Comox Strathcona Waste Management

Minutes

**REGIONAL SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Minutes from the meeting held on November 28, 2024, in the CVRD Civic Room at 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay and via Zoom commencing at 10:00 am

**PRESENT:**

| | |
|---|---|
| D. Baar | Campbell River |
| D. Birtch | Campbell River |
| W. Semmelink | Comox |
| J. Ellis | Courtenay |
| J. Best | Courtenay |
| K. Stubblefield | CVRD Area C |
| R. Telegus | Denman Island |
| K. Lukinuk | Hornby Island |
| C. Thompson, Manager of Solid Waste Services | City of Courtenay |
| C. Perry, Engineering Manager | Town of Comox |
| R. Crisfield, Manager of Operations | Village of Cumberland |
| M. Tatchell, Chief Administrative Officer | Village of Tahsis |
| S. Fisher, Engineering Services Coordinator | SRD |
| A. Milwid, First Nations Liaison | SRD |
| L. Bryan, Executive Director | WMABC |
| C. Melvin, Coordinator | Island Health |
| G. Yaron, Consultant | Light House |
| K. Hamilton, Consultant | Tavola Communications |
| T. Willard-Stepan, Community Educator | CSWM |
| L. Eason, Community Educator | CSWM |
| M. Rutten, General Manager of Engineering Services | CVRD |
| V. Schau, Senior Manager of CSWM Services | CVRD |
| S. Willie, Manager of Solid Waste Planning & Policy Development | CVRD |
| K. Broughton, Manager of Financial Planning | CVRD |
| J. Sexton, Financial Planning Analyst | CVRD |
| O. McDonald, CSWM Communications and Engagement Specialist | CVRD |
| B. Meagher, Branch Assistant | CVRD |

**ITEMS:**

## 1. Review of Agenda and Minutes

M. Rutten acknowledged that the meeting is being hosted on the traditional unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, and the Comox Strathcona Waste Management (CSWM) service area is located in the Coast Salish, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Nuu-chah-nulth territories.

The committee reviewed the minutes of the Regional Solid Waste Advisory Committee (RSWAC) meeting on September 19, 2024, and no errors or omissions were noted. The advisory committee adopted the November 28, 2024, meeting agenda.

## 2. What We Heard Consultation Summary 2024

Katie Hamilton presented a summary of the 2024 consultation process. The consultation involved five open houses, two community events on Cortes and Quadra, facility tours of CVWMC and CR Organics Facility, and online tools such as Weigh-In On Waste for residents to provide input on services they'd like to see in their communities.

The CSWM July 2024 newsletter was mailed to 11,000 households with details about the SWMP process and opportunities for public participation. Outreach included media posts. Educational display boards were developed to visually present information. Participation was incentivized with a draw to win a yard of compost and a used goods swap at events. More than 1,900 people participated between July and October 2024. There was full registration for facility tours in September. Village of Cumberland elected officials and staff also toured CVWMC in October.

Facility tour and open house participants completed feedback forms. We offered multichannel engagement for residents to provide input on services they would like to see. We saw success in reaching people when we went to locations where they were already gathered. Rural curbside collection was among the services discussed; Some communities wanted the service, while others were more divided. All five communities wanted more recycling opportunities and more education around waste options. Cortes residents expressed satisfaction with their collection service. Quadra residents generally satisfied with proposed Depot options and wanted weekend access. Tour participant feedback highlighted high satisfaction with environmental protection measures at the facilities and an interest in options to increase waste diversion. Participants were positively engaged and wanted more opportunities for the public to see the facilities.

**Advisory comments:**

R. Telegus – Commendations on presentations to councils and elected officials. It's important to keep them in the loop. Why did CSWM target Quadra and Cortes, rather than Denman and Hornby?

S. Willie – Quadra and Cortes have service changes taking place in their communities. There are financial considerations with the Cortes curbside service. We're opening a depot on Quadra and the private hauler services have changed.

