

Study Findings

The technical report is in

This is a summary of the technical report on municipal restructuring that was recently completed. The report looks at the impacts of creating a new municipality to replace the Town of Gibsons and two neighbouring electoral areas of the regional district – Elphinstone (known as Area E) and the mainland part of West Howe Sound (Area F).

The full report presents a lot more information than we can show here (it’s about 100 pages long). You can see it several ways.

- It’s on-line at www.SCRD.bc.ca (scroll down to “Restructure Committee”)
- There are loan-out copies at the library, the Town office (474 South Fletcher Road), and the SCRCD office (1975 Field Road in Sechelt)
- You can purchase a copy at the Copy Shop.

Public information meetings

We will be holding public information meetings at the Gibsons Legion Hall (747 Gibsons Way) to present the findings, answer questions, and hear your comments. Please plan to attend!

Public information meetings
Saturday, Nov. 26 ... 11 AM - 1 PM at the Legion
Wednesday, Nov. 30 7-9 PM at the Legion
Saturday, Dec 10 ... 11 AM - 1 PM at the Legion

Who is doing this?

The study is being managed by a local volunteer committee. With a provincial grant, the committee hired Sussex Consultants Ltd. to prepare an independent report on municipal restructuring. The committee’s mandate is to assemble and present information on the subject and then decide whether or not to ask the province to hold a referendum on the question. *The committee has no authority to implement restructuring.*

No changes unless the voters approve
The voters would have to approve of creating a new municipality if things get that far. No commitment has been made about requesting a referendum.

Town of Gibsons, Elphinstone, and West Howe Sound Restructure Committee

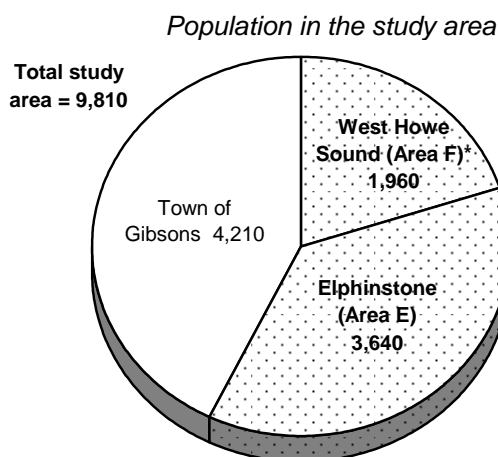
Dave Hargreaves, Chair	Donna McMahon
Joan Beck	John McNevin
Morgan Campbell	Ron Neilson
Robert Curry	Brian Sadler
Jurgen Kowalewski	Suzanne Smart
Agnes Labonte	Bruce Wallis
Ex officio members:	
Celia Fisher (SCRD director for Elphinstone)	
Barry Janyk (Mayor, Town of Gibsons)	
Bernie Mulligan (SCRD director for West Howe Sound)	

Who decides if there will be a referendum?

The province does, through the Minister of Community Services. The committee can only make a recommendation about a referendum.

What areas are involved?

The new municipality would consist of the Town of Gibsons, Elphinstone, and the mainland part of West Howe Sound (see the map on the last page). The province has indicated that Anvil, Gambier and Keats Island would not be included.



* Excluding 210 on Gambier + Keats

Restructuring would not simply be expanding Gibsons. It would be creating a new municipality altogether. Its name might not even be Gibsons (the name would be discussed if and when things get that far).

What are we now?

We have two basic types of local government now: a municipality (the Town of Gibsons) and the electoral areas. Both belong to the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD). The SCRD is the main local government body for the electoral areas; the Town participates in some broad-area SCR D functions but sets most of its own budgets, regulations and policies.

What would we be?

We would be a new district municipality. Instead of a mixed Town-electoral area system of elected officials, we would have one municipal system with a mayor and six councillors (see below). There could be a ward system where seats on council are guaranteed for each of the three areas (Gibsons, Elphinstone, and West Howe Sound).

The Town of Gibsons

The Town of Gibsons would be dissolved and its contracts, assets and liabilities transferred to the new municipality.

