



*Cariboo, Map 1*

### *D. The Cariboo-Thompson*

#### **1. The evolution of the Cariboo-Thompson electoral districts**

Immediately prior to the work of the 1966 Angus Commission, there were four electoral districts in the geographical area that we describe as the Cariboo-Thompson: Cariboo, Lillooet, Yale and Kamloops (see Cariboo, Map 1).

*a. The Angus Commission (1966)*

The Angus Commission concluded that “the proper and effective representation of the people of this region,” which it called the West Central Region, required only three members. It recommended that the electoral district of Lillooet be eliminated, that Cariboo be expanded farther south to include Clinton, and that Yale be expanded north to include Lillooet and be expanded west to include several areas of the eastern Fraser Valley (see Cariboo, Map 2). The commission recognized that the new Yale electoral district would comprise many diverse interests and would impose a heavy burden on its MLA. It was seen as a temporary expedient to which there was no practical alternative.

The Legislative Assembly accepted these recommendations, but changed the name of Yale to Yale-Lillooet.



*Cariboo, Map 2*



*Cariboo, Map 3*

*b. The Norris Commission (1975)*

The Norris Commission recommended that an extra seat be added, because of the rapid growth in the Kamloops area. Kamloops would be divided into Kamloops North and Kamloops South, with the latter extending farther west to include Clinton and 70 Mile House (see Cariboo, Map 3).

The Legislative Assembly did not implement any of the Norris Commission's recommendations.

**c. *The Eckardt Commission (1978)***

The Eckardt Commission recommended that the three Cariboo-Thompson electoral districts established in 1966 (Cariboo, Yale-Lillooet and Kamloops) be retained (see Cariboo, Map 4). It concluded that a return to the historic electoral district of Lillooet could not be logically justified. It recommended that Cache Creek, Ashcroft and Logan Lake be transferred from Cariboo to Yale-Lillooet and that all of Kamloops be kept within one electoral district, despite its growing population.

The Legislative Assembly implemented the Eckardt Commission's recommendations.

**d. *The Warren Commission (1982)***

Mr. Warren declined to redraw electoral boundaries generally, but did recommend that a second MLA be added to seven existing electoral districts, including Cariboo and Kamloops. The Legislative Assembly did not accept these recommendations.

**e. *The McAdam Commission (1984)***

The legislation under which the McAdam Commission operated required that it recommend a second MLA for those electoral districts whose populations were more than 60 percent above the electoral district base calculated according to the *Constitutional Amendment Act, 1984*. Eleven electoral districts qualified, including Cariboo and Kamloops.



*Cariboo, Map 4*



*Cariboo, Map 5*

In 1985, the Legislative Assembly implemented these recommendations, giving the Cariboo-Thompson region five MLAs: Cariboo (2), Kamloops (2) and Yale-Lillooet.

***f. The Fisher Commission (1988)***

In order to address his mandate of eliminating dual-member ridings, Judge Fisher created five electoral districts. He achieved this by dividing Cariboo into two electoral districts (which he initially named Cariboo-Quesnel and Cariboo-Williams Lake), and by dividing Kamloops into two electoral districts (which he named Kamloops and Kamloops-North Thompson). Kamloops would contain the most densely populated areas of the city on both sides of the Thompson River, including Brocklehurst, while the more sparsely populated suburban areas of the city would be included in Kamloops-North Thompson.

In his final report, Judge Fisher recommended that his two proposed Cariboo electoral districts be named Cariboo North and Cariboo South. In 1990 the Legislative Assembly adopted Judge Fisher's recommendations (see Cariboo, Map 5).

*g. The Wood Commission (1999)*

Cariboo North and Cariboo South now had deviations of minus 29 percent and minus 24.7 percent, respectively. In its interim report, the commission concluded that the combined population would be too large for one electoral district, and that the preservation of two electoral districts was consistent with the commission's overall objective of preserving regional representation. To bring both electoral districts within the statutory limit of minus 25 percent, the commission made several controversial boundary adjustments: it removed Lillooet from Yale-Lillooet, and included it in Cariboo South, and it divided Williams Lake between both electoral districts (see Cariboo, Map 6). The commission also made technical adjustments to the two Kamloops electoral districts, and removed Keremeos from Boundary-Similkameen and included it in Yale-Lillooet in response to a submission from the council of the Village of Keremeos indicating that people in that area had connections with the community of Princeton, farther west.



