

EASTSIDE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

wastewater treatment + resource recovery



PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Eastside Wastewater Dialogues | February 2016

PHASE 2

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INTRODUCTION

Meaningful infrastructure planning involves citizens, in particular those whose lives and communities are most affected by decisions on large projects. In this case, our consultation team has engaged the public on conceptual plans for federally and provincially mandated wastewater treatment to serve the Core Area of the Capital Regional District.

Involving citizens does not remove decisions from the hands of identified subject matter experts and elected representatives. Instead, it provides the public with genuine opportunities for input.

More opportunities to seek input can improve transparency and leave both decision-makers and the public with improved technical and planning literacy and a deeper understanding of the issues, ongoing concerns and priorities surrounding major projects.

Beginning in September 2015, the consultation team in support of the Eastside Select Committee (elected directors from Saanich, Oak Bay and Victoria) commenced planning for a second phase of consultation and engagement on specific option sets for wastewater treatment and solids processing in the Core Area. The team was tasked with creating a plan for taking option sets – developed, costed



and sited – to the public for input and to test “acceptability” and listen for support and challenges.

The second phase of public input was initially scheduled for December, and then December and early January 2016. Despite the fact that promotion and outreach for consultation had begun in early December, due to ongoing CALWMC and technical deliberations, the consultation was re-scheduled for a period of one month between January and February 2016. Much of the information that would form the basis for public input, was available in near to final drafts on the CRD website and visible to the public for review from late November on, including costing information that was released in late 2015 and early 2016.

New option sets emerged in mid-January for inclusion in the consultation process.

While the first phase of consultation used deliberative approaches to surface priorities, challenges, values and ideas in the strategic planning of this infrastructure, this phase was intended to address the public's interest in more information around specific sites, proposed activities, levels of treatment and costs. It was also developed to test the acceptability of conceptual solutions for treatment and resource recovery. In short: we were asked to test options that had emerged through a municipal, technical and public process and then to subsequently gather public input and report back.

This document describes the approach for analyzing and reporting on the feedback provided by public participants in the Eastside process from January – February 2016, and to outline how it intersects with overall public engagement across the Core Area. It describes the process for planning and carrying out engagement activities and for reviewing and analyzing data generated through that process. This reporting is presented to help inform decisions by the Core Area Liquid Waste Management Committee and its constituent municipalities related to wastewater treatment in the Capital Regional District.

SUMMARY OF EASTSIDE PARTICIPATION

Participation in workshops, open houses, storefront drop-ins and meetings: **260**

Storefront: **185**

Participation in survey overall: **1357**

Survey participation from Eastside communities: **937**

Questionnaires and feedback forms: **68**

We will share:

- Approach and methodology
- Planning for Consultation
- Activities
- Themes and Priorities
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Appendices and Resources

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Background/ Project Foundations:

The CRD and its municipal partners have engaged the public across the Core Area, to gather input that will inform decisions about wastewater treatment solutions. The work of engaging citizens has been divided between Westside and Eastside Select Committees, the latter including Victoria, Saanich and Oak Bay. Our approach starts from the perspective that durable solutions have three components: they are technically and practically feasible, municipally sanctioned and publicly supportable.

Following the previous unsuccessful attempts to advance treatment and resource recovery, the member municipalities of the Core Area Liquid Waste Management Committee, in collaboration with the CRD, committed to engage citizens in the identification of sites, planning approach and levels of service that would be used to treat wastewater. The foundational approach to this renewed effort was to broaden and deepen public involvement where there was a sense that both municipalities and key publics needed to be involved earlier, more deeply and with greater transparency throughout the process.

Timelines were established that allowed the process to meet deadlines set by the federal and provincial governments. At this time, provincial and federal

contributions are available to offset a portion of local government investments, providing the Capital Regional District achieves a solution that meets already-established federal and provincial criteria for municipal-scale wastewater treatment and completes all political approvals and amendments by March 2016.

