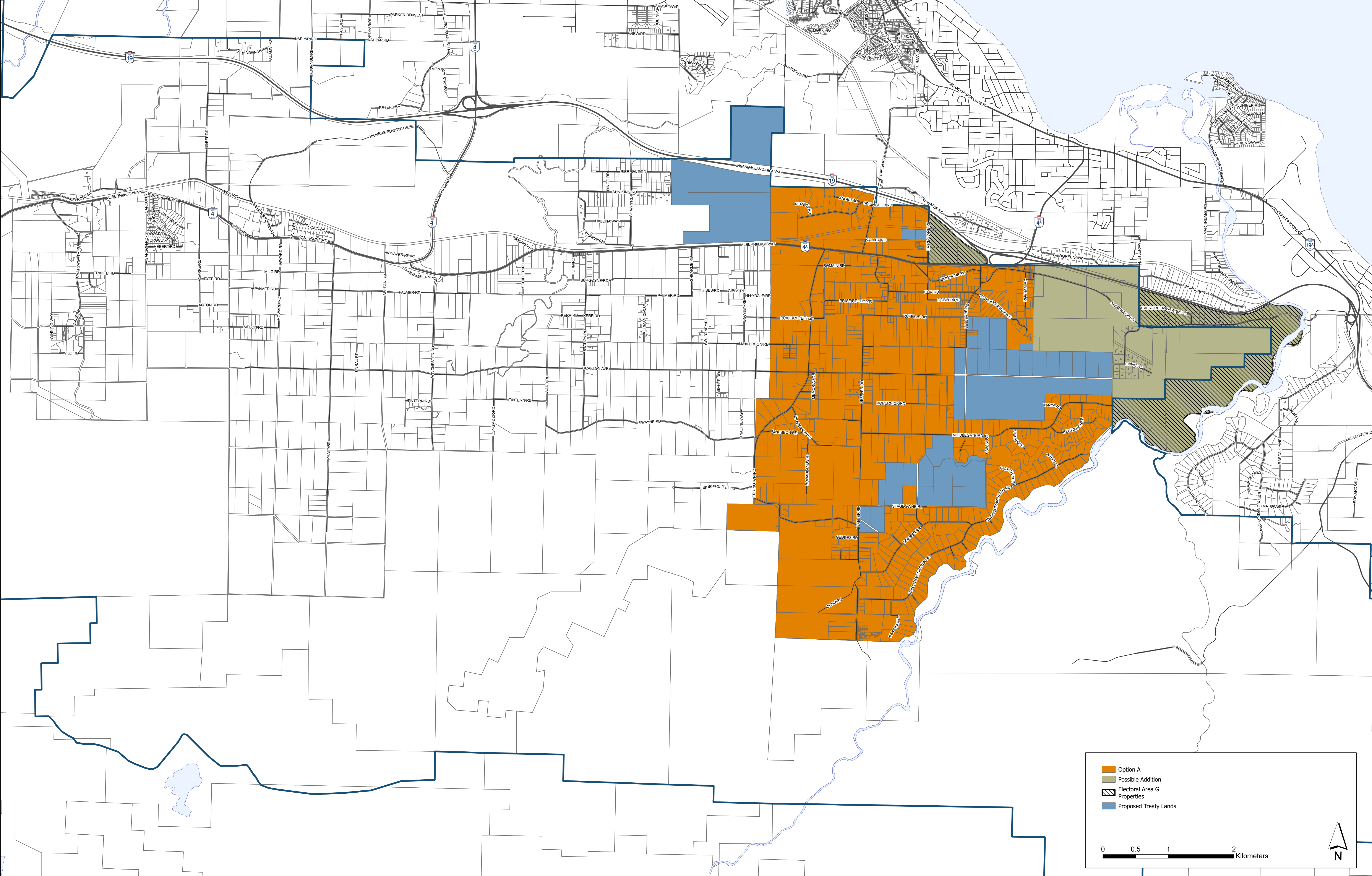
- Option A
- Possible Addition
- Electoral Area G Properties
- Proposed Treaty Lands

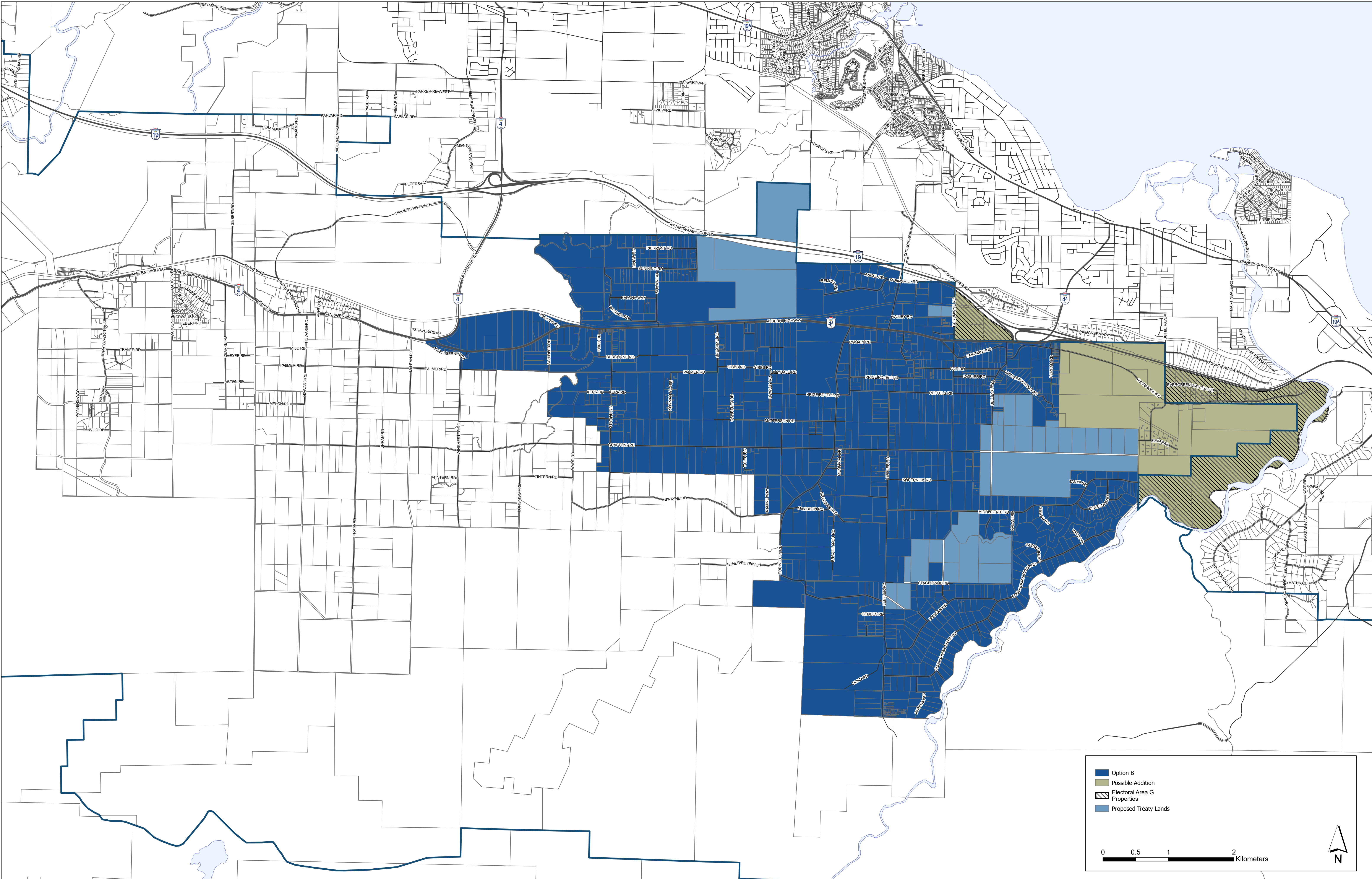
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Option B

Possible Addition

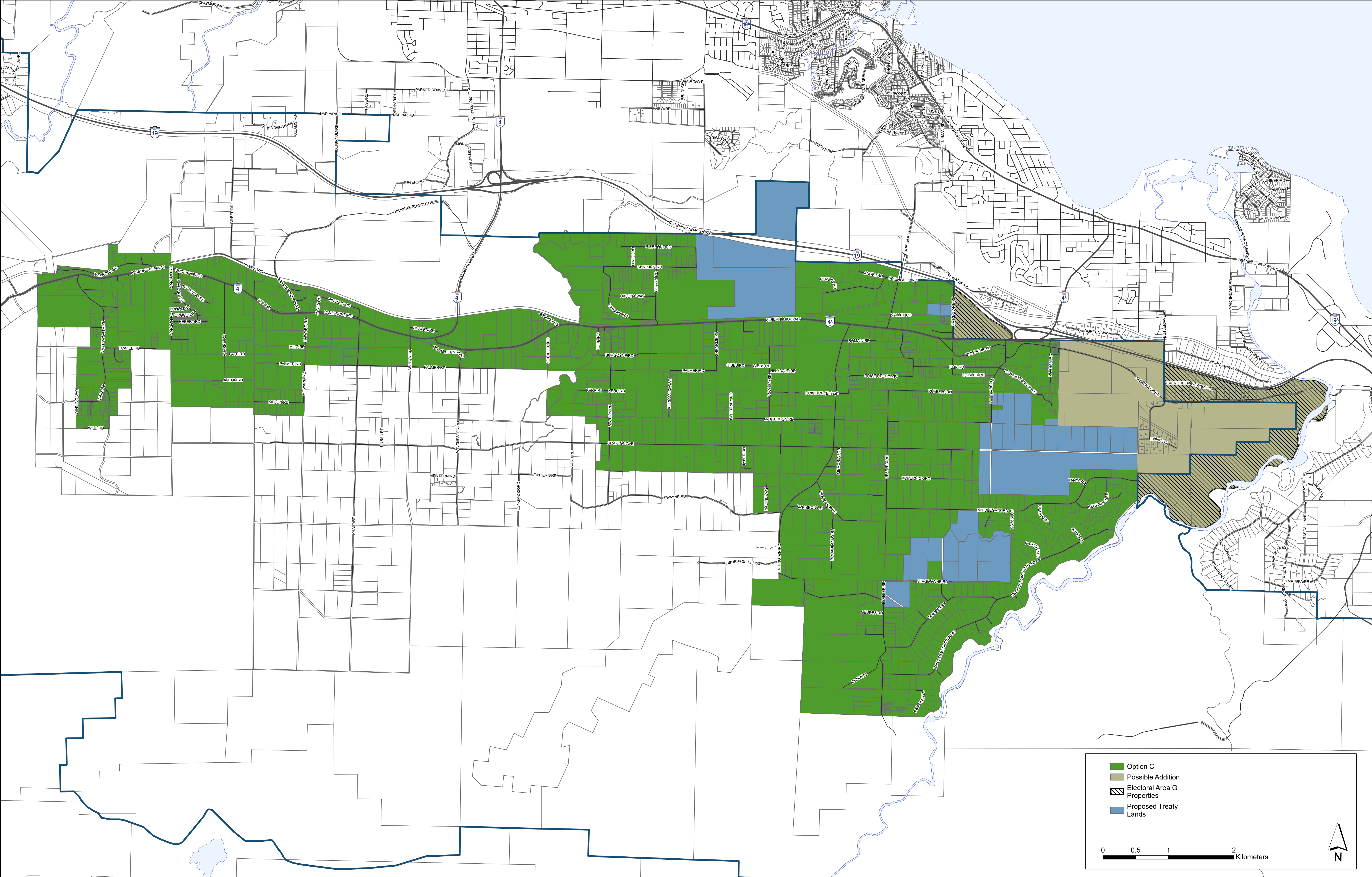
Electoral Area G Properties

Proposed Treaty Lands

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Kilometers

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APPENDIX IV Community Mailout

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We want to hear from you!

Survey

A community survey about the proposed boundary options, including maps of the options, will be **available from June 1 - 15.**

To submit the survey online, residents can visit:

<https://www.getinvolved.rdn.ca/eaf-boundarystudy>

To submit the survey in hard copy, residents can print the survey from the link above, fill it in, and return it to the RDN:

- **By email:** eafboundarystudy@rdn.bc.ca
- **By mail or in person:** Attn: Electoral Area F Boundary Study Team, Regional District of Nanaimo, 6300 Hammond Bay Road, Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6N2

Feedback from the community meetings and surveys will be summarized and included in the Boundary Study report and will help inform the consultant's recommendations to the RDN Board of Directors.

Community Meetings

The Boundary Study team wishes to understand the concerns and interests of Area F residents in relation to the proposed boundary options. Area F residents are invited to attend a meeting to learn about the boundary options and share their views.

Both meetings will present the same information and format. Residents are encouraged to attend one meeting.

Meeting format: There will be a presentation from the Boundary Study consultants at 7 p.m., followed by a Q&A session. Prior to the presentation, residents will be able to view maps of the proposed boundary options, review the criteria used to determine study area boundaries, and talk to members of the study team.

What comes next?

At the conclusion of the Boundary Study, the consultants will recommend the most appropriate preferred boundary based on the findings of the Study to the RDN Board. The RDN Board will decide at that point whether to seek support from the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs for a subsequent incorporation study.

Incorporation of a municipality within any study area could only proceed with support from a majority of residents within the area, which would be determined through a referendum.

Scan for online survey



Regional District of Nanaimo
Electoral Area F Boundary Study Team
6300 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6N2

Details inside!



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Information about
the Boundary Study
in Electoral Area F



REGIONAL
DISTRICT
OF NANAIMO

A Boundary Study is underway in Electoral Area F

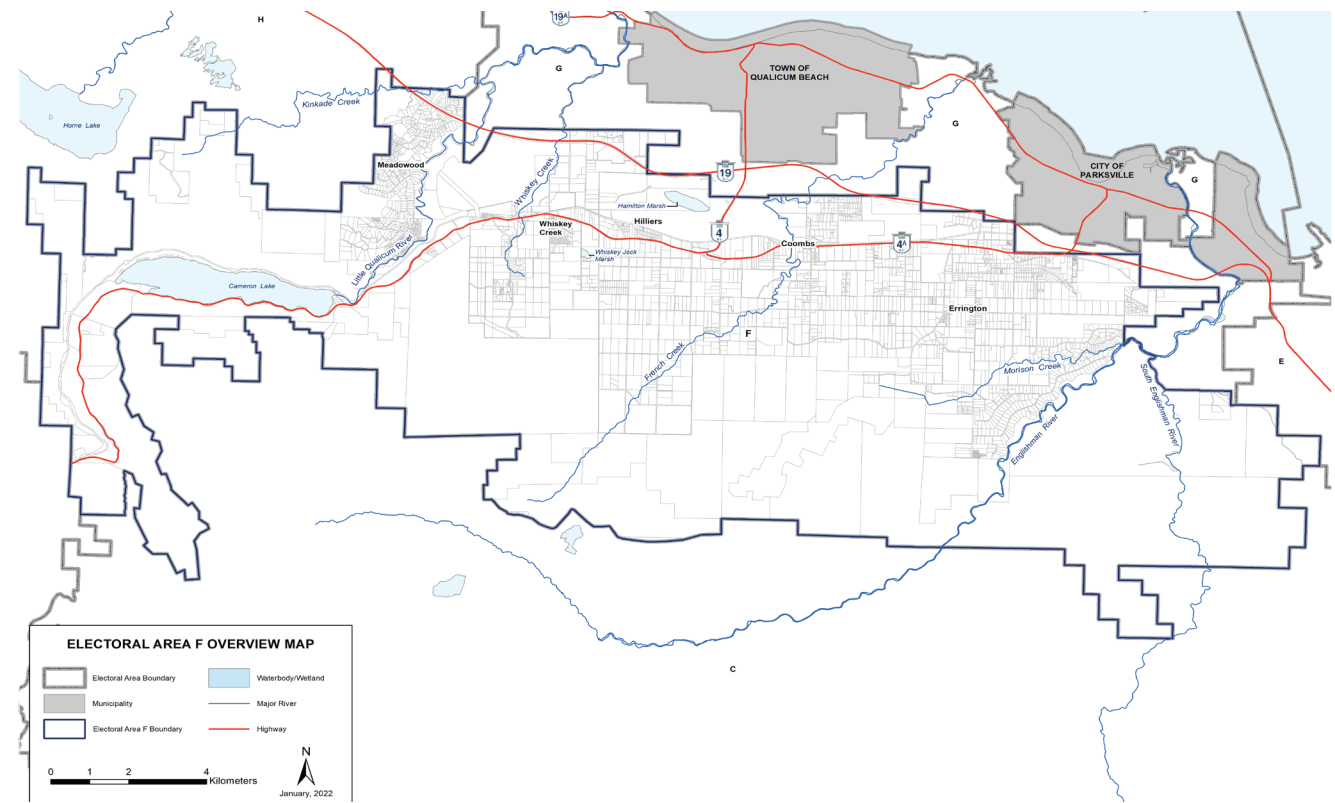
The purpose of the Boundary Study is to:

Recommend a potential municipal boundary within Electoral Area F that could be explored as an incorporation study area in a future incorporation study.

The Boundary Study is being undertaken by local government consultants with funding from the Regional District of Nanaimo and BC's Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs. The Study will conclude by July 2025. Any decision on whether to pursue a detailed incorporation study will be taken after that time.

How are boundary scenarios developed?

Potential incorporation boundary scenarios have been developed for Area F. These scenarios, the rationale for each, and broad implications of each, will be presented at community meetings on May 8 and May 13, 2025.



Identifying the optimal boundaries for potential incorporation requires consideration of many factors – there is no exact ‘recipe’

Important Background

- Electoral Area F is part of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN).
- Regional districts across British Columbia exist to provide local government services to residents in the rural areas and unincorporated communities that make up electoral areas. Regional districts also provide regional and sub-regional services to combinations of municipalities and electoral areas.
- Electoral Area F is a collection of unincorporated communities including Coombs, Errington, Hilliers, Meadowood, and Whiskey Creek and the surrounding rural areas.
- In 2022, the RDN undertook an Area F Governance & Services Study, led by a Committee of Area F residents. The Study examined whether the existing electoral area governance and service model is best suited to address local needs and interests in the Area F communities.
- The Study Committee, in its report, recommended undertaking an incorporation study for Electoral Area F.
- The RDN Board subsequently requested approval and sought funding from the Province of BC for such a study. The Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs provided approval and funding instead for the Boundary Study as a precursor to any future incorporation study work.

The following factors have been considered in developing boundary options within Electoral Area F:

Land ownership

Proposed boundaries typically exclude lands that are owned by and under the control of other jurisdictions, such as First Nations and the federal and provincial governments.

Future development

Boundaries typically include areas designated in the Official Community Plan for growth, higher density developments or mixed uses, reflecting the community’s vision for future development and servicing capacity (e.g. road, water, and sewer capacity).

Existing settlements

Boundaries attempt to encompass existing settlements, including local urban and semi-urban land uses.

Population and population density

Where possible, it is preferred to incorporate areas with larger populations to support economic viability and resiliency. It is also important; however, to consider that in BC, the provincial government is responsible for providing police services to municipalities with populations under 5,000. Once a municipality exceeds the 5,000-person threshold, the municipality becomes responsible for providing local police services and for paying the bulk of policing costs. Study area population, therefore, is an important consideration.

Local government services and service areas

Efforts are made to include entire local service areas within a proposed municipal boundary. In particular, boundaries strive to keep existing water service areas intact to accommodate system management and development.

Local road networks

Boundaries should ideally include complete local roads and only those roads required to make up an efficient local road network in the community. Minimizing the number and length of roads, and costly bridge infrastructure, helps reduce tax impacts for any resulting municipality.

Property assessment

Boundary analysis must consider both the total value of the assessment base and the percentage of non-residential assessment. A large tax base is needed to raise sufficient revenues to fund services. Tax base diversity enables jurisdictions to spread their local tax burdens across more than just residential properties.

Agricultural Land Reserve and farm properties

Boundary options for study areas minimize the amount of ALR land and farm class properties, because both of these property classes lose some tax exemptions once they are included within a municipality.

Community input

Community input and perspectives are taken into account when considering potential boundary options.