K. Lukinuk – Haulers on Hornby need options for disposal of commercial recycling, rather than bringing it to the Depot.

S. Willie – Recycle BC doesn't accept ICI/MF recycling. Cardboard is the highest revenue generator. Other materials are harder to manage. It's a challenge for the commercial sector. CVWMC and CRWMC have paid recycling services for mixed plastic containers and cardboard. CSWM is looking at the cost of subsidizing commercial recycling options.

M. Rutten – Attendance at some events such as the open house in Oyster River was quite low. What are the trends in participation?

K. Hamilton – We're observing people's engagement preferences coming out of the pandemic. With a long-term process, we don't see higher participation until there's a specific strategy or option to react to. More open-ended and higher-level consultation tends to see lower participation. Multichannel options and a long timeframe are helpful to encourage engagement. We want to keep people informed as we move through the process to raise awareness.

**3. SWMP Next Steps**

S. Willie reported that 39 strategies have been developed and outlined in nine technical memos. There have been 13 RSWAC meetings and a field trip. Next, strategies will be narrowed down to determine CSWM's focus over the next ten years and decisions will be made on which options can be funded. The CSWM Board is having a roundtable in February to discuss their values and goals. A short list of strategies will be developed for May and June 2025. The draft SWMP will be compiled and sent out for consultation in Fall 2025.The plan is then delivered to the Ministry for approval. Then we fund it, resource it, execute it.

What are the group's preferences for RSWAC meeting in 2025? Do Thursdays work?

**Advisory comments:**

R. Telegus – Shorter meetings would be my preference.

M. Tatchell – I have a conflict every other Thursday, so it might work if it's the alternating Thursday.

T. Willard-Stepan – Thursdays work depending on my teaching schedule.

D. Barr – Thursdays 10am or later works for me.

L. Bryan – 10am to 4pm is usually okay as long as I leave at 4pm for the ferry.

J. Best – Thursdays generally work. I have a conflict once per quarter.

R. Crisfield – Thursdays work for me.

S. Fisher – Current durations are fine, perhaps a little long. More frequent meetings would be hard to accommodate, especially in-person.

S. Willie – It's helpful if we know if people are attending in-person or virtually to provide food. Virtual meetings in winter may be preferrable.

R. Telegus – You said we'll go to the Board to get input on values. Will you take the input from the public to the Board at the roundtable?

S. Willie – We'll take the public feedback to the Board so it's part of their decision making.

K. Lukinuk – I would like to put together an email to CSWM about ways to improve waste diversion on Hornby for recycling and compost. Would a summary be better than providing periodic input? There's a private operator looking to start up a service on Hornby. Denman operator might also be interested. I feel HIRRA doesn't represent the whole population of Hornby.

S. Willie – A summary of the information would be helpful.

M. Rutten – HIRRA represents Hornby residents in a similar way to elected representatives in the other communities.

**4. Greenhouse Gas Strategies – Part 2**

S. Willie presented the Morrison Hershfield (Stantec) findings on GHG strategies, following up on the Part 1 and Part 3 presentations shared at the last meeting. Scope 1 and 2 Emissions from all sites are primarily from on-site mobile equipment. The

CVWMC emissions include mobile equipment with the compactor as the biggest contributor, the boiler, and the leachate treatment plant.

Transportation emissions from hauling waste between facilities amounted to 417 tonnes CO2e, with the majority from MSW transportation to CVWMC. Total LFG generation from all sites in 2022 was roughly 73,000 tonnes CO2e, mostly from the CVWMC and smaller amounts from the remote landfills. Fugitive landfill emissions are uncaptured gases, which have been significantly reduced at CVWMC with the LFG capture system. Total CSWM Service fugitive GHG emissions in 2022 was roughly 39,000 tonnes CO2e. We focused our efforts and strategies on landfill gas emissions as the largest contributer.

The report covers 14 strategies for reducing GHG. The majority of the landfill emissions reduction potential is at CRWMC where we're implementing an LFG collection system. Not all strategies are feasible or technically viable at this time. Short-term strategies include implementing automated well heads at CVWMC, which is new technology, and operating CRWMC gas collection system to its highest potential. We've had some challenges with staffing to support that initiative and asked the Board for additional staff resources. Another strategy put forward was operating six days per week rather than seven.

