

# Memo

**File:** 5330-20/BSSEP

**DATE:** June 1, 2020

**TO:** Advisory Planning Commission  
Baynes Sound – Denman/Hornby Islands (Electoral Area A)

**FROM:** Engineering Services Branch

**RE:** Royston & Union Bay Sewer Extension Project

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The attached newsletter is for commission members' information.

Recently, the Comox Valley Sewage Commission agreed to receive wastewater from Royston, Union Bay and K'ómoks First Nation into the Comox Valley Sewerage Service. The area has been identified as a priority for sewer service because of the high density of homes, high water tables, poor soil conditions, aging onsite treatment systems and anticipated growth. This unprecedented decision by the Sewage Commission offers a new option for residents in Royston and Union Bay that could provide a regional solution to wastewater management.

The attached newsletter has been developed for the community to share this decision and provide some context, history and planned next steps. While the decision to accept wastewater in the Comox Valley Sewerage Service is an important first step, there are many other decision points required before any discussions about community infrastructure can move forward. This includes reviewing governance options within the commission model and the establishment and adoption of bylaws. Over the next several months the Comox Valley Regional District will be undertaking the following actions:

- Further assessment and technical evaluation including further review of potential costs.
- Discussion with the K'ómoks First Nation and Union Bay Estates.
- Pursuing grant opportunities.

We understand that this is an important topic for many in the community and there will be no decisions made about moving forward without further consultation with residents and property owners. A public engagement strategy is under development and more information about next steps will be communicated this fall.

In the meantime, a new project page has been established at [www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/sewerextension](http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/sewerextension) and we will continue to keep the community and stakeholders updated about planned next steps.

Sincerely,

***D. Monteith***

Darry Monteith  
Manager of Liquid Waste Planning  
Engineering Services Branch

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Attachments    Appendix A – “May 2020 CVRD Newsletter – Royston & Union Bay Sewer  
Extension Project”

# Royston & Union Bay Sewer Extension Project

May 2020

There has been ongoing discussion for a number of years about the potential for sewer service in the Royston/Union Bay areas. Below is an update on some recent progress on this topic.

## CVRD continues to explore sewage treatment options

Wastewater management has been a regular topic for Royston and Union Bay over the years. Since a failed referendum on the South Sewer Project in 2016, there has been ongoing work to find a wastewater solution that protects the natural environment and provides cost effective wastewater treatment for residents.

“The CVRD, through the support of funds allocated by Electoral Area A, has continued to seek an affordable sewage management solution for the community’s benefit. I am hopeful a new proposed framework may achieve this goal,” said Director Daniel Arbour, Electoral Area A.

The last few years of review and assessment have led to a potential new option, that is currently being reviewed by staff and will be put forward to the community for feedback in the fall.

### A NEW OPTION TO CONSIDER

In 2018 the Comox Valley Sewage Commission, which services Courtenay, Comox and K’ómoks First Nation, supported a request put forward by Electoral Area A to analyze the technical, regulatory and financial impacts of extending sewer services south to Royston and Union Bay. This feasibility study was funded by Electoral Area A.

Following this assessment, the sewage commission has now agreed to receive untreated wastewater from Royston, Union Bay and K’ómoks First Nation south lands. The decision means that Royston and Union Bay now have the option of connecting into the Courtenay/Comox system, and have wastewater treated at the CVRD’s sewage treatment plant and discharged via the existing outfall, eliminating the need for a separate treatment plant in the south – if the communities chose to participate. Historically, sewer service has only been offered within municipal boundaries.

“This decision opens up an important option for residents in Royston and Union Bay that could see a solution to wastewater collection and treatment in this sensitive area,” said David Frisch, Chair of the Sewage Commission. The historic decision by the sewage commission opens the door to a collaborative wastewater management solution for the region, offering potential efficiencies in required infrastructure.

The Comox Valley’s sewage treatment plant, shown here, currently serves Comox and Courtenay.



