



Frequently Asked Questions: Next Steps Regional Sewer Treatment Plant Upgrades

July 22, 2026

On July 7, Municipal Council received an update regarding the ongoing response to odours at the Regional Sewer Treatment Plant in New Minas. This Frequently Asked Questions document is based on the information shared in that [presentation](#).

Why has this odour become a recurring issue?

The Regional Sewer Treatment Plant in New Minas was designed based on the treatment requirements of 50 years ago. Today's treatment requirements are substantially different. The lagoon-based system was originally designed to treat wastewater from residential units and light industrial/commercial operations. In more recent years, the system has experienced issues related to several factors, including aged equipment, biosolids/sludge buildup in the lagoons, and increased strength and composition of influent.

How does the lagoon system work?

The lagoons need oxygen to work properly. Biological enzymes (healthy bugs) digest the incoming influent through a series of lagoons with the effluent eventually being clarified and treated by ultraviolet lights before being discharged.

The treatment system experiences upsets and strains when the healthy bugs become overwhelmed through the absence of sufficient oxygen in the water. When dissolved oxygen drops in the lagoons, the bugs are unable to digest the incoming influent. Odours are the unfortunate result.

Why can't odours be addressed quickly?

It takes approximately 60 days for wastewater to travel through all five treatment lagoons and complete the processing required before the treated water is discharged.

Staff continuously monitor for odours and are operating the plant at maximum capacity to reduce the severity and duration. Addressing odour management in recent years has involved increasing the amount of oxygen in the lagoons through equipment renewal and upgrades, removal of excess sludge impacting the treatment process, the addition of oxygen-boosting additives to the lagoons, and the introduction of biological agents upstream.

What is the long-term solution to this odour problem?

Odours are likely to continue until planned major upgrades are completed. An engineering consultant will be providing a report and advice this summer with respect to options. Options will include either an upgrade to the existing treatment system or the replacement of the plant with different technology. Advice will take into consideration service area needs, including population growth for the next 25+ years. Regional Partners will review the recommendations and determine next steps.

When will the major upgrades take place?

The predesign report is due this summer. Although the timeline is subject to change, preliminary projections are follows:

- Following receipt and agreement on recommendations made in the Predesign Report, Preliminary Design will follow in early 2027.
- Detailed Design is estimated to be complete in late 2027.
- If the design work is completed on schedule, tender and construction could begin in late 2027 or early 2028.
- Tendering would occur in late 2027, with construction and commissioning to be complete by mid-2030.

Why do you continue to invest in an aging plant?

It is important that the current treatment system, which services Coldbrook to Greenwich, continues to operate as efficiently as possible until the above noted upgrades or replacement plan are completed.

Investment has, and will continue to be, made at the existing plant to minimize odours arising from the plant operating beyond the capacity for which it was designed.

For more about the steps taken to improve the performance of the existing treatment plant, visit www.countyofkings.ca/regionalsewerupdates.

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