Who provides services now

	In the Town of Gibsons	In Elphinstone and Mainland West Howe Sound
Reg. District (SCRD) director	A member of Town council	Each area has one director
Main local gov't body	Town council	SCRD board
Property tax collection	Town	Province
Zoning bylaws	Town council	SCRD board
Official community plan	Town council	SCRD board
Subdivision approval	Town staff	Province*
Water supply	Town (some SCR D)	Mainly SCR D^^
Water distribution	Town	Mainly SCR D^^
Sewer responsibility	Town	Mainly owners**
Building permits	Town	SCR D
Road maintenance and repair	Town (but hwy is a provincial service)	Province (contractor)
Fire department	SCR D (shared with Town)	SCR D (shared with Town)
Policing	Province/RCMP	Province/RCMP
Garbage collection~	Town	SCR D
Major rec'n facilities^	Town (but SCR D helps fund the pool)	None (pool is in Gibsons)
Parks	Town	SCR D
Gibsons + Area library funding	SCR D	SCR D

SCR D = Sunshine Coast Regional District

* With a referral to the SCR D

~ Town and the SCR D use a private contractor

** SCR D runs 3 small systems

^ Residents recently voted to regionalize major rec'n facilities

^^ There are two improvement districts for water as well (Hopkins + Granthams)

The Regional District

The role of the SCR D in the electoral areas would shrink as responsibility for services like parks, animal control, building permits, zoning, and economic development shifts to the new municipality (SCR D taxes would fall accordingly). Region-wide SCR D services like 911 would not be affected at all. A member of municipal council would serve as the community's director on the SCR D board.

The province's role

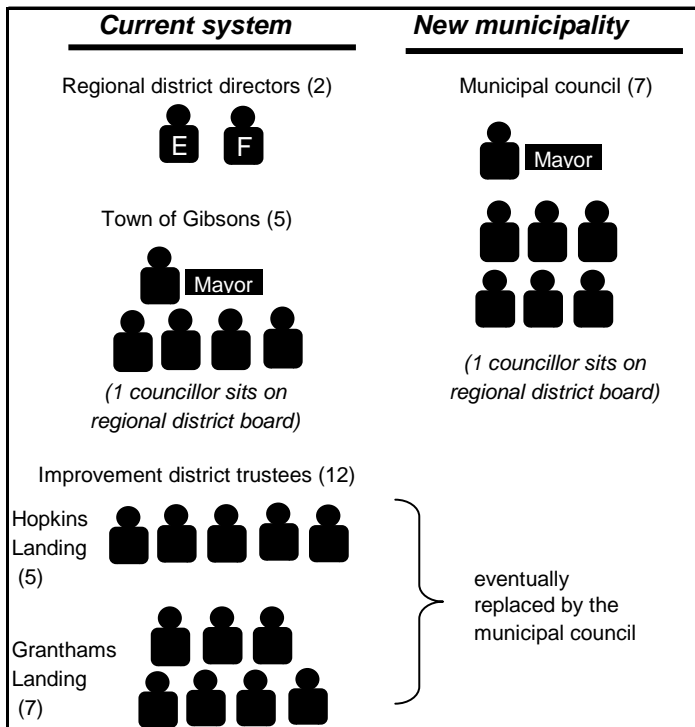
The province's role in the electoral areas would shrink, as responsibility for policing, subdivision approval, tax collection, and roads (except the highway) would shift to the new municipality. The provincial rural tax would be replaced by a municipal tax.

The improvement districts

Eventually, the two improvement districts – Hopkins Landing and Granthams Landing – would be dissolved and their assets and liabilities transferred to the new municipality (these could be protected for the benefit of only the improvement district residents). It could be arranged so that they stay on their own water systems unless a majority of them want to connect to the municipal system.

Water and sewer

Water and sewer services need not be expanded because of restructuring. Just like now, only those properties that can connect to a water or sewer system would pay for the service; properties that can't connect would not subsidize the actual users.



Why would we want this?

Creating a new municipality would consolidate the area under one local government. Individual views on the merits of this will no doubt vary.

Land use regulations

The existing zoning and community plan bylaws in the area would remain in effect. The municipal council could change them under the normal public process, just as the Town and Regional District can now. The municipality would also issue building permits and provide inspections (this is done by the Town and the SCRCD now).

The municipal budget

The new municipality's annual budget would be larger than the Town's because there would be more roads to maintain, more parks to operate, and so on. The major changes in service and service costs would include these.