### Next steps for planning

With the sewage commission’s decision, the CVRD will be proceeding with assessment and public engagement over the coming year:

#### Spring/Summer 2020

- Further technical work to review phasing, scope and construction and operations costs.
- Develop a community engagement strategy.

#### Fall 2020

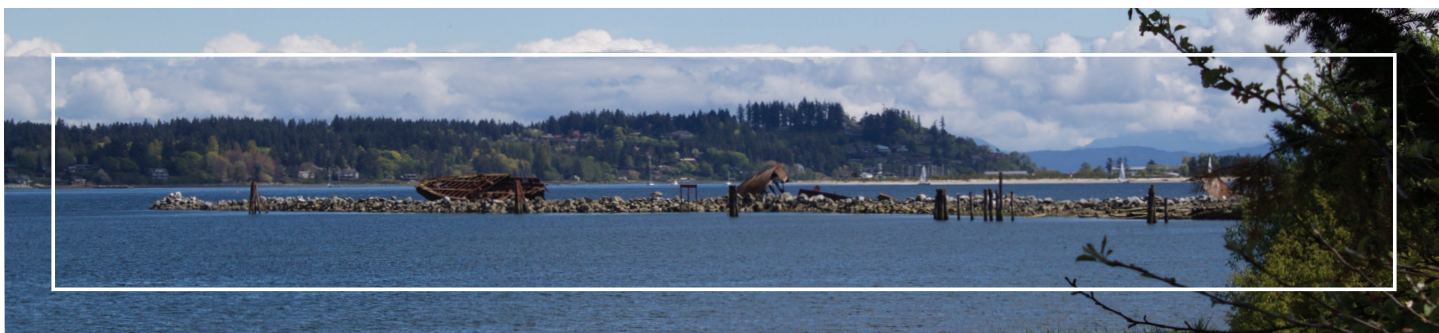
- Launch community engagement strategy.

More information will be shared as it becomes available – Watch [www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/sewerextension](http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/sewerextension) for more info.

### COMING UP NEXT

With this option now on the table, the CVRD is moving forward with further assessment and technical evaluation, discussion with partners and pursuing grant opportunities.

A public engagement plan is also being developed to determine next steps. Thorough consultation and community input on the desired outcomes will be required to move forward.



## Questions and Answers for sewer extension project

There is much more to come as technical assessment continues and public consultation is planned and started, but below are answers to a few of the questions we expect residents will have:

### How much will this cost homeowners in Royston and Union Bay?

The project team is working on updating cost estimates based on further technical work. Outcomes of grant applications will also influence the potential costs. As a result, there are no estimated costs to share at this time, but the CVRD recognizes that affordability for homeowners is key to support moving forward. More cost information will be available during the public consultation period.

### How is Union Bay Estates involved?

The CVRD is in ongoing discussions with Union Bay Estates (UBE) about future service needs and proposed approaches. There is interest from both parties in working together to create a system that is efficient and that will meet the environmental and health guidelines established by the provincial regulators. Proposed options will be presented in partnership with UBE.



Residents in Royston and Union Bay currently rely on onsite treatment systems, which require proper maintenance.



Diagram of a sample septic system.

## Septic Care Information

As work continues on a potential sewer collection and treatment system, it's very important that residents with on-site treatment (septic) system continue to maintain them properly. The CVRD offers information at their website [www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/septic](http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/septic).

## Planning, Consultation and COVID-19

The CVRD is closely monitoring COVID-19 developments and adjusting its operations in accordance with direction from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Provincial Health Officer. It is unclear at this point what future public consultation will look like. It will depend on the status of public health directives at the time. Regardless of whether participation can happen in person, through letters or online, thorough consultation and community input will be required before moving forward.

The CVRD also recognizes the uncertainty, concern and financial pressures many households are feeling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Any solution will have to make financial sense to homeowners and is still a few years away from implementation.

## Questions/Concerns?

### Contact Us:

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