

Backgrounder - Community Issues Survey: Dec 2020

This document provides some background details about Regional District of Kootenay Boundary services offered at Big White that may add context to some of the benefits and challenges that we know about in the delivery of these services. This information and these services may be of more or less benefit to you based on your own individual circumstances and how much time you spend in residence at Big White.

Environmental Services (garbage, recycling, composting):

Big White residents do not pay for garbage disposed of, as do all other RDKB residents (who pay \$3 per bag of garbage).

In the past, people have asked about curbside garbage & recycling collection. Would this be an important addition to the services already provided at Big White. An estimated 50,000 refundable bottles are put into the garbage stream annually at Big White. In 2020 we worked with Return-It to install an unstaffed Express & GO Recycling Station.

Recyclables at Big white are very high in contamination (they contain a high percentage of garbage). This negatively impacts the environment and directly increases the cost of the service to the taxpayers. We've handled this in other parts of the Regional District by going to staffed transfer stations only. In the past, this has not been supported by the community. Please consider whether not the Regional District should consider staffing the Big White Transfer Station. This would increase the cost of the service. It would also restrict access to the site to open days/hours only. This has been done in other parts of the Regional District so what are your thoughts about this at Big White?

We have partnered with the Resort in the past to provide collection of non-garbage items (e.g. furniture, appliances) during "spring cleanup". Is this a service you find useful.

Big White Fire Service

Over the years this service has expanded from being only fire protection. It includes First Responders, Road Rescue and public safety. As part of public safety the Fire Department also provide fire prevention services and complete building inspections to ensure that buildings are maintained in an appropriate manner for fire and life safety compliance to bylaws and the BC Building Code.

Security Services

Earlier community surveys have identified a number of concerns about security. Most of these lie outside of RDKB jurisdiction (e.g. RCMP). Property owners are taxed for Big White Security Service though. Most of the money is used to pay for property security service that provides regularly conducted patrols with hours changing from the winter and summer months. Concerns or issues can be advised to the security service who will then respond to investigate the complaint or call.

Land Use Planning

Development applications are assessed as part of this service to ensure that any proposed development meets the appropriate land use regulations and zoning bylaws. This includes but not limited to reviews for Development Variance applications, Development Permit applications, referrals for subdivision, parkland dedication, external referrals for Forestry and Licences of Occupation on Crown Land.

The Big White APC (Advisory Planning Commission) has an opportunity to comment on the above at their monthly meetings. The RDKB Board takes these comments into consideration when they make their decisions. The APC is composed of 6 community members put forward by the Area E Director and appointed by the RDKB Board. APCs are created under provincial legislation (Local Government Act).

In 2021 a review of the Big White OCP (Official Community Plan) will be initiated. The community has already identified a number of considerations for this review:

- Increased trail network
- Publicly owned land for park(s), community infrastructure & 3rd party services (e.g. post office)

Plumbing/Building Inspection

Inspectors apply BC Building Code and RDKB Building Bylaws to construction throughout the Regional District. The review and issuance of building permits is administered from our Regional District office in Grand Forks.

Community Grant-in-Aid

Grant-in-aid is distributed across 7 communities in the West Boundary. From 2015 to 2020 \$70,323 was distributed to non-profits at Big White out of a total of \$403,685 distributed. Grants-in-aid has been provided for the following purposes at Big White:

- Big White Mountain Community Development Association (incorporation, insurance, bookkeeping, materials, programs & activities)
- Recreation groups, Ski Patrol
- Community Policing
- Fire Department (for some costs not covered by taxation)
- Tourism Society (mosquito control efforts)
- People in Motion

Common criteria considered for supporting grant-in-aid applications are:

- Seed money for new projects
- Help in case of unexpected hardship
- Projects that build community capacity
- Projects that provide regional benefit
- Organizations with limited sources of outside funding

Noxious Weed Control

Big White community and Big White Road are assessed annually for invasive species and are treated when necessary. The Development Permit process guides new construction in the use of plants and grasses that are both fire resistant and which are native to alpine areas. Managing invasive species is important for habitat protection and economic viability of the resort.

911

The RDKB's 9-1-1 Emergency Communications service provides both Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and secondary service answer point services. PSAP call centre is responsible for answering calls to an emergency telephone number (9-1-1) for police, fire and ambulance services, where they are transferred to the requested agency. This is an essential service for the RDKB in the continued provision of our Fire Protection Services.

Emergency Preparedness (floods, fires, etc.)

In addition to base funds to maintain the RDKB department, additional funds from Emergency Management BC are received for direct costs of responding to emergencies. The Regional District has experienced major recurring fire & flood events in the last 6 years.

