

**Civic Politics Should be Civil: Reforming Responsible Conduct in British
Columbia's Local Governments**

By

Rhys Williams

B.A.(H)., Queen's University – Kingston, Ontario, 2022

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

In the School of Public Administration

©Rhys Williams, 2026

University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

We acknowledge and respect the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Xʷsepsəm/ Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Ləkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Supervisory Committee

Civic Politics Should be Civil: Reforming Responsible Conduct in British Columbia's Local

Governments

By

Rhys Williams

B.A.(H)., Queen's University – Kingston, Ontario, 2022

Supervisor: Dr. Evert Lindquist
School of Public Administration Professor, University of Victoria

Second Reader: Dr. Tamara Krawchenko
School of Public Administration Professor, University of Victoria

External Reader: Mr. Rob Lapper, K,C.
Faculty of Law Professor, University of Victoria

Executive Summary

In British Columbia (“BC”), local governments are responsible for providing good governance and stewardship to their community. Further, locally elected officials are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that enhances the well-being and interests of a community. Due to this, the responsible conduct of elected officials should be understood as a foundational component of providing effective local governance.

In recent years, cases of less than responsible conduct from elected officials have become more prevalent, disruptive, and increasingly difficult to manage for local governments in BC. Responsible conduct challenges can create division within a council or board, erode trust between elected officials, and impact the collaborative decision-making processes. In turn, internal dysfunction can impact the ability of a local government to deliver essential services and may affect public confidence in elected officials. These challenges can have broad implications and present a significant policy challenge for local governments in BC.

The purpose of this project is to address the underlying factors contributing to this challenge, examine the approaches for promoting and maintaining responsible conduct, and identify solutions to improve local governance standards.

Accordingly, the primary research questions this project intends to address are:

- *What factors contribute to misconduct in local governments, and what forms of misconduct have been evident in BC?*
- *What options are available to address the challenges surrounding the responsible conduct of locally elected officials in BC?*

Research Methods

Four methods were used to gather evidence for this project: a literature review, document review, cross-jurisdictional scan, and four cases studies.

The literature review collected academic and grey literature to establish the conceptual and thematic foundation for the project. The aim of the literature review is to determine what is known about the challenge, introduce the key trends and driving factors, and identify areas for improvement and gaps in the existing research. The literature review employs a heavy focus on the BC context for this challenge and includes academic literature to expand the scope to the broader Canadian context. Six key themes emerged through the literature review. These themes highlight: the conceptual foundations of responsible conduct and good governance, the trends in local government misconduct, the driving factors of misconduct, the key components of responsible conduct frameworks, the pathways for reform, and the key implementation barriers and gaps in the literature.

The document review provides the primary empirical assessment for the project. The document review examines BC’s responsible conduct framework through the collection and analysis of 132 local government codes of conduct from across the province. The code of conduct review

analyzes the structure of codes, looking at the core elements and the procedures involved. The document review informs two key findings on the landscape of BC's local government codes of conduct. The key findings that emerged through the document review identify the core elements used to characterize "robust" codes of conduct, and the effectiveness of codes of conduct introduced as bylaws.

The cross-jurisdictional scan provides a comparative evaluation of provincial responsible conduct frameworks across Canada. This scan reviews the unique components offered across provincial frameworks and looks at the key framework tools involved to identify the best practices and potential areas for policy improvement for BC's framework. The cross-jurisdictional scan identifies that the landscape of provincial responsible conduct frameworks is mostly consistent and that BC's framework remains significantly behind other provincial models.

The four case studies presented focus on: the City of Kamloops, the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, the City of Surrey, and the District of West Vancouver. Each case study was carefully selected to examine a distinct responsible conduct challenge to demonstrate the different ways that misconduct has emerged and been managed across the province. Together, the case studies illustrate how responsible conduct challenges can impact local governance.

Key Findings

Three key findings are presented in this project. The key findings are informed through the cross-cutting themes identified in the four lines of evidence. The first key finding highlights the challenges associated with the voluntary nature of BC's responsible conduct framework. The second key finding identifies the structural solutions to improving BC's framework through legislative amendments to make codes of conduct mandatory for all local governments. The final key finding brings attention to the external pressures and social dynamics driving the broader behavioural challenges surrounding responsible conduct and offers standardized training and educational approaches as a solution.

Policy Options and Recommendation

Three policy options are presented in this project. The first policy option offers an approach that focuses on minimal reform, maintaining the voluntary nature of BC's current responsible conduct framework, but enhances the status-quo by strengthening guidance and encouraging improved local governance standards. The second policy option presents a structured reform model that focuses on legislative amendments to make codes of conduct mandatory for all local governments, a regulation to prescribe key elements in codes, and mandatory training and education initiatives for locally elected officials. The third policy option focuses on a centralized oversight model that employs a provincial integrity commissioner's office to manage all cases of misconduct and is paired with a provincially prescribed code of conduct regulation.

This project presents five key criteria to evaluate the policy options. The criteria are directly informed through the evidence provided in the four research methods and the key findings of this project. The evaluation criteria are effectiveness, consistency and uniformity, feasibility and practicality, support for governance culture, and resilience to modern governance pressures.

Through the criteria evaluation of the policy options, this project identifies Policy Option Two as the recommended approach and presents an implementation plan to identify the key phases required for the Province of British Columbia to adopt this policy option. The recommendation is intended to help address the challenges facing BC's local governments, improve governance standards, and introduce a framework that provides the necessary mechanisms to manage cases of misconduct.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	iii
Research Methods.....	iii
Key Findings.....	iv
Policy Options and Recommendation	iv
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
The Problem	1
Research Questions and Project Objectives	2
The Organization of This Study	3
Chapter 2: Background.....	4
Local Government System	4
<i>Municipalities</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Regional Districts</i>	<i>5</i>
Legislation.....	5
<i>Community Charter</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Local Government Act</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Vancouver Charter.....</i>	<i>6</i>
Local Government Partnership Organizations.....	6
<i>The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The Local Government Management Association (LGMA).....</i>	<i>7</i>
Responsible Conduct Framework	7
<i>Education and Training</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Foundational Principles of Responsible Conduct</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Code of Conduct</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Integrity/Ethics Commissioner.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Municipal Advisor.....</i>	<i>8</i>
Summary.....	8
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	9
Methodologies.....	9
Needs Assessment.....	9
Methods.....	9
Literature Review	9
Document Review.....	10

Cross-Jurisdictional Scan	10
Case Studies	10
Other Considerations for Case Studies	12
Data Collection and Analysis	12
Strengths	13
Limitations	13
Summary	13
Chapter 4: Literature Review	14
Responsible Conduct and Good Governance	14
Trends in Local Government Misconduct	15
Driving Factors of Misconduct	16
Responsible Conduct Frameworks	17
Pathways for Reform	18
Implementation Barriers and Research Gaps	19
Summary	20
Chapter 5: BC Codes of Conduct Document Review	21
Overview	21
Code of Conduct Structure	21
<i>Application of Codes</i>	22
<i>Standards and Values</i>	22
<i>Complaint, Investigation, and Resolution Procedures</i>	23
<i>Remedies and Sanctions for Breaches of Code</i>	26
<i>Cost Reimbursement Following Investigation</i>	27
The Requirements of a Robust Code of Conduct	28
Code of Conduct Bylaws Versus Policies	30
Summary	31
Chapter 6: Cross-Jurisdictional Scan	32
Alberta – Emphasis on Local Autonomy	32
Saskatchewan – Locally led Ethics	33
Manitoba – Detailed and Regulated Standards	33
Ontario – Moving Towards Provincial Consistency	35
Quebec – Centralized and Enforced	36
Nova Scotia – Recent Reform Model	36

New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island – Emerging Atlantic Foundations	37
Summary.....	38
Chapter 7: Case Studies	40
The City of Kamloops – Governance Breakdown from the Top.....	40
<i>Key Challenges</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Resolution</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Lessons Learned</i>	<i>41</i>
The Village of Harrison Hot Springs – When Council Stops Working	42
<i>Key Challenges</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Resolution</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Lessons Learned</i>	<i>43</i>
The City of Surrey – Politics vs. Governance.....	43
<i>Key Challenges</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Resolution</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Lessons Learned</i>	<i>44</i>
The District of West Vancouver – Ethics without Enforcement	44
<i>Key Challenges</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Resolution</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Lessons Learned</i>	<i>45</i>
Summary.....	45
Chapter 8: Analysis and Discussion	46
Review of Evidence	46
<i>Literature Review.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Document Review.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Cross-Jurisdictional Scan.....</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Case Studies</i>	<i>47</i>
Key Findings.....	48
<i>A Voluntary Framework: The Bar Has Been Set Too Low.....</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Raising the Bar, Mandating Uniformity</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>The Elements of a Legislated Code of Conduct are Clear.....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Addressing Complex Modern Challenges.....</i>	<i>51</i>
Implications and Criteria for Evaluating Policy Options	53
Chapter 9: Options and Recommendation	55
Policy Options	55
1. Modified Status-Quo.....	55
2. Structured Framework with Mandatory Elements.....	56
<i>Legislative Amendments.....</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Regulation</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Education, Training and Guidance Initiatives.....</i>	<i>57</i>

3. Centralized Oversight Model	58
<i>Legislative Amendments</i>	59
<i>Regulation</i>	59
<i>Integrity Commissioner Office</i>	60
Summary Evaluation of Policy Options	60
Recommended Approach – Structured Framework with Mandatory Elements	61
Implementation Plan	61
<i>Timeline for Phased Approach</i>	62
<i>Phase One – Stakeholder Consultation</i>	62
<i>Phase Two – Legislative Amendments and Regulation Development</i>	62
<i>Phase Three – Mandatory Training and Education Initiatives</i>	62
<i>Phase Four – Implementation Period for Local Governments</i>	63
<i>Phase Five - Monitoring and Review</i>	63
Chapter 10: Conclusion	65
Chapter 11: Bibliography	66
Chapter 12: Appendices	76
Appendix 1: Full List of Municipal and Regional District Codes of Conduct Collected for Document Review	76
Appendix 2: Preliminary Analytical Framework	80

List of Tables

Table 1: Municipal Code Application in BC.....	22
Table 2: Regional District Code Application in BC.....	22
Table 3: General Conduct Sections in BC Codes.....	23
Table 4: Municipal Complaints in BC Codes.....	23
Table 5: Regional District Complaints in BC Codes.....	24
Table 6: Sanctions in BC Codes.....	27
Table 7: Cross Jurisdictional Scan Summary Table.....	39
Table 8: Criteria Evaluation of Policy Options.....	61

Chapter 1: Introduction

The responsible conduct of elected officials is a foundational component of effective local governance. In recent years, local governments in BC have experienced a rise in cases of misconduct from elected officials. Misconduct includes a wide range of examples. This can include anything from engaging in bullying and harassment of municipal staff to failing to disclose a conflict of interest.

Challenges associated with misconduct can have broad implications such as creating division, eroding trust, and impacting collaborative decision-making processes. In turn, this dysfunction can impact the ability of a local government to deliver essential services to its community and ultimately affect the public's confidence in their elected officials and government. Addressing the underlying factors contributing to these issues and identifying solutions is essential to improving effective local governance in BC.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the approaches for promoting and maintaining the responsible conduct of locally elected officials in BC. By exploring academic and grey literature on responsible conduct and good governance, legislative framework models, available BC codes of conduct, and case studies on specific BC local governments, this research seeks to identify solutions to BC's responsible conduct issues to enhance good local governance. The findings from this research aim to benefit the Province of British Columbia ("the Province") in implementing a provincial framework model that supports an environment of good governance and responsible conduct amongst the provinces locally elected officials. This project has been prepared for the Governance and Structure Branch, Local Government Division of the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

The Problem

Responsible conduct refers to how local government elected officials conduct themselves as locally elected officials, specifically in their conduct with their fellow elected officials, staff, and the public. Responsible conduct is based on the foundational principles of integrity, accountability, respect, and leadership and collaboration to enhance a local government's ability to govern its community¹. Maintaining responsible conduct has become a growing challenge for local governments in BC, forcing the Province to take measures to implement a framework to mitigate responsible conduct issues. This has been displayed throughout the Province, where issues have arisen from the conduct of the mayor, council members, or even the public, resulting in a number of different challenges. It is crucial that these factors are accounted for when considering solutions.

The greatest measure the Province has taken to tackle such issues has been to implement code of conduct legislation. A code of conduct is a document used to create a shared set of expectations for the conduct of locally elected officials (Mayors, Council Members, Board Chairs, and Board Members). BC's legislation only requires local governments to consider establishing a code of

¹ Province of British Columbia. (2025). Responsible conduct of locally elected officials. Governance and Structure Branch.

conduct, rather than require them to develop and adopt codes². The Province has taken additional steps to mitigate these issues, supporting the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Working Group on Responsible Conduct (WGRC), to provide recommendations for code of conduct content. Local governments in BC such as Vancouver³ and Surrey⁴ have introduced integrity commissioner models to act directly as the enforcement system for incidents surrounding responsible conduct. As well, there have been instances in BC where a police presence has been required to help maintain decorum in council meetings⁵. Despite efforts made by local governments and the Province, further measures need to be considered to ensure that BC's locally elected officials are conducting themselves in a manner that provides the most benefit to their communities.

Research Questions and Project Objectives

The potential for improvement through a more comprehensive responsible conduct framework has been established in other provinces across Canada. This includes provincial framework models that include mandatory codes of conduct, mandatory training, prescribed content for codes, and integrity commissioner models. With Alberta as an exception, BC is the only province without a legislative requirement for all local governments to have a code of conduct for their locally elected officials. Nova Scotia is the latest province to adopt this mandate, requiring codes of conduct for all local governments in October 2024 in an effort that "...will help ensure they follow procedural standards and behave professionally and respectfully"⁶. The potential benefit of implementing a comprehensive responsible conduct framework has been established by Canada's other provinces, however, there are some potential challenges concerning how the Province of British Columbia will respond to the increases and instability surrounding responsible conduct challenges. With this in consideration, the main questions this research will ask is:

- *What factors contribute to misconduct in local governments, and what forms of misconduct have been evident in BC?*
- *What options are available to address the challenges surrounding the responsible conduct of locally elected officials in BC?*

The scope of this project includes municipalities and regional districts in BC that may be referred to as 'local government'. With 162 municipalities and 27 regional districts, ranging from populations of under 1,000 citizens, to the City of Vancouver with a population of over 600,000, the landscape of local government in BC is very diverse. Given this, the challenges surrounding responsible conduct in BC are unique, and can vary greatly across communities.

Four methods are employed to collect evidence for this project: literature review, document review, cross-jurisdictional scan, and case studies. The literature review collects academic and

² BC Laws. (2026). Community Charter. Part 4, Div. 8, Sec. 113.1 & 113.2. Province of British Columbia.

³ City of Vancouver. (2025). Integrity Commissioner.

⁴ City of Surrey. (2023). Appointment of New Surrey Ethics Commissioner.

⁵ Charlebois, B. (2024). Surrey council restricts access over 'disruptive' pro-Palestine protests. Vancouver Sun.

⁶ Province of Nova Scotia. (2024). Province Introduces Code of Conduct for Municipal Officials. Municipal Affairs and Housing.

grey literature on the topic to establish the conceptual and thematic foundations of the project. The document review assesses codes of conduct from across BC's local governments to provide the primary empirical assessment for the project. The cross-jurisdictional scan reviews provincial responsible conduct frameworks across Canada to offer a comparative evaluation of models. The four case studies offer a distinct focus on the unique responsible conduct challenges that have occurred in BC. Together, these methods will provide a needs assessment as the primary methodology for this project. To conclude this study, three policy options will be presented, along with an implementation plan for the recommended policy approach.

In the weeks following the submission of the initial draft of this study, some important provincial updates regarding the responsible conduct of locally elected officials in BC were introduced. On April 2nd, 2026, the Province introduced Bill 17, "Housing and Municipal Affairs Statutes (Codes of Conduct) Amendment Act, 2026"⁷. Currently in the first reading stage, this proposed legislation would introduce a standardized provincial code of conduct framework that would apply to all of BC's local governments⁸. The introduction of Bill 17 demonstrates the Province's growing recognition of responsible conduct challenges in BC's local governments, reinforcing the relevance of this study. The implications of Bill 17 on this study will be briefly discussed in the conclusion chapter of this project.

The Organization of This Study

Following the introduction of this project, Chapter 2 will provide a brief background on BC's local government system, and Chapter 3 will present the methodologies used in this project, highlighting the four different methods that were used to gather evidence. Chapters 4-7 present the findings, respectively, from the literature review, a code of conduct document review, a case study section, and a cross-jurisdictional scan. Chapter 8 reviews and analyzes the findings, presenting key cross-cutting themes, refines the strategic problem, and present key criteria to evaluate policy options. Chapter 9 presents three policy options and offers an implementation plan for the recommended approach. A brief conclusion will be presented as well as a list of references and a package of appendices to complete the project.

⁷ Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. (2026). Bill 17- 2026 Housing and Municipal Affairs Statutes (Codes of Conduct) Amendment Act, 2026. King's Printer.

⁸ Province of British Columbia. (2026). Improving conduct standards for local governments. Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

Chapter 2: Background

This chapter will provide a brief background on British Columbia's local government system. This includes key background on BC's local government system, the legislative framework, key local government partner organizations, and the policy tools currently available to help foster responsible conduct. This section will help to provide readers with a strong foundation for understanding how BC's local government system relates to the research questions for this project.

Local Government System

BC's local government system is unique. It consists of two main forms of local government: municipalities and regional districts. In addition, BC's local government system contains other local authorities such as the Islands Trust and improvement districts.⁹ For the purposes of this project, "local government" will refer to municipalities and regional districts.

Municipalities

Municipalities account for 85% of BC's population, making them the most common form of local government in the province¹⁰. BC has 162 municipalities with the most recent having been incorporated in 2025¹¹. Municipalities are divided into classifications based on population size as set out in the Local Government Act. The classifications range from villages of 2500 or less people, towns between 2500 and 5000 people, cities over 5000 people, and district municipalities for large area municipalities with low population density¹². BC has municipalities ranging from villages with just over 100 people to large cities such as the City of Vancouver with a population of over 630,000¹³. BC's municipal system is unique, as its smallest villages and towns hold all the same powers and responsibilities as its largest cities.

Municipal councils are the governing bodies of municipalities. Municipal councils are composed of a mayor and an even number of councillors, with the number of councillors required being generally dependent on the size of the municipality. Municipal councils are elected in general local elections in four-year terms¹⁴. Municipal councils' main responsibilities are to develop and implement policies and bylaws. Councils are also provided fiscal responsibilities such as financial planning and budget approvals, as well as the appointment of administrative officials and representatives. These broad powers are provided in Section 8 of the Community Charter¹⁵. Section 7¹⁶ of the Community Charter establishes that the purposes of a municipality are:

- (a) providing for good government of its community,
- (b) providing for services, laws and other matters for community benefit,

⁹ UBCM. (2022). Local Government Fact Sheets - A Reference Guide to Local Government Planning & Operations. Union of British Columbia Municipalities. pp. 63-64

¹⁰ UBCM, (2022), *ibid.*, p. 82

¹¹ Province of British Columbia. (2025). Update on Okanagan Falls and the incorporation of a new municipality. Housing and Municipal Affairs.

¹² BC Laws. (2026). Local Government Act. Part 2, Div. 2, Sec. 10. Province of British Columbia.

¹³ Province of British Columbia. (2023). Municipalities in B.C. Governance and Structure Branch.

¹⁴ Province of British Columbia, (2023), *ibid.*

¹⁵ BC Laws. (2026). Community Charter. Part 2, Div. 1, Sec. 8. Province of British Columbia.

¹⁶ BC Laws. (2026). Community Charter. Part 2, Div. 1, Sec. 7. Province of British Columbia.

- (c) providing for stewardship of the public assets of its community, and
- (d) fostering the economic, social and environmental well-being of its community.

Regional Districts

The regional district system is a local governance model that is unique to BC, working as a two-function model that adapts to both rural and mid to large size urban areas. BC has 27 regional districts, with the largest being the Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD), consisting of 21 municipalities and one Treaty First Nation¹⁷. Regional districts serve two core functions: they serve as a federal model for all municipal and rural electoral areas and operate to address shared issues and responsibilities across the regional district. Regional districts provide services such as regional growth strategies and transit planning; however, they also provide services including water and wastewater services that are more efficiently delivered at the scale of the regional district. Regional districts, particularly the large rural regional districts with few and small population centres, deliver direct services to rural communities outside of municipal areas¹⁸.

Regional districts are governed by a regional district board. Regional district boards are made up of board directors and a board chair. Regional district board directors are a mixture of directly elected electoral area directors who represent the rural “unincorporated” or non-municipal areas, and representatives appointed from member municipalities or Treaty First Nations¹⁹. The regional district board chair serves as the head of the administrative organization of the regional district.

Legislation

There are two main acts that set out the primary legislative framework for the local government operations of both municipalities and regional districts in BC: the *Community Charter*²⁰ and the *Local Government Act*²¹. The City of Vancouver is governed by its own separate piece of legislation, the *Vancouver Charter*²².

Community Charter

The Community Charter was enacted in 2003 as a modern approach to governance for municipalities in BC. It derived existing municipal powers from the Local Government Act (formerly the Municipal Act) and put the powers specific to municipalities in the Community Charter. It governs the authorities of municipalities and established a broad powers approach that enabled greater autonomy for municipalities, along with increased accountability measures to the public²³. The Community Charter grants municipalities broad regulatory powers, allowing council proceedings and rules such as conflict of interest, disqualification, council procedures, powers of the mayor. It also establishes the general authorities of the municipal council to govern in its community such as regulatory powers, enforcement and financial (taxation) authorities²⁴.

¹⁷ Metro Vancouver. (2026) About Metro Vancouver. Metro Vancouver Regional District.

¹⁸ Province of British Columbia. (2025). Regional Districts in B.C. Governance and Structure Branch.

¹⁹ Province of British Columbia, (2025), *ibid*.

²⁰ BC Laws. (2026) Community Charter. Province of British Columbia.

²¹ BC Laws. (2026). Local Government Act. Province of British Columbia.

²² BC Laws. (2026). Vancouver Charter. Province of British Columbia.

²³ Duncan, G. (2001). Community Charter Content (Discussion Paper). City of Richmond.

²⁴ Province of British Columbia. (2025). Local government legislative framework. Policy, Research and Legislation Unit.

BC's responsible conduct legislation was introduced in November 2021. Bill 26 – 2021: Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act (No. 2), 2021²⁵, added Sections 113.1 and 113.2 to Part 4 – Public Participation and Council Accountability, Division 8 – Code of Conduct to the Community Charter (“Charter”). Section 113.1 requires municipal councils and regional district boards to consider establishing a code of conduct, or to consider reviewing or amending an existing code of conduct. Section 113.2 requires that councils and boards that choose not to establish or review a code of conduct must reconsider that decision before January 1st of the year of the next general local election²⁶. This legislation was introduced in an effort to improve responsible conduct standards in local governments by introducing shared conduct expectations for elected officials²⁷.

Local Government Act

The Local Government Act is the primary legislation that governs regional districts specifically, while also containing provisions that apply to both municipalities and regional districts such as the incorporation of municipalities, elections administration, qualifications for office, and land use planning authorities²⁸.

Vancouver Charter

Enacted in 1953, the Vancouver Charter is unique to the City of Vancouver. This legislation contains similar but distinct authorities to those for other municipalities under the Community Charter and Local Government Act and sets out the powers of the City of Vancouver²⁹. Sections 145.93-95 of the Vancouver Charter serve as the City's responsible conduct legislation³⁰.

Local Government Partnership Organizations

The two primary local government partner organizations in BC are the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), and the Local Government Management Association (LGMA). These partner organizations support BC's local government system by working directly with local governments, elected officials, and the Province. BC has many partner organizations that support local governance, for the purposes of this project, however, UBCM and LGMA are highlighted as they have the most direct relevance to the project.

