

Westside Public Engagement Summary Document

Introduction

The Westside Select Committee launched the Westside Solutions Project in October of 2014. The Select Committee participants initially were from Colwood, Esquimalt, Langford, View Royal, and Songhees Nation. Esquimalt Nation officially became part of the Committee in the fall of 2015.

The scope of the Select Committee included both technical and public engagement activities including:

- Evaluation of existing technologies
- Evaluation of treatment levels
- Evaluation of resource recovery opportunities
- Site selection criteria
- Site selection
- Public engagement for wastewater and resource recovery options

Throughout the process the Committee has operated in an open and transparent fashion and has endeavored to inform, educate and involve Westside residents and stakeholders in decisions about Westside wastewater treatment and resource recovery.

During Phase I of the project the Westside Select Committee undertook a number of successful initiatives to fulfill their mandate, including open houses, innovation days, roundtables, community events, and online and telephone surveys. The public input around these programs helped guide the information and concepts that have been brought forward into Phase II of the overall project for the Core Area Liquid Waste Management Committee (CALWMC) of the Capital Regional District (CRD).

Phase II has consisted of a more thorough technical evaluation of possible sites and scenarios for wastewater treatment for both Eastside and Westside communities. As of January 13, 2016, the results of the technical work has been part of a concentrated public engagement process that was guided by an approved set of sound principles and clear objectives – recognizing the challenges in delivering a program of this size and complexity in a short period of time.

Over the course of the entire process to date, and through the efforts of municipal staff and consultants, thousands of residents have participated in the public consultation process.

- ✓ Principles:
 - Accessibility
 - Transparency
 - Diversity
 - Expanding Civic Literacy
 - Clear decision-making process
- ✓ Objectives:
 - maximize public engagement on sites, scenarios and costs
 - educate options benefits/drawbacks
 - educate on resource recovery options
 - identify further information requirements
 - engage a wider demographic for wider public feedback
 - identify and address concerns of citizens
 - Solicit constructive input to help guide decision making
 - general public acceptance

Overview

Methodology:

To help reach and engage the maximum number of Westside residents a number of tactics were engaged. These included utilizing earned media and paid advertising done in conjunction with the Eastside, social media, open houses, Westside newsletter and targeted meetings. Materials specific to the Westside along with a more comprehensive guide to the options was made available online, at public events, and at municipal halls and the CRD.

Survey:

The broadest reaching engagement tool was an online open survey targeted at residents across the Core Area. The survey was designed to give citizens the opportunity to examine and evaluate the seven options put forward for treatment of liquid waste and the two possible locations and technologies for treatment of solids. The options were developed by technical consultants, overseen by the Technical Oversight Panel and approved for consultation by the Directors of the CALWMC.

- ✓ Earned media
 - Press releases
 - Editorial meetings
 - Events
- ✓ Social media
 - Twitter
 - Facebook
 - Web sites
- ✓ Paid advertising
 - Black Press
 - Online TC
 - Used Victoria
 - Facebook
 - Postcard drop
- ✓ Targeted meetings and open houses
 - Community/neighbourhood associations
 - Business associations
- ✓ Online feedback
- ✓ Newsletter

<i>Participation</i>	Westside % just Westside communities (n=361)	Westside % to total participation across Core Area	Westside % of population in Core Area
Westside overall	100	27	28
Esquimalt	34	9	5.6
Colwood	26	7	5.7
Langford	24	6	11.9
View Royal	16	4	3.7
Songhees Nation	<1	<1	<1
Esquimalt Nation	0	0	<1

A total of 361 residents completed the online survey. While there was higher percentage of participation per population by Colwood and Esquimalt residents, and a lower percentage of participation per population by Langford residents, the overall participation by Westside residents is virtually equal to its population.

Liquid Treatment:

<i>Acceptability for liquid treatment - Westside residents</i>	One plant secondary	One plant tertiary	Two plant	Three plant secondary	Three plant tertiary	Four plant	Seven plant
Very acceptable	33	34	23	9	10	5	6
Somewhat acceptable	35	32	30	20	17	18	9
Not very acceptable	14	14	18	29	23	23	16
Not at all acceptable	17	16	26	38	46	50	66
No opinion	2	4	3	4	4	4	3
Very + Somewhat Acceptable	68	66	53	29	27	23	15

<i>Please choose 3 options, in no particular order, that are in your view, acceptable options for wastewater treatment.</i>	Pre-change	Post change
Two Plant - Rock Bay & Colwood - Secondary & Tertiary	69	51
One Plant - Rock Bay - Tertiary	70	47
One Plant - Rock Bay - Secondary	62	43
Three Plant Esquimalt Nation, Rock Bay & Colwood - Tertiary	25	20
Three Plant - Esquimalt Nation, Rock Bay & Colwood - Secondary	21	15
Seven Plant - Langford, Colwood, View Royal, Rock Bay, East Saanich, Saanich Core & Esquimalt	13	10
Four Plant - Esquimalt Nation, Rock Bay, Colwood & East Saanich	10	11
No answer	9	33

Solids Treatment:

Preference for solids treatment site	West %
Hartland Landfill	35
Rock Bay	37
No preference	28

<i>Q. Please rank your top three considerations among the following:</i>	Top consideration	Top 1 st , 2 nd or 3 rd consideration
Truck traffic for moving solids	20	42
Ability to be integrated with waste like food scraps, wood and construction waste, yard waste	16	41
Proximity of facilities to residential and business	13	42
Disposal of treated solids	11	45
Ability to generate resources like gas	13	35
Potential emissions	12	34
Piping to move solids	6	28
Ability to integrate into place	8	24

Priorities:

