



REGIONAL
DISTRICT
OF NANAIMO

French Creek Pollution Control Centre – Alternate Septage Receiving Options

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board endorse staff's intention to provide septage haulers with a minimum of two months' notice of septage receiving interruption, limit the complete shut down of the septage receiving service to a two-week period, and offer a discount of 10% on the septage disposal user-rate to discharge loads originating in the Northern Communities to the Chase River Pump Station septage receiving site during the shut down period required to support the French Creek Pollution Control Influent Pipe Repair Project.

BACKGROUND

The RDN has two septage receiving stations to accept septage waste from homes that have septic systems. A septage receiving station at the Chase River Pump Station accepts waste from residents in the Southern Communities area and another receiving station at the French Creek Pollution Control Centre (FCPCC) accepts waste from about 7,000 residents in the Northern Communities area.

The industry recommends that homeowners pump-out their septic system every 3-5 years. The actual frequency is usually more than 5 years. When either septage station is shut down for maintenance or upgrades, advisories are sent to the septage hauling companies that are licensed to use the facilities. There are currently 22 licensed septage haulers in the RDN with two companies historically using this facility on a regular basis during this period.

In September 2023, septage haulers received advanced notice of a potential 2 week shut down, in October 2023, of the septage receiving station at FCPCC. This matter was discussed at the September 26, 2023, Regular Board Meeting and at that meeting, the Board passed Motion 23-488:

Whereas, with the upcoming necessary repairs required at the French Creek Pollution Control Centre (FCPCC), the Septage Receiving Station will not be able to accommodate the disposal of septage for approximately two weeks in October 2023, that staff be directed to:

- 1. Provide a report by end of Q1 2024, on other potential disposal sites when closures occur for the FCPCC, similar to what occurs when the Chase River Pump Station is not available; and*
- 2. Provide financial relief for haulers extra time and travel costs associated with having to travel to Nanaimo to dispose, by offering a discount on the septage disposal user-rates listed in Schedule 'F' of "Trucked Liquid Waste Rates and Regulations Bylaw No. 1732, 2016", for the days the FCPCC Septage Receiving Station will be closed.*

This report is in response to Motion 23-488.

Due to weather constraints and the desire to provide meaningful consideration of Board motion 23-488, the FCPCCC influent pipe repair work requiring a shutdown of the FCPCCC septage receiving station was not completed in 2023. The work is now scheduled to occur in June of 2024.

The shutdown is required to facilitate repair of the aging influent pipe that conveys all wastewater into FCPCCC, a critical component of the plant. Specifically, the septage holding tank is required to be empty to safely isolate a manhole where the lining work will take place. The lining work has been carefully planned in coordination with FCPCCC Operations to minimise the duration of the work and therefore the shutdown of the septage receiving station.

Several options were considered to minimize the inconvenience to septage haulers that could be impacted by a temporary closure of the FCPCCC septage receiving station.

OPTION 1:

Provide septage haulers with a minimum of two months' notice of septage receiving interruption, limit the complete shut down of the septage receiving service to a two-week period, and offer a discount of 10% on the septage disposal user-rate to discharge loads originating in the Northern Communities to the Chase River Pump Station septage receiving site during the shut down period.

As septic users have a recommended 3–5-year window to schedule a pump out, a 14-day day closure is not expected to impact most households. With two-months' notice and information on specific closure dates, septage haulers can schedule their appointments to occur during the revised hours of operation or choose to haul to the septage receiving station at the Chase River Pump Station.

In cases where a septage hauler is unable to schedule a pump-out originating in the Northern Communities outside of the two-week period, the RDN can provide financial relief for haulers' extra time and travel costs associated with their travel to Nanaimo, by offering a discount on the septage disposal user-rates listed in Schedule 'F' of "Trucked Liquid Waste Rates and Regulations Bylaw No. 1732, 2016", for the days the FCPCCC Septage Receiving Station will be closed. This rate reduction should be 10% as it is critical to ensure that the RDN is not aiding business.

This option is expected to have relatively low impact to the RDN and to haulers.

OPTION 2:

Provide other potential temporary disposal sites when closures occur for the FCPCCC, similar to what occurred when the Chase River Pump Station was not available.

Chase River Pump Station septage receiving site was out of service for approximately two months in 2022 to accommodate an internal retrofit and upgrade of the Chase River Pump Station. Previously, if the septage receiving facility was shut down haulers were able to discharge into a suitable manhole within the Chase River Pump Station property that has sufficient size, diluting flow, and rock trap at the pump station to accommodate septage flow to the pump station. Due to the extended two month shut down duration combined with a high usage of the Chase River Pump Station septage receiving site, a temporary septage site was constructed on private

property to maintain septage service for the shutdown duration, and was decommissioned upon completion at the request of the property owner. The cost to construct, support, and deconstruct the temporary alternate septage site on privately owned property was \$41,000. A temporary septage location was not planned for the FCPCCC septage site shut down because the duration of two weeks is expected to be significantly less impactful.

The RDN retained Koers Engineering to investigate and provide cost estimates for possible temporary alternate septage receiving sites. The estimated cost of constructing, operating, and decommissioning a temporary septage receiving site for the French Creek influent pipe repair project is approximately \$40,000.

This not the preferred option because staff believe that the cost of installing a temporary septage site is high relative to the duration of the outage and relative to other mitigating strategies outlines in option 1.

OPTION 3:

Provide other permanent disposal sites when closures occur for the FCPCCC.

In 2023 the RDN retained Koers Engineering to investigate and provide cost estimates for possible permanent alternate septage receiving sites. The investigation was initiated to explore a possible avenue to reduce operational impact of concentrated septage discharge to the FCPCCC facility, and to improve odours resulting from the existing septage site. The estimated cost of constructing a permanent alternate septage receiving site is approximately \$1,140,000 to \$1,350,000, not including the cost to purchase or lease a suitable piece of property.

This not the preferred option because staff believe that the cost of installing a permanent septage site is high relative to the frequency and duration of septage outages at the French Creek Pollution Control Centre. A permanent alternate septage site provides possible improvements to odour and process stability at the French Creek Pollution Control Centre, and may be considered in the future.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

OPTION 1: Based on 2020-2023 data, potential loss of revenue is estimated at \$2,000 - \$6,000.

OPTION 2: Approximately \$40,000

OPTION 3: Approximately \$1,140,000 to \$1,350,000

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Planning and Managing for Growth - Understand and develop an inter-connected framework of strategies and plans to manage growth to support complete communities, including planning, transportation, infrastructure, and fiscal sustainability.

REVIEWED BY:

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