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM)

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities is an advocacy organization that represents all of BC's local governments and member First Nations. One of UBCM's key roles in engaging in policy work. Every year, UBCM holds its convention where local governments can submit and debate resolutions advocating for policy change on key local government challenges. Since 2017, UBCM has worked closely with the Province of BC on responsible conduct policy through the Working Group on Responsible Conduct (WGRC), raising several resolutions driven by the

²⁵ BC Laws. (2021). Bill 26 – 2021: Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act (No. 2), 2021. King's Printer.

²⁶ BC Laws, (2026), *ibid.*, Sec. 113.1 & 113.2.

²⁷ Province of British Columbia. (2021). Introduction of Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act (No. 2), 2021. Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

²⁸ Province of British Columbia, (2025), *ibid.*, Local government legislative framework.

²⁹ UBCM, (2022), *ibid.*, p. 4

³⁰ BC Laws. (2026). Vancouver Charter. Part 3, Sec. 145.93-95. King's Printer.

WGRC. BC’s responsible conduct legislation was introduced following the 2021 UBCM resolution SR3, “Strengthening Responsible Conduct”³¹.

The Local Government Management Association (LGMA)

The Local Government Management Association represents and supports the management of local governments in BC by providing training and resources to local government professionals. LGMA works closely in tandem with UBCM, WGRC, and the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs, and has jointly worked to develop resources, consultation papers, and educational training courses to support BC’s local governments to foster responsible conduct and good governance³².

Responsible Conduct Framework

Along with the Community Charter’s legislation, BC’s current arsenal of responsible conduct policy tools includes education and training for locally elected officials, the foundational principles of responsible conduct, codes of conduct, integrity/ethics commissioners, and municipal advisors.

Education and Training

BC’s responsible conduct framework does not require mandatory education for local elected officials. Jointly developed by LGMA, UBCM and the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs, “Responsible Conduct Every Day Online Course”³³ is a voluntary online education course for locally elected officials in BC. Mandatory training and education for locally elected officials is a legislative requirement in six of Canada’s other provincial responsible conduct frameworks.

Foundational Principles of Responsible Conduct

Established by the WGRC, the foundational principles of responsible conduct are integrity, accountability, respect, and leadership and collaboration³⁴. These principles were enshrined in the “Principles for Codes of Conduct Regulation”³⁵ to supplement the implementation of sections 113.1 and 113.2 of the Community Charter.

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct is a written document that sets out the shared standards and expectations for the responsible conduct and ethical behaviour of elected officials that may be used by a local government to promote responsible conduct.³⁶ Aside from Alberta, BC is the only province in Canada that does not require all municipalities to implement a code of conduct.

³¹ UBCM. (2021). Strengthening Responsible Conduct. Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

³² LGMA. (2026). Responsible Conduct of Local Government Elected Officials. Local Government Management Association of British Columbia.

³³ LGMA, (2026), *ibid*.

³⁴ Province of British Columbia. (2022). Foundational Principles of Responsible Conduct. Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

³⁵ BC Laws. (2022). Principles for Codes of Conduct Regulation. King’s Printer.

³⁶ WGRC. (2022). Model Code of Conduct: Getting Started on a Code of Conduct for Your Council/Board. The Working Group on Responsible Conduct. p. 3.

Integrity/Ethics Commissioner

An integrity or ethics commissioner, also referred to as a third-party investigator, is an independent and neutral officer who is responsible for overseeing the conduct of locally elected officials. This position performs by reviewing complaints of infractions of codes of conduct by elected officials, providing advice and recommending actions for councils following a review. Integrity commissioner models can also vary significantly in structure. Across Canada, three provinces have implemented a legislated and centralized integrity commissioner model into their respective responsible conduct frameworks to improved conduct in local governments. In Provinces without centralized models, local governments have appointed their own independent integrity commissioner to carry out the same role at a local scale. In BC, two local governments have established a dedicated integrity commissioner, the City of Vancouver³⁷ and the City of Surrey³⁸. Local governments can rely on a less formalized approach, contracting a third-party investigator to carry out this role on an as-needed basis. For each different approach, the costs associated will vary. A centralized model may provide the most uniform approach; however, it will also require significantly higher administrative and operational costs for the Province than a more localized approach.

Municipal Advisor

A recent development in BC has been to appoint a municipal advisor to municipalities that are experiencing significant responsible conduct challenges. This is not a statutory position and is not contained in the Local Government Act. Municipal advisors are generally experienced senior local government administrators contracted to provide guidance and advice to dysfunctional councils. Councils may request a municipal advisor, or the province may choose to put one in place. Notable use of municipal advisors in BC has occurred in the City of Kamloops³⁹ and the Village of Lions Bay⁴⁰.

Summary

The background provided in this chapter provides context on the institutional, legislative, organizational, and framework elements necessary for understanding BC's responsible conduct challenges. These elements will be presented throughout the remainder of this project and will be foundational for interpreting the evidence and analysis, as well as assessing the policy options to strengthen BC's responsible conduct framework.

³⁷ City of Vancouver. (2025). Integrity Commissioner.

³⁸ City of Surrey. (2023). Surrey Ethics Commissioner Office.

³⁹ Braun, H. (2024). Municipal Advisor's Report. City of Kamloops.

⁴⁰ Diehl, R. (2023). Municipal Advisor's Report on the State of Governance in the Village of Lions Bay. Village of Lions Bay.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will outline the methodologies used in this research project. The primary methodology employed in this study was a needs assessment. The methods of data collection used within this needs assessment were a literature review, a document review of codes of conduct in BC, a cross-jurisdictional scan of provincial responsible conduct frameworks, and four case studies analyzing the individual conduct of BC municipalities. These approaches will provide a broad understanding of trends and issues along with a focused analysis on specific cases.

Methodologies

This project is guided by a needs assessment as the primary analytical framework and is informed through four data collection methods: literature review, document review, cross-jurisdictional scan, and case studies.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment functions as the primary analytical framework for this project to assess the gap between BC's current state and the desired state of a comprehensive and mandatory responsible conduct framework. Each of the methods employed in the project contribute to this assessment in a specific way. The literature review establishes the conceptual and thematic foundations of the project, the document review provides the primary empirical assessment for the project by evaluating available codes of conduct, The cross-jurisdictional scan comparatively situates BC's responsible conduct framework with other provincial frameworks, and the case studies demonstrate how responsible conduct challenges have emerged and been managed across local governments in BC. Together, these methods allow for a comprehensive assessment of the existing gaps to inform targeted policy development.

Methods

The methodology taken to conduct the needs assessment follows four data collection methods:

1. A literature review of the available academic and grey literature on responsible conduct in local government;
2. A document review of publicly available local government code of conduct documents in BC;
3. A cross-jurisdictional scan of available Canadian provincial responsible conduct frameworks;
4. Case studies on the City of Kamloops, the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, the City of Surrey, and the District of West Vancouver.

Literature Review

The literature review establishes the conceptual and thematic foundations of the project and provides important background on the subject to determine what is known and unknown about the research topic, introduce trends and contributing factors, examine different kinds of misconduct and interventions, and identify areas for improvement. The sources retrieved for this literature review provided information from scholarly sources, grey literature, and policy documents, examining topics like the concepts of responsible conduct and good governance, the

trends and driving factors in municipal misconduct, reform frameworks, and barriers and implementation gaps.

The sources used for the literature review were retrieved through various sources including Google, Google Scholar, and UVic's online library database. The main search terms employed were 'local government', 'municipality', 'regional district', 'responsible conduct', 'good governance', 'code of conduct', 'local governance ethics', and 'integrity commissioner'. Four grey literature sources were retrieved through a scan of the UBCM website. These sources provide a framework for understanding the baseline of the issue, approaches to date, and possible approaches for change. Three sources of grey literature were retrieved from legal seminar papers from the Young Anderson Barristers & Solicitors website. These sources provide a legal framework of precedents where locally elected officials have failed to conduct themselves in a professional manner and suggestions for what codes of conduct should contain. Three sources are journal publications from the Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance, an academic research think-tank based out of the University of Toronto. These sources provide academic literature on how good governance is measured and the functions of integrity commissioners. The remaining three sources were included based on a recommendation from the supervisor for this project.

The above sources were selected based on their relevance to the subject matter and time of publication. It was important to find academic sources on this topic, however, as responsible conduct is a relatively new and developing local governance challenge, it was expected that much of the literature would be supplied through grey literature and policy documents.

Document Review

The document review examines the current landscape of local government codes of conduct in BC. The document review was informed using primary data collection to individually collect and analyze all available codes of conduct from local governments in BC. The examination of available codes of conduct analyzed the different sections and aspects of available codes of conduct, implementation, application, areas of general conduct, the complaint and resolution process, potential remedies and sanctions following a breach, and the enforcement process after a code of conduct investigation.

Cross-Jurisdictional Scan

The cross-jurisdictional scan provides a comparative evaluation of BC's responsible conduct legislation (the *Community Charter* and the *Local Government Act*) against other provincial legislation and responsible conduct frameworks. The cross-jurisdictional scan is limited to jurisdictions that have a similar local government system as BC and will focus on Canadian provinces which have legislative frameworks focused on the conduct of locally elected officials. The cross-jurisdictional scan will identify legislative gaps and potential areas of policy improvement to improve the regulation and enforcement of responsible conduct in BC's local governments.

Case Studies

Four case studies were identified to detail the different manifestations of conduct issues in BC's local governments. The case studies were not intended to be representative of each case of

misconduct seen in the province, but rather to illustrate the different forms of misconduct seen across BC's local governments. The case studies examine the following forms of responsible conduct challenges:

- A mayor versus council conflict, where dysfunction in government was directly attributed to the mayor, creating tensions within council that required external intervention from the Province.
- A council versus council conflict, where internal division halted local government decision making and led to the resignation of five key staff, including the mayor.
- A council versus public conflict, where a controversial policy decision created public opposition and revealed internal division within council.
- A case where the individual misconduct of the mayor was overshadowed by a council's reluctance to improve governance standards.

The four selected municipalities, the City of Kamloops, the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, the City of Surrey, and the District of West Vancouver, each provide specific examples that help to provide understanding to BC's unique landscape of local government and the distinct challenges faced across the province. The case studies will support the position that BC requires improvements to its responsible conduct framework. The following provides a rationale for the selection of the four municipalities chosen by offering a small background to the different causes and factors of the challenges faced.

- *The City of Kamloops*: Kamloops has experienced major challenges in maintaining responsible conduct since the 2022 election of Mayor Reid Hamer-Jackson. Kamloops challenges are unique in the landscape of responsible conduct as they have almost exclusively been focused on the conduct of the mayor. In May 2024, a report released by provincially appointed municipal advisor, Henry Braun, highlighted 10 recommendations for the Mayor, pointing the blame towards Hamer-Jackson for the dysfunction seen in the City of Kamloops Council⁴¹.
- *The Village of Harrison Hot Springs*: Harrison has experienced significant governance challenges in recent years, notably concerning internal conflicts between council members and the mayor. In 2024, Mayor Ed Wood accused three members of Harrison's council of staging a coup, alleging that he and one other councillor were being prevented to move forward with any initiatives by the other three members of council. Months later, Mayor Wood announced his resignation due to the alleged vendetta against him⁴². Prior to this, Harrison had a provincially appointed municipal advisor present seven recommendations for council to help govern the village⁴³.
- *The City of Surrey*: Surrey has experienced notable challenges with clashes between council members and the mayor. Most notably, the City of Surrey faced significant internal conflict surrounding the decision to transition from the RCMP to the Surrey Police Service (SPS). In 2018, Surrey terminated its contract with the RCMP and began the transition to the SPS, however, in 2022, under new Mayor Brenda Locke, council

⁴¹ Braun, H. (2024). Municipal Advisor's Report. City of Kamloops.

⁴² Larsen, K. (2024). Harrison Hot Springs mayor resigns amid ongoing council acrimony. CBC News.

⁴³ Louis, A. (2024). Beleaguered B.C. village council cannot turn itself off. Grand Forks Gazette. (2024).

voted in favour of keeping the RCMP and ending the SPS⁴⁴. This decision underscored the deep divisions within Surrey's council. Additionally, Surrey is one of two municipalities in BC to appoint an Ethics Commissioner to handle code of conduct disputes.

- *The District of West Vancouver*: West Vancouver is another unique example in BC's landscape of responsible conduct challenges. West Vancouver has experienced challenges maintaining responsible conduct. This includes the mayor's suspension from the Law Society of BC⁴⁵ and a workplace bullying investigation⁴⁶. Despite this, West Vancouver's council voted in 2024 to reject the implementation of a code of conduct⁴⁷.

Together, each case study will be examined to provide a comparative understanding of how the different types of responsible conduct challenges can emerge and be managed, and ultimately how they impact local governance.

Other Considerations for Case Studies

There are a number of other jurisdictions in BC that have dealt with similar challenges to the four municipalities that were selected for this case study chapter. For example, the Village of Tahsis⁴⁸ and the Village of Lions Bay⁴⁹ have experienced governance issues in recent years surrounding internal conflict and conduct issues. These challenges, however, were relatively similar to those experienced in Harrison Hot Springs. The selection of the four case studies was given to cases that experienced distinct responsible conduct challenges, while also considering recency, public significance, and overall impact on governance. The goal of the selected cases was to highlight how responsible conduct challenges can arise from different factors, and how these issues can impact governance in different ways.

Data Collection and Analysis

A thematic approach was taken to analyze the data collected through the four research methods used in this project. Additionally, an inductive approach was employed to allow the themes to present themselves organically throughout the collection and analysis of data. Comparative analysis was used in the case studies, cross jurisdictional scan, and document review to identify key similarities and differences. Primary data collection was used to inform the document review. This consisted of individually collecting all the available local government codes of conduct in BC, systematically sorting and analyzing the contents of each document, and synthesizing the data collected to produce thematic findings. The thematic approach, paired with comparative analysis helped to build a comprehensive understanding of BC's local governance responsible conduct challenges. The themes which emerged in each chapter were then synthesized and presented in Chapter 8: Discussion and Analysis of this project.

⁴⁴ Soltau, C., Ruttie, J. (2023). Surrey Police: Here's a timeline of events. Vancouver Sun.

⁴⁵ Ruttie, J. (2024). West Vancouver Mayor Mark Sager barred from practising law for two years. Vancouver Sun.

⁴⁶ Seyd, J. (2023). West Van mayor investigated for workplace bullying. North Shore News.

⁴⁷ Seyd, J. (2024). West Vancouver council rejects code of conduct as unnecessary bureaucracy. North Shore News.

⁴⁸ McElroy, J. (2023). B.C. Councillor steals gavel from deputy mayor as meeting descends into shouting match. CBC News.

⁴⁹ McIntyre, G. (2023). This small B.C. village is split between a feuding council. It's not the only one. Vancouver Sun.

Strengths

The key strength of this research approach is the multi-method design. This approach combines analysis of scholarly and grey literature, policy documents, a comparative review of provincial frameworks, and empirical case studies. Together, this research will provide a multi-layered understanding of the issues and challenges at hand.

Limitations

The research methods used to conduct this study present certain risks that need mitigation. The table below outlines these risks and mitigation strategies:

Literature Review:

- *Risk:* The literature may present biases or gaps that could lead to an incomplete understanding of BC's landscape of responsible conduct in local government. Another limitation is that there is a limited amount of academic literature available on this topic.
- *Mitigation:* To mitigate this, a comprehensive approach will be taken, using multiple academic databases, grey literature, and policy documents to ensure a well-rounded perspective.

Document Review:

- *Risk:* The availability of municipal and regional district code of conduct documents may be limited, potentially restricting the scope of the analysis.
- *Mitigation:* To mitigate this, direct engagement will be made with local government or regional district administration to obtain code of conduct documents.

Cross-Jurisdictional Scan:

- *Risk:* There may be limited access to view certain documents pertaining to responsible conduct, potentially limiting the extent of the analysis.
- *Mitigation:* To mitigate this, direct engagement will be made to obtain any documents that are packaged in a provincial framework model.

Case Studies:

- *Risk:* The selection of specific local governments may create a case selection bias, potentially limiting the general findings from the case study.
- *Mitigation:* To mitigate this, local governments with unique challenges will be selected to ensure that the case studies represent the variation of challenges experienced by local governments in BC.

Each research method presents its own limitations; however, the multi-method approach will ensure a well-rounded and comprehensive analysis of responsible conduct challenges in BC local governments. The research will triangulate these methods by balancing theoretical, policy, and localized case perspectives to build a complete understanding of responsible conduct to strengthen findings and create informed recommendations.

Summary

This chapter has presented the methodologies that will be used to guide this project along with the four different research approaches used to collect evidence. This research will benefit from a wide range of evidence collected through multiple sources and qualitative methods.

Chapter 4: Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the existing literature surrounding the responsible conduct of elected officials. While the concepts of ‘good governance’ and ‘responsible conduct’ are relatively new and growing subjects in local governance, much of the literature surrounding this topic is provided through ‘grey literature’. Together, this literature has been derived from thirteen sources. Due to the recent surge in challenges associated with responsible conduct, seven of the sources provided were collected from grey literature sources and six from academic publications. Of the seven grey literature sources, three are from legal seminar papers published by Young Anderson Barristers & Solicitors, a law firm based in Vancouver, British Columbia, specializing in local government law⁵⁰. The remaining four grey literature sources have been prepared by local government partner organizations such as the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), the Local Government Management Association (LGMA), and specialty groups within these organizations such as the Working Group on Responsible Conduct (WGRC).

The dominant themes that emerged from the literature to build the following chapter are: the conceptual foundations of responsible conduct and good governance, trends in local government misconduct, the driving factors of misconduct, responsible conduct frameworks, pathways for reform, and implementation barriers and gaps.

Responsible Conduct and Good Governance

The opening section of this literature review will highlight the core aspects of this local governance challenge, focusing on ‘responsible conduct’ and ‘good governance’ as the foundational concepts. The literature emphasizes that responsible conduct is a foundational concept to fostering effective governance at the local level. UBCM (2021), offers that responsible conduct is concerned with how elected officials conducts themselves amongst their colleagues, staff, and the public and is grounded in the foundational principles of integrity, accountability, respect, and leadership and collaboration⁵¹. UBCM adds that responsible conduct challenges can create significant dysfunction within a local government, impacting the ability for a council to make decisions and affecting the ability for a local government to function effectively⁵². Harding & Falzon (2022) note that responsible conduct should be understood as a tool used to enhance accountability for elected officials in the same manner that accountability mechanisms are employed in other professions⁵³.

The literature promotes that good governance is a concept that applies to the overall decision-making and operation of municipal governments in Canada. Both Taylor (2016)⁵⁴ and WGRC

⁵⁰ Young-Anderson Barrister & Solicitors. (2026). Our Practice.

⁵¹ UBCM. (2021). Forging the Path to Responsible Conduct In Your Local Government. Union of British Columbia Municipalities. p. 7.

⁵² UBCM, (2021), *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵³ Harding, R., & Falzon, N. (2022). Codes of Conduct and More: Elected Officials Behaving Badly. Young Anderson Barristers & Solicitors. p. 1.

⁵⁴ Taylor, Z. (2016). Good Governance at the Local Level: Meaning and Measurement. Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance. No. 26, 2016. p. 4.

(2017b)⁵⁵, promote that good governance includes demonstrating positive community stewardship, implementing laws and services to benefit communities, and governing in an effective, efficient, ethical, accountable and transparent fashion that is respectful of the perspectives of the public and stakeholders. WGRC adds that good governance is dependent on local governments to have a clear set of conduct expectations for elected officials, access to policy tools to set out expectations and principles, and for locally elected officials to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the local government system⁵⁶. In terms of measuring good governance, Taylor notes that good governance is often largely a results-oriented process that may be guided and measured by either the quality of the political process, the outputs, or the outcomes, adding that good governance is an evolving concept and that changes in societal norms influence how these factors are measured⁵⁷.

Trends in Local Government Misconduct

The literature suggests that there is a growing sense that cases of misconduct in local government have become more common and difficult to manage. It may not necessarily be the case that there are more cases of misconduct in local government than ever before, however, the literature does suggest that responsible conduct challenges in BC have become more showcased, creating greater awareness of this emerging policy challenge in local governance. This notion is supported by Harding & McClendon (2015), noting that “elected officials’ misconduct is a serious concern and many would say anecdotally is on the rise.”⁵⁸. UBCM (2024) supports this claim, adding that UBCM membership voted on six resolutions from 2016 to 2023 that were linked to BC’s responsible conduct framework, all of which “underscored the growing sense on the part of local governments across the province that incidents of less than responsible conduct among elected officials were becoming more prevalent and intractable.”⁵⁹.

The literature also shares a growing sentiment that BC’s current responsible conduct framework is not sufficient in managing cases of misconduct. As noted by Harding & Falzon (2022), local governments have taken steps to improve accountability by introducing codes of conduct, a move which is “gaining increasing popularity over the past decade”⁶⁰. This notion is supported by Harding, MacEachern & Tikhonova (2024), who observe that local governments have become increasingly reliant on codes of conduct to address various forms of misconduct, despite noting a lack of consistent content requirements and procedural processes among codes⁶¹. With local governments becoming more dependent on codes of conduct, many of which lack consistency, UBCM (2024) notes that this underscores “the general belief that resources in the current framework are not sufficient” and that there is a “growing perception that the current

⁵⁵ WGRC. (2017b). Responsible Conduct of Local Government Elected Officials - Policy Report. Working Group on Responsible Conduct. p. 4.

⁵⁶ WGRC, (2017b), *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵⁷ Taylor, (2017), *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵⁸ Harding, R., & McClendon, E. (2015). Open Season on Integrity: Hunting for the Right Solution for BC. Young Anderson Barristers & Solicitors. p. 7.

⁵⁹ UBCM. (2024). Potential for Change. Union of British Columbia Municipalities. (2024). p. 5.

⁶⁰ Harding, R., & Falzon, N, (2022), *ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶¹ Harding, R., MacEachern, C., & Tikhonova, J. (2024). Internal Investigations: Code of Conduct and Workplace Complaints. Young Anderson Barristers & Solicitors. p. 15.

responsible conduct framework has shortcoming that prevent local governments from being able to effectively address cases of poor conduct.”⁶².

Driving Factors of Misconduct

As cases of less than responsible conduct continues to become a more prevalent local government challenge, it is crucial to understand what factors are driving the increase in cases and changes in behaviour amongst locally elected officials. WGRC (2017a) highlights four key pressures that have influenced responsible conduct challenges.

The first key pressure focuses on the pervasiveness of technology and social media⁶³. WGRC offers that increased access to information and “24/7” attention can put pressure on elected officials to react too quickly and give statements that may not be based on verified facts. This can potentially be harmful by putting elected officials in positions where they are required to defend or denounce their actions. WGRC adds that these situations can create heightened criticism and cause local governments challenges in retaining elected officials. The second key pressure situates responsible conduct within local governance through the emergence of the ‘post-truth’ era⁶⁴. In a time where increased polarization and personal beliefs can outweigh objective facts when shaping public opinion, it can become increasingly difficult for elected officials to agree on the facts required for the necessary decision-making of a community. This can complicate governance processes and contribute to interpersonal conflict within councils.

The third key pressure highlights the loss of knowledge and continuity on local government bodies and staff⁶⁵. WGRC adds that rapid turnover in local government can contribute to a loss of knowledge and expertise and limit the ability for local governments to navigate complex issues. A lack of continuity can also impact shared governance norms which can make elected officials more vulnerable to conflict and procedural missteps. Building on the third key pressure, WGRC’s final key pressure touches on a broader lack of shared understanding within local governance⁶⁶. As social norms evolve, the conventional understandings on behavioural expectations and appropriate conduct have shifted, contributing to a lack of shared understanding amongst locally elected officials. The erosion of this shared understanding can impact how relationships are developed and maintained, effectively undermining the foundations of responsible conduct.

Another factor driving misconduct is that many local governments lack the capacity to manage cases of misconduct on their own. Harding & McClendon (2015) note that “local governments are poorly equipped to deal with such situations”⁶⁷. Taylor (2016) contributes to this idea, adding that promoting good governance at the local level is dependent on whether a municipalities resources are aligned with the responsibilities required to do so. Taylor poses that “if sufficient resources are a necessary condition of good decision-making processes and the implementation

⁶² UBCM, (2024), *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶³ WGRC. (2017a). Responsible Conduct of Local Government Elected Officials - Consultation Paper. Working Group on Responsible Conduct. p 7.

