



## Wastewater treatment plant improvement project moves forward

**Wednesday, April 27, 2022 (Wetaskiwin, Alberta)** – Wetaskiwin City Council has officially approved the funding for the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant which will operate as its own corporate entity under the name of *Peace Hills Utilities Inc.*

The City of Wetaskiwin selected [Graham](#) and [Aquateira Utilities Inc.](#) to form a business partnership—Peace Hills Utilities Inc.—to provide construction, financing, and long-term operations and maintenance services for the wastewater treatment plant. [Associated Engineering](#) is providing the design services for the new facility.

“With regulatory requirements around wastewater treatment facilities becoming more stringent, we had to be innovative to cover the cost of the mandated wastewater treatment plant upgrade with the grant funding we had available,” stated Sue Howard, City Manager for the City of Wetaskiwin. “Graham’s new approach allowed us to secure all the financing we needed while ensuring financial flexibility remained for other municipal priorities. Additionally, we have an active role in the entire process as an equal partner which is not the norm in most P3 projects.”

Significant upgrades will be made to the City’s current lagoon-based treatment system—including the addition of a new [Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor](#) (MBBR) system—to align with the required effluent limits set by [Alberta Environment and Parks](#) (AEP) and Environment Canada.

Through this partnership (referred to as Graham’s Municipal Asset Partnership, or MAP), the City of Wetaskiwin and Graham have reduced the financial burden of the project through cost-efficient private financing—combined with a \$12.9 million Alberta Provincial Grant—to fund the \$53 million project. With project development complete and financing secured, construction will commence in May 2022 and is scheduled to be completed by December 2023 to meet the deadlines set by the other orders of government.

“Municipalities should not have to give up control of their utility assets to the private sector in order to finance vital infrastructure projects,” said Grenville Riley, Managing Director of Concessions at Graham. “Through Graham’s Municipal Asset Partnership, municipalities now have an equitable solution available to ensure regulatory compliance while maintaining control of their infrastructure.”

“Throughout this project we have worked alongside Graham, the City of Wetaskiwin, and Associated Engineering to ensure a sustainable and affordable utility upgrade is delivered to the community,” said Vaughn Bend, CEO of Aquatera Utilities Inc.





Graham's utilization of Green Bonds through their sustainable finance framework to finance the project provides a clear indication to the public that the project will have positive impacts on the local environment. The Green Bond designation can only be achieved by projects that meet stringent evaluation criteria, maintain robust reporting practices, and demonstrate the achievement of strictly defined environmental objectives.

For more information about Wetaskiwin's new wastewater treatment plant, visit [\[whatifwetaskiwin.ca\]](http://whatifwetaskiwin.ca).

### **Background:**

- Wetaskiwin City Council approved the wastewater treatment plant project at \$53 million due to the long-term benefits and lower annualized costs for ratepayers. The \$40 million option also proposed by Graham required deferring work on certain components of the project which would have resulted in approximately \$2 million more each year in annualized costs.
- The \$53 million option approved by City Council has a higher initial construction cost, but a lower annualized cost.

### **About the City of Wetaskiwin**

Wetaskiwin is a secure, connected, and inclusive community, home to a diverse population of nearly 13,000 people. Located only 30 minutes south of Edmonton International Airport, the City of Wetaskiwin provides a high quality of life through ample recreation opportunities, diverse cultural activities, and a modernized, business-friendly downtown.

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