In summer 2015, using the suite of sites that had been advanced by the three Eastside municipalities, and the information we learned from the public about base principles for site acceptability, and models for treatment and recovery, the technical and planning team from Urban Systems team began to analyse and iterate loose option sets, to test assumptions, and offer potential directions forward for further study and analysis and feedback. The Urban Systems team developed models based on the existing “sewer sheds”, analysis of flow scenarios, and available land, and identified approaches for treatment and recovery. The approach enabled analysis and costing of several key options that reflected the bundles of the priorities, siting information and values that were provided through public input.

Following this first phase of engagement, the team of technical consultants, the Technical Oversight Panel (TOP) and CRD staff took public, technical and municipal input from phase one, and worked to forge, fine-tune and assess

option sets. They were guided by the development of a project charter that set goals and commitments for the work.

Following this work, a second round of engagement has provided citizens with the opportunity to compare multiple concept based option sets, including design elements, and approaches for resource recovery and energy generation, in order to inform the final decision. The level of detail was increased due to citizen requests during phase one of consultation. Accordingly, phase two provided detailed information including: specific sites, a comparison between costs (life-cycle and household), benefits and performance between secondary and tertiary treatment, an expanded set of centralized and distributed models of delivery, and information about two models of solids processing: anaerobic digestion and gasification.

The initial targets agreed to by the Eastside and Westside Select Committees asked that all public engagement in the first phase be complete by late July 2015, and initially, that all subsequent consultation be complete by December 2015. The second phase of consultation was delayed by ongoing deliberation on technical, municipal and costing information related to option sets presented by Urban Systems, the TOP and CRD staff. Accordingly, the second phase of public consultation was not given a go ahead until January 15th, 2016. Following this decision, the team planned, scheduled and promoted activities to launch public consultation by January 25th. Seven wastewater



option sets and two approaches as well as sites for anaerobic digestion and gasification were prepared for public for input and dialogue. Consultation activities were completed by February 20th with an initial report to the CALWMC by February 22, 2016.

Approach in Brief:

The challenge of such an undertaking in a short period of time is significant given the great variation among the Core Area's population in terms of expertise in the subject matter, awareness about the issue, and ability to participate in face-to-face activities. Despite this challenge and the difficulty of engaging multiple communities in an extremely short period of time, the process resulted in over 1300 touchpoints across the Eastside over 26 days.

There are two important considerations that guide understanding of this second phase of consultation on wastewater planning for the Core Area.

- First, the second phase of the project July 2015 – February 2016 has been guided by a project charter, developed and sanctioned by the Core Area Liquid Waste Management Committee. It outlines the commitment to treat wastewater by 2020, as well as goals and commitments in project planning overall. Public input informed the charter, alongside political and technical considerations.
- Second, while citizen engagement in the first phase of project planning looked at upstream explorations of the infrastructure planning (core values, priorities, challenges and desired outcomes) the second phase dealt mainly with how the project could proceed at the level of concept – specific options for review and input related to site, levels of treatment and approaches to resource recovery. Again, the lens was designed to identify options that were technically and practically feasible, municipally sanctioned and publicly supportable.

The mandate of the second phase of consultation was to provide the public with an opportunity to see and comment on a range of potentially practical options that emerged from the analysis of the consulting technical team of Urban

Systems and Carollo and Associates and the Technical Oversight Panel (TOP).

The public was provided with summary materials and the capacity to review all technical background and detailed technical investigations online at www.coreareawastewater.ca. Our team was open to all input, and solicited feedback on trade-offs and comparisons on costs, levels of treatment, sites and possible approaches to solids processing.



PROJECT CHARTER

The project is guided by a set of goals and commitments that have been identified by CRD staff, elected directors, and informed by citizen and stakeholder input.

THE GOALS ARE TO:

- Meet or exceed federal regulations for secondary treatment by December 31, 2020
- Minimize costs to residents and businesses (life cycle cost) and provide value for money
- Produce an innovative project that brings in costs at less than original estimates
- Optimize opportunities for resource recovery to accomplish substantial net environmental benefit and reduce operating costs
- Minimize greenhouse gas production through the development, construction and operation phases and ensure best practice for climate change mitigation

THE COMMITMENTS ARE TO:

