

Comox Valley Regional District Sewer Extension South

Community Events – Summary Report
June 2023



July 4, 2023



comoxvalleyrd.ca   

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Executive Summary

Over the past year, the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) has taken important steps to move the Sewer Extension South Project forward. These steps include rolling the project into the Comox Valley Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP) as an addendum and forming a Public and Technical Advisory Committee to inform the process.

Following five successful meetings with the PAC/TAC, and with more detailed plans now in place – it was time to update the community on the work completed to date and what to expect in the coming years. The project updates included the following:

- **Community Open Houses:** Two in-person drop-in style public open houses, one at Fallen Alders Hall in Royston, and one at the Union Bay Community Club. Options to attend an afternoon or evening session were provided to help increase the number of participants.
- **Online Webinar:** A lunch time webinar via ZOOM.
- **Website Updates:** Follow up information from the events posted to the project page on [Engage Comox Valley](#), the online engagement hub where background resources are available, including timelines, project maps, etc.

At these events, the CVRD provided detailed information about costs, phasing and timelines for the project. There was opportunity for the public to share questions and comments directly with staff, and via a hard-copy or online feedback form. Once the events were complete, the webinar was posted to the project page for further viewing, along with the open house information boards. Questions and answers from the sessions were collated on the website under themes as follow-up.

Over 200 participants attended the in-person open houses, with an additional 43 public participants and 16 panelists joining the webinar. A variety of tools were used to invite residents to the events, including: direct mail postcard, news release, social media posts, email newsletter and a print ad.

Overall, questions/comments were largely focused on timing and costs. There was mixed response from the public, including:

- residents in favour of moving the project ahead as quickly as possible
- homeowners expressing concern about the cost implications
- residents in future phases expressing interest in being added to Phase 1A
- residents who had recently had new septic systems installed who wanted to defer connection to the community system

Feedback collected at the events, directly by phone or email after the event and via feedback forms, will be shared with the project team for consideration and be included in the draft addendum report that goes to the province.



Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The proposed Sewer Extension South Project will move wastewater from homes and businesses in Union Bay and Royston through a new sewer pipe where it will connect to the Comox Valley Sewer Service, creating a regional approach for the treatment of wastewater. This new regional system will also serve Union Bay Estates and K'ómoks First Nation Treaty Settlement Lands, for which development and economic growth will be an important part of reconciliation.

This project will provide many benefits to impacted residents, including improving operational efficiencies and cost savings. It will also address:

- **Environmental protection:** About 60 per cent of the septic systems in Royston and 70 per cent in Union Bay are more than 25 years old, and many occupied properties do not have record of a permitted septic system at all. Poorly functioning systems pose an environmental and public safety risk.
- **Reconciliation with K'ómoks First Nation:** The new regional system will include service to the K'ómoks First Nation Treaty Settlement Lands south of Courtenay. Should the treaty be ratified, development and economic growth of these lands will be an important part of reconciliation. The project will also help ensure safe access to shellfish for the K'ómoks First Nation for food, social and ceremonial purposes, and support their aquaculture interests in Baynes Sound.
- **Anticipated growth in the area:** The capacity of existing properties to support alternative housing solutions is limited without proper sewer servicing and affordable housing is a key strategic priority for the CVRD Board.

Planning for this project has been rolled into the Comox Valley Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP) to be submitted to the province as an addendum in early 2024. Public Advisory and Technical Advisory Committees have been established to help develop the addendum and feedback gathered at these events will help inform their work.


1.2 Community Engagement Goals

The proposed plans for community sewer will impact Royston/Union Bay residents, including one-time costs, increased taxes and construction disruption. This impact requires dedicated engagement to allow community feedback on the project. Under the LWMP addendum process, the CVRD is required to demonstrate how feedback was incorporated into the final plan.

Feedback from these community events will be included in the addendum report submitted to the province. The community will have an opportunity to review that document before submission in late 2023 or early 2024.

The work of the Public Advisory Committee in development of the options brought to the community falls under COLLABORATE on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum for public engagement. The goal of the community events was to INFORM and collect feedback from the community about:

- Updates in planning for the project, including LWMP addendum process, phasing, funding/project costs and timelines
- Estimated costs to homeowners

Increasing level of public involvement in decision-making 				
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Provide balanced and objective information to residents.	Obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions from residents	Work directly with residents to address concerns	Partner with residents to develop a preferred solution	Place final decision making in the hands of residents

Engagement Overview

2.1 Approach

Three community open houses ran in June 2023 and included the following methods of approach:



In-Person Community Open Houses

These events took place on:

- Tuesday, June 13, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm – Royston
- Wednesday, June 14 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm – Union Bay

There were 8 members of the project team on hand to answer questions as well as two technical consultants and representatives from K'ómoks First Nation and Island Health. Elected officials and members of the Public Advisory Committee were also in attendance.

Fifteen information boards were on display, in addition to takeaway information. This information included a backgrounder on the pros and cons of paying costs up front, and sample copies of a CVRD utility bill, to illustrate how costs would appear there.

Additionally, there were large map printouts, so attendees could find their property and its corresponding phase. Feedback forms were available for participants to submit to the team at the event or online.

More specifically, the events provided details to the public about:

- Reasons for project + project benefits
- Project phasing
- Design/location of the pump stations
- How wastewater will be collected in each community
- Estimated project costs and costs to homeowners

- Options to defer project costs + property taxes
- Proposed CVRD Septic Regulatory Program
- Benefits of community sewer vs. septic, including costs
- LWMP addendum + LWMP process and public consultation component
- Decision-making process/committee structure
- Project planning timeline



ZOOM Webinar

An online webinar was hosted by the project team on June 7 from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm via ZOOM. Darry Monteith, Manager of Liquid Waste Planning, provided a 30-minute overview presentation summarizing the content of the information boards. This was followed by a Q&A period for participants to pose questions to the project team. Like the in-person events, there were 16 panelists available to respond to questions. Elected officials and members of the Public Advisory Committee were also in attendance.



Website Updates

Information from the events, including the information boards and a recording of the webinar, was posted on the [project page](#) for those interested in having another look, or for those who could not attend. The project webpage was also updated to include a feedback form, a 'Key Topics' section (highlighting answers to commonly asked questions) and a questions tab, inviting residents to submit any unanswered questions.

2.2 Promotion

The following blend of tools was used to promote, inform and encourage participation in the community open houses:



POSTCARD INVITATION: A postcard-style invitation was distributed by Canada Post to over 900 Union Bay/Royston households.



NEWS RELEASE: A [news release](#) was distributed on May 29 to announce the details of the open houses and webinar.



SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS: Promotional posts were posted to the CVRD's Facebook + Twitter accounts.



PRINT AD: An ad ran in the June edition of the Union Bay 'Down by the Bay' newsletter.



EMAIL: A notice was distributed to the project email list, which includes 294 individuals who have signed up to receive project updates.

2.3 By the Numbers

The numbers below highlight key data collected through the events.



2.4 Themes of Comments

The themes of feedback listed below are compiled from three sources: feedback relayed directly to staff members at the in-person events, questions posed by participants during the online webinar's question and answer period, feedback forms submitted at the events and online, and follow-up phone and email interactions post-event. Themes are listed in order of interest/popularity.