⁶⁴ WGRC, (2017a), *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶⁵ WGRC, (2017a), *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶⁶ WGRC, (2017a), *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶⁷ Harding, R., & McClendon, E. (2015). Open Season on Integrity: Hunting for the Right Solution for BC. Young Anderson Barristers & Solicitors. p. 7

of outputs, their availability to Canadian municipalities is fundamentally determined by provincial governments.”⁶⁸.

Responsible Conduct Frameworks

The literature suggests that the most effective way to build a system of good governance in local government is by implementing a legislated responsible conduct framework. Levine (2009) adds that implementing an ethics regimes require the “articulation of core values and concerns, what conduct should be promoted, and what conduct prohibited. Once that is established, it becomes important to provide mechanisms to advise, educate, and enforce”⁶⁹. WGRC (2017b) provides four key components to building an effective responsible conduct framework. The first key component is to promote responsible conduct by ensuring that elected officials have clear understandings of their roles and the conduct expected of them⁷⁰. UBCM (2024) notes that many locally elected officials enter office without an extensive understanding of their “roles, responsibilities and limitations”⁷¹ within BC’s local government system. WGRC notes that this can be supported through training and education initiatives and by implementing a code of conduct⁷². The second key component focuses on repairing relationships, targeting situations where a conflict is impacting the ability of an individual to carry out their duties. This component can be supported using peer-to-peer programs or support resources⁷³. UBCM (2021) notes that “good working relations are critical to good governance”⁷⁴ and taking steps to rebuild respectful and trusting relationships denotes a commitment to “continuous improvement in fostering responsible conduct”⁷⁵.

WGRC’s third and fourth key components highlights the importance of evaluating and making determinations for code of conduct complaints and investigations through specific processes and procedures and ensuring that there are appropriate sanctions to apply following the breach of a code of conduct⁷⁶. These procedures can either be undertaken internally through the local government or using third-party oversight. Harding & McClendon (2015) note that many other Canadian jurisdictions have adopted third-party models to manage procedures and enforce sanctions, adding that removing internal investigations makes the process “much more equitable for the elected official.”⁷⁷, and offering that working relationships can become strained when council members “are asked to pass judgement on the actions of another elected official with whom they regularly work”⁷⁸. Taylor, Mutter, Lyons & Dobson (2026) recognize this, also noting that “having councillors investigate and police themselves regarding code of conduct violations and conflicts of interest is in itself a conflict of interest”⁷⁹. Harding & McClendon

⁶⁸ Taylor, (2017), *ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶⁹ Levine, G, J. (2009). *Municipal Ethics Regimes: Second Edition*. p. 33.

⁷⁰ WGRC, (2017b), *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷¹ UBCM, 2024, *ibid.*, p. 28.

⁷² WGRC, (2017b), *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷³ WGRC, (2017b), *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷⁴ UBCM, (2021), *ibid.*, p. 23.

⁷⁵ UBCM, (2021), *ibid.*, p. 42.

⁷⁶ WGRC, (2017b), *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷⁷ Harding, R., & McClendon, E., (2015), *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷⁸ Harding, R., & McClendon, E., (2015), *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷⁹ Taylor, Z., Mutter, C., Lyons, J., & Dobson, A. (2026). *Power and Purpose: The Quiet Evolution of Canadian Municipal Law*. Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance. No. 74, 2026. p. 41

(2015)⁸⁰ and Harding & Falzon (2022)⁸¹ both indicate that responsible conduct is likely to be supported using some form of third-party oversight or by the appointment of an integrity commissioner to receive code of conduct complaints, conduct investigations, provide recommendations, and enforce sanctions. Harding & Falzon (2022), do however, note that a dedicated integrity commissioner model “may not be right for every local government”⁸².

Pathways for Reform

Given what is known about responsible conduct frameworks, the literature identifies several pathways that can be taken to promote responsible conduct and improve good governance. Levine (2009) suggests that “every municipality should seriously consider creating an integrity system, in order to meet growing public demands for accountability and fair governance.”⁸³. Harding & McClendon (2015) note that “BC is uniquely positioned” to implement a framework that accounts for the pros and cons of Canada’s other provincial legislative frameworks⁸⁴. Harding, MacEachern, & Tikhonova (2024) provide three points that highlight the “weaknesses” in BC’s current framework. They highlight the “discretionary nature” of BC’s framework which allows local governments to decide not to adopt a code of conduct. This, paired with the lack of any standardized requirements has created significant inconsistency in codes of conduct, with some codes being much more robust than others. Lastly, because codes of conduct are not clearly grounded in legislation, there remains uncertainty on how codes are applied in practice surrounding aspects like the complaint procedure, investigation process, and enforcement powers⁸⁵.

The literature supports a model for BC’s legislative framework to require codes of conduct to be mandatory for all local governments, and to include prescribed elements and procedures in all codes. Harding & Falzon (2022) note that there is “no one-size-fits-all option for a code of conduct.”⁸⁶. While codes of conduct are recommended to have requirements for content and processes, local government councils and boards should aim to tailor codes of conduct to the “unique needs of their community”⁸⁷. Levine (2009) supports this idea, noting that codes of conduct are not self-implementing, and that “there must be an institutional fabric for developing the code, communicating it, interpreting it, training or education on the code, enforcing it and assessing it”⁸⁸. Harding & Falzon (2022) add that local governments implementing a code of conduct should consider the scope of who the code applies to, highlight the specific behaviours and areas of conduct that the code targets, outline the specific procedures and processes that will be used to manage complaints, list the potential remedies and sanctions to be enforced by the code, and decide whether the use of a third-party will be prescribed.⁸⁹

⁸⁰ Harding, R., & McClendon, E., (2015), *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸¹ Harding, R., & Falzon, N, (2022), *ibid.*, p. 7

⁸² Harding, R., & Falzon, N, (2022), *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸³ Levine, G, J., (2009), *ibid.*, p. 33.

⁸⁴ Harding, R., & McClendon, E., (2015), *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸⁵ Harding, R., MacEachern, C., & Tikhonova, J., (2024), *ibid.*, p.15.

⁸⁶ Harding, R., & Falzon, N, (2022), *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸⁷ Harding, R., & Falzon, N, (2022), *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸⁸ Levine, G, J., (2009), *ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁹ Harding, R., & Falzon, N, (2022), *ibid.*, pp. 4-7

The literature supports a model for BC’s framework that includes specific processes and procedures to manage code of conduct complaints, investigations, and enforcement. Harding, MacEachern, & Tikhonova (2024) support a model that pairs mandatory codes of conduct with independent third parties to manage conduct procedures for all local governments. Harding, MacEachern, & Tikhonova (2024) highlight this, noting that this model would “significantly alleviate many of the shortcomings of the current legislative framework by introducing greater consistency and administrative certainty in the enforcement of codes across the province”⁹⁰.

The literature also notes that when an informal resolution to a conflict is not possible, responsible conduct frameworks require an established set of sanctions and remedies to address cases of misconduct. In BC’s current framework, none of the sanctions available to local governments are established through legislation. Harding, MacEachern, & Tikhonova (2024) note that local governments should produce an exhaustive list of sanctions, supplemented by a list of factors that must be considered when determining if a sanction will be imposed⁹¹. UBCM (2024) adds that “sanctions that target elected official remuneration are becoming increasingly popular in local governments across Canada”⁹². Harding & Falzon (2022), however, note that if a local government chooses to apply a remuneration reduction as a sanction for a code of conduct breach, it must be applied “in a manner that is beyond reproach.”⁹³.

Implementation Barriers and Research Gaps

Perhaps the most significant pushback seen through the literature to responsible conduct frameworks, is the fear that codes of conduct may be “misused or weaponized by individuals who seek to harass or intimidate elected officials with whom they disagree.” (UBCM, 2024)⁹⁴. Taylor, et al, (2026) showcases this concern, highlighting the Province of Alberta’s move in 2025 to enact Bill 50: The Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025⁹⁵, which “included provisions that nullify all municipal codes of conduct in the province, ostensibly to prevent the ‘weaponization’ of codes when relationships among councillors break down.”⁹⁶.

Sancton (2017) documents a potential area of pushback, highlighting the potential for resistance between elected officials and accountability officers in integrity commissioner models. Sancton presents a case from the City of Toronto, in which the observations ultimately created doubts on the assumption that the presence of an integrity commissioner can “provide an authoritative mechanism for settling ethical disputes.”⁹⁷. The case reflects two important points that illustrates why it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of an integrity commissioner model. It highlights that an “integrity commissioner can do nothing without council approval”⁹⁸, and that an integrity commissioner “cannot be effective unless they have some form of statutory authority.”⁹⁹.

⁹⁰ Harding, R., MacEachern, C., & Tikhonova, J., (2024), *ibid.*, p. 16.

⁹¹ Harding, R., MacEachern, C., & Tikhonova, J., (2024), *ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹² UBCM, 2024, *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁹³ Harding, R., & Falzon, N, (2022), *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹⁴ UBCM, 2024, *ibid.*, p. 13.

⁹⁵ Government of Alberta. (2025). *Modernizing Municipal Processes*.

⁹⁶ Taylor, Z., et al., (2026), *ibid.*, p. 41.

⁹⁷ Sancton, A. (2017). *Accountability Officers and Integrity in Canadian Municipal Government*. Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance. No. 17, 2017. p. 7.

⁹⁸ Sancton, A., (2017), *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹⁹ Sancton, A., (2017), *ibid.*, p. 10.

Sancton admits that an integrity commissioner can assist in managing cases of misconduct, however, he offers that an integrity commissioner “can also create problems of their own.”¹⁰⁰.

A final potential barrier stems from the diversity of BC’s local government system, with significant variation in the size, capacity, and political context of its 162 municipalities and 27 regional districts. As noted throughout the literature, this has complicated the development of a uniform approach to promoting responsible conduct and has created a limited consensus on a provincial oversight framework that is appropriate for managing the specific needs of all of BC’s local governments.

Summary

A scan of the literature has reviewed the conceptual foundations of responsible conduct and good governance, BC’s trends in municipal misconduct, the potential factors driving cases of misconduct, the key components of responsible conduct frameworks, BC’s pathway for improving its responsible conduct framework, and the potential implementation barriers, pushbacks, and research gaps. The literature review has shown that there is a number of potential variables impacting the responsible conduct of BC’s locally elected officials and has provided that there are solutions available for the province to consider moving forward. The literature also points to the need for further research and policy evaluation to improve our understanding on the operations of responsible conduct frameworks and how they impact local governance, and how they may be strengthened to support good governance in BC. The following chapter will review BC’s responsible conduct framework through a document review, specifically analyzing local government codes of conduct.

¹⁰⁰ Sancton, A., (2017), *ibid.*, p. 10.

Chapter 5: BC Codes of Conduct Document Review

This chapter examines BC’s responsible conduct framework, looking at the current landscape of local government codes of conduct (“codes”) to develop an understanding on how codes of conduct work, and what key aspects and processes combine to make a code of conduct ‘robust’. For the purposes of this project, the term ‘robust’ refers to a code of conduct that includes all the necessary elements to establish standards for the respectful conduct and ethical behaviour of elected officials and establishes the proper processes and procedures for the investigation and enforcement for contraventions of these standards.

This chapter is informed through a document review of municipal and regional district codes of conduct in BC. The document review collected 132 codes from across the province. The analysis of the codes collected includes consideration of the different aspects and sections in a code, implementation dates, application, areas of general conduct, the complaint and resolution process (i.e. how a complaint is dealt with), potential remedies and sanctions following a breach, and the enforcement process following a code of conduct investigation. This chapter includes tables to best illustrate the variation in codes of conduct from local governments. This chapter also includes various sections pulled directly from available codes of conduct to highlight the different processes used and the lack of consistency in codes.

Two findings emerged from this chapter: the key aspects that build the criteria for a code of conduct to be considered robust, and the effectiveness of codes of conduct introduced as bylaws versus policies.

Overview

Through the document review, 132 local government codes were collected (110 municipal codes and 22 regional district codes). Seventy percent of all local governments in BC had a code of conduct readily available to the public as of March 2025 (110 of 162 (68%) municipalities and 22 of 27 (81%) regional districts).

BC’s responsible conduct framework is grounded in the legislation of the Community Charter (“Charter”). Highlighted in Chapter 2 of this project, Legislative amendments in 2021 added sections 113.1 and 113.2 to the Charter, requiring all of BC’s local governments to consider establishing a code of conduct¹⁰¹. Ninety-two of the 132 codes collected, (70%) were established, amended, or reviewed since sections 113.1 and 113.2 were added to the Charter

In BC’s current landscape of codes, some codes are enacted by bylaw while others are a local government policy. The Charter does not specify whether codes must be done by bylaw. Of the codes examined 27 (20.5%) are adopted by bylaw while 105 (79.5%) are in the form of a local government policy.

Code of Conduct Structure

This section of the document review looks at the overall structure of codes of conduct, the specific areas of conduct included, and the processes and procedures involved. Specifically, this

¹⁰¹ BC Laws. (2026). Community Charter. Part 4, Div. 8, Sec. 113.1 & 113.2. King’s Printer.

section will review the following: application of codes, standards and values, general conduct sections in codes, complaint, investigation, and resolution procedures, remedies and sanctions, and cost reimbursement.

Application of Codes

While codes always apply to elected officials, typically the code will state the different local government staff to whom the code applies in the scope or application at the start of a code. Most codes only apply to council/board members; however, the application of codes can range anywhere from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to staff and volunteers. Table 1 and Table 2 highlight the variety of application for municipal and regional district codes.

Table 1: Municipal Code Application in BC	Total:	Percentage Split:
Council Members	75/110	68%
Council and Committee Members	15/110	14%
Council Members and Appointees	5/110	4.5%
Council and Advisory Board Members	3/110	2.7%
Council Members and CAO	3/110	2.7%
Council Members and Staff	3/110	2.7%
Council, Committee, and Commission Members	2/110	1.8%
Council, Contractors, Committee Members, and Staff	1/110	< 1%
Council, Advisory Board Members, and Staff	1/110	< 1%
Council, Committees, Commissions, and Staff	1/110	< 1%
Council, Committee, Board, and Commission Members	1/110	< 1%

Table 2: Regional District Code Application in BC	Total:	Percentage Split:
Board Members	16/22	73%
Board, Committee, and Commission Members	3/22	14%
Board Members and Staff	2/22	9%
Board Members and CAO	1/22	5%

Standards and Values

In October 2022, the Working Group on Responsible Conduct (WGRC) updated the Model Code of Conduct¹⁰² (‘the model’). The model is a guide that many local governments in BC have used for their own codes. It includes key provisions such as the Foundational Principles of Responsible Conduct (Integrity, Respect, Accountability, and Leadership and Collaboration) (“foundational principles”). The model also includes a section on Standards of Conduct for elected officials. WGRC’s Standards of Conduct includes a section that reflects responsible conduct for each of the four foundational principles.

Of the 132 codes collected, 96 codes (73%) included a section on the foundational principles. Out of those 96 codes, 41 codes (43%) included a section that outlined the standards of conduct for council members. Some codes may not include a full section outlining the foundational principles but may reference them in some capacity in the code.

¹⁰² WGRC. (2022). Model Code of Conduct: Getting Started on a Code of Conduct for Your Council/Board. The Working Group on Responsible Conduct.

General Conduct Sections in Codes

Codes include sections that outline general areas of conduct for council/board members. These sections are useful in addressing matters of importance that may require specific attention, often highlighting the communications and interactions of council/board members with the staff and the public. Some codes may not include general conduct sections and instead refer to provincial legislation or another local government policy. The most frequently included conduct sections are included in table 3.

Table 3: General Conduct Sections in BC Codes	Total:	Percentage of Use:
Conflict of Interest	100/132	76%
Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits	89/132	67%
Interactions with Staff	62/132	47%
Interactions with the Public & Media	60/132	45%
Collection and Handling of Information	55/132	42%
Use of Social Media	54/132	41%
Use of Public Resources	46/132	35%
Improper use of Influence	23/132	17%

Complaint, Investigation, and Resolution Procedures

Codes may include a section on how to submit conduct complaints and the methods used for resolution. Ninety-seven (73%) codes included some form of resolution procedure for code of conduct related complaints. More specifically, 79 of 110 (72%) municipalities and 18 of 22 (82%) regional districts included procedures for resolving complaints.

The complaint section also specifies who can make complaints under the code. Many codes only permit council/board members the right to file complaints, however, some codes extend the right to file a complaint to local government staff and members of the public. Complaints are typically submitted to either the Mayor or the CAO. In cases where the Mayor or CAO are the complainant or are involved or are the subject of a complaint, complaints are to be submitted to the Corporate Officer (CO). Table 4 and Table 5 highlight who can file a code of conduct complaint in municipalities and regional districts.

Table 4: Municipal Complaints in BC Codes	Total:	Percentage Split:
Council Members	29/79	37%
Council Members and Staff	15/79	19%
Council Members, Committee Members, and Staff	13/79	16.5%
Any Person (Members of the Public)	9/79	11%
Council Members, Advisory Board Members, and Staff	5/79	6%
Council Members and Committee Members	4/79	5%
Council Members, Committee Members, Staff and Volunteers	3/79	4%
Council Members, Advisory Board Members, Staff and Volunteers	1/79	1.3%
Council and Advisory Board Members	1/79	1.3%
Council Members and CAO	1/79	1.3%

Table 5: Regional District Complaints in BC Codes	Total:	Percentage Split:
Board Members	6/18	33%
Board Members and Staff	3/18	17%
Board Members, Committee Members, Commission Members, and Staff	3/18	17%
Any Person (Members of the Public)	2/18	11%
Board Members, Advisory Board Members, and Staff	1/18	5.5%
Board Members, Committee Members, and Staff	1/18	5.5%
Board Members, Associate Members, Staff, Volunteers, and Corporate Officer	1/18	5.5%
Board Members, Staff, and Volunteers	1/18	5.5%

In the 97 codes that include resolution processes there are three forms of complaint resolution processes seen including informal and formal resolution processes, and involvement of a third-party investigator.

- Sixty-two of the 97 codes (64%) include some form of informal resolution process.
- Seventy-nine of the 97 codes (81%) include some form of formal resolution process.
- Sixty-two of 97 codes (64%) include some form of third-party involvement for resolving complaints.

The above procedures are described as having “some form” of the process because complaint resolution processes in codes can range from basic to robust. Codes that include a complaint resolution process may include all of the above resolution procedures, some, or none.

Codes that do not include a resolution process for complaints are instead intended to be “self-enforcing” through an understanding of the principles of the code. For example, the Village of Sayward’s Code of Conduct Bylaw¹⁰³ notes:

“The Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of Council with respect to the standards of conduct for Council and is intended to be self-enforcing through understanding and acceptance of the principles and values from which the Code was derived.”

Some codes may only include a simple formal resolution process (i.e. there is no informal resolution process outlined and no third-party involvement). For example, the Village of Telkwa’s Council Code of Conduct Policy¹⁰⁴ uses a process that focuses on the basics of procedural and administrative fairness where a council member is provided the opportunity to respond to the complaint before any sanctions are applied by council. This process is included below:

“To ensure procedural fairness, a Member who is accused of violating any provisions of this Code shall have a minimum of two weeks... to prepare his or her response to these allegations. Specifically, before considering a sanction, Council must ensure that a Member is provided with:

- a) A copy of a written report setting out the alleged breach of this Code, and possible sanctions that may be considered against him or her;*

¹⁰³ Village of Sayward. (2023). Bylaw No. 442, Village of Sayward Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2018.

¹⁰⁴ Village of Telkwa. (2022). Council Code of Conduct Policy #2022-017.

- b) *A minimum of two weeks... to prepare a response against any allegations and possible sanctions; and*
- c) *An opportunity to make representations and be heard by Council.”*

The City of Langley’s Council Code of Conduct Bylaw¹⁰⁵ includes a unique complaint procedure that includes a process for resolving informal complaints, formal complaints, but no third-party investigation. Formal complaints are submitted to the “instructing individual”. In the event of a formal complaint, the mayor, current deputy mayor, or alternate deputy mayor are tasked with fulfilling the responsibilities of the instructing individual. Upon receipt of a complaint, in consultation with the CAO, the instructing individual will conduct a preliminary assessment of the complaint and direct the CAO to conduct a formal investigation.

Codes with robust complaint resolution processes will include informal resolution, formal resolution, and third-party involvement processes. In addition, complaints undergo a preliminary assessment upon receipt of a complaint (in some cases conducted by the Mayor, CAO, or CO). The preliminary assessment may assess whether the complaint has been made in respect to a breach of the code, whether the complaint is frivolous or vexatious, or whether there are insufficient grounds to conclude that a violation of the code has occurred. If the Mayor and CAO determine that a complaint cannot be resolved without a third-party investigation, the complaint is directed to an independent third-party. In other cases, upon receipt of a complaint, a third-party investigator is appointed to conduct the preliminary assessment by the CAO.

Third-party investigators are typically appointed directly by the CAO. In some codes, council may have the responsibility to select the third-party investigator and must do so through a unanimous vote. In other cases, codes allow the complainant and respondent of the complaint to mutually agree on a third-party investigator. This process is used in the District of Lake Country’s Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy¹⁰⁶, shown below:

“Both the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) shall each have the right to recommend three (3) names as a Third-Party Investigator, from which lists a Third-Party Investigator may be mutually agreed upon by both parties. If the parties cannot agree on the choice of investigator, a single nominee of the Complainant(s) and the Respondent(s) shall jointly select a suitable Third-Party Investigator. If this nominee cannot select the Third-Party Inspector, the District’s Solicitor will appoint this person.”

Following a preliminary assessment, the third-party investigator may choose to dismiss the complaint or proceed with the investigation. If the complaint is dismissed, the investigator notifies both the complainant and the respondent and provide the reasons for the closure. If the investigator chooses to proceed with the investigation, the first step is to determine whether the complaint requires a formal investigation or whether it can be resolved informally. If a complaint can be resolved informally, the terms of the resolution are provided to the third-party investigator at which point the investigation is closed. If a complaint is not dismissed or resolved informally, the third-party investigator proceeds to a formal investigation.

¹⁰⁵ City of Langley (2023). Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2023.

¹⁰⁶ District of Lake Country. (2022). Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy 203, 2022.

After a formal investigation by a third-party investigator, a report is typically prepared and provided to the council or board. The report outlines the findings (i.e. whether the code was breached) and the reasons for the investigator’s decision. If it is determined that the code was breached, the third-party investigator report includes recommendations for the appropriate sanction(s) for the breach for the council or board to decide upon.

For codes with a formal complaint process, 22 of 79 (28%) have a requirement to report investigation findings to the public. Investigation findings may be released to the public as a full report or as a summary of the report. Council may choose to review investigation recommendations in a closed meeting if it is determined that there is a valid reason to do so under Section 90¹⁰⁷ of the Charter. Investigations reports released to the public must also comply with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)¹⁰⁸. If council decides to review the investigation report in a closed meeting, or the investigation report contains information that does not comply with FOIPPA, the investigation report or summary may not be released publicly.

Remedies and Sanctions for Breaches of Code

Seventy-two of the 132 codes collected (55%) include a section that outlines possible sanctions or remedies to be enforced following a breach of the code by a council or board members. The terms “remedies” and “sanctions” are used interchangeably throughout codes. Many codes simply provide a list of possible sanctions (ranging in severity) that may be used to address code of conduct breaches. Sanctions may include a request for an apology letter, temporary reduction to a council or board members salary, and suspension or removal from some or all council appointments.

The application and severity of sanctions is dependent on several factors presented in the codes. These factors are consistent in codes and include the following:

- the degree and nature of the conduct;
- whether the contravention was a single or repeated act;
- whether the Council/Board Member knowingly contravened the Code;
- whether the Council/Board Member took steps to mitigate or remedy the contravention;
- the Council/Board Member’s history of other contraventions; and
- if applicable, the Investigator’s finding that the respondent Council/Board Member took all reasonable steps to avoid the breach, or that the breach was trivial or done inadvertently or because of an error in judgment.

