

RDN Receives Grant for French Creek Pollution Control Centre Expansion and Odour Control Upgrades

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to announce \$25,496,859 in funding has been committed for the French Creek Pollution Control Centre (FCPCC) Expansion and Odour Control Upgrades project. Through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program's Green Infrastructure - Environmental Quality funding stream, the Government of Canada is investing \$10,198,744, the Province of British Columbia is investing \$8,498,103 and the RDN is contributing \$6,800,012 as matched funds for the grant. The project will meet the wastewater treatment needs in the service area, improve secondary wastewater treatment and reduce odour coming from the FCPCC.

The project includes the installation of new bioreactors, clarifiers, a process building, improvements to related infrastructure including electrical systems, mechanical systems, control systems and equipment. The project is in the detailed design phase, with construction to start in summer 2024 and completion expected in 2027. Once complete, the FCPCC expansion and upgrades will:

- Increase FCPCC capacity by about 30 per cent and meet area wastewater service demands to 2040
- Improve operational efficiency and replace aging infrastructure in the existing treatment plant
- Incorporate extensive odour control upgrades in the existing treatment plant
- Contribute to carbon neutrality by using solar panels and recovering heat from treated effluent

These sustainable initiatives are also supported by \$733,312 in federal and provincial grant funding from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – CleanBC Communities Fund that was announced in July 2022.

Federal and provincial grant funding will reduce the total estimated costs of this project from \$110 to \$90.6 million. The balance will be covered by RDN reserves, development cost charges and debt financing.

The FCPCC treats wastewater from about 29,000 people and businesses in Qualicum Beach, Parksville, French Creek, Pacific Shores, Surfside and Barclay Crescent. The FCPCC also treats trucked waste from homes with septic systems and holding tanks. More than 90 per cent of the solids are removed from the wastewater before the treated effluent is discharged into the ocean.

For information on the French Creek Pollution Control Centre Expansion and Odour Control project, visit: getinvolved.rdn.ca/french-creek-expansion.

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Quotes

“When we invest in the improvement of essential services, we are investing in healthier, more sustainable communities. Upgrading secondary treatment in the Regional District of Nanaimo will ensure residents have access to efficient wastewater services, while minimizing the impact on the environment. We will continue investing in projects that directly benefit communities across the country.”

The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities

“Investing in a better future for Canada begins with effective, strategic investments in communities, such as the Regional District of Nanaimo. One way the federal government supports growth in this region is by upgrading the wastewater facilities to meet the increased demand on public infrastructure for years to come, while protecting the environment at the same time.”

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

“Qualicum Beach, Parksville, and surrounding communities hold a natural beauty for residents and visitors alike. Greater popularity means increased demand on public infrastructure, upgrades to improve water treatment are more important than ever. That’s why all levels of government are supporting more efficient services while reducing the impact to the environment.”

The Honourable Anne Kang, B.C. Minister of Municipal Affairs

“We thank the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia for this significant investment in the RDN’s French Creek Pollution Control Centre Expansion and Odour Control Upgrade Project. This grant enables us to make critical infrastructure upgrades that will meet growing service demands in our communities while also helping to protect the environment through effective and efficient wastewater treatment.”

Vanessa Craig, Chair of the Regional District of Nanaimo

French Creek Pollution Control Centre Facts

- Built in 1977, the French Creek Pollution Control Centre (FCPCC) is the second largest of four wastewater treatment facilities owned and operated by the RDN.
- Around 3.8 billion litres of wastewater were treated at the FCPCC in 2022. The treated wastewater is discharged into the Strait of Georgia 2,440 m offshore at a depth of 61 m.
- The FCPCC uses primary and secondary treatment to remove more than 90 per cent of the solids from the wastewater before treated effluent is discharged to the ocean. Primary treatment uses gravity to remove solids and secondary treatment uses beneficial organisms which feed on organic matter left after primary treatment. Visit the [How Treatment Works](#) page to learn more about wastewater treatment.
- Solids that are extracted during the treatment process are treated further to become biosolids and used in the Soild Fabrication Program. Visit the [Biosolids Management](#) page to learn about the Soil Fabrication Program and how biosolids are managed in the RDN.

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Technical Terms

- Bioreactors are chambers where beneficial organisms like bacteria can grow and consume substances within raw wastewater.
- Clarifiers are settling tanks built with mechanical means for continuous removal of solids being deposited by sedimentation.
- Biosolids are the solid end product of wastewater treatment. They are a nutrient-dense organic material with a texture like compost.

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For more information, please contact:

Rebecca Taylor
Communications Coordinator
Regional District of Nanaimo

 250-390-6502

 rtaylor@rdn.bc.ca

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