Concerns about costs/affordability of connecting to community sewer

- Property owners concerned about costs being too high/unaffordable
- Most were receptive to the annual costs, with more concerns around the one-time costs associated with decommissioning existing systems and getting a sewer line to the street
- Concerns that costs will escalate between now and project start date; questions about whether contingencies/cost overruns have been built into estimated costs
- Questions about whether there will be any other financial assistance for property owners other than the two deferral options presented



Questions about timing/costs for future phases

- Property owners in Phase 1B and Future Phases wanting to understand timing for their neighbourhoods and what the costs would be in future
- Requests for clarity on how phases were decided, which properties are in what phase, etc
- Disappointment in the small number of properties included in the first phase



Interest from Phase 1B/future phase property owners to connect to the system now

- Many property owners located in Phase 1B or Future Phases expressed interest in being included in the project now – and expressed willingness to pay additional costs



Concern around no option for a referendum/AAP

- Issues with cost impacts to property owners and no ability to 'have a say' with a vote or alternate approval process



Concern that project is being prioritized to benefit private property development

- Questions around cost apportionment for residents and project partners
- Concern that residents are paying the costs for a forcemain that will benefit developers
- Questions whether the system has been sized to accommodate future development in UBE and K'ómoks First Nation



Requests to 'get the job done' / interest in the project moving forward quickly

- Frustration about the length of time the process is taking – 'just get the project done'



Questions about the environmental need of the project

- Questioning the validity of failing septic systems causing harm to Baynes Sound and expressing the belief that the real purpose of the project is to service homes in UBE
- Requests for proof of failing septic systems
- Some frustrated that Union Bay and Royston residents being held responsible for the cost of cleaning up Baynes Sound while shipbreaking activities continue



Questions/concerns about newly installed septic systems

- Concerns from property owners who have recently installed a new septic system about the costs to connect; questioning why they must connect to sewer if their property is not causing issues



Questions about if/when/how to install new septic system if property in future phase

- Septic system needs replacing now (or soon), residents wondering whether to replace or wait for new connection; unclear on how to plan ahead
- Concern over installing new septic system and then being mandated to connect to sewer
- Questions about more affordable alternatives to a new system (e.g. a holding tank or composting toilet) if a septic system fails before sewer hook-up is available



Interest in paying costs up front

- Some Phase 1A property owners expressed interest in paying up front for all costs



Questions about decommissioning of septic system

- Questions about responsibilities of homeowner to destroy/remove existing septic tank; about re-use of existing septic tanks as rainwater cisterns, or retrofitting for an LPS system; and whether decommissioning requires permits



Questions about community collection system piping

- Many wanting to know where pipes will run and where collection pipes will connect at their property
- Suggestions for alternate piping routes to better align with landscaping, current plumbing etc.



Other questions/comments

- Interest from property owners for CVRD to create list of contractors for connection work
- Concern about location of Royston pump station near water's edge (near boat launch); where recreational activity is common. Underground preference.
- Questions about what influences the range of costs for one-time connection fees
- Requests for clarification on five-year deferral date for proposed CVRD septic deferral program
- Requests for clarification on costs to service secondary/multiple dwellings on one property
- Some concerns about future septic regulations for those properties not part of the project boundary

Conclusion

With key project information now available, it was critical to update the community on how they will be affected. The three events were successful in bringing out a large portion of the affected community to share their key concerns – and their support – to be considered as planning progresses and by the committees making the decisions.

Cost concerns emerged as the top issue, followed by questions from homeowners about timing for future phases. Many residents also expressed their strong support for the project and their concern with failing septic systems in their neighbourhoods. In fact – there were many comments requesting earlier connection, from property owners in future phases.

The 250 participants who attended the events will now have the base project knowledge to share with their neighbours and other community members. The comments/concerns collected at this stage will provide valuable considerations for the project team to consider and will be shared with committees for future decision-making.

Next Steps

- **Summer 2023:** Project team develops draft addendum report, incorporating public feedback from these events.
- **Sept. 2023 – Nov. 2023:** PAC/TAC reviews draft report (including the community event summary report) and provides comments for consideration by steering committee.
- **Nov. 2023 – Jan. 2024:** Next round of community events to share final draft addendum with public for review and comment.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Information Boards

Appendix 2 – Promotion Samples

Appendix 3 – Direct Mail Postcard

Appendix 4 – Feedback Form

Appendix 5 – Feedback Form Responses

Appendix 6 – Backgrounder

Appendix 1

Information Boards

WHY DO WE NEED A REGIONAL SEWER SERVICE?



POOR CONDITIONS

The ground conditions and high density of housing in the area create a greater risk for on-site septic systems to fail.



AGING AND FAILING SYSTEMS

About 60 per cent of the septic systems in Royston and 70 per cent in Union Bay are more than 25 years old, and many occupied properties do not have record of a permitted septic system at all.



RISK TO BAYNES SOUND

Baynes Sound produces 70 per cent of BC's cultured oysters – a prized feature of the Comox Valley that holds important cultural, economic, environmental and recreational value. Poorly functioning systems pose an environmental and public safety risk.



EXISTING HUB AND FUTURE GROWTH

The area has an existing population that would benefit from servicing – and once serviced can expect growth.



BENEFITS FOR RESIDENTS

Connecting to a regional sewer service will provide residents with high quality wastewater treatment, reduce regulatory hurdles and offer cost savings over the long-term.



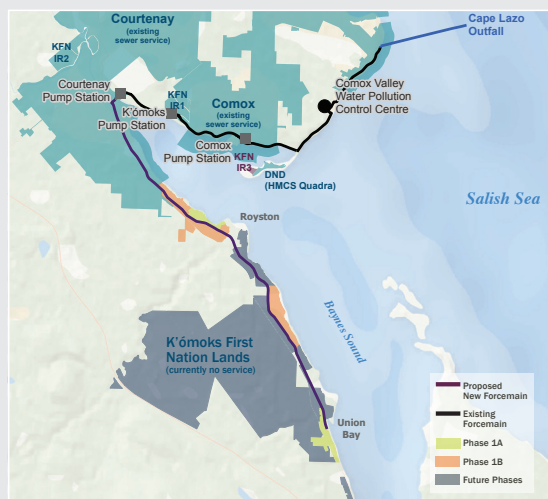
NEW SEWER SERVICE & HOW IT WORKS

The Comox Valley Sewage Commission – which currently services 40,000 people in Courtenay, Comox and K'ómoks First Nation – has made an unprecedented decision by agreeing to receive wastewater from Area A.

REGIONAL SEWER SERVICE MAP

The expanded regional system would see the addition of these components:

- ▶ 13 km long forcemain, extending from Union Bay to the Courtenay Pump Station
- ▶ Neighbourhood collection systems and pump stations



HOW IT WILL WORK

In the new system, wastewater will travel this path:

1. From the home into neighbourhood collection systems
2. Pump stations will move wastewater through a new forcemain to the Courtenay River siphon
3. Wastewater is piped under the Courtenay River to the Courtenay Pump Station
4. Wastewater is combined with municipal flows and pumped to the Treatment Plant near Cape Lazo

Appendix 1

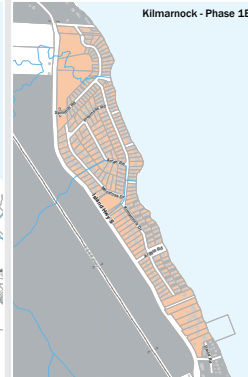
Information Boards

A PHASED APPROACH

Due to the scale of the project and to keep per property costs reasonable, sewer service will be implemented in phases. The maps below show the proposed boundaries for Phases 1A and 1B.

