



Fraser Valley North, Map 1

G. The Fraser Valley

Historically, most Fraser Valley electoral districts were either exclusively north or south of the Fraser River. The one exception has been the most easterly Fraser Valley electoral district which has, between 1978 and 1988 and since 1999, straddled the river.

As we will discuss later in this section, we are recommending that two Fraser Valley electoral districts span the Fraser River. However, before doing so we will trace the evolution of electoral districts in this region. It will be simpler to understand this evolution if we discuss the districts north of the river first, and the electoral districts south of the river second.

1. Evolution of the Fraser Valley electoral districts north of the river

Immediately prior to the 1966 Angus Commission, there was one single-member electoral district north of the Fraser River, called Dewdney. It incorporated not only the area that we call today the Fraser Valley (Pitt River to Hope), but also included an area further west, between Indian Arm and the Pitt River. (see Fraser Valley North, Map 1).

a. Angus Commission (1966)

The Angus Commission recommended that Dewdney be split into two single-member electoral districts (see Fraser Valley North, Map 2). The western portion, extending from Indian Arm and the eastern boundaries of the Burnaby and New Westminster electoral districts eastward to the Pitt River, would be named Coquitlam (to be discussed in the next section of this report – the Tri-Cities region). The eastern portion, extending from the Pitt River eastward almost to Hope, would retain the name Dewdney. A small area named Flood, just west of Hope, would be transferred to Yale.

The Legislative Assembly adopted the Angus Commission’s recommendations.



Fraser Valley North, Map 2



Fraser Valley North, Map 3

b. The Norris Commission (1975)

Due to population growth and under-representation in the legislature, the Norris Commission recommended that Dewdney be divided into two single-member electoral districts (see Fraser Valley North, Map 3). Dewdney would extend from the Pitt River eastward to Harrison Mills, and Chilliwack-Kent would extend eastward from there to Ruby Creek. This would include Agassiz, Kent and Harrison Hot Springs on the north side of the Fraser River and Chilliwack on the south side of the river.

The Legislative Assembly did not adopt the Norris Commission's recommendations.

c. *The Eckardt Commission (1978)*

Judge Eckardt recommended that Dewdney be divided into two electoral districts, similar to what the Norris Commission had recommended (see Fraser Valley North, Map 4). Dewdney would extend east from the Pitt River to Harrison Mills, and the Garibaldi Park area would be transferred into the revised West Vancouver–Howe Sound district. A new Chilliwack electoral district would extend eastward from there to the Ruby Creek area, including Chilliwack south of the river.

The Legislative Assembly adopted Judge Eckardt’s recommendations.

d. *The Warren Commission (1982)*

None of Mr. Warren’s recommendations affected these electoral districts.

e. *The McAdam Commission (1984)*

The McAdam Commission recommended that 11 single-member electoral districts, including Dewdney, become dual-member districts. The Legislative Assembly adopted the McAdam Commission’s recommendation.



Fraser Valley North, Map 4



Fraser Valley North, Map 5

f. The Fisher Commission (1988)

In his interim report, Judge Fisher split the Dewdney electoral district into two districts (see Fraser Valley North, Map 5). Maple Ridge–Pitt Meadows would extend from the Pitt River eastward to 241st Street and the Alouette River, and Mission would extend eastward from there to the Chilliwack-Kent boundary.

In his final report, Judge Fisher reduced the size of his proposed Maple Ridge–Pitt Meadows district (incorporating virtually all of the Maple Ridge District Municipality into this district). He extended his proposed Mission district further east to include Agassiz, Kent and Harrison Hot Springs (to be re-named Mission-Kent), with the result that the district no longer spanned the Fraser River. The Legislative Assembly adopted Judge Fisher’s recommendations (see Fraser Valley North, Map 6).



Fraser Valley North, Map 6



Fraser Valley North, Map 7

g. The Wood Commission (1999)

In its interim report (see Fraser Valley North, Map 7), the Wood Commission concluded that significant population growth in the Maple Ridge area necessitated an additional electoral district north of the river. Because Pitt Meadows did not have sufficient population for its own district, it was necessary to include it with the western portion of Maple Ridge. This meant splitting Maple Ridge between two electoral districts – with Pitt Meadows on the west and with Mission on the east. The commission stated, on p. 74:

The close relationship between Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge suggests a community interest which continues to make a shared electoral district appropriate. We did hear that the Maple Ridge residents placed in the Mission-Kent electoral district during the last revision felt somewhat “orphaned” from their home community. However, we are hopeful that our division of Maple Ridge, which places more of the Maple Ridge population in a shared electoral district with Mission, would have more of a “Maple Ridge” character so as to leave residents feeling less isolated.

The commission recommended a new electoral district to the east (to be named Maple Ridge–Mission), which would include the eastern portion of Maple Ridge and the District of Mission.

In its final report (see Fraser Valley North, Map 8), the Wood Commission extended the Maple Ridge–Mission boundary further east to include several Highway 7 communities (Hatzic, Deroche, Lake Errock and Harrison Mills) which considered Mission to be their commercial, government and recreational centre. However, Kent, Agassiz and Harrison Hot Springs would remain part of Chilliwack–Kent, which spanned the Fraser River. The commission also transferred the small native communities between Harrison Lake and Lillooet Lake into the West Vancouver–Garibaldi electoral district, because all their ties and primary road connections were with the Pemberton and Mount Currie area to the north.

The Legislative Assembly adopted the Wood Commission’s recommendations.



Fraser Valley North, Map 8



Fraser Valley South, Map 1

2. Evolution of the Fraser Valley electoral districts south of the river
 Immediately prior to the 1966 Angus Commission there were two Fraser Valley electoral districts south of the Fraser River (see Fraser Valley South, Map 1). The Chilliwack electoral district (a single-member riding) extended from the eastern boundary of Langley farther eastward almost to Hope. The Delta electoral district (a dual-member riding) included Langley and several municipalities farther west that we have not included as part of the Fraser Valley (Richmond, Delta and Surrey).

a. The Angus Commission (1966)

The Angus Commission recommended that the Chilliwack district be divided into two electoral districts (see Fraser Valley South, Map 2). A new electoral district of Langley would extend from the eastern boundary of Surrey eastward to Gladwin Road in Abbotsford. The more easterly district (to retain the name Chilliwack) would see its eastern boundary moved westward, to the eastern boundary of the Township of Chilliwack.

The Legislative Assembly adopted the Angus Commission's recommendations.



Fraser Valley South, Map 2



Fraser Valley South, Map 3

b. The Norris Commission (1975)

The Norris Commission concluded that there should be a Langley and Central Fraser Valley district (both exclusively south of the Fraser River), and that there should be a third district further east (to be named Chilliwack-Kent) that would extend almost to Hope and north across the Fraser River to include Agassiz, Harrison Mills, Harrison Hot Springs and the Harrison Lake area north to Garibaldi (see Fraser Valley South, Map 3). As far as possible, the commission used municipal and regional district boundaries.

The Legislative Assembly did not adopt the Norris Commission's recommendations.

c. The Eckardt Commission (1978)

Judge Eckardt concluded that, due to population growth, this area warranted a third electoral district. He attempted, whenever possible, to avoid splitting municipalities. He recommended (see Fraser Valley South, Map 4) that the district of Langley follow the District of Langley boundaries, and include the City of Langley. A new Central Fraser Valley electoral district should be created, following very closely the boundaries recommended by the Norris Commission. Finally, he agreed with the Norris Commission that the Chilliwack electoral district should extend north of the Fraser River to include Agassiz and the Harrison Lake area, as “the ties between the area north of Fraser River and south of Fraser River have been reinforced and strengthened by the new bridge crossing and thus an extension to the north is justified.”

