

**In-camera**

**DATE:** August 25, 2014

**FILE:** 5340-02

**TO:** Chair and Directors  
Regional District Board

**FROM:** T. Ian Smith, MCE  
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

**RE:** Land acquisition – future siting of Comox No. 2 wastewater pump station

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**Purpose**

To negotiate the right of first refusal for a property legally described as Lot A, District Lot 110, Comox District, Plan VIP82713 and located in Electoral Area 'B', east of the Town of Comox for the future siting of a new regional district wastewater pump station.

**Policy analysis**

This report is presented in-camera as per section 90(1)(E) of the *Community Charter* which authorizes a local government to discuss matters relating to property acquisition at a meeting that is closed to the public.

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) operates a sewerage service primarily for the City of Courtenay and Town of Comox, established by Bylaw No. 2541, being the "Comox Valley Sewerage Service Establishment Bylaw No. 2451, 2003".

On May 2014 the board approved the following recommendations:

*THAT the Comox Valley Regional District acquire a suitable site for the future Comox no. 2 pump station and work with the Town of Comox.*

**Executive summary**

Wastewater from the City of Courtenay and the Town of Comox is transmitted to the Comox Valley water pollution control centre (CVWPCC) through large diameter forcemain that follows the shoreline from the Courtenay River estuary to Goose Spit, past Willemar Bluff and then on to the CVWPCC. In 2002 the CVRD discovered that beach erosion along Willemar Bluff had exposed significant portions of the forcemain and in 2005 the CVRD completed study work recommending that a new pump station be constructed near the intersection of Croteau Road and Doeliddle Road and that a new inland forcemain alignment be constructed from the new pump station to the CVWPCC thereby by-passing Willemar Bluff.

In February 2014 the CVRD completed additional study work to compare the suitability of two locations (one adjacent to the existing Jane Place pump station and the other near the originally recommended location). The study recommended that the new Comox No. 2 pump station continue to be located near the intersection of Croteau and Doeliddle Roads.

In order to determine properties in the recommended area most suitable to the siting of the future Comox No. 2 pump station, the CVRD retained Heuristic Consulting Associates to further evaluate properties within the recommended area. Utilizing a methodology which considers a combination of technical, environmental, neighbourhood and financial factors, an evaluation has been completed

which determines the most favourable parcels for the future siting of the Comox No. 2 pump station.

The parcel, legally described as Lot A, District Lot 110, Comox District, Plan VIP82713, is the highest ranked parcel in the evaluation. The parcel is currently an unencumbered vacant lot with access to electrical utilities and excellent road alignments to future forcemains. The parcel is large in size with good buffering to neighbouring properties and does not contain any sensitive ecosystems. As all properties in the area, the parcel is not currently provided with access to municipal water. The parcel is currently listed for sale and has been since 2011.

Due to the high ranking achieved as part of the above evaluation combined with the fact that the parcel is currently listed for sale, it is recommended that the regional district secure the right to purchase the parcel for the future siting of the Comox No. 2 pump station. Securing a right of first refusal at this time is preferred over the purchase of the property in order that the purchase can remain in-camera until the CVRD fully completes its due diligence with respect to overall suitability.

**Recommendations from the chief administrative officer:**

THAT the Comox Valley Regional District enter into an agreement with the property owner for the right of first refusal for the property legally described as Lot A, District Lot 110, Comox District, Plan VIP82713;

AND FURTHER THAT the cost of the right of first refusal be no greater than \$20,000;

AND FINALLY THAT the duration of the right of first refusal be no less than six months.

Respectfully:

