Canada and BC make major investment in Powell River treatment plant

Powell River, BC – On August 27, 2019 the City of Powell River was awarded $30,400,000 from the Government of Canada and $25,330,800 from the Province of British Columbia for a total of $55,730,800 in funding for a new wastewater treatment plant.

“This is the result of a lot of hard work,” said Director of Infrastructure, Tor Birtig, who has been the lead on what will be the largest infrastructure project in Powell River history. “We received a large portion of our funding. We got everything we asked for.”

Birtig said the City hopes to begin construction in the spring or summer of 2020, with approximately a year and a-half of construction time.

The grants will amount to approximately 73 per cent of the project. The City’s investment is $24,069,200.

“This is great news for Powell River. We’re all thrilled. It’s been a long time coming, since before I was elected 13 years ago, and this is a legacy that all the previous councils can be proud of. It’s something all of Powell River can be proud of,” said Mayor Dave Formosa. “A new wastewater treatment plant will meet all of the environmental regulations, benefit the economy and meet the needs of Powell River for generations. I also want to recognize and congratulate City staff and especially Tor Birtig who carried the load on this one.”

The treatment facility will consolidate all wastewater from existing plants in Westview, Townsite and the Wildwood Lagoon. It will significantly improve how Powell River treats wastewater and minimize human impact on the marine environment. It will also be easier to operate, maintain and administer than the three existing facilities.

The plant will also have the capacity to serve Tla’aamin Nation, which has expressed a continued interest in participating in the project.
“We’re extremely happy to hear the news,” said Tla’amin Hegus Clint Williams, “We’re awaiting approval from Ottawa for our design that will allow us to connect to Powell River’s system. We’re eager to see the project move forward.”

Councillor Jim Palm, who holds the infrastructure portfolio, has been part of the wastewater plant debate since he was first elected in 2008/09.

“I’m relieved that Powell River has finally got that funding. What we did was max out on our 73 per cent of funding so that’s great news for Powell River,” said Palm. “That’s a great deal of money.”

According to the joint government announcement, the Government of Canada’s $100 million total investment is through the Green Infrastructure Stream – Environmental Quality program of the Investing in Canada plan and the Small Communities Fund of the New Building Canada Fund. The Government of British Columbia is contributing nearly $80 million and the municipalities are contributing more than $60 million to these projects.

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