The Legislative Assembly adopted Judge Eckardt’s recommendations.



Fraser Valley South, Map 4



Fraser Valley South, Map 5

d. The Warren Commission (1982)

None of Mr. Warren's recommendations affected these electoral districts.

e. The McAdam Commission (1984)

The commission concluded that the Langley and Central Fraser Valley electoral districts exceeded the 60 percent threshold established in the legislation, and recommended that each of them become two-member electoral districts. The Legislative Assembly adopted the McAdam Commission's recommendations, giving this area five MLAs.

f. The Fisher Commission (1988)

In accordance with Judge Fisher's mandate to eliminate dual-member electoral districts, he recommended in his interim report (see Fraser Valley South, Map 5) that the Langley electoral district be divided into Langley and Fort Langley–Aldergrove electoral districts, and that the Central Fraser Valley electoral district be divided into Matsqui and Abbotsford electoral districts. He also recommended that Chilliwack (to be renamed Chilliwack–Kent) should continue to extend north across the Fraser River, but only to the Harrison River.

In his final report, Judge Fisher made a significant change. His original proposal for the Chilliwack-Kent district caused great concern among residents of the existing electoral district of Chilliwack living south of the Fraser River, who would have been included in the proposed electoral district of Abbotsford in order to balance populations. If these areas were to remain in the Chilliwack riding, the only feasible alternative would be to link the Kent area to the proposed electoral district of Mission (north of the Fraser River), which is what he now recommended. As he saw it, this solution had three important benefits: it would avoid splitting communities south of the Fraser River, it would leave the Kent area intact, and it would utilize the natural boundaries of the Fraser River, Vedder Canal and Vedder River. He recommended that this reconfigured district be called Chilliwack. The Legislative Assembly adopted all of Judge Fisher's recommendations (see Fraser Valley South, Map 6).



Fraser Valley South, Map 6



Fraser Valley South, Map 7

g. The Wood Commission (1999)

In its interim report, the Wood Commission recommended that the number of electoral districts in this region be increased from five to six, and proposed several significant changes to boundaries (see Fraser Valley South, Map 7):

- The Langley and Fort Langley–Aldergrove districts should be preserved, but with several boundary changes to accommodate expected population growth.
- The population of the Abbotsford area had increased significantly, and continued high growth was expected over the next decade. Although some submitters sought to create two electoral districts exclusively encompassing Abbotsford, the commission was unable to agree because it would result in significant positive deviations (plus 12 percent), and it would result in electoral districts to the east being relatively underpopulated (e.g. minus 9 percent). The only solution was to create two electoral districts wholly within the municipality of Abbotsford (Abbotsford–Mount Lehman and Abbotsford–Clayburn), and another district (Abbotsford–Chilliwack) that incorporated parts of both municipalities.
- Because of population growth, the Chilliwack area needed to be split between two electoral districts – the Abbotsford–Chilliwack district described above, and Chilliwack–Kent,

which would extend north across the Fraser River to include the communities of Kent, Harrison Hot Springs and Agassiz and as far west as Hatzic Lake. The commission stated on p. 75 that:

Although the river might appear to represent a logical boundary, we received numerous submissions indicating that the people in the communities on the north shore opposite Chilliwack – namely, Kent, Harrison Hot Springs and Agassiz – wished to be included in a Chilliwack electoral district. It was explained to us that the transportation route via the bridge on Highway 9 has made Chilliwack a much more accessible center for the people of the north shore than Mission, and that, as a result, these communities have developed close ties with Chilliwack.

In its final report (see Fraser Valley South, Map 8), the Wood Commission recommended several boundary changes to Abbotsford–Mount Lehman and Abbotsford–Clayburn. With respect to the Chilliwack area, the commission decided that the communities north of the Fraser River lying between Mission and Harrison Lake (Hatzic Lake, Deroche and Harrison Mills) should be included in the proposed north shore electoral district of Maple Ridge–Mission. That would leave the



Fraser Valley South, Map 8

north shore communities of Kent, Harrison Hot Springs and Agassiz in the Chilliwack-Kent district that straddled the Fraser River, but the inclusion of 5,000 people into Maple Ridge–Mission meant that Chilliwack-Kent needed to extend further south. The commission accepted submissions that population could be balanced by extending Chilliwack-Kent south to the U.S. border, and substituting a new Chilliwack-Sumas electoral district for the Abbotsford-Chilliwack district which had been proposed in the interim report. This name recognized that the majority of residents lived in Chilliwack, but that the western portion of the electoral district included Sumas Prairie and Sumas Mountain. The commission recognized that Highway 1 was a logical dividing line for Chilliwack, but concluded that using it as a boundary created too much of a population disparity between the two Chilliwack electoral districts.

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

3. *Our analysis of the Fraser Valley electoral districts*

Including electoral districts on both sides of the Fraser River, the geographical area that we describe as the Fraser Valley region (east of the Pitt River and east of Surrey) now has eight electoral districts. (see map on page 170.) Those electoral districts, with their deviations at the time of the 1996 census, and now, are as follows (see Table 15):

TABLE 15: CURRENT SMP ELECTORAL DISTRICTS IN THE FRASER VALLEY

Electoral District	1996 deviation*	2006 deviation**
Maple Ridge–Pitt Meadows	+10.3%	+9.1%
Maple Ridge–Mission	+13.0%	+30.9%
Langley	+7.7%	+12.9%
Fort Langley–Aldergrove	+11.2%	+13.4%
Abbotsford–Mount Lehman	+2.8%	+11.9%
Abbotsford–Clayburn	-9.0%	-8.8%
Chilliwack-Sumas	-8.1%	-0.8%
Chilliwack-Kent	-7.0%	-1.7%

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

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

The Fraser Valley has a total population of 459,510.⁶⁰ Rebalancing this population among the eight electoral districts would result in every electoral district having a deviation of plus 10.3 percent, (based on 79 electoral districts), too high for such a fast-growing area.

Adding a ninth electoral district would result in an average deviation of plus 0.5 percent (based on 81 electoral districts), quite appropriate for this area. We are persuaded that the number of electoral districts in the Fraser Valley should be increased from eight to nine.

This calls for a significant reconfiguration of the existing electoral boundaries. As the table set out shows, there is currently a very uneven distribution of population among electoral districts, ranging from minus 8.8 percent to plus 30.9 percent. In this area of the province we should, subject to important considerations such as municipal boundaries and community interests, strive for electoral districts that exhibit relatively comparable deviations.

However, striving for relatively equal deviations clashes with our goal to create, wherever possible, electoral districts that respect municipal boundaries. On the north side of the Fraser River, for example, Maple Ridge (pop. 68,949) is too large for one electoral district, but not large enough for two. To the west of Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows (pop. 15,623) is far too small for its own electoral district, which means that it

⁶⁰ Includes 8,100 persons from Yale-Lillooet.

must be joined with the western part of Maple Ridge. Combining Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows to form two electoral districts (total population of 84,572) would result in each of them having a deviation of minus 16.7 percent, which in our view is not desirable for this urban area, even with its growth projections.

