



**City of Richmond**

**Report to Committee**

**To:** Public Works and Transportation Committee      **Date:** September 27, 2004  
**From:** Robert Gonzalez, P.Eng.      **File:** 10-6400-00/Vol 01  
           Director, Engineering  
**Re:**      **Sanitary Sewer Connection Policy**

**Staff Recommendation**

That the City adopt the "Sanitary Sewer Connection Policy".

Robert Gonzalez, P.Eng.  
Director, Engineering  
(4150)

Raul Allueva  
Director of Development  
(4138)

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ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Law .....	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Building Approvals .....	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Policy Planning .....	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Clerks .....	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>REVIEWED BY TAG</b>		YES	N/A	<b>REVIEWED BY CAO</b>	YES      N/A
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## Staff Report

### Origin

City staff regularly receive requests for sewer connections to properties outside of designated sewer areas. These requests are typically denied because the existing infrastructure does not have sufficient capacity to accommodate new development without upgrading. However, because the City does not have a well defined policy on this topic, homeowners and developers sometimes perceive that they are not being treated fairly and equitably.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council adoption of a “Sanitary Sewer Connection Policy” (**Attachment 2**) in order to provide clear direction on sewer services for properties outside of designated sewer areas.

### Analysis

The City has a complex network of sanitary sewers. The map included in Appendix A shows an outline of the City’s sewer boundaries. These are the limits of the areas that can be serviced with the sanitary sewer network that we currently have in place. The same map also includes the GVRD’s West Richmond and Fraser Sewerage boundaries.

#### Infrastructure Efficiency

From an infrastructure perspective, the existing infrastructure generally does not have the capacity to accommodate additional area into the existing sewer system without upgrades to the pipe network and pump stations.

The most common requests for sewer connection come from those property owners on the immediate boundary of the sewer area. Even though there may be a sewer in the road that serves as the sewer area boundary, the request for connection by the property owner across the road is denied because the sewer system was not designed for expansion without upgrades and these properties are within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The City’s Official Community Plan states *“From a land management perspective, short and long-term growth should be assessed against existing and projected sewage line and treatment capacity and be located to make best use of existing servicing capacity, so as to minimize the need for building new sewer infrastructure. Therefore, new sewerage services should be budgeted and developed in areas targeted for redevelopment and, where possible, funded as part of new development proposals”*. Therefore, extending services into areas that are well served by septic systems would work against the principles outlined in the City’s Official Community Plan. As a result, extension of the City’s sewer boundaries is typically not supported by staff.

#### Agricultural Protection Policies

In many cases, properties on the periphery of the sewer area are zoned for agricultural land use purposes and designated within the Agricultural Land Reserve. From a land use perspective, allowing sewer service to agricultural lands is contrary to City Policies respecting the protection of agricultural lands, and would generate additional pressure for rezoning and development of lands currently designated and used for farming purposes.

Health Considerations

There are, however, a few instances where servicing properties with sanitary sewers could be considered necessary because of health considerations. Where septic fields no longer function because of changing ground conditions, in consultation with Richmond Health, it may be considered necessary to allow either holding tanks or extensions of the sewer system. Costs for investigation of upgrades necessary to the existing sewer system, including construction costs, would be the responsibility of the property owner. As a result, the attached "Sanitary Sewer Connection Policy" includes for an exemption by the General Manager, Engineering and Public Works when a health concern has been identified.

In summary, from both infrastructure and land use perspectives, extension of sewer area boundaries should be done in a planned approach that maximizes existing services and limits the need for new infrastructure, and discourages the redevelopment of agricultural lands in a manner consistent with City policies.

**Financial Impact**

None.

**Conclusion**

There is a need to develop a policy concerning sanitary sewer connections to properties outside of designated sewer areas due to the potentially significant impact on existing City infrastructure and added pressure to redevelop agricultural lands. Staff recommends that the "Sanitary Sewer Connection Policy" be adopted in keeping with the principles outlined in the Official Community Plan and the City's vision of Richmond being the most appealing, livable, well managed community in Canada.