*Cariboo, Map 6*



*Cariboo, Map 7*

In its final report, the commission recognized that Williams Lake residents were not happy to have their city divided among two electoral districts, but no one suggested an alternative that would have kept both Cariboo electoral districts within the minus 25 percent deviation limit. The commission did recommend several changes to its initial proposals (see Cariboo, Map 7): Lillooet should be returned to Yale-Lillooet (in recognition that any connection to the Cariboo was a purely historical one without any modern-day relevance), and Cache Creek, Ashcroft and Savona should become part of Cariboo South (to bolster its population). These changes brought all five electoral districts within the minus 25 percent statutory limit.

The Legislative Assembly adopted all of the Wood Commission's recommendations.

## 2. Our analysis of the Cariboo-Thompson electoral districts

The geographical area we describe as the Cariboo-Thompson region currently has five electoral districts: Cariboo North, Cariboo South, Yale-Lillooet, Kamloops and Kamloops–North Thompson. These electoral districts, with their deviations at the time of the 1996 census, and now, are as follows (see Table 9):

TABLE 9: CURRENT SMP ELECTORAL DISTRICTS IN CARIBOO-THOMPSON

Electoral District	1996 deviation*	2006 deviation**
Cariboo North	-20.4%	-34.2%
Cariboo South	-22.7%	-32.8%
Yale-Lillooet	-18.8%	-28%
Kamloops	+2.5%	-0.9%
Kamloops–North Thompson	+1.2%	-6%

\* based on 1996 census data, and assuming 79 electoral districts

\*\* based on 2006 census data, and assuming 79 electoral districts

If we were to create electoral districts in the Cariboo-Thompson so that the population of each district approximated the provincial electoral quotient, there would be only four electoral districts. Given the principle that underlies the constitutional and legal framework within which we operate, our overriding obligation is to strive for relative population parity among individual electoral

districts, and to deviate from the provincial electoral quotient only to the extent necessary to ensure effective representation. We do not think it appropriate, as discussed in detail earlier in this part of the report (see “The North”), for us to begin our boundary-setting task with a presumption that regional representation should be preserved.

The Cariboo-Thompson is the province’s second-largest geographical area, after the North. The South Thompson River (originating in the Shuswap) and the North Thompson River (beginning in the Rockies) meet in Kamloops and flow westward, merging with the Fraser River at Lytton and tumbling southward through the Fraser Canyon to Hope.

This region is disparate – to the north, the Cariboo; to the west, the Chilcotin; to the south, the Southern Interior, Fraser Canyon and the Similkameen; and to the northeast, the two Thompson River valleys. It is, some would contend, stretching things to call this diverse area one region. Our Cariboo-Thompson region is, admittedly, a region of convenience, bringing together areas that do not fit naturally within the surrounding regions of the Fraser

Valley, the North and the Okanagan. Indeed, it was argued persuasively during our public consultation that:

- Hope should be included in an electoral district with eastern Fraser Valley communities;
- all of Keremeos’ links (economic, trade, health, education, etc.) are with the southern Okanagan; and,
- economic initiatives are being developed cooperatively between Princeton and Keremeos, such that those two communities should be in the same electoral district.

Within the Cariboo-Thompson region itself, we heard objections to several perceived anomalies. Splitting Williams Lake was not popular when it was done in 1999, and constituents told us that they still do not like it. On the other hand, some said that, if splitting the town is necessary to preserve two Cariboo electoral districts, they will happily pay the price. Residents of Cache Creek and Ashcroft were not happy at having been included in Cariboo South (from Yale-Lillooet) without consultation – they first heard about it after publication of the Wood Commission’s final report. Similarly, we heard objections from people living west of Kamloops (in communities such as Savona and the new Tobiano development) who have



to travel all the way to Williams Lake to meet with their Cariboo South MLA, when they are almost within sight of Kamloops.

We began our boundary-setting exercise by exploring whether we could simply rebalance population among the current five electoral districts. We found that it would result in all five electoral districts having deviations of minus 20.4 percent with 79 electoral districts and minus 14.3 percent with 85; in either case a significant negative deviation, even though within the statutory limit. In any event, that theoretical solution soon bumped into practical realities – it would not work on the ground to create perfectly balanced electoral districts, for several reasons.