Other long-term strategies included landfill biocover systems, increasing organics diversion in the ICI sector and residential areas with no curbside collection, and providing local organics diversion options in remote communities. Facilities and transportation strategies included alternative fuel vehicles. Electric haul vehicles were investigated. At this time, there are no electric options for compactors. Using natural gas was another option. There are current technology challenges but future improvements are possible.

Assessment considerations include savings, payback period, viability, operational impacts, and reduction potential. Landfill gas capture is a viable strategy. The automated well heads are potentially viable. Some more costly strategies include electric vehicles for facilities. Organics collection in remote communities must include wildlife considerations. The cost per tonne is important to consider, as well as the sum of all the strategies undertaken by CSWM. We made a recommendation to the Board for staff resources for CRWMC LFG capture and automated well heads at CRWMC and CVWMC. The Board chose initiatives to reduce GHG in the short term. Some of the payback periods are quite low and some of the middle strategies could be pursued. The technology implementation status will evolve, e.g. dirty wood waste processing and electric vehicles. Some strategies impact staff directly and have budgetary implications. Some strategies may be driven more by politics and public

will, rather than results. Reducing traffic and saving landfill airspace is another consideration.

If we were to implement all the short-term strategies, there's a potential reduction of 52 per cent in emissions. We could reduce up to 60 per cent with longer term strategies. We're moving forward with the procurement of well heads. We've committed to summarizing a new baseline at the end of 2025 to compare to 2022 emissions and refine our long-term strategies and targets.

**Advisory comments:**

W. Semmelink – I would like to see L2 (diversion of organic waste from ICI sector), L5 (enforce organics diversion in Electoral Areas for residents), and L13 (prompt processing of organics locally in remote communities) move forward.

K. Stubblefield and L. Bryan – Agree with L2, L5 and L13 moving forward.

M. Tatchell – Does L5 apply to all electoral areas?

S. Willie – The analysis included all populations.

R. Telegus – I would support L5 and L13. I enjoyed the summary towards the end stating the cost and payback period are important, as well as the societal impacts of people buying into strategies. With rural communities, many people are willing to volunteer. There are opportunities for funding. The previously discussed strategy of offering grants up to $10,000 to community groups to provide composting services might be helpful.

S. Willie – CVWMC LFG is currently captured and a small amount is sent to the leachate treatment plant for heating. The reduction in emissions is happening in the conversion of methane gas to carbon dioxide. There are still emissions with flaring but they're lower. There is also an initiative to use the gas as fuel.

M. Rutten – Is a biocover similar to a biofilter to manage odour? Is it something we can create with our own resources?

S. Willie – Yes, we would use organic materials such as wood chips. It would involve transport costs to provide to remote communities.

D. Baar – It's important to consider the global impact if every landfill similarly reduced their emissions. These short-term fixes are really significant if implemented across Canada.

S. Willie – There are less than 150 landfills in Canada with LFG capture systems. It's challenging for small landfills to cover the expense. BC has strong regulations to reduce emissions. There will be more federal regulations coming.

R. Telegus – The electric hauling containers are interesting.

S. Willie – Our operators have seen some challenges with these containers, such as leaking. It can depend on how much food waste and rain are received.

K. Lukinuk – Hornby uses the backhoe as a trash compactor.

L. Bryan – I was reviewing the MF report. Is there an opportunity to provide feedback now? A few observations from the private sector: The Ministry of Environment waste diversion discussion paper considers MF to be separate from ICI. When it comes to collection, MF is picked up with ICI. They're not separate. We want to make it clear. The majority of MF collection is under contract with service providers, rather than municipalities. Contracts are also in place for organics and recycling if services are available. Vancouver requires organics collection; they provided a timeline for systems to be implemented. There was pushback when given a long timeline, e.g. 18 months. Customers didn't want to pay for the service until they had to. You want to provide enough time for implementation, but don't push it out so far that people don't want to pay until necessary. Service providers were quick to respond. New builds have reduced space for garbage collection areas. When the space is underground, you need a smaller truck collecting waste. There's also limited street space to service bins. Vancouver is looking at staging areas where bins are left for tipping. There will be costs associated with this system as well. There can be single stream options such as bins just for cardboard and paper, depending on services available.

