

This backgrounder provides information on the completion and documentation of the current performance testing phase, which will be discussed by City Council at its December 13 Executive Committee meeting.

EPCOR is progressing toward final completion and independent certification of the Regina Wastewater Treatment Plant, which was substantially completed in December 2016. Since then, the plant has been 100% compliant with the province's new, more stringent operating permit and has no incidents of effluent exceedances. EPCOR has also extensively engaged downstream stakeholders throughout the phases of the project.

Performance Testing Phase

One of the requirements of the City's contract with EPCOR is that the facility demonstrates the ability to process the high-flow volumes of wastewater – and the load solids coming through with that volume – associated with Regina's projected growth. Currently, the upgraded plant is successfully treating an average flow of 75 million litres of wastewater per day. EPCOR is stress-testing the plant to eventually treat solids and nutrients for more than double this amount of flow.

The performance tests are underway and progressing well. We expect that this current phase of testing will be done in mid-December, following which an independent auditor will review and certify the results for the City of Regina to ensure that all requirements have been met. At the December 13 meeting, Executive Committee is being asked to recommend to City Council that City Administration be given the signing authority to extend EPCOR's time period for the completion of this work beyond the current date of December 31, 2017. The extension will allow time for the completion of the independent verification process, and act as a contingency in the event any further work at the facility is required.

In the event the performance test or the independent review identifies any changes that are needed at the facility, those will be completed by EPCOR at no cost to the City or the citizens of Regina.

Solids and Treatment: How it works

With increased wastewater flows to the plant expected in the future, there will be more accompanying solids, as well as other constituents such as higher nutrient loading (nitrogen and phosphorus). Nitrogen and phosphorus that come to the plant in the wastewater are treated and removed before we safely return the treated water back to Wascana Creek. Keeping these nutrients low in the effluent to the creek helps to ensure good conditions are maintained for aquatic life, while eliminating conditions that could lead to algae blooms during hot weather periods.

A model of a partnership that works for the community

The City worked closely with EPCOR to put a strong performance contract in place – one that protects the City’s interests and ensures the community has a facility that meets its future needs. Partnerships like the one between the City of Regina and EPCOR are designed to transfer financial and operating risk away from the municipality and taxpayers. EPCOR is fully committed to delivering a completed facility that meets all the terms in the performance contract.

How we get to Final Completion

EPCOR is currently completing the 30-Day Performance Test, and based on results to-date, believe that all the performance requirements will be met. Should any additional work be required, we are prepared to undertake it at no cost to the City, as required by the terms of our existing contract.

Reliable and environmentally-sound wastewater treatment service will continue throughout the test phase and during any subsequent work, and there will be no impact to customer water, wastewater or drainage rates. EPCOR and our partners are fully accountable for delivering a facility that performs to the requirements of the contract.