Robert Gonzalez, P.Eng.  
Director, Engineering  
(4150)

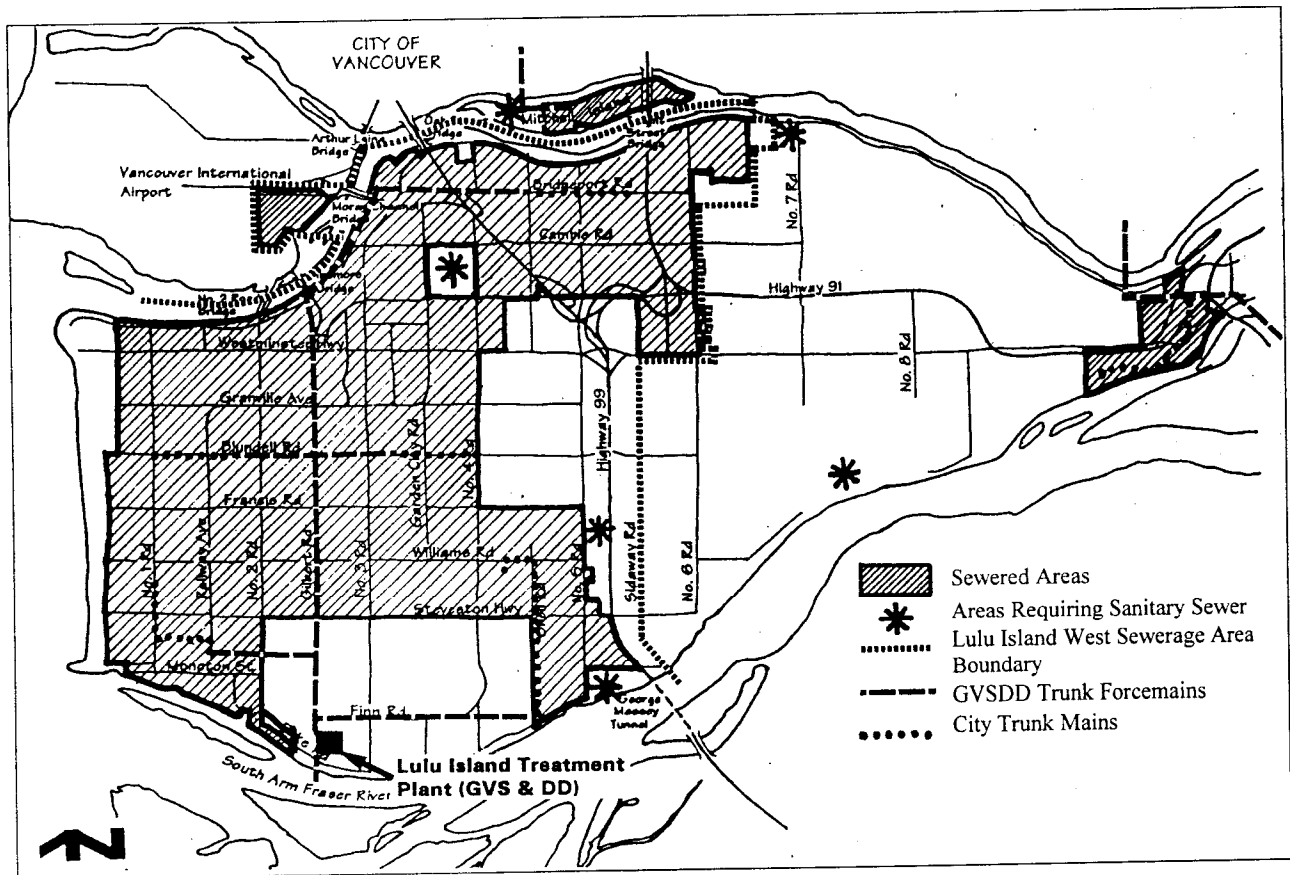


Raul Allueva  
Director of Development  
(4138)

RG:rg

Att. 2

Attachment 1  
Sanitary Sewer Distribution  
Taken from City of Richmond OCP



Sanitary Sewer Connection Policy

Draft Policy:

It is Council Policy that:

1. Properties outside of City sewer boundaries be denied connection to the City sanitary sewer system unless the General Manager, Engineering and Public Works deems there to be a health-related concern and it is not technically feasible to construct an on-site sewer system and the connection would not be contrary to the Official Community Plan.
2. All costs related to connection of a property outside the City sewer boundaries to the City sanitary sewer system are the responsibility of the party requesting the sewer connection, including the costs of investigating and implementing any upgrades to the existing City sanitary sewer system necessitated by the new connection and all associated construction costs.