



**Survey on back page!**  
Please let us know what you think...



## Sewage treatment in the Capital Region

The Core Area Wastewater Treatment Program consists of three projects: the construction of the McLoughlin wastewater treatment plant and marine outfall, a biosolids energy centre, and conveyance system upgrades. The total project cost is estimated at \$783 million, with \$253M from the federal government, \$248M from the Province, and the remainder (about \$281M) from local taxpayers.

The McLoughlin plant will be designed to meet current and future capacity requirements for this region until at least 2030. When capacity at McLoughlin is reached, a new plant will be built somewhere on the West Shore. More information is available at <http://wastewatermadeclear.ca/>

## Paying for Sewage Treatment

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is moving forward on sewage treatment, with funding from the federal and provincial governments. Colwood—like the other six participating municipalities—has to tell the CRD how much space it would like in the wastewater treatment plant. We will then pay the CRD for our proportionate share of the overall cost, starting in 2014. This means the

City also needs to determine the best way to pay for this: who pays, and how much?

This newsletter is designed to give you some information and to encourage you to provide your input into two important Council decisions. Please fill out the survey on the back page or online at [www.colwood.ca](http://www.colwood.ca), and encourage your friends and neighbours to do the same.

## Sewage is a resource...

Sewage treatment has changed a great deal in recent years. Sewage is no longer considered a waste to be got rid of, but a resource that can be a source of clean water, heat, biogas, and electricity. The traditional large open ponds and their associated smells have been replaced by smaller-footprint buildings that contain noise and odours, and can make good neighbours if done well. A good example is found at Dockside Green in Victoria, where the most expensive homes are found alongside the 'sewage outfall'—actually a pond system that is part of the final treatment process.

Learn more about the potential for resources from sewage when you check out the YouTube video produced by the City of Colwood and Capital City Centre at [www.colwood.ca](http://www.colwood.ca)



# CHALLENGE #1: HOW MUCH SPACE SHOULD COLWOOD PURCHASE IN THE CRD WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT?

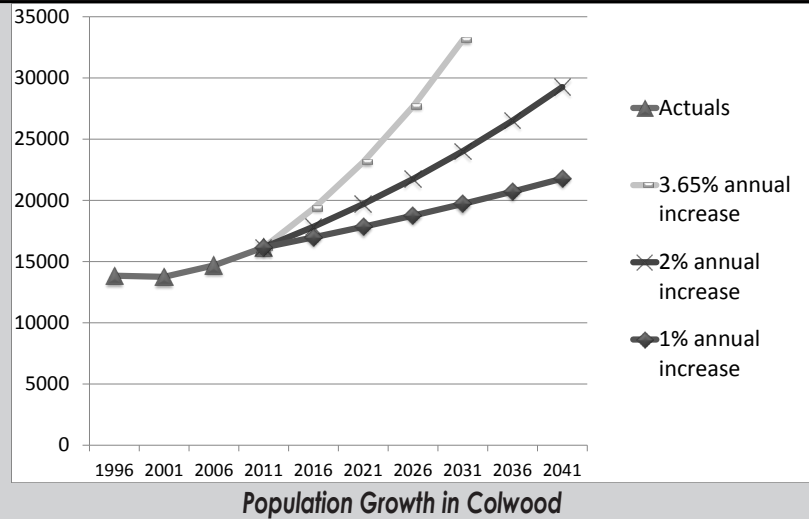
The CRD has proposed that Colwood take about 7% of the McLoughlin plant's capacity—so we would pay 7% of the capital costs, or about \$2.8 million per year (assuming a 15 year amortization period). This capacity is based on a projected population growth of about 3.65% per year.

The City of Colwood is growing, and new developments, especially the large ones at Capital City Centre and Royal Bay, will add significantly to our population over the next 20 years or so. In addition, many residents currently serviced by septic fields would like the opportunity to switch to sewers, adding to the requirement for sewage treatment capacity.

## What is the Population Growth in Colwood?

Colwood's population grew by about 1% per year between 1996 and 2011. Even including proposed developments at Royal Bay and Capital City Centre, Colwood's growth rate is probably only 2% per year for the foreseeable future (see chart).

Colwood needs to determine the 'right' amount of capacity to request from the CRD. Purchasing space now guarantees that we have capacity for current needs and all future developments, at a known price. Purchasing too much space now means that today's taxpayers are paying for capacity that will not be required for many years to come.



When the City needs additional capacity it could ask other municipalities to sell them their excess capacity. However, this is only an option IF there is spare capacity and owners are willing to sell at an affordable price.

Another option is for the City to work with larger developments to have them treat their own sewage in smaller localized treatment plants. These systems would likely include a higher level of treatment and recovery of energy and water. Capital City Centre has already expressed an interest in building such a facility, and could also treat sewage from other Colwood neighbourhoods.

## Which of the following options do you prefer?

(please fill out the survey on the back page or do so online at [www.colwood.ca](http://www.colwood.ca))

### Option 1: Purchase 7% capacity in the CRD plant

- This option would provide sufficient space for all of Colwood's current needs and growth well into the future, based on a generous 3.65% growth rate.
- Costs would be known and predictable. The cost to Colwood would be about \$2.8 million per year.
- Current Colwood residents would be paying for capacity that will not be required for many years to come.