Through an investigation considering the above factors, the third-party investigator will recommend an appropriate sanction(s) in their investigative report. Of the 72 codes that include a set of possible sanctions for breaches, the most often included sanctions are in table 6:

¹⁰⁷ BC Laws. (2026). Community Charter. Part 4, Div. 3. Sec. 90. King’s Printer.

¹⁰⁸ BC Laws. (2026). Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. King’s Printer.

Table 6: Sanctions in BC Codes	Total:	Percentage of Use:
Request from council/board for a letter of apology	63/72	87.5%
Mandatory training, coaching, or counselling	62/72	86%
A motion of public censure	58/72	80.5%
Suspension or removal from some or all council/board appointments (Acting Mayor/Chair and/or Committee appointments)	58/72	80.5%
A letter of reprimand from council/board	44/72	61%
Restrictions on representing municipality/RD at events/attending events	42/72	58%
The publication of letters of reprimand and apology	41/72	57%
Limitations on a council/board members access to confidential information	37/72	51%
Limitations on a council/board members access to public facilities	36/72	50%
Reduction in council/board member remuneration	25/72	35%
Return of public property	12/72	17%
Limitations on council/board related travel and/or expenses	14/72	19%

Less common sanctions for code of conduct breaches included:

- Restrictions on communications with staff – included in 4/72 or 6% of codes.
- Repayment of moneys and/or gifts received – included in 2/72 or 3% of codes.
- In addition to mandatory training, some codes provide for a council/board member to complete a specified number of volunteer hours or to make a charitable donation of a specified or unspecified amount to a particular charitable organization.

Typically, the report of the third-party investigator includes recommendations on appropriate sanction(s) to address the breach for council/board consideration. Once the council/board receives the investigators determination, council/board is responsible for making the final determination on the investigators recommended approach. Council/board members can either approve or reject the recommendation(s). Approval for recommendations typically requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote.

Cost Reimbursement Following Investigation

Thirty-six codes have a process for the reimbursement of costs attributed to legal advice and representation. This process is found only in codes including a formal complaint process. In this process, council/board members may make a request to council for reimbursement of fees in response to a formal complaint. The process for reimbursement will typically look at whether the member has previously breached the code or if it is the council/board members first formal complaint process. Additionally, some codes will permit reimbursement provided that the fees do not exceed a maximum dollar amount. In codes, this maximum amount may range anywhere from \$5,000 to \$25,000, however, codes may only specify that a council/board member receive reimbursement if the amount claimed is deemed to be “reasonable”. This process can be seen in the City of Abbotsford’s *Council Code of Conduct Bylaw*¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁹ City of Abbotsford. (2023). Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2023.

1. *“A respondent may make a request to Council for reimbursement of the costs of legal advice and representation in responding to the complaint process outlined in this bylaw.*
2. *After considering all of the circumstances, Council may resolve to reimburse legal fees reasonably incurred by a respondent, provided that all of the following are met:*
 - a. *the respondent has not previously been found to have contravened this bylaw;*
 - b. *the amount claimed is reasonable;*
 - c. *the respondent did not engage in dishonest, grossly negligent or malicious conduct.”*

Informed through the analysis presented in this section, two findings emerged regarding the current state of local government codes of conduct in BC. The first finding identifies the key elements of a robust code of conduct, and the second finding highlights the effectiveness of introducing codes of conduct as local government bylaws compared to policies. These findings will be presented in greater detail in the following section.

The Requirements of a Robust Code of Conduct

The first finding illustrates the criteria that allows for a code to be considered ‘robust’. Robust codes included five key sections: principles and values, general expectations for conduct, complaint, investigation, and resolution procedure, sanctions, and post-investigation.

Principles and Values

Ideally, robust codes will include a dedicated section to outline the WGRC’s foundational principles (integrity, respect, accountability, and leadership and collaboration) This can be seen below from the City of Vernon’s *Council Code of Responsible Conduct Policy*¹¹⁰.

- **“Integrity** - means being honest and demonstrating strong ethical principles. Conduct under this principle upholds the public interest, is truthful and honourable.
- **Respect** - means having due regard for others' perspectives, wishes and rights; it also means displaying deference to the offices of local government and the role of local government in community decision making. Conduct under this principle is demonstrated when a Member fosters an environment of trust by demonstrating due regard for the perspectives, wishes and rights of others and an understanding of the role of the local government.
- **Accountability** - means an obligation and willingness to accept responsibility or to account for ones' actions. Conduct under this principle is demonstrated when Members, individually and collectively, accept responsibility for their actions and decisions.
- **Leadership and Collaboration** - means an ability to lead, listen to and positively influence others; it also means coming together to create or meet a common goal through collective efforts. Conduct under this principle is demonstrated when a Member encourages individuals to work together in pursuit of collective objectives by leading, listening to and positively influencing others.”

Some codes may reference the foundational principles but not include a dedicated section. The minimum requirement to meet the criteria for the principles and values section of a robust code

¹¹⁰ City of Vernon. (2023). Council Code of Responsible Conduct.

can be seen below from the City of Langley’s *Council Code of Conduct Bylaw*¹¹¹. Additionally, foundational principles may be detailed in the definition section of the code.

“A Council Member shall align their conduct with the key foundational principles of Accountability, Integrity, Respect, Leadership, and Collaboration.”

Codes also included sections on standards of conduct, highlighting specific actions that adhere to the four foundational principles. This is ideal in robust codes.

General Expectations for Conduct

Robust codes should include sections outlining the general conduct expectations of council/board members or anyone else who the codes application extends to. General conduct sections should outline areas of specific conduct that reflect the foundational principles.

Ideally, at a minimum, codes should include (but are not limited to) sections outlining:

- Conflicts of Interest
- Interactions with the Public and Media
- Interactions with Staff
- The Acceptance of Gifts and Personal Benefits
- The Collection and Handling of Information
- Use of Social Media
- Use of Influence
- The Use of Public Resources

Codes should aim to include these general conduct sections. Local governments may have existing policies in place that outline some of these areas of conduct already and refer to those policies in their codes. Codes may also refer to provincial legislation in their codes. For example, codes may reference Division 6 of the Charter¹¹² which outlines conflicts of interest for council members, with subsections on the acceptance of gifts, use of influence, and use of confidential information. For these reasons, while it may not be entirely required for codes to have these sections, robust codes should include them as there is certainly some benefit to having the general conduct expectations for elected officials all in one accessible place. At a minimum, codes must refer to the Charter and any other local government policies that are applicable.

Complaint, Investigation, and Resolution Procedures

Robust codes must include a complaint, investigation, and resolution procedure that includes processes for the preliminary assessment of complaints, the informal resolution process, the formal resolution process, and the appointment of a third-party investigator. This is a necessary requirement for codes to meet the criteria to be considered robust. Codes must also include a section that outlines the requirements for the third-party investigator to prepare a written investigation report to highlight investigation findings and recommendations.

Sanctions

Robust codes require a dedicated section that includes an extensive list of possible sanctions that may be recommended by the third-party investigator in the investigation report following a

¹¹¹ City of Langley, (2023), *ibid*.

¹¹² BC Laws. (2026). Community Charter. Part 4, Div. 6. King’s Printer.

formal investigation. Required sanctions in robust codes should include (but should not be limited to):

- Request for a letter of apology;
- Mandatory training, coaching, or counselling;
- A motion of public censure;
- A letter of reprimand;
- Suspension or removal as acting/deputy mayor/chair; and
- Suspension or removal from some or all committee appointments.

Post-Investigation

To supplement the complaint and resolution procedure and the remedies sections, robust codes should also include sections that outline post-investigation matters. Post-investigation sections should include (but are not limited to):

- Requirements for public reporting of investigation findings; and
- A section outlining that Council/Board members make the final determination on the investigator's recommendations; and
- A section outlining the process for council/board members to be reimbursed for any legal fees attributed to the code of conduct complaints.

Only sixty-five of 132 (49%) codes met the necessary criteria to be considered robust. These codes included the necessary elements to establish the standards for respectful conduct and ethical behaviour and established the appropriate procedures for investigation and enforcement following breaches of the code of conduct.

Code of Conduct Bylaws Versus Policies

The second finding that emerged illustrates the effectiveness of implementing codes of conduct as bylaws versus policies. As noted, the Charter does not require codes to be enacted by bylaws, allowing codes in BC to be enforced as a local government policy or as a bylaw. As a reminder, only twenty-seven of the 132 (20.5%) codes reviewed were adopted as bylaws. Based on the criteria outlined in the first key finding:

- Twenty-four of the twenty-seven (89%) codes enacted as bylaws are considered robust.
- Forty-one of the 105 (39%) codes enacted as policies are considered robust.

The Province of British Columbia uses the following definition for a bylaw:

*“A bylaw is a law that legally implements a decision made by a municipal council or regional district board. A bylaw is typically necessary for a local government to take actions that direct what persons may, may not or must do.”*¹¹³

Local government bylaws require three readings before they can be adopted. Bylaws must also be read and adopted in meetings open to the public. This process allows for councils and boards to debate, discuss, and make changes to the principles of the bylaw before it is adopted and for the public to understand the reasons for a decision. This review showed that codes enacted as bylaws met the requirements to be considered robust at a much higher rate than codes enacted as

¹¹³ Province of British Columbia. (2024). Local government council and board procedures. Governance and Structure Branch.

policies. This may be attributed to the legislative requirements for adopting bylaws, requiring more discussion and review than the process for adopting local government policies, further highlighting the importance of collaboration and teamwork in local governance. As will be seen in the following chapter, the implementation of codes of conducts as bylaws is a legislative requirement in many of Canada's other provincial responsible conduct frameworks.

Summary

The document review has demonstrated that the presence of a code of conduct alone, or the legislative requirement to consider adopting one, does not amount to an effective responsible conduct framework. The review showed that over half of all of BC's available local government codes of conduct failed to meet the threshold to be considered robust. The significant variation in BC's available codes further reinforces the notion that BC's responsible conduct framework lacks structural consistency, however, the findings from this chapter provide a foundation for the Province to consider moving forward.

Chapter 6: Cross-Jurisdictional Scan

This chapter looks at the responsible conduct legislative frameworks outside of BC. This section will analyze the potential for improvement through responsible conduct frameworks and legislation that has been established throughout Canada’s other Provinces. The potential for improvement through more strict responsible conduct legislation has been established in all other provinces across Canada. This includes provincial framework models that include mandatory codes of conduct, mandatory education and training, prescribed content for codes, established procedures, integrity commissioner models, and sanctions. Prior to 2025 legislative amendments in Alberta, Nova Scotia’s adoption of a more comprehensive responsible conduct framework¹¹⁴ left BC as Canada’s only province without a legislative requirement for all municipalities to adopt a code of conduct for the conduct of locally elected officials.

Alberta – Emphasis on Local Autonomy

The Province of Alberta provides a unique example in the Canadian provincial landscape of responsible conduct. Prior to April 2025, the Province of Alberta had an established responsible conduct framework that came into force in October 2017¹¹⁵. This framework included mandatory code of conduct legislation, a regulation that prescribes content, mandatory training for elected officials, and enforcement mechanisms. Section 146, “Codes of Conduct” of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) mandated that all municipalities must establish a code of conduct, by bylaw, for members of a council¹¹⁶. This legislative framework included the *Code of Conduct for Elected Officials Regulation*¹¹⁷ which prescribed minimum content requirements for codes of conduct for councils to follow. This required municipal codes of conduct to address specific areas of content, establish a complaint system, and outlines sanctions for breaches of the code of conduct.

In April 2025, the Government of Alberta introduced *Bill 50, the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act*. Bill 50 specifically targeted section 146 of the MGA by removing all municipal council codes of conduct to prevent the political misuse of codes of conduct¹¹⁸. Municipal councils can no longer make any bylaws or policies that address the conduct of a locally elected official. Additionally, any open or unresolved complaints or sanctions against councillors were terminated¹¹⁹. Alberta still requires all locally elected officials to undergo mandatory training through the *Elected Officials Education Program*. Municipalities are required to provide training to new and returning councillors that covers the roles of municipalities, the responsibilities of councillors, staff responsibilities, and finance and budgeting training¹²⁰.

Alberta’s elimination of their code of conduct framework has indicated that the province will potentially implement a municipal ethics commissioner model. This new model would require

¹¹⁴ Province of Nova Scotia. (2024). Province Introduces Code of Conduct for Municipal Officials. Municipal Affairs and Housing.

¹¹⁵ BILD Alberta. (2018). Changes to the Municipal Government Act: Provincial Fact Sheets.

¹¹⁶ Government of Alberta. (2025). Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26. Alberta Queen’s Printer.

¹¹⁷ Government of Alberta. (2017). Code of Conduct for Elected Officials Regulation, Alta Reg 200/2017. Alberta Queen’s Printer.

¹¹⁸ Government of Alberta. (2025). Modernizing Municipal Processes.

¹¹⁹ Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. (2025). Integrity Commissioner.

¹²⁰ EOEP. (2025). Requirements for Council Orientation. Elected Officials Education Program.

new legislation and likely would not be operational for at least one year¹²¹. The removal of formal codes of conduct and this delay has raised serious concerns among provincial associations such as Alberta Municipalities and the Rural Municipalities of Alberta, both highlighting a worrisome transitional gap between the repeal of codes of conduct and the implementation of an ethics commissioner's office¹²². Until this model is put into place, Alberta's municipalities are left with no available process to manage any conduct related conflicts at the local level.

Saskatchewan – Locally led Ethics

The Province of Saskatchewan's responsible conduct framework was established in November 2015 through the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Amendment Act*¹²³. *The Municipalities Act* (MA) is Saskatchewan's primary legislation for the governing of the provinces municipalities and sets out the framework for local governance. Section 93.1 'Code of ethics' of the MA mandates that a council is to adopt a code of ethics that applies to all council members. Section 93.2 of the MA adds that if a council fails to adopt a code of ethics, the model code of ethics will automatically be adopted by the municipality¹²⁴. Through the *Municipalities Regulation*¹²⁵, Saskatchewan's responsible conduct framework includes prescribed content through a model code of ethics. The model code sets out the minimum requirements for each municipalities code of ethics, which highlights the core standards and values and procedures for the complaint and investigation process¹²⁶.

The Province of Saskatchewan does offer voluntary training for locally elected officials, however, there is no mandated training included in the responsible conduct framework¹²⁷. Additionally, Saskatchewan has no legislative requirement for municipalities to have an integrity commissioner. Municipalities have the ability to create an integrity commissioner or equivalent officer under their bylaw. Municipalities such as Saskatoon¹²⁸ and Regina¹²⁹ have their own integrity commissioner models in place.

Manitoba – Detailed and Regulated Standards

The Province of Manitoba's responsible conduct framework is notable for its detail and robustness. Manitoba's municipal council code of conduct legislation came into effect in November 2020¹³⁰. The *Municipal Act*¹³¹ requires all municipalities to have a code of conduct

¹²¹ Alberta Municipalities. (2025). Preliminary Analysis of Bill 50: Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025.

¹²² Rural Municipalities of Alberta. (2025). Bill 50: Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 – RMA Analysis.

¹²³ Province of Saskatchewan. (2015). The Municipal Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2015, SS 2015, c 30. Queen's Printer for Saskatchewan.

¹²⁴ Province of Saskatchewan. (2005). Municipalities Act, SS 2005, c M-36.1. Queen's Printer for Saskatchewan.

¹²⁵ Province of Saskatchewan. (2024). Municipalities Regulations, M-36.1 Reg 1. Queen's Printer for Saskatchewan.

¹²⁶ Province of Saskatchewan. (2025). Code of Ethics: Sample Municipal Bylaw.

¹²⁷ Province of Saskatchewan. Council Training. (2025).

¹²⁸ City of Saskatoon. (2019). Bylaw No. 9537: The Code of Ethical Conduct for Members of City Council.

¹²⁹ City of Regina. (2017). Code of Ethics Bylaw No. 2017-4.

¹³⁰ Province of Manitoba. (2020). Municipal Council Members' Code of Conduct.

¹³¹ Province of Manitoba. (2025). The Municipal Act, C.C.S.M. c M225. Queen's Printer for Manitoba.

bylaw in place, and mandates training for all council members on their code. Codes are required to have a process to deal with and receive reports of misconduct, set out the sanctions that may be applied to members, and comply with the regulation. Council members are required to take training on the code within six months of being elected or re-elected. The CAO is required to report to council if a member does not undertake the training. Any council member who does not undergo training within six months cannot carry out a power, duty, or function as a member of council until the training is completed. The amendments and regulation came as a result of advocacy by the Association of Manitoba Municipalities¹³², seeking more comprehensive and effective processes to address harassment and bullying at the council level¹³³.

The Council Members' Codes of Conduct Regulation¹³⁴ defines the minimum requirements for municipal codes of conduct. This includes minimum requirements to highlight core values, a procedure to file a complaint, an annual review of the bylaw, and the specific sanctions permitted. The regulation also requires the Minister to appoint an Appeals Director to hear appeals to sanctions that have resulted from code of conduct complaints. Notice of appeal must be filed within thirty days, along with a submission that includes the reasons for the appeal. An appeal may be filed solely on the basis that a council members' conduct did not contravene the code of conduct. Council must provide the appeals director with the investigation report and other background material, and its own submission, within thirty days of receiving the member's appeal. Decisions made by the Appeals Director are final.

Manitoba has a provincially appointed Code of Conduct Intake Reviewer for all code of conduct complaints. The CAO is required to submit completed complaint forms to the Intake Reviewer within seven days of receiving them. Manitoba's current Intake Reviewer is the BC Advisory Group, a Manitoba based organization¹³⁵. To ensure consistency, municipalities are required to send complaint forms directly to the Intake Review. The Intake Reviewer's role is to then conduct an initial assessment of code of conduct complaints to determine which are valid and must proceed through the complaints process, and to recommend to councils any complaints that should be dismissed.

Manitoba's Ministry of Municipal and Northern Relations has created a set of standardized documents to support municipalities with the legislative framework. This includes a sample code of conduct bylaw template for local governments to use to adapt and draft their own code, ensuring that codes meet the standards set out in the regulation. The Province of Manitoba also offers a standardized complaint form for council members to submit code of conduct complaints, and a notice of appeal form for council members to appeal a sanction that resulted from code of conduct complaint.

¹³² AMM. (2026). Home. Association of Manitoba Municipalities.

¹³³ TDS Law. (2020). R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Municipal Council Members' Codes of Conduct (Find Out What it Means to Me).

¹³⁴ Province of Manitoba. (2020). Council Members' Codes of Conduct Regulation, M.R. 98/2020. Queen's Printer for Manitoba.

¹³⁵ Province of Manitoba. (2020). Council Members' Codes of Conduct: Updates on Tools and Resources. Municipal Relations.

Ontario – Moving Towards Provincial Consistency

The Province of Ontario has had ethics rules in place for municipalities since 2001, however, in 2017 the province introduced *Bill 68, Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act*¹³⁶. Bill 68 fundamentally changed Ontario's responsible conduct framework by adding amendments to add section 223.2 to the *Municipal Act*¹³⁷, making codes of conduct mandatory for all municipalities. Through *Ontario Regulation 55/18*¹³⁸, the province prescribes four areas of content that are required for all municipal codes of conduct. These include the acceptance of gifts and benefits, respectful and responsible conduct guidelines, confidentiality, and the use of municipal property. Bill 68 made it mandatory for all municipalities to appoint an integrity commissioner. As well, it expanded powers for integrity commissioners allowing them to investigate conflicts of interest, provide advice to council members, educate officials about responsible conduct, and initiate court proceedings regarding violations if necessary¹³⁹. Prior to Bill 68, municipalities held the authority to appoint an integrity commissioner but were not mandated to do so.

In May 2025, the Province of Ontario introduced *Bill 9, Municipal Accountability Act*¹⁴⁰. Bill 9's status is in second reading and is aimed to be implemented in 2026¹⁴¹. If passed, Bill 9 would bring significant amendments to the *Municipal Act*, aiming to standardize Ontario's responsible conduct framework with four key measures. The first key change would be to standardize municipal codes of conduct, shifting from codes developed over time by municipalities to a provincially standardized code of conduct for all municipal councils. This would likely be supplied through an updated regulation and coupled with a prescribed model code of conduct. The second key change seen in Bill 9 would mandate municipal integrity commissioners to provide standardized ethics and code of conduct training to locally elected officials. The third proposed amendment would significantly centralize Ontario's integrity commissioner model. Under the *Municipal Act's* current legislation, municipalities are responsible for outlining the duties and responsibilities of their integrity commissioner, as well as any complaint and investigation procedures. Bill 9 would give the province the authority to regulate the complaint, investigation, and reporting procedure for municipal integrity commissioners, as well as provide the *Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario*¹⁴² a role to advise and train municipal integrity commissioners. The fourth proposed amendment would provide a new mechanism for council members to be removed and disqualified from holding office for four years. This mechanism would be triggered following a recommendation from a municipal integrity commissioner to the *Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario* and a decision would be based on four criteria assessing the severity of the contravention¹⁴³. If passed, Bill 9 would

¹³⁶ Province of Ontario. (2017). *Bill 68: Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act, 2017*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

¹³⁷ Province of Ontario. (2025). *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

¹³⁸ Province of Ontario. (2025). *O. Reg. 180/55: Municipal Elections Act, 1996 – Regulations*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

¹³⁹ Hicks Morley. (2018). *Municipalities Take Note: The Expanded Role of Integrity Commissioners*.

¹⁴⁰ Province of Ontario. (2025). *Municipal Accountability Act, 2025 (Bill 9)*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

¹⁴¹ Jeronimo, S. N. (2025). *Ontario Government Introduces Municipal Accountability Act, 2025*. Hicks Morley.

¹⁴² OICO. (2026). *Encouraging a Culture of Integrity*. Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.

¹⁴³ Province of Ontario. (2025). *Ontario Supporting Stronger Local Governance*. Ontario Newsroom.

represent a major shift towards a significantly more centralized and standardized framework for Ontario's municipalities.

Quebec – Centralized and Enforced

In the landscape of Canada's responsible conduct frameworks, the Province of Quebec has one of the most unique frameworks available. The *Municipal Ethics and Good Conduct Act* ("the act") was introduced in December 2010¹⁴⁴, making it one of the earliest responsible conduct frameworks in Canada. Under Section 2 of the act, every municipality must adopt a code of conduct by bylaw for its elected officials¹⁴⁵. Outlined through Sections 4-7 of the act, each municipality must reflect the core ethical values and detailed conduct rules in their code¹⁴⁶. These sections prescribe the minimum required content expected in codes of conduct. Additionally, Section 13 of the act mandates that municipalities must revise and update their codes following each general election¹⁴⁷.

Rather than an integrity commissioner model, Quebec has a centralized institutional model to enforce codes of conduct and individual local governments do not appoint their own integrity commissioners. The *Commission Municipale du Québec* (CMQ) is a provincially appointed independent administrative body that ensures compliance with the standards and laws related to the management of municipalities¹⁴⁸. In 2010, after codes of conduct were made mandatory for local government through the *Municipal Ethics and Good Conduct Act*, the CMQ was given the authority to investigate alleged breaches of codes of conduct and to impose penalties. Any code of conduct complaints is communicated directly to the CMQ for an inquiry. If the CMQ determines that there has been a breach, the CMQ may make sanctions including a reprimand, suspension for up to 90 days, the reimbursement of remuneration, or a penalty of up to \$4,000¹⁴⁹.

Quebec's legislation also makes training for all elected officials mandatory. Section 15 of the act requires all elected officials to undergo mandatory professional training on municipal ethics and good conduct within six months of their first term or within nine months after beginning a subsequent term¹⁵⁰. The training content is determined by the CMQ and is aimed to reflect on municipal ethics and values.

Nova Scotia – Recent Reform Model

Nova Scotia is the most recent Canadian Province to introduce a mandatory code of conduct regulation for all municipalities. The Province of Nova Scotia introduced Sections 23A-23E to the *Municipal Government Act* in April 2021¹⁵¹. This legislation created the legal framework for the province by establishing the legislative authority for each municipality to adopt a code of conduct. Through the legislation, the province introduced the *Code of Conduct for Municipal*

¹⁴⁴ Province of Québec. (2010). *Municipal Ethics and Good Conduct Act*. Québec Official Publisher.

