

EASTSIDE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

wastewater treatment + resource recovery



REPORT TO EASTSIDE SELECT COMMITTEE
Phase 1 – Public Consultation
July 15, 2015



Making a difference...together

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Summary of New Information

Findings from digital engagement/ survey

- Beginning June 24th we used a digital engagement tool to stage six options that emerged through our public dialogue process.
- In line with our approach of complete transparency, we showed the public the work in progress and asked them to participate in an iterative process.
- We heard a range of comments, in particular, that the public wants more costing and specific technical information.
- We were still able to gather a wealth of information, and in the name of accuracy and fairness, we are coding and preparing a report on the qualitative data.
- What we have confirmed from Ethelo Decisions, is the overall completeness of ranking data for options, with small shifts to account for fairness screening of participants taking the survey multiple times.

Rankings of Six Option Sets:

The first number represents the ranking overall and the second, is weighted for self-identified priorities.

- Centralized Plant – Rock Bay Area
 - 73.3% , 69.7%
- Two Plant – Victoria Outer Harbour / Rock Bay Area
 - 39.1% , 39.2%
- Centralized Plant – Victoria Outer Harbour
 - 37.0% , 38.0%
- Three Plant – Victoria Outer Harbour / Rock Bay Area / East Saanich
 - 32.3% 35.1%
- Four Plant – Victoria Outer Harbour / Rock Bay Area / East Saanich / Oak Bay
 - 27.7% 31.4%
- Five Plant – Victoria Outer Harbour / Rock Bay Area / Oak Bay / Saanich Core / East Saanich
 - 26.8%, 31.0%

Qualitative Data:

The commentary on the options offers key information to the process. We have surveyed and moderated it constantly. We are coding the qualitative data and overall survey data and anonymizing it for review. It will be available as a full report, before the July 29th meeting.

Overall themes:

- commentary on process
- frustration with level of information (too much, not enough, not right kind of data)
- interest in next steps
- challenges to siting
- ideas for options sets
- “get on with it”

Levels of Participation:

- Number of visits to the website: 3544
- Number of users registered (signed-up): 1144
- Number of users who voted: 861
- Average percentage of topics voted upon by each user: 66%
- Number of users who commented: 292
- Number of users who participated (voted or commented): 906
- Percentage of participants from Eastside postal codes: 82%

Challenges and Key Learnings from Digital Engagement Activity:

- We pushed the limit in terms of the type of information the public could assess with existing knowledge and project profiles.
- We heard this from participants and were able to harvest data about alternatives as well as process.
- Information, though critical, was highly valuable and focusing.
- This is one tool of many we have used, but many of the findings align with and build on what we have been learning. Exceptions are outlined in key findings.
- Findings on options beyond Rock Bay centralized options were inconclusive on Ethelo Decisions website.

Overall Consultation Participation – Breadth And Depth:

- Approximately 3000 touch points interactions with citizens over 10.5 week process.
- Some deep, some broad using a range of tools, processes and outreach methods.
- Overwhelmingly an older audience.
- Representative demographic sample gained through IPSOS Reid Survey, and range available in Ethelo, but largely an audience over 44.
- Many new participants to key processes, however, heavy engagers were part of every session.

Key Findings: Principles and Commitments

Project commitments:

Through the process, we've learned about public priorities, values and their expectations for the project. We've articulated this grouping of findings as project commitments going forward.

OUR PROJECT COMMITMENTS

The following values and commitments have emerged through our process -- they represent what we heard as priorities, challenges and goals. We express them here as a way to be clear about public priorities and how they will guide future phases of the project.

1. We will treat our sewage and move forward efficiently and transparently to achieve this goal, while respecting a process of community input and technical design.
2. We are committed to solutions that value the livability of neighbourhoods, cities and the sub-region. In specific terms, this means we will seek wastewater solutions that:
 - Have no odour
 - Have low noise
 - Reduce construction and traffic, where possible
 - Create new opportunities for public amenities and public spaces through urban design
 - Pursue architecture that inspires pride and offers opportunities to educate the public, and reflects place.
3. We are committed to solutions that value ecological health and sustainability. This means solutions that:
 - Safe for water, land, air and human health, now and in future.
 - Able to capitalize on opportunities to reuse heat and water
 - Responsive to changes in sea level and other challenges posed by climate change
 - Meet and exceed provincial and federal regulations.
4. We are committed to solutions that optimize costs to citizens and are transparent about all costs to build, operate and recover resources. This means solutions that:
 - Optimize existing funding, where possible
 - Are clear about the costs to build and the lifecycle costs to operate all plants and related infrastructure
 - Optimize the costs to taxpayers at build and over the lifecycle of the project

5. We are committed to solutions that are safe for communities: This means solutions that are resilient and sensitive to:

- Seismic conditions
- Sea level rise
- Proximity of uses to residential neighbourhoods

6. We are committed to transparency and processes that involve communities. This means we are committed to an ongoing process that:

- Offers clear opportunities for public input and communicates how the input will inform decision makers
- Offers the most detailed level of information available
- Provides independent oversight and accountability for developing solutions

7. We are committed to solutions that are innovative and can anticipate and plan for future challenges and demands. This means solutions that

- Can stand the test of time and can be adaptive and responsive to changing conditions
- Are adaptive to local development pressures
- Use existing infrastructure to key advantage
- Explores the most up-to-date research and options in the field

Key Findings: Areas For Further Investigation

Through this process, we were able to surface key areas of interest, we were challenged to bring back costing and technical solutions, and we gained insight into acceptance of sites and options will be based on a public understanding of project features like scale, performance, amenities and how they integrate into community fabric.

We have walked the boundaries of how far we can push co-development of complex solutions through public engagement.

We have been given a clear message that a hand-over to subject matter experts and elected leaders to bring back rigorous information with true tradeoffs is now.

What Are The Questions And Challenges They Have For The Process?

- Respondents have called for a comparative analysis of:
 - distributed and centralized systems models,
 - secondary and tertiary treatment; and
 - approaches to residuals management – both anaerobic digestion and gasification.
- They want to see region-wide analysis that unites the Eastside and Westside findings and technical analysis.

Siting Findings:

- One of the most polarizing elements of dialogue has been the siting conversations, and process.
- We were tasked with identifying sites, and this theory of change has raised a number of challenges and opportunities.
- While talking about sites, we have been able to learn many things about the project; the cart and the horse are moving along together.
- We provided deep opportunities to reflect on sites brought forward by municipalities.
- Sites that emerged as possible options through dialogue, did not meet our conditions for acceptability post release of sites and options.
- Some sites, while publicly acceptable, may not be ideal from a seismology perspective, from a land acquisition perspective or from a compatibility with options modeling perspective.

We Learned:

- ***Ogden Point, Coast Guard Station and Banfield Park would likely not be considered publicly supportable.***
- As a result of feedback gathered through email, conversations and the survey, they no longer meet the standard for publicly acceptable sites.
- Through dialogue there was demonstrable conversation about opportunities to explore these sites for heat recovery, new public amenities, and for mitigation of current conditions, but we have listened.
- This affects our ability to bring forward a clear distributed model with existing public data.
- Citizens have flagged a number of sites that they recommend as being acceptable or worthy of further investigation: Trial Island, Cattle Point Park, Royal Roads Golf Course, Royal Jubilee Hospital, Trent Street pump station, Oak Bay Public Works Yard, Haultain Park – Haultain and Richmond
- In the spirit of deliberative democratic process and while the process was live on Ethelo, we have looked at these sites from an engineering and technical point of view.
- We see a need for a re-assessment of current distributed models without the Outer Harbour options as well as with some new thinking about viable sites.

Process Findings Going Forward

Public involvement, commentary and leadership throughout this process has provided invaluable guidance and has effectively shaped the solutions to come. We heard a mix of positive and negative commentary on the process. Many were frustrated by what they saw as a lack of technical and costing information that could guide their input. Others were happy to be able to help shape a project, as difficult as this is, through an iterative, building process. Many were challenged by what they saw as a taxing, fast process. Others seemed pleased to see movement.

Going forward we have some key learnings that can guide the next phase of public involvement:

1. Education and Project Literacy

As we emerge from a phase of listening into sharing information, there is a need for an improved focus on more accessible, broadly available information about the project, process and options. Our focus to date has been a sounding of public values and knowledge. As a way of improving the quality of debate, we are committed to best practices in information sharing going forward.

2. A Focus on Vision, Commitments and Opportunities

Following a public event presented by an architect and urban designer with a focus on wastewater, we saw the opportunity to share a vision of what could be. We can see how future collaborative explorations with the public should begin to imagine what is possible aesthetically – models of treatment that can be green, community friendly, beneficial to tourism, as well as providing critical information regarding cost, standards, benefits and potential outcomes. We are interested in moving into a place where citizens can look at the net benefits of a project going forward.

3. Greater Demographic Inclusivity

While we had robust and deep engagement in this phase, the face-to-face engagement was characterized by a high-level of participation from elders versus younger audiences. There was a marked lack of ethno-cultural diversity as well. We will make it our goal to involve citizens under 40, families, children, newcomers to Canada and range of audiences who have not been involved as deeply to date.

4. Specificity and Trade-Offs Required

We heard very clearly that the public did not want to be engaged or consulted further unless they had detailed technical and costing info in hand. Our approach will be on education and project updates, until there is an opportunity to present detailed information for review.