First, it would require dividing Kamloops among three electoral districts. With a population of 80,376 it must be divided between two electoral districts, but for several reasons we were not attracted to the idea of using Kamloops as the anchor for three electoral districts any more than we were in the case of Prince George. As a large and growing regional centre, Kamloops has economic development, housing and social issues quite different from the issues facing smaller communities such as Cache Creek and Blue River. Smaller towns do not want to be “swallowed up” by Kamloops. Where possible, we

tried to accommodate concerns that were expressed about mixing urban and rural communities.

Second, Yale-Lillooet would have to extend eastward, including southern Kamloops neighbourhoods, as well as Highway 97 communities such as Falkland and Westwold.

Third, Cariboo South would have to extend farther south, to include communities such as Lillooet, Lytton, Shalath and Seton Portage. During the 1999 Wood Commission, Lillooet had voiced strong opposition to being included in South Cariboo and we should, if possible, respect that preference.

Fourth, although all of Williams Lake would now be in one electoral district (Cariboo South), communities to the west along Highway 20 (e.g., Alexis Creek and Anahim Lake) and communities to the east (e.g., Likely and Horsefly) that see Williams Lake as their main commercial centre would be in Cariboo North, in violation of long-standing community interests.

Finally, it would be difficult to justify significant negative deviations for the three Kamloops-based electoral districts, since about two-thirds of each electoral district’s population would be urban. But giving each of these three electoral districts a more modest

deviation (e.g., minus 7 percent) would have the effect of driving the remaining two Cariboo electoral districts substantially outside the statutory limit, with deviations averaging between minus 41 percent with 79 electoral districts and minus 35.9 percent with 85, which we concluded are not justified.

Because of these practical realities, we decided that a significant reconfiguration of the electoral districts of the Cariboo-Thompson was required. We began by articulating several considerations that should guide our work, including the following:

- Kamloops, being too large for one electoral district, must be divided between two electoral districts. However, for the reasons set out above, we do not believe it should be split among three. We are persuaded that it is in the best interests of the constituents of this region if the residents of Kamloops, and people living along the North Thompson River and to the west of Kamloops, be distributed between two urban-suburban-rural electoral districts.

We agree with the submissions received that:

- Keremeos has many attributes of a southern Similkameen, south Okanagan community with very little community interest

with other Yale-Lillooet communities, and should be included in an Okanagan-based electoral district.

- Princeton has many tangible economic and trade connections with Keremeos, and they should be in the same electoral district.
- Hope has much more compelling community ties to the eastern Fraser Valley than it does to other Yale-Lillooet communities.
- Williams Lake (pop. 10,744) should not be divided between two electoral districts.
- Rural communities to the east of Williams Lake (e.g., Horsefly and Likely) and those to the west (e.g., Alexis Creek and Anahim Lake) see Williams Lake as their principal commercial centre, and should be in the same electoral district as Williams Lake.
- Yale-Lillooet is an electoral district of small communities (e.g., Keremeos, Princeton, Hope, Merritt, Logan Lake, Lytton and Lillooet); these communities should remain in “rural” ridings.

With those considerations in mind, we began our boundary-setting task in Kamloops. It is currently divided into the two electoral districts of Kamloops and Kamloops–North Thompson, with a dividing line running north-south through the city along Sixth Avenue and Peterson Creek. We considered creating an urban electoral district wholly within the City of Kamloops, and a second district that would include the remainder of Kamloops (about 29,600 people) plus the North Thompson River communities north to Blue River and the more southerly communities between Chase and Cache Creek.

The Kamloops–North Thompson electoral district works well in its present configuration, and we are proposing that it retain its current boundaries, except for one change within the City of Kamloops – in our view, the South Thompson and Thompson Rivers serve as a more practical, natural boundary between the two Kamloops-based electoral districts.

The only significant boundary changes we recommend for the Kamloops–North Thompson electoral district (see map of proposed Kamloops–North Thompson electoral district page 110) are:

- to move its southern boundary northward to the South Thompson River; and,
- to extend it westward from the North Thompson River, picking up that part of the City of Kamloops that lies north of the Thompson River.

These changes will give Kamloops–North Thompson a deviation of minus 1.5 percent based on 81 electoral districts.

The other Kamloops district (which we propose be named Kamloops–South Thompson) would include all of the City of Kamloops south of the South Thompson and Thompson rivers. It would extend southward to Stump

Lake and westward about halfway to Cache Creek. Communities along Kamloops Lake and the Thompson River, such as Savona, and the new Tobiasiano development, would be included. However, we do not propose that Cache Creek, Ashcroft or Logan Lake be included, for population-balancing reasons and because we were told that people from those communities would prefer being in a rural electoral district. This newly-configured district (see map of proposed Kamloops–South Thompson electoral district page 111) will have a deviation of plus 2 percent.