¹⁴⁵ Province of Québec, (2010), *ibid.*, Chapter 2, Div. 1, Sec.2

¹⁴⁶ Province of Québec, (2010), *ibid.*, Chapter 2, Div. 2, Sec.4

¹⁴⁷ Province of Québec, (2010), *ibid.*, Chapter 2, Div. 2, Sec.13

¹⁴⁸ CMQ. (2026). *Welcome to the Quebec Municipal Commission*. Commission Municipale du Québec.

¹⁴⁹ Province of Québec, (2010), *ibid.*, Chapter 3, Div. 2, Sec.31

¹⁵⁰ Province of Québec, (2010), *ibid.*, Chapter 2, Div. 2, Sec.15

¹⁵¹ Province of Nova Scotia. (2021). *Municipal Government Act (amended) and Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (amended) respecting codes of conduct*. Queen's Printer for Nova Scotia.

Elected Officials Regulations in October 2024¹⁵². The new regulation enforces each municipality to adopt a code of conduct and includes a model code of conduct for municipalities to follow. Additionally, training for locally elected officials is made mandatory through the new regulation, requiring all councillors to undergo training modules within 30 days of being elected. The regulation and model code also includes prescribed content that covers different areas of conduct for locally elected officials to ensure that councils maintain accountability¹⁵³.

Under Nova Scotia's regulation, each municipality must appoint an investigator to receive and handle code of conduct complaints. The responsibilities of the investigator are the same as those given to an integrity or ethics commissioner and is responsible for reviewing complaints and recommending sanctions if a breach of the code of conduct is found. A unique aspect of Nova Scotia's regulation is that monetary fine of up to \$1,000 per contravention may be assessed to councillors who are found to have breached the code of conduct. Additionally, a councillor who has breached the code of conduct may have their pay reduced for up to six months or be required to repay any monetary loss suffered to the municipality resulting from a code of conduct breach.

New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island – Emerging Atlantic Foundations

The final three Atlantic provinces of New Brunswick (NB), Newfoundland and Labrador (N&L), and Prince Edward Island (PEI) hold key similarities in their provincial responsible conduct framework. Through NB's *Local Governance Act*¹⁵⁴, N&L's *Municipal Conduct Act*¹⁵⁵, and PEI's *Municipal Government Act*¹⁵⁶, municipalities in each of the three provinces are required by legislation to establish a code of conduct for councils. To supplement their respective legislation, all three provincial frameworks include a regulation that prescribes content for codes of conduct and outlines the procedure for investigations and complaints. The key difference between the three provinces is seen through mandatory training requirements. NB's framework does not impose a provincial requirement for councillors to undergo training on codes of conduct and municipal ethics¹⁵⁷, whereas N&L¹⁵⁸ and PEI¹⁵⁹ both make training for councillor's mandatory. NB, N&L, and PEI do not include an integrity commissioner model, leaving municipalities in each of these three provinces responsible for enforcing the processes established in their respective codes of conduct.

¹⁵² Province of Nova Scotia. (2024). Code of Conduct for Municipal Elected Officials Regulations. Queen's Printer for Nova Scotia.

¹⁵³ Province of Nova Scotia. (2024). Province Introduces Code of Conduct for Municipal Officials. Nova Scotia Newsroom.

¹⁵⁴ Province of New Brunswick. (2017). Municipal Ethics and Good Conduct Act, SNB 2017, c 18. Queen's Printer for New Brunswick.

¹⁵⁵ Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. (1990). Municipal Affairs Act, RSNL 1990, c M-20.1. Queen's Printer for Newfoundland and Labrador.

¹⁵⁶ Province of Prince Edward Island. (2023). Municipal Government Act, R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. M-12.1. Queen's Printer for Prince Edward Island.

¹⁵⁷ Province of New Brunswick. (2024). Code of Conduct Regulation – Local Governance Act, New Brunswick Regulation 2024-48. Queen's Printer for New Brunswick.

¹⁵⁸ Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. (2022). Municipal Conduct Regulations, Newfoundland and Labrador Regulation 59/22. Queen's Printer for Newfoundland and Labrador.

¹⁵⁹ Province of Prince Edward Island. (2023). Municipal Government Act Code of Conduct Regulations. Queen's Printer for Prince Edward Island.

Summary

The Canadian landscape of provincial responsible conduct frameworks is mostly consistent. Provinces seem to be motivated and appear to be taking steps to improve accountability and responsible conduct in local governance. Interestingly, the Province of Alberta has taken steps in the opposite direction by essentially removing all responsible conduct tools that were present in their framework. Conversely, the Province of Ontario's proposed legislation aims to do the opposite, creating a stronger and more centralized legislative enforcement model for fostering responsible conduct. With these two provinces taking steps in different directions, the Province of British Columbia should be watching closely to gauge the next steps that they will take.

For now, British Columbia remains significantly behind the rest of Canada in establishing an enforceable responsible conduct framework for municipalities. Apart from Alberta, BC is the only province in Canada that does not mandate the adoption of council codes of conduct for municipalities. Additionally, BC's legislation does not prescribe minimum content for codes, mandatory training requirements, and enforcement mechanisms. Given the challenges that BC's municipalities have faced and continue to face surrounding responsible conduct in recent years, it appears that BC's responsible conduct framework requires significant legislative amendments to avoid falling further behind the rest of Canada's provinces. Table 7 provides a summary of this chapter.

Table 7: Cross Jurisdictional Scan Summary Table

Provinces:	Mandatory or Optional Codes	Prescribed Content	Model Code of Conduct	Mandatory Training	Established Procedures	Integrity Commissioner Model
British Columbia	Optional	Recommended, not prescribed.	No	Voluntary	No	Local autonomy, no requirement
Alberta (Pre 2025)	Mandatory	Prescribed through regulation	No	Voluntary	Yes	Local autonomy, no requirement
Alberta (2025)	In progress	In progress	In progress	In progress	In progress	In progress
Saskatchewan	Mandatory	Prescribed through Regulation	Yes	Voluntary	Yes	Local autonomy, no requirement
Manitoba	Mandatory	Prescribed through Regulation	Yes	Mandatory	Yes	Local autonomy, no requirement
Ontario	Mandatory	Prescribed through Regulation	No	Voluntary	Yes, through IC model	Mandatory for each Municipality
Ontario (proposed legislation in Bill 9)	Mandatory	Prescribed through Regulation	Yes	Mandatory	Yes, through IC model	Mandatory for each Municipality and Centralized model
Quebec	Mandatory	Prescribed through Regulation	No	Mandatory	Yes, through centralized model	Centralized model
Nova Scotia	Mandatory	Prescribed through Regulation	Yes	Mandatory	Yes	Mandatory for each Municipality
New Brunswick	Mandatory	Prescribed through Regulation	No	Voluntary	Yes	Local autonomy, no requirement
Newfoundland & Labrador	Mandatory	Prescribed through Regulation	No	Mandatory	Yes	Local autonomy, no requirement
Prince Edward Island	Mandatory	Prescribed through Regulation	No	Mandatory	Yes	Local autonomy, no requirement

Chapter 7: Case Studies

This section will provide four case studies of BC municipalities that have faced challenges surrounding the responsible conduct of locally elected officials. Each case will provide a distinct example to help provide understanding to BC’s unique landscape of local government and the unique challenges faced across the province. The four selected municipalities are:

- **The City of Kamloops:** Conflict between council members and the mayor created serious dysfunction within government, requiring external intervention from the Province.
- **The Village of Harrison Hot Springs:** Conflict that divided council and halted decision making, requiring external intervention from the Province, ultimately leading to the resignation of the mayor.
- **The City of Surrey:** Significant policy change decision highlighted conflicts of interest, created public opposition, and led to internal division within council.
- **The District of West Vancouver:** Professional misconduct by the mayor raised concerns over municipal ethics.

Each case study will examine a unique responsible conduct challenge, looking at the different types of conflict seen in each of the four selected local governments. Together, each case study will be examined to provide a comparative understanding of how the different types of responsible conduct challenges can emerge and be managed, and ultimately how they impact local governance. Each case study will provide an overview of the conflict, highlight the key challenges experienced, the implications of challenges faced, and lessons learned from each case.

The City of Kamloops – Governance Breakdown from the Top

The City of Kamloops has a population of over 100,000 people, making it one of the largest cities in BC¹⁶⁰. Kamloops’ city council is made up of eight councillors and a mayor¹⁶¹. Since the 2022 election of Mayor Reid Hamer-Jackson, the city of Kamloops has experienced significant challenges in maintaining responsible conduct. Specifically, since early 2023, and intensifying throughout 2024, Kamloops has faced unique challenges in the landscape of responsible conduct as they have almost exclusively been focused on the conduct of the mayor.

The City of Kamloops’ “Council Code of Conduct Bylaw” (“code”) was adopted in May 2023¹⁶², and amended once in August 2023¹⁶³. In January 2024, it was reported that the City of Kamloops had reported 17 code of conduct related complaints since the code was adopted in 2023, with 11 complaints being submitted by members of council, five by members of the public, and one submitted by a member of Kamloops’ city staff¹⁶⁴. From May 2023 to February 2024, the financial burden of investigating complaints had cost Kamloops taxpayers more than

¹⁶⁰ City of Kamloops. (2024). City Publishes 2024 Housing Needs Report.

¹⁶¹ City of Kamloops. (2026). City Council.

¹⁶² Holliday, K. (2023). Kamloops council votes unanimously to officially adopt new code of conduct. Castanet Kamloops.

¹⁶³ Holliday, K. (2023). Kamloops council OKs code of conduct changes to avoid high costs for vexatious complaints. Castanet Kamloops.

¹⁶⁴ Holliday, K. (2024). City of Kamloops reports 17 code of conduct complaints since new bylaw adopted Castanet Kamloops.

\$92,000¹⁶⁵. By December 2024, the number of formal complaints received had reached 23, more than one per month, costing the city over \$287,000 in legal fees¹⁶⁶.

Key Challenges

Kamloops Mayor, Reid Hamer-Jackson has been central to many of the challenges faced. In March 2024, Kamloops' Mayor, Reid Hamer-Jackson suspended Kamloops' acting CAO, Byron McCorkell, without any input from City council¹⁶⁷. Two days later, the mayor's decision was reversed by Kamloops council in a unanimous vote and led to a decision to revoke the mayor's power to suspend certain employees¹⁶⁸.

In April 2024, a confidential investigation report into workplace bullying and harassment was anonymously leaked to the mayor, months after the investigation was completed. The mayor released the confidential report that contained sensitive personal information about staff involved in the investigation, putting the City of Kamloops at major legal risk¹⁶⁹.

In February 2024, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs appointed former Abbotsford mayor, Henry Braun, as municipal advisor to provide support and guidance to Kamloops council and to provide recommendations to improve the situation at Kamloops City Hall¹⁷⁰. This move came after Kamloops council voted unanimously to ask the province to appoint of municipal advisor in September 2023¹⁷¹.

Resolution

In May 2024, Braun's findings were presented in a municipal advisor report to council, identifying 16 challenges that had contributed to the continued dysfunction in since Hamer-Jackson was elected. The challenges situated the mayor as being largely responsible for the issues being experienced in Kamloops and provided 23 recommendations for council to address the ongoing challenges. Of the 23 recommendations, 10 were directed to the mayor, focusing on behavioural change, highlighting the mayor's personal leadership style, misuse of authority, and failure to respect confidentiality, whereas the recommendations to council aimed on repairing trust and strengthening governance process¹⁷². Kamloops council voted to remove Hamer-Jackson as the city's spokesperson and reduced his pay by 10% for the following six months¹⁷³.

Lessons Learned

This case study highlights how damaging the conduct of a single elected official can prove to be in destabilizing the governance of a municipality. Mayor Hamer-Jackson's repeated breaches of

¹⁶⁵ Landry, L. (2024). Kamloops council code of conduct investigations cost \$92,000 so far. Infotel.

¹⁶⁶ Landry, L. (2024). More than \$287,000 spent so far on Kamloops council conduct investigations. Infotel.

¹⁶⁷ Landry, L. (2024). UPDATE: Kamloops mayor suspends city's top employee. Infotel.

¹⁶⁸ Holliday, K. (2024). Councillor says new restrictions on Kamloops mayor an 'extraordinary step' to protect staff. Castanet Kamloops.

¹⁶⁹ Landry, L. (2024). Kamloops mayor's release of confidential report 'unlawful': city councillor. Infotel.

¹⁷⁰ Holliday, K. (2024). Former Abbotsford mayor tapped as municipal advisor for embattled Kamloops council. Castanet Kamloops.

¹⁷¹ Holliday, K. (2023). Embattled Kamloops city council asking province for help amid discord. Castanet Kamloops.

¹⁷² Braun, H. (2024). Municipal Advisor's Report. City of Kamloops.

¹⁷³ Lorraine, C. (2024). Kamloops mayor has pay cut, barred from closed committee meetings. KamloopsBCNow.

Kamloops' code of conduct created an unstable working environment that damaged council relations and the public's trust. Kamloops shows that responsible conduct required a shared commitment to ethical leadership and collaboration.

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs – When Council Stops Working

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs (“Harrison”) has a population of just under 2000 citizens¹⁷⁴, with council including just four councillors and a mayor¹⁷⁵. Harrison village council's governance and conduct challenges can be attributed to internal division between council members and the mayor. This created a highly dysfunctional environment which ultimately led to the resignation of the mayor in 2024.

Key Challenges

The divide between Harrison's council began following Ed Wood's election as Mayor in October 2022. In February 2023, this was demonstrated when it was announced that all four members of Harrison's council had signed a vote of no confidence in regard to the leadership of Wood as Mayor¹⁷⁶. Shortly after, a council meeting nearly broke down after the mayor threatened to have two council members physically removed from the council meeting over an agenda dispute¹⁷⁷.

Harrison saw the resignation of 5 key municipal staff in a short time. This included Harrison's financial officer, CAO, and deputy CAO¹⁷⁸. Shortly following, councillor John Buckley resigned, stating that he could no longer work with Wood, citing conflict within council as the reason for his departure¹⁷⁹.

In response to these issues, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs appointed Ron Poole as an independent municipal advisor to assess and assist with the governance of Harrison. Poole presented his findings in a report providing seven recommendations to improve governance. The recommendations suggested that council undergo mandatory elected official training, establish respectful relationships, and adopt a code of conduct. The motion to receive the report ultimately passed 3-2, with Wood and one other councillor opposed¹⁸⁰.

In March 2024, Wood asked the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to dissolve Harrison's council, a legislatively invalid move that drew further criticism to Wood¹⁸¹. Weeks later, Wood accused three of Harrison's council members of staging a coup against him and another councillor¹⁸².

¹⁷⁴ Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Harrison Hot Springs, Village (VL). Government of Canada.

¹⁷⁵ Village of Harrison Hot Springs. (2026). Village Council.

¹⁷⁶ Louis, A. (2023). Harrison council calls for no-confidence vote against Mayor Ed Wood. Agassiz-Harrison Observer.

¹⁷⁷ Louis, A. (2024). Tensions boil over as 2 councillors nearly ejected from Harrison Council Meeting. Agassiz-Harrison Observer.

¹⁷⁸ Louis, A. (2023). Harrison Hot Springs financial officer resigns, marking fourth managerial departure this year. Agassiz-Harrison Observer.

¹⁷⁹ Louis, A. (2023). Harrison councillor resigns as turmoil with new leadership continues. Trail Times.

¹⁸⁰ Louis, A. (2023). Another Harrison council meeting ends early amid clashes. Agassiz-Harrison Observer.

¹⁸¹ Louis, A. (2024). Beleaguered B.C. village council cannot turn itself off. Surrey Now-Leader.

¹⁸² Louis, A. (2024). ‘Totally disgraceful’: Harrison council meeting falls apart after ‘coup’ accusations. Agassiz-Harrison Observer.

Resolution

In June 2024, Ed Wood resigned as Harrison's Mayor following nearly two years of dysfunction in the village's council¹⁸³. Two weeks following Wood's resignation, Harrison's council adopted a code of conduct bylaw¹⁸⁴. In September 2024, Fred Talen was elected as the mayor of Harrison Hot Springs¹⁸⁵.

Lessons Learned

The case of Harrison Hot Springs demonstrates what can happen when internal conflict overshadows a public duty to responsible governance. The ongoing conflict between council created major dysfunction in governance which eroded public trust and impacted decision-making, ultimately requiring the Province to intervene.

The City of Surrey – Politics vs. Governance

With a population just short of 400,000, the City of Surrey is BC's second largest city¹⁸⁶. Surrey's council is made up of eight councillors and Mayor, Brenda Locke¹⁸⁷. Surrey adopted its Council Code of Conduct Bylaw in May 2020 on a five to four council vote¹⁸⁸. Subsequently, in July 2020, Surrey became the first municipality in BC to formally establish and appoint an Ethics Commissioner to oversee the administration of the code as well as council conduct and ethics complaints¹⁸⁹. The City of Vancouver is BC's only other municipality to voluntarily establish an independent ethics position by appointing an Integrity Commissioner in 2022¹⁹⁰.

The City of Surrey has faced significant governance challenges surrounding the transition from the RCMP to the Surrey Police Service (SPS). This transition became a central issue in the 2022 municipal election after Locke was elected on a platform to keep the RCMP, despite a 2018 city council vote to transition from the RCMP to the SPS with provincial approval¹⁹¹. The controversy surrounding Locke's platform highlighted deep divisions within Surrey's council and between the municipal and provincial authorities.

Key Challenges

Shortly after Locke was elected as mayor, Surrey council narrowly voted 5-4 in a decision to retain the RCMP, effectively halting the transition to the SPS¹⁹². The close 5-4 council vote to keep the RCMP highlighted deep division within Surrey's council and created an increasingly polarized and dysfunctional workplace.

¹⁸³ Larsen, K. (2024). Harrison Hot Springs mayor resigns amid ongoing council acrimony. CBC News.

¹⁸⁴ Louis, A. (2024). Harrison Council approves Code of Conduct. Agassiz-Harrison Observer.

¹⁸⁵ Pawson, C., Kshatri, S., & McElroy, J. (2024). Harrison Hot Springs elects new mayor, councillor in byelection. CBC News.

¹⁸⁶ World Population Review. (2026). British Columbia Cities by Population 2026.

¹⁸⁷ City of Surrey. (2025). Mayor & Council.

¹⁸⁸ Zytaruk, T. (2020). Surrey Council Code of Conduct gets final nod on five-yes, four-no vote. Surrey Now-Leader.

¹⁸⁹ Manhas, S. (2020). City of Surrey Appoints Ethics Commissioner. Young-Anderson Barristers & Solicitors.

¹⁹⁰ City of Vancouver. (2025). Integrity Commissioner.

¹⁹¹ Surrey Police Service. (2024). Policing Transition. SPS.

¹⁹² Dickson, C. (2022). Surrey city council has voted to keep the RCMP. What happens now? CBC News.

Months following the vote to retain the RCMP, city councillor Rob Stutt was determined to have breached Surrey's Code of Conduct Bylaw by the city's Ethics Commissioner due to a conflict of interest for failing to disclose family connections to the RCMP. It was noted that Stutt should not have voted in the decision to retain the RCMP, which would have resulted in a 4-4 tied vote and a failure of the motion¹⁹³.

Resolution

Despite the vote to keep the RCMP, the Province ordered Surrey to continue on with the transition to the SPS¹⁹⁴. In November 2024, the six-year saga over the transition from the RCMP to the SPS concluded, with the SPS becoming the official law enforcement body for the City of Surrey¹⁹⁵.

Lessons Learned

The City of Surrey's dispute concerning the police force transition illustrated the impacts that political division and conflict can have on local governance. The challenges associated with this major policy change highlighted internal division and conflicts of interest within Surrey's city council, ultimately damaging public trust and council relations.

The District of West Vancouver – Ethics without Enforcement

With a population of just over 44,000¹⁹⁶, the District of West Vancouver's council includes six councillors and Mayor, Mark Sager¹⁹⁷. West Vancouver has dealt with responsible conduct challenges surrounding the conduct of the Mayor, Mark Sager, however, West Vancouver has publicly opted not to adopt a code of conduct to help address these challenges, presenting a unique example in BC's landscape of responsible conduct.

Key Challenges

In April 2023, West Vancouver council gave a first reading to a new proposed Council Code of Conduct Bylaw in an open council meeting. One month following, Mayor Mark Sager created a code of conduct committee to take considerations and reviews towards adopting the proposed bylaw¹⁹⁸.

In June 2023, a third-party investigation was prompted after Sager was named in a formal staff complaint alleging bullying and harassment by the mayor. Subsequently the CAO, left West Vancouver's government. Three months prior, West Vancouver's deputy CAO had also left the district. This raised legitimate concerns about the leadership and overall work environment in West Vancouver's government¹⁹⁹. The results of this investigation, however, were never made public.

¹⁹³ Pawson, C. (2023). Surrey, B.C., councillor breached code of conduct over police vote, ethics commissioner says. CBC News.

¹⁹⁴ Meissner, D. (2023). Province orders City of Surrey to stick with transition to municipal police force. CBC News.

¹⁹⁵ Surrey Police Service. (2024). Surrey Police Service Becomes Police of Jurisdiction for the City of Surrey. SPS.

¹⁹⁶ Statistics Canada. (2021). West Vancouver, District municipality (DM). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population.

¹⁹⁷ West Vancouver. (2026). Mayor & Council.

¹⁹⁸ West Vancouver. (2024). Memorandum, Proposed Council Code of Conduct Bylaw. District of West Vancouver.

¹⁹⁹ Seyd, J. (2023). West Van mayor investigated for workplace bullying. North Shore News.

In February 2024, Mayor Sager was barred from practicing law for two years by the BC Law Society after Sager admitted to improperly withdrawing funds and failing to maintain records following the handling of a client's estate. This was Sager's second disciplinary action, facing previous sanctions in 2019 for accepting gifts²⁰⁰. Following Sager's suspension, former mayor of West Vancouver, Michael Smith publicly stated that he believed Sager had lost credibility and should step down as mayor. This also prompted a West Vancouver resident to start an online petition for Sager to resign as the mayor²⁰¹.

Resolution

Despite the controversy surrounding Sager, West Vancouver's council rejected the adoption of the proposed Council Code of Conduct Bylaw in a five to two vote in April 2024. West Vancouver's council maintained that the proposed bylaw was rejected to avoid excessive regulation that would create time consuming complaints, citing the City of Kamloops as example for avoiding the adopting of a code of conduct²⁰².

Lessons Learned

The case of West Vancouver is unique in BC's context. The District of West Vancouver has not experienced governance challenges as significant as some of the other municipalities in the province highlighted in the prior sections of the chapter. However, despite publicly cited professional misconduct from the mayor, along with a formal investigation into workplace misconduct, coupled with the current landscape of responsible conduct challenges in BC's local governments, the District of West Vancouver has shown a reluctance to promote ethical standards in local governance through the use of a formal code of conduct. Ultimately, this has created some public skepticism surrounding the integrity of West Vancouver's governance and raises questions over the effectiveness of BC's framework model.

Summary

Together, the cases of Kamloops, Harrison, Surrey, and West Vancouver showcase the variation of responsible conduct challenges in BC's local governments, highlighting how challenges can emerge in different forms and contexts, and how these resulting stresses can impact governance. These cases included a council pitted against its mayor, a council split between themselves, a community divided because of a key policy change, and a municipality displaying a questionable reluctance to enforce ethical standards amid controversy. In each case, the ability for locally elected officials to perform their duties was impacted, public trust was eroded, and relationships were damaged. The cases also show that misconduct challenges can be driven by personality and behavioural challenges, political influence, and by structural and institutional factors.

²⁰⁰ Ruttle, J. (2024). West Vancouver Mayor Mark Sager barred from practising law for two years. Vancouver Sun.

