

January 30, 2020

NEW INFORMATION: CULTUS LAKE SEWER SYSTEM

In November 2019, we wrote to inform you of the status of the Cultus Lake Sewer project. Since that time, FVRD staff and elected officials have been diligently working to develop an action plan that will minimize the cost of this project to the community without compromising important community objectives. Director Taryn Dixon, Chair Jason Lum, and senior staff have had meetings at the provincial and federal levels to make them aware of the need for a new system, request financial support to help offset the costs, and ensure we keep the lake healthy. As a result of these meetings, **the FVRD has decided it will not hold a referendum in 2020.**

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

The current project funding shortfall is estimated to be \$5M (if the system was constructed now). As you know, the only way the FVRD has to generate capital funds is through grants or long-term borrowing (with the majority approval of the existing service area voters). Although the FVRD has not been able to obtain project grant funding to date, we believe the best course of action is to make an application to the next intake of the *Investing in Canada Green Infrastructure – Environmental Quality Program*. The deadline for this new funding opportunity is February 26, 2020. Provincial staff and elected officials have informed us that announcements for this grant are not expected until the spring of 2021.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

We all want to have a new, high-quality sewer system in place. The existing system has reached the end of its life, and having a referendum to approve additional borrowing would be the fastest way to build the project and prevent potential sewer system failure. However, we recognize that additional borrowing places a substantial financial burden on the community, one that should not be borne by the residents and businesses of Cultus Lake alone.

Waiting on the outcome of this new grant opportunity means that the project will be on hold until at least 2021. To be eligible for this stream of funding, work on the new sewer system cannot continue. However, FVRD staff will be working to mitigate challenges that may arise with the existing system. During the busy summer months, this may include “pump and haul” measures to help prevent the system from failing. You may also see staff undertaking other minor construction works to stabilize the existing system. The funds for this capital work will come from existing budgets, provincial funds for sewer-related projects that would be set to expire if they are not used in 2020.

WHAT IF THE GRANT APPLICATION IS NOT SUCCESSFUL?

If the FVRD is not successful in this new grant opportunity, a referendum will be held in 2021 to seek approval for additional borrowing to complete the sewer project.

This notice will be posted on the FVRD’s website along with new information we receive on the project from time-to-time: www.fvrd.ca/CultusSewer