

Coming together on project

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Photo: Contributed

A big step forward was taken in the construction of a wastewater recovery system that would provide environmental and economic benefits to the Regional District of North Okanagan, Township of Spallumcheen, and the Okanagan Indian Band.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed this week by all three jurisdictions.

“This partnership is critical to advancing the environmental protection of our lake and our drinking water,” said OKIB Chief Byron Louis. “It’s great to be working with our neighbours. More funding opportunities arise when small governments stop competing for provincial and federal grant dollars and start collaborating.”

The system would serve residents and businesses in the proposed service area. The wastewater recovery facility could potentially be located on L&A Cross Road in Spallumcheen, where the Township recently purchased a 2.5-acre site.

“We are extremely honoured to partner with the Township of Spallumcheen and OKIB on making this project a reality,” said RDNO Board Chair and Electoral Area “B” Director Bob Fleming. “While

we recognize there is still much to be done, we're inspired by so many potential benefits for our residents, businesses, and the environment.”

The next big step is secure cash to fund the project.

The partners will be submitting a grant application to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

The requested grant amount of \$24.3 million represents approximately 66 per cent of the \$36.9 million total project cost.

The remaining amount is proposed to be funded through the Okanagan Basin Water Board Sewerage Facilities Assistance Grant (\$5.9 million), Township of Spallumcheen reserves (\$1.5 million) and RDNO borrowing (\$5.2 million).

A petition will be used to confirm support for the project and borrowing of \$5.2 million. The petition will be available in the near future.

“We are excited to see the positive movement on this,” said Spallumcheen Mayor Janice Brown.

“We’ve seen water quality challenges, lack of water for our farmers, and economic opportunities missed. This system will help fix those problems.”