Major milestone reached for the North End Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade projects

The Headworks Facilities are the first stop of wastewater and features an odour reducing process

August 26, 2026



The Headworks Facilities are now operational and treating wastewater at the North End Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Wastewater is now flowing through the newly-built Headworks Facilities. This marks a major milestone for the North End Wastewater Treatment Plant (NEWPCC) Upgrade Projects.

“It feels great to work on a project that has benefits for the environment and residents of Winnipeg.” said Alison Weiss, the project manager for the Headworks Facilities upgrades. “I’m excited to see it become operational.”

What happens at Headworks

What you flush down the toilet has to go somewhere. Around 70 percent of our wastewater is treated at NEWPCC. Its first stop when entering the plant are the Headworks Facilities.

It’s where all the wastewater coming in from deep underground is collected. Then, it’s pumped up to ground level where large pieces of debris and grit are removed. This step helps protect the rest of the plant. On top of removing debris and grit, there are also odour control processes in place for the new Headworks Facilities to reduce bad smells.

A microscopic solution to a noticeable nuisance

Treating wastewater can be a smelly process. Odours at NEWPCC are sent up large stacks into the atmosphere. Depending on the conditions outside, the surrounding area may notice a smell.

The new Headworks Facility does things differently. We use a specific kind of bacteria to eat the smelly compounds first. That’s right, its new odour control system involves teeny, tiny living organisms being grown on foam and on rock-like pieces.





Air first moves through the foam where bacteria specifically targets what causes rotten egg smells. The rock-like pieces are next, where bacteria attacks the rest of the odours. We use a similar process at our South End Wastewater Treatment Plant.

It takes time for the helpful bacteria in the odour control system to grow.

This means residents in the area may notice occasional odours for a short period of time until the helpful bacteria are established and working away.

Odour control at NEWPCC is being upgraded progressively. As the Biosolids and Nutrient Removal projects come online, there will be continued improvement.

Why the upgrade matters

The North End Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade is the largest capital project in Winnipeg's history. It's also one of the most important for our city's future.

Getting the Headworks Facilities online is a significant milestone in improving how the NEWPCC plant operates.

It's a key step towards:

- Upgrading NEWPCC to meet regulatory requirements
- Replacing aging infrastructure

- Increasing capacity for future growth of the city

Work is well underway on the remaining two projects.

- Project 2: Biosolids Facilities will deal with the solid part of sewage, like poop, fats, organics, and grease. We're expected to start construction in the coming weeks.
- Project 3: Nutrient Removal Facilities is currently in the procurement stage. This project will treat the liquid part of wastewater before it enters the river. It will help us meet our environment licence requirements. It is being designed to accommodate growth of our city into the future.

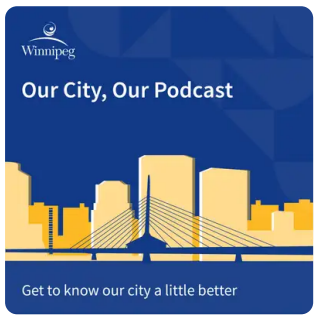
These upgrades are essential to keep up with the needs of our growing city and protect the health of our local waterways.

You can sign up for new NEWPCC Upgrade Newsletter to receive updates as this critical work progresses.

Our City, Our Podcast

Engineers Linda McCusker and Lana Obach are on the team leading these upgrades. They joined Our City, Our Podcast to discuss why this massive project is critical for Winnipeg. This episode was released in February 2026.

You can listen to it in the player below or wherever you listen to podcasts.



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