

Hudson's sewer project:

Poorer residents nervous about cost

by ELYSE AMEND

HUDSON — Residents living in some of the town's lower income areas are worried about how the upcoming sewer and water system projects will affect their taxes and their quality of life.

At last Tuesday's public meeting, council informed residents that a few municipalities living downstream from Hudson wrote a letter to the Ministry of Environment, asking them to take action against the town and make sure they stop sending untreated sewage their way.

The town plans to install sewer lines in the downtown core within the boundaries of Lakeview, Mount. Pleasant, Côte St. Charles, and Main Road, and for every civic address on Bellevue, Sanderson, Seigneurie, and Wilkinson.

The cost of the sewer system will be shared by all Hudson residents, with citizens in "non-serviced" areas paying an additional \$60 per year on their tax bills, while people living in the "serviced" areas will pay \$335 a year extra in total costs and \$139 in operating costs. People in the "serviced" areas will also have to foot the bill for connection fees, the emptying of their old septic systems and the filling or complete removal of them, and any additional landscaping or home repairs that need to be done after the hookup.



Only 145 Hudson residents attended last Tuesday's information session while even fewer business owners were there for the Wednesday night briefing.

Individual residents will be responsible for hooking up their homes to the sewer system, a cost that varies significantly from one property to another.

What one Wilkinson resident who got up during the meeting's question period does not understand is why only about 20 percent of the population needs to pay for a problem downstream, especially when

that 20 percent is made up of some of Hudson's poorest residents.

Mount Pleasant resident Al Jared is for the sewer system and agrees that non-users should contribute something to it, but is worried about some of the residents in his area, which is a "serviced" one.

"You know what bothers me is, you pay whether you like it or not. And we have a

lot of widows on our street that aren't very well off," Jared said. "This is going to be pretty tough for them."

People living in the serviced areas can choose whether or not they want to be connected to the main line, but must pay the taxes even if they decide not to be.

One 68-year-old woman on Wilkinson who preferred not to be identified echoed Jared's feelings.

"I'll just have to cut down on something else and pay that. Where else am I going to go? I can't go to an old age home or something. My husband died and I'm in my home. I have my little doggy, so where else am I supposed to go," she said.

Anne Pollard, also a Wilkinson resident, had her septic system inspected and was told it was in good working order.

"The fellow said it would 'see me out,'" Pollard said. "I guess he meant it was okay."

Even so, Pollard will probably hook up to the sewer line to avoid paying for both her septic system and the extra taxes, and to keep the value of her house up. However, as a divorced woman, she says "money isn't really flowing in" either and that the taxes and hookup costs worry her very much.

Camilla Malashenko, however, is

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The bill by the numbers

Water-system improvements by the numbers:

Total cost: \$6.4M

Minus: federal/provincial infrastructure grants: \$1.6M

Cost to ratepayers: \$4.8 M (\$2.4M over 25 years plus \$2.4M over 40 years)

Annual cost per address: \$145 (\$122 for loan bylaw, \$23 for operation)

Note: Everyone drawing Town water will pay the \$240 water tax as a separate line item on their tax bills. West-end residents may choose to continue drawing water from a private well, but will pay \$122 because nearby fire hydrants will reduce their insurance costs.

Sewer project by the numbers:

Total cost: \$14.8M

Minus: federal/provincial infrastructure grants, excise tax rebate: (\$9.1M + \$825,000)

Cost to ratepayers: \$5.7M (\$1.8M over 25 years plus \$3.9M over 40 years)

Cost split: 70% paid by 30% of all addresses, the remaining 30% paid by the unserviced 70%.

Proposed annual cost per residence: 789 serviced addresses would pay approximately \$474 per year (\$335 + \$139 in operating costs), while 1995 unserviced addresses would pay \$60 per year.

Proposed annual cost per business: To be determined on the basis of ongoing negotiations.

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