- Develop and implement the project in a transparent manner and engage the public throughout the process;
- Deliver a solution that adds value to the surrounding community and enhances the livability of neighbourhoods;
- Deliver solutions that are safe and resilient to earthquakes, tsunamis, sea level rise and storm surges;
- Develop innovative solutions that account for and respond to future challenges, demands and opportunities, including being open to investigating integration of other parts of the waste stream if doing so offers the opportunities to optimize other goals and commitments in the future; and
- Minimize greenhouse gas production through the development, construction and operation phases and ensure best practice for climate change mitigation

Planning for Consultation

Citizen advisors – the Eastside Public advisory Committee have served as a wisdom council and sounding board in the development of the public consultation process, materials and promotion of the process. They gave input in the development of a phase 2 plan and have received draft materials for review, but as often, the pace of the process has meant they are offering constructive strategic input without an expectation of sign off. Members of the Committee have also been concerned with the governance and mandate of the committee over the last four months.

Planning Process - Input

We sought input from the Eastside Select Committee, the Technical and Community Advisory Committee and the Eastside Public Advisory Committee in the development of a phase 2 public engagement plan.

Education and Outreach in Advance of Consultation

We were asked to reach out to stakeholder groups in advance of the second phase of consultation. We met with the Burnside Gorge Residents Association, the Gorge Tillicum Residents Association and the Gordon Head Residents Association. We reached out to all community associations through our existing lists and SCAN – the

Saanich Community Association Network, promoted participation. We also brought back architect Bruce Haden alongside local architects from Cascadia Architecture, to deliver an educational conversation about possibilities for wastewater, architecture and urban design in the region. Plans for outreach to schools and broader community groups were challenging in the face of deadlines and schedules. Newsletters and email updates to a growing eastside list provided updates as they were available to citizens and organizations in advance of consultation.

Core Principles:

Based on our work to date and the feedback from participants, consultants, elected directors and citizen advisors, this phase of work was grounded in key principles. These include:

1. **Accessibility:** We are committed to ensuring that clear information – technical, costing, performance, governance – is made available to citizens in a range of formats and accessible to a range of learners.
2. **Transparency:** Ensuring that all project information is made public in as rapid and clear a manner as possible.
3. **Diversity:** In the context of public problem solving, diversity refers to the different skills, knowledge, and

interests of participants, as well as ethnocultural background, age, and economic backgrounds. Diversity is essential for effective public problem solving.

4. Expanding Civic Literacy: That we make a sincere effort to reach out to the broader community with basic information about the role, importance and basic technical info about wastewater treatment. We will attempt to expand knowledge and engagement throughout the exercise.
5. Clear decision-making process: Being extremely clear about how public input is gathered, reported and how it feeds decision making by whom and when.

Methodology for Phase Two Consultation

At the next level of detail, the consultation methodology was organized around several commitments including:

- To identify the timelines and the decisions to be made and by whom;
- To ensure participants have access to information and multiple opportunities to offer input;
- To inform the public of the conceptual alternatives and identify key trade-offs;
- To provide a range of types of engagement to allow people with varying levels of time and commitment to participate; and
- To solicit input and reflect it back to the public and decision-makers rapidly.

ACTIVITIES IN DETAIL

Website – CoreAreaWastewater.ca December 2015

Feedback on the website during earlier phases of consultation, resulted in the CRD streamlining its online presence for wastewater planning and developing a direct and focused address to point the public to activities and resources. This became a clearinghouse for the latest planning information and engagement activities.

Storefront – Centennial Square CRD offices

January 26 – February 19

Because of the rapid nature of the consultation and the season, we determined that it would be important to provide a stop for citizens seeking information, resources, questionnaires and accessibility to boards and other materials provided at open houses. We were open weekdays from 11-7pm and some shifts on the weekend to ensure that we provided access after working hours . As well, we used the space to host various stakeholder meetings, a media launch and briefings. Through sign ins and daily counts we estimate 185 drop-ins to the CRD storefront.