²⁰¹ Seyd, J. (2024). Former West Van mayor Mike Smith calls on current Mayor Mark Sager to resign. North Shore News.

²⁰² Seyd, J. (2024). West Vancouver council rejects code of conduct as unnecessary bureaucracy. North Shore News.

Chapter 8: Analysis and Discussion

This chapter will overview the discussion and analysis portion of this project and will consist of three sections. The first section will provide a brief summary of each line of evidence presented in Chapters 4 through 7 of this study. This will include the literature review, document review, cross jurisdictional scan, and case studies. The second section will identify and present the key findings that emerged through the cross-cutting themes of this project. The third section will provide the discussion for this chapter by refining the strategic problem, identifying the current state of play, and presenting the criteria that will be used to evaluate the policy options offered in Chapter Nine.

Review of Evidence

Four lines of evidence have been presented in this project: the literature review, document review, cross-jurisdictional scan, and four case studies. The first section of this three-part chapter will provide a reminder of each of the four lines of evidence, highlighting the core concepts presented, the key findings, and how each has worked to support the analysis and discussion chapter of this project.

Literature Review

The literature review established the conceptual and thematic foundation for the project. The literature employed a heavy focus on the BC context for this challenge, while also including academic literature that expanded the scope of the review to the broader Canadian context. The review identified six key themes surrounding the responsible conduct of locally elected officials. The themes that emerged from the literature highlighted:

- The conceptual foundations of responsible conduct and good governance.
- The trends in local government misconduct.
- The driving factors of misconduct.
- The key components of responsible conduct frameworks.
- Identifying BC's pathways for reform.
- Key implementation barriers and gaps in the literature.

The key themes noted that responsible conduct challenges are trending in local governments across BC, highlighting the key governance pressures that have contributed to these issues. The literature also pointed to the importance of enforcing an effective responsible conduct framework and the key components needed to support it. Conceptually, the key themes that emerged from the literature review suggested that misconduct challenges may be shaped by institutional capacity and stressed the need for clearly defined and structured frameworks to help shape governance conduct standards and the values of locally elected officials.

Document Review

The document review provided the primary empirical assessment for the project, examining BC's responsible conduct framework, specifically looking at codes of conduct from across the province. In total, 132 codes of conduct from BC's municipalities and regional districts were collected. It analyzed the structure of codes, looking at the different content and procedures involved.

The review indicated that while the adoption of codes of conduct has become more common across BC, there remains a significant lack of consistency among codes. Notably, variation in the promotion of behavioural standards, expectations for conduct and the procedures and processes involved highlighted a serious need for consistency across the province.

The document review identified the core elements used to characterize a robust code of conduct:

- Promoted key principles and values.
- Outlined general expectations or standards for conduct.
- Detailed procedures used for processing complaints, managing investigations, and handling resolutions.
- Provided an exhaustive set of sanctions.
- Identified necessary post-investigation matters.

However, less than half of the codes collected contained all these core elements. But the codes that were adopted as bylaws included the core elements to be considered robust at a substantially higher rate than those implemented as policies. This highlighted the legislative requirements for adopting bylaws as a possible indicator to this finding, noting the increased collaboration, discussion, and rounds of approvals involved in the bylaw adoption process.

In short, the application of BC's responsible conduct framework is too inconsistent across local governments, suggesting that legislative amendments targeting mandatory codes of conduct for all local governments would significantly improve the inconsistencies seen in BC's current framework.

Cross-Jurisdictional Scan

The cross-jurisdictional scan comparatively situated BC's responsible conduct framework within the broader scope of Canada's other provincial frameworks. It identified the components offered across provincial frameworks, looking at key tools such as mandatory codes of conduct, model codes of conduct or prescribed content for codes, mandatory education and training for elected officials, established procedures, integrity commissioner models, and sanctions.

The cross-jurisdictional scan indicates that provincial responsible conduct frameworks are mostly consistent. Canada's provinces are motivated and have taken steps to promote responsible conduct and improve local governance standards by making many of the above framework components mandatory for all local governments. This also demonstrated that multiple pathways exist for establishing a strong framework to improve local governance standards. In this sense, the cross-jurisdictional scan showcased that BC remains significantly behind the rest of Canada in establishing an enforceable responsible conduct framework. BC is in a unique position, however, and can apply and adapt the experiences and successes from other provincial models to develop approaches that accommodate the needs of BC's local governments.

Case Studies

The case studies provided applied evidence that demonstrated how responsible conduct challenges have emerged and been managed across local governments in BC. The case of Kamloops highlighted the damaging effects that the conduct of a single elected official can have on the operational stability of a local government. The case of Harrison showcased extreme

internal division that split a council and resulted in a significant governance fallout that caused one councillor to step down and led the mayor to resign in the absence of a code of conduct. In both cases, Kamloops and Harrison required the Province to appoint a municipal advisor to offer guidance and provide recommendations. The case of Surrey showcased the major policy change surrounding the police force transition which highlighted internal division and conflicts of interest within city council and the impact that it can have on public trust and council relations, even with the presence of a formal ethics commissioner model.

West Vancouver provides a unique example. It focused on the conduct of the mayor, who had been the focus of a formal workplace misconduct investigation, and was suspended by the BC Law Society. West Vancouver's council was reluctant to promote and improve responsible conduct standards by opting to not introduce a formal code of conduct, showcasing how a discretionary approach has enabled local governments to reject the promotion of improved conduct and governance despite facing misconduct challenges.

Key Findings

Section two of this chapter identifies three cross-cutting themes that emerged from the evidence provided in the literature review, the document review, the cross-jurisdictional scan, and the four case studies. The first theme highlights the challenges associated with the voluntary nature of BC's responsible conduct framework. The second theme identifies the structural solution to improving the current framework through legislative amendments to mandate codes of conduct for all local governments. The final theme brings attention to the external pressures and social dynamics driving the broader behavioural challenges surrounding responsible conduct and offers standardized training and educational approaches as a solution.

A Voluntary Framework: The Bar Has Been Set Too Low

Perhaps the clearest theme that has emerged is that BC's framework has set the bar too low. As it stands, participation in BC's responsible conduct framework is voluntary for local governments. The evidence has shown that a commitment to improving and promoting accountability and ethical standards in local governance should not be optional, it should be a priority.

Since the Community Charter was introduced in 2003, responsible conduct challenges have grown with limited legislative change. While the Community Charter is generally considered a modern approach to local government legislation, focusing on enhancing autonomy for local governments and providing broader powers, the discretionary structure of this approach has not resulted in the supports needed to address and manage these challenges. BC's laissez-faire approach is effectively grounded through the 2021 legislative amendments to the Community Charter, only requiring municipalities to consider adopting a code of conduct rather than making it mandatory. This voluntary structure can be reflected clearly when comparing the tools offered in BC's framework against those available in Canada's other provincial frameworks.

BC's local government partnership organizations offer voluntary training and education courses on responsible conduct. BC's framework has no role in mandating education or training for locally elected officials, making participation optional. Outside of BC, six provinces have framework elements that mandate education and training for elected officials. With the recent exception of Alberta, BC is the only province in Canada without mandatory codes of conduct for

all municipalities. Each province with mandatory codes also prescribes mandatory content through a regulation, with four mandating the use of a model code of conduct as well. BC's framework offers recommended content through WGRC's foundational principles and model code of conduct; however, these resources are purely advisory and not enforceable. Mandating content for codes of conduct also ensures that local governments follow established procedures for managing complaints, conducting investigations, reaching resolutions, and determining sanctions.

All other provinces have these processes built into their frameworks, with three having an integrity commissioner model in place. BC's lack of mandatory framework elements has not required local governments to enforce mechanisms to establish these key processes. The Province's direct intervention concerning responsible conduct challenges has been limited to the deployment of municipal advisors to provide guidance and offer recommendations during conflicts. In these cases, councils are still required to vote to request the Province to appoint a municipal advisor, often happening only when conflict has become so severe that necessary governance operations are being impacted.

Together, the lines of evidence point towards the current frameworks voluntary nature being problematic, suggesting that BC's responsible conduct challenges stem from the absence of consistent and mandated elements, rather than just the presence of misconduct. The document review demonstrated that voluntary adoption produces uneven results, identifying that less than half of all codes of conduct in BC met the necessary criteria to be considered robust, and presented two areas where uniformity in codes could be improved. Assessing against WGRC's key components of an effective responsible conduct framework illustrates that BC's framework has neglected to enforce any of these standards, systematically failing to guarantee the governance mechanisms identified as being foundational to responsible conduct oversight. At the ground level, the case of West Vancouver showcases that the lack of oversight has enabled BC's municipalities to abstain from taking actions to improve conduct and governance standards despite facing misconduct challenges.

The Province should consider where the bar needs to be set. BC's experience over the 2022-2026 municipal term has shown that the voluntary approach to responsible conduct is insufficient, and that the existing framework has not equipped local governments with the tools to manage cases of misconduct and conflicts effectively. The new local election cycle beginning in late 2026 offers BC a practical policy window to implement mandated elements that goes beyond the current framework's voluntary approach. The following key finding identifies the best approach for the Province moving forward.

Raising the Bar, Mandating Uniformity

While the first key finding of this project demonstrated the shortcomings of BC's responsible conduct framework and the challenges associated with its voluntary nature and inconsistent structure, the second key finding identifies the key components required for the Province to improve current conditions and effectively raise the bar. In principle, BC's framework exists, but it is not institutionally guaranteed.

Each line of evidence showed that responsible conduct frameworks function more effectively when they are formally embedded in the model and identified this structural gap in BC's framework. The literature review defined the components for an effective framework, the document review identified existing inconsistencies, the cross-jurisdictional scan determined that stronger framework models exist, and the case studies showed the ground-level consequences of a lack of structural stability. The evidence in this project suggests that BC requires a responsible conduct framework that mandates a consistent and uniform approach. The direct and most effective approach for the Province is to introduce legislative amendments and a regulation to make codes of conduct mandatory and prescribe required elements that establish shared expectations of behaviour, standards for conduct, and regulate uniform procedures for all local governments.

The evidence identifies the core elements of a responsible conduct framework can be formally embedded and administered using a code of conduct. The code of conduct document review revealed the significant lack of consistency in BC's codes of conduct through two key findings. Only 49% of the codes collected in the document review included all five core elements of robust codes of conduct and only 20% BC's codes of conduct were adopted as local government bylaws. 90% of the codes that were adopted in bylaw included all five core elements, whereas under 40% of codes adopted as local government policies met those criteria. This inconsistency confirmed that the presence of a code of conduct does not necessarily guarantee effective oversight, that a code of conduct containing these elements collectively operationalizes the entire responsible conduct system of a local government.

Paired together, the literature review, cross-jurisdictional scan, and case studies reinforce this conclusion. The literature review defined the core elements of effective responsible conduct frameworks. Each of the five core elements observed in robust codes of conduct corresponds directly with one or more of WGRC's key responsible conduct framework components. Five of the provincial frameworks presented in the cross-jurisdictional scan position mandatory codes of conduct as the primary delivery mechanism of their model through legislation and regulations. The BC case studies indicated that BC's 2021 legislative amendments were not strong enough, showcasing the ground-level consequences of a weak structured model through continued council dysfunction and conflict. The experience in the case studies may raise the following question: if codes of conduct exist and governance challenges still occur, why make them mandatory? The answer is that a code of conduct cannot eliminate misconduct, however, it can ensure that there are structured principles and responses in place when misconduct occurs.

The central conclusion of this key finding is that BC's responsible conduct framework can no longer rely on increased encouragement and municipal discretion. Rather, it requires the establishment of uniform, mandatory, and institutionally guaranteed foundations. BC can learn from the experiences of other jurisdictions to employ a mandatory code of conduct that incorporates the identified elements of a robust code as the first step towards addressing BC's responsible conduct challenges. Mandatory codes of conduct should not be understood as restrictive instruments for local governments, but as the institutional foundation and key delivery mechanism for improving governance standards.

The Elements of a Legislated Code of Conduct are Clear

The evidence shows that legislative amendments to sections 113.1 and 113.2 of the Community Charter will be required to make codes of conduct mandatory for all of BC's local governments. Further, pairing legislation with a new regulation will be necessary to establish prescribed elements for codes. The conclusions drawn in the document review suggest that an effective mandatory code of conduct will require the elements identified in robust codes. At a minimum, this requires:

- Clearly defined principles and values.
- Clearly defined behavioural expectations and standards for conduct outlining standardized areas such as conflicts of interest, interactions with staff, public, and media, handling of information, acceptance of gifts, etc.
- An accessible and structured complaint submission process.
- A structured and defined investigation process highlighting procedures for the preliminary assessment of complaints, use of third-party investigators, and process for making determinations.
- Formal and informal resolution procedures.
- An exhaustive list of standardized and enforceable sanctions with criteria for assessing sanctions.
- Post investigation sections outlining procedural fairness protections, public reporting requirements, final determinations from council, reimbursement of legal fees, etc.
- Codes of conduct to be adopted as bylaws.

A model code of conduct may support the regulation and legislative amendments but should not act as a single uniform code across the province. While the prescribed elements must be included in codes, it's important that local governments retain the ability to tailor elements of a code to meet the specific needs of their communities.

The legislative requirements for adopting a local government bylaw can allow for this. Bylaws require three readings and must be read and adopted in open council meetings. This process emphasizes the importance of collaboration, teamwork, and public trust in local governance by giving elected officials the opportunity to discuss and make changes to the principles of the bylaw before it is adopted and for the public to understand the reasons for a decision.

Addressing Complex Modern Challenges

The final key finding identifies the root causes of BC's responsible conduct challenges, beyond the institutional shortcomings that have been highlighted in the previous two findings. Local governments are facing an increase of complex modern challenges. These challenges, like responsible conduct, reflect a combination of behavioural and broader structural pressures that have been shaped by the increasingly complex environment that local governments are operating within.

Local governments are becoming increasingly responsible for managing complex local challenges in their communities. These challenges have created conditions in local governance where conflict has become more prevalent and difficult to manage. These complex challenges can include managing public disorder concerns like homelessness and public drug use, housing shortages and affordability, infrastructure demands, and rising policing costs. These challenges

are complex and can become highly visible, emotional, and politically polarizing for communities, and can increase division and conflict amongst decision makers. Further, many of the challenges hold shared responsibilities between different levels of government, often requiring long term policy coordination that requires provincial responsibilities with local delivery, leaving the immediate pressure to act most visibly on local governments.

The literature review noted that the prevalence of social media puts pressure on elected officials to react quickly to issues, however, this dynamic has created an environment that can amplify conflict through increased public criticism and personal attacks on elected officials. This was also a focus of the 2024 Federation of Canadian Municipalities resolution, “Harassment of Elected Local Government Officials”²⁰³. This environment may also discourage moderation, and normalize more confrontational, aggressive, and extreme discourse. This environment of putting elected officials under constant public pressure in the face of complex modern challenges poses a significant structural risk for local governments. Particularly in smaller communities with lower voter turnout, qualified candidates may be discouraged to seek office because of these dynamics. This can empower single-issue candidates whose governing approaches may contribute more to disruption than collaboration. The case of Kamloops, whose mayor was elected on a platform focused primarily on public safety, illustrates this structural risk. Additionally, in the Village of Lions Bay, the mayor campaigned on a platform of efficiency and removed key municipal staff in the early part of the term causing additional staff to leave²⁰⁴.

As local governments remain bound to the mechanisms available to them from provincial legislation, BC’s responsible conduct framework should incorporate preventative measures to strengthen and support governance culture. Standardized training and governance education initiatives remain a key component to supporting the delivery of legislative amendments and is mandated for all local governments in six of Canada’s other provincial responsible conduct frameworks. Education and training support local governance and strengthen understanding on roles and responsibilities and provides the foundation for building relationships based on integrity, respect, accountability, and leadership and collaboration. Building on the work done by LGMA, UBCM, and the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs, the Province should update the available training and education programs offered to align with legislative amendments and look to make participation mandatory for all locally elected officials.

While some of the broader complex modern local governance challenges may fall beyond the scope of this study, this key finding illustrates how external pressures and social dynamics have contributed to BC’s responsible conduct challenges. Communities do not operate in isolation, and external factors influence local issues and decisions. Complex modern problems faced by local governments that go beyond more simple core services require better tools and supports. Solutions to this challenge must recognize these multidimensional aspects, and address the behavioural dynamics of elected officials, and the structural pressures local governments are faced with. Together, mandated and standardized training strengthens governance culture, while uniform institutional mechanisms manage governance breakdowns.

²⁰³ Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (2024). Harassment of Elected Local Government Officials. FCM Resolutions.

²⁰⁴ Dyer, K. (2023). Village Rocked by Resignations. Lions Bay Watershed.

Implications and Criteria for Evaluating Policy Options

At the outset of this research, this project was concerned with the factors driving the different forms of misconduct occurring in BC's local governments, and the options available to address these challenges. The challenge is not simply concerned with isolated instances of governance misconduct or the absence of codes of conduct in local governments. Rather, the evidence presented through this chapter has suggested that the strategic problem of this project is more precisely defined: BC lacks a responsible conduct framework that is applied consistently, institutionally guaranteed, and effective in managing local governance misconduct and conflict in an increasingly complex governance environment.

The current state of play in BC reflects this strategic problem. The 2021 amendments to the Community Charter established expectations and encouragement surrounding the use of codes of conduct for local governments but fell short of making codes mandatory and prescribing uniform standards and procedures. The amendments were successful in encouraging BC's local governments to adopt codes of conduct; however, the lack of uniformity and enforcement has left the Province with a fragmented system. This has resulted in significant inconsistency among codes in how behavioural expectations and standards for conduct are defined, and how the processes for complaints, investigations, resolutions, and sanctions are established and managed. Simultaneously, locally elected officials are under the spotlight, operating in an increasingly high pressure and complex governance environment. Together, these dynamics have created conditions where disruptive conflict and misconduct have become more prevalent and difficult to manage for local governments.

The Province needs to establish a responsible conduct framework that targets the strategic problem and improves the current state of play. Informed by findings in this chapter, the following criteria emerged to evaluate the potential options presented in the next chapter:

- *Effectiveness*: will be measured by the extent to which an option is able to establish consistent and enforceable framework mechanisms and reduce the likelihood of misconduct and conflict in local governance.
- *Consistency & Uniformity*: will be measured by the degree to which an option is applied uniformly across all of BC's local governments, ensuring consistent expectations for behaviour, standards of conduct, procedures, enforcement, and protections.
- *Feasibility & Practicality*: will be measured by the ability for an option to be effectively implemented across the variety and size of BC's local governments. This criterion will account for the administrative capacity of local governments and consider the capacity of the Province to develop approaches that ensure legal clarity and fit into optimal time frames to deliver legislation.
- *Support for Governance Culture*: will be measured by the extent to which an option promotes the understanding of roles and responsibilities, ethical behaviour, and responsible conduct through education and training initiatives for elected officials. This criterion will also evaluate the extent to which an option respects local autonomy.
- *Resilience to Modern Governance Pressures*: will be measured by the ability of an option to equip a council or board to effectively manage conflict in an increasingly complex and high-pressure governance environment.
- *Costs*: will be measured by the potential costs for the Province to implement options, considering fiscal implications and cost-effectiveness.

This chapter has identified the shift in the strategic and logical trajectory of this project. This project no longer questions whether reforms to BC's responsible conduct framework are needed, it specifically recognizes how the targeted approach should be structured. This section has refined the strategic problem, clarified the current state of play, and provided the key criteria for the consideration of potential policy options.

Chapter 9: Options and Recommendation

This chapter will introduce the options and recommendation portion of this project and will consist of two sections. The first section introduces three potential policy options to improve BC's responsible conduct framework. Each policy option will be evaluated against the criteria presented in the previous chapter to inform the recommended policy approach for the Province. Section two of this chapter offers a detailed implementation plan for the recommended approach.

Policy Options

This section presents three potential policy options that offer incremental increases in the level of provincial intervention. Option 1 provides minimal reform, offering a model that enhances the current status-quo. Option 2 presents a structured mandatory framework centered on codes of conduct and training for elected officials. Option 3 employs a centralized integrity commissioner oversight model. The three policy options will be evaluated based on the criteria presented in the previous chapter. This evaluation will inform the recommended policy approach for this project.

1. Modified Status-Quo

Option 1 focuses on strengthening guidance and encouraging improved governance standards but maintains the voluntary measures found in BC's current legislative framework. This is the least disruptive approach, providing a modified but enhanced status-quo model.

Under this approach, the framework would include:

- New and updated guidance material provided by the Province encouraging local governments to adopt stronger and more consistent codes of conduct.
- A model code of conduct to encourage local governments to incorporate robust code of conduct elements.
- Expanded and updated voluntary governance training initiatives provided by the Province for elected officials.

This approach would not include:

- Amendments to sections 113.1 and 113.2 of the Community Charter, maintaining that the adoption of codes of conduct remains optional for local governments.
- A regulation prescribing mandatory elements or procedures, maintaining that the content and structure of codes of conduct is left to the discretion of local governments.
- Any requirement for local governments to adopt codes of conduct as bylaws, allowing the use of policies to remain in place for the adoption of codes.

This option offers an incremental, low cost, and politically safe approach that promotes autonomy and flexibility for local governments with minimal provincial intervention. Local governments would not be obligated to adhere to any statutory requirements, and the Province would avoid the administrative complexity of drafting and introducing legislative amendments.

However, this approach would not address the uneven standards, structural inconsistency, and uneven enforcement seen in the current framework. While this option takes steps towards improving the current state of play, the evidence in this project has demonstrated that voluntary

approaches that rely on local government discretion do not institutionally guarantee a uniform and enforceable framework.

2. Structured Framework with Mandatory Elements

Option 2 establishes a uniform and mandatory framework that is centered on the use of codes of conduct established through three core components: legislative amendments, regulation, and training initiatives. This approach builds on the recommendations offered in the key findings, targeting the structural and behaviour aspects of responsible conduct challenges, and directly addresses the criteria presented in the previous chapter.

Legislative Amendments

Legislative amendments to sections 113.1 and 113.2 of the Community Charter would be amended to make codes of conduct mandatory for all of BC's local governments.

- Section 113.1 would be amended to add a new requirement, mandating each municipal council and regional district board to adopt a code of conduct, or update an existing code of conduct, in accordance with the code of conduct regulation, by bylaw, for council and board members to adhere to.
- Section 113.2 would be amended to add a requirement for each municipal council and regional district board to conduct a review of its code of conduct bylaw within six months after its first regular council meeting following a general election, providing the opportunity for collaboration among council and board members to update their code of conduct. This review would be done in an open meeting, and any resolutions would be adopted by a majority vote.
- A legislative requirement would be introduced to this section of the Community Charter, mandating all council and board members to participate in and complete responsible conduct training within six months of the first regular council or board meeting following a general election.
- Sections 145.93, 145.94, and 145.95 of the Vancouver Charter would be amended to adhere to the amendments to sections 113.1 and 113.2 of the Community Charter.

Regulation

This option would pair the legislative amendments with a regulation to establish prescribed elements for all codes of conduct. The elements prescribed in the regulation would require:

- Codes of conduct to be adopted strictly as bylaws following the formal bylaw adoption process.
- Codes of conduct to apply directly to municipal council and regional district board members.
- Clearly defined principles and values for elected officials to adhere to. This would be reflected through the Foundational Principles of Responsible Conduct of integrity, accountability, respect, and leadership and collaboration.
- Clearly defined behavioural expectations and standards of conduct demonstrating the conduct reflected by each of the Foundational Principles.
- Clearly defined sections outlining standardized areas of conduct for elected officials. These key sections would highlight conduct surrounding conflicts of interest, interactions with staff, interactions with the public and media, acceptance of gifts and benefits, collection and handling of information, use of social media, use of influence, use of

public resources, business relations, and election activities. In addition to the sections highlighted above, councils and boards would be permitted to adapt any other specific areas of conduct to cater to the needs of their communities.