Consequently, we have decided to adopt the approach taken by the 1999 Wood Commission of dividing Maple Ridge between two electoral districts – with Pitt Meadows to the west, and Mission to the east (see maps of proposed Maple Ridge–Pitt Meadows electoral district page 172 and proposed Maple Ridge–Mission electoral district page 173). Before reaching that decision, we did consider several other options:

- Create an exclusively Maple Ridge electoral district with a population of about 51,000. However, that would have resulted in a second, crescent-shaped district composed of Pitt Meadows (pop. 15,623), the balance of Maple Ridge (pop. 17,949) and the western part of Mission (pop. about 17,400).
- Develop a configuration that would combine some parts of Pitt Meadows and/or Maple Ridge with Langley and/or Abbotsford communities

south of the Fraser River. From a transportation perspective, this will be feasible by 2009 with completion of the Golden Ears Bridge that will cross the Fraser River at 201st Street. The reason for doing this would be to increase the Pitt Meadows–Maple Ridge population enough to create one district wholly within Maple Ridge and a second Maple Ridge–Pitt Meadows electoral district, thus avoiding a Maple Ridge–Mission district. However, to do this now would require encroaching into Langley and/or Abbotsford enough so that about 17,000 constituents from south of the river would be in an electoral district north of the river. In our view, this would be disruptive to communities south of the Fraser River, at a time when the only transportation corridor across the river in this area is the Albion–Fort Langley ferry, with few demonstrable community interests. That situation may well change by the time of the next electoral boundaries commission, after the Golden Ears Bridge has been in service for several years.

Creating a Maple Ridge–Pitt Meadows electoral district with a population at about the provincial electoral quotient (50,784) means that nearly 34,000 residents of Maple Ridge will become

part of the Maple Ridge–Mission district. Regrettably, this means that the domino effect moves further east, because the Maple Ridge–Mission district needs only about 16,000 residents from Mission (pop. 34,742), to reach the provincial electoral quotient. The result is that Mission, too, must be divided between two electoral districts.

In designing this more easterly Mission-based electoral district, there are two options. We could extend the district eastward, staying north of the Fraser River, which means that Mission would be included in the same electoral district as Kent, Agassiz, Harrison Hot Springs, Hope and the Fraser Canyon communities.⁶¹ The alternative would be to join the eastern part of Mission with the Matsqui and Clayburn areas of Abbotsford south of the Fraser River. The Mission Bridge, which connects these areas, makes this option feasible.

During our public consultation, we heard nothing to suggest discontent with the current inclusion of Kent, Agassiz and Harrison Hot Springs in the Chilliwack-Kent electoral district. The people living in these communities are connected to Chilliwack via the Highway 9 bridge at Agassiz and they assured us, as they had the 1999 Wood Commission, that their trading routes

⁶¹ Earlier in this section of the report (see Cariboo-Thompson), we decided that the District Municipality of Hope and nearby Fraser Canyon communities should be included in an eastern Fraser Valley electoral district.

and community interests lie with Chilliwack to the south, not Mission to the west.

At the same time, we were told that there is a high level of inter-governmental co-ordination between Mission and Abbotsford – they are in the same regional district, and they share a regional water and sewer system, a recycling system and a transit system. The Mission Bridge facilitates transportation between the two areas.

We decided to join the eastern part of Mission with the Matsqui and Clayburn areas of Abbotsford into one electoral district, rather than join Mission with Hope and the Fraser Canyon communities (see map of proposed Mission-Clayburn electoral district page 174). Having said that, we propose that communities east of Mission to the current Harrison River boundary, be included in this new electoral district that we propose be named Mission-Clayburn. It will have a deviation of plus 4.1 percent.

Turning to the area of the Fraser Valley south of the Fraser River, we again are faced with municipal populations that do not match well with our provincial electoral quotient of 50,784. Moving eastward from the Surrey-Langley border, we find the following municipal populations:

• City of Langley	23,606
• Township of Langley	93,726
• Abbotsford*	109,290
• Chilliwack	69,217

*(net population after deducting the 14,574 residents of Abbotsford who are included in our Mission-Clayburn Electoral District.)

Ideally, two electoral districts should be created that correspond exactly with the remaining Abbotsford population. However, that configuration would result in having two Langley-based electoral districts to the west with a total population of 117,332, giving each a deviation of plus 15.5 percent (based on 81 districts), too high in this rapidly-growing area.

Consequently, we began the boundary setting task at the Surrey-Langley border and, moving eastward, developed electoral districts with roughly similar deviations and which, as much as possible, respected local community interests. The result is five electoral districts entirely south of the Fraser River, and a sixth in the eastern Fraser Valley that combines eastern Chilliwack with Kent, Agassiz, Harrison Hot Springs (as at present), and now includes Hope and adjacent Fraser Canyon communities that are within the Fraser Valley Regional District (see maps of six proposed electoral districts page 175-180). They will have deviations ranging from minus 3.8 percent to plus 4.8 percent.

We realize that this configuration results in the Township of Langley (pop. 93,726) being split among three electoral districts and the City of Abbotsford (pop. 123,864) being split among four electoral districts. Given the distribution of the Fraser Valley's population among its numerous municipal divisions, and the very limited transportation connections across the Fraser River, we could devise no better arrangement of electoral districts. We should also observe that, although the proposed Chilliwack-Hope electoral district covers a large geographical area, almost the entire population lives along an easily accessible narrow corridor between Chilliwack and Hope.