PHASE 1A

- Proposed to include 460 properties in the historic cores of Royston and Union Bay.
- These areas were selected because:
 - significant number of aging/at-risk systems
 - greatest environmental need due to lot size and density
 - most cost efficient to service
- Phase 1A will provide foundational infrastructure needed for connection of future phases, and all future connections will benefit from this work.
- Phase 1A will see use of the \$30 million provincial grant.
- The CVRD is currently seeking more information from SD71 about the value of adding Royston Elementary School to Phase 1A.



PHASE 1B

- Phase 1B will expand servicing to additional portions of the Royston area as well as the Kilmarnock neighbourhood.

FUTURE PHASES

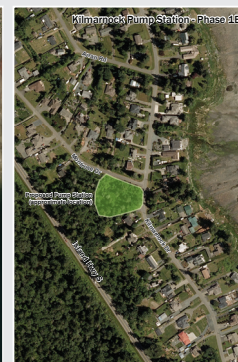
- Future project phases will include smaller and/or lower density neighbourhoods where servicing is more expensive, including Gartley Point, Spence Road and Garvin Road.
- The timing of future phases is unknown at this time.

PUMP STATIONS

Wastewater will move through neighbourhood collection systems to the pump stations, which will pump wastewater into the regional forcemain and carry it to the sewage treatment plant. Phase 1A will see the installation of two pump stations, with an additional pump station installed in Phase 1B.

PHASE 1A: ROYSTON PUMP STATION

- Committees recommended a location for a single storey pump station building at the base of Royston Road on the Northwest corner of the Royston Road/Marine Drive intersection.
- Future planning will consider potential community amenity options (i.e. public washrooms, parking).
- Proposed location is in the coastal flood zone – there are ongoing discussions to mitigate potential impacts of coastal flooding. Alternative options under consideration include:
 - Small community kiosk/ underground pump station at proposed location, with a regional pump station located near Highway 19A
 - Kiosk at proposed location, with electrical equipment relocated outside of the flood zone up Royston Road



PHASE 1A UNION BAY AND PHASE 1B KILMARNOCK PUMP STATIONS

- Location options are under consideration in the approximate highlighted area.



Gravity Wastewater Collection System: Pump stations need to be located at low points so collected wastewater can flow to them by gravity.

Public Input: Pump station locations are still undergoing review/consideration and community input will be considered as these decisions are made.

COLLECTION SYSTEMS

A collection system is the system of pipes that collects wastewater from individual properties in a neighbourhood into one central location – a pump station. The pump station will then push the collected wastewater into the regional sewer forcemain, which will move the wastewater through Courtenay and Comox to the sewage treatment plant.

COLLECTION SYSTEM

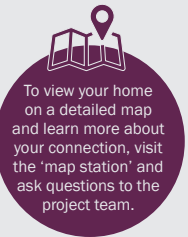
A hybrid gravity/low pressure sewer system was selected as the preferred option after review of options.

GRAVITY SYSTEM

- Wastewater would flow from homes by gravity to local pump stations.
- Most properties in the service area would be serviced with a gravity connection.

LOW PRESSURE SEWER SYSTEM (GRINDER PUMPS)

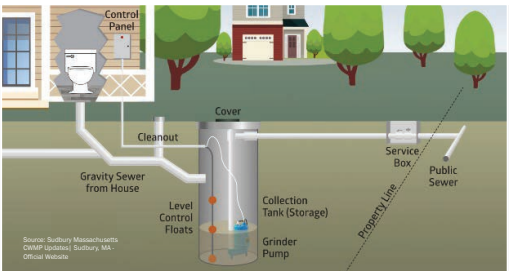
- Selected to minimize installation of infrastructure along the foreshore and limit excavation depths for sewer mains (deeper excavation increases cost).
- Involves installation of chambers with grinder pumps on some properties to push up to the gravity sewer main in the fronting street.
- Applies to an estimated 40 properties in Phase 1A where the wastewater plumbing exiting the home is lower than the sewer main in the fronting street.



CHAMBER AND GRINDER PUMPS: HOMEOWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

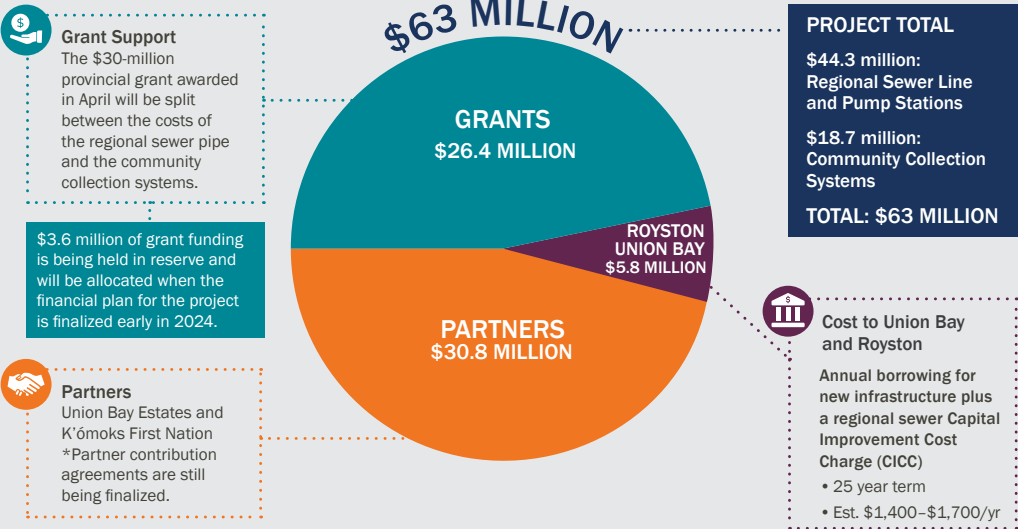
- Installation and maintenance:** The property owner would be responsible for installation, operation and maintenance costs of these pumps.
- Replacement:** Grinder pumps will typically last 10 to 15 years prior to requiring repairs or replacement. Replacements costs are currently around \$3,000 (depending on model chosen).
- Annual costs:** In other areas, annual operating/maintenance costs are estimated to be \$40 to \$50 for a typical household.

LOW PRESSURE SEWER SYSTEM: CHAMBER AND GRINDER PUMP



PROJECT COSTS

Extending sewer service to Royston and Union Bay is a significant project that is complex both in design and in funding. The good news is that the current proposed approach sees a large portion paid for by project partners and grants. See the below breakdown on project costs and costs to residents.



Appendix 1

Information Boards

COSTS FOR RESIDENTS

We know that one of the most important questions for residents is around the cost of a new service. There are two categories of costs anticipated: a) One-time costs which will vary from home-to-home and are the responsibility of the homeowner and b) Ongoing annual costs. See the below breakdown for more info.