APPENDIX V

Community Meeting Presentation Slides

ELECTORAL AREA F
BOUNDARY STUDY

FINAL REPORT

NEILSON
STRATEGIES

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ELECTORAL AREA F BOUNDARY STUDY

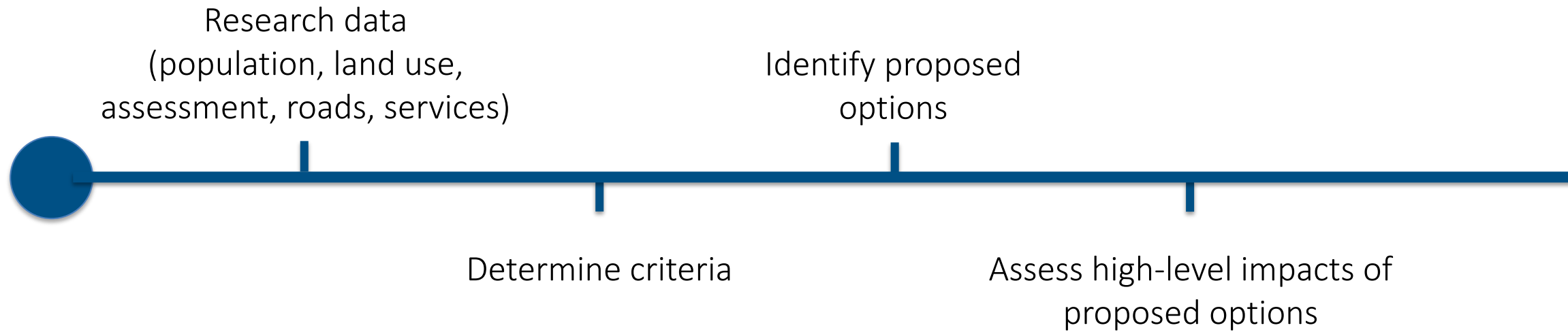
MAY 8, 2025

THE STUDY

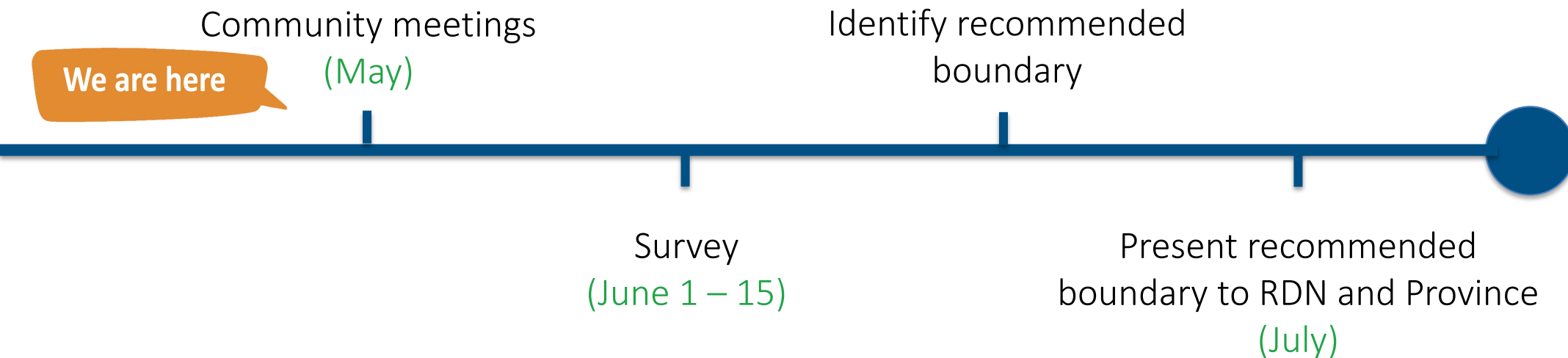
- Recommend a boundary that could be explored in a potential future incorporation study, including:
 - ✓ Outline criteria used to decide on a future study area boundary
 - ✓ Recommend a potential study area reflecting the criteria
 - ✓ Identify high-level restructure implications resulting from the recommended boundary that could be explored in a future study



PART 1: TECHNICAL ANALYSIS



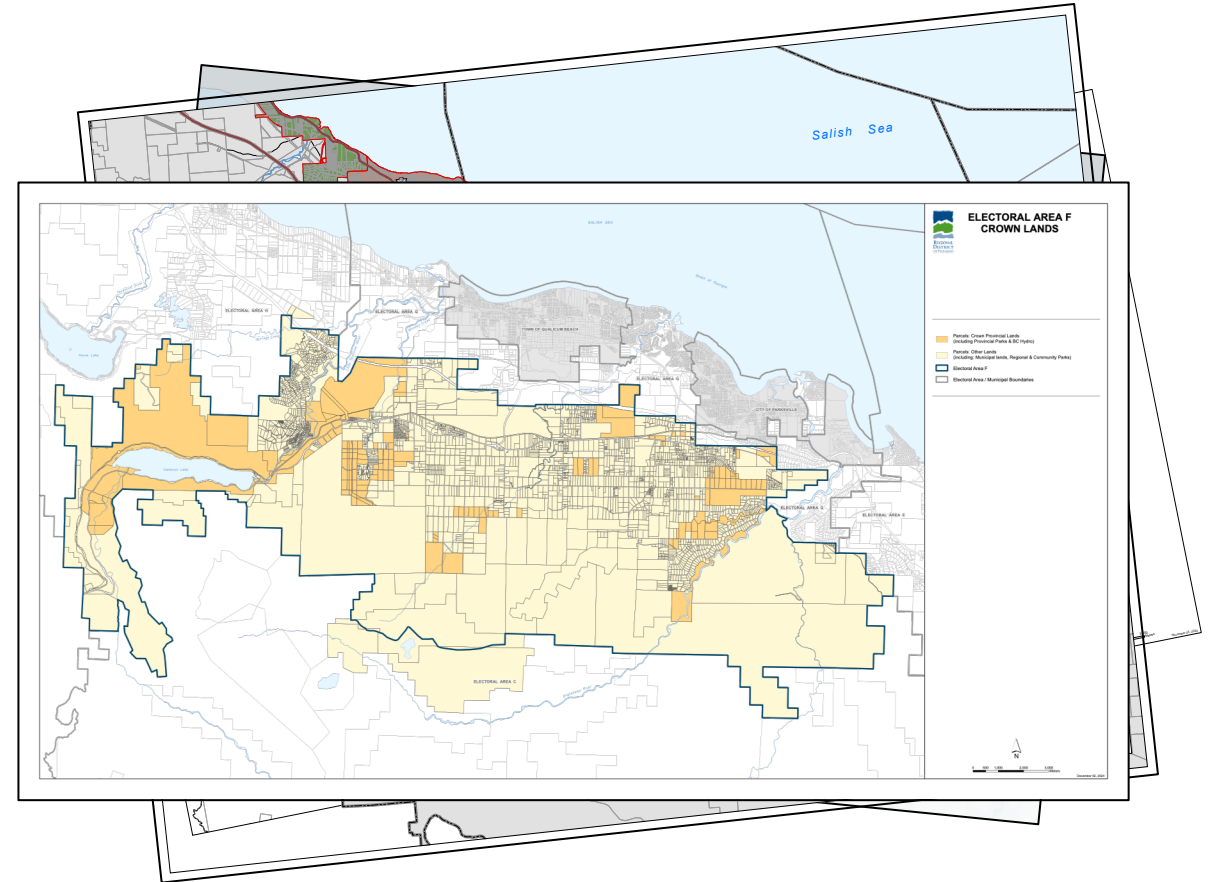
PART 2: COMMUNITY INPUT



TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

► Data and background information

- ✓ Assessment classes and values (tax base)
- ✓ Land uses
- ✓ Population
- ✓ Infrastructure
- ✓ Crown lands



TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

- Key Criteria – why are they important?
- ✓ Exclude Proposed Treaty Lands
 - ✓ Minimize Crown land
 - ✓ Include village centres
 - ✓ Include commercial and industrial uses
 - ✓ Minimize Class 9 farm land
 - ✓ Minimize roads
 - ✓ Rural and rural residential lands
 - ✓ Minimize private managed forest lands

Overview of boundary options

Determining boundaries includes the consideration of many factors and criteria, including both technical criteria and community input. The objective is to create a boundary that encompasses an area with sufficient population, area and tax base to ensure service delivery is feasible, sustainable and cost effective, and where residents have a shared sense of community identity, commitment to local governance and an interest in considering incorporation.

The following were some of the key technical factors in creating options:



Exclude proposed Treaty Lands

Proposed Treaty Lands are neither in nor out of any municipality or electoral area, and are left outside all boundary options.



Minimize Crown land

A municipality does not have jurisdiction over the land use of provincially- or federally-owned lands, nor does it have any taxation authority. The province provided guidance to minimize Crown lands where possible.



Include village centres, commercial and industrial areas

These areas represent the heart of the communities. Municipalities are more sustainable when they have a diverse tax base that enables sharing of costs with a variety of property classes.



Minimize Class 9 farm land

Lands with farm tax class lose the property tax exemption on their farm residence after incorporation, so are excluded where possible due to the disproportionate tax impacts on these properties.



Minimize roads

Municipalities assume ownership of and responsibility for the local road network. Municipal operating costs can be minimized by limiting the length of roads included in the boundary, and by reducing the number of bridges and creek crossings.



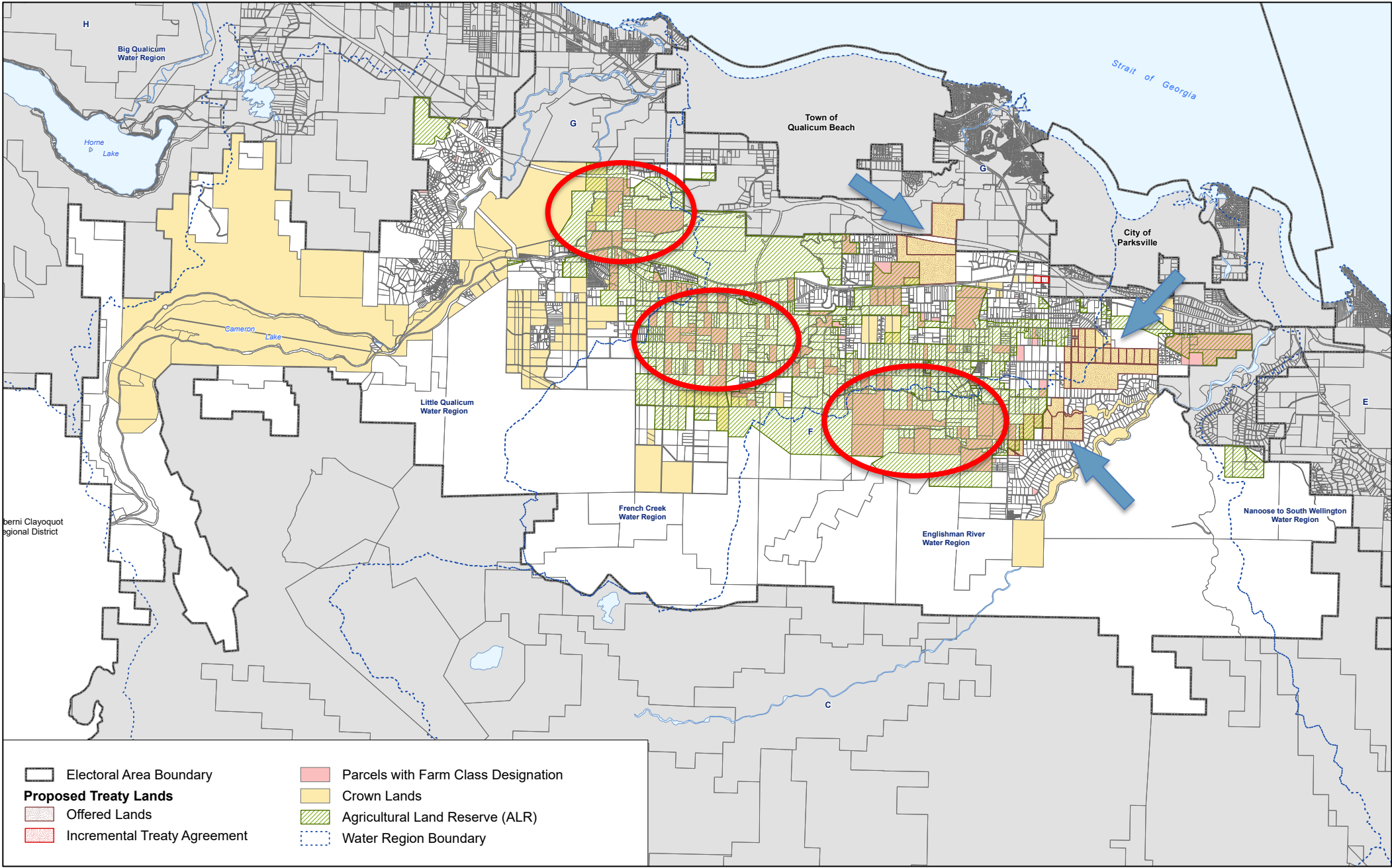
Include denser residential neighbourhoods

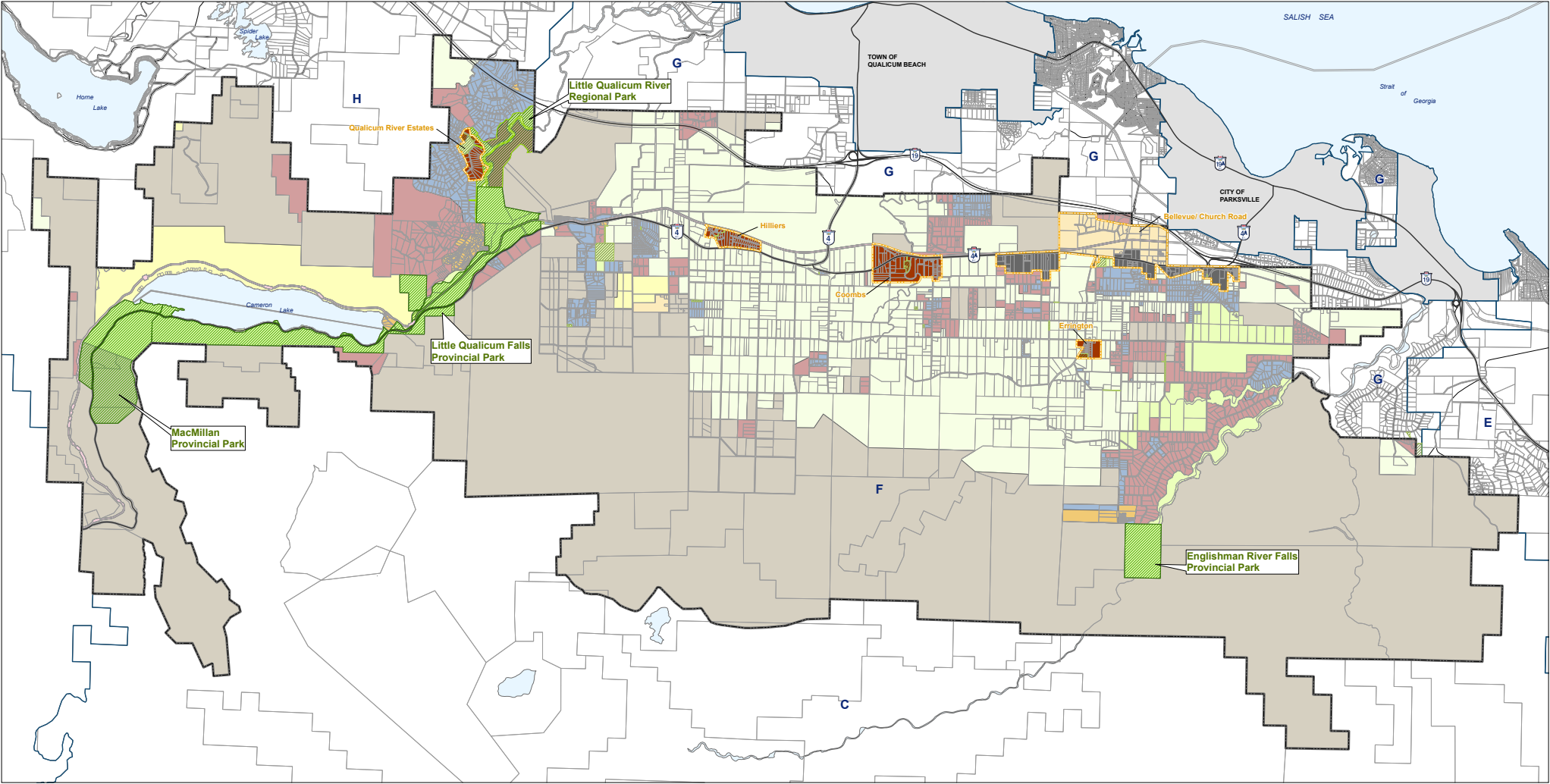
While Area F is mostly rural, the boundaries should encompass the existing higher density clusters. These areas represent the main neighbourhoods and population base of the electoral area.



Minimize private managed forest lands

These properties are designated and used for forestry and resource purposes. Local governments have limited control over the land use of lands with this designation, and the assessed values are set by regulation at values significantly below market value.





OCP Landuse Designations

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
|  Commercial/Industrial Mixed |  Tourist Commercial Lands |  Rural Residential |  Provincial Park |
|  Comprehensive Mixed Use |  Transportation Corridor |  Growth Containment Boundary |  Regional Park |
|  Industrial |  Resource Lands within ALR |  Electoral Area F Boundary |  Community Park |
|  Park Lands |  Resource Lands within FLR |  Other Electoral/Municipal Boundary |  Highway |
|  Resource Lands Crown Land |  Rural |  Parcel Boundary | |

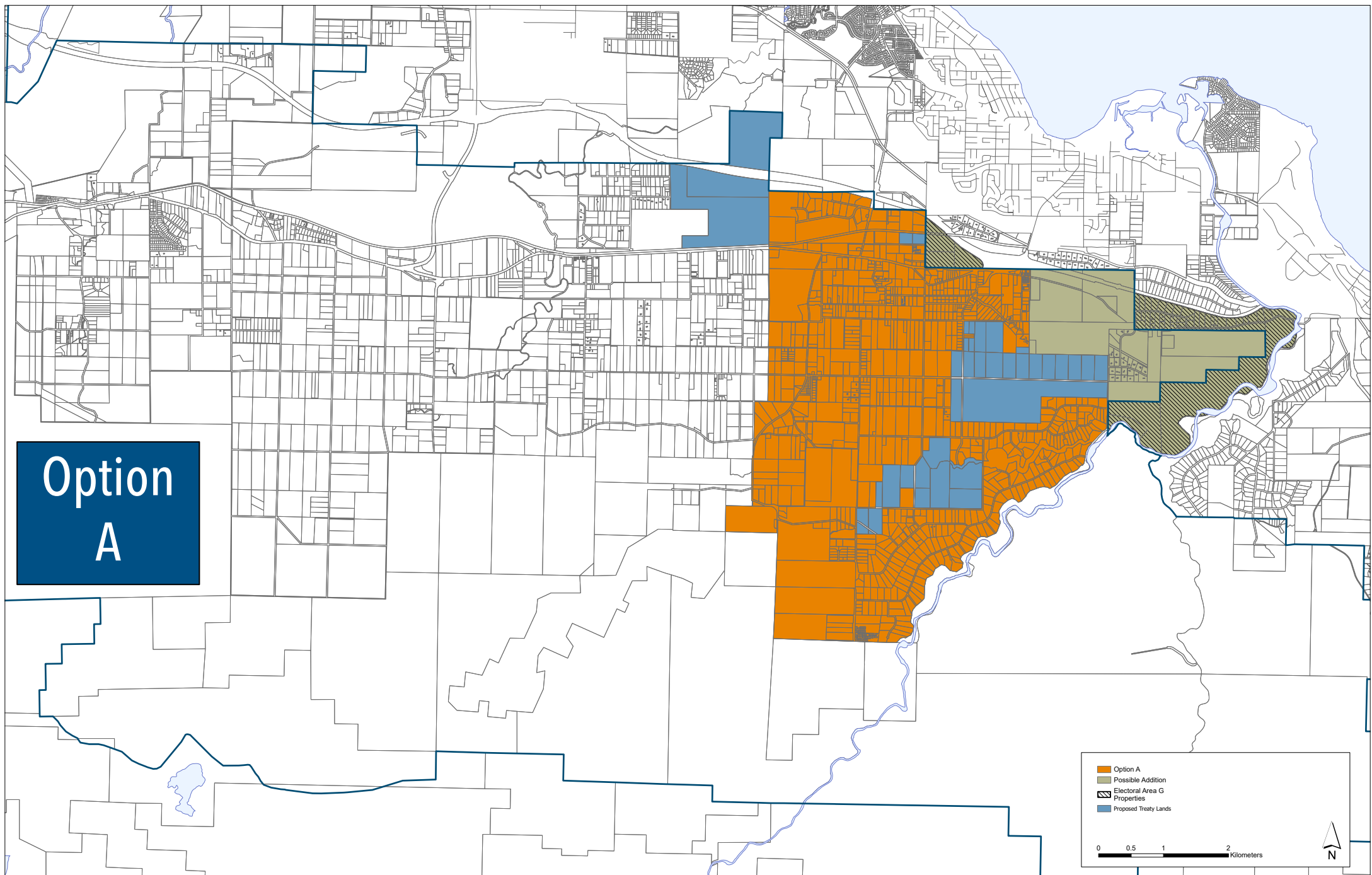
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Kilometers