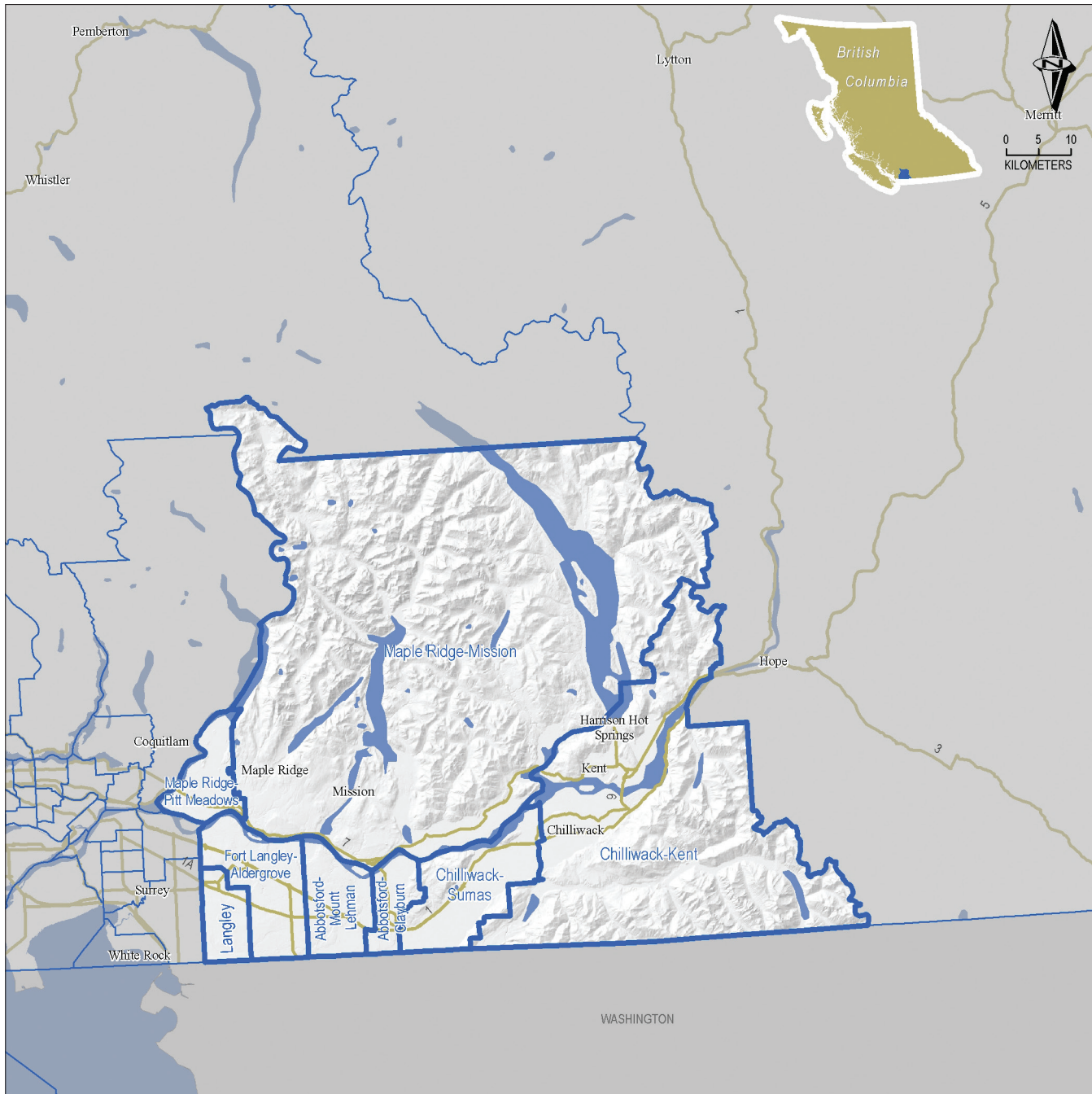
4. Conclusion

Accordingly, we propose that there be nine electoral districts in the Fraser Valley, as follows:

TABLE 16: PROPOSED SMP ELECTORAL DISTRICTS IN THE FRASER VALLEY

Electoral District	Sq. Km.	Population	Deviation*
Maple Ridge–Pitt Meadows	1,946	50,474	-0.6%
Maple Ridge–Mission	389	50,193	-1.2%
Mission–Clayburn	638	52,874	+4.1%
Langley West	73	53,231	+4.8%
Langley East	211	50,805	0%
Abbotsford–Aldergrove	193	50,965	+0.4%
Abbotsford Centre	49	52,495	+3.4%
Abbotsford–Chilliwack	281	49,863	-1.8%
Chilliwack–Hope	10,842	48,807	-3.9%
* based on 81 electoral districts, with a provincial electoral quotient of 50,784			

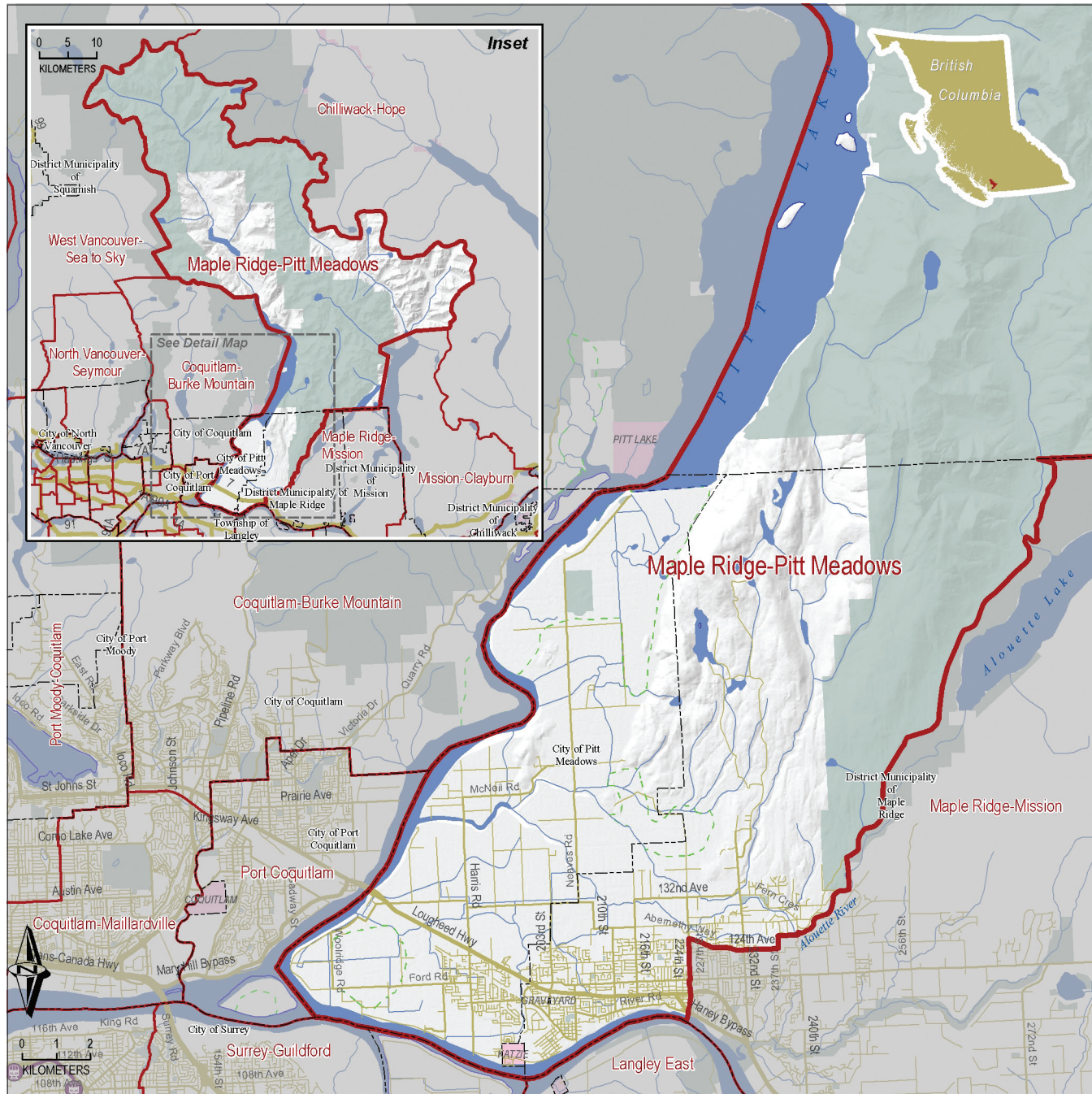
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Region: Fraser Valley – Proposed Fraser Valley Electoral Districts

