

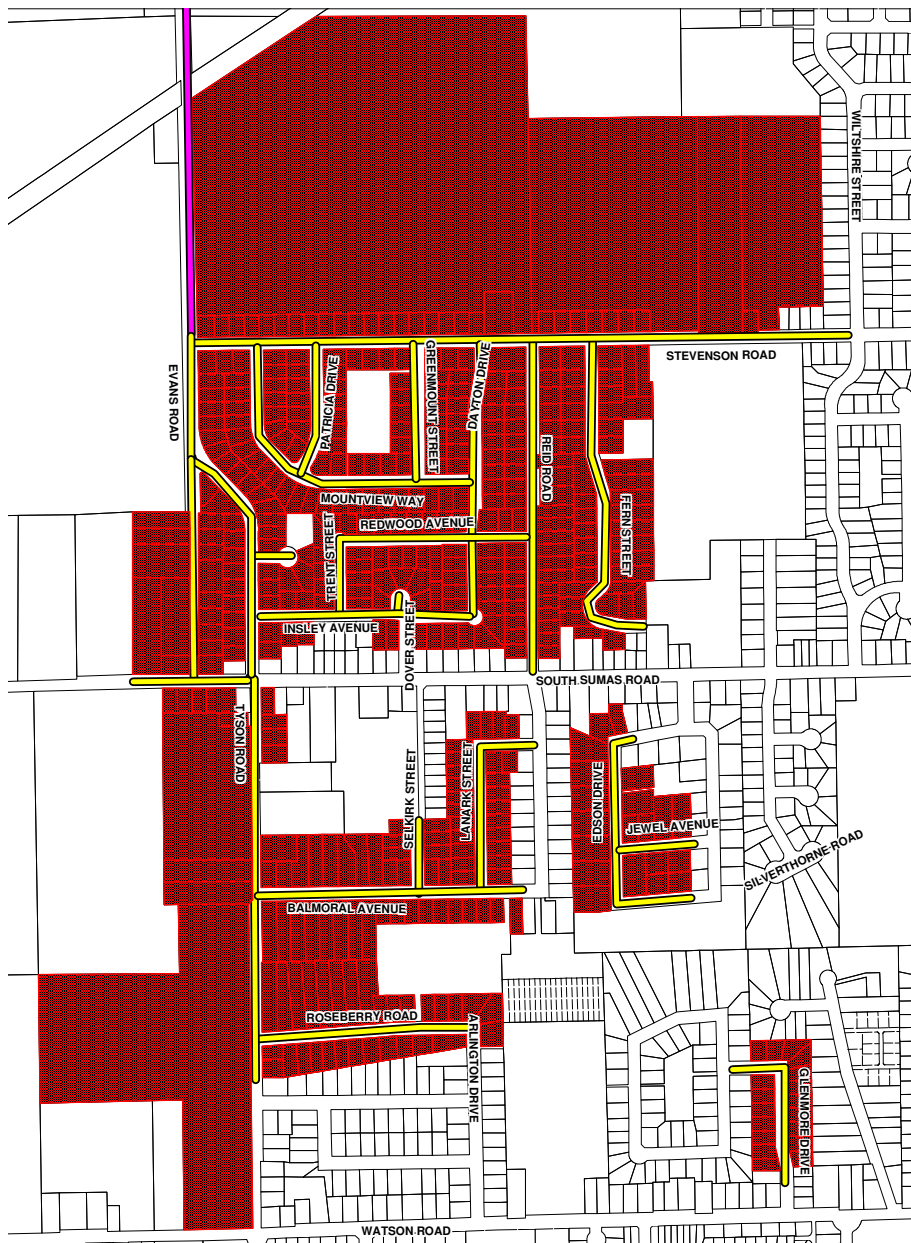
# PROGRAM

## *Tyson-Stevenson Sewer Project*

May 06, 2010



1. **Opening Address** - Mayor Sharon Gaetz
2. **Servicing Concept** – David Blain, Director of Engineering
3. **Financial Options** – Jennifer Kooistra, Manager of Revenue Services
4. **Local Area Service Procedures** – Karla Graham, City Clerk



## The Proposal

It is proposed that a community piped sanitary sewer system be extended into the Tyson-Stevenson area, to provide service to 442 properties.

The residential development of the Tyson-Stevenson area goes back approximately 40 years. Sanitary sewer service for these lots was provided by way of septic tanks and tile fields. Over the intervening years, a significant number of home owners have experienced failure of these tile fields. These failures are primarily due to fields which have become plugged with solids and grease. It is believed that some of the lots have had more than one failure and the ability of the homeowner to construct an effective remedial solution, has become extremely limited and expensive.