January 2025



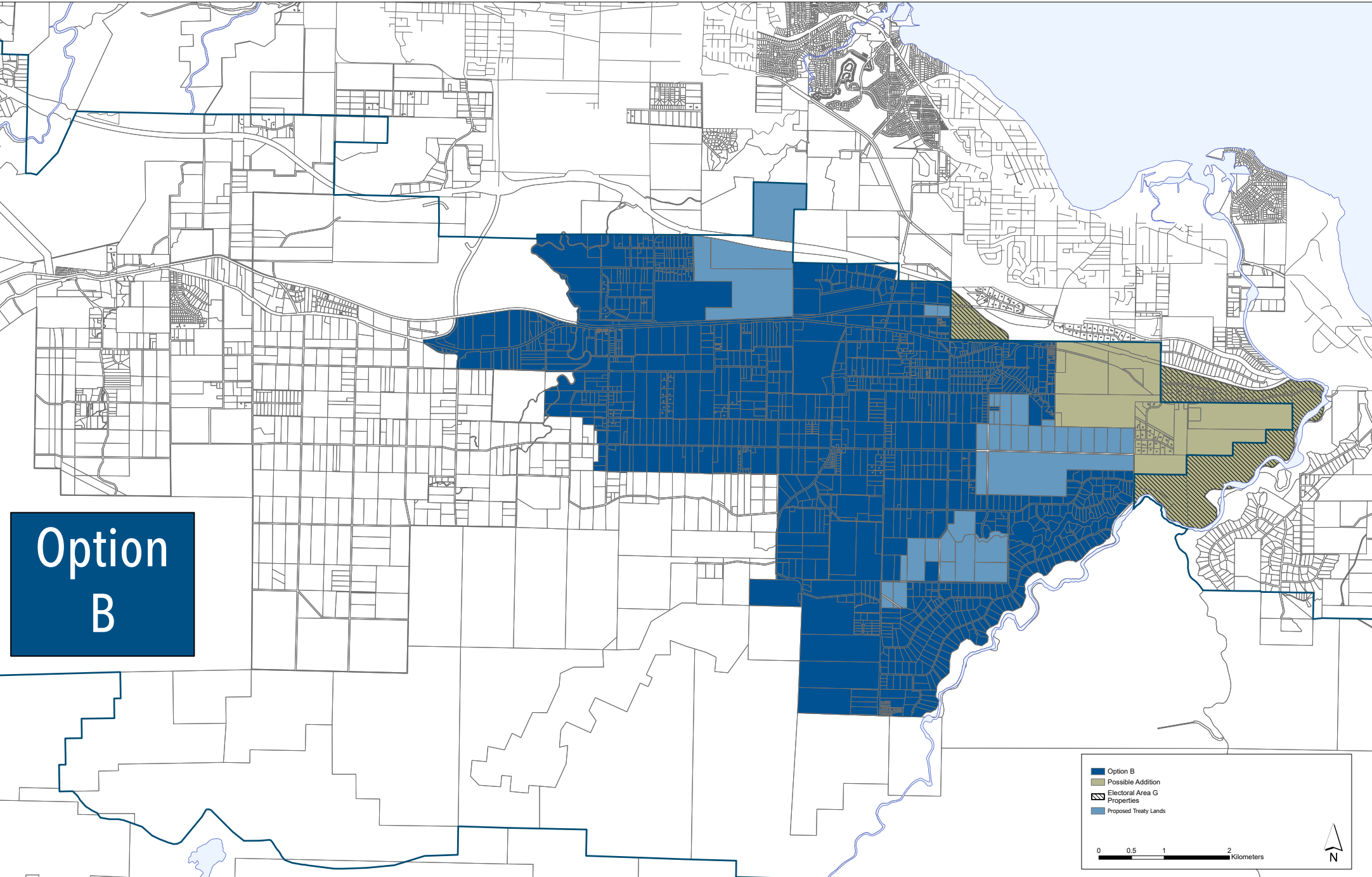
TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

- Implications for boundary options
 - ✓ Meadowood not included
 - ✓ Areas with Class 9 farm land properties left out where possible
 - ✓ Avoid creating orphan roads
 - ✓ Include commercial and industrial uses
 - ✓ Not intended as a reflection of broader community
 - ✓ Recognize the boundaries will include people who don't want to be in ... and exclude others who would like to be
 - ✓ Area G properties

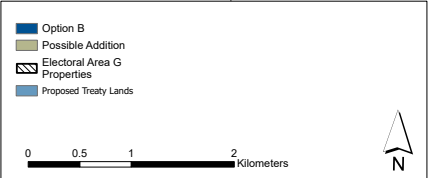




REGIONAL
DISTRICT
OF NANAIMO

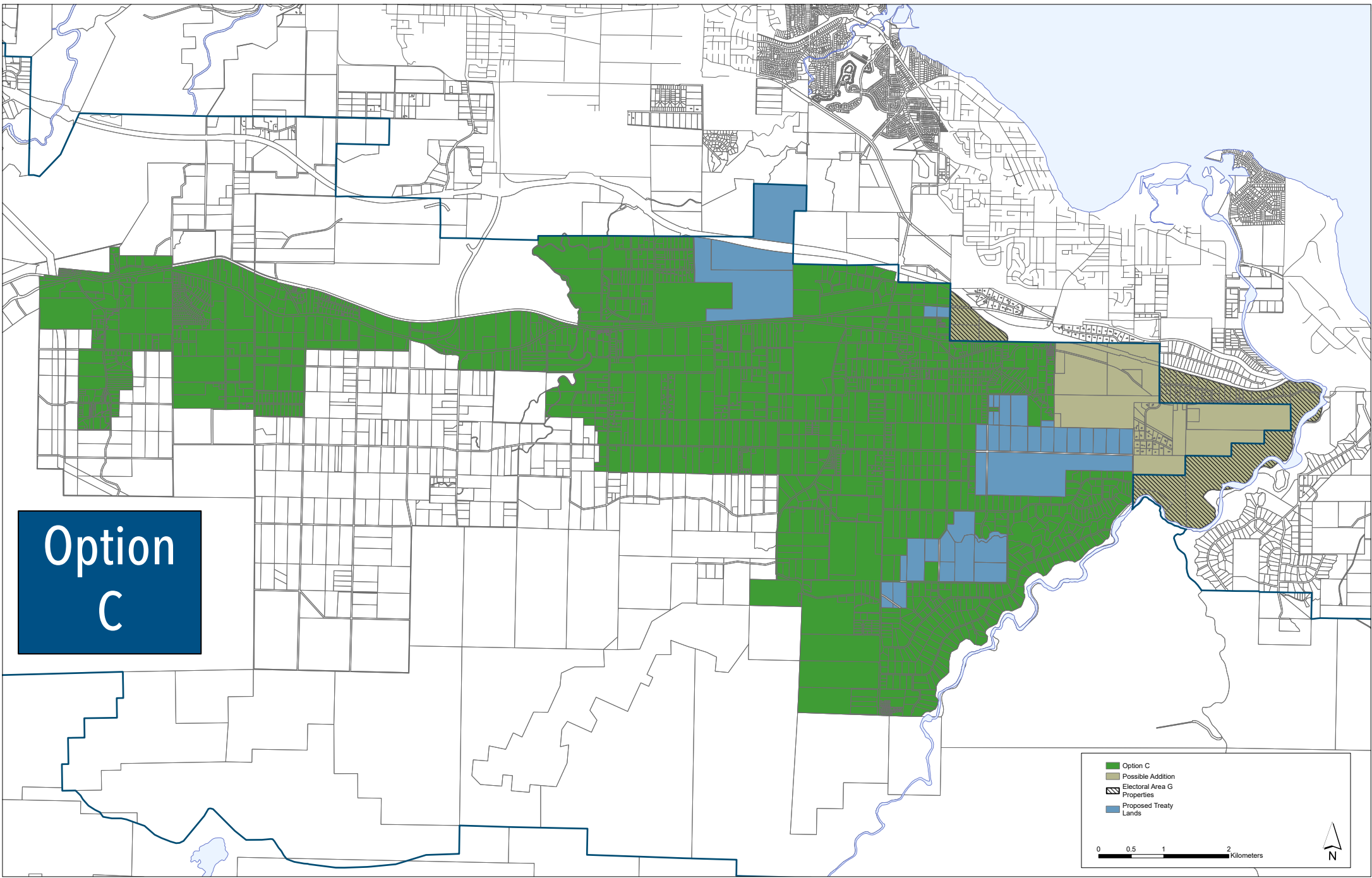


Option
B





REGIONAL
DISTRICT
OF NANAIMO



KEY IMPACTS & CONSIDERATIONS



Costs

- ✓ Policing
- ✓ Roads
- ✓ Water services



KEY IMPACTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Setting up for success
 - ✓ Start small – simpler to join a municipality later than to get out
 - ✓ Referendum process



NEXT STEPS

- Discussion
- Comment card and sticky notes
- Survey
 - ✓ available online June 1 - 15
 - ✓ hard copies can be printed out from website and emailed, mailed or hand delivered to RDN
- Recommendation to RDN and Province in July (together with feedback summary)

coombs to parksville
RAIL TRAIL



DISCUSSION

- Are you interested in being part of a potential study area?
- What areas do you think should be included?
- What areas do you think should not be included?
- What option makes the most sense to you?



THANK YOU!

ELECTORAL AREA F
BOUNDARY STUDY

MAY 8, 2025



APPENDIX VI

Community Meeting Poster Boards

ELECTORAL AREA F
BOUNDARY STUDY

FINAL REPORT

NEILSON
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Welcome

The purpose of the Area F Boundary Study is to recommend a boundary that could be explored in a potential future incorporation study. The Boundary Study is the outcome of the Area F Governance and Services Study that was completed in 2023.

You are invited to:

- **REVIEW** the display boards to learn about the study
- **ASK** the study consultants questions
- **LISTEN** to the presentation
- **SHARE** your preferences on the feedback card
- **COMPLETE** a survey between June 1 – 15

All study materials, including copies of the display boards and the survey are also available online at getinvolved.rdn.ca/eaf-boundarystudy



Before you leave...



Complete a feedback card
Share your thoughts on what option makes sense to you.



Submit a survey between June 1 – 15, 2025
Options may be refined based on input received. Options will be included in an online survey available June 1 to June 15. Share your preferences!

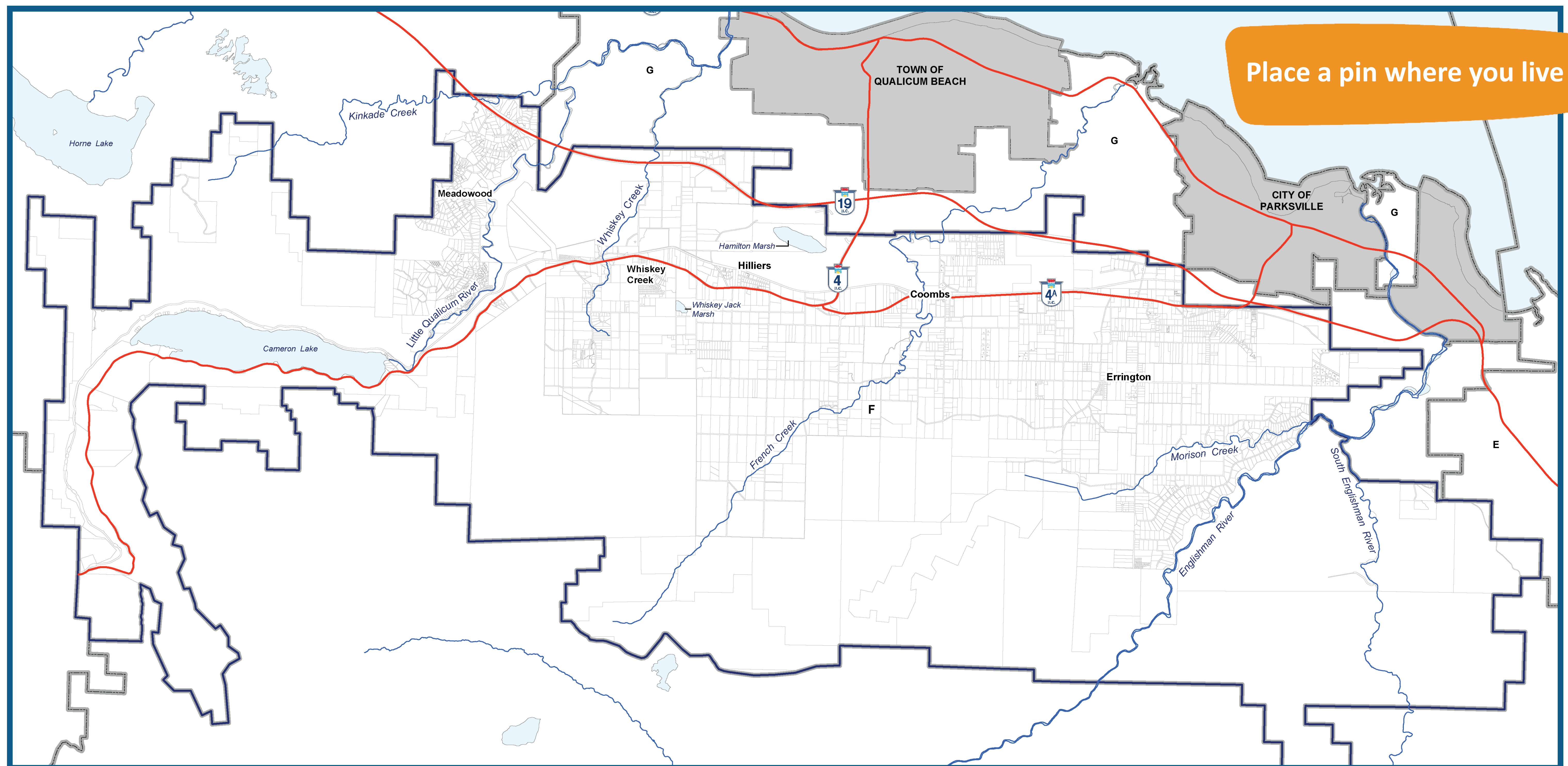
- To submit online, visit getinvolved.rdn.ca/eaf-boundarystudy between June 1- 15
- To submit a paper copy, download and print the survey and submit it to RDN:
 - by email (eafboundarystudy@rdn.bc.ca)
 - by mail (RDN office, 6300 Hammond Bay Road)
 - in person (RDN office, 6300 Hammond Bay Road)

The Boundary Study
is anticipated to be completed
by July 2025.

Input from the community meetings and the survey will be summarized and presented to the RDN Board and will help inform the boundary recommendations.

All study materials, including copies of the display boards and the survey are also available online at getinvolved.rdn.ca/eaf-boundarystudy

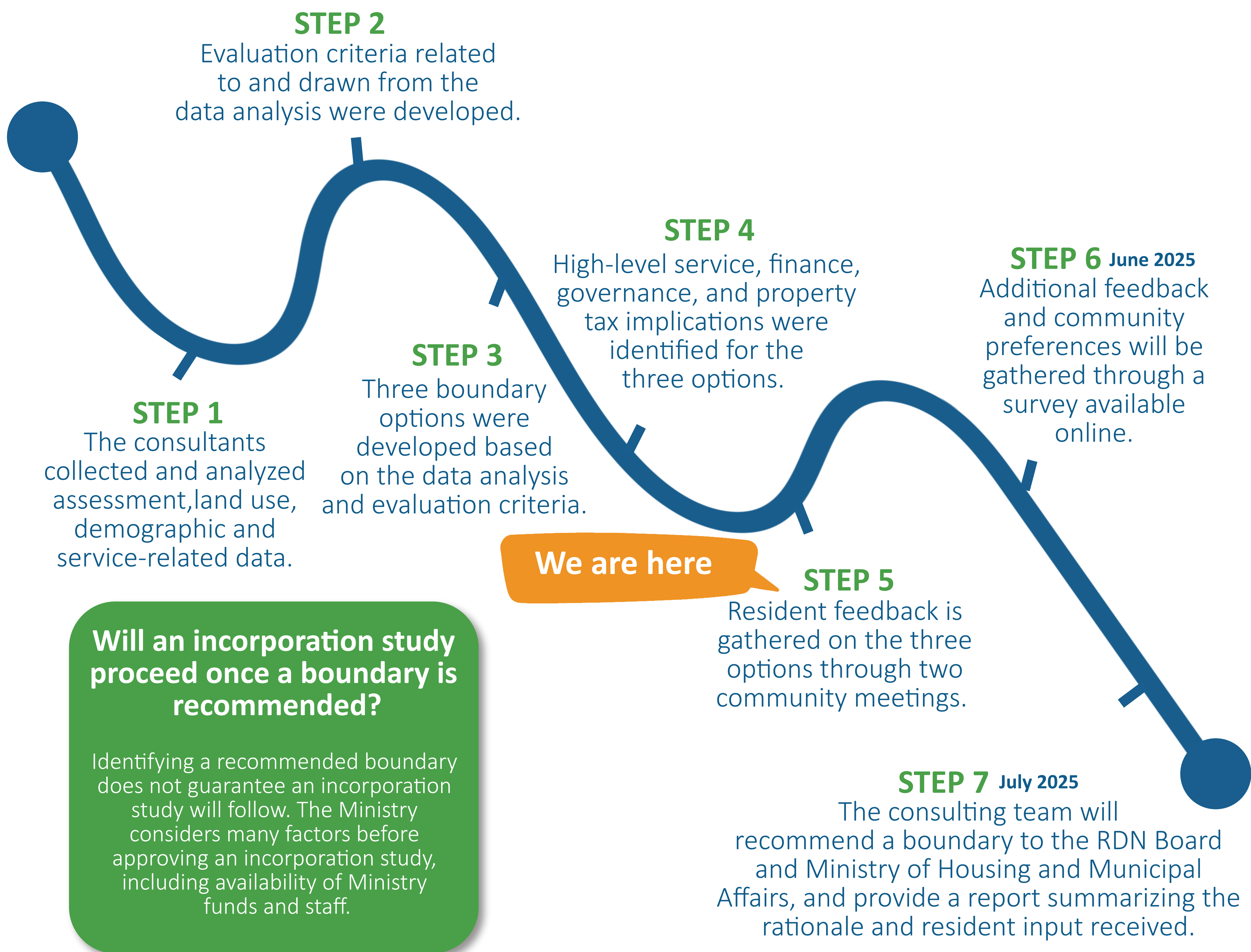
Where in Area F do you live?



Why are we considering boundaries?

Before an incorporation study, the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs considers whether a feasible study area boundary exists. If an incorporation study is approved, a boundary enables the committee that leads the study, and its consultants, to gather and analyze the data for the incorporation study. It is only once the boundary is determined that the services provided to the area can be identified and quantified, assessment base totalled, and tax impacts calculated.

How are the options determined?



What criteria were used to evaluate boundary options?

