

Best Practice

Relocation of Sewage Treatment Facilities

CONTACT

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THE PRACTICE

The Fort Qu'Appelle sewage treatment facilities were outdated and incapable of meeting regulations brought into effect by the provincial and federal governments. The decision to relocate the sewage treatment facilities to a location outside of town was made. At the outset, the initial intent was to incorporate final effluent disposal through irrigation.

THE PROCESS

Beginning in 2003, action was undertaken to engage expert advisors as well as the surrounding resort villages of B-Say-Tah, Fort San and the RM of North Qu'Appelle for their participation. The Fort Qu'Appelle town engineer was heavily involved in offering suggestions and assisted in completing an application for a grant under the Canada Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program (CSIP).

An environmental assessment of the project was undertaken and in April, 2003, a grant was approved under CSIP to carry out an in-depth study for phase I of the project and then proceed with carrying over the implementation of phase II of the project. The town contracted Blue Sky Management to prepare reports relative to pumping effluent out of the valley into a conventional lagoon, with effluent irrigation. The major concern with this proposal was the potential opposition from area farmers to allow permission for effluent irrigation in the area.

It was ultimately determined that Sask Water would build the waste water system and pay for the original capital cost. Sask Water would own and operate the system on a 20 year contract in return for annual predetermined payment to cover capital as well as operating costs. When Sask Water provided the annual fee of approximately \$480,000 per municipality, the other municipalities expressed concern that this was too much and backed out of the project.

Fort Qu'Appelle town council made the decision to sign an agreement as sole partner with Sask Water to proceed with the proposed project. The initial cost estimate was \$3,090,000 with the town receiving \$1,238,920 in grant funding.

THE RESULTS

The Town of Fort Qu'Appelle now has a state of the art waste water treatment system. It took much longer than anticipated, but the benefits are tenfold relative to long term protection of our valley ecosystem. Hopefully the major influence this project has had on surrounding jurisdictions is the desperate need to cooperate in matters which affect not only your own municipalities but the region as a whole.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Town of Fort Qu'Appelle learned that it is essential for neighbouring municipalities to maintain a good working relationship to ensure that projects can be completed in a timely and efficient manner. This particular project may have had significant up-front costs, but the long term benefits to the region as a whole have already been witnessed. It is unnecessary for municipalities in such close proximity to provide the same services to their residents when one facility would be sufficient for the entire region.