



District of Lantzville
PHASE III SANITARY SEWER COLLECTION SYSTEM PROJECT
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (Q&A)

The Phase III Sanitary Sewer Collection System (SSCS) Local Area Service Establishment is currently subject to a Petition Against process with a closing date of September 5, 2017. In addition to the information previously distributed (view on the [District website](#)), this Q&A is to respond to questions about the project. For regular information updates visit www.lantzville.ca or call the Municipal Hall (250.390.4006) with your questions.

- Q1: *Why is the District of Lantzville proposing undertaking the Phase III Sanitary Sewer Collection System (SSCS) project at this time?***
- A1:** In March 2017 the District was fortunate to receive a Small Communities Fund grant worth up to \$4,373,332 (2/3 total project cost) towards the \$6.88 million Phase III SSCS project. The grant is subject to project completion by March 31, 2020 and the District funding (through a Sewer Parcel Tax on benefitting properties) the remaining 1/3 total project cost (up to \$2,506,668). The grant is available now to fund 2/3 of the project. If the project does not proceed, the funds must be returned.
- Q2: *What is the advantage to hooking up to sewers?***
- A2:** Advantages to hooking up to municipal sewer system includes:
- More useable yard area
 - No septic system replacement costs
 - No risk of contamination due to failures
 - Homeowner free of maintenance responsibility
 - Peace of mind
 - Improved environmental conditions
- Q3: *When will owners of property within the Phase III SSCS Local Service Area be able to connect to sewer if it is approved?***
- A3:** The connection date is estimated to be in 2019 or 2020. Many steps in this complex project still need to occur before connection would be possible, e.g. approval of bylaws, interim borrowing, detailed design, acquiring rights of way where required, construction, borrowing, parcel tax roll, etc.
- Q4: *Once sewer becomes available, how long do owners of property within the Phase III SSCS Local Service Area have to connect?***
- A4:** All properties with improvements within the Phase III Local Service Area must be connected within one year after completion of the Phase III sewer line construction.
- Q5: *What is the timing for Phase III sewer line construction work to begin?***
- A5:** The District anticipates starting the Phase III sewer line construction in mid to late-2018; however, this is subject to the timing of other steps that must occur first, e.g., receiving approval from the Province for the borrowing bylaw, development of the detailed design, acquiring rights of way where required, finalization of the detailed design, and awarding of the construction contract.
- Q6: *What is included in the Sewer Parcel Tax (not to exceed \$8,165 up front or estimated at \$590 annually over twenty years, subject to borrowing and interest costs)? Is this just to tie into the system or does this cover the cost for us to dig and run the line from our home?***
- A6:** The grant and the Sewer Parcel Tax will cover the District's construction cost to bring the sewer line and connection points to the property line of properties located within the Phase III SSCS Local Service Area. The cost of digging and running the line from your home or business to the property line/connection point is the responsibility of the property owner.
- Q7: *Do you have a plan that would show where the sewer line is going to go in relation to my property located within the Phase III Local Service Area?***
- A7:** A preliminary plan is available. [Click here to view the 2015 Map](#). During detailed design (after bylaws are approved), the District will consult with the property owner about the most convenient location for the sewer connection at the property line.
- Q8: *Is it a must that I connect to the utility service installed under the LAS?***
- A8:** Yes, you must connect your property within one year of completion of the Phase III construction. The only exception would be for bare land, where connection would be delayed until an improvement is constructed.
- Q9: *Will property owners have to pay the Sewer Parcel Tax if they petition against the project?***
- A9:** If the Petition Against fails, yes.
- Q10: *My property is vacant, do I still pay the Sewer Parcel Tax?***
- A10:** Yes.

Q11: Are there any additional costs to each Phase III property owner to tie into the new sewer system, other than the Sewer Parcel Tax (not to exceed \$8,165 if paid up front or estimated at \$590 annually over twenty years, subject to borrowing and interest costs)?

A11: Yes. There are operational one-time costs and ongoing costs, currently projected as follows:

Description	One-time Cost	Ongoing Cost	Paid by Property Owner To	When Payment Required
RDN Southern Community Sewer Service Capital Charge (<i>per Bylaw No. 1257</i>)	\$966 (2020 rate) OR \$938 (2019 rate)	nil	Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN)	Earliest of either, at time of Building Permit Sewer Connection application, or within one year following substantial completion (<i>eta 2019/2020</i>) of Phase III construction.
Construction of sewer line from house to property line to connect to Phase III sewer line	Unknown. <i>Subject to location of house, length of sewer pipe, depth of sewer line, soil condition and amount of excavation. Obtain a cost estimate from a contractor.</i>	nil	A Contractor selected by the property owner to construct the sewer line on your property	When property connecting to Phase III, i.e. within one year after Phase III construction completion (<i>eta 2019/2020</i>)
RDN Building Permit & Inspection of Sewer Connection Works Cost (includes title search fee)	\$115 if within one year of Phase III completion OR \$265, if later	nil	Regional District of Nanaimo	At time of Building Permit Sewer Connection application. Property owner/ contractor to schedule septic tank decommissioning and call for sewer connection works inspection at least two business days prior to proposed inspection time.
Decommission Septic Tank <i>Septic tank must be pumped out prior to sewer connection/RDN inspection. After which the property owner may choose to remove the tank, leave the tank in the ground and fill it with sand OR repurpose, e.g., clean it and use it as a cistern for irrigation.</i>	Estimated average cost \$300 (cost may be similar to your current cost to pump out tank). <i>Subject to location, condition and size of septic tank. Obtain a cost estimate from a contractor and ask about any additional cost if you wish to remove or repurpose tank.</i>	nil	A Contractor selected by the property owner to pump out the tank.	Contractor payment amount and schedule will be per the terms of your contract with your Contractor. Property owner/ contractor to schedule pumping out of septic tank (decommission) and call for inspection at least two business days prior to proposed inspection time.
Utility Billing – sewer user fee (<i>funds the operation and maintenance of the sewage collection/ treatment system</i>)	nil	Current minimum quarterly sewer rate of \$94 (<i>per consolidated Sewer Rates & Regulations Bylaw No. 66, 2007, subject to amendment</i>)	District of Lantzville	Billed Quarterly – to each property owner after connected to the system. Your sewer user fee is based on water consumption; however, it is subject to a minimum charge of \$94 per quarter. High water use = higher sewer fee. This charge will appear on your utility invoice, once connected to the system.

Q12: Why am I paying a Capital Charge to the Regional District of Nanaimo?

A12: As with prior phases of the Lantzville sanitary sewer collection system, the waste collected in the Phase III sewer will be conveyed, treated and disposed of through facilities constructed, owned and operated by the RDN for the Southern Community Sewer Service. The District of Lantzville does not own/operate a sanitary sewer treatment plant.

Q13: If we choose the 20-year payment option for the Sewer Parcel Tax, is that amount deferrable or would we have to pay it each year like the garbage and recycling user fee?

A13: For BC homeowners who qualify for the Provincial Property Tax Deferral Program for their principal residence, the Sewer Parcel Tax for their principal residence can be deferred. However, like the garbage and recycling fee, the quarterly Sewer User Fee is not deferrable (current fee is based on water consumption and is subject to a minimum charge of \$94 per quarter).

Q14: How do the costs for Phase III property owners compare to Phase I and II?

A14: Here is a table comparing *initial cost information estimates* provided at the start of each Phase:

COSTS PAYABLE BY PROPERTY OWNER	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Estimated Parcel Tax, per year for 20 years	\$497	\$573	\$590
One-time costs:			
Contractor charge to install line from your house to property line connection point	<i>Cannot be estimated by the District – have a contractor provide a ballpark estimate until detailed design is available. Cost subject to location of house on each individual property, length of sewer pipe required, depth of the sewer line, soil conditions and amount of excavation required to facilitate the connection.</i>		
RDN Capital Charge	\$658	\$698	\$966 (if in 2020) OR \$938 (if in 2019)
Estimated Contractor charge to Decommission Septic Tank	\$300	\$300	\$300
District Sewer Connection Fee	<i>Estimate previously used – confirm with your contractor</i>		
	\$1,000 <i>(\$1,000 refunded subject to early connection)</i>	\$1,500 <i>(\$1,000 refunded subject to early connection)</i>	\$0
RDN Building Permit - Sewer Connection & Inspection Cost	\$100 <i>(if paid/connected within one year of Phase I completion, OR \$250)</i>	\$100 <i>(if paid/connected within one year of Phase II completion, OR \$250)</i>	\$115 <i>(if paid/connected within one year of Phase III completion, OR \$265)</i>
Estimated one-time costs total <i>(excluding installation of line from house to connection at property line)</i>	\$1,058	\$1,598	\$1,381
Additional one-time cost for pump for properties unable to accommodate a gravity feed line Estimated Contractor charge	\$5,000 (32 properties)	\$5,000 (20 properties)	\$5,000 <i>(est. 33 properties – update after detailed design and rights of way acquired)</i>
On-going costs after connection: Sewer User Fee added to Utility Invoice (minimum) per Quarter <i>(rates established by District Bylaw & subject to change)</i>	\$42	\$42	\$94 <i>(current rate)</i>
	<i>NOTE: These were the Sewer User Fees in effect at the time each Phase started. Property owners are subject to fees currently in effect, i.e., since the fees Bylaw amendment, Phase I and II property owners now pay \$94 per quarter (min).</i>		

Q15: Is the removal of our existing septic tank required? If so, will the cost of existing septic tank removal be covered by the \$8,165?