Open Houses and Workshops – January 30 – February 17

We held a range of open houses and 90-minute workshops during the period of consultation. At each open house we had engagement and technical staff present provide briefings, answer questions and listen to input. These sessions included:

- January 30, Gordon Head United Church
– Open House (40 participants)
- February 9, Burnside Gorge Community Centre
– Workshop (22 participants)
- February 10, Victoria Conference Centre
– Workshop (26 participants)
- February 11, Songhees Wellness Centre
– Open House (26 participants)
- February 13, University of Victoria, Cadboro Commons
– Workshop (35 participants)
- February 14, Burnside Gorge Community Centre
– Open House (22 participants)

Focused Briefings with Community Organizations and Stakeholder Groups February

We reached out the Saanich Community also held a range of stakeholder focused briefings that including:

- January 25, Burnside Gorge Community Association Briefing (12 participants)
- February 12, Victoria West Community Association Briefing and Dialogue (30 participants)

- February 12, Rock Bay Business Briefing (2 participants + 5 calls and door knocking discussions)
- February 14, Burnside Gorge Community Association, Residents Briefing and Dialogue (22 participants)
- February 15, Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Victoria Briefing (4 participants)
- February 15, Local place making, tech and cultural creative briefing (3 participants)
- February 16, Local conservation organizations (35 participants)
- February 16 CUPE briefing and conversation (5 participants)
- February 17, Burnside Gorge Residents Briefing and Dialogue (7 participants)

At each meeting we attempted to do the following: inform participants of the process and how their feedback would be incorporated; a briefing on all of the seven option sets and the two approaches and sites for solids processing; and an attempt to answer questions and gather comments. We offered questionnaires, feedback forms, an invitation to email thoughts and we captured comments and key

themes via flipchart and detailed notes. The sessions varied in size, although common to all were smaller groups participating than in the first phase of engagement. We developed notes and themes from each conversation, which will be appended in the final report.

Self Selecting Survey January 25 – February 20

A self-selecting, open-link survey developed with advice from IPSOS Reid provided survey takers with information including municipally focused costing on each option, followed by a summary of concepts and their comparative performance. It provided a range of open-ended and multiple choice questions. This was a non-representative sample, and generated strongly-felt sentiments from those who seek to ensure that their positions are heard. There was a limit of four responses from each IP address to ensure that there was not an attempt to overload the survey with responses from one source. We were not tasked with asking participants to vote on options, but to share information and test options for acceptability and to gather commentary. We were not asked to test other options, but gave space for participants to opt out of questions or to provide detailed comments. The CALWMC decided to change a question at the mid-point in the survey. This had an impact on the results. The survey was developed with guidance from the citizen committee and was shown in beta and draft form to the Eastside and CALWMC. Questions were developed with assistance from Kyle Braid of IPSOS Reid. Despite the skewing of data from the change mid-

survey, overall the data provided quantitative analysis showing the most prominent issues in the minds of survey participants. The survey included open questions, which may identify additional areas of interest and concern in the minds of the public.

Print questionnaires: We distributed print versions of the questionnaire at all events, through municipal halls, at the storefront and on demand by phone or email. We mailed out dozens and picked up dozens at the municipal halls and other outlets. We included the data from the 68 completed print surveys.

Direct emails to wastewater@crd.bc.ca

We invited the public to send direct feedback via email, which was then subsequently coded for review and inclusion into the Core Area Report.

Promotion of Process

Ensuring citizens were aware of the opportunities to engage and could find our materials was a key pillar in our work. The channels we used to promote participation include:

Earned media

Media launch of consultation on January 26th.

Paid Media

Advertising in regional and community print media, radio ads and digital media.

Email Outreach

Using the CRD's list of community associations and individuals who expressed interest in the project, we would send out updates on all events.

Networks

Using networks through citizen advisors, directors and team members, we were able to promote the process and key events.

Materials Development

Developing videos, booklets and key information packages that offered visualization of challenging technical info.



THEMES AND PRIORITIES

Our goal is to provide an accurate reflection of the feedback from citizens on issues, themes and options for consideration by decision-makers, and articulate these in a manner that will assist subject matter experts and decision-makers understand their relevance for the decisions required.

There was a broad diversity of opinions, values and ideas expressed during the second phase of consultation. Examining all the data inputs, we were able to identify several strong themes that point to public priorities and concerns with the option sets and alternatives:

Levels of Treatment – Wastewater Treatment Options

Throughout our conversations in open houses and in workshops, via the written questionnaires, emails and as a finding in the survey, we heard a strong interest in tertiary treatment. This aligns with priorities gathered during the first phase of the consultation process around improving the quality of what goes into the ocean and an interest in water reuse.

