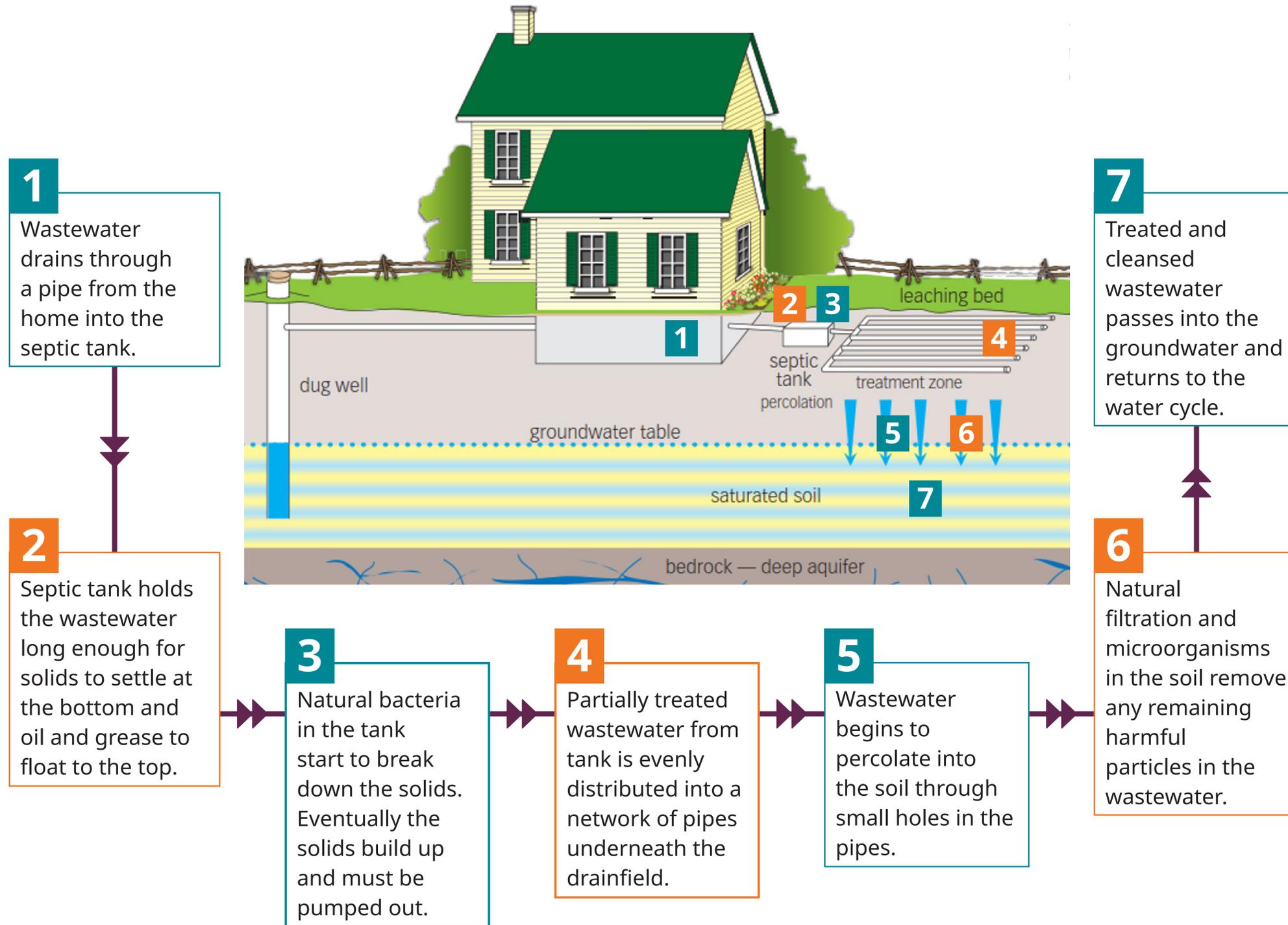


How Septic Systems Work

In our region, homes may have a Type 1, 2 or 3 septic system. In general, wastewater in a Type 1 system follows this path:



