

Responses to questions asked by residents following the May 29, 2017 Public Information Meeting

Q1	Why did the province award this grant? Was it to address environmental problems related to failing septic fields?
R1	<p>On March 17, 2017 the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) was awarded funding under the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund for the Bowser Village Wastewater Servicing Project at a maximum federal/provincial contribution of \$7,590,328. The grant was awarded in order to support the community's evolution into a compact and complete community as envisioned by the current Bowser Village Centre Plan and current and previous Official Community Plans. Sewer servicing has been identified as a key component to achieving this community vision.</p> <p>While not initiated by environmental or public health concerns associated with failing septic, property owners' with aging septic fields would benefit from decommissioning their on-site system and joining the community wastewater system.</p>
Q2	There was a lot of information presented at the May 29, 2017 public information meeting. How do I get more information and stay informed about the project?
R2	<p>The RDN website has a dedicated page for the Bowser Village Wastewater Servicing Project that contains background information and reports as well as current information. The webpage will remain a key resource for project information and updates, so please visit it often: www.rdn.bc.ca/bowser</p> <p>Over the next few weeks, RDN staff familiar with this project will also be at the RDN office in Bowser (Room 204, Magnolia Court) on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (9:30 to 12:00). Drop by the office or feel free to schedule an appointment.</p> <p>You can also contact RDN staff directly with project related questions or comments. Contact: Jamai Schile, Senior Planner by telephone at 250-390-6510, or by email at jschile@rdn.bc.ca.</p>
Q3	Why do we need to make a decision so quickly? Can we get an extension on the grant?
R3	<p>The Clean Water and Wastewater Fund is a joint funding initiative of the federal and provincial governments, who set the terms and conditions for funding. For the Bowser Village Wastewater Servicing Project a maximum federal/provincial contribution of \$7,590,328 has been made available over a one year period.</p> <p>Since the funding announcement, RDN staff and consultants have been working with the community and provincial staff to finalize the project scope, costs, schedule, and petition process. Based on this information, RDN staff have already submitted a request for an extension of one year. The request is currently awaiting approval by senior government officials. Any updates will be made available on the project webpage: www.rdn.bc.ca/bowser</p>

Q4	What are the timelines and milestones for community decision making?
R4	<p>The next few months are critical in terms of property owners reaching a decision on establishing a service area for wastewater servicing within the Bowser village. RDN staff have been working with the community to provide information in-person and online to help inform the decision making process.</p> <p>May 29 - Public Information Meeting June 26 - Public Information Meeting <i>July 19 - Tentative Date</i> - Public Information Meeting and launch of petition August - Petition submission deadline <i>*July & August dates to be confirmed and residents notified.</i></p> <p>By the end of August 2017, we should know if there is sufficient support to proceed with the wastewater system.</p> <p>To stay up to date on developments visit the RDN project webpage: www.rdn.bc.ca/bowser</p>
Q5	What stage is the design at? When would construction start, and when would the plant start up?
R5	<p>Following the funding announcement, the “Bowser Village Wastewater Servicing Study Design Report” for the Treatment Plant, Collection System and Outfall (pre-design) was completed by Stantec Consulting Ltd. in April 2017 and is available on the RDN project webpage: www.rdn.bc.ca/bowser by following the hyper link: “Bowser Village Waste Project History”.</p> <p>If the service area is approved then RDN staff will proceed with taking forward the applicable bylaws for Board approval. If approved, RDN staff would then request provincial and federal permit approvals for an effluent outfall, complete design work and initiate the tender process. Once authorized, it’s anticipated that the wastewater system would be operational as early as 2019.</p>
Q6	When will you tell me what the costs will be for my property? How much will I have to pay for the wastewater system, including capital costs, my own onsite hookup costs, annual operating and maintenance costs, grinder pump purchase and installation?
R6	<p>At the May 29, 2017 public information meeting preliminary cost recovery options were presented. Following this meeting, RDN staff have continued to work with the community and the final details of capital costs for individual residents will be made available at the public information meeting in July, 2017. Details of this meeting will be to residents and posted on the project website.</p> <p>Costs associated with operations and maintenance and on-site costs for connection are discussed in the Bowser Village Centre Sewer Service Information Newsletter #1, which is available on the RDN project website: www.rdn.bc.ca/bowser</p> <p>Also, operations and maintenance costs are discussed in Response 7 of this FAQ Sheet.</p>