R. Telegus – This reopens the discussion about MF contracting with private haulers and the challenge of accessing Recycle BC services. Municipalities could require haulers to have an agreement with Recycle BC.

L. Bryan – There are some programs in place.

J. Best – Recycle BC will sign agreements directly with private collection companies. Private haulers want to mix ICI and we're working with them to develop strategies for integrated ICI/MF routes. They can send us a representative sample of how much is MF versus commercial recycling. Our services only cover residential recycling.

## 5. LUNCH BREAK

## 6. Construction, Renovation and Demolition Diversion Pilot Experience

Community Educators Daryl and Lindsay Eason presented the results of a CRD waste diversion case study focusing on a new build on their property between February and August 2024. The participating construction company was provided with tools to sort waste for increased diversion. They hand-sorted the waste into 13 categories, such as clean wood, metal, cardboard, flexible plastic, coffee cups. Educators observed what happens with waste on a construction site, which depends on the time, space and budget available. Sometimes all waste gets put in one pile. Metal and clean wood may get put aside while loading trailers/bins. A common practice is using cardboard boxes as garbage cans. All lunch food items get thrown into the same pile.

At the case study work site, 1,500kg of waste was sorted by hand. They found 51 per cent was garbage. 38 per cent of divertible materials was clean wood, so 11 per cent is divertible. Hardy board greatly increases weight because it's not recyclable in our region. They approached construction companies with systems and signage to help separate and divert waste, including a flexible sorting system for smaller sites. They met with the participating contractor for feedback and next steps. By the third site visit, they'd modified the diversion system to accommodate a large volume of clean wood waste. The system needed to be moved as the project progressed. The contractor bought their own containers for sorting on-site. They collected refundable beverage containers in a bin. Pallet bins worked well for collecting scraps. As a result of the case study, the contractor had a tidier site and expanded the system to other sites.

Key takeaways: There's no financial incentive for construction waste diversion. The company was interested in doing something to divert waste but found separating out all clean wood too time consuming. Ultimately, they were provided with simple and adaptable tools to use in future. The accountability piece was significant. The contractor worked towards increasing diversion with the educators providing engagement and support. It was a soft approach aiming to find early adopters to win over the construction industry. In conclusion, construction waste diversion could be promoted by offering contractors adaptable options such as toolkits, bins and signage.

**Advisory Comments:**

R. Telegus – Companies could advertise themselves as being part of these pilot initiatives to attract business.

D. Eason – The smaller items such as metal and containers are more readily diverted. Wood waste is more time consuming.

L. Eason – Companies pay more for mixed waste with recyclables. The costs are passed on to homeowners without them knowing.

J. Ellis – There is a plan in place for making wood recycling more viable. The time, space and efforts aren't currently rewarded. It's challenging.

D. Baar – What a fascinating project. My understanding is not all finished wood is clean wood. Is that the case? I agree there could be consumer pull for creating standards for contractors.

J. Ellis – Latex paint is alright on wood. It can be difficult to tell.

D. Birtch – If a contractor shows up with waste sorted, are there financial savings?

S. Willis – There may be a benefit if they want to take the time to loop through the scale house to weigh the clean wood waste and metal separately.

D. Birtch – In Europe, construction waste was minimal due to diversion. Here it's easier and cheaper to dispose of waste without separating materials. If it's not worth the cost to contractors, they won't do it.