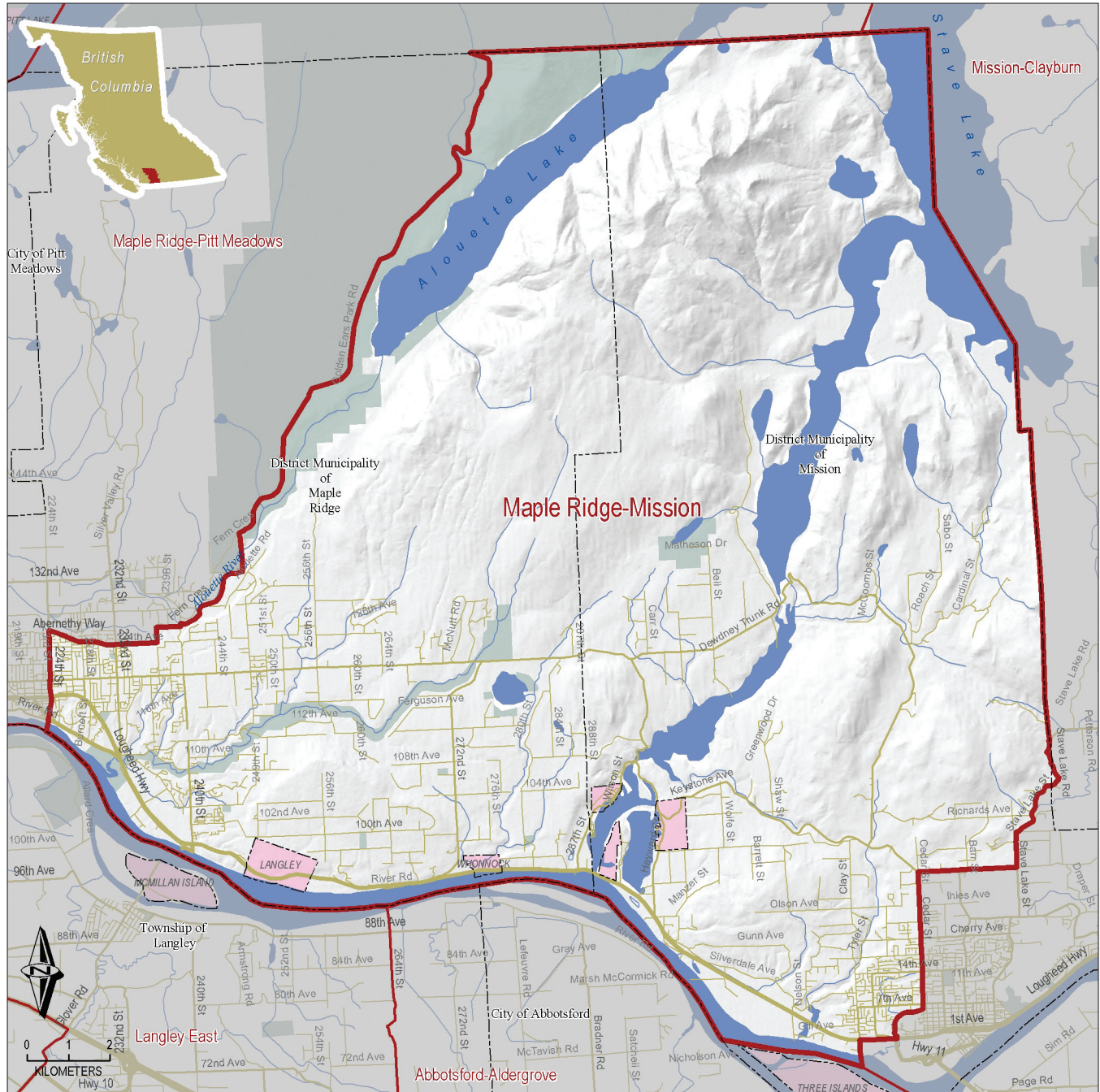


Region: Fraser Valley – Proposed Maple Ridge–Pitt Meadows Electoral District

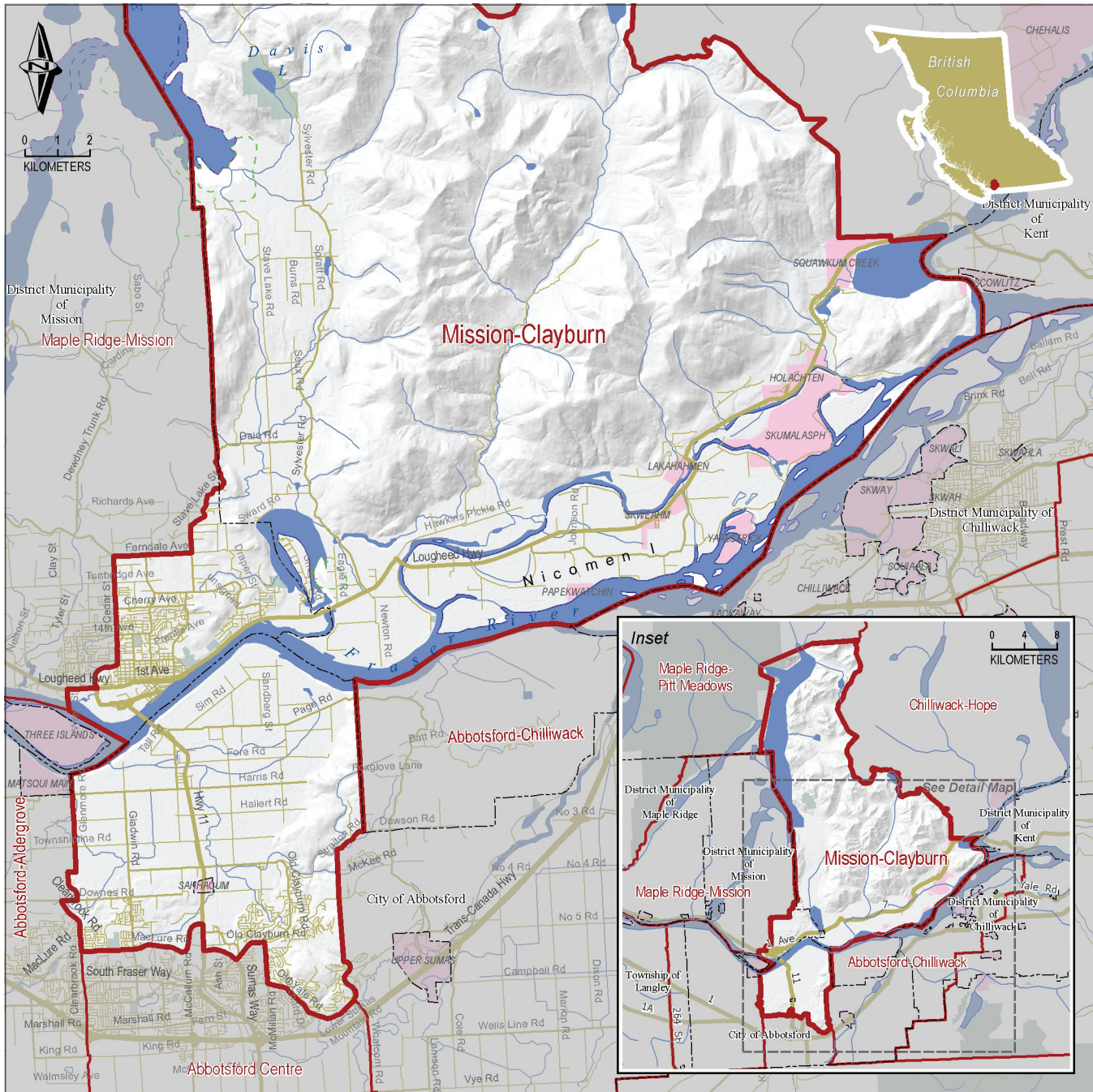


PART 9 – PROPOSED SINGLE MEMBER PLURALITY BOUNDARIES

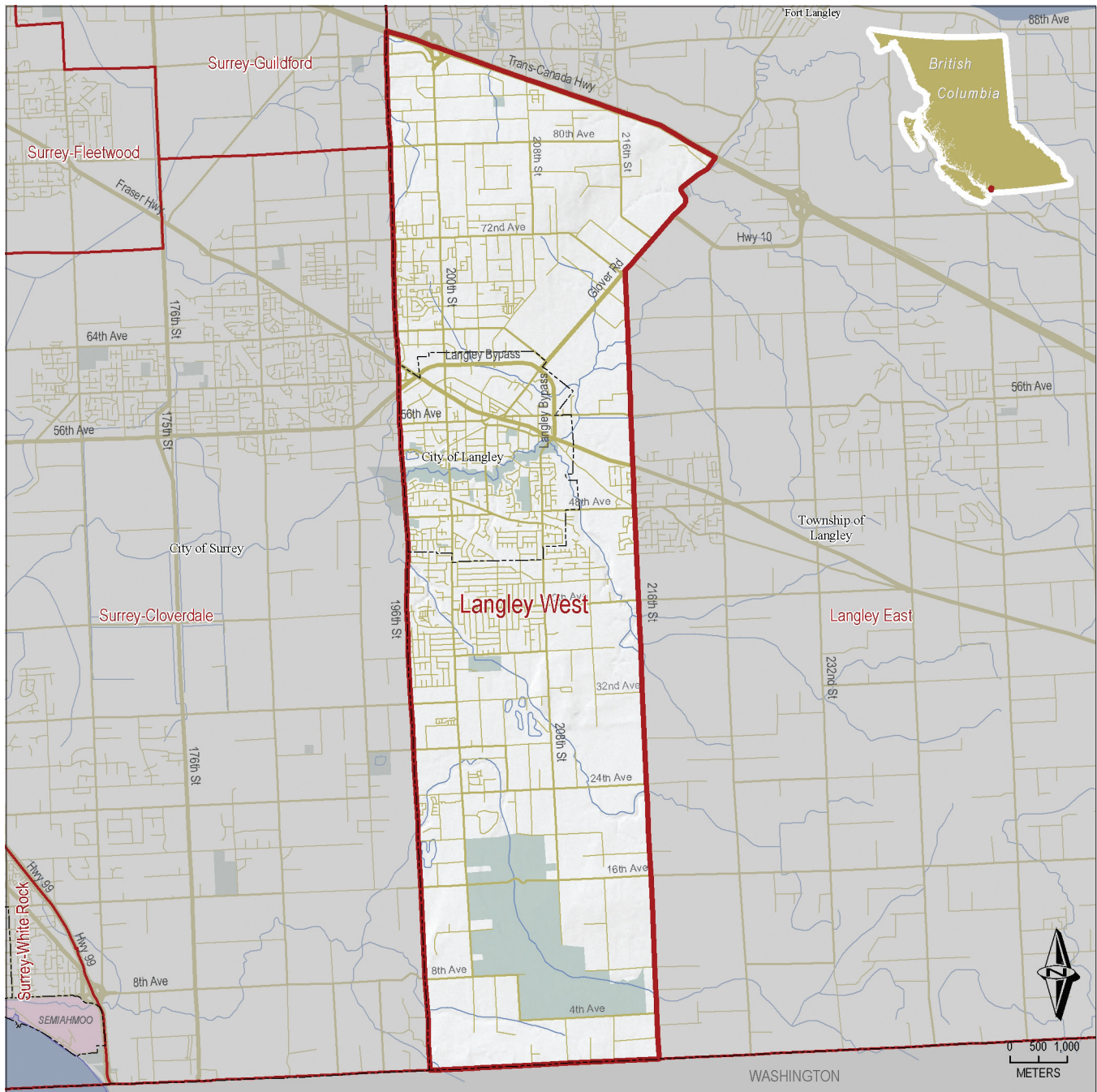
