

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## **Q: Uplands Combined Sewer Separation Project: Why are we doing this?**

The provincial government's Municipal Wastewater Regulation requires all BC municipalities to have separate stormwater and sanitary sewer systems. Compliance with the provincial regulation is mandatory for the District of Oak Bay as it is for other jurisdictions in the province such as Burnaby, New Westminster and the City of Vancouver where single pipe infrastructure currently exists. Separation of the combined sewers is an integral part of the CRD's Core Area Liquid Waste Management Plan in compliance with the Municipal Wastewater Regulation.

The Uplands neighbourhood in Oak Bay currently has a single pipe system to accommodate both sanitary sewer and stormwater flows. During heavy rainfall, the storm water volume exceeds the capacity of the system and a combination of stormwater and raw sewage discharges into the shallow ocean waters at the Rutland and Humber pump stations.

## **Q. Will enlarging the pump stations at Rutland and Humber address the problem of the overflows?**

Rutland and Humber pump stations pump into the CRD's East Coast Interceptor (ECI) which moves sewage to Currie Road pump station and then to the Clover Point outfall. The ECI was not designed to accommodate stormwater flows from Uplands. Increased pumping capacity at Rutland and Humber pump stations would have no benefit due to the lack of capacity in the ECI.

## **Q: Won't the new sewage treatment facility take care of the problem of the overflowing combined sewers draining into the ocean?**

No. Combined flows would not reach the proposed sewage treatment facility because of the lack of capacity in the CRD's East Coast Interceptor. In addition, the provincial government will not approve a sewage treatment plant designed to accept combined sewer flows.

## **Q: What if we don't do this?**

Compliance with the provincial government's Municipal Wastewater Regulation is mandatory for the District of Oak Bay.

## **Q: How many sewer system overflows do we have a year?**

The number of overflows depends on the number and intensity of rainstorms, but on average about 12 each winter. We are obligated to fulfill a legislated requirement to separate the combined system and reduce the impact of sanitary sewage on the environment.

## Q: How will compliance be achieved?

In the spring 2015, the District of Oak Bay engaged McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. to undertake a pre-design study to examine options for separating the existing combined sewer system. This work has been substantially completed and six options were brought forward for Council to review on October 26.

Oak Bay residents are invited to provide feedback on these six options at Open Houses during the month of November until December 4th. All information presented at the Open Houses including an online survey will be available on the District's website: [www.oakbay.ca](http://www.oakbay.ca)

Public feedback and a technical assessment of all options will be presented to District Staff prior to the end of the year. A recommendation for a single option will be presented to Council for consideration and decision in January 2016. The selected option would then move forward to detailed design and construction. Construction would be phased over several years depending on available funding.

## Q: What are the six options?

### ***Options being examined include:***

- a new deeper, gravity sanitary sewer system, the existing sewer would carry stormwater;
- a new, deeper gravity system for stormwater, the existing sewer would carry sanitary sewage;
- a low pressure sanitary system and existing sewer would carry stormwater;
- shallow gravity stormwater sewers, pumped where necessary, and existing sewer would carry sanitary sewage;
- a new shallow gravity sanitary sewer system, pumped where necessary, and existing sewer would carry stormwater;
- a new shallow gravity sanitary sewer system, community pump stations where necessary, and existing pipes would carry stormwater.

## Q: How much is this going to cost?

Cost estimates for each option are under development. These are available at the public Open Houses, and on the District of Oak Bay's website: [www.oakbay.ca](http://www.oakbay.ca)

## Q: How is this project being paid for?

### ***On Municipal property:***

The District is actively seeking federal and provincial grant funding to assist with the capital costs of this mandated project. In addition, the District has been putting aside money into a reserve since 2005. This reserve fund is a combination of the annual Gas Tax Transfer which the District receives from the Federal Government and money raised through sewer user charges and taxes.

Consistent with all municipal infrastructure initiatives throughout Oak Bay, the District will cover the costs of installing the new pipe system within the roads right of way. It is standard practice in municipalities for basic infrastructure costs such as roads and sidewalks, water mains and sewers to be a common cost charged to all residents either in a utility rate or in property taxes on the basis of assessed value.

### ***On private property in the Uplands:***

Property owners are responsible for the cost of separating combined sewers on their property and connecting to the new sewer infrastructure.

Over 20% of home owners in the Uplands have already separated their stormwater from their sanitary sewers to their property lines when undertaking new construction and renovations.

## Q. What are the District and property owner's responsibilities under the Heritage Act?

The Uplands is within the Traditional Territories of the Songhees Nation and the Esquimalt Nation, and the area includes documented heritage sites. The District anticipates that construction will reveal evidence of archeological sites in some areas. That being the case, the District is responsible for responding to any archeological evidence found on municipal property, and home owners are responsible for responding to any archeological evidence found on their property in compliance with British Columbia's *Heritage Conservation Act*.