- A detailed and uniform process for submitting complaints for breaches of the code of conduct. This process would be standardized and accessible for all local governments.
- A detailed and structured process for investigating complaints. The regulation would prescribe uniform procedures for the preliminary assessment of complaints, the use of third parties to conduct investigations on complaints, and the process to make determinations on whether a complaint was found to have breached the code of conduct.
- A detailed and uniform process for informal resolutions of code of conduct breaches.
- A detailed and uniform process for formal resolutions of code of conduct breaches.
- An exhaustive list of standardized and enforceable sanctions. Sanctions would include a letter of reprimand, public censure, request for a letter of apology, requirement to attend specific training or counselling, limitations on access to documents or confidential information, limitations on access to certain municipal or district facilities, suspension or removal from committee or board appointments, prohibition from publicly representing the municipality or district, and suspension or removal from appointment as acting mayor or chair.
- A standardized set of criteria for determining appropriate sanctions following a breach of the code of conduct. These criteria would assess the nature of the breach, whether the code was breached intentionally, whether steps were taken to mitigate the breach, and whether the council or board member has previously breached the code of conduct.
- Detailed post-investigative sections outlining procedures following a breach of the code of conduct. This would include standardized processes for procedural fairness protections for defense against vexatious complaints, public reporting requirements, final determinations to be made by councils or boards, and the reimbursement of costs attributed to legal fees for a council or board member up to a maximum dollar amount.
- That municipal councils and regional district boards retain the authority to tailor any additional provisions to their code of conduct, provided that all the required elements prescribed in the regulation have been satisfied.

To support the implementation of legislative amendments and the regulation, the Province would provide local governments with a model code of conduct reflecting the prescribed elements in the regulation to improve uniformity and streamline the adoption process. Further, adopting a code of conduct as a bylaw ensures that elected officials understand the elements and processes that build the code, and offers flexibility for a local government to adapt any additions necessary for the unique contexts of a community. The process for adopting bylaws enhances collaboration, strengthens accountability, and increases the institutional legitimacy of the code of conduct. Additionally, the review process established by the amendments to section 113.2 of the Community Charter ensures that a code of conduct exists as a living document, allowing local governments to make amendments to modify any elements beyond those prescribed in the regulation.

Education, Training and Guidance Initiatives

The third component of this option incorporates preventative measures through mandatory education and training initiatives for elected officials and guidance material for local

governments. This component supports governance culture, targeting the behavioural aspects of responsible conduct challenges. Training and education programs would be adapted from the work done by LGMA, UBCM, and the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs. This component would:

- Develop a mandatory standardized governance training program for all locally elected officials. Training would focus on strengthening understanding on the roles and responsibilities of elected officials, directly aligning with the legislative and regulatory amendments to BC’s responsible conduct framework.
- Require all council and board members to participate in training at the beginning of each term. Providing training at the beginning of each term allows the Province to adapt the education model to any new changes or trends impacting local governance.
- Provide guidance materials to local governments to support the implementation of the updated framework model, focusing on the role of a code of conduct, the importance of training and education programs, and the impacts of responsible conduct challenges on local governance.
- Provide preventative guidance that identifies the complex external pressures facing elected officials and targets strategies for local governments to mitigate the risk of misconduct.
- Offer guidance on the role and powers of an integrity commissioner. The purpose of this guidance would not be offered to support on a centralized integrity commissioner model. Rather, guidance would support local governments, particularly larger municipalities, interested in appointing a dedicated integrity commissioner.
- Identify a list of potential third-party investigators for local governments to consult.

Under this option, local governments retain the ability to appoint a dedicated integrity commissioner, or to contract an independent third-party investigator to manage complaints and investigations for code of conduct breaches. As a result, the costs attributed remain as the responsibility of the local government.

The three components in this option offer an effective, consistent, and administratively feasible approach that supports autonomy for local governments while addressing the structural shortcomings of BC’s current framework. Option two also addresses the behavioural aspects of responsible conduct challenges by supporting governance culture and equipping local governments with the mechanisms needed to effectively manage conflict.

3. Centralized Oversight Model

Building on the components presented in Option 2, Option 3 offers a centralized approach, shifting authority away from local governments by introducing a centralized provincial integrity commissioner model. Under this model, the authority for oversight to manage code of conduct complaints, handle investigations, and enforce sanctions and resolutions would be managed by a centralized integrity commissioner model. Further, a single provincially prescribed code of conduct would be established to apply to all councils and boards in BC, removing the responsibility for local governments to draft and adopt their own codes.

Legislative Amendments

Option 3 would require significant legislative amendments across BC's legislative framework to establish the authority for a centralized provincial integrity commissioner model.

- New provisions would be introduced to the Community Charter and the Local Government Act, establishing the powers and authority of the centralized provincial integrity commissioner model.
- Section 113.1 of the Community Charter would be amended, mandating all local government councils and boards to adhere to the provincially prescribed code of conduct. This amendment would not include any requirement for codes of conduct to be established as bylaws as local governments would no longer be responsible for drafting or adopting codes.
- Section 113.2 of the Community Charter would be amended, removing any requirement for local government councils or boards to conduct reviews of codes of conduct. Any revisions to the provincial code of conduct would therefore be conducted by the Province. This section would be replaced with a requirement for elected officials to participate in standardized training initiatives focused on the roles and responsibilities of elected officials, the behavioural expectations and standards of conduct prescribed in the provincial code of conduct, the role of the integrity commissioner, and the specific features of the updated centralized framework model. A requirement for all council and board members to participate in training at the beginning of each term would also be included in this section.
- Sections 145.93, 145.94, and 145.95 of the Vancouver Charter would be amended to align to the legislative amendments in the Community Charter.

Regulation

Following the format of the regulation presented in Option 2, Option 3 would introduce a code of conduct regulation to function as a single provincially prescribed code of conduct to apply to all local government councils and boards in BC. Removing any variable elements in codes and establishing a single, uniform code of conduct ensures the highest standard of consistency for the centralized integrity commissioner model.

The regulation would follow the same format as Option 2; however, the following key changes would be required:

- The requirement for codes of conduct to be adopted as bylaws, and the authority for municipal councils and regional district boards to tailor any additional provisions to codes of conduct are not applicable to this model and therefore would not be included in the regulation.
- The regulation would outline the processes for submitting complaints, investigating complaints, reaching informal or formal resolutions, and detailing any post-investigative procedures. However, the regulation would note that these processes are managed directly by the integrity commissioner.
- The regulation would also detail the criteria for determining appropriate sanctions and present an exhaustive list of enforceable sanctions; however, additional and more strict sanctions could be imposed under the centralized model. These would include suspension from carrying out duties as a council or board member for a period of up to 90 days,

reducing or suspending compensation for the duration of a suspension, and imposing fines up to \$1,000.

- Because the regulation would function as single, uniform code of conduct for all local governments, a model code of conduct would not be required.

Integrity Commissioner Office

Creating an independent integrity commissioner office would be a central component of this option. At its outset, the office of the integrity commissioner would be established within the Provincial government and would be supported by ministry staff and approved third-party investigators. The Province may be inclined to appoint a third-party to operate the management of the integrity commissioner office, similar to the Commission Municipale du Quebec which works as the Quebec's provincially appointed independent administrative body.

As an independent authority, the office of the integrity commissioner would be responsible for:

- Receiving code of conduct complaints.
- Screening complaints to determine whether the alleged breach of the code of conduct requires a formal investigation.
- Conducting investigations and preparing investigative reports to determine whether a code of conduct breach has occurred.
- Determining whether a formal resolution is required or if an informal resolution is possible.
- Enforcing sanctions.
- Determining whether complaints were vexatious or made in bad faith.
- Preparing public reports to share findings.

As Option 3 offers a centralized oversight model, the costs attributed to managing code of conduct complaints would shift away from local governments and be taken on by the Province. The costs attributed to this model would require significant operational funding from the Province to support staff.

Of the three options, Option 3 offers the most consistent and uniform approach by removing any variation in locally developed codes of conduct and transferring procedural authority to a centralized integrity commissioner model. However, it would present a significant shift in the autonomy of local governments and would require the most extensive administrative and legislative changes of the three options presented. The centralized model of Option 3 may also present capacity and workload challenges resulting from high administrative costs and the potential for a backlog of code of conduct complaints. While it would offer the highest degree of consistency in the enforcement of BC's responsible conduct framework, it may not be administratively feasible for the Province right now.

Summary Evaluation of Policy Options

The options were evaluated against five criteria: effectiveness, consistency and uniformity, feasibility and practicality, support for governance culture, and resilience to modern governance pressures. The options are assessed on a ranking scale of low to moderate to high (costs are ranked from high to low). The table below displays how each policy option performs across the five evaluation criteria:

Table 8: Criteria Evaluation of Policy Options

Criteria:	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Effectiveness	Low	High	High
Consistency & Uniformity	Low	High	Very High
Feasibility & Practicality	High	Moderate-High	Low
Support for Governance Culture	Moderate	High	Low-Moderate
Resilience to Modern Governance Pressures	Low	High	Moderate-High
Costs	Low	Moderate-Low	High

Option 1 performs the worst across the evaluation criteria. While it ranks highest in terms of administrative feasibility and costs, it performs poorly on effectiveness, consistency, resilience to pressure, and ranks as moderate in terms of support for governance culture because it offers the highest level of autonomy for local governments. Together, this option does not address the structural weaknesses that have been identified in BC’s current responsible conduct framework.

By establishing a centralized oversight model that is paired with a provincially prescribed code of conduct regulation, Option 3 offers the highest level of consistency among the three options. However, Option 3 performs the worst across the options in terms of administrative feasibility and costs and would require the most substantial administrative resources and legislative amendments and may present operational challenges. It would support governance culture through mandatory education and training initiatives for elected officials but would offer the lowest degree of autonomy to local governments. Although Option 3 is very effective in terms of consistency and enforcement, it would prove to be very administratively complex and expensive.

Option 2 offers the most balanced approach across the criteria. It ensures that local governments maintain a reasonable level of autonomy while providing a model that significantly improves the effectiveness and consistency of BC’s framework. Through legislative amendments, a code of conduct regulation, and mandatory training, Option 2 remains as an administratively feasible and cost-effective approach that equips councils and boards with the ability to effectively prevent and manage conflict. Together, this is the most effectively balanced and practical policy option for the Province.

Recommended Approach – Structured Framework with Mandatory Elements

Based on this evaluation, the recommendation of this project is that the Province adopt and implement **Option 2** to replace BC’s current responsible conduct framework. This approach provides a comprehensive and structured framework that improves consistency through mandated elements, is administratively feasible for the Province and BC’s local governments and remains respectful of local government autonomy.

Implementation Plan

Section two of this chapter presents the implementation plan for Option 2. The implementation plan introduces a phased approach consisting of stakeholder consultation, legislative amendments and regulation development, training and education initiatives, implementation period for local governments, and monitoring and reviews.

Timeline for Phased Approach

The following timeline targets October 2026 as an ideal deadline to implement the updated responsible conduct framework to align with BC's upcoming general local election.

- Phase One: Spring 2026
- Phase Two: Summer 2026
- Phase Three: Fall 2026
- Phase Four: Fall 2026 (Post Election)
- Phase Five: 2026-2030 Term

Phase One – Stakeholder Consultation

The first implementation phase is to be led by the Ministry of Housing Municipal Affairs and should focus on consultation and engagement with key stakeholders to ensure coordination. Coordination between the Province, local governments, and local government partner organizations such as UBCM and LGMA will be required to successfully implement Option 2. The purpose of this phase is to help refine the direction of legislative amendments and elements in the regulation by identifying any practical considerations or feedback, ensuring that the components of the updated framework are administratively feasible for local governments. This would also provide the opportunity to incorporate any support mechanisms required to overcome potential barriers that local governments may be faced with. During this phase, provincial staff would begin drafting legislative amendments and the code of conduct regulation.

Phase Two – Legislative Amendments and Regulation Development

The second phase of implementation would be led by the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs and involves two stages to draft legislation and develop the code of conduct regulation. The first stage of this phase would introduce legislative amendments to the Community Charter establish the statutory foundation of the updated responsible conduct framework. Amendments to the Vancouver Charter would also be required to align with the amendments adopted in the Community Charter. The second stage of this phase would be to introduce the code of conduct regulation to supplement the amended legislation. To support local governments, the Province would also develop a model code of conduct in this phase to provide a practical tool that encompasses all the mandatory elements prescribed in the regulation.

The costs for the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs for this phase would be attributed to staff time for the drafting of legislative amendments, the regulation, and the model code of conduct. Ministry staff would also be required to prepare supporting materials such as briefing notes for the minister and cabinet submissions. These are standard components of the legislative process, however, and would not require significant costs or resources beyond the Ministry's existing budget.

Phase Three – Mandatory Training and Education Initiatives

The third implementation phase would be led by the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs. Additionally, UBCM and LGMA are well suited to this assist the Province with this phase as they have already worked on the development of existing education programs for elected officials. This phase would focus on the development, design, and delivery of mandatory training programs for elected officials, as well as the development of any new or updated guidance materials to support local governments. Legislative amendments to the Community Charter

would establish the requirement for council and board members to participate in training programs and delivery would be facilitated by local government partnership organizations in coordination with the Province.

The provincial costs associated with this phase of implementation would be attributed to the design and development of training programs and guidance materials. Costs associated with the delivery of training would be shared with UBCM and LGMA and could be integrated into the existing education programs currently offered to elected officials.

Phase Four – Implementation Period for Local Governments

The fourth implementation phase focuses on local government compliance to the amended legislation and regulation and would be led by local governments with support from the Province. Any local governments without an existing code would be required to adopt a code of conduct bylaw to comply with the legislative amendments to the Community Charter and ensure that the code complies with the elements prescribed in the regulation. Any existing code introduced as a local government policy would need to be repealed and replaced with a bylaw, and any new or existing codes introduced as bylaws would require revisions and amendments to ensure compliance with the code of conduct regulation.

The Province would support the adoption process by providing the model code of conduct. Local governments could adopt the model code as a template and adapt any additional provisions to reflect the unique contexts of their communities. The Province would also provide local governments with additional guidance materials focused on the components of the updated framework. The Province may also be required to offer additional support to smaller municipalities to identify third-party investigators.

Local governments would also be required to comply with the legislative amendments involving mandatory training and education. The Province would deliver training programs; however local governments would be responsible to ensure and report participation from all council and board members.

The implementation costs for this phase would be primarily attributed to local government staff time required for the preparation and adoption of code of conduct bylaws and administrative time required for participation in training. Local governments would face additional costs if engagement with a third-party investigator is required. Provincial costs for this phase would be attributed to ministry staff time required to monitor compliance from local governments.

Phase Five - Monitoring and Review

The final implementation phase would focus on monitoring the effectiveness of BC's updated responsible conduct framework and would be led by the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs. This phase would also be largely supported by input from local governments and partnership organizations like UBCM and LGMA. This initial steps of this phase would monitor and evaluate local government compliance to the legislative amendments, regulation, and training and education initiatives.

Following a full election cycle, this review phase would assess whether the framework has been effective in improving conditions. This assessment would identify whether the framework has been successful in reducing the overall number of cases of misconduct, looking at the frequency and severity of conflicts. Additionally, this evaluation would extend to identifying whether the framework has been successful in improving the overall behaviour of elected officials to ultimately improve local governance standards and conduct.

The review would also identify areas where the framework may require improvements. This may include updates to the regulation or training programs. If the review identifies that conditions have not improved or have worsened, the Province may choose to assess whether further steps are required to improve the framework.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

The aim of this project was to examine the challenges surrounding the responsible conduct of locally elected officials in BC and identify the options available to address them. To do this, four lines of evidence were offered: a literature review, a document review, a cross-jurisdictional scan, and four case studies. Through the evidence gathered, the research presented three key findings that identified the key structural weaknesses of BC's current framework and the factors driving this challenge. In response, three distinct policy options were presented to address these challenges and evaluated against a set of key criteria.

Based on this evaluation, the principal recommendation of this project is for the Province to adopt a structured and mandatory responsible conduct framework supported by legislative amendments, a regulation, and training and education initiatives for locally elected officials. The legislative amendments would require all municipalities and regional districts in BC to adopt code of conduct bylaws, the regulation would ensure consistency across the framework, and mandatory training programs would round out the framework, offering a balanced policy approach that targets the structural and behavioural aspects of this challenge. Together, the recommended approach addresses several gaps in the current framework and offers significant improvements to the current state of play by enhancing consistency across the province while maintaining an appropriate level of autonomy for local governments.

Looking at the structural aspect of this challenge, further research is needed to assess the long-term effectiveness of mandatory codes of conduct in their ability to improve governance standards. As well, research over the next general election term would be required to assess local government compliance. In terms of the behavioural aspects, further research is required to explore the first-hand experiences from councils and boards that have managed cases of misconduct. This could assess the root causes of individual cases of conflict and also help identify any specific structural gaps in complaint and investigation procedures. Lastly, more in depth analysis on the experiences across other provincial frameworks may offer valuable insight to help further refine policy approaches for this challenge.

The Province's recent introduction of Bill 17 further reinforces the relevance of this challenge as a significant local governance policy challenge in BC. While Bill 17 is certainly a step in the right direction, important questions remain regarding the structure of the framework, and the costs associated with enforcement and oversight. The Province will need to closely monitor any new cases of governance misconduct to assess whether conditions have improved, and to determine if future steps towards a more centralized model like Option 3 are required.

This project was not intended to suggest that elected officials aim to routinely act in bad faith. The vast majority of locally elected officials run for office with the intention to act responsibly and positively contribute to the service of their community. However, this project intentionally highlighted that the realities of modern governance environments mean that cases of misconduct from elected officials can and will occur. While there is no way to guarantee that cases of misconduct will be completely eliminated, this project has demonstrated that a structured, consistent, and enforceable responsible conduct framework is required to ensure that the necessary mechanisms are available when misconduct occurs.

Chapter 11: Bibliography

Alberta Municipalities. (2025). Preliminary Analysis of Bill 50: Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.abmunis.ca/system/files/2025-04/ABmunis%20Analysis%20of%20Bill%2050%20-%20MA%20Statutes%20Amendment%20Act%2C%202025%20%2820250417%29.pdf>

AMM. (2026). Home. Association of Manitoba Municipalities. Retrieved from: <https://amm.mb.ca/>

BC Laws. (2021). Bill 26 – 2021: Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act (No. 2), 2021. King’s Printer. Retrieved from: <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/lc/billsprevious/2nd42nd:gov26-3>

BC Laws. (2022). Principles for Codes of Conduct Regulation. King’s Printer. Retrieved from: [https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/136_2022/search/CIVIX_DOCUMENT_ROOT_STEM:\(TREE%20FARM%20LICENCE%20MANAGEMENT%20PLAN%20REGULATION\)%20AND%20CIVIX_DOCUMENT_ANCESTORS:statreg?753](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/136_2022/search/CIVIX_DOCUMENT_ROOT_STEM:(TREE%20FARM%20LICENCE%20MANAGEMENT%20PLAN%20REGULATION)%20AND%20CIVIX_DOCUMENT_ANCESTORS:statreg?753)

BC Laws. (2026). Community Charter. King’s Printer. Retrieved from: https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/03026_00_multi

BC Laws. (2026). Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. King’s Printer. Retrieved from: https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96165_00_multi

BC Laws. (2026). Local Government Act. King’s Printer. Retrieved from: https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/r15001_02#section10

BC Laws. (2026). Vancouver Charter. King’s Printer. Retrieved from: https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/vanch_00_multi

BILD Alberta. (2018). Changes to the Municipal Government Act: Provincial Fact Sheets. Retrieved from: <https://bildalberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2.-MGA-Amendments-Provincial-Fact-Sheets-as-of-1-18-18.pdf>

Bish, R. L., & Clemens, E. G. (2008). Local Government in British Columbia. Fourth Edition. Union of British Columbia Municipalities. Retrieved from: <https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/LGBC-All.pdf>

Braun, H. (2024). Municipal Advisor’s Report. City of Kamloops. Retrieved from: <https://www.kamloops.ca/sites/default/files/2024-05/H.%20Braun%20Municipal%20Advisor%20Report%20-%20Redacted%20Version%20for%20release.pdf>

Charlebois, B. (2024). Surrey council restricts access over ‘disruptive’ pro-Palestine protests. Vancouver Sun. Retrieved from: <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/surrey-council-restricts-access-over-pro-palestine-protests>

City of Abbotsford. (2023). Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2023. Retrieved from: <https://laws.abbotsford.ca/civix/document/id/coa/coabylaws/2023b3455>

City of Kamloops. (2024). City Publishes 2024 Housing Needs Report. Retrieved from: <https://letstalk.kamloops.ca/HousingNeeds/city-publishes-2024-housing-needs-report>

City of Kamloops. (2026). City Council. Retrieved from: <https://www.kamloops.ca/city-hall/city-council>

City of Langley (2023). Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2023. Retrieved from: <https://pub-langleycity.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=16663>

City of Regina. (2017). Code of Ethics Bylaw No. 2017-4. Retrieved from: <https://www.regina.ca/city-government/administration/office-of-the-city-clerk/integrity-commissioner/#:~:text=Integrity%20Commissioner>

City of Saskatoon. (2019). Bylaw No. 9537: The Code of Ethical Conduct for Members of City Council. Retrieved from: <https://www.saskatoon.ca/city-hall/mayor-city-councillors/integrity-commissioner-code-ethical-conduct#:~:text=Bylaw%20No,Ms>

City of Surrey. (2023). Appointment of New Surrey Ethics Commissioner. Retrieved from: <https://www.surrey.ca/news-events/news/appointment-of-new-surrey-ethics-commissioner>

City of Surrey. Surrey Ethics Commissioner Office. (2023). Retrieved from: <https://www.surrey.ca/city-government/mayor-council/surrey-ethics-commissioner-office>

City of Surrey. (2026). Mayor & Council. Retrieved from: <https://www.surrey.ca/city-government/mayor-council>

City of Vancouver. (2025). Integrity Commissioner. Retrieved from: <https://vancouver.ca/your-government/integrity-commissioner.aspx>

City of Vernon. (2023). Council Code of Responsible Conduct. Retrieved from: <https://pub-vernon.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=7535>

CMQ. (2026). Welcome to the Quebec Municipal Commission. Commission Municipale du Québec. Retrieved from: <https://www.cmq.gouv.qc.ca/>

Dickson, C. (2022). Surrey city council has voted to keep the RCMP. What happens now? CBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/surrey-police-service-rcmp-switch-timeline-1.6652986>

Diehl, R. (2023). Municipal Advisor's Report on the State of Governance in the Village of Lions Bay. Village of Lions Bay. Retrieved from: https://www.lionsbay.ca/sites/lionsbay.ca/files/2025-07/R.%20Diehl%20-%20Final%20Report%20to%20Council%20of%20Lions%20Bay%20-%20Aug%2031%202023_0.pdf

District of Lake Country. (2022). Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy 203, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://pub-lakecountry.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=3204>

Duncan, G. (2001). Community Charter Content (Discussion Paper). City of Richmond. Retrieved from: https://citycouncil.richmond.ca/_shared/assets/120301_item73985.pdf

Dyer, K. (2023). Village Rocked by Resignations. Lions Bay Watershed. Retrieved from: <https://www.lionsbaywatershed.ca/post/village-rocked-by-resignations>

EOEP. (2025). Requirements for Council Orientation. Elected Officials Education Program. Retrieved from: <https://eoep.ca/mga-requirements>

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (2024). Harassment of Elected Local Government Officials. FCM Resolutions. Retrieved from: <https://resolutions.fcm.ca/en-US/ResolutionDetails/?id=adabc9c0-e32c-ef11-8e50-002248ada916&return=%2Fen-US%2FResolutions%2F%3Fpage%3D1>

Greene, I., & Shugarman, D. P. (2017). Honest Politics Now: What Ethical Conduct Means in Canadian Public Life.