There was specific concern identified for pharmaceuticals, household and industrial materials, micro-plastics and other chemical inputs and the ability to remove these

inputs through tertiary treatment. Another line of inquiry focused on not simply meeting but exceeding government standards. Another theme identified a commitment to tertiary level of treatment in order to maximize the investment of infrastructure dollars and to prepare for future shifts in base requirements. Additionally, there were sentiments expressed around water reuse and future-proofing the region through a period of climate shift, and to recognize water as a valuable commodity now and in future.

Divergence:

Where we heard diverging streams on this theme was through

- questioning of the cost benefit analysis of tertiary versus secondary
- survey results showing nearly even support for one plant secondary and tertiary and lower for multiple plants
- survey results showing significantly higher support for one plant with tertiary treatment than for multiple plants providing tertiary treatment

Complexity, Cost and Options – Wastewater Treatment Options

Another rising theme for participants was the balance between cost, performance and environmental benefit. **This was manifest in support for one and two plant solutions** through the survey, during open houses and via questionnaires. Respondents weighed the impacts, benefits with cost overall and complexity of the options. Respondents reported that one and two plant options could provide increased levels of treatment and innovation with lower levels of complexity, conveyance infrastructure and environmental impact than options with more plants. The priorities articulated in a representative survey in spring 2015, identified priorities as preventing harmful materials from entering land and ocean and cost align with the public's ongoing balancing between cost and environmental performance. There was also a theme present around the opportunities to be responsive to growth or need in future, but while achieving a base level of service quickly. A number of participants discussed that while they are interested in possibilities for heat and water resource incomes with more distributed systems, they are weighing the costs and impacts of the operating costs and infrastructure. Many are coming down in favour of less complexity for one plant and two plant options with consideration for smaller plants in growth centres as need or opportunity emerges.

Divergence:

Where we heard diverging themes:

- interest in single plant but concerns for Rock Bay as a site and its need for conveyance to Clover Point.
- Concerns for resilience of single plant and scale of single plant sites versus smaller distributed sites

Feedback Re: Alternatives Outside of Wastewater Options Presented for Review

Many respondents provided strong feedback on the proposed options. The commentary coalesced around key themes:

1. A concern with rising costs;
2. Concern with siting , particularly costs and disruption of conveyance in Victoria;
3. Some respondents still feel that no treatment is required;
4. Interest in design alternatives, such as distributed systems and revisiting sites already considered and rejected during phase one of consultation.

These themes and response can be summarized as follows:

“Return to McLoughlin”

In the context of media outreach by directors and a motion to bring this previous plan back to the table, we heard some commentary that supports reviving this option. We heard this in survey comments, via questions at meetings, and in emails and questionnaires. The interest in this option focused mainly on an assumption of lower cost in comparison to the options that emerged and were put in front of the public through the current and agreed upon process. Also, by siting at McLoughlin, some respondents argued it would avoid disruption of proposed infrastructure from Rock Bay to Clover Point.

“Innovation and Lower Cost Alternatives”

There is a group of community advocates who have been longtime observers of wastewater planning and past participants in this process. Individuals have attended some consultation events and have been promoting alternative options that feature other sites that were not advanced during this process. This group is interested in options like “deep shaft” technology that was explored by the Technical Oversight Panel as well as a \$250 million fully tertiary distributed option proposed by several community members and reviewed by all the technical teams. Some citizens who attended public meetings have expressed

doubt about the environmental regulations that call for redundancy of pipes. In summary, the commentary can be summarized as promoting a distributed option that would result in 100% tertiary treatment with less need for ocean outfalls or back up infrastructure.

“Concern with Conveyance and Cost”

Some participants focused on the fact that all the options required new infrastructure from a facility at Rock Bay to Clover Point. There was concern with the cost of the new infrastructure, compared to costs of infrastructure at other sites that are not currently under consideration, as well as concern with the possible disruption to the downtown core of Victoria.

“No Need To Treat”

Despite the commitment of the Core Area Liquid Management Committee, some people question the need for treatment and therefore the need for any additional infrastructure. Another theme of conversation emerged around delaying the investment in treatment until a later date. This theme appeared in comments and questions from some participants.