The table below summarizes the more detailed criteria used to develop boundary options:

CATEGORIES	CONSIDERATIONS	CRITERIA
Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Big enough to allow for growth• Compact enough to facilitate efficient servicing and minimize servicing/road costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land area (compare to existing municipalities)
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sufficient population to ensure a pool of candidates to share in responsibilities in governing and servicing the community (volunteer roles, council positions)• Larger populations are generally associated with economic viability and resiliency• Minimum of 3,000 population• Municipalities over 5,000 population pay 70% of policing costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Estimated population (compare to existing municipalities)
Tax Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sufficient tax base to minimize the burden of operational and capital costs of servicing the municipality, contribute toward resiliency and sufficient borrowing power• Sufficient diversity in the tax base to reduce the burden on residents• Minimize Crown land parcels over which the municipality has no control, and no taxation• Minimize Class 9 Farm properties, due to the loss of tax exemptions after incorporation• Minimize Private Managed Forest Lands from which the municipality receives little tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total assessment value• % Non-residential assessment• Number of Crown land parcels• Area of Crown land• Number of Class 9 (Farm) parcels• Area of Class 9 (Farm) parcels• Area of Private Managed Forest
Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encompass a mix of land uses to support economic diversity, promote community and resiliency• Include existing settlement areas, community hubs and Village Centres• Include a mix of housing unit types and range of affordable options (if available)• Minimizing the inclusion of lands in the ALR to reduces the tax impact on properties and to ensure opportunities for growth• Assess ability for growth with infill opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes Village Centre• Includes Rural Residential• Includes Rural• Land Area outside the ALR (%)• Assessment of development potential
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encompass entire service areas, particularly for infrastructure such as water systems to facilitate transition to being provided by a municipality.• Service planning, governance, finance and operation are easier to manage when service areas under the responsibility of one local government that has responsibility for land use and utilities• Consider watershed boundaries as an indicator of common water management interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local services• Water Region (and watershed)
Infrastructure and Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimize the length of roads and number of bridges. The longer the road network, the greater the operation and maintenance cost borne by the community• Minimize orphan roads and ensure an efficient network of local roads to simplify road maintenance and servicing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Length of local roads• Number of bridges/significant creek crossings
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encompass existing settlements, and areas with shared community assets, and community identity, often following natural or physical community divisions• Shared identity and community definition will help the community unite and work toward common goals or and overcome challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community assets included• Boundary logic• Shared interests• Community interest or issues

Overview of boundary options

Determining boundaries includes the consideration of many factors and criteria, including both technical criteria and community input. The objective is to create a boundary that encompasses an area with sufficient population, area and tax base to ensure service delivery is feasible, sustainable and cost effective, and where residents have a shared sense of community identity, commitment to local governance and an interest in considering incorporation.

The following were some of the key technical factors in creating options:



Exclude proposed Treaty Lands

Proposed Treaty Lands are neither in nor out of any municipality or electoral area, and are left outside all boundary options.



Minimize Crown land

A municipality does not have jurisdiction over the land use of provincially- or federally-owned lands, nor does it have any taxation authority. The province provided guidance to minimize Crown lands where possible.



Include village centres, commercial and industrial areas

These areas represent the heart of the communities. Municipalities are more sustainable when they have a diverse tax base that enables sharing of costs with a variety of property classes.



Minimize Class 9 farm land

Lands with farm tax class lose the property tax exemption on their farm residence after incorporation, so are excluded where possible due to the disproportionate tax impacts on these properties.



Minimize roads

Municipalities assume ownership of and responsibility for the local road network. Municipal operating costs can be minimized by limiting the length of roads included in the boundary, and by reducing the number of bridges and creek crossings.



Include denser residential neighbourhoods

While Area F is mostly rural, the boundaries should encompass the existing higher density clusters. These areas represent the main neighbourhoods and population base of the electoral area.



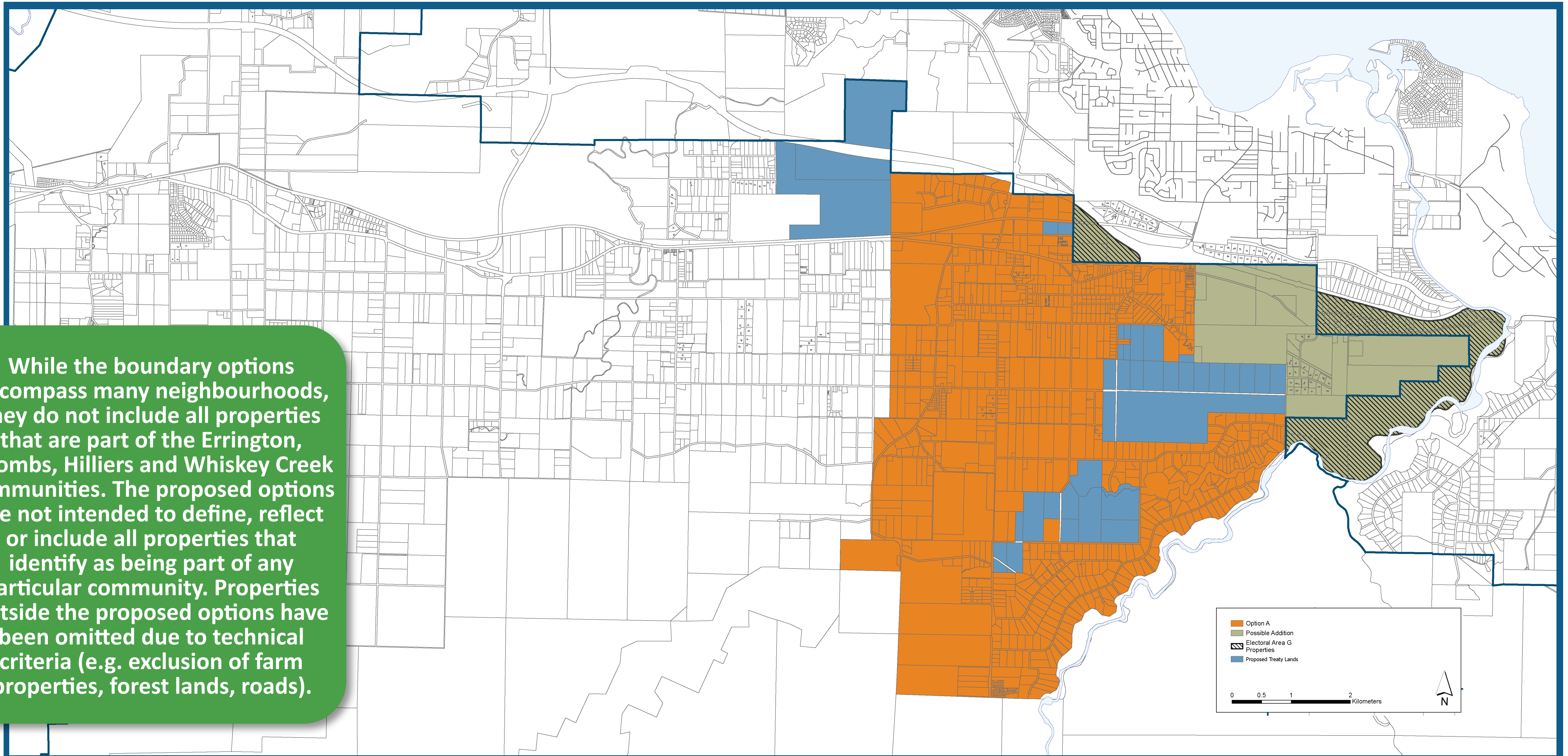
Minimize private managed forest lands

These properties are designated and used for forestry and resource purposes. Local governments have limited control over the land use of lands with this designation, and the assessed values are set by regulation at values significantly below market value.

Option A:

This option includes the Errington Village and much of the Errington community, generally using Highway 19 as the northern boundary, Englishman River to the east, properties accessed from Errington Road as the western boundary, and Englishman River Falls Provincial Park to the south.

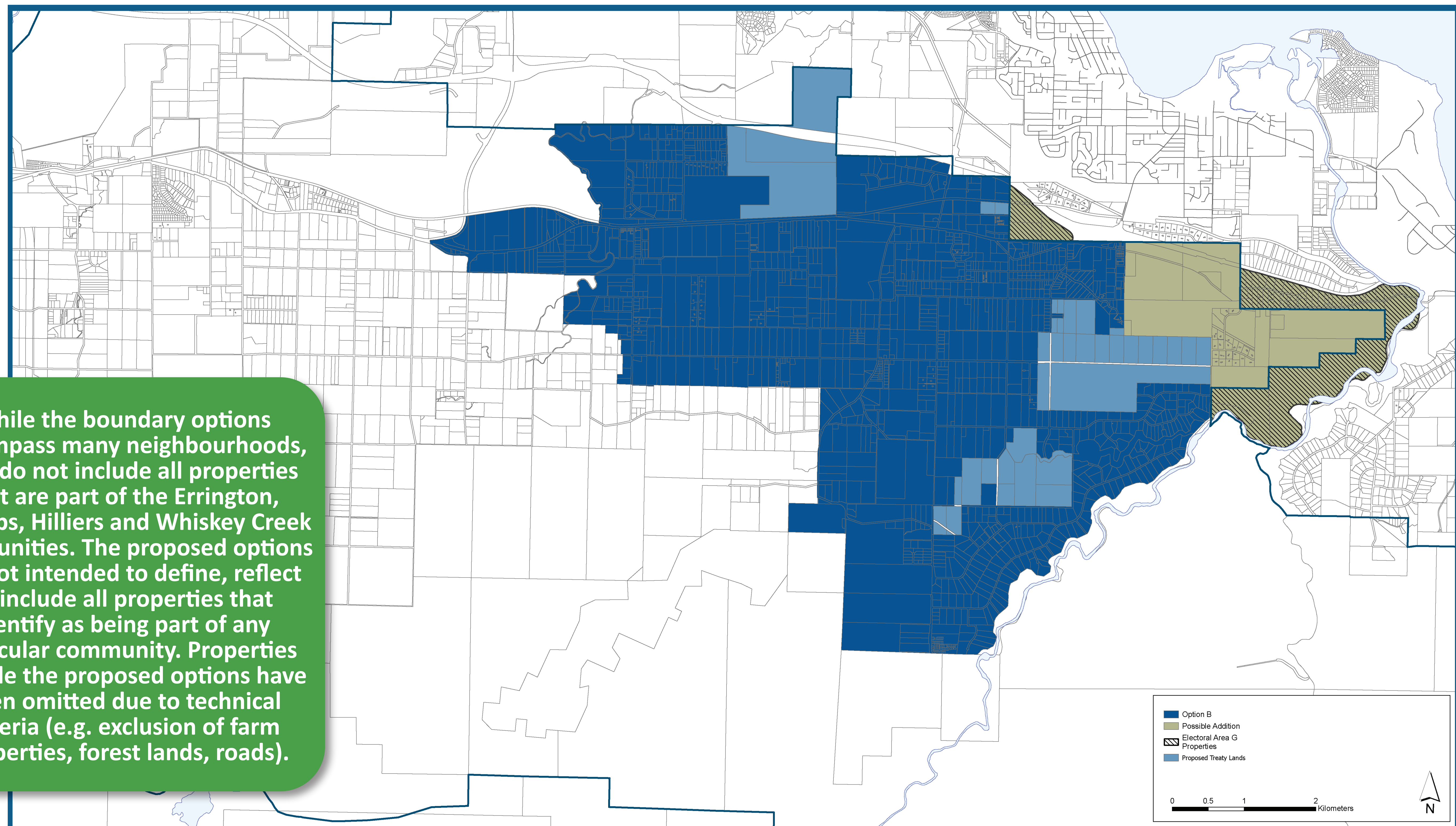
While the boundary options encompass many neighbourhoods, they do not include all properties that are part of the Errington, Coombs, Hilliers and Whiskey Creek communities. The proposed options are not intended to define, reflect or include all properties that identify as being part of any particular community. Properties outside the proposed options have been omitted due to technical criteria (e.g. exclusion of farm properties, forest lands, roads).



Option B:

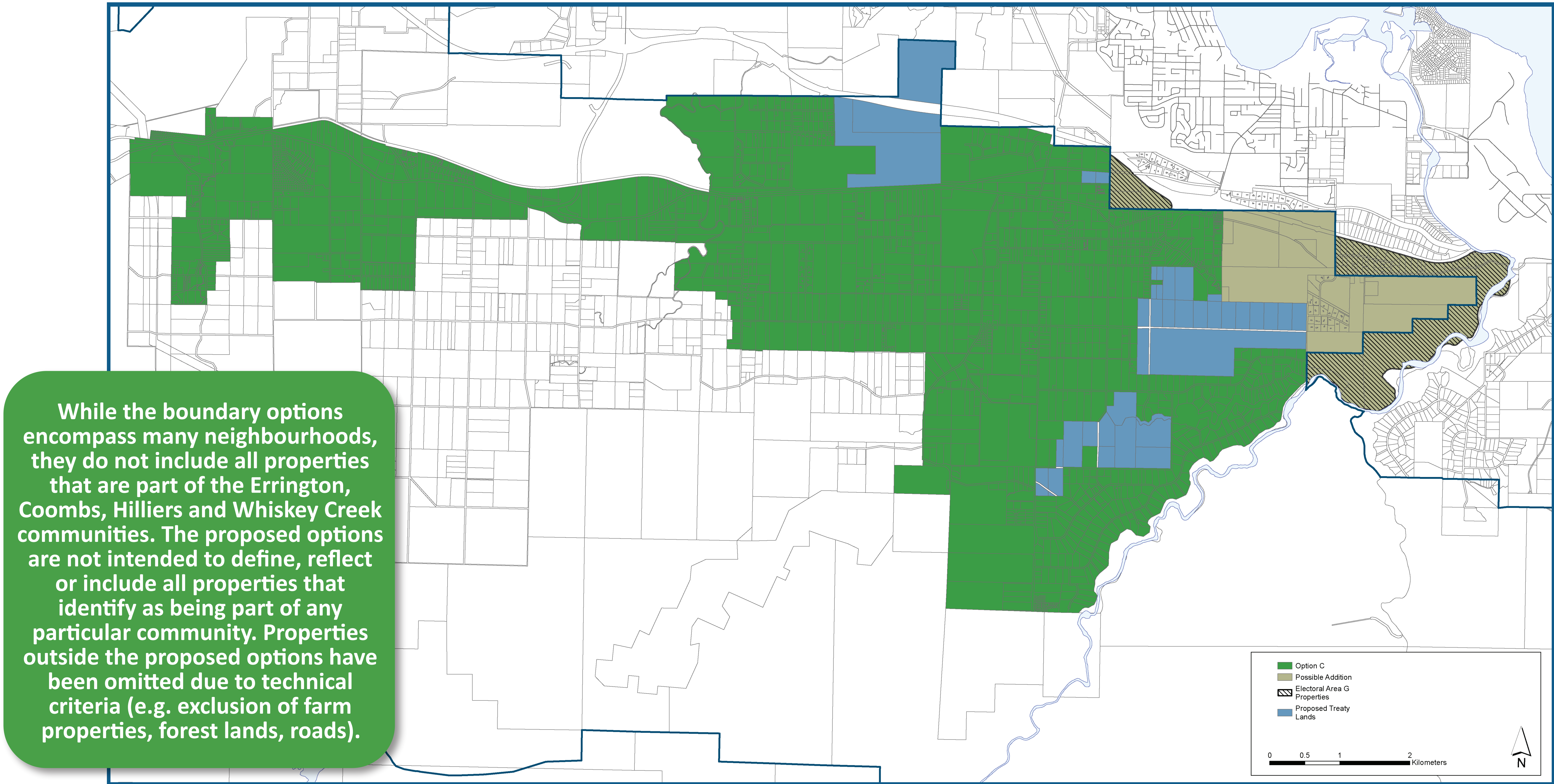
This option includes all of Option A, plus the village centre of Coombs, as well as the remainder of Highway 4A and the mixed commercial/industrial uses along the highway.

While the boundary options encompass many neighbourhoods, they do not include all properties that are part of the Errington, Coombs, Hilliers and Whiskey Creek communities. The proposed options are not intended to define, reflect or include all properties that identify as being part of any particular community. Properties outside the proposed options have been omitted due to technical criteria (e.g. exclusion of farm properties, forest lands, roads).



Option C:

This option includes all of Option A and B, plus the community of Hilliers as well as Whiskey Creek and the Chatsworth Road residential and industrial area.



How do the options compare?

The table below compares some of the key criteria for each of the options:

	OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
Land Area (km ²)	21.72 km ²	33.56 km ²	42.63 km ²
Estimated Population (2021)	2,670	4,220	5,527
Number of Dwellings	1,159	1,942	2,561
Assesement (Tax) Base	Gross: 1,100,491,523 Net: 1,002,949,908	Gross: 1,613,885,901 Net: 1,466,960,942	Gross: 2,002,274,231 Net: 1,823,245,339
Non-residential Tax Base (%)	25.0%	21.6%	19.0%
Road Length (km)	63.19 km	88.35 km	117.85 km
Farm Class Properties	17 properties	37 properties	55 properties
Area of Private Managed Forest Land	97.24 ha	139.34 ha	139.34 ha
Crown Land (Parcels and Land Area)	9 parcels (33.87 ha)	10 parcels (90.5 ha)	19 parcels (185.14 ha)

Impacts to consider

Here are some key impacts that would differ between the three boundary options:



Policing

If the population of a new municipality exceeds 5,000, it would be responsible for delivering policing services (currently delivered by the province) and paying for at least 70% of policing costs. Based on examples from municipalities that exceeded 5,000 population in the last Census (2021), this change can add more than \$1 million to annual municipal operating costs. The population within Option C currently exceeds 5,000. The population for Option B was 4,220 in 2021, but is expected to be higher by the next Census (2026).



Local roads

Roads in electoral areas are maintained and paid for by the province. Electoral areas pay a provincial rural tax, but it does not fully cover the cost of maintaining roads within the community. Once incorporated, even if local roads continue to be maintained at a rural standard, the full maintenance cost represent an added burden for municipal taxpayers. Longer road networks translate into higher road maintenance costs.



ALR and farm properties

Properties within the ALR and Class 9 farms lose some tax exemptions if they become a part of a municipality. Class 9 farms, in particular, are impacted by the loss of the tax exemption that applies to the farm residence. Each option affects a different number of Class 9 farm properties.



Tax base

Each option has a different total tax base, and diversity of tax base. Higher tax base means fixed costs are spread amongst a larger tax base, and creates greater resilience and borrowing capacity. A higher percentage of non-residential tax base is important in spreading the tax burden amongst other property tax classes (and not just residents).



Water services

Existing RDN services that are contained within the municipal boundary would be transferred to the new municipality. Only Option C encompasses RDN water systems that would be transferred to a new municipality (Whiskey Creek, Westurne Heights, and Melrose Terrace water services).

Detailed implications of
incorporation would be analyzed as
part of any future
incorporation study

Want to recommend changes?

Based on technical criteria, the options may exclude residents who want to be included within the boundary, and at the same time, likely include some who would prefer not to be part of any potential incorporation study. The open houses and subsequent survey are your opportunity to share your preferences, and even note specific properties you wish were included (or excluded) from the boundary options.

Use the coloured sticky notes to identify a property address or specific location that you think should be in or out of the boundaries, and leave it on this board for the Study team.

Yellow sticky note to identify a property you think should be included within a boundary option

Pink sticky note to identify a property you think should be removed (excluded) from a boundary option

Comment cards can also
be used to share your preferences
and provide additional rationale



APPENDIX VII

Community Meeting Comment Cards

ELECTORAL AREA F
BOUNDARY STUDY

FINAL REPORT

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Electoral Area F Boundary Study

At first glance, which of the three
boundary options makes the most
sense to you?

☐ **Option A**

☐ **Option B**

☐ **Option C**

Is your property included within
your preferred option?

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

We're Listening!



Scan the QR code to view the project webpage
getinvolved.rdn.ca/eaf-boundarystudy

Flip over to
give your input



Electoral Area F Boundary Study

Why do you prefer this boundary option?

Do you support seeking provincial
approval for a detailed incorporation
study?

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

We're Listening!



Scan the QR code to view the project webpage
getinvolved.rdn.ca/eaf-boundarystudy

Thank you
for your feedback!



APPENDIX VIII

Boundary Options Survey

ELECTORAL AREA F
BOUNDARY STUDY

FINAL REPORT

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Boundary Study Survey for Electoral Area F

Background

The purpose of the Boundary Study is to recommend a boundary within Electoral Area F that could be explored in a potential future incorporation study. **This survey will be open from June 1 – 15, 2025.**

If an incorporation study were to proceed in the future, only residents within the boundary would have the opportunity to vote on whether to incorporate as a municipality.

Three boundary options have been developed by consultants based on technical criteria, including:

- Future development plans and land-use categories
- Population (current and projected)
- Local government services
- Local road networks and associated infrastructure
- Property assessment classes and values
- ALR and Farm Class inventories
- Proposed Treaty Settlement Lands, Crown Lands and privately managed forest lands

Feedback was collected from residents on the three boundary options at two community meetings in May. Some changes have been made to properties on the edges of the boundary options in response to feedback provided. Other changes will be considered once additional feedback has been gathered through the survey.

Please take a moment to review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#), as well as [information presented at the community meetings](#) regarding the boundary options, prior to completing the survey.