***I. Smith***

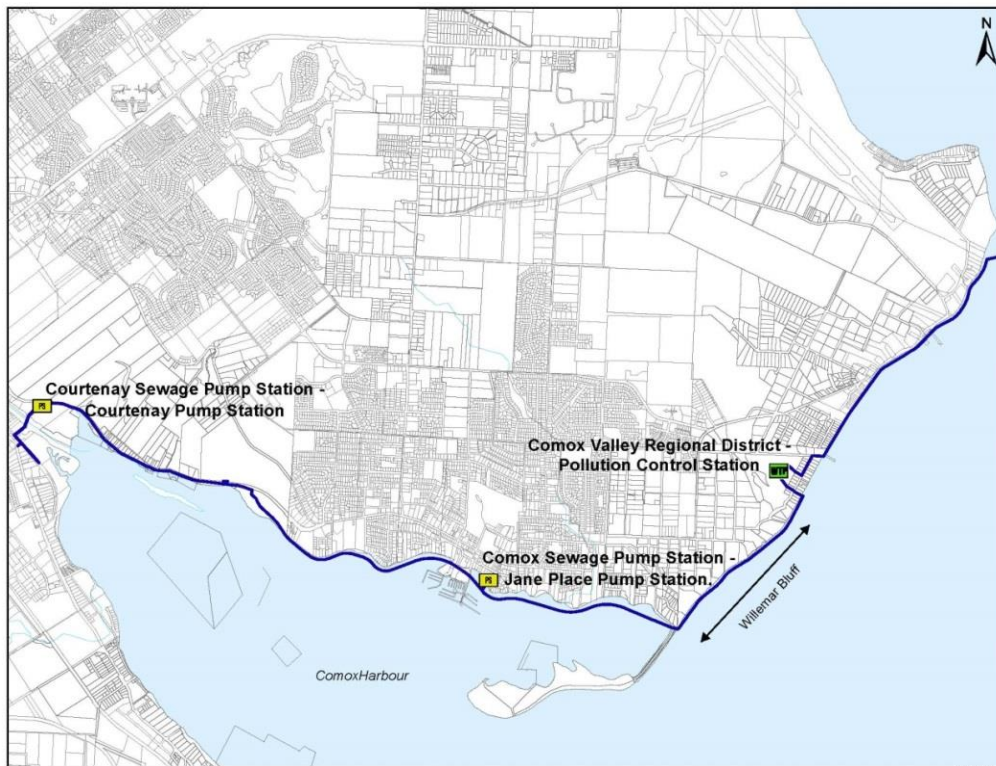
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T. Ian Smith, MCE  
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

### History/background factors

The Courtenay and Jane Place pump stations transmit wastewater from the City of Courtenay and Town of Comox via a common forcemain to the CVWPCC to be treated and then discharged through a marine outfall. The following Figure No. 1 provides an overview of the current arrangement of pump stations, forcemains, treatment plant and outfall.

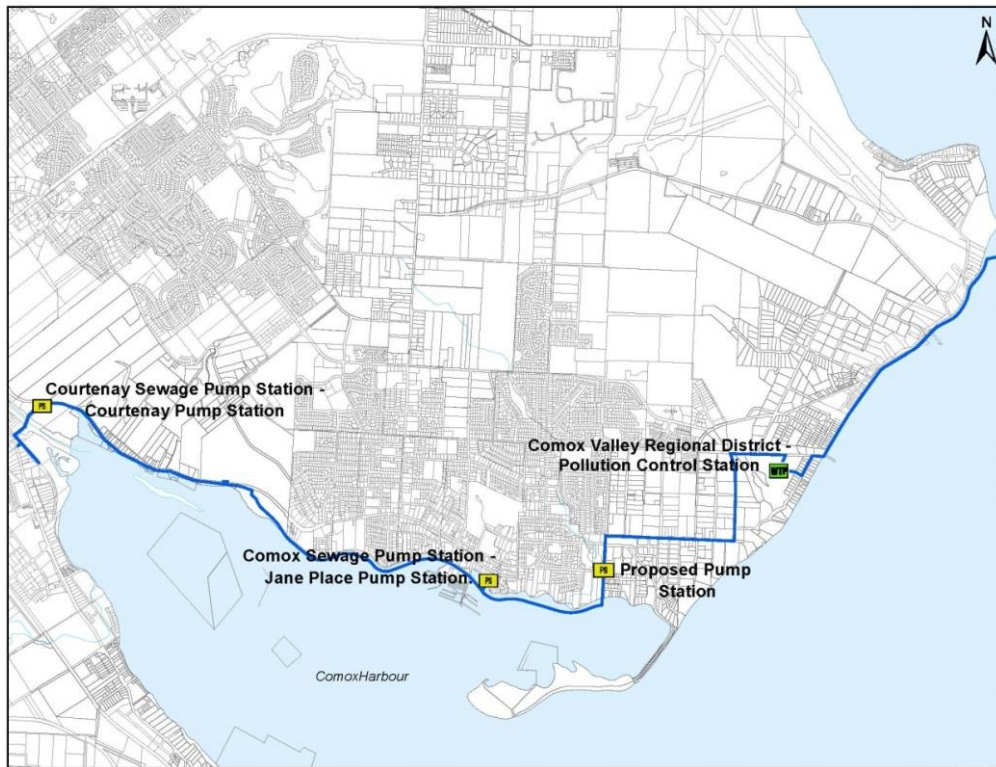
**Figure No. 1: Current arrangement - forcemain along Willemar Bluff**



In 2002 the regional district discovered that changes to erosion and deposition patterns along the Willemar Bluff section of the beach had exposed significant sections of the forcemain. These sections were re-covered with rock-filled gabion baskets but the regional district concluded at the time a more permanent solution was required in order to eliminate risk to the environment and to public health and safety.