Why It's Important to Care For Your System

- ✓ To keep your family and neighbours healthy and avoid contaminating groundwater
- ✓ To protect the environment and your drinking water
- ✓ To protect your property value
- ✓ To prolong the life of your system and save money
- ✓ It's the law – under the *Sewerage System Regulation*, it's the property owner's responsibility to ensure their septic system does not cause a health hazard

***Type 2 & 3 systems operate in a similar fashion, with a package treatment plant in place of the septic tank.**

Taking Care of Your Septic System

Regular maintenance and proper care can have a significant impact on how well your system works and how long it lasts. Follow these tips to keep your system working efficiently:



Mark septic system location: When completing landscaping, mark off septic system components to avoid damage to the system. Do not park, drive or build on your drainfield.



Plant grass: Grass is the ideal ground cover for drainfields as it helps hold the soil and has shallow roots.



Divert drains: Make sure that the drainfield is free of surface water, downspout discharges and that any irrigation is at least 10 feet from the edge of the septic system.



Minimize indoor water use: Using less water keeps solids settled on the bottom of the septic tank, improves the efficiency of the system and can extend its life.



Only flush the three P's: What can go down the toilet? The three P's (Pee, Poo, Toilet Paper) – nothing else.



Avoid septic additives: Septic tanks already contain the microbes they need for the effective breakdown of household wastewater pollutants.



Properly dispose of medications: Antibiotics and other strong medications can affect bacteria growth and the operation of your system. Bring medications to participating pharmacies that collect expired, unused and unwanted medications for free and safe disposal.



Follow septic-smart kitchen tips: Scrape plates before rinsing to reduce solids and fats that enter the system and use liquid detergents in the dishwasher.



Use greener cleaners: Stronger cleaning products (like bleach and ammonia) can be harmful to septic systems as they contain chemicals that will stop the bacteria from effectively breaking down the waste.



Complete regular septic system maintenance: Have your system maintained by an authorized person every 3-5 years for a Type 1 system and every year for Type 2 and 3 systems.



