



# South St. Andrews Wastewater System Public Utilities Board April 26, 2021

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DJ Sigmundson, CAO, RM of St. Andrews





# PROJECT MILESTONES

12+ years of planning, consultation and development

<b>2009</b>	\$8 million from Building Canada Fund confirmed; detailed planning begins
<b>2010</b>	St. Andrews, West St. Paul and Winnipeg begin developing co-operative plan
<b>2015-2017</b>	St. Andrews hires Water Services Board to manage Phase 1; open houses and public hearings held; tenders awarded and construction begins
<b>2019</b>	Council considers sending wastewater to Selkirk instead of Winnipeg, and subsequently decides to continue with Winnipeg plan after engineers' findings and conversations with provincial officials suggest this would be the more affordable option
<b>2020</b>	Construction completed
<b>2021</b>	Rate application to PUB

# PREVIOUS PUBLIC HEARINGS - LID

4 public hearings held prior to construction

Date	Purpose	Authority
March 2016	Phase 1 Borrowing	RM Council
Fall 2016	Phase 1 Borrowing	Municipal Board
May 2017	Phase 2 Borrowing	RM Council
November 2017	Phase 2 Borrowing	Municipal Board

# RATE APPLICATION

## 3 challenges when determining first-year rates

- Connections will occur at a measured pace, meaning lower volumes in start-up years
- Operation costs are mostly fixed
- City of Winnipeg MOU requires annual fee in addition to the rate to treat wastewater

# INITIAL RATE APPLICATION TIMELINE

When	What	Who
February 2020	Consultant recommends Council investigate a per-parcel fee to help keep rates affordable	Way-To-Go Consulting
April 2020	After much discussion Council gives 1 <sup>st</sup> reading to rate application by-law <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No per-parcel fee</li><li>• Assume 600 connections in year 1</li><li>• Rate/cubic meter \$5.91</li></ul>	Council
May 2020	Council announces it is withdrawing rate application due to public concerns	Council

# ADDITIONAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

May 27, 2020, Council issued this announcement:

“ Council has heard residents’ concerns about the initial rate application to the Public Utilities Board.

We’ve listened, and we agree that the rates suggested for the first year are high. It’s clear that we should take more time to get this right. Therefore, we’ve decided to withdraw our application to PUB and reconsider our rate model with your input.

Over the next few months, we’ll be inviting residents to share their views as we look at alternatives. After we’ve found the model that works best for the community, our rate study will be updated and a new rate application will be filed with PUB. ”

# ADDITIONAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## South St. Andrews invited to take part in wastewater survey

Submitted by the RM of St. Andrews

Until July 24, South St. Andrews residents are being asked to complete a survey aimed at helping their RM make important decisions as it rolls out the area's new wastewater system.

The survey is being conducted by Probe Research for the RM of St. Andrews, which plans to have the new service in operation by the end of this year. In the survey, residents are asked to answer questions related to user rates for the new utility, including how the costs of building and running the system should be shared among households in the service area during the first years of operation. The survey also asks residents about when they plan to hook up to the new system, how the RM could help them prepare and preferences for billing.

"Some of these decisions aren't easy

for the RM to make, and that's why we hope future users of the service will share their views and ideas," said DJ Sigmundson, chief administrative officer of the RM of St. Andrews. "Their input will help St. Andrews' council implement the new system in ways that work best for the community."

Before taking part in the survey, residents are being encouraged to spend some time reviewing background information about the new system. The RM recently created new web pages about the project, including one page providing context for the survey questions. To review these pages, go to [rmofstandrews.com](http://rmofstandrews.com) and click on Wastewater Services.

When residents are ready to share their views, they can answer the survey using the confidential online platform that has been created by Probe

at [standrews.questionpro.ca](http://standrews.questionpro.ca).

Those who prefer a printed survey can ask Probe to mail out a copy, along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for easy return. Probe can be contacted by telephone at 204-926-6565, toll-free at 1-877-538-8545, or by e-mail at [probe@probe-research.com](mailto:probe@probe-research.com).

Sigmundson said it was important to use the services of a professional research company like Probe because the RM wants residents to feel totally comfortable expressing their opinions.

"The answers residents provide will be shared as we report back to the community, but Probe will make sure that no responses are attributed to a specific individual or household."

Probe is controlling the number of responses allowed from each household and will provide an objective

analysis of the results. Anyone living in the RM can answer the survey, but Probe will separate out the responses provided by those within the area served by the new wastewater system.

"Ideally, we'll end up with a sense of how people feel about these issues, as well as some new ideas for the RM to consider," Sigmundson said.

The survey was created with input from a new implementation committee that is helping the RM communicate with future users of the new wastewater service. The committee includes Mayor Joy Sul and Councillors Matthew Prychun, Darryl Pohl, and Kristin Hoebee, who represent wards within the service area, as well as citizen representative Karen Mackenzie.

The deadline to complete the survey is July 24, 2020.



# ADDITIONAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## Survey

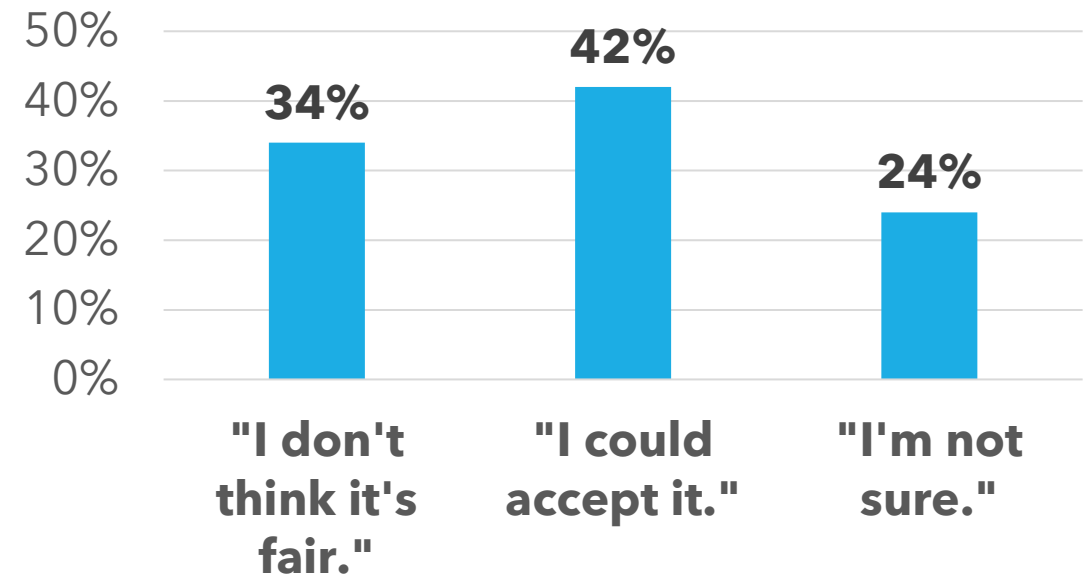
- Conducted by Probe Research and Blueprint Inc.
- June 30 to August 4, 2020
- Completed by 655 residents, or 30% of properties impacted



# SURVEY - KEY FINDING

## Significant support for concept of fee for unconnected properties

“ One idea is to charge a minimum fee to all households in the service area as soon as the system becomes operational, regardless of whether they have hooked up to the system. This temporary fee might be \$100-\$150/year and would be charged until a household begins using the system. The proceeds would help cover some of the operating costs during the phase-in period so rates can be more affordable for those who hook up sooner. Which one comes closest to your view? ”



# COMMENTS - SPECIAL SERVICE PROPOSAL

“infrastructure is being put into place... to benefit us (and) protect our beautiful environment, so... a fee until all households hook up ... is just.”

“... if only 30 or 40 households hook up, costs could be unbearable.”

“... it's best to have everyone pay a small fee at once to try to cover some costs and hopefully won't be so expensive to all in the future.”

“...will encourage homeowners to connect to the system sooner, which is important to eliminate the detrimental effects of leaking or inoperative septic fields that this project is addressing. Also, if the municipality were to build a new road, we'd all pay for it...not just those that use it.”

# REVISED RATE APPLICATION TIMELINE

When	What	Who
December 2020	Council decides to move forward with Special Service Proposal for \$100 fee per unconnected property	Council
December 2020	Council gives 1 <sup>st</sup> reading to rate application by-law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$100 per-parcel fee</li> <li>• Assume 500 connections within 3 years</li> <li>• Rate/cubic meter \$4.23 (vs \$5.91 in previous application)</li> </ul>	Council
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two information notices mailed to all properties</li> <li>• Article published in local paper</li> <li>• Email, text and voice mail communications utilized</li> </ul>	RM
January 2021	RM hosts 2 virtual open house events, attended by 262 people and viewed 250 times on YouTube	Council

# REVISED RATE APPLICATION TIMEMELINE

When	What	Who
February 2021	<p>Council holds virtual hearing February 2nd regarding Special Service Proposal for the per-parcel charge, watched by 157 people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 letters of objection received</li> <li>• 2 people presented, including 1 in favour of the concept with comments about how internal revenue transfers should be handled, and 1 opposing the proposal</li> </ul>	Council
February 2021	<p>Council gives 1<sup>st</sup> reading to Special Service Proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice provided February 5th to all objectors informing them that they had the right to object to the Municipal Board</li> </ul>	Council/RM
April 2021	No decision from the Municipal Board on whether a hearing will be held or when a decision will be made	

# CURRENT STATUS

## Construction

- Complete, with some restoration activities in progress

## Service agreements

- Winnipeg agreement not yet finalized but City staff authorized to complete it
- Working agreement similar to 2018 draft agreement, but with limits on number of connections/volume
- West St. Paul agreement can be finalized after City agreement

## Operation of system

- 18 homes connected
- Waste water being trucked to RM lagoon until all the agreements in place
- RM staff monitoring the lift station

## Per-parcel levy proposal

- Decision required from Municipal Board

## Rates

- Decision required from PUB