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Comox Valley REGIONAL DISTRICT

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January 28, 2025

Hand-Delivered

Dear Jane Place Residents and Neighbours,

We are writing to re-activate a consultation process with the residents of Jane Place and neighbouring properties regarding the Comox Pump Station (previously known as the Jane Place Pump Station).

Due to an internal error, the Comox Valley Regional District failed to follow-through with some of the commitments made during 2022 community engagement by staff. The Capital Projects team did not have all the relevant public feedback when completing the design and communications for the retrofit of the Comox Pump Station. We apologize for this and for the frustration and confusion it has caused.

The CVRD is committed to working with the residents to help this essential piece of sewer infrastructure fit into the residential neighbourhood. There is still opportunity for community input on some key factors of the pump station design, and this letter is intended to map out the engagement opportunity and plan over the coming month.

Engagement Plan

The CVRD will provide opportunity over the coming month for the community to provide input on some features of the pump station. Specifically:

- A drop-in open house will be held on **Thursday, February 20, from 5 – 7 p.m**. at the Spinnaker Building in Comox Marina Park, presenting three architectural design options for the neighbourhood to consider relating to siding and finishes, landscaping and fencing.
- A letter will be distributed earlier in February, at least a week before the open house, outlining those options for the neighbourhood's consideration and review – and inviting feedback if they are unable to attend the open house.
- Materials will be posted to the project webpage at EngageComoxValley.ca/ConveyanceProject for review and feedback as well. Look for the tab called **Comox Pump Station.**

If any resident has a particular idea that they want the CVRD to consider as part of the engagement, please send them to communications@comoxvalleyrd.ca by February 5, 2025.

The Comox Valley Regional District respectfully acknowledges the land on which it operates is on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

About the Current Design

The 90% detail design, whose renderings were shared with the neighbourhood in early January, has the following features which are detailed on the annotated legal survey plan (now available on the project webpage):

- An extension of the current building, to the south-east, to house the back-up power generator. Siding is proposed as masonry brick, to match existing building.
- A new underground flow meter chamber in the forecourt of the station.
- A new external, above-ground air management system, including a fan and a carbon tank, situated on the north-west side of the facility.
- Numerous electrical panels mounted to the front of the existing building with a raised walkway providing access to them.
- A new fence following the same fenceline, with an additional swing gate to add to the existing swing and slide gates. The fencing is proposed as powder-coated black metal residential style fencing.
- A new garden bed out front of the facility between the existing swing gate and slide gate, to plant a hedge to screen the facility.

What cannot be changed: Regulations and safety standards restrict and guide the options the CVRD has to retrofit the existing infrastructure due to the constrained site. To this end, there are certain elements of design which cannot be changed. These include:

1. The location and size of the generator building (new addition)
2. The location of the new air management system
3. The location of new electrical panels and walkway at front of the existing building
4. Trucks and other maintenance vehicles must be able to access the forecourt along the entire north side of the facility (behind the fence-line)
5. The use of paving around the infrastructure

What can be changed: There are several areas where we can work together on aspects of the design.

- **Siding materials for the new extension:** The proposed siding for the extension matches the existing brick. This was chosen to help marry the buildings together. At this time, the exterior siding of the existing building is not being replaced, however the new extension could have a different siding. Options for changing siding on some sides, and using different materials, will be presented as part of the three options coming forward.
- **Adding features to the existing building:** As noted above, the existing building will not change. However, additions that make the existing building and new walkway/electrical panels appear more residential will be considered. For example, staff are exploring including an awning over the walkway to make it appear as a front verandah and provide a structure for vegetation to re-grow up onto.

- **Fencing:** The new fence is proposed to be a modern corrugated black metal. This choice was reached as the fence needs to be made of a hardwearing, easily maintained material which can accommodate large gates as well as blend into a residential neighbourhood. Wooden fencing is unfortunately not an option for this project, as it requires too much maintenance, but there are other fencing options that could be considered.
- **Landscaping:** Landscaping opportunities on the property include the south-east side of the new extension, neighbouring 77 Jane Place, and a small area in front of the property between the two gates. The constrained site and access requirements limit landscaping options. We will only be able to review plant options which require minimal trimming, topping or pruning, and do not exceed 20 feet in height at maturity. We are open to discussing other placements for landscaping.

We look forward to working with the community to find solutions and compromises that we can all support.

Follow along for updates at www.EngageComoxValley.ca/ConveyanceProject

- For documents pertaining to this engagement look for the tab called **Comox Pump Station.**

We would like to thank residents for their support and cooperation as we work to upgrade this essential part of our sewer system.

Sincerely,

Charlie Gore,
Senior Manager of Capital Projects Delivery

APPENDIX 1: Frequently-Asked Questions

CVRD have heard questions from the neighbourhood which we wanted to answer here for all to assist in a common understanding:

- **Why is there a raised walkway in front of the new building?**

  The flood construction level of the facility is 4.6m above sea level, which is 1.4m above existing grade level. The electrical panels mounted along the front face of the facility need to be above that level, with their installation height governed by electrical code to ensure safe access by operators. These panels, which are required for the electrical infrastructure, do not fit in the existing building and are required external to the control panel room due to electrical code and/or building code occupancy hazard levels.

