

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2019

Community Support for Sewer Project Confirmed

Sewer service for the Swan Lake Corridor took a major step forward as the majority of property owners signed the petition showing their support for the project.

The petition for the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) share of funding is one of many required steps to develop the North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project, a partnership between the RDNO, Township of Spallumcheen and the Okanagan Indian Band. The bylaw will now be sent to the Inspector of Municipalities for approval. With this approval, the RDNO will be able to establish a local service area and proceed with borrowing \$5.2 million if the federal/provincial grant application for \$24.3 million is approved.

The RDNO petition had to pass two tests to achieve approval from the community: the owners of at least 50 percent of the parcels liable to be charged for the proposed service had to sign the petition, and the signed petitions had to represent at least 50 percent of the net taxable value of all land and improvements within the proposed service area. The petition passed both tests, with 63% of the parcels, and 78% percent of the value voting in favour.

The RDNO received petitions from around the world as multiple property owners in the service area sent in their support despite being out of the country.

The Swan Lake Corridor has long been identified as a future growth area in the RDNO's Regional Growth Strategy and Official Community Plans once community sewer became available.

"It has taken us years to get to this stage, and the successful petition marks a huge milestone for the project," said Bob Fleming, RDNO Area B Director. "It confirms that the community supports this project and brings us closer to making the North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project a reality."

In December 2018, a Wastewater Recovery Community Working Group consisting of eight members (residents, business owners, environmentalists, farmers, and sewer and septic industry experts) was formed to provide a community perspective on the project development and implementation; build awareness of the need for providing wastewater recovery, treatment, and reuse; and, identify and assess options for meeting partnership objectives.

"We thank the Community Working Group for their tireless efforts in sharing information with the community and building awareness of the project and the petition," said Amanda Shatzko, RDNO Area C Director. "They went door to door in the rain and snow on their own time to talk to property owners about the project. Their tenacity and enthusiasm to make our community better environmentally and economically was vital to the success of the petition."

In addition to the door to door information, an [open house](#) was held in January to engage with residents and businesses about the North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project and the petition. Over 130 people attended the event.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND NEXT STEPS

The North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project is a unique partnership involving the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO), Township of Spallumcheen, and Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) that will improve Swan Lake water quality, support agriculture, enhance recreation, and enable economic development opportunities for residential and businesses property owners and the partner jurisdictions.

The \$36.9 million project would service RDNO Electoral Area B and C residences and businesses in the Swan Lake corridor, the Township of Spallumcheen's south-east industrial area, and portions of Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) IR4 by providing wastewater collection and treatment facilities and a distribution network to distribute reclaimed water to area farmers.

The project is contingent on senior government grant funding (\$24.3 million). If the grant funding is approved, the remainder of funding for the project will be provided by the RDNO (\$5.2 million), an Okanagan Basin Water Board Sewerage Facilities Assistance Grant (\$5.9 million), and Township of Spallumcheen reserves (\$1.5 million).

The partners have taken many steps to ensure the project is shovel-ready should senior government funding be approved.

– 30 –

For more information:

Bob Fleming
RDNO Area B Director
bob.fleming@rdno.ca
250-558-9653

Amanda Shatzko
RDNO Area C Director
amanda.shatzko@rdno.ca
250-241-1051

Leah Mellott
RDNO, General Manager,
Electoral Area Administration
leah.mellott@rdno.ca
250-550-3722