

Magic Lake Estates Wastewater System Infrastructure Renewal Project

Frequently Asked Questions



Capital Regional District | August 2019

Is my property located in the Sewer Service Area?

The sewer service area is defined in Bylaw 1873, as amended by Bylaw 4238, and is a prescribed area. A map showing the current Magic Lake Estates Sewer Service Area is available at www.crd.bc.ca/magiclake-sewer. All properties located within the defined boundary area are in the Sewer Service Area.

If I'm not in the Sewer Service Area, do I have to pay for the system Renewal?

No, only the properties within the Sewer Service Area will pay for the system renewal.

If I'm in the Sewer Service Area, but I am not connected to the sewer system yet, do I still have to pay for the system Renewal?

Yes, properties within the Sewer Service Area do pay Parcel Taxes towards capital costs of upgrading the system, but properties that are not yet connected to the system do not have to pay User Fees towards the operational cost of the system.

How do I connect to the Sewer?

If a resident currently has property in the sewer service area, they can call 250.474.9611 to request an application to connect. If the property is not in the sewer service area, the owner will have to make a request for inclusion into the service area and submit it to the Magic Lake Estates Water and Sewer Local Services Committee for their review.

Why is the sewer system in such a bad condition?

A majority of the original system was installed by a developer in the late 1960's – early 1970's with few upgrades since that time. Much of the system has reached the end of its service life.

How much will it cost to renew the sewer system?

The total estimated cost to renew the system back to a safe, reliable state that meets regulatory requirements is approximately \$12.15 million. However, it is possible to upgrade the system in various phases over time.

Why do we have to borrow funds to do the sewer upgrades?

There is approximately \$200,000 in the Magic Lake Estates Sewer Capital Reserve Fund. This does not cover the cost of completing the upgrades, so funds will need to be borrowed to complete the work.

How much am I currently paying for the sewer service?

The 2019 annual Parcel Tax and User Fee rates are \$777.60 and \$381.54, respectively.

How much will my cost increase as a result of the system renewal?

Based on feedback received and other considerations, the Magic Lake Estates Sewer Committee approved proceeding to referendum based on completing the upgrades in phases and to request approval to borrow \$6 million over a 30 year loan amortization period for Phase 1. The cost increase for that option will be approximately \$496 per parcel.

Can I defer the cost (tax) increase?

If the property owner is at least 55-years old, the Provincial government may allow parcel taxes to be deferred. However, please note that User Fees cannot be deferred. Visit the Province of BC website for more information, and to see if you qualify.

Can I pay the entire cost up front rather than over a long amortization period?

Yes. Subject to CRD Board approval of a specific financial bylaw, property owners could choose to pay a one-time lump sum cost for their share of the capital cost for the sewer upgrades rather than paying debt servicing costs over the whole amortization period. Based on a capital cost of \$6 million divided by 713 parcels, the approximate lump sum cost would be \$8,415.

What happens if the sewer system is not upgraded?

It will continue to deteriorate, service disruptions will increase, operational and emergency response costs will increase and it will remain out-of-compliance with Provincial and Federal regulations which could result in legal orders and fines to the Service.

When would the sewer renewal work commence and how long will it take to complete?

The renewal work can only commence if the elector's support borrowing funds to complete the work through a referendum. If the referendum (November 23, 2019) is successful, work could commence in 2020. It will take approximately a year to complete the upgrades.

Will my service be disrupted during the sewer renewal work?

Generally, your service should not be disrupted during the renewal work. However, there could be brief periods of time where some residents could be asked to minimize wastewater discharges. There should be no interruptions to your water service.

When will be the voting day for the referendum to borrow funds for the sewer renewal work, and how will I be informed?

The General Voting Day for the referendum will be on November 23, 2019. Property owners and eligible electors of the sewer service can be informed through the CRD website, mail-outs, and statutory advertisements in addition to other community outlets (Pender Post, Facebook, etc.).

Who is eligible to vote on the referendum?

People who live in the Magic Lake Estates sewer service area and qualify as a resident elector, or who own property in the service area but live elsewhere in British Columbia and qualify as non-resident property elector are eligible to vote.

Where will the referendum polling station be located?

The polling station will be located on Pender Island. Once the exact location is determined, the information will be advertised and posted on the CRD website in advance of the voting date.

Will there be an advance poll or an option for an absentee vote?

Yes. Advance voting opportunities will be available on Wednesday November 13 and Wednesday, November 20. Absentee (mail in) ballots are permitted under the Local Government Act, and will be available early November. Mail ballot voting is only available for electors who are unable to attend a voting location due to illness, injury, disability or because they will be absent from the area on the voting days.

How do I obtain a copy of the mail in ballot?

Mail in ballot application forms are available on our website. Once the application is received and ballots are received and prepared, they will be sent via mail to the address provided.

When do the mail in ballots have to be received by the CRD?

Mail ballots must be received by the Chief Election Officer by 8 pm on voting day, November 23, 2019. Complete ballots can be sent to the CRD main office of 625 Fisgard Street, Victoria, BC.

For information on elector qualifications, or how to vote by mail, please visit:

www.crd.bc.ca/about/how-we-are-governed/elections-other-voting/voter-qualifications-registration

Mail ballot applications will be available as of late October.