We then turned to the southern part of this region. We were told that Keremeos (as well as Cawston to the east and Olalla to the north) have much more in common with the South Okanagan than they do with the other Yale-Lillooet communities:

- Oliver and Penticton are much closer (50 km) than Merritt (150 kilometres).
- The area, with many cottage wineries, is a fruit- and grape-growing area, as is the Okanagan.
- These communities are partnering with Oliver in developing an organic farming institute.
- Tourism is tied to the Similkameen and the Okanagan.
- The communities are part of the

### Okanagan–Similkameen Regional District.

Beginning with the 1966 Angus Commission, every independent electoral boundaries commission until 1999 had included Keremeos and nearby centres in an Okanagan-based electoral district. However, the Wood Commission felt compelled to include it with Yale-Lillooet, as the only available option of fulfilling its goal of preserving five electoral districts in this region.<sup>59</sup>

As discussed earlier (p. 44), we did not ground our boundary-setting task with a presumption of preserving regional representation. The compelling community interests referred to above have persuaded us that this area should be part of an Okanagan-based electoral district.

At the same time, we have decided that Hope should be included in an eastern Fraser Valley–based district which results in the population of Yale-Lillooet being reduced by 8,105 people. As discussed above, Hope’s trade ties and community interests are directed to the west rather than to the north or east, and Hope and nearby Fraser Canyon communities are part of the Fraser Valley Regional District.

Having made those decisions respecting

Keremeos and Hope, we moved our attention to the several communities along Highway 3 between Manning Park and Keremeos, such as Princeton and Hedley. We heard submissions indicating that they have more in common with Keremeos than they do with Yale-Lillooet communities to the north. Indeed, we were told of the growing economic interdependence between Princeton and Keremeos, and we were asked to place the two communities in the same electoral district. We agree, and propose that Princeton, Hedley and other Highway 3 communities east of the Fraser Valley Regional District (which are part of the Okanagan–Similkameen Regional District) be included in the same Okanagan-based electoral district. This decision resulted in an increase of 9,611 persons to an Okanagan based district and a reduction by the same number in Yale-Lillooet.

The remaining area of the Cariboo-Thompson region stretches from south of Hixon along the Cariboo Regional District boundary in the north to Merritt and Lytton in the south. With a population of 87,274, dividing it into three electoral districts would result in relatively compact districts with almost all the population living along, or close to, major highways, yet with deviations averaging minus 44.1 percent based on

79 electoral districts. If the number of districts were increased to 85, the average would be minus 39.9 percent. Such electoral districts would be smaller than and, in our view, more easily served by MLAs than the current Cariboo North, Cariboo South and Yale-Lillooet electoral districts, and they would bear none of the exceptional or extraordinary hallmarks of the proposed North Coast or Northland electoral districts. We have concluded that “very special circumstances” justifying those two electoral districts’ deviations (such as the extremes of a large land mass, sparse population and transportation challenges) would not exist in such districts.

Consequently, we concluded that the remaining area could be effectively represented by two MLAs. But where should we draw the dividing line? Balancing the population would produce two electoral districts with 43,637 people in each, but that would require splitting Williams Lake, an unpalatable decision for people of that community and for us. Not dividing Williams Lake, and yet including with Williams Lake the communities westward along Highway 20 (e.g., Alexis Creek and Anahim Lake) and communities to the east (e.g., Likely and Horsefly), means that the northern electoral district will have significantly more people than will the southern district. On balance, we

<sup>59</sup> See the 1999 Wood Commission’s interim report, p. 59, and final report, p. 34.

are persuaded that, in this case, community interests as noted above, should prevail over population parity, and that the City of Williams Lake should, in its entirety, be within the northern district, which we propose naming Cariboo-Chilcotin (see map of proposed Cariboo-Chilcotin electoral district page 112). It would have a deviation of minus 11.2 percent based on 81 electoral districts.

The southern electoral district (which we propose be named Cariboo-Fraser) would begin south of Williams Lake, and include 100 Mile House, Clinton, Cache Creek, Ashcroft, Lillooet, Lytton, Logan Lake and Merritt. Apart from Merritt (pop. 6,998), it would have no population center greater than 3,000 (see map of proposed Cariboo-Fraser electoral district page 113). It would have a deviation of minus 17 percent, high but acceptable for such a diverse rural electoral district.