Solids Processing:

While the survey shows even support for solids processing either at Hartland or Rock Bay, we heard concern about these sites during community conversations and from emails and questionnaires.

1. Residents of Rock Bay and Burnside were concerned about seeing processing of solids in closer proximity to residential neighbourhoods, and identified piping to Hartland to minimize truck traffic and impact on the neighbourhood. Without more information about design and impacts on the local community, Rock Bay and Burnside residents opposed solids processing in their neighbourhood.
2. Overall, there was concern for safety and possible environmental impacts of both anaerobic digestion and gasification.
3. There was a strong interest in further study of the opportunities for integrating municipal solid waste with wastewater solids provided at Hartland.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We met with a range of organizations and communities to try to ensure we could canvass a broader group than those who might be highly attuned to the conversation on wastewater, but who may be impacted by any decisions or approaches going forward. They included:

- Burnside Gorge Community Association, local residents and business owners
- Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Victoria
- Conservation organizations including Surfrider Foundation, T. Buck Suzuki and Sewage Treatment Alliance
- Designers, urbanists and business owners
- CUPE

Burnside Gorge Community

Perhaps the most significant activity during this short period, and where we put a good deal of energy was reaching out to residents and business people in the Rock Bay and Burnside Gorge areas. We held two workshops, one open house, one lunch mixer and several focused briefings for local residents, as well as meeting with the Board of

Directors of the Burnside Gorge Community Association. We promoted these events through:

- The listserv of the Burnside Community Centre through the support and assistance of staff and board
- On site flyers and leaflets
- By leafletting businesses and the surrounding neighbourhoods
- Through our existing outreach and mail drops, including print, radio and mail outs to every household.

We had approximately 12 residents at one workshop and 32 at two subsequent briefing workshops, with open attendance of approximately 20 at an open house. We have also received numerous emails and questionnaires from residents.

We provide information about the options, as well as the two sites in question: the BC Hydro/ Transport Canada site and the mix of sites at Pleasant Street, the Municipal Works and David, closer to Point Ellice. We discussed the footprint, proposed activities, the opportunities for mixed use on the sites, the benefits and implications of various forms of treatment.

What we heard:

- Residents of the area feel that there is a mistaken perception among people in the region and among decision-makers, that Burnside Gorge is a solely industrial rather than residential community. There were concerns about the long-term implications of siting a large wastewater treatment plant because:
 - » the neighbourhood has a higher density of renters who tend to be more transient and may not participate as vigorously as those in other neighbourhoods;
 - » there are residents who have barriers to participation based on economic need; and
 - » the neighbourhood is often seen as a destination for siting industrial, activities that other neighbourhoods reject
- There was also a concern that not enough time was dedicated to consultation and more detailed information about possible local impacts was requested.
- There were mixed levels of support and opposition to wastewater treatment, and strong opposition to establishing solids processing in the area. Participants expressed this through concern for increased construction and operational traffic, as well as concerns for environmental impacts closer to residential neighbourhoods.
- There was some expression of concern for the loss of the industrial waterfront, as well as concern about state of remediation on either site.
- There were caveats that could affect support for any wastewater project in the neighbourhood:
 - » A commitment to the highest level of odour and noise control
 - » Commitments to manage and mitigate construction disruption to a minimum of what was proposed for the previous project in Esquimalt
 - » Addressing possible risk to property values
 - » Selection of a site that will cause the least disruption to business and community with the highest benefit in terms of mixed use and recreation.
 - » Excellence in design including strong design input by the community through ongoing involvement in project planning

- » Place making for recreation, business, education and culture onsite
- » Meaningful amenities packages that bring benefit to community
- » Access to waterfront and desire for harbour path and improved connectivity between downtown and Selkirk neighbourhood

Business Voices:

We had challenges getting numbers of business people out to events but had a robust conversation with the CEO of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce as well as a small number of business people in the Rock Bay/ Burnside neighbourhood. We promoted these conversations through existing Chamber networks and the local business list of the Burnside Gorge Community Association.