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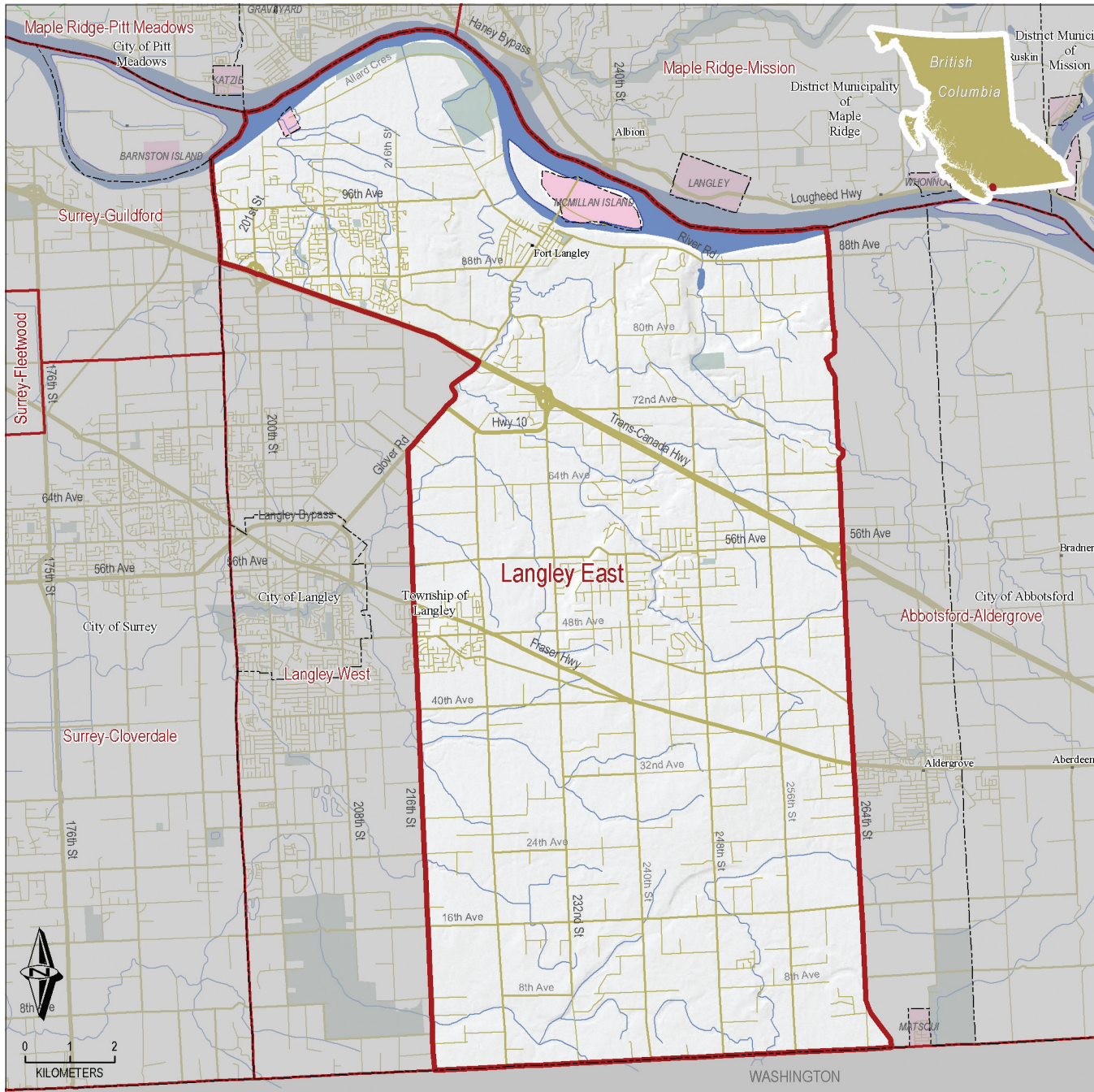
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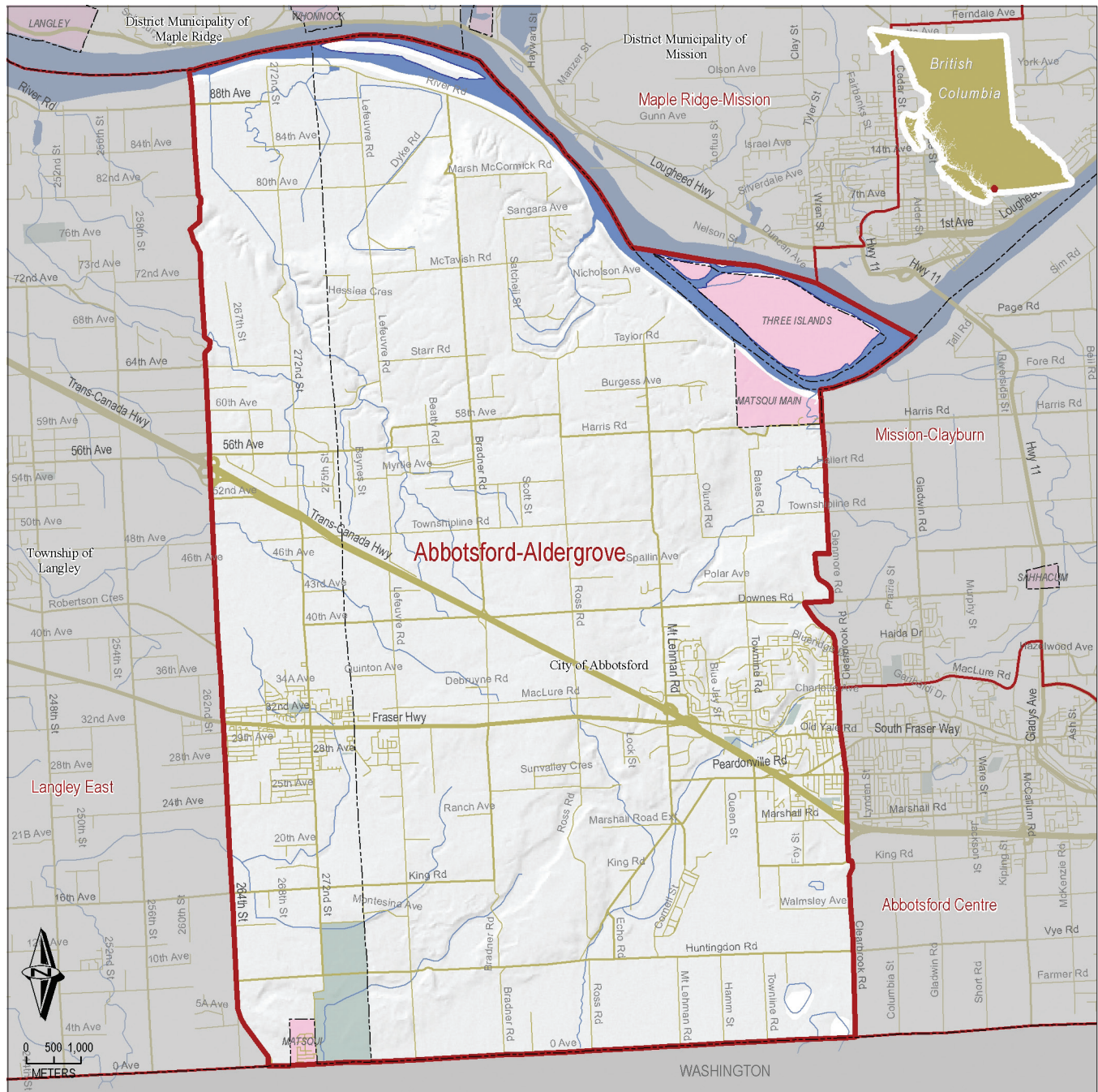
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