

DATE: October 12, 2016

FILE: 5340-02

TO: Chair and members
Comox Valley sewage commission

FROM: Debra Oakman, CPA, CMA
Chief Administrative Officer

RE: Comox No. 2 pump station – indicative design and communications

Purpose

To recommend proceeding with the preliminary design phase and accompanying communications plan for the Comox No. 2 pump station project.

Policy analysis

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. 2541, 2003”.

At its March 1, 2016 meeting, the Comox Valley sewage commission approved the following recommendation:

THAT staff continue efforts on the Beech Street property for a Comox No. 2 pump station and a public open house be held regarding the Beech Street site within three months from March 1, 2016.

Executive summary

A new pump station is required in order to resolve the long standing environmental risk associated with the CVRDs wastewater forcemain along Willemar Bluff, and also to increase pumping capacity at the Courtenay and Jane Place pump stations. In late 2014 the CVRD purchased a property on Beech Street in the Croteau Beach neighbourhood as the site for the future Comox No. 2 pump station. Local neighbourhood opposition to the selection of the Beech Street site has been significant and in an effort to address neighbourhood concerns the sewage commission established the Comox No. 2 pump station site advisory group to investigate alternate sites.

An alternate site at the base of Croteau Road was investigated by the CVRD with the completion of several preliminary studies aimed at identifying the potential layout of future infrastructure, the impact to archeological features, the impact to ground water resources and the placement of features in the unopened road right of way. The study work revealed that the site was constrained by its narrow configuration and low elevation and generally not suitable for the construction of the future pump station.

The CVRD has completed preliminary study work related to siting of the Comox No. 2 pump station on Beech Street. Work to date includes potential configurations of the pump station on the site, conceptual architectural work into possible building designs, a hydrogeological study to assess potential impacts to local groundwater during and after construction, and an archeological overview assessment and a topographical survey of the Beech Street property.

Indicative design

The next step in the Comox No. 2 pump station project is for the CVRD to retain an engineering consultant to progress the project design. Core objectives for the next phase will include:

- Developing a cost effective solution to decommissioning the Willemar Bluff section of the existing sewer forcemain;
- Ensuring that no impediments exist to siting the Comox No. 2 pump station on the Beech Street location (i.e. ruling out potential red flags);
- Developing a design and construction methodology for the project that minimizes the impact of construction and operation of the facility on the surrounding community.

High level scope components for a request for proposal (RFP) to select an engineering firm to undertake the design will include:

- Environmental permitting;
- Geotechnical investigations;
- Pump station configuration;
- Pump and motor sizing;
- Inlet and outlet forcemain sizing and alignment;
- Tie-in to the existing foreshore forcemain;
- Construction planning/scheduling;
- Class C cost estimates;
- Communications support; and
- Architectural design.

Criteria used in the evaluation and selection of the engineering firm, such as:

- Experience of the proposed team (staff and sub-consultants) and firm with projects of similar scale and scope;
- Methodology proposed to undertake the preliminary design; and
- Fee estimate to undertake the proposed scope.

Next steps

If the recommendation to proceed to the next phase of design is supported by the sewage commission, staff will develop the detailed RFP scope of work for the project, release the RFP in early November, and bring forward a recommendation of award to the successful proponent to the sewage commission in early 2017.

The RFP scope of work will be structured in phases; proponents will be asked to provide fee estimates for an indicative design, and subsequent phases of design and construction management – dependent on which procurement method is selected. Should the project proceed beyond indicative design on this site, and the engineering consultants have performed well up to that point, the CVRD will avoid another procurement process and award the next phases of engineering support to the same consultant.

Communications

Proactive communications with local residents and the broader community will be a key component of the planning and design work moving forward. Attached as Appendix A is the proposed Comox No. 2 pump station communications plan outlining goals, target audience, guiding principles, and strategies that will be used to engage with the public over the indicative design phase of the project. The CVRD will continue to consult directly with the K'ómoks First Nations as the project proceeds.

Recommendations from the chief administrative officer:

THAT a request for proposal process be initiated for selection of an engineering consulting firm to develop an indicative design for the Comox No. 2 pump station project;

AND FURTHER THAT the Comox No. 2 pump station communications plan be implemented to ensure proactive and consistent communications with the public and key stakeholders over the next phase of project development.

Respectfully:

D. Oakman

Debra Oakman, CPA, CMA
Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared by:

K. LaRose

Kris La Rose, P.Eng.
Senior Manager of Water and
Wastewater Services

Concurrence:

M. Rutten

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

Attachment: Appendix A – “Comox No. 2 pump station communications plan”

Comox No. 2 Pump Station - Communications Plan (File: 1470-06)
Date: Sept. 6, 2016, Updated Sept. 16.