The City of Chilliwack has had a number of inquiries from the Tyson-Stevenson area residents regarding the installation of a community piped sewer system. As a result of public health concerns and the level of interest by the residents, the City applied for and obtained Federal and Provincial funding up to \$2.5 million to complete the project. The City Council authorized the use of the design-build process to obtain a design and arrange for the construction of a sewer system to service the Tyson-Stevenson area.

The design-build team of Sandpiper Contracting LLP and McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. are the lead proponent for the project. They have provided a design which provides services to all 442 properties in the Tyson-Stevenson area. The final design work is currently underway, and construction will commence shortly after the approval of the Local Area Service bylaw. All work must be completed by March 31, 2011 as a condition to funding.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **QUESTION: What is the process?**

**ANSWER:** Should it appear that sufficient interest exists in the extension of sanitary sewer service to the urban area of Tyson - Stevenson, then the City will proceed, on the Council Initiative Local Area Service, to provide sanitary sewer service to the area.

The Community Charter requires that notices be sent to each property owner affected and that publication of a notice be placed in the paper. As well, a one month period will be allowed for owners to consider the proposed works.

If 50% of the owners (representing at least 50% of the value of the parcels) petition against the work, the project will not proceed.

## FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

**QUESTION: What would be my annual fee to use the sewer system?**

**ANSWER:** Sewer user fees are based on a two part calculation. There is a fixed quarterly (every three months) rate of \$26.74 per household. The second part of the fee structure is based on 90% of water registered by the water meter at the residence. The consumption fee is \$1.98 per 100 cubic feet of sewage.

The average annual water usage for a single family home in Chilliwack is approximately 12,000 cubic feet or 75,000 imperial gallons for an annual cost of \$250. The actual usage for every home will vary depending upon the number of people living in the home, the number of plumbing fixtures and whether or not any of the fixtures have been retrofitted with water saving devices such as a shower restrictor or low flow toilets. Other water use practices will also have an effect on the annual average water use such as lawn sprinkling, watering of gardens, or washing of vehicles. **It is important to remember that your sewer bill is based on 90% of water consumption, so application of water conservation methods can make a big difference on the utility bill.**

**QUESTION: What other City fees or costs are involved?**

**ANSWER:** There will be no other City fees for connection to the sewer system.

**QUESTION: What is the cost for me to install a sewer service on my own property?**

**ANSWER:** The owner is responsible for all costs from the property line to his house, and these costs will vary depending upon the site development characteristics of each lot. A local contractor who is experienced in this kind of work estimates the cost to range between \$3,000 and \$7,000.

**QUESTION: How much will this project cost the property owner?**

**ANSWER:** Allocating the overall project costs between the 442 property owners would result in a cost of \$1,782.69 per property.

**QUESTION: How can I pay for this service?**

**ANSWER:** The two options are:

- a. Upon adoption of the Local Improvement bylaw, the entire \$1,782.69 may be paid in full prior to December 31, 2010 (referred to as a 'commuting'); or;
- b. The City will finance the cost over a 15 year period. The annual cost will be approximately \$167.69 per annum (based on current interest rates). This

amount will be added to the property tax bill and will remain with the property even if it is sold.

**QUESTION: Why don't my property taxes include this service?**

**ANSWER:** The services provided by the City of Chilliwack are divided into three separate and distinct 'businesses'. The revenues and expenditures of each business must be kept separate from one another. The sewer system, like the water utility, is a separate business from the rest of the City (i.e. fire, police, and administration).

As a separate business, property tax cannot be used to support the expansion of either the water or the sewer utility systems.

## ENGINEERING QUESTIONS

**QUESTION: Were other servicing options explored by the City?**

**ANSWER:** The City evaluated three proposals for providing sanitary service to the Tyson-Stevenson area. The selected design provides the most cost effective servicing for the community.

**QUESTION: I have a bathroom and a washing machine in my basement. Will I be able to hook up to the sewer system with a gravity connection?**

**ANSWER:** With the design selected by Council, the majority of homes with existing plumbing fixtures in the basement will be able to be served by gravity. Some homes with deep basements cannot be serviced by a gravity connection. In these cases, the homeowners will be required to install a small sewage pump in order to connect the basement to the proposed sewer system. It is likely that there will be no change to how the sewer currently leaves your house before entering the existing septic system.

**QUESTION: When I connect to the City sewer system, what will I need to do with the old septic tank?**

**ANSWER:** Under the provisions of the City Sanitary Sewer bylaw, when a property connects to the municipal sewer system, the existing septic tank must be either:

- a. excavated and removed from the site, or;
- b. pumped out and then filled with gravel or sand so there is no danger of cave in.