ONE TIME COSTS: HOMEOWNERS

**ONE-TIME COST
PER HOUSEHOLD**
\$2,500–\$8,500



Connection from home
to new pipe at road:
\$1,500–\$6,500

Decommissioning
of septic system:
\$1,000–\$2,000

TOTAL: \$2,500–\$8,500

About this cost

- Responsibility of homeowner
- Varies depending on property and current system
- Estimates are based on current market conditions
- Grinder pumps for applicable properties not included in estimate

ANNUAL COSTS: PAYABLE TO CVRD

**ANNUAL COST
PER HOUSEHOLD**
\$1,930–\$2,350



Borrowing (25 years):
\$1,400–\$1,700

Operations + Maintenance
(ongoing):
\$530–\$650

TOTAL: \$1,930–\$2,350



Where you'll see these charges:

Borrowing:
\$1,400–\$1,700
On Annual
Provincial Property
Tax Bill

**Operations +
Maintenance**
\$165–\$180
On CVRD Quarterly
Utility Bill



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:

The CVRD is considering offering an option to pay some charges up front, all at once. Is this something that would be of interest? Visit our feedback table to let us know.

COSTS: DEFERRALS

There are two programs that could provide financial relief to property owners in the community sewer service area.

1 CVRD SEPTIC DEFERRAL PROGRAM

Eligible Properties:

- Properties with a **Type 2 or 3 septic system newer than five years** may qualify to delay connection to the community sewer by up to five years.

ELIGIBLE COSTS FOR CVRD DEFERRAL



Operations + Maintenance
est. **\$530–\$650 annually**

One-time Connection
\$1,500–\$6,500

Septic Decommissioning
\$1,000–\$2,500

2 PROVINCIAL PROPERTY TAX DEFERRAL

The property tax for project borrowing will be eligible for deferment under the **Province of BC's property tax deferment program**. For eligible owners, this could reduce the cost impact by **\$1,400–\$1,700** on your annual provincial tax bill.

Homeowners can apply for one of two provincial deferment programs:

1. Regular program:

- 55 or older during current year
- A surviving spouse of any age
- A person with disabilities

2. Families with Children Program:

- Parent, stepparent or financially supporting a child under 18

You must also meet applicant, property and equity qualifications to be eligible for these programs. **To learn more, scan the QR code:**

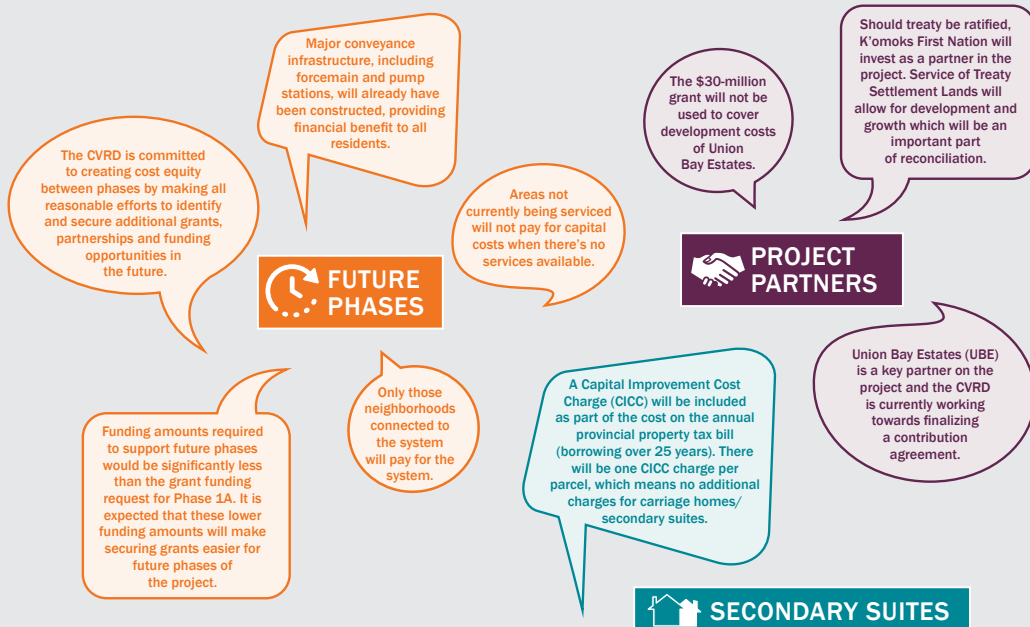


Homeowners that qualify for both the CVRD Septic Deferral program and the Province of BC's property tax deferment program could delay all costs related to the sewer project by up to five years.

Appendix 1

Information Boards

COSTS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



SEPTIC REGULATORY PROGRAM

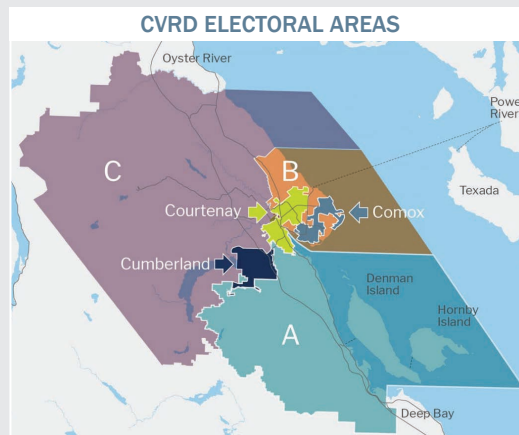
The CVRD is currently seeking provincial guidance on options to enact a septic regulatory bylaw and establish a septic maintenance service for Electoral Areas A, B and C.

WHY?

A regulatory bylaw would help ensure septic systems in the electoral areas are properly operated and maintained in accordance with Sewerage System Regulation requirements.

WHAT?

This new service could introduce required maintenance, including septic inspections, pump outs and enforcement measures.



HOW?

The proposed regulatory plan uses a risk-based approach tailored to the level of environmental and public health risk associated with septic systems, with electoral area neighborhoods at higher risk prioritized for additional regulatory measures.

WHEN?

A phased roll-out over five years has been proposed with an initial focus on highest priority areas.



NEXT STEPS

The Electoral Areas Services Committee is currently considering further information on the proposed septic regulatory program, options to initiate it and provincial guidance on the process.

Appendix 1

Information Boards

SEPTIC VS. SEWER

Connecting to the Comox Valley Sewer Service would reduce the environmental and health risks posed by aging septic systems, plus provide a number of other benefits to homeowners.

SEWER SERVICE

- Option to borrow over a 25 year term and to distribute costs over many users
- Reduced property maintenance responsibilities; skilled operators manage the system 24/7
- Provides the ability to use portions of the property that are currently occupied by septic system components
- Increased property values
- \$30-million grant for the project



SAMPLE COMMUNITY SEWER COSTS

UPFRONT COSTS*

Connection from house to sewer main

\$1,500-\$6,500

Septic system decommissioning
\$1,000-\$2,000

*estimates based on current market conditions

ONGOING (annual costs)

Borrowing (25-year term)
\$1,400-\$1,700

Operations + maintenance
\$530-\$650

AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER YEAR **\$2,000**
(based on 50-year time frame)

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

- Septic systems place the cost/maintenance burden on individual property owners
- Septic systems need to be replaced over time
- Failing systems pose a risk to environmental and public health
- Without appropriate servicing, it may not be possible for continued land development, resulting in potential regulatory changes such as:
 - Restrictions on adding secondary dwelling units, and/or revised zoning that better considers the area's on-site wastewater treatment capacity



SAMPLE PRIVATE SEPTIC SYSTEM COSTS**

UPFRONT COSTS

Installation of new Type 2 system

\$25,000 (years 1 & 26)

**estimates only - costs could be higher for more complex Type 2&3 systems

ONGOING (annual costs)

New septic maintenance property tax
\$250 per year

Maintenance
\$500 per year

Pump out
\$600 every three years

AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER YEAR **\$3,060**
(based on 50-year time frame)

THE PLANNING PROCESS

In June 2022, planning for the project was rolled into the long-term plan for the Comox Valley Sewer Service in order to create a truly regional approach. As a result, the project is undergoing a Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP) addendum to obtain borrowing approval.