We heard that:

- There is concern about rising costs and challenges that could be posed to local business by conveyance infrastructure in the downtown core of Victoria.
- There is concern about the ability to implement options with high complexity versus a one or two plant option – multiple site option sets versus the previous

plan and/ or the lowest cost option available through the existing options.

- There is frustration and fatigue with the pace and getting something done
- There is concern for the state of remediation on the existing sites.
- There is some interest in improvements to the business zones in Rock Bay, especially for businesses like food and beverage and breweries, and the possibility to bring more animation and customers to the zones. For some businesses close to the existing industrial uses, there is a hope that a new wastewater plant could address air quality and disruption challenges posed by the existing industrial uses.

CUPE:

Following a detailed briefing, the Canadian Union of Public Employees have provided a detailed position on the proposed options. It is attached to this report.

Conservation organizations:

A group of conservation organizations attended a briefing and offered overall feedback on the option sets.

- Many were concerned that the process was headed for more delay and being derailed. Get on with it – was a strong sentiment
- A commercial fisher and long-time activist asked to flag that secondary removes a lot from the effluent and asked that the fastest most approach be taken to expedite treatment.
- There were questions about McLoughlin and whether it is a better or more feasible site
- Questions about the possibility of a hybrid model – with secondary and tertiary add-ons and plants as needed
- There were questions about technologies for treating solids and questions about openness to technologies outside of gasification and anaerobic digestion, like fluidized bed. Commentary about high heat and ability to remove toxins from sludge was provided.
- There were questions about McLoughlin as a backup to the existing option sets.



- There were questions about the costing post 2030 and whether demand would require new infrastructure.
- Overall, interest in moving ahead and finding most expeditious model for getting treatment to improve marine environment.

Creative Focus Group:

A group of three local creative and place makers gathered to discuss opportunities for urban design and wastewater. One of the participants was a former wastewater engineer, who expressed a desire to see wastewater infrastructure celebrated and used to educate – both children and the public – on the processes that help the city run.

Another local creative imagined improved public connectivity through either of the sites in Rock Bay and into local neighbourhoods, as well as the possibility of co-locating tasting rooms for local breweries in a mixed use setting.

Challenges For Consultation:

The original plan for consulting residents of the Eastside communities were developed in alignment with best practices for consultation on large infrastructure projects, including:

- Sufficient time and notification;
- Outreach to communities that are challenged to participate;
- A welcoming environment including food and sufficiently detailed background materials

- Accessible opportunities
- Multiple touchpoints that allow for participation despite varied working schedules
- Online and in-person opportunities

There were numerous challenges posed by the consultation:

1. Scheduling Changes

We reached out to communities, planned, scheduled and began to promote consultation in early to mid December. It was frustrating and confusing to some stakeholders that we had to cancel our activities and then reach out again to reschedule. In some cases, this undermined trust in the process and confidence that input would be appropriately considered.

2. Period of Consultation

We were given a short period of time to plan, schedule and promote consultation as well as to implement the formal consultation during the period of a month. More time would have meant we could have reached more citizens and stakeholders, allowing for a fuller conversation and understanding of the various perspectives.

3. **Diversity of Voices – Consultation Framework**

While it is expected and welcome to hear a diversity of voices with a range of perspectives during a consultation period, many citizens came to events feeling overwhelmed by the competing information in the public domain. They reported being confused by CALWMC directors who were promoting alternatives to those being presented as part of the agreed-upon process. This resulted in staff having to manage anger and confusion by stakeholders, as well as try to support learning and input on already complicated option sets.

4. **Balance of Information**

We were tasked with trying to provide information in such a way that allowed those who are less involved to participate. We attempted to provide high level summaries and comparisons, while linking to more detailed technical information as needed. While some respondents reported being overwhelmed by information, others requested more detail. It was challenging to get the balance correct.

5. **Emotional Debate**

We had highly emotional participants, who frequently yelled at staff during the consultations. This was to be expected, but where challenges became highly charged is when advocates tried to prevent other participants from filling out questionnaires. This became especially challenging for the team in communities like Burnside Gorge, where local residents wanted more information about sites and impacts, and residents from outside the neighbourhood sought vocal debate and challenge. While louder voices could dominate, quieter voices at open houses and in smaller groups gave us a good picture of the overall debate.