In 2005 CH2M Hill consulting engineers completed a study of replacement options for the forcemain section along Willemar Bluff. After evaluating four options it was recommended that a new pump station be constructed west of Goose Spit near the intersection of Croteau and Docliddle Roads and that a new forcemain alignment be constructed from the new pump station to the CVWPCC. The new pump station is required to overcome the elevation gain that results from the overland route. The new alignment would follow an inland route essentially along existing public road right-of-way (see Figure No. 2). For planning and communication purposes the proposed new pump station is called the Comox No. 2 pump station.

Figure No. 2: Comox No. 2 pump station and new forcemain along inland route to CVWPCC



The recently completed Comox Valley SMP and the prioritized 10-year capital plan both indicate an immediate need for a capacity upgrade at the Courtenay pump station in order to adequately transmit peak wastewater flows to the CVWPCC. The SMP also indicates the need for the construction of the Comox No. 2 pump station in order to resolve the long standing environmental risks at Willemar Bluff.

In order to progress the Courtenay pump station upgrade project the CVRD retained AECOM engineering consultants in 2013 to design the required upgrade. After completing the pre-design phase of the work, which included an overall staging plan that provides the most cost effective way of increasing pump system capacity, AECOM recommended that a new Comox No. 2 pump station be constructed, ahead of upgrading the Courtenay pump station.

The construction of a new Comox No. 2 pump station, located generally as recommended in the 2005 CH2M Hill report, will improve the design operating capacity of the Courtenay pump stations to year 2028 and the Jane Place pump station beyond year 2030 and also resolve environmental and public health risks related to the current forcemain routing along Willemar Bluff. The 2014-2018 sewerage service financial plan now includes the siting and pre-engineering for a new Docliddle pump station in year 2014 followed by detailed design and construction in 2015 and 2016.

In February 2014 the CVRD retained AECOM to complete a siting study for the new Comox No. 2 pump station. The study focused on the comparison of two locations – the first adjacent to the existing Jane Place pump station and the second located generally as originally recommended near

Doeliddle Road. AECOMs work considered issues related to work scope, layout constraints, site elevation, constructability and aesthetic impacts. AECOM recommends that the new Comox No. 2 pump station be sited as per the original recommendation near Doeliddle Road, east of the Town of Comox and at the May 27, 2014 regional district board meeting the board approved the following recommendations:

*THAT the Comox Valley Regional District acquire a suitable site for the future Comox no. 2 pump station and work with the Town of Comox.*

In order to move forward with acquiring a suitable site for the future Comox No. 2 pump station, in July 2014 the CVRD retained Bruce Turner from Heuristic Consulting Associates to complete an analysis of properties within a defined area to determine the most suitable property for the new pump station. Heuristic Consulting has developed a detailed methodology for site selection that consists of the following three main categories:

- Engineering/Technical: site elevation, site size, access to services, alignments to existing and future infrastructure, etc.
- Environmental/Neighbourhood/Archeological: adjacent sensitive ecosystems, neighbourhood density, buffering, First Nations interests
- Financial – cost and risk

Within each of the above categories several sub-factors have been considered including site encumbrances, costs, existing development, size, regulatory, neighbourhood compatibility, environment, archeological, timing, utilities and construction. The above factors have been ranked and weighed based on a pre-set scoring system and suitable properties within the study area have been identified. The maximum possible score is 156. A map, attached as Appendix A, shows the four highest ranked parcels for the future siting of the Comox No. 2 pump station. Two of the four properties are Town of Comox municipal park properties and it is expected that public opposition to these parcels will be significant.

The remaining two highest ranked parcels are residential lots located in Electoral Area 'B', east of the Town of Comox. Of the two parcels, one is unimproved vacant land and currently listed for sale (appendix A – parcel highlighted green). It is recommended that the CVRD attempt to secure an option to purchase this parcel which is legally described as Lot A, District Lot 110, Comox District, Plan VIP82713.