Ranking of your HIGHEST, SECOND HIGHEST and THIRD HIGHEST priorities for this project.	Highest priority	Highest 1 st , 2 nd or 3 rd priority
How the project costs will affect my taxes	45	75
Level of water quality being discharged into the ocean	26	51
Opportunities for water reuse and heat recovery	9	43
Location of the treatment plants	10	36
How the treatment facilities will integrate with my neighbourhood and community	5	24

Completing the project on time	4	30
How construction will impact the quality of life in my neighbourhood	1	12
How truck traffic will impact the quality of life in my neighbourhood	0	12

Open Houses:

Westside hosted four Open Houses for Westside residents and participated in a joint Open House at Songhees Wellness Centre with the Eastside. The Open Houses were not as well attended as the ones hosted last year at this time – however there was a very interested and engaged public that did come to the events. As well – it should be noted that all the Open Houses were well supported by municipal staff and politicians.

<i>Participation</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Langford	February 10, 2016	~20
Songhees Wellness Centre (Joint with Eastside)	February 11, 2016	~30
Colwood	February 13, 2016	~75
Westshore and Esquimalt Chambers	February 15, 2016	~20
View Royal	February 15, 2016 (AM)	~30
Esquimalt	February 16, 2016	~85





Correspondence

Residents of the Westside who were unable to attend the Open Houses and/or were unwilling to complete a survey were encouraged to email coreareawastewater.ca, staff or consultants to voice their concerns and ideas. As most emails received did not specifically identify where the respondent resided it is difficult to quantify which proportion of those who wrote in were from the Westside. However, it should be noted that themes coming from correspondence coincided with the quantitative data collected through the survey and at Open Houses.

All correspondence will be made available in accordance with *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*.

Qualitative Themes:

1. Financial

The priority concern of Westside residents is perceived cost escalations for the overall project. This issue was exacerbated by the comparison to the previous plan in spite of it being at a more preliminary stage in the process (the initial estimate for the previous plan was \$1.2B in 2007) and the claims put forward by citizen advocates of a less costly solution.

There are also concerns by citizens regarding the cost allocations published with the options and that they were unfair to smaller municipalities. Specifically there is a great deal of anxiety for those on septic and what, if anything, they

should contribute to the overall system. This is a particular concern of Colwood residents as 70% are currently not on the sanitary system – but as there are those on septic in Langford and View Royal there are potential impacts there as well.

The issue of protecting the grants was raised occasionally – however people who participated in the events were more concerned about getting the scale of the project to the right size and then convincing senior levels of government to support that plan financially.

2. Environmental

In spite of the financial concerns there is still a great degree of concern for the quality of discharge into the environment. Concerns mainly centre most notably around the discharge of pharmaceuticals and micro-plastics, their impact on wildlife and the aquatic eco-system, and potential impacts on human health. Regardless of costs – there are a substantial number of residents who would be willing to pay more to do what they see as the right thing and protect the environment.

There is also a substantial interest in the opportunities for recovery of both heat and water. Particular interest to residents is not only the potential for both benefitting the environment, but also creating a revenue stream to offset costs. Of recovery potential – water reuse was the most mentioned by participants.

3. Community impacts

In July of 2015 Westside Solutions conducted a public education and survey on proposed sites for wastewater treatment on the westside. From that consultation sites were narrowed into the six (6) that were part of the current initiative. As residents had already weighed in on site selection – there was very little negative feedback on Westside sites.

As well – because of the previous technical and public engagement work done on the Westside there is an interest by some members in the community to pursue a “Westside Solutions” that would have a single plant that would treat wastewater generated on the westside, and potentially all wastewater currently being discharged out the McCaulay outfall.

In earlier engagement events, the Westside has put an emphasis on community integration. While residents are always concerned that there will be a negative impact – there is a much higher level of comfort that any facility can be a positive addition to a neighbourhood, and not a negative. However, concern over impacts of truck traffic and disruption during construction must be acknowledged and minimized during construction and in operation.

4. Other

Other issues that were raised with some frequency at events include:

- confusion on why Rock Bay is in every option
- no analysis of impact on business taxes
- no analysis of impact on tourism if the stalemate continues
- frustration over conflicting information
- frustration of the length of time it is taking to make a decision

Conclusion

The Westside Select Committee's engagement strategy for the current phase of the Core Area project was built on a number of previous successful public engagement initiatives. As well as collaborating with the Eastside on the survey and advertising, over the course of the past few weeks the participating communities promoted activities and materials on their websites, at municipal halls and through social media; hosted five (5) Open Houses (including a joint Open House with the Eastside); communicated directly with community associations and citizens in person and through correspondence; and participated in a breakfast meeting with members of the Esquimalt and Westshore Chambers of Commerce.

Key themes that emerged include:

- concerns over costs and cost allocations;
- how application of costs will affect people on septic systems;
- concerns around discharge quality and having a treatment level that deals with substances such as pharmaceuticals and micro-plastics; and
- opportunities for water re-use and energy extraction.

There was very little negative feedback from participants on the proposed sites either in this round of engagement, or in the earlier SiteSpeak online survey that appears to speak to an understanding that facilities can be integrated into communities successfully. As well there is some interest, primarily from members of the business community, to further explore a "Westside Solution" with a single facility to treat wastewater generated by participating west-side communities as per the Engineering consultants report delivered to the Select Committee in November, 2015.

Public sessions were fairly well attended, had a cross section of residents – including many new faces - and were very respectful. It was clear that people who come to the public events came to learn more about the issue so as to contribute positively to the solution. It noted and appreciated by many citizens that the Westside public events were very well supported by municipal staff and politicians.