How to submit the survey

Residents can complete the survey online at: www.getinvolved.rdn.ca/eaf-boundarystudy

Residents may also complete the fillable form below OR print this document, fill it in, and submit it to RDN:

- By email: eafboundarystudy@rdn.bc.ca
- In person at one of these RDN facilities:

RDN Main Office

6300 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6N2

Oceanside Place Arena

830 W Island Highway
Parksville, BC V9P 2X4

Ravensong Aquatic Centre

737 Jones Street
Qualicum Beach, BC V9K 1S4

Personal Information

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. The personal information you provide is collected by the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) under sections 26(c) and 26(e) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) for the purposes of engaging and consulting with the public.

The RDN is using (and enters hard copy survey results in) a Bang the Table engagement platform that stores the information in Canada. However, Bang the Table staff are located in the United States. Some of the questions allow for written responses. To protect your privacy and the privacy of others, please do not include any information that could identify you or another person, such as a person's name, address, email or phone number. Any personal information inadvertently included in the written responses will be deleted when the survey results are compiled.

Boundary Study Survey for Electoral Area F

1. In which Area F neighbourhood do you live (select one)?


- ☐ Coombs
- ☐ Errington
- ☐ Hilliers
- ☐ Meadowood
- ☐ Whiskey Creek
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ I do not live in Area F

2. Did you attend one of the Boundary Study meetings on May 8 or 13, 2025?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Watched recording online

3. Boundary options aim to minimize the costs for any potential future municipality, while maximizing the tax base, to best position any future potential municipality for success, and to enhance its resilience in the face of future challenges. At the same time, boundary options try to encompass the majority of those residents who are interested in exploring incorporation as an option, wherever possible.

Please indicate the relative importance of the following criteria to you (1 being not at all important; 5 being very important):

	Not at all important				Very important
	1	2	3	4	5
Minimizing the costs for a future municipality and its taxpayers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avoiding the 5,000 population threshold above which the municipality and its taxpayers would become responsible for paying for 70% of police costs (estimated to be more than 3 times the current police tax rate)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Including an area that identifies as a cohesive community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Including the entirety of Highway 4a as the community's service hub and transportation corridor (note that the province would continue to own and maintain this highway even in the event of an incorporation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Minimizing the number of farm class properties within the incorporation boundary because farm class properties lose some property tax exemptions upon incorporation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Boundary Study Survey for Electoral Area F

4. This survey is seeking input on three boundary options that could be used in a potential future municipal incorporation study. Please [click on this link to view maps of the three boundary options](#) as you answer the next few questions (you can also view the maps at the end of this document).

Some key features of each option are highlighted below:

Option A	Option B	Option C
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smallest area of the three options, centred around Errington• 2021 Census population of 2,670• Highest proportion of non-residential tax base (25%) of the three options• Includes 17 farm class properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Area includes much of Errington and Coombs• 2021 Census population of 4,234• Non-residential tax base proportion is 22%• Includes all of Highway 4a• Includes 37 farm class properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Largest area of the three options, with much of Errington, Coombs, Hilliers and Whiskey Creek included• 2021 Census population of 5,527• With a population over 5,000, local policing costs would be highest in this option (estimated at more than three times current police tax costs)• Non-residential tax base proportion is 19%• Includes 57 farm class properties

- a) Of these three options, which is your top preference? (select one) (Note that you can only choose one option as your highest preference. If you want to indicate support for multiple options, space is available for written comments in the last question of the survey)

- ☐ Option A
- ☐ Option B
- ☐ Option C
- ☐ None of the above

- b) Why do you prefer this option?

5. Is your property included in the boundary option you selected as your preferred option?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Boundary Study Survey for Electoral Area F

6. An incorporation study would detail the impacts of incorporation on governance, services and costs based on a specific boundary. At the end of the study, and based on the findings, a referendum on incorporation could be ordered for voters within the chosen boundary (a decision to incorporate must be determined by voters using a referendum). Only those within the boundary would have the opportunity to vote in a referendum.

Do you support seeking provincial approval for a detailed incorporation study based on one of the boundary options?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. Please suggest any property(s) that you think should be included within one or more of the Boundary Options, or that you would like to see removed from one or more of the Boundary Options (enter address or location):

I would like to see the following property(s) added to the boundary:

I would like to see the following property(s) removed from the boundary:

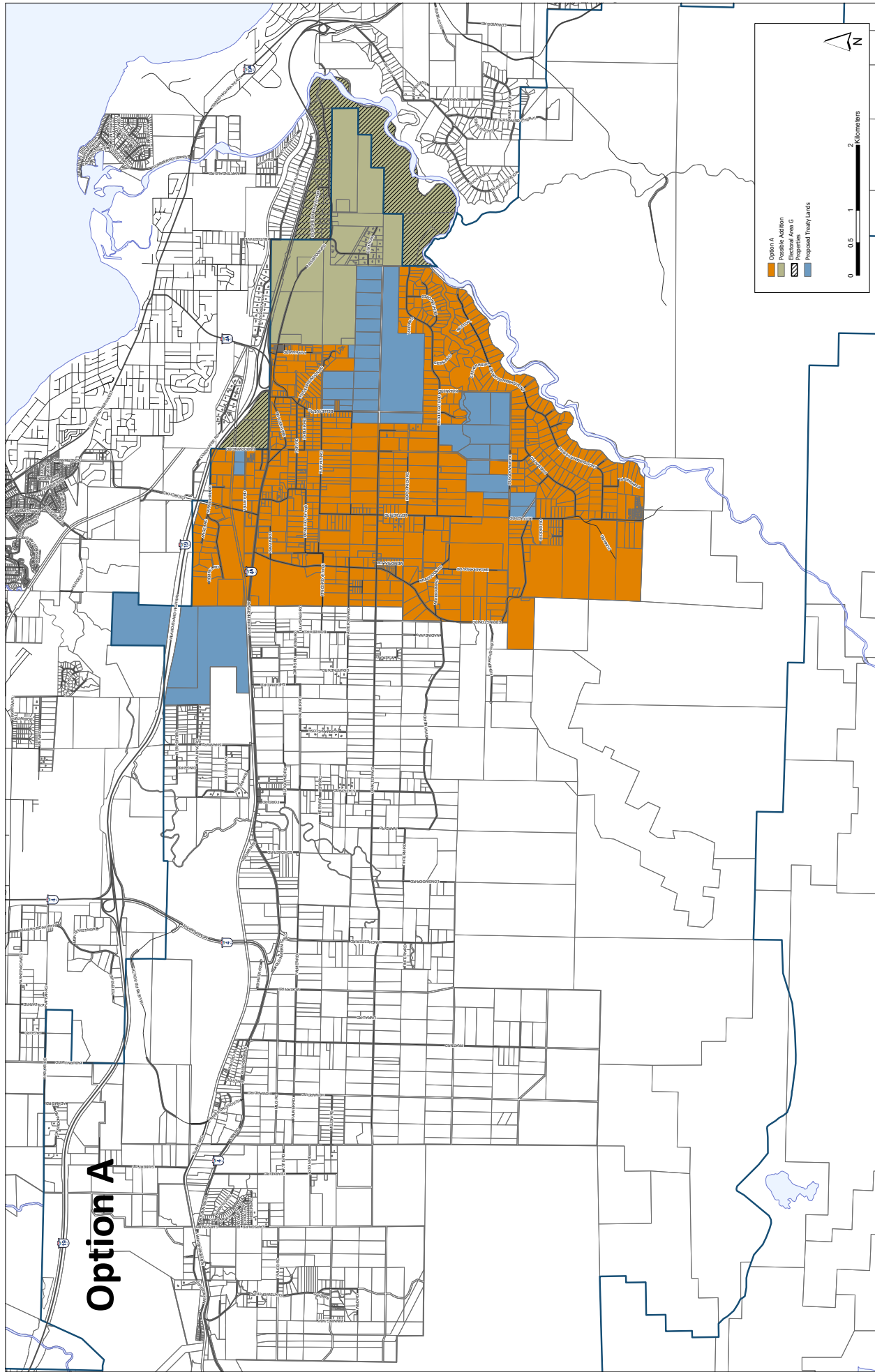
8. Is there anything else you would like to share about the boundary options?

Thank you for your input!

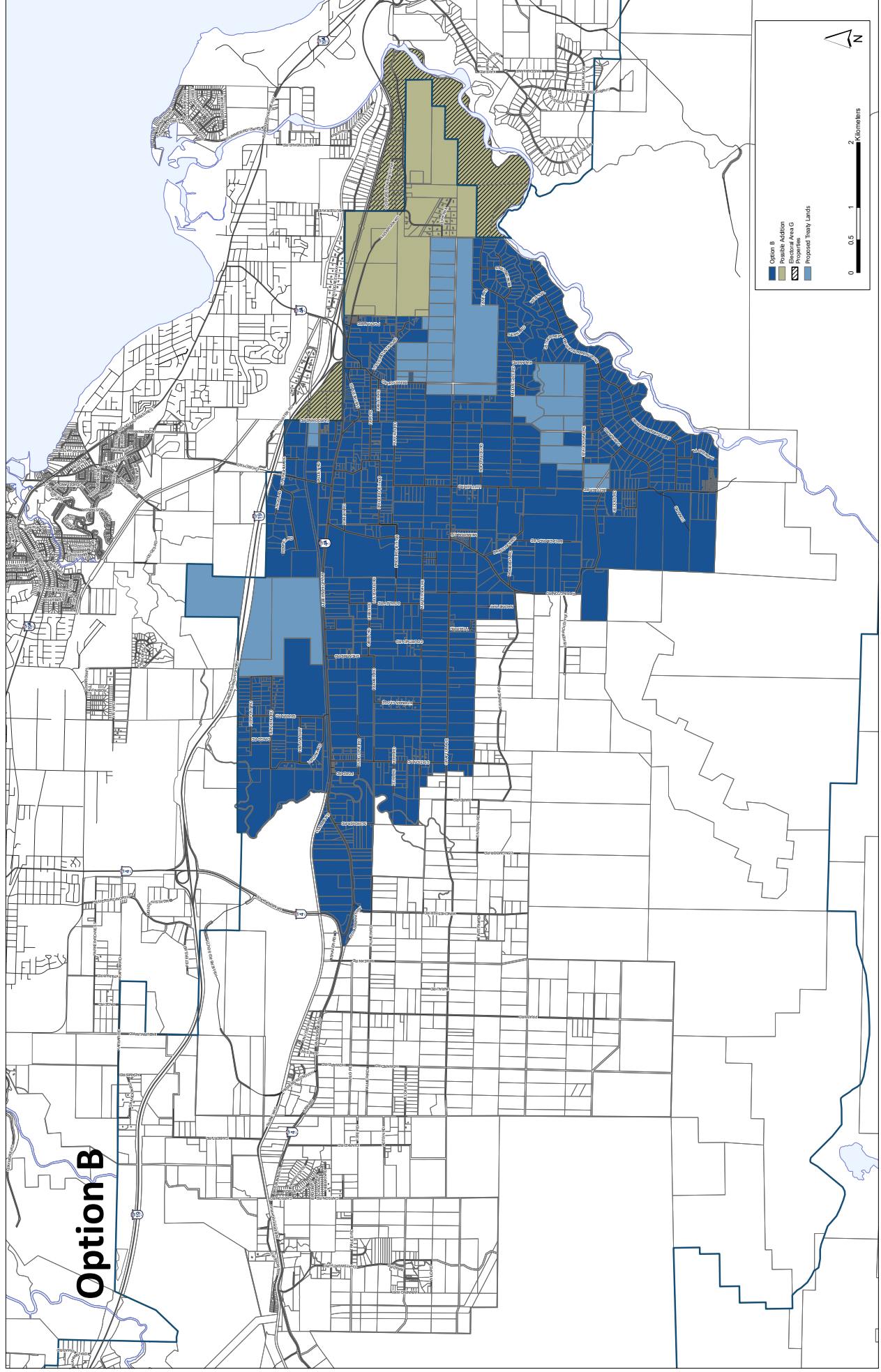
Survey results will be summarized and included in the consultants' report to the RDN Board scheduled to be presented at the RDN Board meeting on July 22.

It is important to remember that identifying a recommended boundary does not guarantee that an incorporation study will follow. Incorporation studies rely upon provincial funding and approval, among other factors.

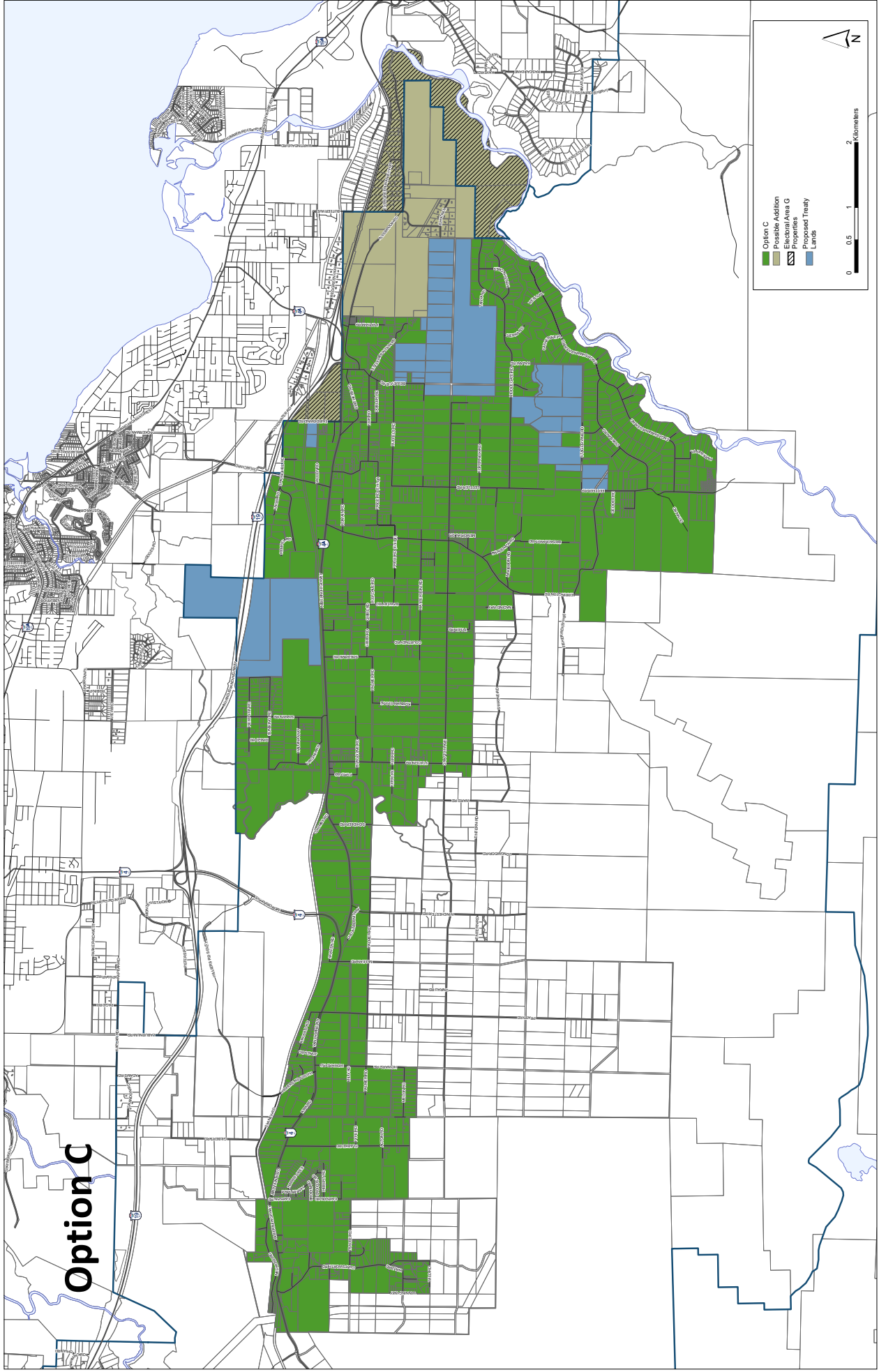
Option A



Option B



Option C



APPENDIX IX

What We Learned – Communications & Engagement Summary

ELECTORAL AREA F
BOUNDARY STUDY

FINAL REPORT

NEILSON
STRATEGIES

leftside partners inc.

What we learned

Communications & Engagement Summary
Electoral Area F Boundary Study
July 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes the communication and engagement that occurred during the Boundary Study for Electoral Area F, which took place from November 2024 until June 2025.

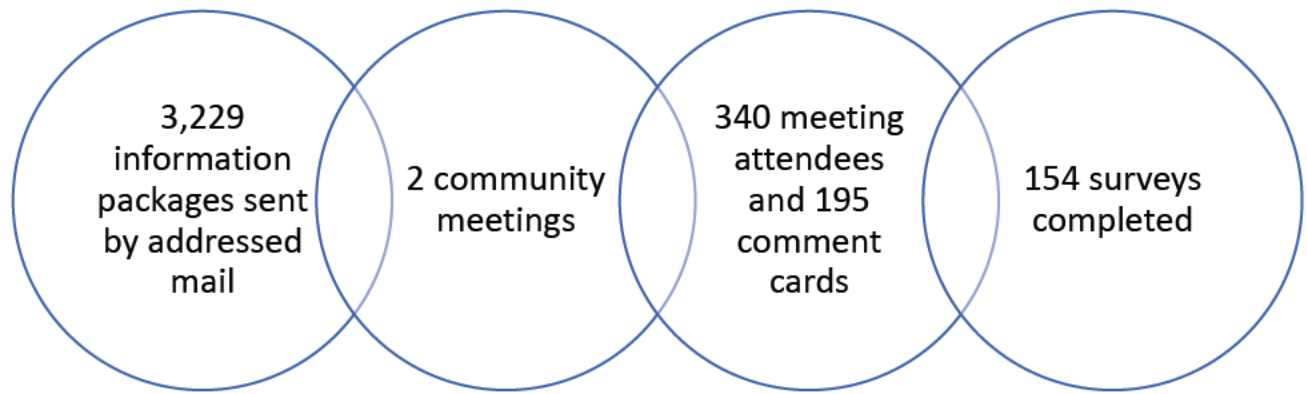
Electoral Area F is part of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) and includes the communities of Coombs, Errington, Hilliers, Meadowood, Whiskey Creek, and the surrounding rural areas.

In 2022, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs contributed funding for a Governance and Services Study in Electoral Area F to document service delivery and governance arrangements, engage the local community, and identify potential future governance and service delivery options for the area. At the conclusion of that process, the resident-led Governance and Services Study Committee recommended undertaking an incorporation study for Electoral Area F. The Ministry determined that proceeding directly to an incorporation study was not appropriate, and instead supported a Boundary Study to determine boundary options within the Electoral Area, identify at a high level some of the implications of incorporation within those boundaries, and solicit resident input and feedback on boundary scenarios.

The core objectives of the Boundary Study are to:

- Identify and outline criteria used to decide on a future study area boundary,
- Identify a potential study area boundary scenario or scenarios that reflect the outlined criteria and could be explored in a future incorporation study,
- Identify, at a high level, restructure implications associated with the proposed study area scenario(s) and to highlight the differences among the options, and
- Identify a recommended boundary scenario.

2.0 SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT



Area F community meeting, May 13, 2025.

3.0 SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

A total of 340 people attended the two community meetings and a total of 154 surveys were submitted. At the community meetings, residents were invited to fill out and submit comment cards, which were less detailed than the survey and asked residents which of the three boundary options they prefer and whether they support a detailed incorporation study. 195 comment cards were submitted, and these, together with the survey responses, were taken into consideration by the consultants.

Findings from the comment cards and the surveys are summarized below, together with themes from the written comments. Residents may have submitted both a comment card and a survey, and therefore, we should not assume that each response represents a unique individual. For that reason, totals from the two different feedback methods are not added together.

3.1 Summary: 154 Survey Responses

1. Approximately 62% of survey respondents attended one of the Boundary Study community meetings, 27% did not attend a meeting, and 10% watched a recording of the meeting online.
2. 55.2% of survey respondents live in Errington.
3. The survey responses showed higher support for Options B and C.