### **Options**

The regional district board has the following options to consider:

1. To enter into an agreement with the property owner for a right of first refusal in favour of the regional district for the purchase of the property legally described as Lot A, District Lot 110, Comox District, Plan VIP82713.
2. To purchase in full fee simple interest, the property legally described as Lot A, District Lot 110, Comox District, Plan VIP82713 for the future siting of the Comox No. 2 pump station.
3. To not pursue the purchase of property for the Comox No. 2 pump station at this time.

Wastewater from the City of Courtenay and the Town of Comox is transmitted to the CVWPCC through large diameter forcemain that follows the shoreline from the Courtenay River Estuary to Goose Spit, past Willemar Bluff and then on to the CVWPCC. In 2002 the CVRD discovered that beach erosion along Willemar Bluff had exposed significant portions of the forcemain. In 2005 the CVRD completed study work recommending that a new pump station be constructed near the

intersection of Croteau Road and Doeliddle Road and that a new inland forcemain alignment be constructed from the new Comox No. 2 pump station to the CVWPCC thereby by-passing Willemar Bluff. In addition to the above environmental risks the new Comox No. 2 pump station will also increase the capacity and life expectancy at both the existing Courtenay and Jane Place wastewater pump stations.

A detailed site selection methodology that considers technical, environmental, and financial factors has been developed and utilized in the evaluation of potential sites for the new future Comox No. 2 pump station. The property legally described as Lot A, District Lot 110, Comox District, Plan VIP82713 has received the highest score as part of the evaluation process and is currently listed for sale.

Due to the fact that the CVRD has had limited time to fully complete its due diligence on the subject property, it is recommended that the board secure a 'right of first refusal' in favour of the regional district for the property. The 'right of first refusal' will allow the CVRD time to complete its required due diligence.

### **Financial factors**

A title search has revealed that the property is unencumbered with respect to the future siting of a wastewater pump station. It is expected that a 'right of first refusal' will cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000 and provide the CVRD with an additional six months to finalize an agreement for purchase.

### **Legal factors**

This report is presented in-camera as per section 90(1)(E) of the Community Charter which authorizes a local government to discuss matter relating to property acquisition at a meeting that is closed to the public.

The 'right of first refusal' is a legal agreement between the CVRD and the property owner. The siting of a wastewater pumping station, especially one as large as the future Comox No. 2 pump station is not without risk. The pump station will have the potential to impact traffic, noise, odour and aesthetics in the local neighbourhood. The siting of a wastewater pump station will most likely receive opposition from the local neighbourhood. Although many of the above impacts can be mitigated or eliminated through good design, operation and maintenance, existing property owners may remain opposed to the pump station location.

### **Sustainability implications**

The Comox Valley sustainability strategy contains several targets applicable to the installation, operation and upgrade of the Comox Valley sewerage service. This includes reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and considering waste flows as a resource.

It should be noted that the Comox No. 2 pump station will increase electric energy use (for pumping purposes) for the Comox Valley sewerage service. Detailed design of the pump station will incorporate targets from the Comox Valley sustainability strategy such that the new pump station incorporates energy efficiency to the greatest extent possible.

### **Intergovernmental factors**

The Comox Valley sewerage service is governed by the sewage commission whose membership includes representatives from the Town of Comox, the City of Courtenay and the Department of National Defence.

**Interdepartmental involvement**

The engineering services branch is leading this work with support from the financial services department. The public affairs and information systems branch will also be involved in developing and implementing the communication plan.

**Citizen/public relations**

Siting a new waste water pump station can have an impact on neighbouring properties. Careful communication with residents will be required prior to constructing the new Comox No. 2 pump station.

The construction of a new Docliddle pump station and forcemain will involve an intense construction period both at the location of the new pump station and along the new forcemain route to the treatment plant. Construction activities may have an impact on local residents in the surrounding area.

The CVRD will host a public information meeting in either late 2014 or early 2015 to first introduce the fact that the property has been selected for the construction of a future wastewater pump station. This initial meeting will focus on the rationale and methodology used to select the property. Addition meetings will occur throughout the design process to further inform residents about the technologies and architecture used to mitigate concerns. A detailed communications plan will be developed