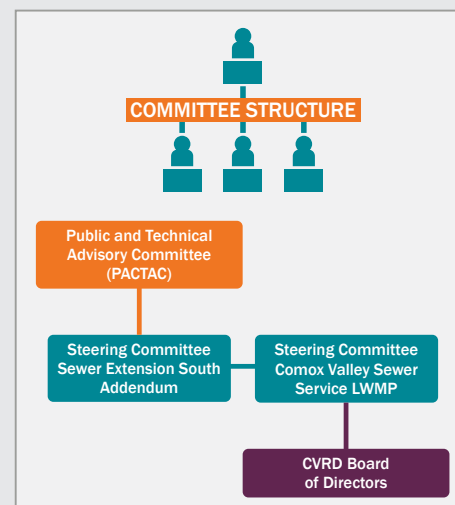
Provincial approval of a LWMP gives local government the ability to borrow for projects included in the plan. This means no referendum or AAP is required to move the approved plan forward.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- The CVRD must demonstrate the community's contribution to the planning process and how public feedback was incorporated into the final plan.
- A public advisory committee (PAC) including seven representatives from three different communities has been formed to inform this process.
- They have been considering information from technical experts and the project team, providing feedback and guidance.
- Community members will have an opportunity to review and comment on the final draft addendum later this Fall.
- This feedback will then be considered by the PAC and incorporated into the final report.

DECISION-MAKING

- All feedback collected at these events today will be shared with committees for their consideration (see structure at right).
- All final decisions will go to the CVRD Board.



Appendix 1

Information Boards

PROJECT PLANNING TIMELINE

COMOX VALLEY SEWER SERVICE LIQUID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN (LWMP)



NEXT STEPS

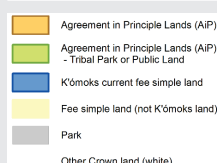
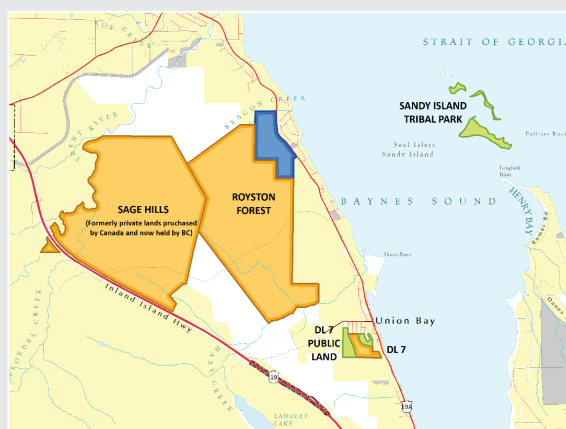


SEWER EXTENSION SOUTH LWMP ADDENDUM PROCESS



K'ÓMOKS FIRST NATION AND RECONCILIATION

hchəwčis; Hayuthela la xens: Moving Forward Together



SOUTH TREATY LANDS - AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE

- The new regional system will include service to the K'ómoks First Nation Treaty Settlement Lands south of Courtenay, where further development is planned.
- Should the treaty be ratified, development and economic growth of these lands will be an important part of reconciliation. Bringing water and sewer service to these proposed parcels removes key barriers to development.
- The sewer extension project will also help ensure safe access to shellfish for the K'ómoks First Nation for food, social and ceremonial purposes, and support their aquaculture interests in Baynes Sound.

K'ómoks Treaty is intended to create jobs, promote investment and economic development, build housing, support tourism and encourage investments in infrastructure which will benefit the entire Comox Valley and surrounding area.



Appendix 1

Information Boards

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

Thank you for attending today. Your input is important to us and will be collected and reported out to the Province as part of the Liquid Waste Management Plan addendum process.

TWO WAYS TO SUBMIT YOUR FEEDBACK



Complete and submit a feedback form here



Fill the feedback form out online

STAY UP TO DATE AT www.engagemoxvalley.ca/sewerextension



Register to receive project updates



Get access to the latest news and events




Ask a question of our project team

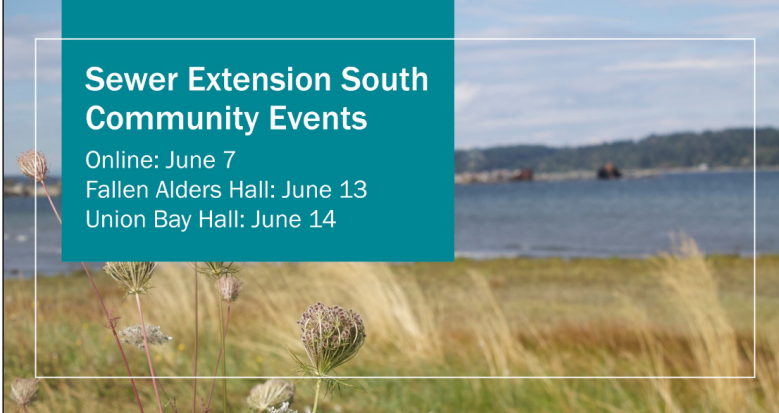


Appendix 2


Promotion Samples

 **Comox Valley Regional District - Local Government**
June 1 · 🌐

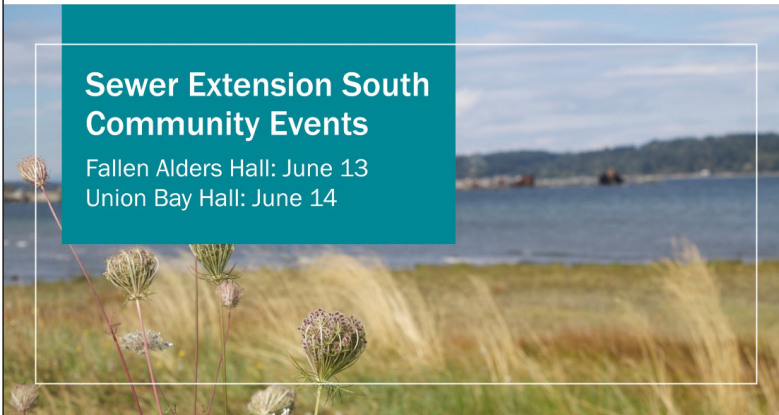
ATTN Royston/Union Bay residents: The CVRD is hosting three info sessions to provide updates on plans for the Sewer Extension South Project.
Join us at the dates below to have your say about important project components. 📌
To register for the virtual event visit: www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/sewerextension
#ComoxValleyRD #SewerExtensionSouth



Sewer Extension South Community Events
Online: June 7
Fallen Alders Hall: June 13
Union Bay Hall: June 14

 **Comox Valley Regional District - Local Government**
June 13 · 🌐

ROYSTON/UNION BAY SEWER UPDATE COMMUNITY EVENTS: Drop in to open houses today or tomorrow to share your feedback on plans for the Sewer Extension South Project.
📅 Tuesday, June 13, 3:00 to 5:00 pm, Fallen Alders Hall
📅 Wednesday, June 14, 5:00 to 7:00 pm, Union Bay Community Hall
More event details at www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/sewerextension
#ComoxValleyRD #SewerExtensionSouth



Sewer Extension South Community Events
Fallen Alders Hall: June 13
Union Bay Hall: June 14

 **Comox Valley RD @comoxvalleyrd · May 29**

 **CVRD News: Community events planned to update residents on Sewer Extension South Project**
The CVRD is taking next steps to bring community sewer service to Royston & Union Bay and open houses are set for June to update the public.
For more info engagecomoxvalley.ca/sewerextension.



engagecomoxvalley.ca
Sewer Extension South Project
Wastewater management for Royston and Union Bay. Finding a solution that protects the natural ...