Work is continuous throughout the year when not responding to emergencies to work towards prevention, public education and preparedness to better respond and protect the public and communities in the event of future disasters. An example of this is the education around the 'Fire Smart Program', helping home owners to better protect their properties and be prepared for wildfire.

Economic Development

Starting in 2019, a separate Area E only Economic Development Service was established. This allows Area E to engage in activities that benefit Area E only. Each year \$12,000 from this service is allocated to support the Community Development Officer position for Big White Mountain Community Development Association. The service also contributes to funding an Economic Development Manager for Area E who has been working with organizations & businesses throughout the West Boundary.

Note that local governments are prohibited by legislation from directly benefiting businesses. There is some leeway however for providing broad business supports, like supporting some aspects of the work of a local chamber of commerce.

Although the RDKB doesn't have the capacity to directly provide economic development services to each of its jurisdictions, it can advocate, provide building space on RDKB owned properties, and partner with other public and private organizations (e.g. school district, BC Housing, Big White Resort) for shared space and services.

Please rate the importance of the following community & economic development activities to the community:

- Diversify local economy
- Support for non-profits
- Business supports (e.g. educational opportunities, acceleration services)

- Post Office
- Community Health Centre
- Community Hall/meeting space
- Library
- Financial institution
- Visitor Centre
- Child Care
- Arts & culture
- Activities for children & youth
- Activities for seniors
- Food Security issues
- Housing: long term rentals
- Housing: for staff
- Tech business space
- Support more commercial space

Noise Control

This service essentially support the provision of a Noise Control Bylaw. However, due to limited further funding and staff resources there is limited enforcement. The RDKB is creating a Bylaw Adjudication System that will provide further legal processes to be able to apply bylaw enforcement, for services such as noise control. A Bylaw Enforcement Officer would be a valid expense in this service and added cost. Currently noise disturbances are often reported to the security service personnel who respond. Each year the RDKB receives multiple complaints of disturbances from social gatherings at Big White.

Regional Parks & Trails

There is a Director position in Trails to the Boundary Society for a representative from Big White. For 6 years, there has been active participation from the reps. Efforts of the Society for Big White have focused on a physical connection to the rail trail and promotion of the rail trail & Big White as a stop for cyclists travelling the rail trail. The Society contracts a Trail Coordinator to do this work. In addition, money is being set aside annually in this service for purchase of park land at Big White.

Earlier community surveys identified Parks & Trails as an area that was lacking. Some of the additions and benefits that may be possible with additional investment and funding could be:

- Public washrooms
- Playground
- Community building (meeting space)
- Indoor recreation opportunities
- Picnic area
- Other forms of outdoor recreation opportunities (not currently provided by Big White Mtn resort)
- Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Street Lighting

This service covers the cost of electricity, maintenance & installation of new street lights. New lights are not added every year.

RDKB is only responsible for street lights on public roads (not on strata properties or Resort owned properties). This can make it complicated when malfunctions are reported by the public.

Funding for lighting along public trails could also be paid for and managed out of this service.

Boundary Integrated Watershed Service

The primary function of the Watershed Service is implementation of the goals and actions in the Kettle River Watershed Management Plan (KRWMP). This plan considers the health of the complete Kettle River and Granby River watersheds in the Boundary Region. Implementation of the plan is accomplished by:

- Communicating with the public
- Organizing and attending regular meetings with the Kettle River Watershed Advisory Council (KRWAC) and smaller working groups as required
- Liaising with industry, water suppliers, the public, the Province, and First Nations to implement the Drought Management Plan; annual drought review
- Liaising with the Okanagan Nation Alliance and member First Nations; the Okanagan Basin Water Board; the Boundary Stewards; other government and non-government organizations, and the Boundary Flood Recovery Team regarding watershed management projects and activities
- Providing input on development proposals and land use bylaws in the context of the Kettle River Watershed Management Plan and Christina Lake Watershed Management Plan
- Coordinating an occasional comprehensive review of the Kettle River Watershed Management Plan
- Seeking funding sources; applying for funds and coordinating special projects as opportunities arise
- Providing day to day oversight of consultants and contractors

Bylaw Enforcement

The RDKB hired a Bylaw Enforcement Officer in 2020. This position is funded out of Electoral Area Services and the single position is currently responsible for all bylaw enforcement throughout the RDKB and based in the head office in Trail, BC.

The current work and focus of this role includes:

- working on Land Use & Building Bylaw infractions
- establishing a legal process through the local government act to enable ticketing, adding fines for infractions