

A referendum on municipal status for Sun Peaks

Sun Peaks
Governance
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Sun Peaks Referendum Committee

A referendum has been announced

On January 30, 2010, Sun Peaks voters will decide whether their community will become a municipality. This follows several years of study by the Sun Peaks Incorporation Study Committee, who recently requested that the Province arrange a formal referendum on the matter. The Minister of Community and Rural Development, the Hon. Bill Bennett, issued an order that such a referendum be held on Saturday, January 30, 2010.

At the time of writing, voting venues are being finalized. We'll send another newsletter in early January that explains more about the voting process (including mail-in ballots, which will be allowed). Until then, please visit www.SunPeaksGovernance.com for more information.

We're holding more public information meetings too, so please plan on attending so you can learn more and get the answers you need before you vote. This information process is being organized by the Sun Peaks Referendum Committee (see below), whose members express no opinion for or against municipal status.

Sun Peaks Referendum Committee

Member	Affiliations
Darcy Alexander	Owner; VP of Sun Peaks Resort Corporation
Colleen Hannigan	Owner; resident
Al Raine	Owner; resident

Who can vote in the referendum?

For a quick look at voting procedures, please check www.SunPeaksGovernance.com (click "who can vote"). If you need more information, please contact the Chief Election Officer, Lyle Huntley, at (250) 377-8673 or toll free at (877) 377-8673. Note that mail-in ballots will be allowed in the referendum.

Why consider municipal status?

Becoming a municipality would provide the community with various opportunities, including more autonomy, increased local accountability of decision-makers, improved local services like bylaw enforcement and building inspection, increased flexibility to set service priorities based on Sun Peaks needs, and new funding for tourism-based initiatives, for environmental sustainability, and for general purposes.

Why not be a municipality?

While a municipality *can* do more, it also has more obligations and *must* do more. The municipality would have to provide an array of local services, and finance them too. Roads, for example, would become a local responsibility (they are currently a provincial service).

Here are some FAQs about municipal status.

Governance

1. Aren't we too small to be a municipality?
No. We would be a Mountain Resort Municipality – a special type designed for ski destinations like Sun Peaks. We have more dwelling units and a bigger tax base than many BC municipalities. We have 400-500 year-round residents, and this is growing.
2. Who would run it?
An elected body of 5 (a mayor and four councillors). One councillor could be a provincial appointee to help ensure harmony between the Resort Corp's development rights and local regulations.
3. Isn't it just another layer of government?
Yes and no. The municipal layer would be new but the Provincial and Regional District roles would be reduced, and there would be no Improvement District.
4. What happens to the Improvement District?
The Improvement District would be dissolved, and its bylaws, assets and liabilities would be transferred to the municipality. The 7-person Board of Trustees would be replaced by the 5-person municipal council.

4 Ways to vote in the referendum

- In an advance poll on Wednesday, January 20th
 - In an advance poll on Saturday, January 23rd
 - In an advance poll on Wednesday, January 27th
 - On general voting day: Saturday, January 30th
 - By mail-in ballot
- Voting details will be part of our next newsletter
Contact the Chief Election Officer, Lyle Huntley, for more information at (250) 377-8673 or toll free (877) 377-8673

5. Would we still be in the Thompson-Nicola Regional District?
Yes. We would continue to participate in the TNRD's wide-area services like 911, landfill management, and regional library, but not local services like building permits, bylaw enforcement, and land use planning.

See Page 2 for the schedule of public meetings

6. How would the TNRD be affected?
The TNRD Board would expand by one director – the representative from Sun Peaks. A member of municipal council would fill this role.

Services and regulations

7. Would there be more local control over land use?
Yes. Zoning and community plan bylaws would be adopted by the Sun Peaks municipality without the involvement of officials from other areas of the TNRD (but community plan and zoning bylaws would require Provincial approval).

8. Who would be responsible for roads?
The municipality would, after 5 years of subsidy by the Province. Note: Our tax estimates are based on the full municipal cost, not the subsidized cost from the early years.

9. Would we need more fire equipment and staff?
No. Fire protection would stay the same as now, and current training and staffing levels could continue with no meaningful change.

10. Would we need to have our own police force?
No. The Province would continue to provide policing through its contract with the RCMP. The municipality could, however, offer to fund extra policing.

11. Would we have to create all the required new bylaws from scratch?
No. The municipality would inherit the existing zoning, building, and other bylaws from both the Regional District and the Improvement District.

12. What would happen to Improvement District staff (the Administrator and 3 fire dep’t employees)?
They would become staff of the municipality.

13. Who would provide water and sewer?
The private water and sewer utility company would continue to be responsible for these.

Finances

14. What grants would the municipality get?
It would get two types of grants and assistance:
- Short term assistance worth about \$700,000.
 - Ongoing grants estimated at over \$640,000 per year, including a share of hotel taxes, gas taxes, and the provincial Small Communities Grant.

15. Who would set the tax levels?
The municipal council would set each year’s budgets and taxes for municipal use. School taxes, hospital taxes, and taxes for TNRD region-side services would not be affected.

16. Would we still pay TNRD taxes, Improvement District taxes, and the provincial Rural Tax?
Yes, for TNRD region-wide taxes, but no for TNRD local services, for the Rural Tax and for Improvement District taxes (they are replaced by the municipal tax).

17. How much would roads cost?
Based on spending observed in other municipalities and on the length of roads here, the tax projections include \$242,000 per year for maintenance and about \$200,000 per year for improvements (over and above any special grants and developer funding).

Learn more at the public information meetings!

Date	Time	Location
Sat., Jan. 9 th	3-5 PM	Delta Sun Peaks Resort
Tues., Jan. 12 th	7-9 PM	Holiday Inn Express Metrotown* (in Burnaby)
Fri., Jan. 22 nd	7-9 PM	Delta Sun Peaks Resort

* 4405 Central Blvd, at Metrotown in Burnaby (near Skytrain)

18. Would my property taxes rise?
This would be up to the municipal council when it sets service levels and spending priorities. Our projection is that if a municipality were operating now, taxes on an average residential property would be \$79 (or 3%) higher than they are now. This is based on a fully-staffed, post-grant municipal budget.

19. Wouldn’t taxes jump more after the first 5 years?
The \$79 tax projection is based on full road costs and all other municipal services, not on a lower-cost, early-year budget. (Note: The “before-and-after” tax comparison is based on 2009 data.)

20. What about property taxes on businesses?
This depends on how municipal council shifts taxes between businesses and homes. Our projections are that businesses would face a 3% tax rise like homes.

21. Do these estimates allow for start-up infrastructure?
Yes. The tax estimates cover the costs of funding municipal offices and other immediate infrastructure needs that a new municipality would have to face.

22. Are there risks?
Yes. Annual grants could fall; road costs could rise. Some of the risks also exist under the current system.

Want to contact us or learn more?

- Email us from the website directly (click “Contact us”)
- Email address: askus@SunPeaksGovernance.com
- Mail to: SPRC, c/o Sun Peaks Resort Improvement District, PO Box 1002, Sun Peaks, BC V0E 5N0

**See the schedule of public information meetings above and plan to attend!
 Visit our website to learn more: www.SunPeaksGovernance.com**