### 3. Conclusion

Accordingly, we propose that there be four electoral districts in the Cariboo-Thompson, as follows:

TABLE 10: PROPOSED SMP ELECTORAL DISTRICTS IN CARIBOO-THOMPSON

Electoral District	Sq. Km.	Population	Deviation*
Cariboo-Chilcotin	75,184	45,104	-11.2%
Cariboo-Fraser	35,477	42,170	-17%
Kamloops–South Thompson	3,854	51,812	+2%
Kamloops–North Thompson	21,694	50,042	-1.5%
* based on 81 electoral districts, with a provincial electoral quotient of 50,784			



*Region: Cariboo-Thompson – Current Electoral Districts*



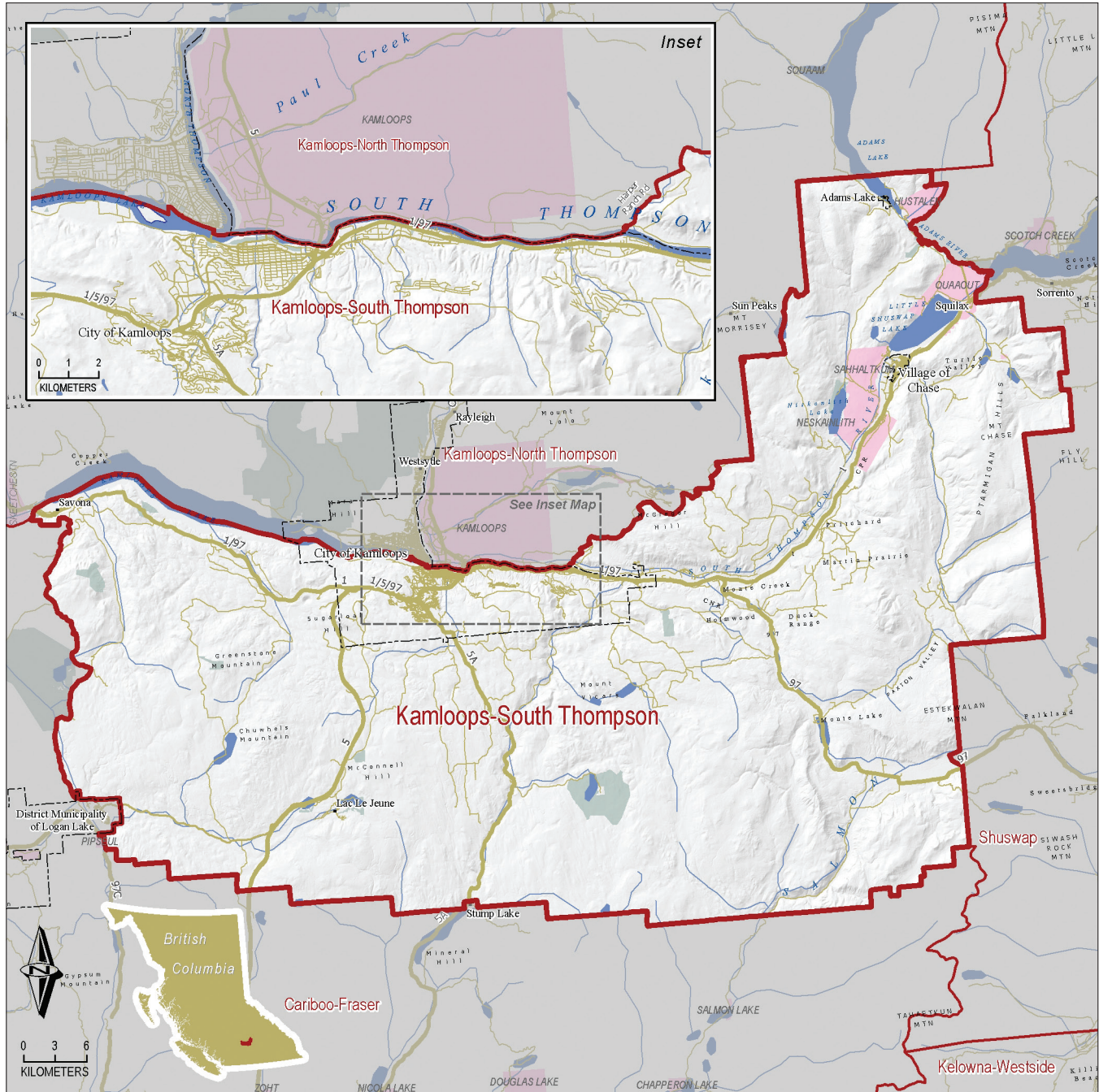
*Region: Cariboo-Thompson – Proposed Electoral Districts*