Sewer Extension South

Community Update Events

Union Bay and Royston Residents: Join Us to Learn More About Sewer Plans

We're taking next steps on the Sewer Extension South Project – and we want to update the community and impacted homeowners about progress to date, and get feedback on critical project components.

The Sewer Extension South Project will bring community sewer service to Royston and Union Bay by connecting to the Comox Valley Sewer System. These community updates will include information about phasing, costs to households included in the new sewer service and timelines for planning, approval and construction of the new system.



In Person Open Houses:

- **Tuesday, June 13**, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Fallen Alders Hall, 3595 Royston Rd, Royston
- **Wednesday, June 14**, 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Union Bay Community Hall, 5401 Island Hwy S, Union Bay



ZOOM Webinar:

- **Wednesday, June 7**, 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm
- To register visit: www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/sewerextension

Questions?

Call: **250-334-6000**


Email: communications@comoxvalleyrd.ca




Sewer Extension South Project: Community Events


We're taking next steps on the Sewer Extension South Project – and we want to update the community and impacted homeowners about progress to date, plus get feedback on critical project components.

JOIN US IN PERSON

 **Tuesday, June 13**
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Fallen Alders Hall
3595 Royston Rd, Royston

 **Wednesday, June 14**
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Union Bay Community Hall
5401 Island Hwy S, Union Bay

JOIN US IN ONLINE

 **Wednesday, June 7**
12:00 pm to 1:00 pm
To register visit:
www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/sewerextension

QUESTIONS?

 Contact us at
E: communications@comoxvalleyrd.ca
P: 250-334-6000

The Sewer Extension South Project will bring community sewer service to Royston and Union Bay by connecting to the Comox Valley Sewer System that currently services Courtenay, Comox, Department of National Defense and K'ómoks First Nation. Come join us to find out more about how this impacts you.

Appendix 4

Feedback Form



Welcome and thank you for attending the **Sewer Extension South Project Update**. As you review the project information, we invite you to reply to the questions below and write down any feedback you have about the project. Once complete, please submit this form, which will be shared with the project team for consideration. Information collected will be summarized and shared with the province as part of the community consultation report.

Feedback Form

1. What community do you live/own property in?

2. Please visit the map station and find the location of your property.

Check One:

☐ I am located in Phase 1A

☐ I am located in an electoral area outside of the proposed project area.

☐ I am located in Phase 1B

☐ I am located in a Future Phase

☐ I am located within the municipal boundaries of Courtenay, Comox or Cumberland.

Do you have any comments regarding the proposed boundaries?

3. Please visit the **pump station location poster board and share any thoughts you have for the project team about the design of the proposed pump stations located in Royston, Union Bay and Kilmarnock.**

The personal information collected on this form is collected pursuant to Section 26 (c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and will be used solely for responding to any questions and/or comments you may have regarding the Sewer Extension South Project. A summary of comments/questions, with name & contact information of the submitters removed, will be shared with the advisory and steering committees. No personal data will be retained by CVRD once data is collected. Should you have any questions about the collection and use of this information, please contact Christianne Wile, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives, by emailing communications@comoxvalleyrd.ca or by calling 250-334-6000.

Appendix 4

Feedback Form



4. Please visit the project cost poster board. If your property is located in Phase 1A, do you foresee any barriers to connecting to the new system?

5. Please visit our cost deferral poster board to answer this next set of questions.

Do you have a septic system that is currently less than five years old?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have any comments regarding the proposed CVRD septic deferral program?

Do you have an interest in pursuing the province's property tax deferral program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Questions/Comments: Please share any other questions/comments you would like the project team to consider as planning progresses.

RESPONSES CAN BE ANONYMOUS: Please share your information below if you would like to receive future email updates or would like a follow up on a question above.

Name: _____

Email: _____

If you take this comment form home with you, please return it before June 30, 2023 via email (communications@comoxvalleyrd.ca), or drop-off to the Comox Valley Regional District office, 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay BC.

Appendix 5: Feedback Form Responses

1. What community do you live/own property in?

Union Bay: 18 respondents

Royston: 17 respondents

Kilmarnock: 5 respondents

Craigdarroch: 3 respondents

Courtenay: 2 respondents

2. Please visit the map station and find the location of your property.

Phase 1A: 17 respondents

Phase 1B: 16 respondents

Future Phase: 6 respondents

Electoral area outside of the proposed project area: 5 respondents

Within the municipal boundaries of Courtenay, Comox or Cumberland: 1 respondent

Do you have any comments regarding the proposed boundaries? (27 responses)

- Why are you building the line on highway in front of our area but not including us.
- 1. Please post PAC/CVRD (ZOOM/YouTube) meetings more quickly...within a week. 2. Make it easier to find on CVRD website ex: UB/Area A, sewage, heading, treatment plant. 3. Can't fast forward on YouTube.
- Concerned sewer line proposed to go right down our backyard between us and neighbors. This will be very problematic to install and maintain as there won't be easy access.
- Should be included in first phase.
- My concern is CVRD not imposing another general tax for electoral A residences to subsidize future operational expenses (pumps) and maintenance beyond 2027.
- No – just proceed
- Concerned that our neighbourhood is in Phase 1B. There are several systems on Montrose and Arren that are tailing and need attention. Would prefer to speed up time schedule.
- Making it unaffordable for the average homeowner.
- Not a comment about boundaries but we'll be watching the sewer get placed along our backyards and have no guarantee we'll be connected. Very difficult to plan ahead.
- We live on a sparsely populated road that is in the future phase. We would love to be connected to sewer. My concern is that if the septic inspection bylaw goes through, we will have to pay for inspections on a septic system that we would rather have connected to sewer. But the connection to sewer is not our call. Further I'm not going to want to do expensive upgrades when I know sewer connection is imminent.
- Would like to see more properties included especially waterfront properties @ Gartley Point and Briardale subdivision
- We would consider an option to pre pay up front for initial costs instead of added to taxes
- Will CVRD put together a list of contractors to a) decommission a septic system b) connect houses

to new sewer line & c) our property will need an extra pump due to steep slope of land, so what pumps are recommended?