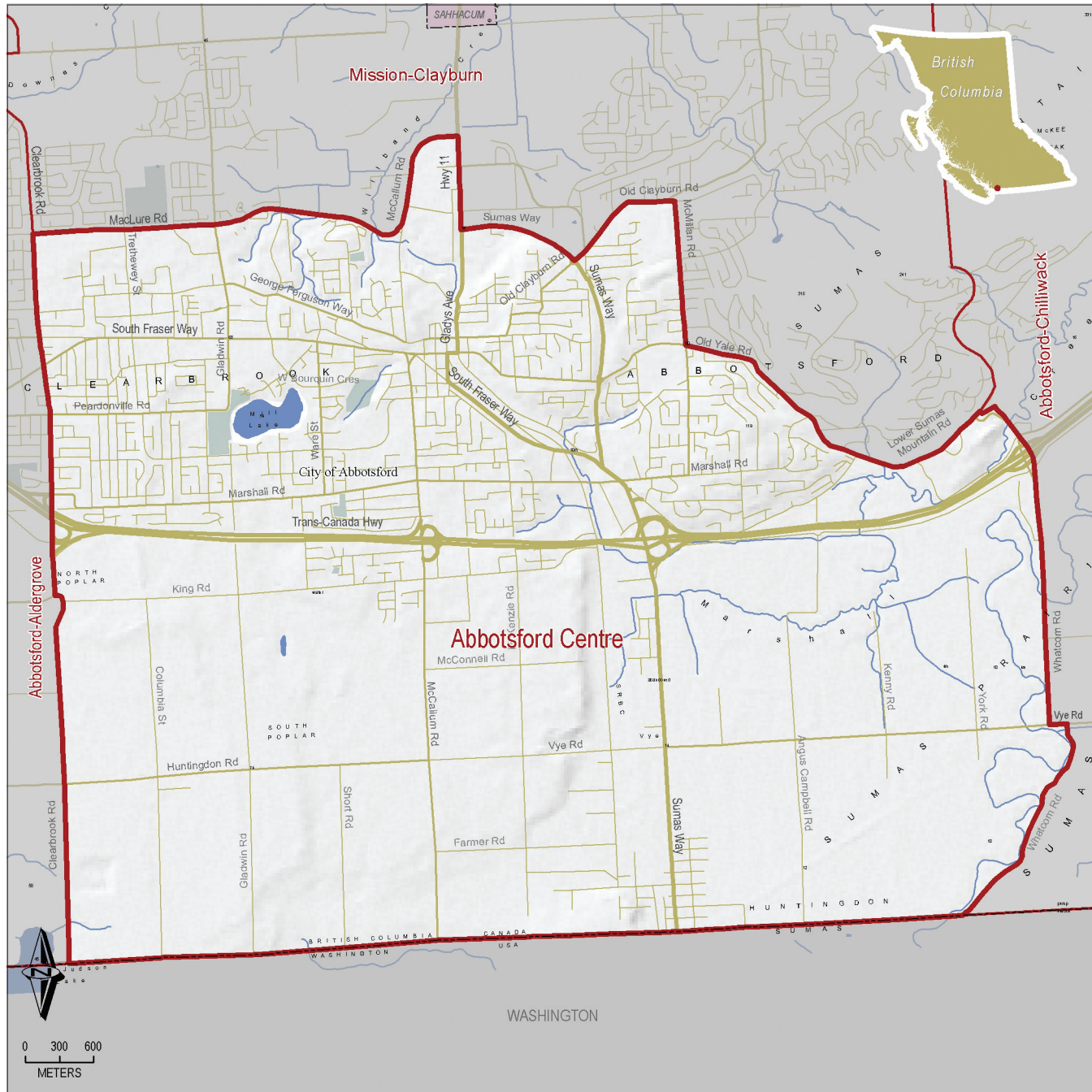
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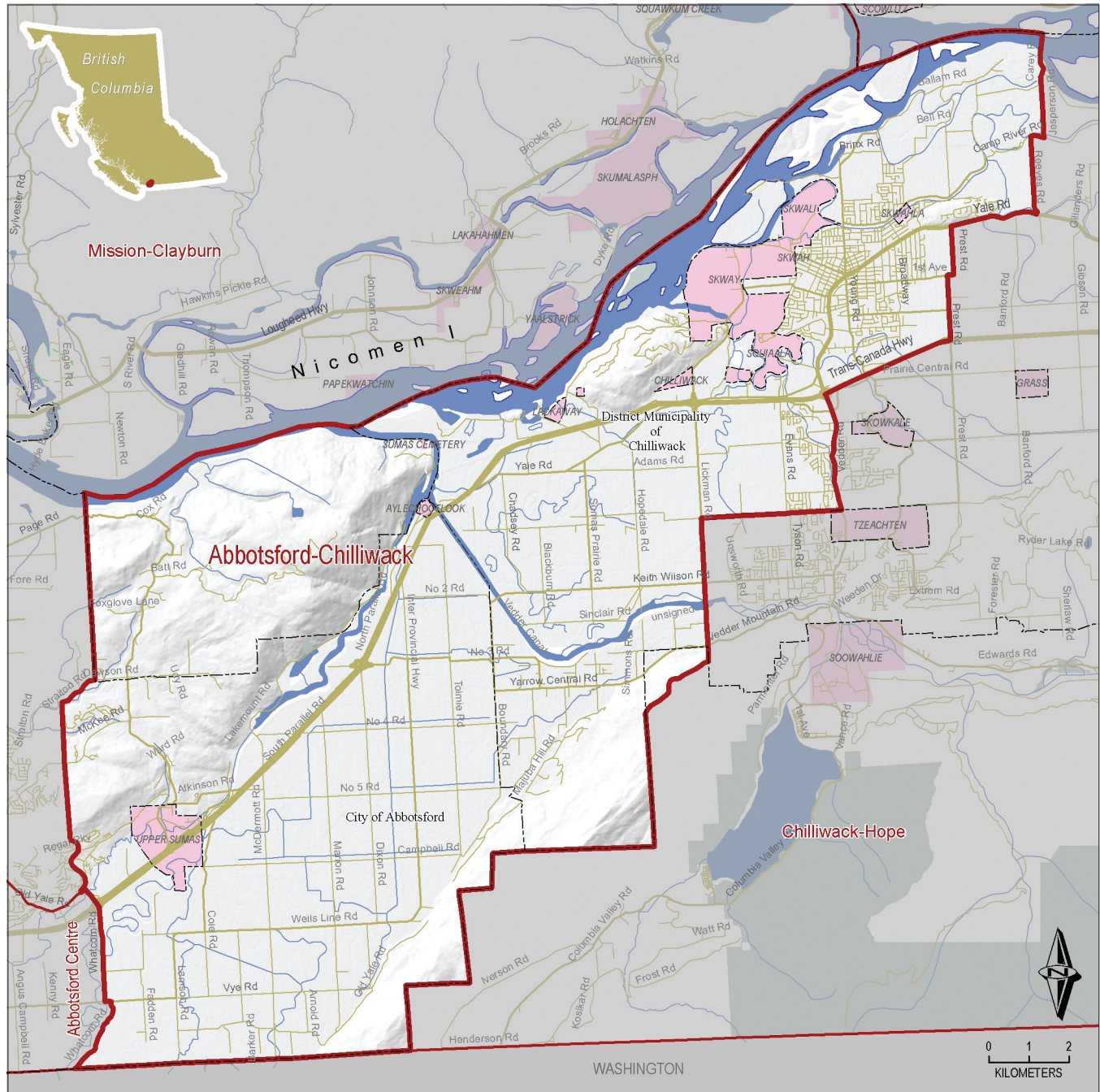
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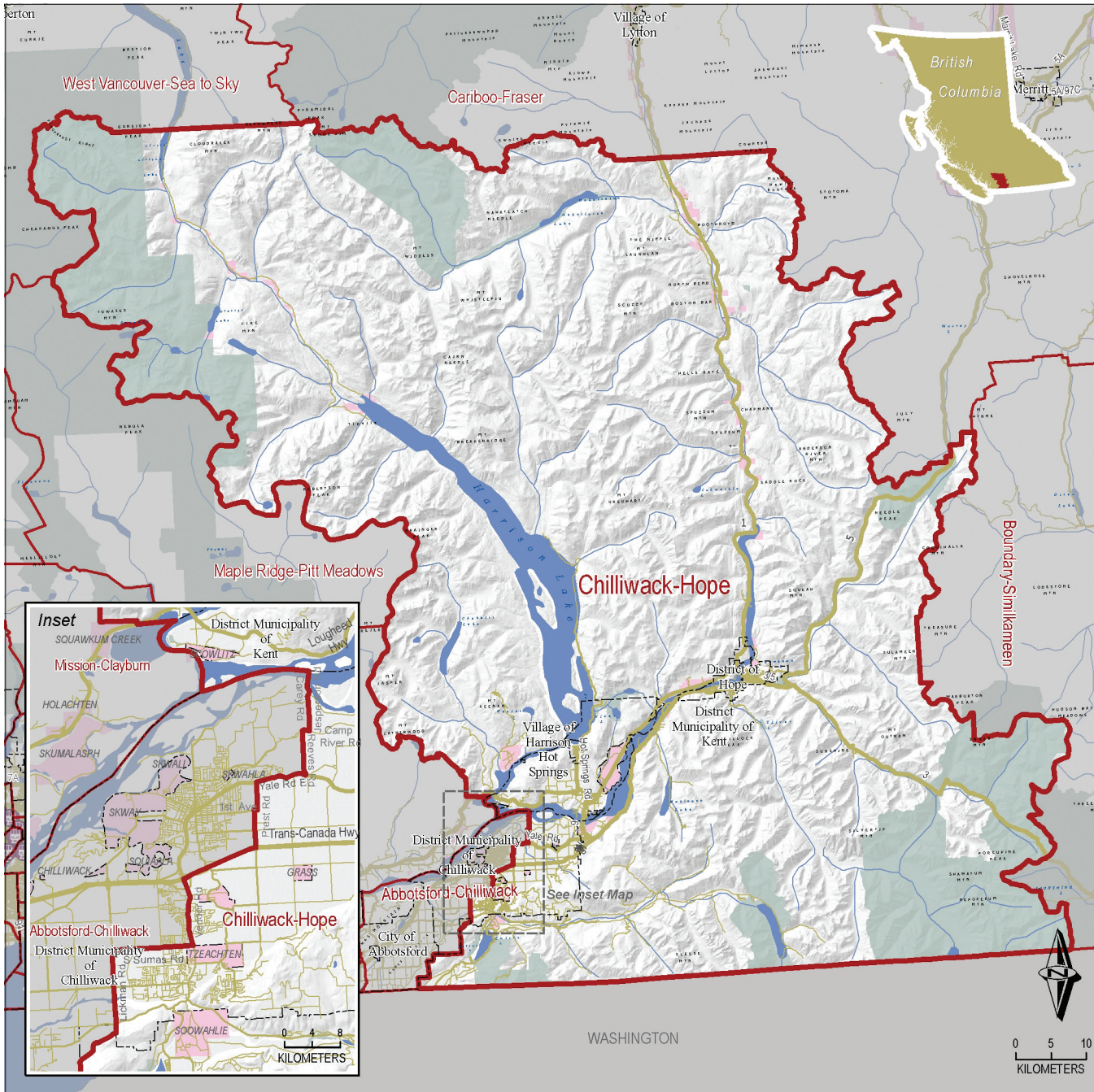
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Region: Fraser Valley – Proposed Abbotsford-Chilliwack Electoral District



Region: Fraser Valley – Proposed Chilliwack-Hope Electoral District



PART 9 – PROPOSED SINGLE MEMBER PLURALITY BOUNDARIES