- There would be a concentration of administration costs from multiple agencies and government bodies to the new municipality.
- The municipality would have to arrange for policing via an RCMP contract, though not right away. There could be 10.0-11.5 officers plus civilian staff for the municipality.
- The fire department could operate just as it does now.
- About 105 km of local roads would have to be maintained (the Town has 37 km now, and the province is responsible for the remainder). Funds would also be needed to improve and repair roads and drainage.
- The municipality would have a community planning department (like the Town and SCRCD have now).
- The running of the aquatic centre and the recently regionalized recreation service would not be affected, but the new municipality would have to maintain the current Town and SCRCD parks.
- Garbage collection could carry on just as is, through a private contractor.

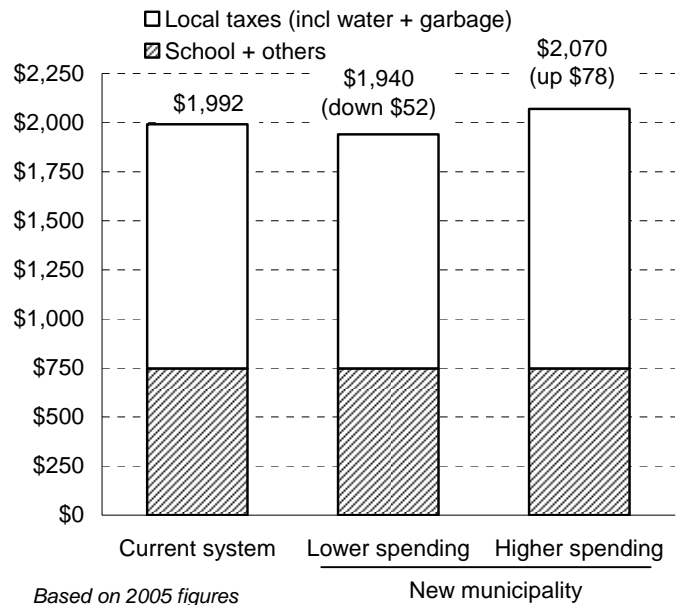
In addition to annual operations, the municipal budget would have to allow for both short-term capital infrastructure works and on-going, long term works. The taxes shown here would allow for over \$10 million in infrastructure upgrades in the first six years.

The revenues needed to support the budgets have been translated into the tax burden on a home. All homes would pay the same general municipal rate, but there could be a separate rate for Gibsons debts (paid only by Gibsons properties) and for fire protection (paid by the same properties that pay now). *The tax changes are moderate because the HSPP mill would pay municipal taxes too.*

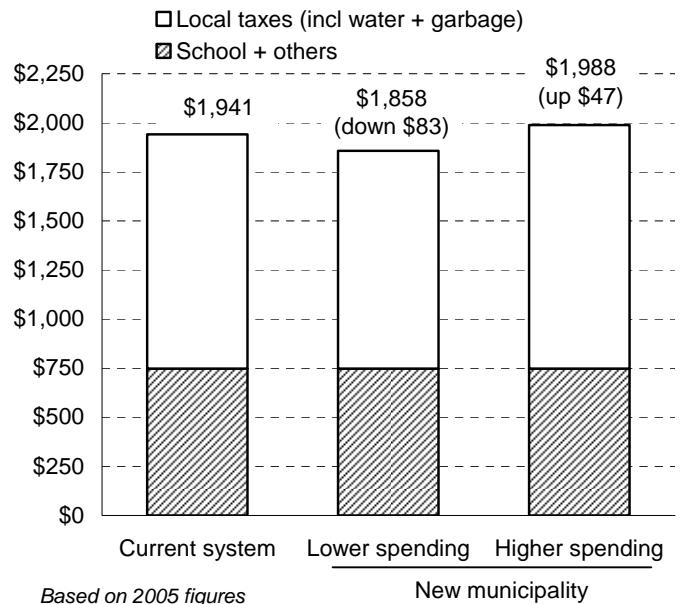
Municipal council would set spending priorities

Spending levels would be up to the elected municipal council. The budgets used in this study are based on 2005 service levels wherever possible.