	Option A	Option B	Option C	None
Survey	27 (18%)	49 (32%)	54 (35%)	23 (15%)

4. The following chart highlights the boundary option preferences by neighbourhood (*note that percentages may total 99% instead of 100% due to rounding*):

	Option A	Option B	Option C	None
Errington	22%	42%	28%	7%
Coombs	14%	20%	54%	11%
Hilliers/Whiskey Creek	12%	6%	47%	35%
Meadowood	0%	27%	27%	45%
Not specified	33%	0	0	67%
Not live in Area F	0	100%	0	0

5. The main reasons that participants prefer each boundary option can be summarized as:

Option	Key Reasons for Preference
Option A (Errington)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller, more manageable boundary • Seen as a cautious or practical starting point • Avoids reaching the 5,000 population threshold (and associated policing costs) • Easier to expand later than shrink • Includes like-minded and local communities • Excludes many farm class properties • Helps avoid annexation by Parksville • Lower financial risk; more compact and cohesive
Option B (Errington & Coombs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered a good compromise between Options A and C • Balance of land uses • Includes communities with shared interests and the core community • Includes commercial/industrial areas, which improves the tax base • Includes all of Hwy 4A for tax base and community identity • Limits inclusion of farm properties • Keeps population under 5,000 to avoid policing costs • Is more inclusive than Option A • Offers potential for future expansion • Some supported B as a second choice if A was too small
Option C (Errington, Coombs, Hilliers & Whiskey Creek)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most inclusive of residents, communities, and services (e.g., more of fire protection districts) • Highest tax base due to inclusion of additional industrial lands • Largest population • Offers potential independence from RDN and improved local representation for more people in the community • Aligns with existing community identity and long-term planning
None of the Above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to maintain the status quo and stay in RDN • Concern about increased taxes without improved services • Distrust about the incorporation process and motivations • View that incorporation won't solve underlying issues at the RDN • Preference for regional governance reform rather than incorporation • Belief that proposed boundaries exclude key properties or communities

6. 62% of respondents identified minimizing costs for a future municipality as important or very important. However, only 35% of survey respondents identified keeping the population below the 5,000 threshold to pay for 70% of policing as important or very important. This suggests that more communication is needed about how policing costs affect the overall costs of a potential future municipality.

7. Approximately 75% of survey respondents indicated support for seeking provincial approval for a detailed incorporation study (116 in support, 38 responses against).
8. The table below shows the number of survey participants who support or do not support a future incorporation study based on where respondents live:

	Errington	Coombs	Hilliers/Whiskey Creek	Meadowood	I don't live in Area F	Not specified
Yes	69	28	13	4	1	1
No	16	7	4	7	2	2
Total	85	35	17	11	3	3

9. At the end of the survey, participants were asked “is there anything else you would like to share about the boundary options.” 61 responses were provided, and they generally fall into the following themes:

Theme	Comments (# reference repeat occurrences)
Farm class properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm class properties should be removed from the boundary options and do not belong inside any future proposed municipalities More farms should be included in potential municipality boundary
Incorporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several indicated that they do not wish to be incorporated (or for incorporation to proceed) (5) In favour of whatever option helps this study proceed Incorporation is not the right solution (recommended other options) (3)
Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the boundaries as large as possible to include all of Area F (2) Include both fire protection areas (3) Start small and expand later (2) Option A (3), and minimize the impact on the rest of Area F (2) Coombs/Hilliers is very different from Errington
Meadowood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that the options do not include or impact Meadowood, and propose alternatives for Meadowood (join other electoral areas, create their own boundary, join a future municipality in the future) (4)
Information on cost impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More information about cost (7) Costs will show that incorporation does not make sense Benefits will outweigh the costs Do not believe it is as expensive as presented Hope for transparent info moving forward

Theme	Comments (# reference repeat occurrences)
Bias to current governance model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that the Study and information shared is intended to maintain the current model of governance (4)
Bias towards incorporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that incorporation is promoted by only a select group, and worry about biased in how information is shared (4) Discomfort with separate Area F Town Hall meeting held outside the Study process (2)
Tax base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose options that have greatest tax base Include all industrial properties
Keep community together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep our community together - Allow for areas that can be developed to support our financial base (2) Concern that the options are creating unnecessary fractures in community
Protection of rural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect rural areas from development (3)

3.2 Summary: 195 Comment Card Responses

- More people who submitted comment cards preferred Option C. However, when combined, more people prefer Option A and Option B (total 86) over Option C (76).

	Option A	Option B	Option C	None
Option Preference	44	42	76	38

- The main reasons shared on the comment cards for why people prefer each boundary option can be summarized as:

Option	Key Reasons for Preference
Option A (Errington)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the most practical and manageable Start small with potential to expand to include others in the future Avoids the 5,000 population threshold for policing costs Concern regarding annexation by Parksville Most viable with best tax base and compact road network Makes the most sense financially Most like-minded area More localized Less impact on the remainder of Area F

Option	Key Reasons for Preference
Option B (Errington & Coombs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes communities with shared interests and services • Avoids the 5,000 population policing cost threshold, but not too small • Most economically feasible option • Enables local control over development for my area • Including the industrial area would improve the tax base and less cost as population would be below 5,000. • If there is future growth, then we could add more land to the area • Most balanced option • Better option because Option A divides the community in half • Fewer roads and farm class properties than Option C
Option C (Errington, Coombs, Hilliers & Whiskey Creek)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largest population and tax base with large industrial component • Greater pool of people for potential council members • The most inclusive to allow for long-term planning • Option C is larger and most people want self-government • Includes all fire departments • Offers more people independence from the RD governance model • It is the most inclusive option that recognizes the broader community with shared values • No one should be left out unless they want to opt out (should include all of Area F) • Other options could create unnecessary conflict within the community • It has more village centres • It should include both fire protection districts
None of the options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No interest in incorporation and preference to remain with status quo/RDN • Concern about potential for tax increases with no increase in service • Perception that incorporation could ruin what is special about Area F • Concern that incorporation does not solve what residents see as the governance issues or “foundational issues” at RDN (some noted preferences for different solutions) • Concern that Incorporation would result in more government and less control • Desire for the lowest possible taxes • Some expressed desire for alternative options (larger ones or ones that include different properties) • Concern that no cost analysis had been provided

3. 75% of people who submitted a comment card support seeking provincial approval for a detailed incorporation study (132 in support, 44 responses against).

4.0 LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Given the parameters of this project, engagement occurred at the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2's) "inform" and "consult" levels. This means that the RDN's and consultants' goals were to provide residents with balanced and objective information and to obtain resident feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

5.0 KEY MESSAGES

Key messages are the most important information about the project. The following key messages were used throughout Boundary Study communication and engagement materials:

1. At the end of the 2022 Electoral Area F Governance and Services Study, the resident-led Study Committee recommended an incorporation study for Area F. The Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs determined that a boundary study was needed first.
2. The purpose of the Electoral Area F Boundary Study is to identify and evaluate potential boundaries within Area F that may be suitable study areas for a future incorporation study.
3. Consultants have been hired by RDN to develop boundary scenarios based on criteria such as: existing services and infrastructure, future infrastructure needs, future development plans, existing local roads, settlement patterns and property class composition.
4. Once the boundary scenarios are developed, residents will be asked to share input on the options.
5. [Background]: Incorporation is the process through which an unincorporated area becomes recognized as a municipality (village, town, city or district). As a municipality, the community elects its own Mayor and Council and makes decisions about most local services and taxation.
6. [Background]: An Electoral Area is comprised of communities outside of municipal boundaries. Electoral Areas are represented by one Area Director on the Board of the local regional district.

6.0 AUDIENCES

An audience is a specific person or group of people with whom we want to communicate. The primary audience of the Boundary Study was **residents within RDN Electoral Area F**. This large audience group was broken down into several sub-audiences to help determine what types of communication methods were needed (in no particular order):

- Residents (property owners and renters)
- Non-resident property owners
- The RDN Board, including the Area Director
- Residents who prefer to get information online
- Residents who prefer to get information in hard copy or in person

7.0 COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT METHODS

The table below summarizes the communication and community engagement activities that occurred between November 2024 and June 2025 as part of the Area F Boundary Study:

Method
<p>Project page on Get Involved RDN engagement platform</p> <p>A project page was maintained through the duration of this project to provide a single place for residents to find information. The page contained links to all documents generated through the project, as well as background documents.</p> <p>Data on webpage activity indicate that as of June 30, 2025, there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 928 visits • 88 engaged participants — that is, visitors who participated in the survey (note that one participant was RDN staff member who entered the 67 surveys that were completed in paper form, for a total of 154 surveys) • 583 informed participants — visitors who downloaded a document, visited the key dates page, visited the FAQ page, or visited multiple project pages • 1,653 aware participants — visitors who visited the site at least once
<p>Newsletter through Get Involved RDN</p> <p>The project webpage enabled residents to sign up to receive email updates from the project team on the project.</p>
<p>Mailout to all addresses within Electoral Area F</p> <p>A mailout was sent by addressed mail to all properties in Area F in April 2025 (3,229 addresses). The mailout described the purpose of the Boundary Study, the criteria for developing boundary options, and invited residents to attend a public meeting and submit a detailed survey response.</p>
<p>Posters</p> <p>Posters advertising the project and community meetings were distributed around Area F in April 2025.</p>
<p>Newspaper advertisements</p> <p>A number of newspaper ads were run in the <i>Parksville-Qualicum Bay News</i> through April and May 2025 advertising the project and community meetings, and in June advertising the survey.</p>
<p>News releases</p> <p>A news release was issued in June 2024 informing residents that RDN had received approval to conduct the Boundary Study. A second news release was issued in April 2025 inviting residents to participate in the community meetings and community survey.</p>

Method

RDN social media

The Boundary Study was announced on the RDN's Facebook page in June 2024, and the community meetings were advertised in April and May 2025.

Two (2) community meetings

Two community meetings were held in Area F:

- May 8, 2025: attended by 227 people
- May 13, 2025: attended by 113 people

The meetings included an open time for attendees to review information posterboards, a presentation from the consulting team, and audience questions and answers. The presentation slides and a video from the meeting was available on the project website. A record of the questions asked by participants at the meetings is contained in Appendix A.

Comment Cards

Comment cards were distributed to attendees at the two community meetings and extras were given to the Electoral Area Director for distribution. Comment cards were simple, and asked participants which boundary option they prefer, why, and whether they support a future incorporation study. 195 comment cards were submitted, and the responses received are provided in Appendix B.

Survey

154 surveys were submitted between June 1 – June 15, 2025. The survey asked detailed questions to gather input about boundary criteria and preferences. Hard copies of the survey were made available at a local store, 125 copies of the survey were provided to the Area Director for distribution, and RDN staff at recreation facilities printed surveys for residents upon request. Residents were able to drop-off hard copy surveys at four locations (the Errington Post Office, the Meadowood store, Ravensong Aquatic Centre, and Oceanside Place Arena). The survey could also be completed online through RDN's Get Involved platform or submitted to the RDN by email. A record of the feedback received through the surveys is contained in Appendix C.

FAQ

A Frequently Asked Questions resource was prepared in response to some of the questions raised by residents at the two Community Meetings, and to help ensure consistent information was available after the two community meetings, particularly for residents who had not attended either of the meetings. The FAQ was available on the project webpage. The FAQs were viewed 312 times as of June 30, and the FAQ document resource was downloaded 43 times.

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY MEETING FEEDBACK

Two Boundary Study meetings were held in Area F. The input received during those meetings is summarized below:

<p>Meeting #1: May 8, 2025, 6:30-8:30pm</p> <p>227 attendees</p>	<p>Questions raised by participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will hard copies of the survey be available? Can we print the surveys and send them in? • What prompted this study? How did we get here? • What happens to parts of Electoral Area F that are outside of the identified boundaries? Is there an option for them to be included? • If later people wanted to come in, how would they be included? • Why are we doing this study? We should be exploring the issues before incorporating. • Why are we jumping to an incorporation, who is supporting these studies? Are you engaging with residents? • Is there a way to restructure the imbalance at the RDN? vs. changing the Electoral Area. • Is there a minimum number of Council members required for an incorporated town? • What happens with zoning/land use when incorporation happens? • What is the reason behind the delay with the Electoral Area F Official Community Plan? • Dissatisfaction with services provided in the Electoral Area • Why did the consultants exclude specific farm properties? • Can municipalities change Class 9 property taxes? • Desire for control in the area, and dissatisfaction with time it's taken to get studies. • Why is there no "out" option? • If Errington is incorporated, who then do they answer to? Are they still involved with the RDN? • Tax increase concerns, will municipalities control those increase? • Will the RDN control us if we are incorporated? • What is the lowest tax and greatest autonomy you could have? • Electoral Area F continues to have growth and development; can we incorporate to reduce Nanaimo influence. • What if we choose our option in this study process, could Parksville or Qualicum beach annex the area?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the Mill-rate for taxes set? Can Council change the tax rate? • Can you divide the Electoral Area? Can you split the Regional District of Nanaimo? • Monetary issues brought forward at the Board, being weighted by Nanaimo votes. • Who gets to vote on these areas for incorporation? • What's next in this process? What comes after the open house? • How is the name selected? • Electoral Area F community characteristic: rural, minimal government, minimal growth/development • Why are we minimizing farm land in these options? We need to protect farmland. • Can we join the Regional District of Port Alberni? • Why isn't Meadowood included? Why are other areas excluded from this study?
Meeting #2: May 13, 2025, 6:30-8:30pm 113 attendees	Questions raised by participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the average assessed value, and what would the tipping point be to trigger RCMP costs? • Are there protective mechanisms in place that would protect the tax base? • Could other Municipalities annex areas or absorb other pieces of land? Such as industrial. • Could the municipalities just do what they want with the boundaries? • Can the online survey include maps with roads? • What is the difference between non-residential and industrial cost percentages? • What becomes of the Coombs-Hilliers Fire Department? • What happens to the taxes that pay for the Fire Service for Coombs-Hilliers, will they still get it in option B and C? Will those who pay for it, end up paying more because less people are contributing to it? • What happens to properties who are left out? What happens to their roads? • What kind of tax increase do we look at with incorporation? • Why are we leaving farms out of the Area F options? • How are we protecting farms? • RDN pays very high taxes, ACRD is lower. When we incorporate can we go to ACRD? • How much of the money we pay for taxes gets spent in Area F? • What comes next? • Who can vote in the referendum?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can Meadowood ever be a part of this incorporation? • Who sets the RCMP threshold? • Are there other municipalities that are similar to ours in the province? • What are cost implications with incorporation? • What does Electoral Area F have that is unique, and would set us up for successful incorporation? • How many people do you have to hire when you become a municipality? • What is Metchosin's residential vs industrial tax rate? • Do municipalities get more grant funding than regional districts?
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APPENDIX B: COMMENT CARD INPUT

195 comment cards were collected during the Boundary Study

Which of the three boundary options makes most sense to you? (195 answered, some indicated two preferences for total of 202)

Option A	Option B	Option C	None of the options
44 (21.8%)	43 (21.3%)	77 (38.1%)	38 (18.8%)

Is your property included within your preferred option? (159 answered)

Yes	No
118 (74%)	41 (26%)

Do you support seeking provincial approval for a detailed incorporation study? (176 answered)

Yes	No
132 (75%)	44 (25%)

Why do you prefer option A?

- It is the most practical and realistic. In my fantasy, I would like to see all of Errington, Coombs, and Hilliers taken in. Coombs is the public face of Area F and it should be the 'capital.'
- I prefer this option because my property is not in it.
- Keep it small.
- Start small.
- If the community decides to do this, it's best to start small. I am thrilled that Meadowood isn't included, since that plan never made sense.
- This is the cautious approach, avoid policing costs
- This area is closest to Parksville and we don't want to be annexed by Parksville
- Most viable, compact – has the best tax base; most of the roads are paved
- Send Meadowood to Area H
- Makes the most sense financially; smaller size, more manageable; easier to add additional population areas rather than shrink boundaries later.
- Most like-minded area.
- More localized.
- Smaller number; will not get to 5,000 as quickly (or ever hopefully); my property is in all 3 options.
- Lower population less likely to trigger paying for policing any time soon. Biggest concern is ending up with higher taxes, lower environmental protections and increased density.

- It leaves most of us alone.
- Like idea of starting small with option to expand to include others in the future.
- If you're going to create an obvious divide, you might as well start with Errington.
- Includes my community and it is the bare minimum with hope of annexing afterwards.

Why do you prefer option B?

- Because of the close proximity and common aspects that Errington and Coombs have to one another. This option would have a population below 5000, thus would not have the larger policing costs. But the population will exceed 5000 in the near future, so I would be open to supporting Option C if this makes more long-term sense for the community.
- If I have to choose one of the 3 options, B makes the most sense economically. However, we have arrived at this point because of lack of representation on decisions in the RDN as most numbers favour south RDN and other municipalities. We need to add another director or two for Area F.
- Coombs/Errington are cooperative communities with shared ideals.
- I prefer this option because my property is not in it.
- Prefer more control of the development surrounding my home.
- Common interests.
- It is time for more local control of costs. This option is a good balance of village/subdivision and people have a common interest.
- We are close enough to benefit, but further away to avoid large changes for the negative (this person's property is not included in the boundary)
- Including the industrial area would improve the tax base and less cost as population would be below 5,000. If there is future growth, then we could add more land to the area.
- Most economic option
- Option B feels like the most balanced option. Plus, I want to be in the incorporated area!
- Including the industrial area improves the tax base.
- Under 5000 population; pretty commonly accepted as Area F.
- Under 5000 but not too small.
- Economic feasibility.
- My property would be included...just want to have a look at what the study might say before any decisions.
- B or C is my preference because Option A would cut the community in half.
- I like the idea of starting small and expanding but I don't think Option A makes as much sense as B. Start with B and expand.
- Feels the most balanced.
- This option seems to make the most sense financially.
- All of Errington.
- Financially, it is the best option to utilize property tax \$. Smaller amount of roads and farm class properties.

Why do you prefer option C?

- We have a rural property and don't want to be influenced by the RDN.

- Largest population base with large industrial component.
- Greater tax base, greater pool of people for potential council members.
- Option C is the most inclusive to allow for long-term planning. My preference would be to include all of Area F.
- Option C is larger and most people want self-government
- Nadine Way is not included and I think should be. Same with Tyler Road subdivision.
- Includes all 3 fire departments and a large enough population base to work with.
- Concerned about current governance – too many reps from Nanaimo, Parksville, Qualicum making decisions that affect Area F taxes and wellbeing.
- Independence from the current governance model – larger areas with representation are very much less caring about Area F and others and make decisions with a view to the larger Metro Area.
- Do not want to be part of Parksville/QB. Want to keep our rural setting but want fair and equal representation. RDN is too controlling and not fair to rural areas.
- Better representation. Do not like how RDN does not offer fair governance!! Too Nanaimo top-heavy.
- Most inclusive of current boundaries.
- Most logical.
- Includes my property and has the largest tax base, including industrial to possibly lower or sustain the homeowners' tax burden.
- More inclusive; please explain the benefits of having to pay for policing.
- Makes the most sense to me.
- More people (properties) included.
- It includes us.
- It's the most inclusive option.
- We want to be the same without as many neighbors as possible.
- I don't want to see our Area F broken up into pieces.
- I want as many residents as possible within the municipality.
- Larger tax base to support our own community – more taxes from industrial and commercial properties for our local community to decide on uses.
- Control over our preferences in our community.
- Would like to have some say in where our tax dollars go and what services we pay for vs services we receive.
- Bigger is better – whole Area F should be the boundary.
- This is close to my property and I hope to be included in the future.
- Because we are community.
- Control of our own destiny; I think it should include all of Area F unless some want to opt out.
- Include all.
- Includes enough tax base.
- Most encompassing for the wide areas, for community building.
- Larger population, lower tax base.
- Include farms.
- Should include everybody that has lived here for so long.

- No one should be left behind to remain with RDN.
- We all should be included.
- All should be included.
- As many residents/properties should be included as we are a “unique” rural area with shared values.
- Covers a larger area, more people breaking away from big government.
- Maintain existing communities.
- It’s the best of them, would prefer to be included and include both fire areas with departments.
- It’s the closest option to making any sense. None of them make sense, as they could potentially create an unnecessary conflict within the community.
- It should be both fire protection districts.
- This is my extended community – a huge portion of these people want out of RDN.
- Both fire protection districts should be in boundary.
- It has all the village centres in it. It should have both fire protection districts.
- It’s the only one that includes a larger area – still not enough.