The District will be consulting with the Songhees Nation and the Esquimalt Nation and has retained an archeological consultant from Golder and Associates to prepare an archaeological overview assessment for the Uplands neighbourhood. This information is available on the District website [www.oakbay.ca](http://www.oakbay.ca)

The provincial government is the regulatory authority and the Archeology Branch website is a very helpful resource. Property owners are encouraged to contact the Archeology Branch directly when undertaking work on their property. The Archeological Branch is available to respond to questions from property owners.

[https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/archaeology/property\\_owners\\_and\\_developers/index.htm](https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/archaeology/property_owners_and_developers/index.htm)

[https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/archaeology/property\\_owners\\_and\\_developers/frequently\\_asked\\_questions.htm](https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/archaeology/property_owners_and_developers/frequently_asked_questions.htm)

<https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/archaeology/external/!publish/web/Property%20Owner%20Brochure.pdf>

## Q: What is the process for public engagement?

Oak Bay residents are invited to provide feedback on the six options at four Open Houses during the month of November until December 4th. All information presented at the Open Houses including an online survey is available on the District's website: [www.oakbay.ca](http://www.oakbay.ca)

### **Open House dates:**

#### **Saturday, November 7: 2pm – 5pm**

Neighbourhood Learning Centre at Oak Bay High School  
Activity Rooms 3 & 4 – 2151 Cranmore Road

#### **Tuesday, November 10: 5pm – 8pm**

Royal Victoria Yacht Club  
Cadboro Room – 3475 Ripon Road

#### **Friday, November 20: 5pm – 8pm**

Uplands Campus – Gym  
3461 Henderson Road

#### **Saturday, November 21: 2pm – 5pm**

Uplands Campus – Gym  
3461 Henderson Road

## Q: How will the decision be made on which option to use?

Oak Bay residents will be invited to provide feedback on the six options between November 7 and December 4 at four Open Houses and online at [www.oakbay.ca](http://www.oakbay.ca)

Public feedback and a technical assessment of all options will be received by District staff prior to the end of the year. A recommendation for a preferred option will be presented to Council for consideration and decision in January 2016. The selected option will then move forward to detailed design followed by construction.

## **Q: Can home owners opt out and install their own wastewater treatment system?**

No. Under District Bylaw No. 3891 homeowners do not have the option of installing their own wastewater treatment system.

## **Q: Can home owners opt out and install their own on site stormwater management system?**

While home owners may include stormwater management systems on their properties, they will still have to connect to a new dedicated stormwater system.

## **Q: What section of the Uplands will you start in?**

We don't know yet. A work plan for both the Humber and Rutland catchment areas will be developed and accompany the recommendation to Council along with the preferred option in January 2016. This will be a phased project over many years and residents will be notified when work is going to be done in their area.

## **Q: How long will construction take? When will it start?**

The construction timeframe will depend on the available funding – a shorter timeframe if the District receives grant funding from the provincial and federal governments. Once a preferred option is chosen, the next stage is detailed design and final costing. Construction will follow the completion of the detailed design phase.

## **Q: A low pressure pump system was considered previously and did not move forward. Why are you bringing this option forward again?**

Council directed staff to look at all options. The topography of the Uplands neighbourhood already requires, in some cases, the installation of sewer and stormwater pumps. Because the existing easements are not being used, more homes will require pumps even if a deep trench gravity system is chosen. Project engineering consultants will be on hand at the Open Houses to speak with property owners about pump technology.

## **Q: Why are the easements not being used as part of the solution?**

When the Uplands subdivision was built 100 years ago, the combined single pipe was placed alongside and behind property lines in easements. Existing easements have been excluded from the option solutions for the following reasons:

- The existing easements are not wide enough to allow for a second companion gravity pipe. The District would have to negotiate larger easements with affected property owners.
- Trench construction is invasive and may require the removal of mature trees, hedges, and fences along private properties as well along the existing easements.

## **What were the project recommendations made to Council that will impact how this project moves forward?**

- Amend Bylaw 3891 to mandate sewer separation for new homes and connection to the separated municipal sewers when available; to mandate sewer separation for homes undergoing major renovations, based on a value of \$100,000 or greater, and connection to the separated municipal sewers when available and to update Schedule "A" 'Fees and Permits' of the bylaw to reflect current costs and that it be updated annually.
- Include the cost of connecting properties with sewers separated prior to the municipality separating the combined sewers, in the cost of the sewer separation construction contracts.
- Obtain blanket Heritage Inspection Permits covering the municipal rights of way and adjacent property owners, as the project proceeds to construction.