

CVRD borrowing now to save later on Trestle work

Sarah Simpson, The Citizen
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The core rehabilitation of the historic Kinsol Trestle is on time and on budget and Joe Taxpayer hasn't had to pay a penny of the \$6.653 million bill thus far.

While ongoing fundraising and some taxes are expected to cover a significant chunk of maintenance costs moving forward, the Cowichan Valley Regional District has decided to borrow \$90,000 a year over the next five years so it can get a head start on the next phase of the maintenance work, expected to tally about \$450,000.

The loan will not affect tax rates.

The idea is to spend a little now to save a lot later, according to Director Mel Dorey.

He said time is of the essence.

"They've already got all the cranes in place and all the labourers and workers engineers in place to continue with the work, so there would be quite a bit of costs in taking them down and putting them up if we did it over five years," Dorey said.

Director Mary Marcotte wondered if getting the loan would mean the end of raising community cash.

"Will we continue with the fundraising to carry on and get the balance that we're short... or will we just throw in the towel?" she wondered.

There will be no towel-throwing confirmed CVRD Parks manager Brian Farquhar.

"We're still actively fundraising... because there's still things like parking lots, viewing platforms, recognition kiosks, landscaping, interpretative signage, all of those other things that we need to do to complete the site," he said.

Marcotte's fears can be further quelled with the knowledge that some grant applications are still pending.

"If any other grant funding comes through that puts us over the top in terms of what's needed for the core project in terms of landscaping and stuff that we have to do, we'd certainly look to apply that against the loan," Farquhar said.

While the majority of the structural work will be completed by the end of March, Farquhar said no date has been set for the official opening, the one where folks will be able to walk across the 614-foot walkway atop the structure.

He did say it would be in late spring.