Reasons provided by people who did not select any of the boundary options (and/or wrote in “none”):

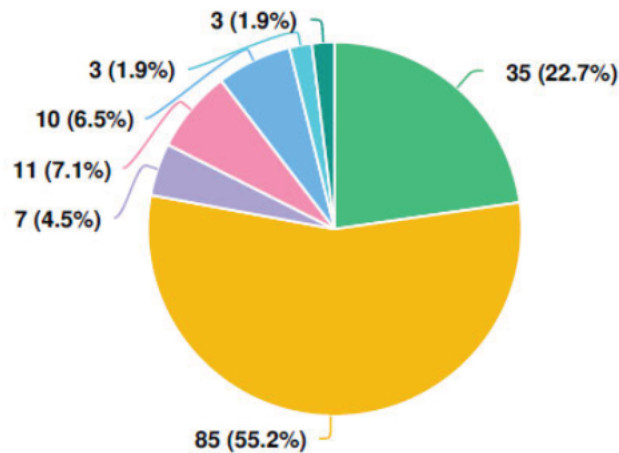
- Leave things as they are now. It’s just going to cost us more not less.
- Please stop wasting taxpayers money on this study
- I prefer that things stay as they are now. No changes please!
- I came from the City to get away from this. I do not support incorporation at this time. Our area is very special. Incorporation at this time would wreck what people love about our area.
- I don’t prefer any incorporation at all. It would result in less or even status quo control over our lives and there is FAR too much of that at every level of government. We moved here specifically to get away from that.
- I don’t like any of the options and believe we need to divide the RDN into 2.
- I do not support a boundary change.
- I do not want to incorporate.
- We should be able to govern our “F” water aquifers – cancel the section of land east of little mountain,
- Least amount of taxes. I am currently satisfied with staying with the RDN. I do not want to incorporate. Please leave it alone.
- Costs will increase. Services will not necessarily be better.
- I do not support incorporation, although, I don’t believe that Meadowood should be in Area F.
- We are a rural farming community – farm properties should be included in boundary options. If this were the case, I would support Option C.
- Lots of biased language and attempts at fear mongering about farm taxes. What about an opportunity to diversity farm offering (allowable by the ALC but restricted by RDN)?
- I’m pretty unimpressed that after all this time, [REDACTED] My property needs to be included! Include farmland in Option C.
- Fix the dysfunction at the RDN and provide a greater say for Area F. This proposal(s): “jumping from the frying pan into the fire.” [REDACTED]

- I'm not in favour of any of these 3 options. I want the systemic issues at the RDN studied and solutions presented. Breaking up the RDN and Oceanside being a regional district (60) and/or regional district with Port Alberni. [REDACTED]
- No discussions of water/resources required for developments.
- No costed analysis of options presented; no complete list of costs (e.g. policing) presented; no discussion of water resources as more development would deplete water table.
- I think none of the options actually address the root issue many of the areas have with the disfunction at the RDN. Creating autonomy for a small group of residents does not fix the foundational issues that are present within many areas of the RDN. An incorporation study would be more money spent not fixing the real issues.
- We would prefer to opt out of all of the options. [REDACTED]
- I prefer none of them as my property is not included.
- Both fire protection areas.
- If I had it my way, there would be a fourth option that includes a larger area yet.
- My property is not included in any of the options [REDACTED] I had truly hoped all of Coombs-Hilliers and Errington would be an option.
- No more government.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY RESULTS

154 surveys were completed between June 1 - 15, 2025

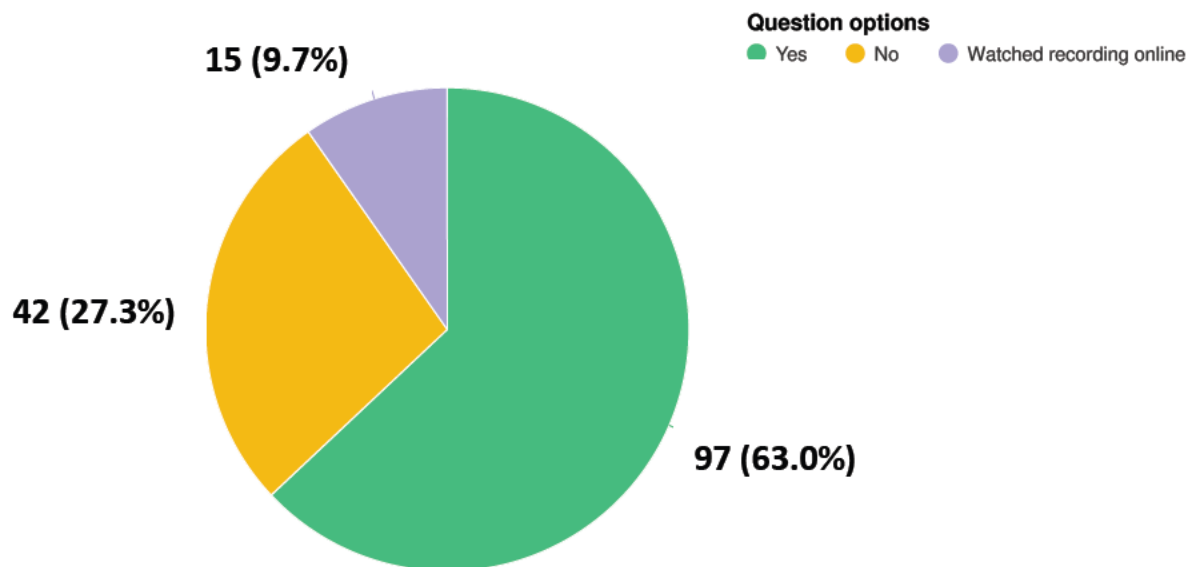
Q1 In which Electoral Area F neighbourhood do you live (select one)?



Question options

Coombs Errington Hilliers Meadowood Whiskey Creek I do not live in Electoral Area F
Other (please specify)

Q2 Did you attend one of the Boundary Study meetings on May 8 or 13, 2025? (154 answered)



Question options

Yes No Watched recording online

Q3: Boundary options aim to minimize the costs for any potential future municipality, while maximizing the tax base, to best position any future potential municipality for success, and to enhance its resilience in the face of future challenges. At the same time, boundary options try to encompass the majority of those residents who are interested in exploring incorporation as an option, wherever possible.

Please indicate the relative importance of the following criteria to you (1 being not at all important; 5 being very important):

Note: the numbers in the table below represent responses, not percentages.

	1 (not at all important)	2 (not very important)	3 (somewhat important)	4 (important)	5 (very important)
Minimizing the costs for a future municipality and its taxpayers	13	19	25	20	77
Avoiding the 5,000 population threshold above which the municipality and its taxpayers would become responsible for paying for 70% of police costs (estimated to be more than 3 times the current police tax rate)	45	18	36	16	39
Including an area that identifies as a cohesive community	8	7	34	34	71
Including the entirety of Highway 4a as the community's service hub and transportation corridor (note that the province would continue to own and maintain this highway even in the event of an incorporation)	16	12	33	37	56
Minimizing the number of farm class properties within the incorporation boundary because farm class properties lose some property tax exemptions upon incorporation	55	19	44	9	27

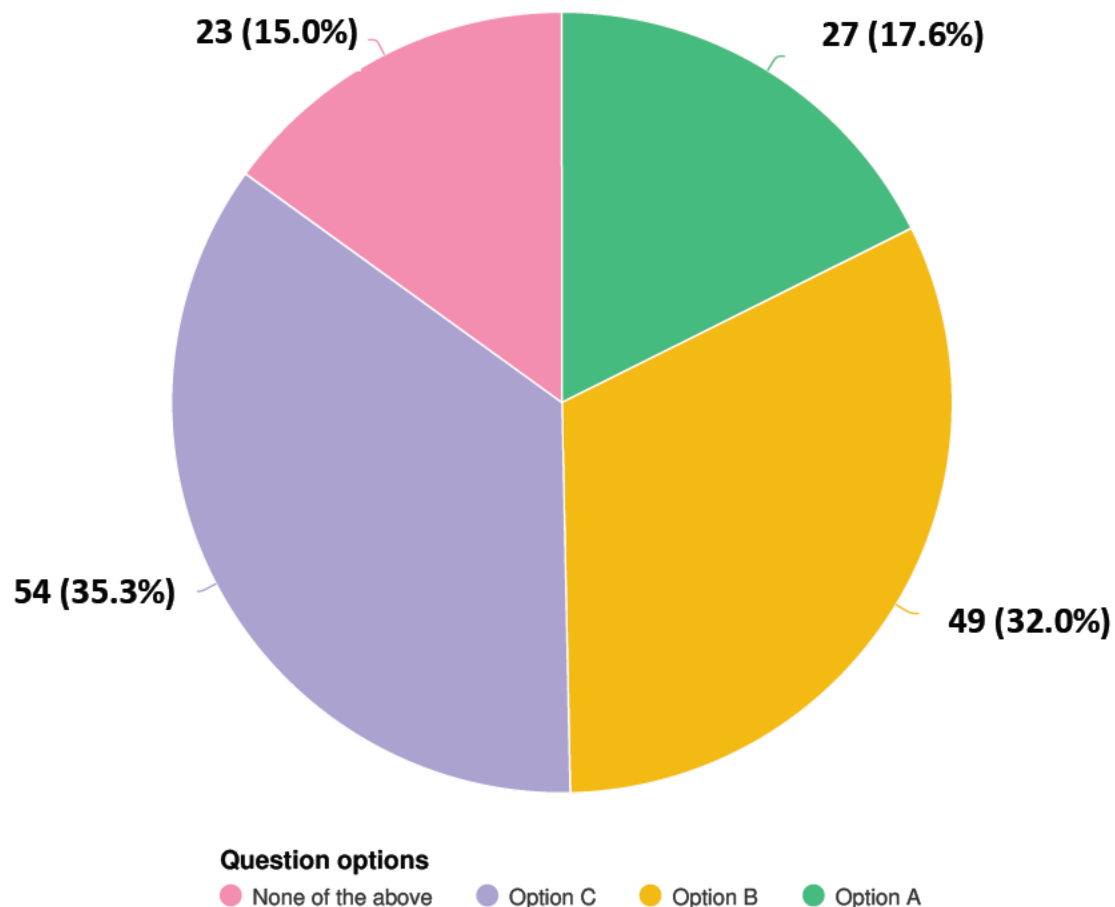
Interpretation of Q3 data (table above):

- Participants indicated that the most important criteria for boundary selection is "Including an area that identifies as a cohesive community" (105 respondents or 68% identified this as important or very important).
- Participants indicated that the second-most important criteria for boundary selection is "Minimizing costs for a future municipality and its taxpayers" (97 respondents or 62% identified this as important or very important).
- Avoiding the 5,000 population threshold to avoid paying for 70% of policing was only identified as important or very important by 55 out of 154 survey respondents

(approximately 35% of respondents). Indeed, a higher number of respondents (63 or 41%) stated that this criteria was not at all important or not very important.

- Similarly, nearly half of survey respondents (74 or 48%) stated that “Minimizing the number of farm class properties within the boundary” was not at all important or not very important.

Q4: Of these three options, which is your top preference? (153 answered)



Q5: Why do you prefer this option?

I prefer Option A because:

- What is the real need to incorporate a mostly rural area?
- My property is not in it and I do NOT want to be in a municipality.
- If it had to be but I don't want to incorporate at all. This choice would be the lesser of financial blows to the community.
- Less population, smaller focus of community that being Errington, less farm land.

- Of those 3 options, I think Option A makes the most sense from an economical point of view. But overall, I don't think incorporation is a wise move as it will cost us taxpayers more without much benefit.
- Errington is its own thing and the only ones who want incorporation.
- I don't want any incorporation – there's no option for that.
- Because Option B and C affect me as a farmer.
- Start small.
- Most viable financially – therefore has a greater probability to succeed as a fledgling municipality.
- Begin with a manageable size and then expand if others choose to be included.
- Cohesive community already exists.
- Avoid interaction with political element of those further west.
- It makes sense for Errington. Leaves rest of area together. Leaves room for tax base + growth outside boundaries.
- This includes my home and most immediate community; however, I would be very happy with B or C as well.
- Because it doesn't mean higher policing costs so size would remain smaller- makes sense economically and leaves a reasonable size area for keeping taxes affordable for the remaining area.
- Because more likely to get out.

I prefer Option B because:

- Seems a fair balance of the three.
- High number of farm class properties.
- It includes my property.
- Larger tax base, good mix of commercial, residential and farm lands but below population requirement for policing costs.
- Try to keep population below 5,000.
- It is a great place to start and it is pretty well balanced.
- Inclusive of communities that have always worked in cooperation.
- More useable taxes per household with no policing costs.
- Staying below the 5,000 population count. Focussing on Coombs and Errington as a first step, with a plan to include those in option C at a later date.
- More realistic than the other two options.
- Allows for more input on Hwy 4a for transportation inclusion, while still maintaining the rural area, maximizing farm or large parcel holdings.
- I am included and staying under the 5,000.
- Includes most of the core area and community.
- It's a good balance of commercial and residential.
- Includes a fair balance of farm, residential, and commercial.
- More bang for our buck. Keeps the community small with lower police costs.
- More inclusive of the local area.
- Most logical for well-rounded community.

- Keeps population under 5,000.
- It is below the 5,000 population; it's tax base is 22%; it includes some farm class properties.
- Financially stronger, have a tighter bond with Coombs area and Hilliers; Whiskey Creek can join later in the process.
- It's the best plan.
- Looks acceptable for success.
- Makes sense.
- Makes the most sense financially and socially.
- Cohesive community, Valuable industrial sector, Logical Boundary for fire service etc.
- Although tempted towards Option A, for its simplicity and presumably lowest initial cost, my choice of option B is acknowledgement of the importance on the Hwy 4A commercial strip in defining our community identity. Enhanced tax base for fledging muni.
- Identify as a coombs/Errington resident Area F is a desired area of like-minded rural property owners - who have a lifestyle similar to each other away from people who have chosen to live in the city.
- Leaves out most of the farm class properties.
- Hilliers and Whiskey Creek are spread out and harder to police and maintain the roads.
- We can bring in the last area after incorporation.
- Leaves enough other Area F to be workable as it is a more rural type community.
- Includes more commercial real-estate + potential growth and expansion.
- Most logical.
- All of Errington + under 5,000 folk.
- Policing costs. Expansion can take place in the future control of our property taxes to stay for option B rather than at directions of the RDN.
- Coherent grouping coombs and Errington - good solid tax base 22% - below immediate need for costlier policing - includes fewer farm class properties.

I prefer Option C because:

- It represents current trading, transport and neighbourhood affiliations. It also includes a greater number of commercial and industry sites for greater variation in taxation.
- I support Option C as a local resident [REDACTED] Despite the farm class drawback, its broader area and higher population allow for better services, especially transportation— [REDACTED] to support local youth.
- I believe adding the whiskey creek area will generate more of a tax base that will benefit the area.
- Largest population.
- Closest to including my property.
- We live in this area and want to be included in the incorporation. Our tax base will benefit the incorporated area.
- It is the most cohesive community and collects as many commercial/industrial properties as possible along highway 4.
- Because it'll be the best one.
- Screw over as many people as possible.

- 1. community identity. 2. best mix of commercial, industry, farm and residential.
- We would be included and wish to be part of the new municipality.
- Largest tax base.
- Because we have been a community for along time.
- All of Area F deserves to be part of the new community as we have all contributed, via taxes, to the well being of all for the last 60 years.
- It has the biggest tax base. But I do not wish to incorporate. I prefer to remain as part of the RDN.
- A larger population makes a stronger community. More police services would mean better safety and support for people and businesses in Area F. A larger tax base will better fund services, like municipal water, sewer & better road upkeep.
- I think the light commercial/industrial along the Alberni Hwy would be a huge financial asset plus we would still have the community.
- Area F is a name for the purposes of the RDN this is not how we identify as a community, we are a rural people who have and wish to keep our rural values... and this is true of all three identified areas.
- Biggest future tax base.
- Includes areas that are all very similar and traditionally minded. our issues are universal to these areas.
- Best choice for everyone in the area.
- Because it keeps the community together.
- Larger area.
- Makes the most sense.
- Covers a large area and more farms.
- Area F has a unique culture and community. Coombs-Hilliers is as much a part of this community as Errington. I do not wish to see any part excluded non-voluntarily.
- Maintain existing communities.
- The best option for all-to preserve our lifestyle.
- There is Not only other option that will alleviate the overwhelming unfairness of decisions made by the RDN Board which does not serve the residents of Area F to an equitable level. If it was not, would be stuck with the same lack of representation.
- Includes area f limiting farms but including industrial + residential.
- Makes most sense to me.
- To keep area F together to support our rural lifestyle, larger tax base - we are not heard + discussions are Rail Road on in favour of Nanaimo.
- Any other option does not resolve the HUGE governance concern + divides the residents of Area 7 - (I am pressing that as the slant of this survey - THAT is THE intention).
- Largest tax base.
- [REDACTED] This is a community + I'm not fond of the thought of leaving others behind.
- All given a chance to participate.
- Bigger tax base.
- Includes all of Area F.

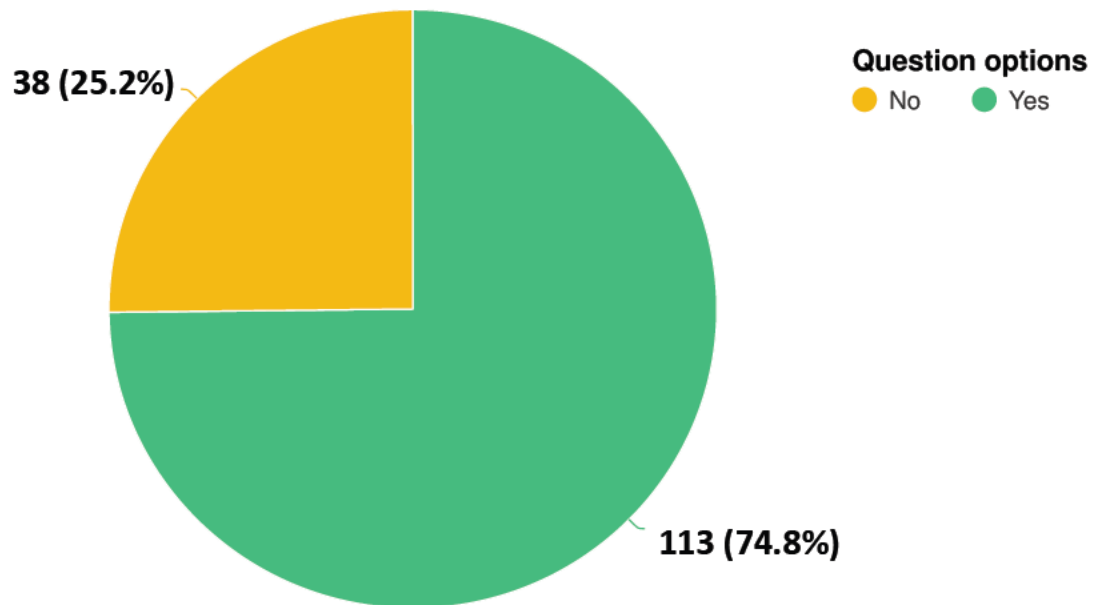
- No person/property left behind! Each of our communities/neighbourhoods share *rural values* that are quite apart from downtown or north Nanaimo. Leaving people/properties out would leave those with having to keep dealing with the escalating costs of the R.
- Area F is composed of co-operating local communities: Coombs, Errington, Hillier, Whiskey Creek, Cameron Lake.
- Area F has always been an inclusion of Coombs, Errington, Hilliers, Whiskey Creek, Cameron Lake.
- Most logical.
- Most tax base to be available.
- Inclusive of Area F as it has been for years. Would like to see more farmland - the heart of Area F - including Swayne Rd +Grafton Rd.