- We should be in Phase 1 like our neighbours – even though I have a long driveway – it feeds three houses. We are on a flood plain – we need sewer!
- I don't believe the development in Union Bay should be paid for with our money. It should be separate.
- Would like to see all of Hyland Road included in Phase 1B. Current boundary seems arbitrary and gravel nature of the road makes service extension cost effective.
- The proposed boundary does not include my property. I would like it to and am happy to pay an increased tax to prevent needing to invest in septic system. The road to the house is gravel and would be easy to dig and lay pipe. The sewer would access a number of properties with older septic systems and provide good bang for buck.
- Regarding 1A: There are properties ex: Garley Point that are located directly on Baynes Sound that are not in 1A or 1B. Why are these areas being treated differently.
- Yes; Kensington should be shown as 1A because I believe they are the most desperate to have the sewer system. The currently shown 1A should be 1B and 1B should be 1C.
- I am opposed. I have a 4-year old \$25,000 septic system & limited income.
- The proposed sewer does not extend far enough towards Buckley Bay.
- The boundaries are very limited according to the map. I would have like to see more homes (areas) included in the boundary areas.
- When I was at the meeting at the Fallen Alders I was advised that I was in Phase 1A, the map you have shows me in Phase 1B, which am I??
- I am in favour of the project but I would like to know more details about where the line will run and how houses on the beach side of the highway will be connecting to the system.
- why is the project only going as far as Union Bay, what about Buckley Bay, Fanny Bay etc is it only going that far to cover Union Bay Estates?
- They don't make sense. The gap in addresses serviced by Phase 1B between Hyland Rd and Cameron Rd is odd. These are older homes with dated septic fields that are located close to Roy Creek upgradient. It appears nobody considered these properties that boarder the creek in close-proximity. These properties should be included in Phase 1B and would be gravity fed.
- The scope of phase 1 seems very narrow considering the amount of infrastructure investment.

3. Please visit the pump station location poster board and share any thoughts you have for the project team about the design of the proposed pump stations located in Royston, Union Bay and Kilmarnock. (18 responses)

- Looks okay
- Very few
- Looks good! Pump station locations. Note: more factual info is needed on the CVRD 'scare tactic' that failed septic systems are contaminating Baynes Sound. Highly unlikely – we are talking parts per billion of dilution in the large volume of Baynes Sound.
- Pleased to see the option of a pump station
- Nice. Build it in contaminated soil. Good idea.
- Royston Pump Station – underground preference; if building includes washrooms
- Union Bay – in coal hills? Aren't they proposing to rehabilitate that area?

- Pump station in Royston is near the boat launch – that is not a good idea! No bathroom please it will attract campers in the residential area.
- No comment as I am sure the engineers know more than me.
- Bad location at the waters edge.
- Your pump station is right where people launch their kayaks, fish and do the polar bear swim. Terrific!!!
- The Royston pump station is going to be an eye sore in a popular area for recreation.
- Very poor location for pump house; smell sound...so many birds and nature affected.
- I talked with one of the engineers at an Open House who answered all my questions. I have no concerns regarding the proposed pump station station on Kilmarnock as long as the planning continues to be coordinated with the planning of a potential park in that area.
- I have no comment on these proposed locations, I assume that the engineering has dictated their locations.
- Looks fine.
- I like the idea of incorporating public washrooms with the pump stations.
- I hope the main sewer line runs along the highway and away from the beach.

4. Please visit the project cost poster board. If your property is located in Phase 1A, do you foresee any barriers to connecting to the new system? (16 responses)

- How close to the property line will be required to conduct construction? (I have a fence)
- I am in 1B but in my opinion the costs shown for the project and homeowner connections are unrealistic based on current economic conditions. Project cost escalation will be significant.
- New septic 2021!
- Money
- If my septic fails before 'future planning phase' that's very difficult.
- No, should easily gravity feed from my house as I am on the uphill side of 6 St.
- The project cost poster board should state that these costs are only for Phase 1A. Doesn't say that anywhere on the board.
- I am a single mom. Low income. My septic system is 5 years old.
- We have quite a steep angle for connecting to the auxiliary line – plus our septic line goes out back of house. But we are now going to have to connect in front.
- Will the pump at the end of Royston Road block the view for residents? Will it smell? Can it be put underground?
- Yes – this is a small seaside community. Lots of construction and upheaval. I can't afford this.
- If I am in Phase A??? The one time costs and annual costs are unrealistic for the average person to be able to pay! This is totally unfair. The CVRD should be paying for the main sewage pipe. I have no problem for the hook up and taking care of my septic. The taxes seem to be double what we should be paying. You are going to make people on a limited income to sell their houses. Not that you care.
- If phase 1B is projected to cost the same as phase 1A I feel this will create an unnecessary hardship for homeowners.
- No we will be hoping to do asap
- No as long as our existing septic system lasts until the completion date of the sewer project.
- Far too much money for the average householder in this area, a lot of us are pensioners who have

their later life costed out already. I can think of a lot of other things I would rather spend the money on. Is this a set cost? What happens when there are cost overruns (as in all projects!!) who pays for that??

5. Please visit our cost deferral poster board to answer this next set of questions.

Do you have a septic system that is currently less than five years old?

Yes: 7 respondents

No: 30 respondents

Do you have any comments regarding the proposed CVRD septic deferral program? (23 responses)

- People with fully functioning septic systems (inspected and approved by qualified professional) should not be required to pay anything to connect to this proposed system.
- Not necessary. Everyone's property has gained minimum \$100,000 or more in equity in the last couple years.
- Too expensive and no one has tested the systems in our area. So how did you come up with 50% failures?
- My septic works well.
- You have explained the two plans quite clearly. However – could you be more clear about the current utilities costs per property compared to costs after sewer is hooked up?
- Seems like a reasonable idea since people may have to replace septic field while waiting for sewer.
- My system is older than 5 years.
- I am concerned about the \$250 septic tax for large lots that will not be connected to the system. I see no need for added taxes.
- I don't want to pay for a new one just to rip it out!
- Money.
- Not sure of this.
- Assume all septic systems will be more than 5 years old by project completion date.
- Our house is only 1 year old with brand new septic system. We want the option to defer much longer than the proposed 5 years. Our system will function very well for decades before there will be any concerns with its performance.
- Yes, our house is a 2022 new build with a 'state of the art' septic system. We actually support connecting to sewer vs. keeping our septic, but we're both 50 (too young for deferral? No young kids living at home either) so just wondering/hoping the CVRD is considering people in our situation & able to provide some options/advice.
- Costs are too expensive.
- I feel the costs are extremely high for property owners. As this system is mandated with no opportunity for alternative & options, homeowners are being forced to participate and pay!
- Does my septic system have to be a '2' or '3' type to be eligible for this deferral program?
- Will less expensive alternatives to a new system (e.g. a holding tank or composting toilet) be possible if a septic system fails a few years before sewer hook-up is available?
- I think this is a good idea. What you don't want to see is a rush of people who are scheduled to connect to sewers all of a sudden replacing their septic system. Hopefully you have thought of this and do not provide permits in these situations.

- It is unfair that it is not being put to a vote. I believe you are not doing this because you know it will not pass because of the costs. Because of the new development in Union Bay the rest of us should not be paying for this. You go on about all the septic tanks failing, why not hire persons to go around checking them and if they are failing they have to replace. Most of us are not in this boat.
- I shouldn't think there are too many in this area unless it's a new house.
- All properties within catchment areas should be connecting to sewer system. No Exceptions.
- Deferrals just postpone payment, they do not mitigate costs.

Do you have an interest in pursuing the province's property tax deferral program?

