



Making a difference...together

**REPORT TO MAGIC LAKE ESTATES WATER AND SEWER LOCAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE
MEETING OF TUESDAY, JULY 8, 2014**

**SUBJECT INVESTIGATE THE COST OF PURCHASING SEWER PIPE CLEARING
EQUIPMENT ON PENDER ISLAND**

ISSUE

On January 14, 2014, the Magic Lake Estates Water and Sewer Local Services Committee requested the Capital Regional District (CRD) staff to investigate whether it is more cost effective to purchase sewer pipe clearing and equipment (aka Roto-Rooter) for Pender Island or to procure the service of a third party on an as need basis as our current practise.

BACKGROUND

The request to review the cost of purchasing sewer pipe clearing equipment on Pender Island came about as a result of an incident that occurred in the Magic Lake Estates local service area, where an obstructed sewer main caused an overflow into Buck Lake, due to a tree root-ball being lodged in a sewer pipe. A private company was dispatched to Pender Island to remove the obstruction with sewer pipe clearing equipment.

The direct cost to remove the obstruction was approximately \$900. The actual time to remove the obstruction had a minor impact in the overall costs. The majority of the cost was related to travel time to get to Pender Island and equipment rental cost.

On Pender Island, staff have historically used contracted sewer pipe clearing services. This type of service is used infrequently (less than once per year) to clear obstructions within the sewer collection system. Sewer laterals, which are pipes connected from individual homes to the sewer collection system, are cleared of blockages on average three to four times per year. The majority of the time blockages are found to be on private property therefore the cost to provide this service is paid by the homeowner. Under most circumstances, CRD staff does not perform work or services on private property.

The typical pay-back period for tool/equipment purchases is five to seven years or desirably less. The pay-back for Magic Lake Estates Sewer Local Services is over 10 years, not including any sewer laterals.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1 (Status Quo)

That the Magic Lake Estates Water and Sewer Local Services Committee direct staff to continue to procure sewer pipe clearing services on as needed basis until such time that the demand changes significantly and report back to the committee.

Alternative 2 (Purchase a Sewer Pipe Cleaning Equipment)

That the Magic Lake Estates Water and Sewer Local Services Committee direct staff to purchase sewer pipe clearing equipment for use on Pender Island.

The purchase of sewer pipe clearing equipment would be funded from the Equipment Replacement Fund. The balance of the fund as of December 31, 2013 was \$74,572.

IMPLICATIONS

Alternative 1 (Status Quo)

The current practise of procuring sewer pipe clearing services on an as needed basis has worked effectively for the CRD staff. By contracting the service in this fashion has been very efficient. The daily call-out charge for this type of service is approximately \$800 to \$900, but may vary depending on the nature and severity of the issue. As an added benefit, video camera services are typically provided in the daily rate.

Alternative 2 (Purchase a Sewer Pipe Clearing Equipment)

The cost to purchase sewer pipe clearing equipment for commercial application is estimated at approximately \$5,000. This device would be transported in one of the CRD service vehicles and would be available to be utilized any time as required. To ensure staff operate the equipment safely an initial training session is required and additionally safe operation procedures will likely need to be developed. Other costs associated with the purchase of the equipment will be annual maintenance which is estimated to be about 10 percent of the purchase cost. CRD staff does not expect to use this device for clearing obstructions on lateral sewer services that are located on private property. For sewer issues on private property, the owner is expected to contact the local plumbing services.

If it were decided to purchase sewer pipe clearing equipment, it could be funded from the Magic Laker Estates Equipment Replacement Fund. The balance of the fund as of December 31, 2013 was \$74,572.

CONCLUSION

The best solution today is to continue to procure sewer pipe clearing services on an as needed basis. It is important to note that the contractor providing the service has responded immediately without delay.

This is the most cost effective solution to date. If the conditions or demand changes significantly the CRD staff would report back to the committee and seek advice on how to best proceed.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Magic Lake Estates Water and Sewer Local Services Committee direct staff to continue to procure sewer pipe clearing services on as needed basis until such time that the demand changes significantly and report back to the committee.

Dan Robson, ASCT
Manager, Saanich Peninsula & Gulf
Islands Operations

Peter Sparanese, P.Eng.
Senior Manager, Infrastructure Operations
Concurrence

Ted Robbins, B.Sc., C.Tech.
General Manager, Integrated Water Services
Concurrence

PS/DR:ls