I don't prefer any of these options because:

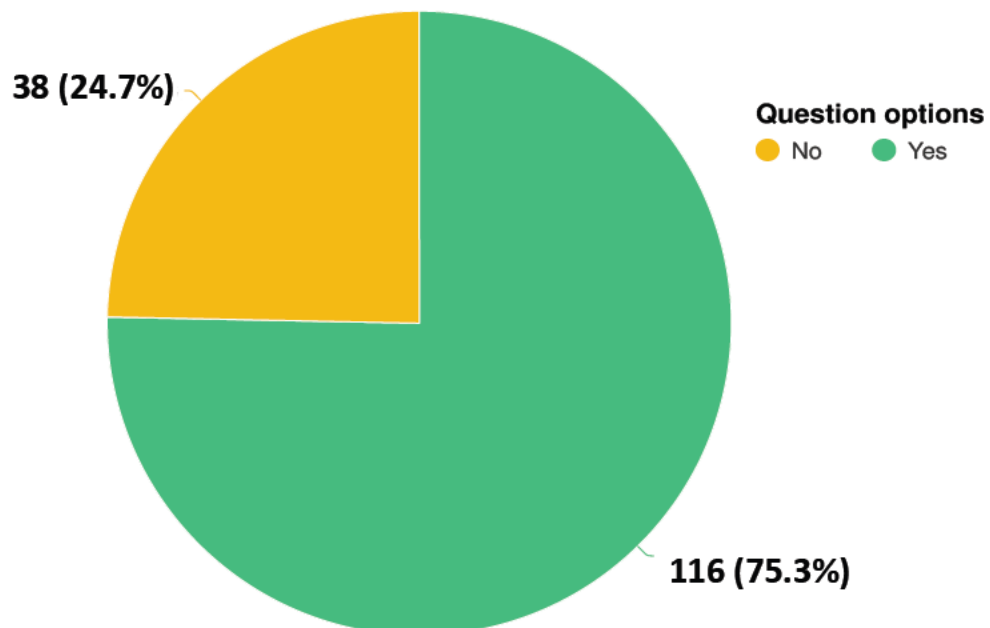
- [REDACTED] located inside Option A boundary. We are against incorporation and would if incorporation proceeds, we would not want to be included in the new municipality.
- I prefer to stay in the regional district, probably G.
- Stay in RDN.
- Not sure that the boundaries reflect the community in Meadowood.
- Detrimental to farm status.
- It doesn't affect me.
- I don't understand why the boundary needs to change. What is the benefit and what costs would there be for a new municipality?
- Do not want increased taxes with no definitive improvement in municipal bureaucracy or efficiency. We currently do not have a need or justification for becoming a municipality. The use of scare tactics, ie Parksville will take us over, is not a reason.
- No mention of Meadowood.
- Keep things as they are. This is a ridiculous proposal. Ms. Salter is bias and should be removed.
- I do not wish to see the future potential incorporation study.
- We like things as they are, status quo.
- this is not a citizen driven project.
- I believe our taxes are high enough, belonging in the RDN with a huge tax base. Smaller tax base will increase taxes. Whiskey Creek has high enough taxes with no streetlights, no sidewalks, no fire hydrants.
- Because it fails to include all of Grafton Avenue. We'd be cutting out a chunk of our community! Why? Probably decided based on postal codes? All of Grafton is part of our community, just like the entire stretch of Hwy 4 is our community.
- Smaller tax base means more taxes stay with the RDN.
- small tax base mean's more tax's stay with the RDN.
- Should be both fire protection areas.
- Should include both fire protection areas.
- Not all costs are evident for options A,B,C - Want to keep treaty lands - want to keep ALR and farm properties with tax exemptions - "New councils" will minimize tax base which means more development - No mention of alt. to ABC

- I believe all of Electoral Area F should be included in the Incorporation Study.
- No incorporation.

Q6: Is your property included in the boundary option you selected as your preferred option?
(151 answered)



Q7: Do you support seeking provincial approval for a detailed incorporation study based on one of the boundary options? (154 answered)



Q8: I would like to see the following property(s) added to the boundary & Q9: I would like to see the following property(s) removed from the boundary:

Properties to Add	Properties to Remove
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED] Evergreen Way and [REDACTED] Allsbrook Rd (mentioned multiple times) • [REDACTED] Grafton Ave • [REDACTED] Grafton Ave • [REDACTED] Grafton Ave [REDACTED] Grafton Ave and Ward Road) • Properties on both sides of Grafton to Hwy 4 • [REDACTED] Pratt Road • [REDACTED] Tintern and Longmoor • Church Road, Fisher Road, Ward Road • [REDACTED] Longmoor [REDACTED] • Slaney Rd and Gilbert Rd • [REDACTED] Palmer Rd • All properties within Grafton, Errington, Swayne, and Station Roads • Silvermeadows Farm and Swayne Rd Farm • Properties bordering the Englishman River (Allsbrook Rd south of river) • Fisher, Swayne, Coldwater, Evergreen Roads, and properties above Hwy 19 from Englishman River to French Creek • Sterling Park • All industrial and commercial properties • All farms and farm class lands, including Crown land and private managed forest land • [REDACTED] Swayne Road • Entire areas of Coombs, Errington, Hilliers, and Whiskey Creek • Cameron Lake • "Other half" of Errington & Hilliers • Suggestion to include any properties whose owners request inclusion • All of Area F (multiple calls for complete inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED] Elk Trail, Parksville BC (also mentioned as simply "Elk Trail") • Errington Hilliers area (general) • [REDACTED] Grafton Ave • Properties along Melon Road, Hilliers • Deepest parts of Errington, including Dobson Road and Englishman River Road areas • South of Morrison Creek – said to be too far removed from the core • Swayne Rd Dairy Farm • Properties that can only be accessed via Area G and H (unspecified) • Parksville/Qualicum Beach (not specific properties but suggested not be included) • Farm class properties, generally (repeated suggestion) • "All of them" – by respondents opposed to incorporation • [REDACTED]

Q10: Is there anything else you would like to share about the boundary options?

- We believe farm class properties should be removed from the boundary options and do not belong inside any future proposed municipalities.
- I do not wish to be included in any of the boundary options.

- I do not wish to be include in any boundary options.
- Why would we not be part of area G?
- Make them as large as possible to include all of Errington, Coombs, Hilliers and Whiskey Creek.
- Limit subdivision of properties and protect agricultural lands from commercial development. Protect creeks and water from industrial destruction such as car dumps and impoundment yards within 200 meters of any water ponds or creeks.
- I'd like to see the Meadowood area be included in area H or an area of its own as it does not share many easy accesses and issues as the rest of area F
- There are a lot of misinformed people regarding the costs associated with creating a municipality, therefor the study must be thorough and clearly show real data numbers. Hidden costs should not be discovered after the fact. At the end of the day most people are concerned about their pocketbook, and the services they are receiving for what is being taken from them in tax dollars. The study must show an improvement on both services and taxes, or it is unlikely incorporation would be voted in.
- No, but I feel the question regarding the policing is biased. You should include what it costs for taxpayers now because most owners do not know what 3x their cost will be. The question leads the owner to believe it would be an outrageous number. I felt that question was a scare tactic and biased towards staying in the RDN.
- Option A is the only option that makes sense. Leave the rest of us out of this crap.
- I live [REDACTED] so not within the new boundaries for area F. We will be moved to another district. So, I feel that I should not vote on the impacts of those within the new Boundaries. BUT we should have a survey on how we fit into our newly proposed new district.
- Incorporation is not the solution to fix a perceived governance imbalance with the RDN.
- All industrial properties below the Alberni Highway should be included.
- Truly the most ridiculous concept ever considered.
- The survey is somewhat biased to going ahead with municipal option. I do not support this idea based on no cost benefit, no service improvement benefit. no real reason other than political control.
- I would like the study to come up with a taxation per capita valuation on each boundary study.
- My biggest concern falls under the "better the devil you know" thought process. There are some key figures in area F that are in favour of separating from the RDN with a plan to tailor the new municipality towards their fringe thinking. If there's any chance they'll control the mayor or council positions I'll work diligently to vote no against separation. That, or I'll run for mayor myself!
- [REDACTED] the RDN keeps trying to increase their tax base. This is not the first time we have danced around this issue. The questions are focused to give the survey the answers the RDN wants. Area F was forced to have land classification done and there is a process to review each property on its own merit with the RDN as things progress in Area F. This has been working effectively until the RDN gets into this notion of re evaluating Area F again.
- I do not wish to incorporate.
- I do not think this is a necessary cost to tax payers. The boundary should remain as it is.
- I feel that Errington should be included with Parksville, as most services used are in this city.
- There is lack of information and this is not being properly shared amongst community members. Very poor way of communicating changes that affect people who live in this area. Ms Slater has a

bias agenda and is purposely holding information and is unwilling to answer questions. June 12, 2025 meeting was a bias waste of time meeting.

- Again, please leave our area as is! It works just fine now! I don't see any added value in going to incorporation and starting a municipality.
- the reasons for including all three areas is to sustain the level of services that exists and to provide additional levels for everyone,,, it is not true that the costs out weigh the benefits.
- It is better to start small with the option that has the best financial viability, and then at a later date, once established, the fledgling municipality can evaluate the feasibility of adding additional properties if the communities (such as Coombs) request this
- I hope this process is conducted with transparency and accountability. Questions are answered openly and that there is a genuine desire to find creative solutions to the needs of rural communities who have lost faith in the RDN because of the imbalance of power loaded toward Nanaimo.
- Possible expansion to Meadow view if there was a connecting road from Whiskey creek. Bridge across Qualicum River. Possible inclusion of Port Alberni area for future consideration
- Use natural boundaries rivers and roads like Hwy 19, Any pre-existing service areas.
- This study is specious at best. It caters to a marvellously cohesive and politically active group whose underlying intentions are not, in fact, community oriented, but contain an anarchic element 35 years out of date.
- Doesn't seem to affect us up here in Meadowood.

• [REDACTED] have
campgrounds included because they are occupied by full-time residents;

[REDACTED] The result is a skewed perspective of our community, as many low-income, non-property owners are left out of the statistical information collected on both the short and long-form census documents. How Corcan/Meadowood every ended up in Area F is a mystery to me, but the boundaries need to be amended – regardless of incorporation plans by our elected official. I would like to note that I am extremely uncomfortable with the elected official holding meetings outside of the RDN umbrella.

- Would like to see it cover all of F.
- I would like to see the study done * So which ever is chosen to allow expansion of municipal boundaries to be expanded to include Coombs - if this study needs to be cost effective so it gets done.
- The police cost item is a red herring - It does not impact the total property tax more than 4-6% - no big item: It is being tossed around like a bogey-man, a doom goblin.
- Get rid of corrupt current RDN - Charging too high of taxes for what our area gets + padding their own pockets + area for the future gains that serve Nanaimo only! No new office etc.
- Certainly seems to designed fragment + split the community - Area F - e. seem to be designed to ensure the best intacts of the RDN to maintain their current governance mode where our taxes are collected for projects that are to costly + ego boosting.
- Very important to keep our community together.
- Should be both fire protection areas.
- Should be both fire protection areas.

- Should include both fire protection areas.
- Keep us together - Allow for areas that we can develop as a community to support our financial base.
- Constantly the first two (A+B) Are very fractionalizing of Area &" + seems to B designed to cause needless "Angst" Among the residents. Note: It is plain to see the survey + Public Hearing presentations Have A Negative Agenda + A Significant Attempt to prevent incorporation + leave the resident with an unfair governance.
- increase funding to fire department.
- Don't understand why Nanaimo have 100 K people and have less industrial taxes - But its not a problem?
- Important to protect rural areas before Area F becomes wall to wall houses and condos (Parksville).
- I am satisfied with the "option B" Boundary parameters.
- Coombs/Hilliers is very different from Errington. Not same at all!
- ASAP deal with them.
- Continued from Number * - The reintegration of "town and country" is an important step not just for our area, but for all of Vancouver Island. In 1960, Vancouver Island produced 60% of it's food; 18 years ago, that had dropped to only 6%. Today, we now produce less than 3% of our food. This inability to feed ourselves is a dangerous trend and we need farmland included in municipalities so that it isn't some abstract concept, "out there." 15 years ago, volunteers at the Agricultural Exhibition in Nanaimo overheard a child ask its mother while staring at an animal, "Mom, what is that?" And the mother replied, "I think it's a cow." This growing disconnect from how food is created is NOT okay. One day soon, city planners need to realize that local food and local food system infrastructure isn't something to be hidden from the general public.
- included in the boundary (with the exception of Meadowood *only* if they so choose not to be included.) For this question: Yes, there is more I'd like to share about the boundary options. Area F is a very RURAL area. We share RURAL values. I encourage you to keep an open mind with our area. As you found out with the governance study prior to the boundary study, we are indeed UNIQUE. We are all within the Arrowsmith Bioregion that includes our watershed, our farmland and our ways of life. It also serves to remember that we are on the unceded territory of the Qualicum and Snaw-naw-as First Nations. While you may be an "expert" in your field, your education is not all-encompassing and will have blind spots. Area F has the capacity, ability and wherewithal to incorporate as a community with five unique neighbourhoods. (Metchosin successfully incorporated to protect its rurality from the encroaching suburban sprawl.) I ask, above all else, that you remain humble and receptive in the work that you are engaged in because after you go home, we will still be here — this is where we live, work and play.
- No incorporation.
- I'd like to see the try area north (the Inland Parkway, + all Corcan Rd be moved to the next area (Area H?) because we don't fit with area F & Meadowood - its logical to be area f.
- I want to see Errington incorporate and the we can join them (coombs).
- If Area G properties were included, I believe the RDN should "enlarge" AG to compensate.

*** note some typos have been edited for clarity, and personally identifiable information has been removed**



APPENDIX X

Frequently Asked Questions

ELECTORAL AREA F
BOUNDARY STUDY

FINAL REPORT

NEILSON
STRATEGIES

leftside partners inc.

JULY 2025
PAGE xi

Area F Boundary Study

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the focus of the Area F boundary study?

The purpose of the Boundary Study is to recommend a boundary within Electoral Area F that **could be** explored in a potential future incorporation study. This boundary study is **not** exploring the detailed impacts of incorporation – that would be done in a subsequent study, if desired by the RDN and supported by the Province of BC. However, questions about potential incorporation impacts have arisen during the course of this study; therefore, there is some high-level information about potential incorporation impacts in some of the Boundary Study materials.

How do the consultants choose which boundary to recommend to the RDN Board, and what is the process there?

In July 2025, the consulting team (Neilson Strategies and Leftside Partners) will recommend a boundary option for consideration by the RDN and Province of BC as a study area that could be used as the basis for a potential future incorporation study. The recommendation will be based on detailed analysis and technical criteria, combined with input provided by residents through the open houses and survey. The recommendation will also consider feedback from residents to the extent possible, while minimizing servicing costs and financial implications.

Why do the boundary options not encompass the whole community?

The boundaries reflect a number of technical criteria that are intended to facilitate servicing and create a tax base and population of sufficient size to sustain a potential new municipality. Some parts of Area F are left outside the boundary options due to criteria such as farm land, or private managed forest land, or servicing of the associated road networks.

Is there any way to be excluded from the study area options?

All preferences that are shared with the consultants will be considered as part of the final boundary recommendations. However, where individual requests to be within or outside a boundary are difficult to accommodate due to compromises to other criteria, they may not be reflected in the recommendation. For example, it may be difficult to exclude a property that is situated in the middle of a boundary option, and on a road that would be included as part of the final boundary.

Why are the costs of incorporation not calculated at this stage?

At this point in the process, some impacts of the proposed boundary options can be identified at a high level, such as the requirement to pay for 70% of the municipal policing costs if the municipality exceeded 5,000 population, and the impact of having to pay for the full cost of the local road network. However, until a boundary, and the associated assessment base is determined, the full implications and cost comparisons cannot be calculated. Each boundary option has different infrastructure, road lengths, assessment bases, and populations that will impact the cost of services in an incorporation scenario. If an incorporation study proceeds at a later stage, it will be based upon a specific boundary, and will undergo a detailed comparison of the existing costs and services to provide information to the community so residents can make an informed decision on whether they would like to incorporate.

Do police services change if an area incorporates?

If an area incorporates and the resulting municipality has a population of less than 5,000, policing costs (levied through the provincial police tax) would increase slightly, but generally there would be very minor impact to the taxes or police services. If, however, the population of a new municipality is more than 5,000, the municipality would become responsible for paying for 70% of the RCMP police agreement costs for the municipality, which includes the officers assigned to the municipality for cost recovery purposes, as well as a share of any integrated teams (such as the Mobile Integrated Crisis Response team), in addition to some costs that the municipality is required to pay 100% of, such as an allocation of the detachment (portion of detachment “rent” is assigned to the municipality), furniture and “civilian” administration staff assigned to support the police detachment.

In BC, of all municipalities receiving RCMP services that are over 5,000 population (including those municipalities that just exceeded 5,000 in the last Census), the lowest number of “authorized strength” (sworn officers/members assigned to a detachment) assigned to and paid by any municipality of this size is four (4). An example of the costs associated with four officers is the rural municipality of Metchosin, which exceeded 5,000 population at the last Census. The estimated cost of policing in Metchosin in 2025, which provides four authorized strength officers, is \$1,046,500 (*2024 financial statements, and 2024 – 2028 financial plan*). As a comparison, the entirety of Area F, including all property classes, contributed \$417,000 in police tax in 2024, and an average residential property (assessed at \$802,034) paid \$96 in police tax. If, in the future, an incorporation study is conducted for a part of Area F that exceeds 5,000 population (or is likely to within 7 years), the associated impacts and costs would be explored and estimates developed as part of that study.

Would road standards have to change if incorporated?

No. Road standards would not have to change if an area incorporated. The new municipality would be transferred ownership of the roads, and would therefore assume responsibility for maintaining the roads and associated ditches and drainage. Arterial highways would remain under provincial jurisdiction.

Residents of electoral areas currently contribute a provincial rural tax that goes toward maintaining the provincial roads at the current standard. However, the province does not fully recover the costs of maintaining roads from electoral area property taxes, so the amount currently paid is not reflective of the full cost of maintaining local roads. Conversely, a municipality would need to recover the full cost of maintaining roads from its tax base. For this reason, residents can expect to pay more toward the cost of roads in a municipality than in electoral areas. Due in part to the significant cost of maintaining roads, the province has provided assistance to new municipalities by continuing to maintain the roads for a transition period (in the most recent municipal incorporation, the offer to maintain roads was for a period of five years) to give the new municipality time to prepare for providing road services (acquiring staff and equipment, or securing contractor), and to give the municipality time to establish reserves during that transition period.

Why are farms excluded from municipal boundary options?

Properties that are currently assessed as Class 9 farms receive certain tax exemptions to help support farming and the viability of farms. One of the tax exemptions for Class 9 properties in electoral areas is from the provincial rural rate on the value of the residential dwelling. Once that same property is included in a municipality, the property no longer pays the provincial rural rate and instead pays the municipal residential tax rate on the value of the residential dwelling. There is no equivalent exemption from the municipal residential tax rate on dwellings located on Class 9 farms. All residential dwellings in a municipality pay the municipal residential tax rate.

A municipality can set its own Farm land Class 9 tax (mill) rate, but that rate only applies to the **farm land** (and not the value of the residential dwelling). The farm land in an electoral area receives 50% exemption from regional district services. Municipalities can create a Farm Class 9 tax rate that is 50% lower than the residential rate to provide equivalent **land** exemption, but because the farm land often represents a very low percentage of the overall property value (when there is a dwelling on the property), even providing a zero Farm Class tax rate does not fully compensate for the loss of the **dwelling** tax exemption received in electoral areas. Tax analysis was completed as part of the boundary option process, and on some of the Class 9 farm properties left outside the boundary the farm land value represents less than 2% of the farm property's overall assessment.

I own a Class 9 farm property and would like to be included within the study area, even though I recognize that I would lose some of the tax exemptions that apply to my property if it were ever incorporated. How can I share that information?

Interested residents and Class 9 property owners are encouraged to share their preferences through the survey.

As noted above, based on the financial impacts that the loss in tax exemption represents to farm class properties, they are generally left outside the boundaries as the default starting point (where possible), to avoid negatively impacting residents and creating financial barriers to farming. Some farms and farm properties may want to be included within a study area boundary, and it is hoped that those interested in that option will share their preferences as part of the public input process.

What happens to areas that are not included in a study area boundary?

a) If an incorporation study proceeds, followed by a referendum, and local electors within the study area chose to incorporate, then residents outside of the new municipality would continue to be part of Electoral Area F of the RDN. Residents would continue to be represented by the Electoral Area F Director, and RDN would continue to be their local government.

The province would work together with the Regional District to determine if any changes to the “remainder of Area F” are needed to ensure that the area continues to receive the same level of services and is not negatively impacted by the loss in any tax base. The loss in tax base is not necessarily a concern, and does not necessarily suggest that service costs will increase as a result. Regardless, the province would consider what the impact is on the remaining area, and determine if there is any need to adjust boundaries or consider consolidating areas to ensure electoral areas can continue to support the existing services. As part of an electoral area, road and police services would continue to be provided by the province.

b) If an incorporation study proceeds, followed by a referendum and the referendum is voted down, no changes would occur and the entire area would remain as Electoral Area F.

Do residents outside the study area boundary get to vote in any subsequent referendum?

No. If an incorporation study proceeds, followed by a referendum, only eligible residents and property owners within the study area boundary would have the opportunity to vote in a referendum for that area to incorporate as a municipality.

How many council members would be on a municipal council?

The *Local Government Act* provides default numbers for council sizes of municipalities, based on population and on the overall size (land area) of the municipality. Based on the options under consideration, if any of these options were to incorporate, the default would be a council with seven (7) members (Mayor and six (6) councillors). However, a community could choose to have five council members instead (Mayor and four (4) councillors).