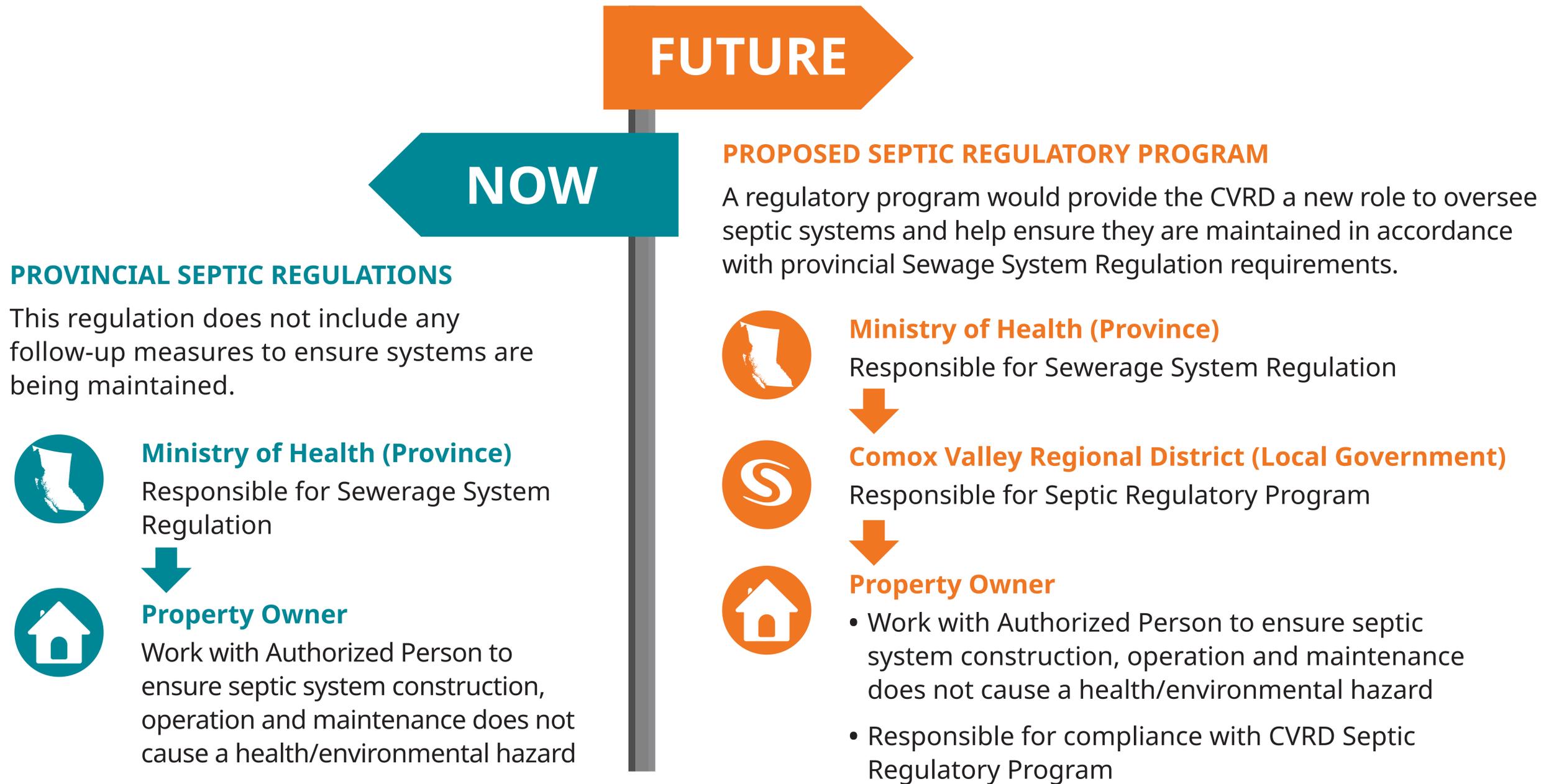
Septic Regulatory Program

While the *Sewerage System Regulation* places responsibility with property owners for proper maintenance of their septic system, it does not include any follow up measures to ensure maintenance activities are completed. A CVRD regulatory program would provide further oversight to ensure proper maintenance is completed.

For more tips visit: www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/septic

Current Septic System Regulations

Today, all septic systems in the CVRD's Electoral Areas are regulated under the provincial *Sewerage System Regulation*. The CVRD is taking steps to introduce a new Septic Regulatory Program within Electoral Areas A, B and C.



9,000

Did you know?

Currently, there are approximately 9,000 septic systems in use in the CVRD's Electoral Areas.

Proposed CVRD Septic Regulatory Program

The CVRD is looking to implement mandatory septic regulations within Electoral Areas A, B and C. The program would help ensure septic systems are properly operated and maintained in accordance with provincial *Sewerage System Regulation* requirements.

W What?

- The CVRD is recommending mandatory pump-outs in all electoral areas and an inspection-based program for 'high-risk' areas.

W Who?

- **All Electoral Areas (A, B & C):** Mandatory pump-outs
- **High-Risk Areas:** Mandatory pump-outs and inspections

W Why?

- **Aging systems:** Many of the septic systems are more than 25 years old. Older, poorly functioning systems pose an environmental and public safety risk.
- **Environmental protection:** Required maintenance would help protect sensitive aquifers and aquatic and marine habitats from sewage contamination.
- **High dwelling density:** Many electoral area neighbourhoods were established prior to the introduction of provincial septic regulations, and include concentrations of homes considerably higher than what would be permitted under current standards.

H How?

- All pump-outs, maintenance and inspections to be coordinated and arranged by individual property owners.

W When?

- Program startup is planned for 2026, if all approvals and successful completion of an elector approval process is achieved.



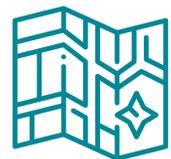
Septic Regulatory Program Requirements

A CVRD study completed in 2020 provided an assessment of risks associated with septic systems in CVRD electoral area neighbourhoods. This study identified seven neighbourhoods as high-risk areas. Under the new regulatory program, high-risk areas would see added inspection requirements.