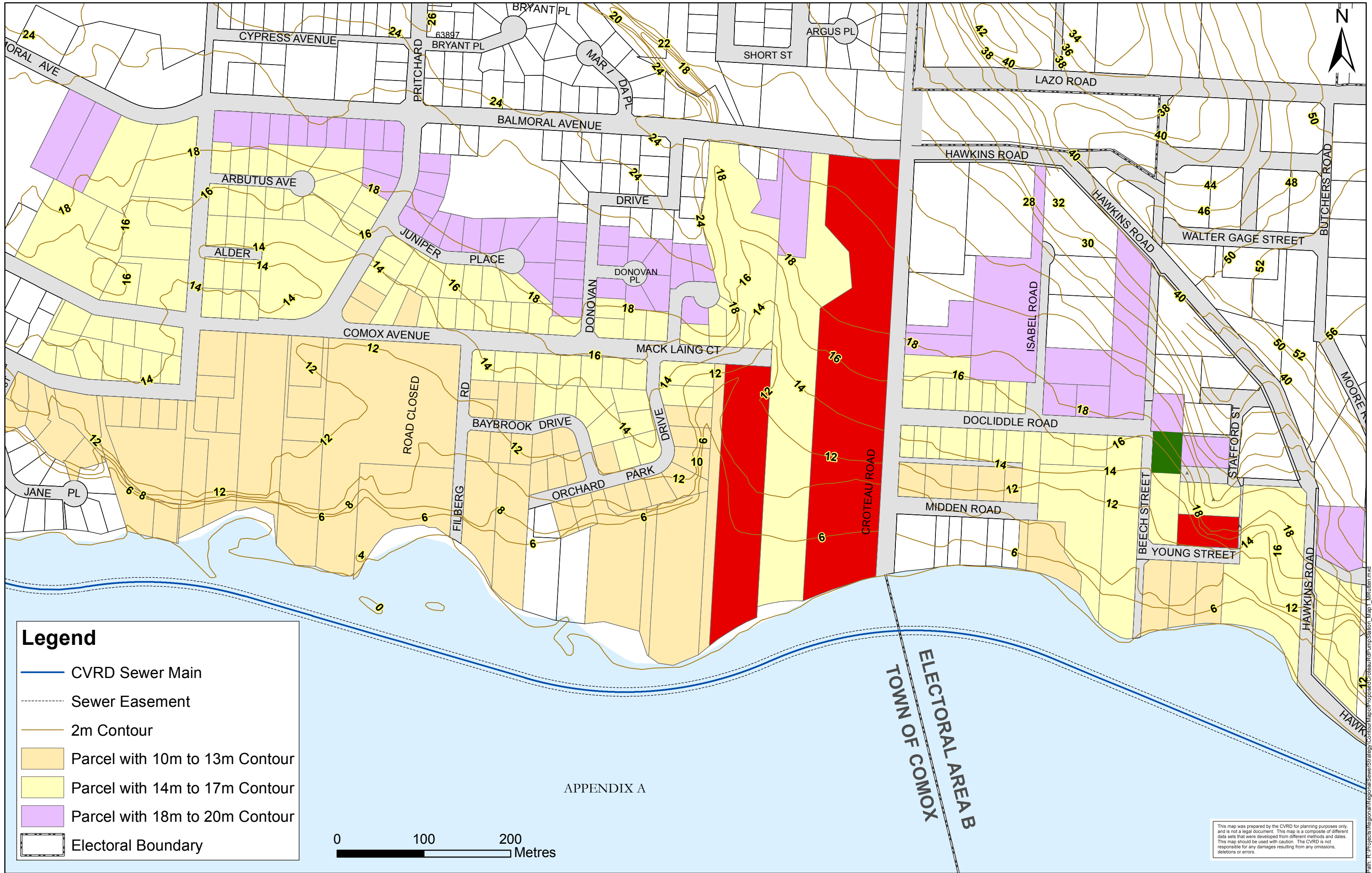
Prepared by:

***M. Rutten***

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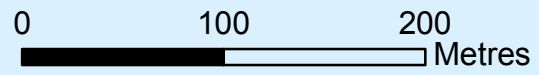
Marc Rutten, P.Eng.  
General Manager of  
Engineering Services

Attachment: Appendix A – “Site selection area – Comox No. 2 pump station”



**Legend**

- CVRD Sewer Main
- Sewer Easement
- 2m Contour
- Parcel with 10m to 13m Contour
- Parcel with 14m to 17m Contour
- Parcel with 18m to 20m Contour
- Electoral Boundary



APPENDIX A

TOWN OF COMOX  
ELECTORAL AREA B

This map was prepared by the CVRD for planning purposes only, and is not a legal document. This map is a composite of different data sets that were developed from different methods and dates. This map should be used with caution. The CVRD is not responsible for any damages resulting from any omissions, deletions or errors.