

Magic Lake Estates Wastewater System Infrastructure Renewal Project Frequently Asked Questions



Capital Regional District | 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 your property is already in the sewer service area, a resident 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, so 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 about \$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 saved in the Magic Lake Estates Sewer Capital Reserve Fund which is not enough to complete 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?

It depends on what the community prefers for the loan amortization period and how many phases the work is completed in (i.e. one, two or three phases). Estimated costs for a number of options are shown on slide 16 of the Open House Boards (www.crd.bc.ca/magiclake-sewer).

Can I defer the cost (tax) increase?

If the property owner is at least 55-years old, then 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.

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.

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 is held later this year, work could commence in 2020. The length of time to complete the work depends on the final scope of work that is decided by the community.

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 a recommendation be made on which Option to proceed with?

After feedback has been received from the community by May 24, 2019, the Committee will make a recommendation to the CRD Board which will then determine how to proceed with the referendum.

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

Generally the voting day in a referendum takes place about 3-6 months after the process commences and Ministry approval has been granted. 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 (like the 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. The exact location is yet to be determined, but it 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. An advance poll is typically held in the week prior to the referendum voting date. Absentee (mail in) ballots are permitted under the Local Government Act, but the Magic Lake Estates Committee and CRD Board would determine this for this referendum.