A15: No.

Q16: If we do not pay the up-front \$8,165 cost and choose the 20-year parcel tax payment, can this be paid off at any given time during the 20 years with no penalty?

A16: No. There is no option to pay off the balance during the 20-year term; the only lump sum payment option is at the beginning, before the 20-year Sewer Parcel Tax payments begin.

Q17: Will disruption or damage to my property (paved or concrete driveways, fencing, trees, lawn, decks, and patios) during installation of sewer system be repaired or costs covered by the District of Lantzville?

A17: Work conducted on your property will be by your contractor, within your control and any related damage or costs are the responsibility of the property owner and/or for you to claim from your contractor subject to the terms of your contract. The District is not responsible for costs on private property. The exception to this is if you are located on one of the properties across which the District will be seeking a right of way to run the Phase III sewer line (e.g., to reduce the need for a pump for some properties where a gravity feed line will not work). In this case, any damage caused by work conducted by the District will be repaired to the state that it was in prior to construction, or better.

Q18: *Can the property owner use any contractor to connect their house to the municipal sewer line?*

A18: Yes. We recommend that you ensure that your contractor is fully knowledgeable of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) specifications (listed below) associated with installing the sewer connection works on your property, as you/your contractor will be applying to the RDN for a Building Permit-Sewer Connection, the RDN will be inspecting the works, and, after passing inspection, your contractor will connect your line to the municipal sewer line.

Regional District of Nanaimo Sewer Connection Specifications & Inspection Information as at Aug. 2017

- Pipe to be four (4) inches in diameter, PVC CAN/CAS – B181.2-m
- A trench with a minimum depth of 2 feet below grade
- Pipe laid with a minimum of 1/16 inch per foot fall (1.5% grade)
- Six (6) inches of bedding sand below & six (6) inches of cover over the pipe
- Clean out within 1 m. from discharge from house and every 15 m. of line length
- Pipe plugged and subjected to load test of 3 metres head pressure

Applicant must contact the RDN Building Department to request inspections at least 48 hours (two business days) prior to proposed inspection time. Sewer lines must be inspected prior to backfilling and the connection will be completed after inspection is approved. Property owner and/or contractor to schedule pumping out of septic tanks (decommission). All septic tanks must be pumped out at time of sewer connection/inspection. Obtain copy of 'final' approval from RDN (following pass of inspection).

NOTE: Should you require further clarification, please contact the RDN Building Inspection Department at 250.390.6530.

Q19: *When will property within Phase III SSCS Local Service Area start being levied the Sewer Parcel Tax?*

A19: The Sewer Parcel Tax (based on actual construction cost, not to exceed \$8,165 up front or estimated at \$590 annually over twenty years, subject to borrowing and interest costs) will be levied as soon as possible after the Phase III SSCS construction is completed and the system is operational, estimated to be in 2019 or 2020. Prior to levying the Sewer Parcel Tax, the District will inform property owners of the amount and of the opportunity to pay the cost up-front if they so choose.

Q20: *When should I pay, and should I pay at once? (Sewer Parcel Tax)*

A20: At the end of the Phase III SSCS construction project, the actual cost attributed to each property will be determined (per Bylaw No. 143 it must not exceed \$8,165) and added to the tax roll. Owners can either pay in full at once or choose to pay over 20 years. The decision lies with the property owner.

Q21: *Can a property owner withdraw their Petition Against form after it was submitted to the District?*

A21: A property owner can write to the Director of Corporate Administration requesting that their name be removed from the Petition Against prior to the September 5, 2017 Petition Against deadline. If this happens, their original Petition Against form will not be counted when the Director of Corporate Administration certifies the results. A property owner cannot request removal after the Petition Against deadline has passed.

Q22: *Can the number of responses received while the Petition Against is underway be released to the public?*

A22: No. Releasing the information could alter the outcome of the Petition Against process, as property owners may base their decision on the number of response forms already submitted and whether the threshold has been met (Petition Against signed by more than 50% of property owners of properties within Phase III LSA representing more than 50% of the assessed value). The appropriate time to release the number of responses is after the deadline for submissions has passed and when the Director of Corporate Administration has certified the results and provided the report to Council.

August 17, 2017