

April 20, 2021

**CAMPBELL RIVER'S SOUTH END SEWER SYSTEM HAS REACHED MAXIMUM CAPACITY  
CITY ANNOUNCES TEMPORARY DELAY IN OCCUPYING 20 NEW HOMES TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH**

To protect public health and safety, no new homes can be connected to the sewer system in a southern Campbell River neighbourhood until the City can increase sewer capacity.

The City has been monitoring the sewer system and has confirmed that it has reached capacity in the area between Willow Creek, Highway 19A and Jubilee Parkway.

*"This affects people looking forward to building or moving into new homes in this area. We are now advising people with 20 new homes that, unfortunately, we must delay occupancy permits,"* says deputy city manager Ron Neufeld. *"To help keep people working, the City will issue building permits on the understanding that occupancy will not be granted until we have additional sewer capacity for this area."*

Neufeld says the City is contacting people directly *"to discuss what this means for them and what they can anticipate as we work toward a solution. We recognize this is unwelcome news – and we are sincerely sorry for the concern, frustration, disappointment and significant inconvenience this is likely to cause for a number of people."*

Neufeld adds that the City is actively looking for ways to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. The City is working with a local engineering firm to determine how to increase sewer system capacity in this area. Options to consider are anticipated within two weeks.

*"We're aiming to have options to consider within two weeks,"* Neufeld says. *"In the meantime, this does not affect sewer services for people already living in this area. The issue is that the pipes in the affected area were installed decades ago, when there were far fewer houses—and they are now running at full capacity. We have to increase capacity in that system before we can connect new houses."*

In the short-term, this will likely require increasing pipe size at specific points where there are bottlenecks. In the long-term, this will mean an upgrade for longer stretches of Highway 19A.

Funding for an upgrade in this area would come from user fees the City collects for a sewer reserve fund, and through development cost charges to pay for sewer services related to new development – not through an increase in property taxation.

The number of active building files currently under construction in Campbell River is 302, to build 396 residential units. New residential growth from January 2020 to date saw 463 units created and an estimated construction value for all building types of \$147,979,818.

*"This is an example of how challenging it can be to schedule upgrades to meet the demand of the local building boom,"* says city manager Deborah Sargent. *"We are all eager to find a quick, affordable and safe solution to increase the size of those sewer lines as soon as possible."*

Building and development will proceed in other neighbourhoods that have sufficient sewer system capacity.

## COVID-19

Please note: We have new procedures in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We are gradually – carefully – resuming in-person services and limited public access to City facilities. For the most recent information on City services, please see our website ([campbellriver.ca](http://campbellriver.ca)). Reach us with general inquiries by email ([info@campbellriver.ca](mailto:info@campbellriver.ca)) or telephone **250-286-5700**.

The City has invested in sewer upgrades to meet the demands of community growth, including increasing community-wide capacity for processing wastewater at the Norm Wood Environmental Centre in recent years. Recognizing significant construction activity in the southern portion of the community, the City has also recently increased sewer line capacity along Highway 19A from Willow Creek to the Maritime Heritage Centre (\$13.2 million) and along Erickson, Harrogate and Larwood (\$3.9 million).

Due to limited funding, the City carefully considers timing to invest in new infrastructure.

*“The City, developers and engineering consultants have been aware that the sewer system along Highway 19A is too small to accommodate the full build-out of the community from Ken Forde boat ramp south. During times of rapid growth, which has continued during the pandemic, the challenge is to stay ahead of service demand in all areas of the community,”* Neufeld says. *“Recent sewer upgrade projects were higher priority projects given that they were needed to meet the growth needs of large areas, including this area. We have been monitoring the system to schedule upgrades when necessary – and until now, monitoring has not indicated an immediate need to proceed with upgrades for this area.”*

*“The sewer system is now at maximum capacity, and adding any more wastewater from new development before capacity upgrades are completed could overload the system during peak times. This confirms it’s time to do this upgrade work,”* Neufeld says.

Find answers to frequently asked questions posted on the City’s website under What’s New and at [www.campbellriver.ca/sewer-fags](http://www.campbellriver.ca/sewer-fags).

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