

## Engagement Summary: Municipal Incorporation Process for Okanagan Falls

<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>April 23, 2026 Open House</b> in Okanagan Falls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Information session, 4:00-7:00pm</li> <li>○ 209 participants</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Community Survey</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 260 online survey responses</li> <li>○ 8 written survey responses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Common themes: Areas of Community Strength and Challenge</b>	
<b>Areas of strength</b>	<p>The community’s strengths are seen as being rooted in its small-town character, quiet lifestyle, and strong sense of belonging, with many residents valuing the close-knit, friendly atmosphere and slower pace of life. The natural environment – particularly Skaha Lake, along with local beaches, parks, trails, and surrounding landscapes – is seen as central to quality of life, supporting recreation, well-being, and overall appeal. There is also a deep attachment to the community’s identity and history as Okanagan Falls. Additionally, residents frequently describe the area as safe, stable, and low in crime, which is especially important to families and retirees.</p>
<b>Areas of challenge</b>	<p>The main challenges identified by residents in the context of the survey focused on concerns about the community’s transition to incorporation, including its readiness and capacity to respond to the complexity (and potential costs) of shifting from regional district governance to a municipal model.</p> <p>There was a sense of frustration in the provincial process raised by many survey respondents, citing a desire for more transparency – particularly linked to perceptions of the role of DRIPA and First Nations issues, and people’s concerns about potential impacts on land, governance, and local autonomy. Some wished for a revote based on limited information.</p> <p>Infrastructure deficits, especially an aging or inadequate water system, were also seen as a critical issue. Finally, residents voiced strong concern about financial sustainability, pointing to a limited tax base, affordability pressures, and the risk of tax increases needed to maintain municipal services, a trade-off that was considered by residents during the incorporation study, which looked at the benefits of incorporation (i.e. governance, local decision-making, infrastructure) against other factors.</p>
<b>Common themes: Letters Patent</b>	
<b>Boundary</b>	<p>Respondents to the survey and attendees at the open house were both looking for clearer explanations to understand exactly which lands will be included or excluded from the boundary, and how final boundaries will be set. Many participants were worried that the boundary under consideration by Cabinet may differ from what was presented during the study and 2025 vote. During the open house, participants appeared to appreciate the clarity provided by maps shown there which confirmed that all of the privately-owned parcels that were part of the study and vote would be proposed to be part of the new boundary.</p>

	<p>Feedback on the boundary also included concerns about private property rights and land title security. At the open house, it was shared that incorporation would have no impact on privately-owned property or land title security – and would bring stronger local decision-making for the community.</p> <p>Community members also voiced interest in the future of parks, foreshore areas, Crown land, and recreational spaces, with an emphasis on preserving public access and protecting the community’s recreational character.</p>
<p><b>Name</b></p>	<p>Feedback on naming showed strong, consistent support for retaining “Okanagan Falls” as the primary or sole name, which many residents view as central to the community’s identity and history.</p> <p>While some survey respondents expressed conditional openness to a dual name, many worried that it could add costs for businesses, legal documents, signage, and personal records – for example, if documents needed to be changed, alongside challenges related to pronunciation and spelling, and a fear that dual naming would create confusion for navigation, emergency services, tourism, and everyday use. In the event of a dual name, a clear desire was heard for “Okanagan Falls” to still be usable on its own for as many purposes as possible.</p> <p>While similar themes were raised during the open house, community members were appreciative of clarity that if a dual name was chosen Okanagan Falls continue to be a name residents and businesses could use for daily tasks – unless they chose otherwise. The full dual name would only be required in narrow circumstances, such as with legal contracts, and that it would not affect mailing, business names, or general use by residents.</p> <p>Some respondents suggested alternative ways of honouring Indigenous history, such as signage, education, art, or naming parks and facilities. Many residents expressed that they would have preferred to have been clear on potential naming options prior to the incorporation vote.</p>
<p><b>Services</b></p>	<p>Services-related feedback focused on a desire to maintain continuity during the transition and avoid service disruptions. Water, sewer, and utility systems were a particular focus, with concerns noted about infrastructure condition, water quality, system reliability, and potential cost increases if services are transferred. Many had questions about whether services will continue to be delivered by the RDOS or other contracted providers, with a strong preference expressed for keeping existing arrangements.</p> <p>In the Open House it was shared that development services would become a municipal responsibility and subject to the bylaws and policies of the new municipal council. The only change to development processes would be the subdivision approval, which would transfer from the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to the new municipal council. Subject to the Letters Patent, it is anticipated that most</p>

	<p>regional district services would become municipal services over the next few years. This includes, for instance, water, sewer and street lighting services.</p> <p>There was also worry raised by some respondents about whether a small municipality would have sufficient staffing, expertise, and administrative capacity to manage services independently. Service impacts and related considerations were explored during the incorporation study, and community members signaled that they felt the benefits were greater than the projected costs.</p> <p>Overall, respondents emphasized affordability and expressed a desire to avoid higher municipal taxes/impacts to cost of living, especially without seeing improvements in service.</p>
<b>Indigenous consultation</b>	<p>Feedback on Indigenous consultation included calls for greater transparency.</p> <p>Many respondents expressed that they would have preferred to have been clearer about the extent of provincial responsibilities to consult on key issues – such as boundaries, name, and land-related matters – prior to the incorporation vote. Respondents frequently questioned the basis for provincial consultation with First Nations and expressed uncertainty about how this engagement could affect issues going forward, including the authority of the new municipal council.</p> <p>Many of these concerns were shared at the open house, where community members had a chance to learn more about provincial consultation duties. It was also confirmed at the open house that a new municipal council would have full decision-making authority over municipal matters – just like any other municipal government.</p> <p>Some respondents noted that collaboration with the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB) could benefit the community, particularly through partnership opportunities and potential access to funding. At the same time, there were concerns from some about the relationship between the new Council and the OIB, and whether provincial support would be available if challenges arise.</p>
<b>Common themes: Priorities for the Future</b>	
<b>Taxes and affordability</b>	Widespread desire to keep taxes low and avoid potential new costs from incorporation. Many references to fixed incomes and skepticism about municipal overhead.
<b>Water</b>	Repeated concerns about water quality and reliability (i.e. boil water advisories, discoloration) and the need for significant infrastructure upgrades and investment.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Common focus on improving core infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, lighting, and sewer systems. Included both general upgrades and specific deficiencies.
<b>Traffic safety</b>	Concerns about dangerous intersections, traffic controls (lights, stop signs), speed management, and pedestrian safety.
<b>Economic development</b>	Strong interest in attracting businesses, supporting the local economy, and expanding tourism. Included support for short-term rentals and industrial/commercial growth.
<b>Public safety</b>	Regular interest in improved policing presence, bylaw enforcement, and crime reduction. Included desire for local RCMP access and safer community conditions.