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Grant funding could reduce municipal sewer service cost if boundary change approved by residents

A \$3.5 million provincial grant for Area D sewer could be available to support expanded municipal sewer service if Area D residents accept a proposal for a City of Campbell River boundary re-structure – and if the Strathcona Regional District agrees to transfer the funds.

“The City’s goal is to provide a cost-effective and practical solution to address the public health and environmental concerns created by failing septic fields in part of Area D,” says City Manager Andy Laidlaw. “If people support the boundary change, the City would seek senior government funding to assist with sewer service delivery in the area of the boundary expansion. That would include asking the Strathcona Regional District to transfer to the City the \$3.5 million provincial grant money for Area D sewer.”

That grant is due to expire March 31, 2015, and as part of the effort to confirm cost and funding options, City Council wrote to the provincial government to make sure the \$3.5 million grant opportunity would remain available, whether or not a boundary expansion takes place, Laidlaw says.

“In the event that people support the boundary expansion, Council understands that the Regional District would have to agree to transfer the funds,” the City Manager says. He adds that the City would also investigate other grants and funding opportunities to reduce costs.

“Certainly, it will be up to people who own properties in the proposed boundary expansion area to decide whether they want to accept the City’s proposal,” Laidlaw adds. “The City is researching technical requirements and cost estimates to help determine the most cost-effective proposal for a southern boundary adjustment, and we aim to share the fully-developed proposal with all the related cost details later this year.”

“Council maintains that municipal sewer services will only be provided within City boundaries, and once we have fully developed the proposal, the City will meet all provincial requirements for public consultation around the proposed southern boundary adjustment,” says Mayor Walter Jakeway. “Part of the process will be to provide information to City and Area D residents about service improvements and property tax changes to help people decide whether they support extending the City boundary and municipal services, including sewer.”

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