Government of Alberta. (2017). Code of Conduct for Elected Officials Regulation, Alta Reg 200/2017. Alberta Queen's Printer. Retrieved from: <https://www.canlii.org/en/ab/laws/regu/alta-reg-200-2017/latest/alta-reg-200-2017.html>

Government of Alberta. (2025). Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26. Alberta Queen's Printer. Retrieved from: <https://www.canlii.org/en/ab/laws/stat/rsa-2000-c-m-26/latest/rsa-2000-c-m-26.html>

Government of Alberta. (2025). Modernizing Municipal Processes. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/modernizing-municipal-processes>

Harding, R., & Falzon, N. (2022). Codes of Conduct and More: Elected Officials Behaving Badly. Young Anderson Barristers & Solicitors. Retrieved from: https://www.younganderson.ca/assets/seminar_papers/2022/1-Codes-of-Conduct-and-More.pdf

Harding, R., & McClendon, E. (2015). Open Season on Integrity: Hunting for the Right Solution for BC. Young Anderson Barristers & Solicitors. Retrieved from: https://www.younganderson.ca/assets/seminar_papers/2015/Open-Season-on-Integrity.pdf

Harding, R., MacEachern, C., & Tikhonova, J. (2024). Internal Investigations: Code of Conduct and Workplace Complaints. Young Anderson Barristers & Solicitors. Retrieved from:

<https://www.younganderson.ca/images/2-Internal-Investigations-Code-of-Conduct-and-Workplace-Complaints.pdf>

Hicks Morley. (2018). Municipalities Take Note: The Expanded Role of Integrity Commissioners. Retrieved from: <https://hicksmorley.com/2018/12/04/municipalities-take-note-the-expanded-role-of-integrity-commissioners/#:~:text=,to%20appoint%20an%20Integrity%20Commissioner>

Holliday, K. (2023). Embattled Kamloops city council asking province for help amid discord. Castanet Kamloops. Retrieved from: <https://www.castanetkamloops.net/news/Kamloops/449087/Embattled-Kamloops-city-council-asking-province-for-help-amid-discord>

Holliday, K. (2023). Kamloops council OKs code of conduct changes to avoid high costs for vexatious complaints. Castanet Kamloops. Retrieved from: <https://www.castanetkamloops.net/news/Kamloops/443594/Kamloops-council-OKs-code-of-conduct-changes-to-avoid-high-costs-for-vexatious-complaints>

Holliday, K. (2023). Kamloops council votes unanimously to officially adopt new code of conduct. Castanet Kamloops. Retrieved from: <https://www.castanetkamloops.net/news/Kamloops/426472/Kamloops-council-votes-unanimously-to-officially-adopt-new-code-of-conduct>

Holliday, K. (2024). City of Kamloops reports 17 code of conduct complaints since new bylaw adopted. Castanet Kamloops. Retrieved from: <https://www.castanetkamloops.net/news/Kamloops/469322/City-of-Kamloops-reports-17-code-of-conduct-complaints-since-new-bylaw-adopted>

Holliday, K. (2024). Councillor says new restrictions on Kamloops mayor an ‘extraordinary step’ to protect staff. Castanet Kamloops. Retrieved from: <https://www.castanetkamloops.net/news/Kamloops/481039/Councillor-says-new-restrictions-on-Kamloops-mayor-an-extraordinary-step-to-protect-staff>

Holliday, K. (2024). Former Abbotsford mayor tapped as municipal advisor for embattled Kamloops council. Castanet Kamloops. Retrieved from: <https://www.castanetkamloops.net/news/Kamloops/472269/Former-Abbotsford-mayor-tapped-as-municipal-advisor-for-embattled-Kamloops-council>

Jeronimo, S. N. (2025). Ontario Government Introduces Municipal Accountability Act, 2025. Hicks Morley. Retrieved from: <https://hicksmorley.com/2025/05/08/ontario-government-introduces-municipal-accountability-act-2025/>

Kernaghan, K., & Langford, J. (2014). *The Responsible Public Servant*, Second Edition.

Larsen, K. (2024). Harrison Hot Springs mayor resigns amid ongoing council acrimony. CBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/harrison-hot-springs-mayor-ed-wood-resigns-1.7230332>

Landry, L. (2024). Kamloops council code of conduct investigations cost \$92,000 so far. Infotel. Retrieved from: <https://infonews.ca/news/2484095/kamloops-council-code-of-conduct-investigations-cost-92000-so-far/>

Landry, L. (2024). More than \$287,000 spent so far on Kamloops council conduct investigations. Infotel. Retrieved from: <https://infotel.ca/newsitem/more-than-287000-spent-so-far-on-kamloops-council-conduct-investigations/it107516>

Landry, L. (2024). UPDATE: Kamloops mayor suspends city's top employee. Infotel. Retrieved from: <https://infotel.ca/newsitem/kamloops-mayor-suspends-citys-top-employee/it103985>

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. (2026). Bill 17- 2026 Housing and Municipal Affairs Statutes (Codes of Conduct) Amendment Act, 2026. King's Printer. Retrieved from: https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/overview/43rd-parliament/2nd-session/bills/1st_read/gov17-1.htm

Levine, G. J. (2009). Municipal Ethics Regimes: Second Edition.

LGMA. (2026). Responsible Conduct of Local Government Elected Officials. Local Government Management Association of British Columbia. Retrieved from: <https://www.lgma.ca/responsible-conduct-of-local-government-elect>

Lorraine, C. (2024). Kamloops mayor has pay cut, barred from closed committee meetings. KamloopsBCNow. Retrieved from: https://www.kamloopsbcnow.com/watercooler/news/news/BC_Interior/Kamloops_mayor_has_pay_cut_barred_from_closed_committee_meetings/

Louis, A. (2023). Another Harrison council meeting ends early amid clashes. Agassiz-Harrison Observer. Retrieved from: <https://agassizharrisonobserver.com/2023/11/16/another-harrison-council-meeting-ends-early-amid-clashes/>

Louis, A. (2023). Harrison council calls for no-confidence vote against Mayor Ed Wood. Agassiz-Harrison Observer. Retrieved from: <https://agassizharrisonobserver.com/2023/02/22/breaking-harrison-council-calls-for-no-confidence-vote-against-mayor-ed-wood/>

Louis, A. (2023). Harrison councillor resigns as turmoil with new leadership continues. Trail Times. Retrieved from: <https://trailtimes.ca/2023/06/05/harrison-hot-springs-councillor-john-buckley-resigns/>

Louis, A. (2023). Harrison Hot Springs financial officer resigns, marking fourth managerial departure this year. Agassiz-Harrison Observer. Retrieved from:

<https://agassizharrisonobserver.com/2023/05/04/harrison-hot-springs-financial-officer-resigns-marking-fourth-managerial-departure-this-year/>

Louis, A. (2024). Beleaguered B.C. village council cannot turn itself off. Surrey Now-Leader. Retrieved from: <https://surreynowleader.com/2024/03/25/beleaguered-bc-village-council-cannot-turn-itself-off/>

Louis, A. (2024). Harrison Council approves Code of Conduct. Agassiz-Harrison Observer. Retrieved from: <https://agassizharrisonobserver.com/2024/06/25/harrison-council-approves-code-of-conduct/>

Louis, A. (2024). Harrison officials seek more outside help for good governance. Agassiz-Harrison Observer. Retrieved from: <https://www.agassizharrisonobserver.com/local-news/harrison-officials-seek-more-outside-help-for-good-governance-7361259>

Louis, A. (2024). ‘Totally disgraceful’: Harrison council meeting falls apart after ‘coup’ accusations. Agassiz-Harrison Observer. Retrieved from: <https://agassizharrisonobserver.com/2024/04/17/totally-disgraceful-harrison-council-meeting-falls-apart-after-coup-accusations/>

Manhas, S. (2020). City of Surrey Appoints Ethics Commissioner. Young-Anderson Barristers & Solicitors. Retrieved from: <https://www.younganderson.ca/publications/bulletins/city-of-surrey-appoints-ethics-commissioner>

Manhas, S., Falzon, N., & Ruston, N. (2024). Governance: Common Issues. Young Anderson Barristers & Solicitors. Retrieved from: <https://www.younganderson.ca/images/3-Governance-Common-Issues.pdf>

McElroy, J. (2023). B.C. Councillor steals gavel from deputy mayor as meeting descends into shouting match. CBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/tahsis-council-meeting-dysfunction-1.6787953>

McIntyre, G. (2023). This small B.C. village is split between a feuding council. It’s not the only one. Vancouver Sun. Retrieved from: <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/council-chamber-chaos-in-lions-bay-bc>

Meissner, D. (2023). Province orders City of Surrey to stick with transition to municipal police force. CBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/surrey-police-service-rcmp-transition-bc-decision-1.6910870>

Metro Vancouver. (2026) About Metro Vancouver. Metro Vancouver Regional District. Retrieved from: <https://metrovancover.org/about-us>

OICO. (2026). Encouraging a Culture of Integrity. Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario. Retrieved from: <https://www.oico.on.ca/en/>

Pawson, C. (2023). Surrey, B.C., councillor breached code of conduct over police vote, ethics commissioner says. CBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/surrey-police-union-conflict-of-interest-complaint-surrey-ethics-commissioner-report-1.6883729>

Pawson, C., Kshatri, S., & McElroy, J. (2024). Harrison Hot Springs elects new mayor, councillor in byelection. CBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/harrison-hot-springs-byelection-results-1.7330645>

Province of British Columbia. (2021). Introduction of Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act (No. 2), 2021. Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Retrieved from: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021MUNI0062-002036>

Province of British Columbia. (2022). Foundational Principles of Responsible Conduct. Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Retrieved from: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/local-governments/governance-powers/foundational_principles_responsible_conduct_2022.pdf

Province of British Columbia. (2023). Municipalities in B.C. Governance and Structure Branch. Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/facts-framework/systems/municipalities>

Province of British Columbia. (2024). Local government council and board procedures. Governance and Structure Branch. Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/governance-powers/councils-boards/council-board-procedures>

Province of British Columbia. (2025). Local government legislative framework. Policy, Research and Legislation Unit. Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/facts-framework/legislative-framework>

Province of British Columbia. (2025). Regional Districts in B.C. Governance and Structure Branch. Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/facts-framework/systems/regional-districts>

Province of British Columbia. (2025). Responsible conduct of locally elected officials. Governance and Structure Branch. Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/governance-powers/conduct-of-locally-elected-officials/responsible-conduct>

Province of British Columbia. (2025). Update on Okanagan Falls and the incorporation of a new municipality. Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs. Retrieved from: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025HMA0066-000781>

Province of British Columbia. (2026). Improving conduct standards for local governments. Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs. Retrieved from: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2026HMA0033-000349>

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. (2025). Integrity Commissioner. Retrieved from: <https://www.rmwb.ca/local-government/mayor-council-and-administration/accountability-and-transparency/integrity-commissioner/>

Rural Municipalities of Alberta. (2025). Bill 50: Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 – RMA Analysis. Retrieved from: <https://rmalberta.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Bill-50-RMA-Analysis.pdf>

Ruttle, J. (2024). West Vancouver Mayor Mark Sager barred from practising law for two years. Vancouver Sun. Retrieved from: <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/west-vancouver-mayor-mark-sager-barred-from-practising-law-for-two-years>

Sancton, A. (2017). Accountability Officers and Integrity in Canadian Municipal Government. Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance. No. 17, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://utoronto.scholaris.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/95dcccad-f48c-4d66-8fda-9327d957e80f/content>

Soltau, C., Ruttle, J. (2023). Surrey Police: Here’s a timeline of events. Vancouver Sun. Retrieved from: <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/surrey-police-timeline-of-events>

Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Harrison Hot Springs, Village (VL). Government of Canada. Retrieved from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&DGUIDlist=2021A00055909027>

Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, West Vancouver, District municipality (DM). Retrieved from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=west%20vancouver&DGUIDlist=2021A00055915055,2021S051259151747&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

Surrey Police Service. (2024). Policing Transition. SPS. Retrieved from: <https://www.surreypolice.ca/hello-sps>

Surrey Police Service. (2024). Surrey Police Service Becomes Police of Jurisdiction for the City of Surrey. SPS. Retrieved from: <https://www.surreypolice.ca/news-events/news/surrey-police-service-becomes-police-of-jurisdiction-city-of-surrey>

Seyd, J. (2023). West Van mayor investigated for workplace bullying. North Shore News. Retrieved from: <https://www.nsnews.com/local-news/west-van-mayor-investigated-for-workplace-bullying-7208928>

Seyd, J. (2024). Former West Van mayor Mike Smith calls on current Mayor Mark Sager to resign. North Shore News. Retrieved from: <https://www.nsnews.com/local-news/former-west-van-mayor-mike-smith-calls-on-current-mayor-mark-sager-to-resign-8446657>

Seyd, J. (2024). West Vancouver council rejects code of conduct as unnecessary bureaucracy. North Shore News. Retrieved from: <https://www.nsnews.com/local-news/west-vancouver-council-rejects-code-of-conduct-as-unnecessary-bureaucracy-8638891>

Taylor, Z. (2016). Good Governance at the Local Level: Meaning and Measurement. Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance. No. 26, 2016. Retrieved from: https://politicalscience.uwo.ca/about_us/news_and_announcements/imfgpaper_no26_goodgovernance_zacktaylor_june_16_2016.pdf

Taylor, Z., Mutter, C., Lyons, J., & Dobson, A. (2026). Power and Purpose: The Quiet Evolution of Canadian Municipal Law. Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance. No. 74, 2026. Retrieved from: https://imfg.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/imfgpaper_no74_power_noapp_2026.pdf

TDS Law. (2020). R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Municipal Council Members' Codes of Conduct (Find Out What it Means to Me). Retrieved from: <https://www.tdslaw.com/resource/r-e-s-p-e-c-t-municipal-council-members-codes-of-conduct-find-out-what-it-means-to-me/#:~:text=The%20amendments%20and%20regulations%20came,of%20harassment%20and%20bullying%20complaints>

UBCM. (2021). Forging the Path to Responsible Conduct In Your Local Government. Union of British Columbia Municipalities. Retrieved from: <https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2021-08/Forging%20the%20Path%20to%20Responsible%20Conduct.pdf>

UBCM. (2022). Local Government Fact Sheets - A Reference Guide to Local Government Planning & Operations. Union of BC Municipalities. Retrieved from: <https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2023-09/UBCM%20Local%20Govt%20Fact%20Sheets%20Final%202022.pdf>

UBCM. (2024). Potential for Change. Union of British Columbia Municipalities. Retrieved from: https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2024-09/Potential%20for%20Change-Sept2024_0.pdf

UBCM. (2021). Strengthening Responsible Conduct. Union of British Columbia Municipalities. Retrieved from: <https://www.ubcm.ca/convention-resolutions/resolutions/resolutions-database/strengthening-responsible-conduct>

Village of Harrison Hot Springs. (2026). Village Council. Retrieved from: <https://www.harrisonhotsprings.ca/village-office/mayor-council>

Village of Sayward. (2023). Bylaw No. 442, Village of Sayward Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.sayward.ca/sites/sayward.ca/files/2023-04/Bylaw%20442%20->

[%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20Consolidated%20Version%2C%20for%20convenience%20onl
y.pdf](#)

Village of Telkwa. (2022). Council Code of Conduct Policy #2022-017. Retrieved from: https://telkwa.civicweb.net/filepro/document/15548/Council%20Code%20of%20Conduct_2022-017.pdf

West Vancouver. (2024). Memorandum, Proposed Council Code of Conduct Bylaw. District of West Vancouver. Retrieved from: <https://westvancouver.ca/media/3924>

West Vancouver. (2026). Mayor & Council. Retrieved from: <https://westvancouver.ca/mayor-council>

WGRC. (2022). Model Code of Conduct: Getting Started on a Code of Conduct for Your Council/Board. The Working Group on Responsible Conduct. Retrieved from: https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2022-10/Policy_Model_COC_Aug2022_UPDATED.pdf

WGRC. (2017a). Responsible Conduct of Local Government Elected Officials - Consultation Paper. Working Group on Responsible Conduct. Retrieved from: https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2021-08/ResponsibleConductLocalGovtElectedOfficials_Consultation_Paper_March302017.pdf

WGRC. (2017b). Responsible Conduct of Local Government Elected Officials - Policy Report. Working Group on Responsible Conduct. Retrieved from: https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2021-08/Policy_Book_1.pdf

World Population Review. (2026). British Columbia Cities by Population 2026. Retrieved from: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/cities/province/british-columbia>

Young-Anderson Barrister & Solicitors. (2026). Our Practice. Retrieved from: <https://www.younganderson.ca/practice/>

Zytaruk, T. (2020). Surrey Council Code of Conduct gets final nod on five-yes, four-no vote. Surrey Now-Leader. Retrieved from: <https://surreynowleader.com/2020/05/06/surrey-council-code-of-conduct-gets-final-nod-on-five-yes-four-no-vote/>

Chapter 12: Appendices

Appendix 1: Full List of Municipal and Regional District Codes of Conduct Collected for Document Review

- City of Abbotsford, Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2023.
- City of Armstrong, Council Code of Conduct.
- City of Burnaby, Burnaby Code of Conduct Bylaw 2023.
- City of Colwood, Code of Ethics.
- City of Coquitlam, Council Code of Conduct.
- City of Courtenay, Code of Conduct for Council Members.
- City of Cranbrook, Council Code of Conduct Policy 10-06.
- City of Dawson Creek, Code of Conduct, Council.
- City of Delta, Council Code of Conduct/Code of Ethics.
- City of Duncan, Policy: Code of Conduct.
- City of Fernie, Council Code of Conduct Policy.
- City of Fort St. John, Council Member Code of Conduct Policy.
- City of Grand Forks, Council Code of Conduct Policy.
- City of Kamloops, Council Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 53, 2023.
- City of Kelowna, Code of Conduct.
- City of Langford, Council Code of Conduct Policy.
- City of Langley, Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2023.
- City of Maple Ridge, Council Conduct Bylaw No. 7637-2020.
- City of Merritt, Code of Conduct for Council and Committee Members.
- City of Mission, Code of Responsible Conduct.
- City of Nanaimo, Code of Conduct Bylaw 2022 No. 7348.
- City of New Westminster, Council Code of Conduct.
- City of North Vancouver, Council Code of Conduct.
- City of Parksville, Council Code of Conduct.
- City of Pitt Meadows, Council Code of Conduct.
- City of Port Alberni, Council Code of Conduct.
- City of Port Coquitlam, Code of Conduct.
- City of Port Moody, City of Port Moody Council Code of Conduct Bylaw 2023, No. 3396.
- City of Prince George, City of Prince George Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 9439, 2023.
- City of Quesnel, Code of Conduct and Ethics-IWC-4.
- City of Revelstoke, Council Code of Responsible Conduct.
- City of Richmond, Council Code of Conduct Policy No. 1500.
- City of Rossland, Ethics, Conduct & Conflict of Interest Policy.
- City of Surrey, Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2020, No. 20020.
- City of Trail, Council Code of Conduct.
- City of Vancouver, Code of Conduct By-Law No. 12886.
- City of Vernon, Council Code of Responsible Conduct.
- City of Victoria, Code of Conduct Bylaw.
- City of West Kelowna, Code of Conduct.

- City of White Rock, Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2023, No. 2456.
- City of Williams Lake, Council Code of Conduct.
- District of Barriere, Council Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy.
- District of Coldstream, Council Code of Conduct.
- District of Elkford, Council Standards of Conduct Policy.
- District of Esquimalt, Council Code of Conduct.
- District of Fort St. James, Council Code of Conduct.
- District of Houston, Council Code of Conduct Policy.
- District of Invermere, Council Code of Conduct.
- District of Kent, Council Code of Conduct - 2018.03.
- District of Lake Country, Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy 203, 2022.
- District of Lantzville, Council Code of Conduct.
- District of Lillooet, Council Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy.
- District of Logan Lake, Code of Conduct Policy.
- District of Mackenzie, 1.23 Council Code of Conduct.
- District of Metchosin, Council Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 682, 2023.
- District of North Cowichan, Standards of Conduct Policy.
- District of North Saanich, Code of Ethics and Conduct for Council.
- District of North Vancouver, Code of Ethics.
- District of Oak Bay, Council Code of Ethics.
- District of Peachland, Council and Committee Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 2390, 2023.
- District of Port Hardy, Mayor and Council Code of Conduct Policy.
- District of Saanich, Code of Conduct.
- District of Sechelt, District of Sechelt Council Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 619, 2023.
- District of Sooke, Code of Ethics Policy.
- District of Sparwood, 1008-01 Code of Conduct.
- District of Squamish, District of Squamish Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 2919, 2022.
- District of Stewart, Code of Conduct.
- District of Summerland, Code of Conduct - Policy #100.23.
- District of Taylor, Code of Responsible Conduct for Council Members Policy.
- District of Tofino, Council Code of Conduct.
- District of Tumbler Ridge, Elected Officials - Code of Conduct.
- District of Ucluelet, Responsible Conduct Policy.
- District of Vanderhoof, Code of Conduct for Council, Committees, Commissions, and Boards.
- Town of Gibsons, Council Code of Conduct.
- Town of Golden, Town of Golden Bylaw 1479, 2023 - "Council Code of Conduct".
- Town of Ladysmith, Council Code of Conduct.
- Town of Lake Cowichan, Town of Lake Cowichan Code of Ethics.
- Town of Osoyoos, Code of Conduct.
- Town of Qualicum Beach, Council Standards of Conduct.
- Town of Sidney, Town of Sidney Council Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 2249, 2023.
- Town of Smithers, Code of Conduct for Members of Council.
- Town of View Royal, Code of Conduct.

- Village of Anmore, Council Code of Conduct Policy.
- Village of Belcarra, Council Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 609, 2023.
- Village of Cache Creek, Code of Responsible Conduct for Council and Committee Members.
- Village of Canal Flats, Council Code of Conduct.
- Village of Cumberland, Code of Responsible Conduct.
- Village of Daajing Giids, Council Code of Ethics and Conduct.
- Village of Fruitvale, Conduct of Conduct Policy.
- Village of Granisle, Code of Conduct.
- Village of Harrison Hot Springs, Code of Conduct.
- Village of Keremeos, Code of Conduct.
- Village of Lions Bay, Code of Conduct.
- Village of Lumby, Code of Ethics Policy.
- Village of McBride, Council Code of Conduct.
- Village of Midway, Responsible Conduct Guiding Principles Policy.
- Village of Montrose, Council Ethical Conduct Policy.
- Village of Nakusp, Council Code of Conduct.
- Village of Port Clements, Code of Conduct.
- Village of Radium Hot Springs, Council Code of Conduct.
- Village of Salmo, Code of Conduct.
- Village of Sayward, Bylaw No. 442, Village of Sayward Code of Conduct Bylaw, 2018.
- Village of Tahsis, Code of Conduct.
- Village of Telkwa, Council Code of Conduct Policy #2022-017.
- Village of Valemount, Council Code of Conduct.
- Village of Warfield, Code of Conduct Policy.
- Resort Municipality of Sun Peaks Mountain, Council Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 0212.
- Resort Municipality of Whistler, Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 2397, 2023.
- Regional District of Alberni-Clayoquot, Code of Conduct Policy.
- Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, Board of Directors and Staff Code of Conduct.
- Regional District of Capital, Code of Conduct.
- Regional District of Cariboo, Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- Regional District of Central Coast, E-7 Ethical Standards of Conduct for Elected Officials.
- Regional District of Central Okanagan, Code of Conduct and Respectful Workplace: Board and Committees.
- Regional District of Columbia-Shuswap, Board of Directors' Code of Conduct Bylaw.
- Regional District of Comox Valley, Board Code of Conduct.
- Regional District of Cowichan Valley, Code of Conduct for Board, Committee & Commission Members Policy.
- Regional District of Fraser Valley, Code of Responsible Conduct.
- Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, Kitimat-Stikine Board Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 782, 2023.
- Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, Responsible Conduct Guiding Principles Policy.

- Regional District of Mt. Waddington, RDMW Code of Conduct Policy.
- Regional District of Nanaimo, Code of Conduct.
- Regional District of North Coast, Code of Conduct - Staff and Elected Officials.
- Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, Elected Official Code of Conduct Policy.
- Regional District of Peace River, Directors Code of Conduct.
- Regional District of qathet, Code of Conduct.
- Regional District of Squamish-Lillooet, Code of Conduct.
- Regional District of Strathcona, Code of Conduct.
- Regional District of Sunshine Coast, Code of Conduct.
- Regional District of Thompson-Nicola, Code of Conduct.

Appendix 2: Preliminary Analytical Framework

