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Regional District of North Okanagan electoral area directors Mike Macnabb (left, area C) and Bob Fleming (right, area B) join Okanagan Indian Band Chief Byron Louis and Township of Spallumcheen Mayor Janice Brown in celebrating reaching a memorandum of understanding toward a proposed wastewater recovery centre in the township. (RDNO photo)

## North Okanagan parties agree on wastewater recovery centre

Possible centre location is Spallumcheen; agreement is between township, OKIB, RDNO

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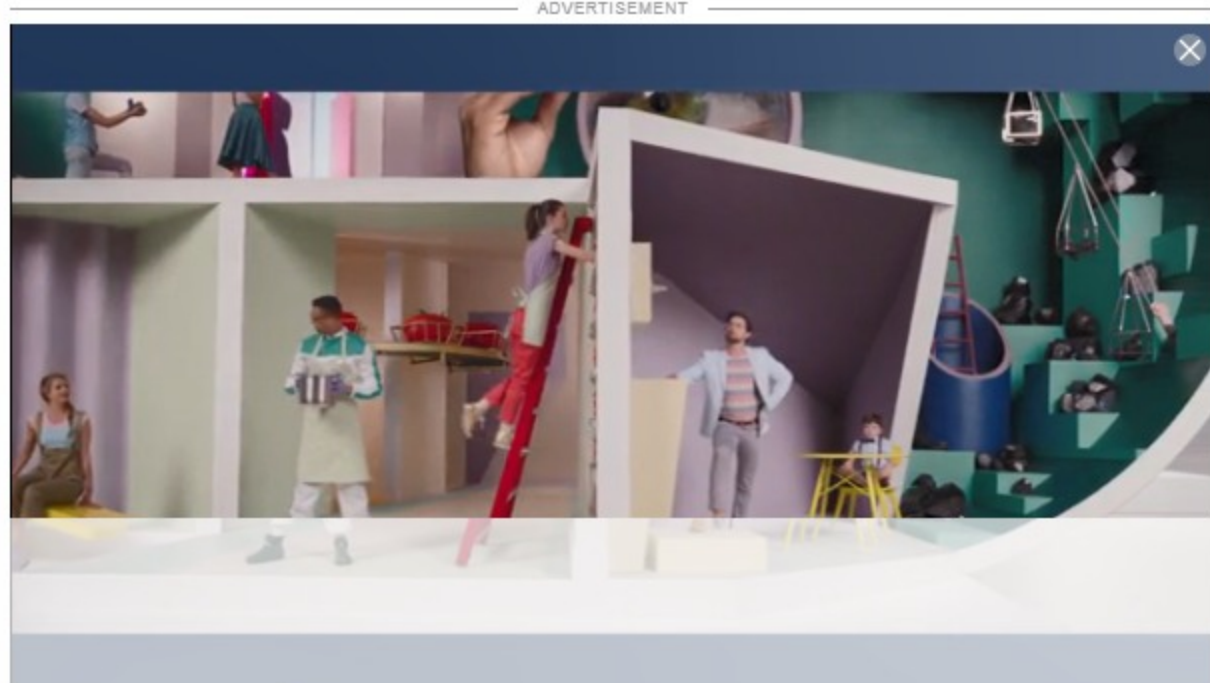


A Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO), Township of Spallumcheen, and Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) is an important step in the move toward construction of a wastewater recovery system that would provide significant environmental and economic benefits for all three jurisdictions.

The system would serve residents and businesses in the proposed service area, which includes portions of RDNO Electoral Areas B and C, the Township of Spallumcheen's southeast industrial area, and parts of OKIB north of Swan Lake.

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.

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"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 next step is to secure funding for the project.

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The partners agree the project is contingent on grant funding and 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).

Funding is also contingent on a successful petition of RDNO Electoral Area B and C residents and businesses within the proposed service area. The 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 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."

This unique partnership and the collaborative approach to funding strengthens the grant application and reduces financial impacts by sharing costs over a larger population.

"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."

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