Status: Discussion Draft

Purpose:

To provide an overview of the communications plan, prepared for expanded, proactive outreach to neighborhood residents and the broader Comox Valley sewer service area about the need for a new pump station and the process that is currently underway to assess, plan and ultimately construct a new facility proposed to be sited on Beech Street.

Goals:

- Provide the public with accurate information about the project, its planning and the need for it.
- Improve communication with neighborhood residents and property owners concerned about the proposed pump station location.
- Provide clear opportunities for people to find information about the project and share their questions/comments/feedback with CVRD staff and the sewage commission.
- Increase confidence in the CVRD's decision-making process

Target audience(s):

Primary

- Neighbours and community members in the proposed pump station location
- Comox Valley service area residents

Secondary

- CVRD sewage commission
- Comox Valley local governments and elected officials
- Media

Project background:

- The existing forcemain that runs along Willemar Bluffs is at increased risk due to coastal wave action. Temporary measures, such as the installation of gabion baskets, have extended its lifecycle however a permanent solution is needed.
- Increased use of the Comox Valley sewer system has resulted in the need for increased pump station capacity.
- To address both of these issues, it was determined that a new pump station near the intersection of Croteau and Docliddle roads would be the best option moving forward. This was included in the sewer master plan completed in 2011.
- In Feb. 2014, additional study work compared the Croteau Road-area site to another location near Jane Place, confirming the first option as the most suitable.
- In 2014, the CVRD retained Heuristic Consulting to assess and propose potential sites for the required pump station. Using methodology that considered technical, environmental, neighbourhood and financial factors, the Beech Street Property was

identified as the best available option. The CVRD purchased the property, with sale complete in Dec. 2014.

- Additional review was undertaken via an advisory committee and completed in spring 2015. This group recommended an alternate site in the neighbourhood, at the base of Croteau Road. Upon additional review, the new site however, didn't eliminate neighbourhood concerns and was less technically suitable. The sewage commission decided in March 2016 to commit further planning to the Beech Street site.
- In June 2016, the CVRD held an update open house about the Comox No. 2 pump station project, outlining next steps in terms of planning and assessment. Roughly 120 people attended with 77 leaving comment forms. Those questions have since been categorized and responded to in a comprehensive document posted to the CVRD's project webpage.

Guiding communications principles:

- Proactive communications and regular updates will establish reliability by the CVRD in continued information sharing
- Respectful acceptance of the concerns of the community and commitment to responding to questions and sharing information where possible.
- Messaging to reflect need for new infrastructure and degree of review already completed

Situational analysis:

Strengths:

- Demonstrated need for new pump station capacity and realigned forcemain
- Extensive history of process by CVRD includes significant review completed to date
- Commitment from sewage commission to find best option

Weaknesses:

- Outstanding questions that will be addressed as planning continues are concerns for the community

Opportunities:

- Upcoming investigations will address community questions and CVRD's response to those results can demonstrate responsive action
- General understanding that there is a need for more pump station capacity and that the Willemar bluffs risk needs to be alleviated

Threats:

- Disinterested/distrusting community
- Infrastructure failure in time lag created by drawn-out process

Communications strategy:

<p>Update public information on project to make accessible, informative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create basic, easy-to-reference info sheets, including ‘frequently asked questions’ and glossary • Develop wordmark and templates to make project information easily identifiable • Create a centralized project contact (email) • Establish email/mail list for interested Comox Valley residents • Update project specific web pages, reducing on-page content, and creating easier-to-browse links and categories. • Develop clear key messages for use with media, and for public/resident/stakeholder meetings • Offer technical briefings for media, as appropriate • Use CVRD social media sites for current information and ‘traffic directing’ to material on website as available • Respond to media enquiries in timely, consistent manner • Create and share regular updates for sewage commission
<p>Create regular, ongoing opportunities to connect with neighbourhood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create regular newsletter providing updates throughout planning process (min. 4x/year). Establish and follow schedule to ensure regular outreach. • Host open houses where key updates are available. (See below). • Track specific concerns by individuals and follow-up directly as information is available.
<p>Keep broader service area informed of significant/notable updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host open houses where key updates are available (including info materials, advertising & promotion, media advisory, photos, event summary and follow-up materials). • Track and provide responses to questions/comments shared at events. • Media releases to highlight key project milestones. • Identify opportunities to work with municipal partners to provide updates on project progress • Manages issues quickly as they arise, including responses to questions via info sheets, media interviews, or direct meetings