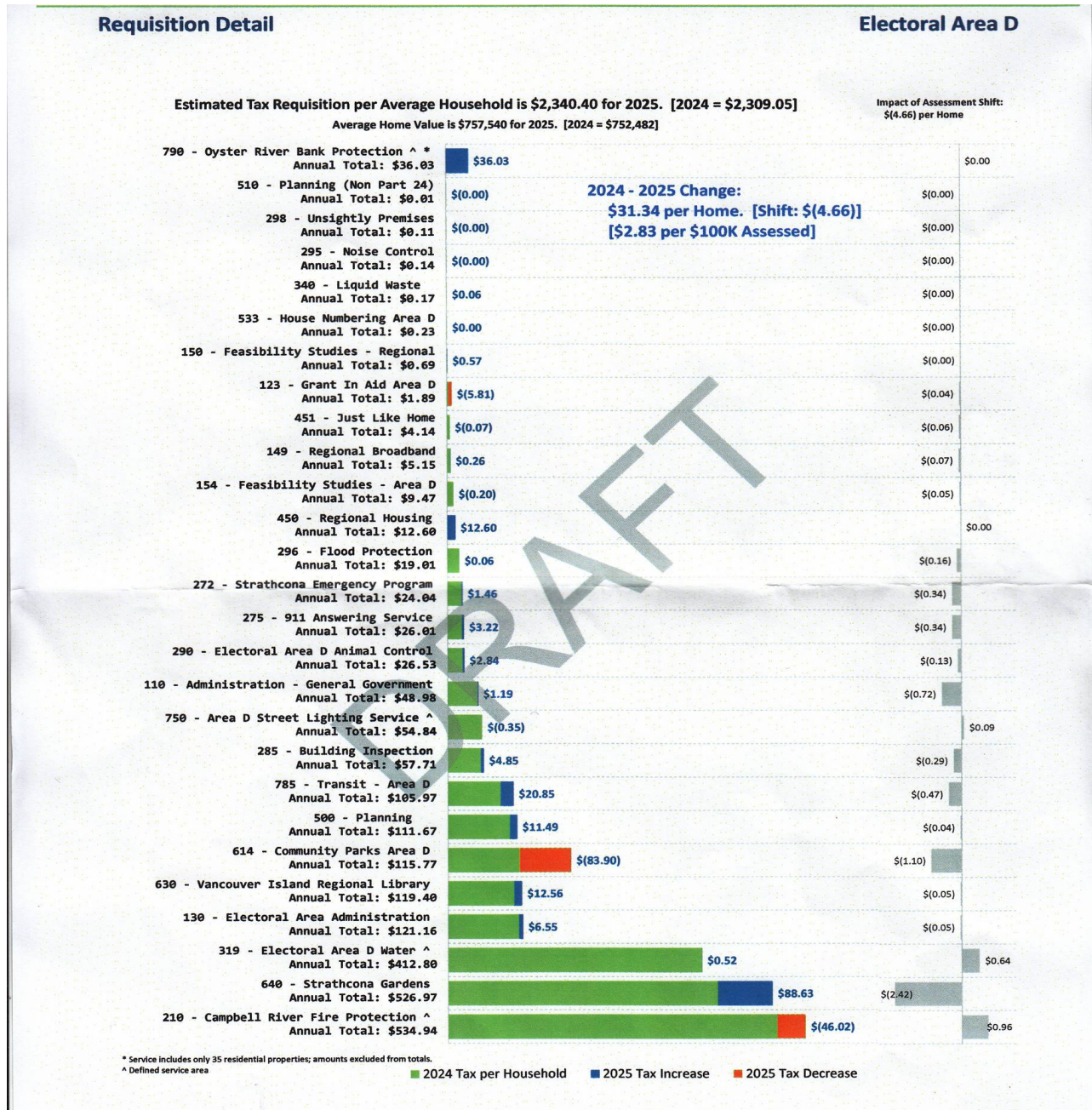


Directors Report Feb 2025

Strathcona Gardens

I have been corrected by the SRD on the tax increase for the Strathcona gardens and our taxes in general for 2025. I thought the gardens increase was based on a per 100 k property assessment when it was in fact an increase per house.