Taxes on a \$250,000 home in the Town of Gibsons

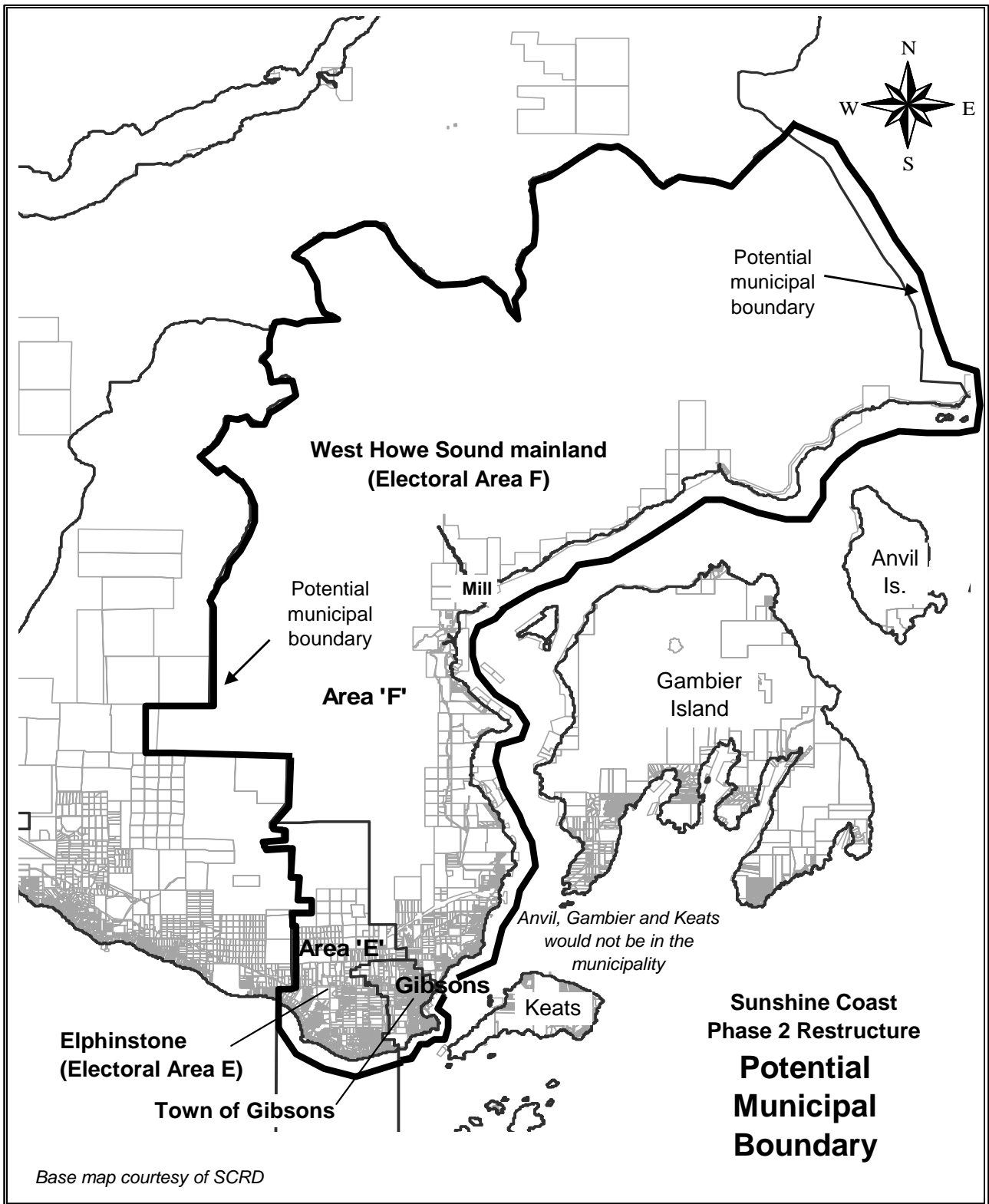


Taxes on a \$250,000 home in Elphinstone and Mainland West Howe Sound



Can't make the public information meetings?

You can mail us your comments. Please send them to:
 Sunshine Coast Restructure Committee
 c/o Sunshine Coast Regional District
 1975 Field Road, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A1



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the Gibsons Legion Hall (747 Gibsons Way):
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