



September 2019

Reinfeld - Schanzenfeld Sewer Project Community Update & Request for Survey Response

Dear Property Owner:

As you may have been hearing over the past while, the RM of Stanley is planning a sewer system for Reinfeld and Schanzenfeld. New sewer lines would be installed throughout these communities, providing an opportunity to replace each property's onsite septic field.

This letter is intended to give you an update on the current status of the project and to request your response to a community survey to guide future decision making so that we develop the sewer project the best way possible.

Why do we need a sewer system?

Reinfeld and Schanzenfeld have grown and changed over time, and so have our needs for treatment of wastewater from sinks, showers and toilets. We have more people in our communities with more wastewater to be treated. Unlike some other areas, we also have high ground water conditions, which means septic fields can easily become saturated and begin to fail.

While many onsite septic fields function without issues, the potential for problems increases as they age. Because our current septic fields treat wastewater in place instead of removing it from the area, failing septic fields cause unpleasant odours and in some cases surface water and soil becomes contaminated with bacteria. In spring or during periods of high use or heavy rainfall, you may have seen or experienced the effects of failing septic fields in the community: dead, mushy patches of grass, unpleasant smell or standing water.

There is a growing concern regarding the future of communities relying on septic fields as the only means of wastewater treatment.

Why we need to act now

1. The RM is anticipating receiving significant funding from the federal and provincial governments. The Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba's *Investing in Canada Infrastructure Fund* is expected to cover as much as 73% of the total cost of the sewer project. There is no guarantee this funding will be in place in the future.
2. In 2018, the RM was able to sign an agreement with the City of Winkler which will allow wastewater from Reinfeld and Schanzenfeld to be treated at the new proposed Winkler Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant.
3. Interest rates are currently low. In the future, the costs of financing the project may be much higher.
4. Government regulations around treatment of wastewater are becoming increasingly strict. Safe, reliable and affordable options may be unavailable when septic fields fail.

A permanent sewer system will provide a long-term, community-wide solution for Reinfeld and Schanzenfeld to thrive and grow sustainably well into the future. By safely removing and treating

wastewater, a new sewer system helps put an end to problems and repairs from failing septic fields. As families connect to the system, yard space occupied by septic fields can also be reclaimed for other uses.

Current status of the project

Over the last several years, the RM conducted extensive study with experts to assess affordable, long-term solutions. As part of this study, the experiences of many other municipalities dealing with the same problem were considered.

In 2018, the RM was able to sign an agreement with the City of Winkler which will allow wastewater from Reinfeld and Schanzenfeld to be treated at the new Winkler Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant that is being proposed. The engineering & design for both communities is now complete.

This past year, an application was submitted for 73% of estimated \$24.4-million total project costs to be funded through the federal and provincial governments. The remaining total cost to the RM (including a capital cost to Winkler) is estimated to be around \$7.18 million. Provided funding is granted the sewer system would be constructed and service would be available within an estimated two to three years.

What we must consider – costs and timing

If the funding application is approved this year, the RM will be able to continue detailed planning for the sewer project and another project update will be provided to property owners with a breakdown of the project, timelines, work required and associated costs. But first, we need your input to determine options for costs and connection timing for property owners.

At this point we know the cost to each property owner in Reinfeld and Schanzenfeld will be in the range of \$6,000 to \$9,000 for installation of the sewer system throughout the community. In addition, property owners will be expected to cover the cost of work on your property to connect your home to the system, as well as a basic quarterly sewer bill to cover ongoing system operation once complete. We also know that connecting within a certain period of time is mandatory due to current provincial regulations. However, the timing of *when* you connect may be more flexible, and the RM is working with the Province right now to explore this further.

Community survey and how to learn more about the project

At this early stage, we need to know what priorities are important for you and your household. There are multiple ways that you can find out more and share your views:

1. **Reinfeld and Schanzenfeld community survey – please respond by September 30, 2019.**
Complete the brief survey online at your convenience, or you can drop by the RM office during regular office hours to request a paper copy. The survey is being conducted at arms-length, and your answers will be held in strict confidence.
Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/stanleysewer>
2. **Visit the special web page created for the project and sign up for email updates.** The web page will be continually updated so you can stay up-to-date as the project moves forward.
www.rmofstanley.com/sewerproject
3. **Reach us directly.** If you have questions or would like to provide additional feedback, you can contact the RM at any time, either by email at info@rmofstanley.ca or by phone at 204-325-4101.

Your views are very important to us. The RM of Stanley genuinely appreciates your input, questions and understanding.