Yes: 11 respondents

No: 12 respondents

Need more information: 7 respondents

6. Questions/Comments: Please share any other questions/comments you would like the project team to consider as planning progresses. (27 responses)

- I am opposed to this project.
- I do not believe that people with fully functioning systems should have to pay anything for a proposed system that financially benefits private or First Nation property development; nor homes that can install a type 3 septic system for less than the cost of CVRD sewer connection fees & cost. Yes to a sewer; no to making most property owners pay ridiculously high fees.
- I would pay a lump sum.
- Please expand the area of Phase 1B. Many risky and old septic systems are in our area.
- We strongly support being included in this project and have failed to find transparent justification of current boundaries which exclude us.
- Why are we subsidizing the First Nations and private developers in Union Bay with their development putting strain on water and roads. If you are so concerned about the environment what about shipbreaking, and Cumberland dumping their stuff into the Trent.
- Why would all this effluent put in to the ocean from the sewer system be good for the environment when it mainly breaks down in septic systems.
- It looks like the red pipe will be at the bottom of my property. What does that involve? Extra cost? What is the compensation for me?
- We would consider paying up front vs. adding to taxes.
- There should be an option for homeowner to pay a lump sum up front.
- We installed a type 2 system in 2010 & have maintained it well. It is a real issue for us to swallow the costs for all of it with a perfectly maintained and appropriate system. I feel that we are carrying the burden of other homeowners ignorance/refusal/inability to maintain and now will be in a financial strain through no control or other options.
- Concern re: annual costs for existing systems that are healthy.
- Keep us informed.
- Phase 1B has no budget, no schedule. How can I comment when I don't know anything about the project.
- Why put in septic to "protect" Baynes Sound and allow shipbreaking on Baynes Sound!

- If each homeowner is responsible for connecting to the system and removing their existing system will they be responsible for all necessary environmental permits.
- As this project will be cutting and covering the new sewer pipe, are you considering topping the cover with a bike rideable pedestrian walkable alternative to using the highway shoulder?
- This meeting should have been individual talking (this you cannot hear and find info) this was lost of time. No good.
- It is clear that the rate of development on the Island is constrained by the lack of infrastructure. This scheme is badly needed and long overdue. At the same time the scope is too limited and does not address the large amount of land slated to be used for housing in Union Bay outside of the Union Bay Estates site, off of Callis Road, Bray Road and by Harwood Frontage. This is short sighted and will lead to increased costs and disturbance in the long run.
- I think that this project is overdue and hope that it will be implemented as soon as possible to protect Baynes Sound.
- I would like to see greater flexibility on lump sum payment opportunities for those connecting to sewers. It could be set up similar to a mortgage where you could have one or not, pay it off at set renewal times or pay it off when and if you sell your home with penalty if you choose. Peoples circumstances change and this would allow greater flexibility.
- Unless costs to the individual home owner can be reduced I can't see how most of us can afford this project.
- This project is long overdue, we are hoping that construction proceeds as soon as possible
- Speed up the process.
- At the open house I was told this project has nothing to do with Union Bay Estates needing the sewage connection but is because a study in 2009 showed our septic systems were polluting Baynes Sound, if that was true how come the state of affairs was so desperate then that its taken 14 years to possibly even start to rectify!! What about all the future pollution which will come from all these houses/people/animals situated right on the foreshore, building so close to the water should not be allowed. And what about the ship breaking operation so blatantly being carried on there as well.
- The newspaper-Comox Valley Record printed a story on June 7/23 about the Sewage Project, which states: 1) a \$39,000.00 tax bill is coming to households in Royston and Union Bay and; 2) residents in phase 1A will see an annual property tax rate increase of approx \$1550.00 from 2026-2051 and; 3) alternatively residents could skip the 25 year term and pay roughly \$22,000.00 up front. First of all, is this accurate reporting, there is a huge difference between \$39,000.00 and \$22,000.00, what does this difference represent? If a homeowner was wanting to pay it off -for example- in 4 installments, would that be accommodated? And will the homeowners in area 1B be faced with the same costs, or....Thank you.
- It appears the map that was created the last go around for Royston road was just dusted off. Properties with dated fields that pose a risk to the ecosystem want to connect, but you haven't included them in your plan. This needs to be revisited. With the topography of the properties I'm referring to the cost/meter would likely be among the lowest in the entire project. My wife and I also own a property in Courtenay. We have lived in the community for 40 years and have paid property taxes on 2 homes for 18 and 11 years each. Seeing long term residents left out of this plan in favor of a new development, the wealthy and the well connected is unnerving to say the least. Over the past 13 years I've financed a multitude of development projects in the Comox Valley that have bolstered property tax revenue. Maybe we consider charging Union Bay Estates more in DCC's to pay for their connection rather than using the government money that should

be used to provide infrastructure upgrades to existing properties that pose a risk. In my view long term engaged loyal residents are being screwed in the pursuit of more tax revenue.

Appendix 6

Background



The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) recognized early in the project that the cost to the property owners is significant and made it a priority to minimize the impact and keep affordability as a key consideration during the planning stages. Just as each property is unique, each household will have access to different financial resources.

Options To Consider

The capital cost and capital improvement charge for the residents' portion of the sewer line is \$5.8 million, or approximately \$23,000 per property. This works out to an annual cost of \$1,400 - \$1,700 per year over 25 years to be paid through a parcel tax.

The CVRD is also considering an option for residents that wish to pay the full amount up front and we would like to hear if this would be of interest to you.

Two of the most important questions to ask before getting into the advantages and disadvantages of each option are:

- Do I have the funds available to pay up front?
- If I pay upfront and an emergency situation (unplanned household repair, reduction in personal income, medical problem, etc), crops up, will I still have the resources necessary to maintain my current needs?

Below is a breakdown of advantages and disadvantages for the two options.

Option 1: Pay the capital cost and capital improvement charge upfront

Advantages	Disadvantages
Save on the financing interest expense.	The payment is a "sunk cost" If you move out of the property, the up-front payment might not be recoverable from a purchaser.
Avoid having to plan for community sewer as an annual expense.	Cannot switch alternatives once the payment has been made.
The up-front payment could give an advantage when selling your property as it will not have the additional parcel tax attached to the property tax invoice.	The "cash" could have been used for other investments or expenditures.
Minimize the future impact of tax rates increases by not having the additional parcel tax included with the annual property tax invoice .	Local Governments can borrow at excellent interest rates.
	The up-front payment is not eligible to defer under the BC Property Tax Deferment program.

Learn More

Website: www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/sewerextension

You can also phone 250-334-6000

or email communications@comoxvalleyrd.ca

Appendix 6

Backgrounder

Capital Cost and Capital Improvement Charge Payment Options

June 2023

Option 2: Finance the capital cost and capital improvement charge over 25 years

Advantages	Disadvantages
Fits better into a household budget. Easier to manage expenditures and save.	The interest expense portion of the loan adds to the overall cost.
Share the cost proportionally between this household and the next if you move.	Cannot switch alternatives once the financing agreement is signed. The term is locked for the entirety.
You could invest the amount of the up-front payment and possibly make a better rate of return than I will pay annually for the parcel tax.	The parcel tax could be a negative selling feature when selling the property.
Local Governments can borrow at excellent interest rates – better than banks and credit unions.	A lender or financial institution could have other programs or financing arrangements that fit your lifestyle better.
The parcel tax is eligible to defer under the BC Property Tax Deferment Program.	

Submit Your Feedback



Complete and submit a feedback form here



Fill the feedback form out online at www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/sewerextension

Learn More

Website: www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/sewerextension

You can also phone 250-334-6000

or email communications@comoxvalleyrd.ca



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