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UNIVERSITY HILL

# Connections

February 2017

## SPECIAL EDITION

### Information from Your Elected UEL Council regarding BC Government Factsheets and Feedback Form

Dear Fellow UEL Residents:

You have recently received information in the mail regarding 9 factsheets the BC Government has prepared “to provide basic information about present governance, services and financial arrangements in the UEL area” and an online feedback form the government asks you to complete.

You may be wondering what this is all about. To assist you, the Community Advisory Council is providing information in the form of a series of questions and answers.

Note that you have until 4:30 pm on Friday, February 17 to complete the feedback form.

Best regards,

Dave Forsyth

President, UEL Community Advisory Council



**DEADLINE to  
complete feedback  
form: Friday  
February 17,  
4:30pm**

# Q & A

## Questions and Answers

### 1. Why has the government prepared the factsheets and feedback form?

This is the first public action taken by the government in response to the request made by the Community Advisory Council *more than three years ago* for a study on incorporating the UEL community as a municipality. The November 2013 letter making that request is available on the UEL community website ([www.uelcommunity.com](http://www.uelcommunity.com)) under “Government Correspondence”.

### 2. What does the government hope to learn from the feedback form?

The feedback form mostly gathers information on services provided in the UEL. It appears to be designed primarily to determine whether there are any problems with the current delivery of services, presumably with a view to making specific improvements (although the government hasn't actually said this).

The form does not ask any questions about the current governance structure for the UEL. However, comments can be made on this topic in response to the open-ended questions (see question 6 on next page).

**UEL Feedback Form**

[Community Feedback Form \(English\)](#)

[Community Feedback Form \(Chinese\)](#)

Feedback Form Closes:  
February 17, 2017

**UEL Factsheets (PDFs)**

1. [UEL Present & Past](#)
2. [Service Provision](#)
3. [Community Planning & Growth](#)
4. [Police, Fire & Emergency Planning](#)
5. [Water, Sewer & Garbage Services](#)
6. [Public Schools, Parks, Libraries & Recreation](#)
7. [Roads, Transit, Cycling & Walkways](#)
8. [Taxation & Finance](#)
9. [Regulation & Enforcement](#)

Link for on-line feedback form:  
[www.uefacts.gov.bc.ca](http://www.uefacts.gov.bc.ca)

### 3. Are the factsheets accurate?

Members of the CAC and others were given an opportunity in December to review a draft of the factsheets. We sent the government 7-1/2 pages of detailed comments, identifying errors and requesting other changes to the factsheets. The CAC has not reviewed the published version of the factsheets.

### 4. Do the factsheets include information relevant to the CAC's request for an incorporation study?

The short answer is: **very little information.** The factsheets describe how the UEL is governed and administered, with a particular focus on the delivery of services. They do not describe the shortcomings with the current governance structure, shortcomings that are at the heart of the CAC's request for a governance study.

Minister Fassbender states the following in his message to the community: "Having a shared view among the community about the current nature and operation of the UEL will help ensure that any future conversations about your UEL community are grounded in a common understanding of the community as it is now."

An important ongoing conversation has to do with governance of the community. We do not see how the factsheets assist with that conversation. There is almost no connection between the factsheets and the CAC's request for an incorporation study.

### 5. What are some of the shortcomings with the current governance structure?

The primary failing of the current structure is that we, **the residents of the UEL, do not control our own local government affairs.** Those who run our affairs, both in the local UEL administration office and in the ministry headquarters in Victoria, work for the provincial government, not for us. They are often not responsive to our concerns. It can be difficult for residents to get their attention and the community has no way to require them to do anything. Although the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development has the powers of a mayor and council for our community, he or she does not meet with community representatives or the community at large to discuss the exercise of those powers or the Ministry's plans for the UEL.

6) What do you think are the **three most important issues** facing the UEL community today? (Please respond in English)

1.
2.
3.

The province views its role as delivering basic services: water, sewerage, local streets, development and building permits, and so forth. In order to have a healthy community, not just a serviced collection of single-family and multi-family homes, we need a local government that is directly accountable to UEL residents, a government that is concerned with the development of the UEL as a community, a government that can and will plan for our long-term future, a government that will regularly update our Official Community Plan and bylaws. For years, the CAC has been trying without success to have the provincial government update these documents.

Bylaw enforcement is a specific example of the shortcomings with current governance. The enforcement mechanism is impractical. It generally requires the involvement of the Attorney General's office, which can only prosecute alleged offenders in court. The UEL Administration cannot even ticket parking violations!

Our current governance structure also has significant financial disadvantages, e.g., **our capital reserve is held by the provincial government on a non-interest-bearing basis; money cannot be borrowed for capital projects; and our community is not eligible for provincial grants to municipalities.** UEL budgets and property taxes are determined by the provincial government. While the CAC is given a limited opportunity to comment on budgets, **this amounts to taxation without representation.** Moreover, the government does not publish UEL budgets and financial statements, something that municipalities are required to do.

For a more complete description of the shortcomings, see the CAC's November 2013 letter requesting an incorporation study, available on the UEL community website ([www.uelcommunity.com](http://www.uelcommunity.com)) under "Government Correspondence".

### 6. Can the feedback form be used to support the CAC's request for an incorporation study?

**Yes.** Question 6 asks you to list the three most important issues facing the UEL community today. Question 11 permits you to add further comments or suggestions about living in the UEL. If you would like to support the CAC's request for an incorporation study or to identify specific issues with the present governance structure, you can do so in your responses to these questions.

### 7. Do I need to complete the whole of the feedback form?

**No. You must respond to question 1 to say that you live in the UEL,** or otherwise your input will be ignored. If you wish to comment only on governance, you can ignore the questions about services in the UEL.

### 8. What other steps is the government taking in response to the CAC's request for an incorporation study?

In his letter of July 2016 to the CAC, Minister Fassbender held out the possibility of a governance study – not an incorporation study – "later in 2017". A governance study would include options in addition to the incorporation of the UEL as a municipality. The Minister stated that "considerations respecting the format, scope and potential outcomes of such a study are currently under review" by his Ministry staff.



**CAC members** (from left to right): Hong Chen, Mojan Nozari, Jaymie Ho, Justin LeBlanc, Pete McConnell, Dave Forsyth, Lynne Pomfret.

The CAC exists to represent the UEL community to the provincial government authorities who administer the UEL's municipal-level affairs. The CAC advises the UEL manager – who, like other staff, is a provincial employee – on matters of importance to the residents.

The CAC can only advise the UEL administration manager: it cannot require that any action be taken. Council is the only body that is charged with communicating the needs and concerns of U Hill residents to the Administration, and it endeavours to do so fairly and equitably.