Program Requirements Per Area & System



Area	System Type	Requirement
All Electoral Areas (A,B & C)	Type 1	Periodic pump-outs (i.e. every five years)
All Electoral Areas (A,B & C)	Type 2 & 3	Annual maintenance in accordance with maintenance plan
High-Risk Areas	Type 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic pump-outs (i.e. every five years) • Inspection every 10 years
High-Risk Areas	Type 2 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual maintenance in accordance with maintenance plan • Inspection every 10 years



High Risk Areas

The seven high-risk neighbourhoods identified include:

- Robinson Lake
- Saratoga Beach
- Bates Beach
- Royston/Gartley/Kilmarnock*
- Union Bay*
- Ships Point
- Some Hornby Island neighbourhoods

High risk areas will be further evaluated as program requirements are developed.

* Royston/Union Bay neighborhoods would be exempt should sewer servicing proceed



Risk Factors

These areas were identified due to a number of risk factors, including:

- Higher residential lot density, with many lots considerably smaller than permitted under current standards
- Drinking water provided by private wells
- Proximity to sensitive environmental features (ex: Baynes Sound, freshwater habitats)
- Evidence of groundwater contamination in prior study
- High consequence of failure for public and environmental health

Septic Maintenance Plans

All septic system owners with a system constructed after the enactment of the provincial *Sewerage System Regulation* in 2005 should be in possession of a maintenance plan.



What is a maintenance plan?

A maintenance plan is included with the system records that are filed with Island Health by the authorized person (AP) who designed the septic system. A maintenance plan should generally include the following:

-  Operation manual for the system
-  A schedule for maintenance and monitoring including recommended maintenance tasks
-  Contact information for the AP who filed the system, the installer, a maintenance provider and the electrician
-  Information and advice for the system owner
-  Sign off by the owner that they have received and understood the requirements of the plan



Costs of a Septic Regulatory Program

The expected costs of the proposed program are not anticipated to be significant for homeowners who are already maintaining their system according to provincial regulations. Introducing this program could see two types of cost increases: a small property tax increase, as well as possible increased septic maintenance expenses. These anticipated costs are broken down further below.



Property Taxes

A small property tax increase is anticipated for all property owners in Electoral Areas A, B and C.

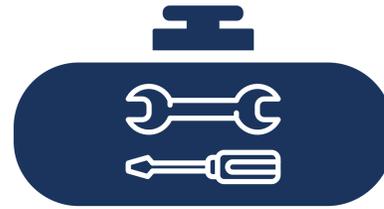


Annual septic regulatory program budget:

est. \$100,000 – \$200,000



Property tax impact to be confirmed before 2025 elector approval.



Septic Maintenance Expenses

Some property owners may see increased septic maintenance expenses as an outcome of complying with regulatory program requirements. This could include:

Tank pump out	\$500-\$800	Every 5 years for Type 1 systems
Annual Maintenance	\$200-\$800	Annually for Type 2 and 3 systems
Inspection	\$400-\$900	Every 10 years in high risk areas



Next Steps

While there has been significant review and planning work to date on the proposed regulatory program, there are still important steps ahead before a program like this is implemented.

Spring 2024 ✓

Public engagement, to provide information on proposed program

Late spring 2024

Electoral Areas Services Committee (EASC) decision on whether to move forward and submit an Order in Council request to the Province

Summer 2024

Submit **Order in Council** request to the province (Ministry of Municipal Affairs) to introduce a new program

What is an Order in Council?

The CVRD requires additional authority from the province to “impose requirements” prior to establishing a septic regulatory program; this involves Cabinet approval of an Order in Council (OIC) request to amend the CVRD Regulation accordingly.



Fall 2024

Electoral area directors confirm elector approval process, if provincial approval is granted

2025

Elector approval process: Either by assent vote (referendum) or Alternative Approval Process

2026

Program startup