### Option 2: Purchase 3.5% capacity in the CRD plant

- This option would provide sufficient space for all of Colwood's current needs and growth until at least 2030, based on a 2% growth rate.
- Costs would be known and predictable for the foreseeable future. The cost to Colwood would be an estimated \$1.4 million per year.

- Colwood residents would be paying for some capacity that will not be required for many years (but less than for Option 1).
- If growth is faster than predicted, the cost of acquiring additional capacity for new users is unknown.

### Option 3: Purchase 2.5% capacity in the CRD plant and require that major new developments construct their own sewage treatment/resource recovery systems

- This option would provide certainty of sufficient space for Colwood's current needs, with some additional allowance for 2% growth up to 2020.
- It ensures that we only build capacity as required.
- The cost to existing Colwood residents would be an estimated \$1.0 million per year. The costs for the new local treatment plants would be covered by their users.

# CHALLENGE #2: HOW SHOULD COLWOOD PAY FOR THE CAPACITY ON THE CRD PLANT?

Currently, households serviced by sewers are in a Local Area Service (LAS), and pay a sewer **tax** that recovers the cost of putting the pipes in the ground, and a sewer **fee** to cover operating costs. There are some properties (e.g., undeveloped properties) that are in an LAS, but not yet connected to sewers—they pay a sewer tax but no sewer fee. The cost for sewage treatment will be in addition to what is already being paid.

Most homes in Colwood (about 75%) are still on septic systems. Some will convert to sewers over the next few years as the sewer system expands, but for many this will not be an immediate option.

To date, Colwood has preferred to follow a user pay principle, in other words only those properties in an LAS pay for sewer costs. The total cost to Colwood for sewage treatment will depend on which of the above options is chosen, however all of them will add to the tax burden.



## Which of the following options do you prefer?

*(please fill out the survey on the back page or do so online at [www.colwood.ca](http://www.colwood.ca))*

### Option A: Only sewer users pay for sewage treatment

- This option maintains the user pay principle, in that only those who benefit from the service pay for it.
- Will result in the sewer users paying for the future capacity needs of the City as well as their own treatment costs.

The approximate annual cost per household on sewers for this option might be:

	Option A+ Option 1	Option A+ Option 2	Option A+ Option 3
Approx annual cost/ household on sewer	\$1,000	\$600	\$480

### Option B: All property tax payers share the costs for sewage treatment

- Sewer treatment benefits the entire region through reduced environmental impact. As well, providing for future sewage capacity is important to encourage new development in the community. These are shared benefits that should be paid for by all, not just sewer users.
- The per household cost will be much lower for properties connected to the sewer.
- Properties on septic will pay, even though they

get no benefit from the system (unless they can connect in future).

The approximate annual cost per household (all Colwood) for this option might be:

	Option B+ Option 1	Option B+ Option 2	Option B+ Option 3
Approx annual cost/ household	\$380	\$230	\$180

### Option C: A blended option, with sewer users paying for their portion of the capacity and the costs for future capacity borne by all property tax payers

- Sewer users would pay an appropriate amount for the service they require.
- The cost of future capacity would be borne by all Colwood property tax payers.

The approximate annual cost per household for this option might be:

	Option C+ Option 1	Option C+ Option 2	Option C+ Option 3
Approx annual cost/ household on sewer	\$610	\$460	\$420
Approx annual cost/ household NOT connected to sewers	\$240	\$90	\$40



## Community Survey: Tell us What YOU think!

1. What is your postal code? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you a Colwood resident? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

3. Are you currently serviced by:

- municipal sewer service
- a septic field
- a shared septic field.
- don't know

4. How much space should Colwood purchase in the CRD wastewater treatment plant?

Option 1  7% - enough for all of Colwood's needs well into the foreseeable future

Option 2  3.5% - enough for all of Colwood's needs until at least 2030

Option 3  2.5% - enough for Colwood's current needs with some room for expansion. Major new developments would be required to build their own sewage treatment/resource recovery for their needs.

Other suggestions/comments:

5. How should Colwood residents pay for sewage treatment costs?

Option A  Only homes and businesses currently connected to the sewer should pay.

Option B  All Colwood property tax payers should share the cost.

Option C  There should be a blended approach (people connected to sewers pay for their needs, capacity for future requirements should be shared by all Colwood taxpayers).

Other suggestions/comments

6. Any other comments?

### Your opinion matters!

Please submit your response by **September 30th 2012**. You can fill it out online at **www.colwood.ca**, or complete and drop off a copy or mail it to Colwood City Hall, 3300 Wishart Road, Colwood BC, V9C 1R1. Or, if you prefer, call Engineering at 250.478.5999.

Join us at the Transportation and Public Infrastructure meeting on Thursday September 20th 6:30 pm at City Hall to learn more and share your ideas.

ColwoodConnection is a publication of the City of Colwood. Colwood is committed to conservation, and is looking to reduce our community's ecological impact while keeping people connected. Get in touch with Mayor and Council and learn more about the City's committee structure at [www.colwood.ca](http://www.colwood.ca).