- **Why can't the generator be outside the building?**

  The flood level of this site does not allow an external generator. If a flood occurs, the BC Hydro transformer which provides electricity to the site, will fail. The generator, which provides back-up power, needs to be protected from these flood waters by locating it inside the building. All the openings to the building are at least 1.4m above the ground level to meet the 4.6m flood construction level. The doors to the facility are not rated for flood water submersion (as this would require submarine-style doors) but the inside of the facility has bulk-heads, sumps and drain channels to ensure it can continue to operate in a flood scenario.

- **Why does the building extension need to go past the existing back of the building, so close to the ocean?**

  An excerpt of the architectural drawings showing the size of the generator inside the extension, and the 1m offset between the generator and the walls of the building required by electrical code, has been posted to the website. You will notice in the sketch that the SRW, which is parallel to the lot line of 77 Jane Place, is at an angle to the existing building, growing wider towards the ocean. The generator cannot move any closer to Jane Place, due to the SRW width at the front of the generator. This requires the building extension to be behind the facility rather than in front.

- **Why are there limitations to vegetation on the ocean side of the new building extension?**

  The majority of the back wall of the building extension is taken up by an air discharge louver, which a large volume of air is pushed out of when the generator runs. This louvre must remain open of obstruction to that air flow. The existing louvre points towards 77 Jane Pl. out the south-east side of the existing building and does not leave room for landscaping.

- **Where will the generator diesel exhaust discharge?**

  It will discharge through the roof of the building extension, not out the back wall as it currently does.

- **Why is a new above ground odour control unit required?**

  New discharge piping from the upgraded facility will push sewage up Jane Pl to the new forcemain on Beaufort Ave, rather than out the west side of the facility. A new underground flow meter chamber on the new discharge is required at the front of the facility, where the existing biofilter is located. Biofilters require large surface area to work, and there is insufficient space within the rest of the facility to move it elsewhere. To replace the biofilter, industry best practice is an above-ground carbon filter unit. The unit is six feet in diameter and 3.5m high, and is tucked behind the existing building as much as possible. A discharge pipe extends from the top of the filter to the same height as the existing building, pointing towards the Marina. The fence and proposed vegetation will provide partial screening, and CVRD can also add a vinyl wrap to the carbon tank to help blend in with facility vegetation.

- **Why can't there be more landscaping?**

  The available land that CVRD have SRW rights to host sewer infrastructure is very limited. The redlined survey plan shows the maintenance areas that need to be kept clear and gates that need to open for this. The three areas identified for vegetation to screen the facility are:

  1. In front of the facility between the swing and slide gates;
  2. along the south-east wall, between the building extension and 77 Jane Place;
  3. between the elevated walkway in front of the existing building and the underground concrete structures (space for vines only)

- **Why is the ivy being removed?**

  We acknowledge that the ivy which currently covers the existing building will be lost. This will be a significant change visually but cannot be avoided because the significant construction work will remove all soils in front of existing building. However, the team is looking at possibilities to plant new vines along the frontage.

- **Why aren't pavers being used?**

  The Town of Comox is currently undertaking the process of removing pavers from sidewalks and driveways throughout the downtown area to lower maintenance infrastructure. CVRD are similarly focussing on low-maintenance infrastructure, and thus pavers have not been proposed. All paving that is modified by the Project will be replaced with new pavement.

APPENDIX 2: Timeline/Process to Date

- **2022: Engagement with neighbourhood and preliminary design**
- **2023: Procurement of a Design-Builder**
    - Project specifications for Comox Pump Station:
        - If possible, fit all electrical infrastructure in existing building (Design-Build fixed price contract provides significant financial advantage for achieving this and not having to build a new extension at their cost)
        - If not, any extension must be to south-east, as small as possible, matching existing building height and masonry brick cladding
        - New external carbon odour management system, as the existing biofilter space is taken up with new underground flow meter chamber
        - Black powder-coated metal residential style fence
        - Landscaping, where possible, to screen facility and equipment
        - A design flood level of 4.6m, 4.5 feet above Town of Comox bylaws
    - What was not included in project specifications (in contrast to engagement):
        - Requirement for 3 design concepts
        - Natural/residential theme
        - Pavers instead of asphalt where possible
- **2024: Detail Design**
    - April 2024: 30% design submitted by DB, generator inside existing building
        - Internal walls demolished to try and make sufficient space (defined by electrical codes) for new electrical infrastructure
        - Would have required new external washroom and additional, larger fan equipment outside
    - May 2024: design development between CVRD / Design-Builder
        - Due to structural codes, the modifications required for fitting electrical equipment triggered the need to bring existing building up to current structural codes including seismic codes – new structure and roof required – not within scope/budget of project
    - June 2024: 60% design, generator extension does not fit within sewer system statutory right-of-ways (SRW)
        - Extension back wall (ocean side) lined up with existing building
        - Building extension eastern most corner extends over SRW – and closer than 1.55m from property line of 77 Jane Pl
    - September 2024: Revised 60% design, generator extension fits inside SRW, but architectural wall assemblies does not meet requirements
        - Building shifted further back towards ocean
        - Not clear if possible to fit within SRW and achieve masonry brick
    - December 2024: 90% design, meets project requirements