L. Bryan - An example of a CnD waste reduction toolkit: https://metrovancouver.org/services/solid-waste/Documents/construction-and-demolitionwaste-reduction-and-recycling-toolkit.pdf

**Reduction Strategies**

Gil Yaron from Light House provided an overview of construction waste reduction strategies. Waste is referred to as Construction, Renovation and Demolition (CRD) waste because renovations contribute to roughly 40 per cent of construction waste. The strategies are framed with a circular economic approach focusing on reduction, reuse and restoring our ecosystems. This approach aligns with CSWM guiding principles, including maximizing the use of materials, preventing recyclables and organics from going in the landfill, and building and supporting collaborative partnerships to meet targets.

Construction waste represents the second largest category of materials received by the landfills. The infrastructure and technology in the region are not sufficient to support CRD diversion. Northwin commercial landfill has seen a large increase in CRD materials. Some materials are being recycled such as drywall, clean wood and metal. These are managed at CVWMC and CRWMC but not at all sites. The housing market will impact future waste volumes with increased housing starts. Demolition data is not correlated with housing starts, possibly due to tracking of permits by local

governments. Approximately 42 per cent of housing stock was built before 1980, so these buildings may be renovated or demolished.

CSWM has variable tipping fees as financial incentive to sort materials. It doesn't appear to be resulting in increased sorting. Eleven key stakeholders were interviewed. They were generally satisfied with CVRD's handling of materials and management of the landfill and transfer stations. There was consensus that tipping fees don't have an impact on sorting. Most were accepting of fees if applied equally across the industry. Corporate-owned waste companies absorb costs and pass them on to customers. As CSWM sets higher fees on mixed loads, it may be more economical for companies to do sorting. One stakeholder said nothing short of a ban will stop mixed loads. Commercial haulers are avoiding penalties on mixed loads by using tipping trailers that aren't examined at the tipping face. They expressed a need for more consistent and streamlined handling of drywall at the site. Policies may encourage reuse and relocation of homes, rather than demolition. There's demand for more educational support and penalties for illegal dumping.

Eight strategic options have been developed. The first three may go together:

8a. Pre-demolition assessment:
Assess homes prior to demolition to determine whether they can be relocated or deconstructed. Sixty to 80 per cent of homes could be relocated or deconstructed. Diversion potential is high. Operational and staffing resources required are minimal once a policy framework is developed. No regulatory authority required. Many municipalities are considering this strategy, but none have implemented it yet.

8b. Mandatory compliance with pre-demolition assessment:
Local governments require an assessment prior to demolition to see if a building could be relocated or deconstructed.

8c. Early green removal permits, move-on permits, expedited electrical disconnection, and improved data management:
Develop systems for construction to move faster when relocating and deconstructing.

8d. Comprehensive regional strategy to salvage and process clean wood:
There's already diversion happening. The service could be expanded with additional staffing or contracting out to process material. We suggest fees for clean wood be reduced further to $80/tonne. The Hartland Landfill banned clean wood at the beginning of this year. They contracted out on-site processing.

8e. Engage with other jurisdictions on cross-regional solutions:
The Building Material Exchange Program enables companies to buy and sell materials from each other to reduce waste.

8f. Educational ools and resources to support on-site material management:
While we don't see a direct correlation between education and diversion, it provides a foundation for other policies. Medium operational impact.

8g. Financial incentive for deconstruction:
Currently it costs more to deconstruct. Homeowners could be offered $5,000 to deconstruct. Financial impact is estimated at $100,000 to $125,000. Seattle and Portland offer incentives, so there is precedent.

8h. Implement tipping pad and sorting at CVWMC:
Haulers could drop off mixed loads and staff or contractors could sort on-site. Contractors would be charged mixed load fee. Some regulatory changes required. The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen used this strategy with a contractor.

**Advisory Comments:**

S. Fisher – In the SRD, an increase in permitting would be challenging.

R. Telegus – Denman and Hornby also don't require permitting. You could perhaps have demolition requirements in the solid waste bylaw, rather than using building permits.

G. Yaron – Other districts have built requirements into their solid waste bylaws.

D. Eason – Why did Victoria choose pre-1940 for deconstruction?

G. Yaron – Pre-1940 homes used valuable materials such as old growth Douglas fir. There's enough financial incentive to deconstruct. Governments currently considering this policy are looking at an assessment approach, rather than a date cut-off, because some new homes have valuable materials.

