



# CITY CONNECT

a newsletter highlighting services, projects and other information from the City of Port Alberni

## Secure Your Garbage and Help Prevent Human-Bear Conflicts



The Alberni Valley is known for its natural beauty and abundant wildlife. That's why many of us choose to live here and that's the way we want it to remain.

Living in close proximity to wildlife means we need to share the space and manage our garbage responsibly to reduce conflicts. Black bears are one of our most common wildlife neighbours and are very active during the late summer and fall, always on the lookout for "easy" calories. While searching for food in their natural environment bears often find their way into residential areas. With their keen sense of smell bears are driven to investigate. Once they discover human food or garbage, bears will continue to seek it out within our community and become "food conditioned".

Bears in pursuit of human food sources may damage property or, in rare cases, cause injury

to people. Carelessly stored garbage, birdfeeders, pet foods and barbecues are open invitations for bears and often causes them to pay with their lives for human mistakes.

While bears can't change their behaviour, we can. As such, the City of Port Alberni and Alberni Valley Bear Smart would like to remind residents to harvest fruit as soon as it ripens, feed your pets inside and store their food inside, never store garbage outside, unless it is in an approved bear-proof container or bear-proof enclosure, and clean barbecues immediately after use. One of the most common mistakes is garbage carts being placed at the curb-side the night before pick-up. This puts

the garbage in reach for bears and they learn to come back to it again and again. In accordance with City Bylaws, garbage carts should be placed out the morning of pick-up only.

Starting this fall, the City and AV Bear Smart will be providing friendly reminders to residents whose garbage carts are placed out the night before. These tags (see below) will be attached to the garbage cart using a removable strap.

Simple actions such as this will protect your family and neighbours and prevent bears from being needlessly destroyed. For more information please call the City's Public Works Yard at 250-720-2840.

A friendly reminder from the City of Port Alberni	<b>X THIS IS NOT A TICKET</b>	<b>City of Port Alberni Bylaw #4885 Sec. 11.0</b>
	This is a message from Alberni Valley Bear Smart and The City of Port Alberni.	
	<b>Trash container left out in a manner that allows for the feeding of bears.</b>	<b>BC Wildlife Act Section 33.1</b>
	BLACK BEARS HAVE EXTREMELY GOOD NOSES AND ARE ATTRACTED TO ANY POTENTIAL SMELL ON YOUR PROPERTY. THEY ALSO HAVE GREAT MEMORIES AND ONCE BEARS ACCESS TRASH THEY WILL REMEMBER THAT FOOD SOURCE.	

## Get Active This Fall!

Get active this fall with a variety of recreation programs for the whole family.



**Youth Activity Night @ Glenwood Centre**  
(Ages 13 - 17)  
Friday Nights 8:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
September 23 - December 16  
Enjoy awesome music, fun activities and hanging with your friends



**Dad's Night Out**  
(Ages 3 and up)  
Wednesday Nights 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
October 5 - November 30  
Free drop in for dads and their kids! No registration required. See our website for the full schedule of great activities



**Physical Literacy 101**  
Monday, September 12, 2016  
6:30pm-8:30pm @ADSS Auditorium  
Run, Jump, Skip, Throw! Come out to this free community event and take part in this interactive presentation on Physical Literacy and how it benefits everyone throughout their life time.

# Moving Forward on Wastewater Treatment

Work begins on new sewage treatment lagoon to meet new government regulations

One of the largest infrastructure projects in Port Alberni's history is being undertaken just across the Somass River. The expansion and redevelopment of the City's sewage treatment facility is part of a long-range, multi-phased effort to manage our city's wastewater (ie: sewage) to ensure protection of public health and the environment and achieve compliance with new federal and provincial regulatory requirements. We've put together answers to some of the most frequently asked questions we receive about this project.

## WHY IS AN UPGRADE TO THE SEWAGE TREATMENT FACILITY NEEDED?

Municipal sewage treatment is subject to regulations and standards set by the provincial government and, since 2012, now the federal government as well. Planning for the replacement of the City's current sewage treatment facility has been ongoing for many years due to persistent challenges with meeting the standards for discharge of treated wastewater.

Aside from the regulatory requirements, properly collecting, treating and disposing of our community's wastewater is critical to our continued health and wellbeing. Untreated or undertreated wastewater can pose significant risks to our own health, local aquatic ecosystems and species, and can impact our quality of life through odors and other negative effects.

## WHAT IS THE LIQUID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN (LWMP)?

The upgrade to the sewage treatment facility is part of a larger process set out by the province for communities across BC to establish comprehensive, long term strategies for dealing with all aspects of liquid waste. The planning process, known as a liquid waste management plan (LWMP), is a guidance document that details each community's solutions for managing wastewater. The plan is required to be developed in 3 stages: examine existing conditions and develop options; evaluate options and select preferred choice(s); and develop a plan with projected funding.

## WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED FOR SEWAGE TREATMENT?

As part of the LWMP process the City developed and evaluated three options for future wastewater treatment. They included three different approaches that ranged in value (present day) from approximately \$42 million to \$60 million. The City felt strongly that a more cost-effective solution could be achieved by utilizing and upgrading the adjacent paper mill lagoon and so delayed a decision regarding the existing options to pursue discussions with the owners of the mill. An agreement in principle was reached with Catalyst Paper for the acquisition of the lagoon and other property in 2010, opening the door for the City to pursue its preferred option, a secondary aeration treatment system.

## WHAT IS THE COST OF THE NEW SEWAGE TREATMENT FACILITY?

The total cost for the acquisition and upgrade of the sewage treatment facility is estimated at \$27.7 million. While the capital improvements to the sewage treatment facility are still in the design phase, the City has spent: \$5.3 million to purchase the lagoon; \$1 million on engineering and environmental studies; and \$1.9 million on the removal of sludge from the new lagoon facility.

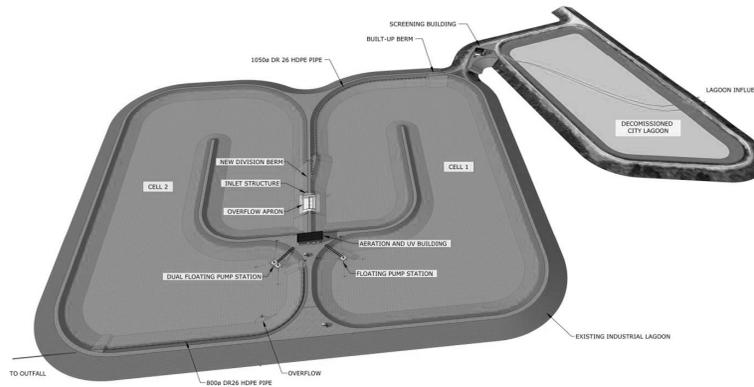
In 2011 as part of preparation of a grant application, the total project was estimated at \$14.2 million. This was based on early conceptual plans, senior government regulations at the time, and assessments of the infrastructure. The scope and cost of the project have increased significantly since that time due to requirements of new federal regulations and increased infrastructure acquisition costs. Infrastructure not originally budgeted for and now required includes the construction of a 1.6km long deep-water effluent outfall.

## WHO IS PAYING FOR THIS?

The Government of Canada and Province of BC are currently committed to provide 40% of the total project costs, with the City responsible for the balance.

In 2016 the City increased sewer and water rates for all customers.

These changes were introduced to ensure the long term sustainability of these services by providing adequate funding to operate, repair, maintain and renew existing utility infrastructure. Revenues are not projected to cover the additional costs associated with the sewage treatment facility; however, the City is actively developing plans to address this matter.



## CAN THE CITY GET MORE GRANT FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT?

In January of 2012 it was announced that the City was successful in achieving an \$11.2 million grant for the project. This was the largest grant ever received by the City and one of the largest awards by the federal General Strategic Priorities Fund. In fact, of the 300 grants awarded under the first Gas Tax Agreement from 2005-2014, there were only three grants across the province that were larger. The City will be pursuing further grant opportunities as they become available. City Council and staff are working closely with provincial and federal government representatives to identify and secure additional grants.

## WHY DOES THIS UPGRADE COST SO MUCH?

Wastewater treatment facilities are complex and highly costly capital projects. Communities across the country are making significant investments to meet new regulations and guidelines. Within BC a number of communities have faced or are facing similar challenges, including: a \$28 million upgrade in Cranbrook; \$24 million upgrade in Penticton; a \$43 million upgrade in Kamloops; and projected project costs of \$22 million in Sechelt; \$56 million in the Comox Valley; and \$25 million in Powell River. The financial burden on communities is significant and only compounds the existing funding gap municipalities are facing in the replacement of roads, buildings, bridges and other infrastructure.

## WHEN IS THE TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADE SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED?

Grant funding provided by the Government of Canada must be spent by March 2018 while new federal wastewater regulations require that the project be completed by 2020.

## HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

You can learn more about this project by visiting: [www.portalberni.ca/liquid-waste-management-plan](http://www.portalberni.ca/liquid-waste-management-plan) and review the documents and information there. You can also call the City's Engineering Department at 250-720-2830 or email [cityservice@portalberni.ca](mailto:cityservice@portalberni.ca)