To simplify this years tax increase, the increase is an average of \$31.34 per house based on an average assessment of \$757,540 or \$2.83 increase per 100k assessment. This includes all of services in Area D plus the strathcona gardens.

I hear lots of concerns over the rising costs, and I have been equally concerned. Across the province local governments have seen that their initial quotes including contingency which they use to seek the initial approval to move a project forward are no longer valid once it goes to tender for bids. Construction costs across the province are experiencing considerable cost increases and it is creating real challenges. I fully agree it is shocking to see how much this project has increased over initial estimates.

The Strathcona Gardens and Recreate has a long history. Well over a decade has been spent with public engagement, finalizing designs and presenting to previous Strathcona Gardens Board Members the need to move forward. The new pool construction was imperative. The existing pools are no longer repairable and closing this vital Regional Asset was not an option. Equally, while I did not vote in favour of the ice rink construction in Dec 2024 due to the debt that Area D Tax payers face, I do respect that this facility is also long over due.

Since taking office I have questioned why is Area D the only Electoral Area paying into the Strathcona Gardens considering that it serves the Regional District. In **June 2023** the Board did support my motion for staff to prepare a report to explore having other Electoral Area's participate in the Strathcona Gardens Service. ***This process is still playing out and it is unknown at this time if any other Electoral Area's will be contributing to the Strathcona Gardens.***

The Strathcona Gardens is far more than just a swimming pool or an ice rink. This facility is used for rehab services across the Regional District, it has long standing contracts with Island Health that also benefit the entire Regional District. As for programs offered to the Regional District it has some of the best life guard training here on Vancouver Island, and there are countless programs for the schools in Campbell River that are also attended by other Electoral Area's. Last and not least is it has some of the best hockey programs on Vancouver Island.

So let me state again I do believe that it is time that some Electoral Area's in this Regional District need to start contributing to recreational faculties that provide services that benefit the entire Regional District.

The new construction of \$54 million for the ice rinks will need to go through the AAP process. I encourage all those that are opposed to this new construction to participate in the AAP process.

Animal Control Services

I have a brief Directors report before the Board for consideration and I have a simple motion. I would like the Boards approval to conduct a public engagement to determine what does the community feel about the current state of Animal Control in our community and what is the experience from those that have relied on this service.

There has been **significant changes** with this service since **July 2024** when **Coastal Animal Services** was **removed** by the City of Campbell River. Over the past several months while this service

transitioned back to Campbell River Bylaw Officers, I suspect that there has been some service interruptions and service delays during this transition.

As this is a City of Campbell River service that does not report to the SRD in any fashion it is time to hear what do Area D residents feel about the service. The costs of this service has seen a substantial increase in the past 2 years. In **2023** the cost to run this service was **\$44,685** and for **2025** the cost is now **\$70,008**. There has been no explanation from the City of Campbell River on these increases.

From the little that I have been able to learn about this service, Area D does **pay 20% of all costs** associated with this service. That does seem to be an unreasonable amount, however without stats from the City of Campbell River regarding call volumes to our community it has become even more important to engage with the community to determine how the community values this service .

If my motion is approved SRD staff will be reporting back to the Board with a public engagement plan.

Expect more to come on this over the next few months.

Wood Chipping Service and Bylaw 581

While this matter was before the Board at the Regional Board Meeting of Feb 19th 2025 this item has been deferred to the March Board Meeting. For those wondering about the results of the AAP process there was **206** responses in opposition to this bylaw. In order to prevent this bylaw from going forward there was a need for **339** responses in opposition to this bylaw.

If the bylaw is approved by the Board the service will start in 2026. When this service did run in the community an average of 75 tons of wood debris was chipped.