Q7	Please explain Operating and Maintenance costs and how they will be distributed among the participants?
R7	<p>Operations and maintenance (O+M) costs are a combination of user fees and a parcel tax required to pay for the ongoing operation of the wastewater treatment plant, pumps and collection system, as well as replacing parts of the system as they age. O+M costs are not included in the project costs and will be charged as a separate fee on all properties and units receiving sewer services.</p> <p>The annual O+M costs are currently estimated at \$150,000 annually, which would be divided among the number of parcels/properties in the service area. As new development occurs, O+M costs will be spread over a larger number of properties and will likely reduce the annual costs to individual properties.</p>
Q8	How will you make sure costs are fairly distributed between large developable properties, and small single family properties?
R8	<p>At the May 29, 2017 public information meeting we heard that some residents were concerned about the potential costs per parcel, especially for smaller parcels (1 acre or less) with limited future development potential. In response, RDN staff have been working closely with interested owners and developers to identify an alternative cost recovery option. This option will be presented and discussed in detail at the next public information meeting in July 2017. Details of this meeting will be to residents and posted on the project website.</p>
Q9	What will happen to the grant money if the petition fails?
R9	<p>In the event that the petition is not successful the RDN would notify the provincial/federal funding providers, who would then revoke the approval for funding for the Bowser Village Centre Wastewater project and any funds already received by the RDN would be returned to the funding providers.</p>
Q10	Why would you require us to connect to the system and decommission our septic within one year?
R10	<p>The proposed wastewater system has been designed to provide sufficient capacity for the current population and to allow for future service for growth over the next 20 years. To enable the facility to operate optimally, the flow capacity for which it has to be designed has to be achieved by initiating existing connects as they become available.</p>
Q12	How does the petition process work?
R12	<p>Owners of a parcel(s) within a proposed service area submit a petition to the RDN by the established deadline. If the Corporate Officer determines that the petition is sufficient and valid, the Board may proceed with adopting bylaws to establish the service and authorize the borrowing in relation to the service.</p> <p>In order for a petition to be certified as sufficient and valid, the petition must be signed by the owners of at least 50% of the parcels liable to be charged for the proposed service, and the persons signing must</p>

	be the owners of parcels that in total represent 50% of the net taxable value of all land and improvements within the proposed service area.
Q13	What happens if I don't submit a petition (is that counted as a yes or no)?
R13	If a petition is not returned it is deemed to be a 'no'.
Q14	How does the petition process work for strata developments?
R14	Strata property owners are treated no differently. Each owner receives a petition and is asked to return the completed petition to the local government Corporate Officer within the established deadline period.
Q15	How will operations and maintenance costs be charged to strata properties?
R15	Strata properties are treated the same as non-strata properties. Each strata property owner within the wastewater service area would be subject to annual operation and maintenance fees.
Q16	Are there opportunities for seniors on fixed incomes to defer costs?
R16	<p>Yes. Residents may wish to apply to the provincial <i>Property Tax Deferment Program</i>. Once you have received a copy of your Property Tax Notice you may apply to determine if you are eligible. Applications are generally submitted in May.</p> <p>For more information on property tax deferment contact the Surveyor of Taxes Office at 1-250-356-8121 or visit their website at www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/defer-taxes</p> <p>Note: annual user fees association with Operation and Maintenance costs can not be deferred.</p>
Q16	Who pays if there are cost overruns?
R16	The Bowser Village Centre Wastewater Servicing project was awarded \$7.6 million, representing 83% in senior government funding up to a total project cost of \$9.15 million. The amount that property owners fund is established through the petition process. Any costs above the agreed amount would be funded by property owners within the service area and require further approval from these owners prior to any change implemented.
Q17	Are there other sources of funding available?
R17	The federal and provincial government joint funding initiative to support the development of the Bowser village is a unique, possibly unprecedented, opportunity in BC. It's true that different funding programs and opportunities are announced periodically, but it is also less likely that this level (83%) of grant funding will be available in the near future.