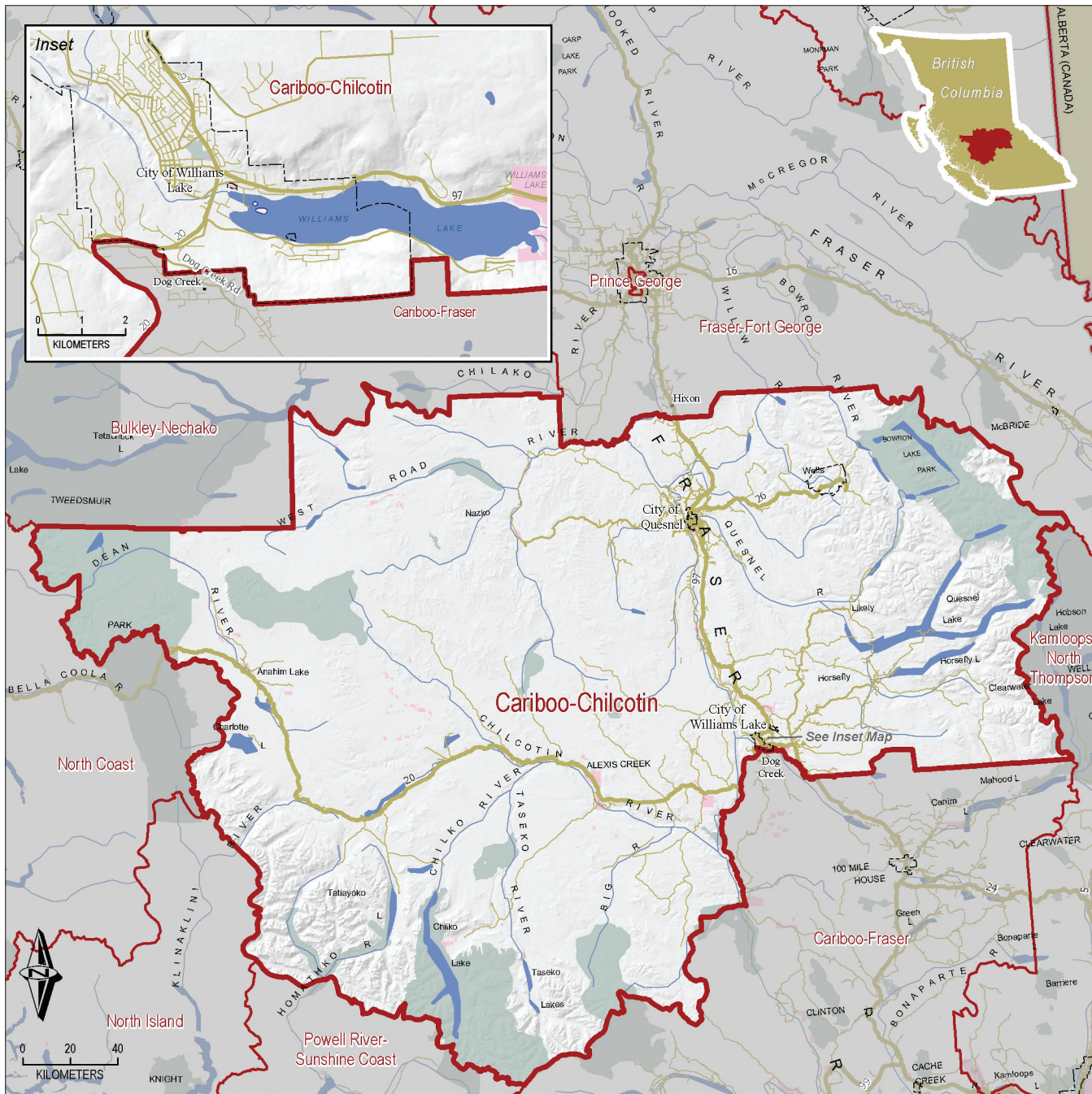




Region: Cariboo-Thompson – Proposed Kamloops–South Thompson Electoral District



*Region: Cariboo-Thompson – Proposed Cariboo-Chilcotin Electoral District*



*Region: Cariboo-Thompson* – Proposed Cariboo-Fraser Electoral District