S. Fisher – I wonder if implementing the requirements in CSWM bylaws would work if some areas don't support it. Are the financial implications of the downloading captured?

G. Yaron – The financial implications aren't captured, but we do flag where we see potential costs for local governments. We didn't attempt to quantify it for this report.

S. Fisher – Would the staffing impact apply to the CSWM or the CVRD and SRD?

G. Yaron – We focused on impacts to CSWM and noted whether we anticipate impacts on other local governments.

S. Willie – We'll consider the building and planning departments when looking at strategies.

G. Yaron – We identified where there is potential to share resources across departments or governments.

**7. 2025 Budget and Financial Picture**

M. Rutten presented the CSWM financial plan. It was presented to the Board for recommendations. Many directors are from remote communities with different interests than larger communities. There's a desire to break the budget down by the different lines of business (e.g. administration, transportation, debt servicing) to provide the ability to focus on different parts of the CSWM Service. Metrics show CSWM in the middle of the ranking of waste diversion across BC. These metrics are helpful for the Board and there's a desire to provide more of them.

Trends, challenges and opportunities: There are many opportunities to divert more waste. Traffic counts have increased and it creates an impact at the frontend with 500 or 600 cars arriving daily. It creates backups at the scales. Regulatory requirements have increased and we need to keep up. Disaster preparedness is an emerging item. Messaging is another challenge in promoting behaviour change. We can improve education and enforcement. The automated wells are an opportunity.

2024 accomplishments include GHG emissions reduction with completion of the CR Organics Facility. The Campbell River flare was commissioned. Also, we're using an emissions detection drone. The progress with the SWMP renewal is a major accomplishment. Landfill and Organics Facility tours were popular with the public.

We expect to generate more revenue than predicted. The surplus has several components, including higher revenue at the scales and underspending. Strategic priorities come from the 2012 SWMP. We're focused on reducing GHG, as well as developing environmentally responsible waste management services. There has been a big improvement in both these areas. Old landfills have been capped, the new landfill is fully lined, and GHG has been reduced.

The proposed budget asks for additional staff resources for LFG operation, including leachate operation, a financial planning analyst, and summer coverage. Overall expenses include landfill operation, leachate treatment, and processing organics. We

no longer show surpluses as a revenue source in order to be more prudent in our budgeting. Surpluses are not guaranteed. We have significant future capital needs to be considered, such as building a new landfill cell. We need to accumulate reserves to help pay for capital projects. If we improve diversion, we can defer the building of the new cell.

K. Broughton presented on fiscal sustainability. Some policies are being introduced to the Board, such as the operating and capital reserve policies. Another policy will be a debt management policy. The ratio between tipping fees and requisition will be examined. The debt servicing levels are projected to remain the same, with debt increased by the construction of the new cell. Reserves are underfunded and don't yet meet fiscal sustainability best practices. Policy changes are planned to increase reserves. The Board recommendation was to increase requisition by $500,000 rather than $1,000,000, with CSWM coming back with proposals for tipping fee increases.

M. Rutten explained the Board didn't provide feedback on the budget itself. They were concerned about getting additional funding through tax increases and generally felt a user pay model was better. They encouraged increasing tipping fees to get funds.

**Advisory Comments:**

R. Telegus – I commend the Finance department on seeking sustainable financing.

S. Willie – Our objective in sharing this information is demonstrating what we can afford to do. Past decisions put us in a position of needing to borrow to fund necessary projects. We're trying to pay debt while raising funds for the future.

D. Baar – A requisition increase might mean $100 per household.

**8. Wrap up and Meeting Adjournment**

Committee members invited to submit ongoing feedback.

**GENERAL:**

The Regional Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting schedule for 2025 will be released shortly.

**TERMINATION:**

S. Willie adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.

Recorded by: Certified correct:

***B. Meagher***

Bridget Meagher
Branch Assistant – Engineering Services

***S.Willie***

Sarah Willie
Manager of Solid Waste Planning and Policy Development