OVERALL FINDINGS

In summary, our team attempted to balance a range of perspectives, voices and the expression of positional interests. We stand by the data and synthesis of commentary through multiple channels. Many participants came to learn and give feedback on the existing options. Still others pushed for alternatives. We listened for the range of commentary and have tried to reflect it as clearly and carefully as possible. We thank the citizens who participated, most of whom were thoughtful, curious, engaged and care deeply about their communities.

This report has been prepared by the consulting team of Amanda Gibbs, Principal, Public Assembly in support of the Eastside Select Committee and Core Area Liquid Waste Management Committee.

APPENDICES – TO BE INCLUDED IN FINAL REPORT

1. Session notes and flipcharts
2. Questionnaires
3. Letter from Canadian Union of Public Employees
4. Verbatim results from Eastside
5. Eastside Consultation Plan
6. Minutes from Eastside Public Advisory Committee, TCAC, CALWMC related to consultation planning, as required.

Wastewater Planning Consultation Representatives,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide some feedback on sewage treatment in the Capital Regional District. As many politicians have noted this is the largest infrastructure project that the CRD will take on for the foreseeable future and getting it done right is important not only to current residents, but also for future residents.

CUPE Local 1978 represents approximately 950 members in Greater Victoria, and is affiliated to both CUPE BC and CUPE National. CUPE is the largest public sector union in Canada with 635,000 members nationwide.

CUPE has been involved in the process to develop a wastewater treatment plant for the CRD from the beginning. Our primary concern is that this new infrastructure be publicly owned and operated and we, along with allies and residents, have advocated for this all through the process.

While this phase of consultation has not focused on procurement, we want to ensure that decision makers are still mindful that public ownership and operation is important to CRD residents.

Below we have briefly outlined the reasons we believe publicly owned and operated infrastructure is the right decision for CRD residents and we have also included a few comments and concerns we hope will be considered moving forward.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need further clarification on anything below.

Thank you,

Rick Illi
CUPE Local 1978 President

Benefits to Publicly Owned and Operated Infrastructure

- **Protecting the environment and public control are linked.** Public control means the public interest, and not private corporate interests, will drive decisions. Local government decisions are most often done in public and are much more accountable and transparent than those made by private corporations. And in the end, environmental risk and damage always end up as a public concern and responsibility.
- **Privatization costs more.** Public-private partnerships or P3s are a taxpayer rip-off. They cost more than public operation. Private corporations take on P3 projects to make money. They answer to shareholders, not the public or taxpayers. Private financing costs more and the “mark up” for taking on risk and meeting profit targets adds significantly to the cost of P3 projects. British Columbia’s Auditor General, Carol Bellringer recently offered strong evidence of this in her [annual report](#) where she found that government is paying nearly twice as much for borrowing through P3s as it would if it borrowed the money itself.
- **Taxpayers “run the risk” in the end.** If things go wrong, private corporations can walk away. Government and taxpayers cannot. We end up with the problem and ultimately pay to clean up the economic and sometimes, environmental mess.
- **P3s lock us into decades-long contracts.** They lock our local governments and communities in to 30-or-more-year contracts. This limits current and future generations having a say in a key part of their community. Multi-decade contracts also limit how flexible our communities can be in terms of using new technologies or responding to new information.
- **P3 deals are very complex and secretive.** P3 deals are secretive and negotiated behind closed doors. By the time they are finished, the contracts are huge and incomprehensible even to the staff of cities that are “purchasing” the service.
- **Focusing on local employment and economic development.** When private corporations run the show contracts often go to big corporations and we lose local investment, tax resources and jobs. We want local government to be able to offer the next generations challenging jobs that pay decently and allow the students of today to stay in our communities and have successful careers. Investing in public services is part of that.

Public ownership and operation as a theme during public consultation

There has been many opportunities for public input both when developing the current funded and approved plan, and also over the past year while the CRD has explored new options for sewage treatment. One thing that residents have consistently said is that this infrastructure should be publicly owned and operated.

Most recently during phase one of the consultation the survey for the Westside showed that the majority of respondents (67 percent) supported a public option. On the Eastside, open-link survey respondents ranked 'publicly owned and operated' as one of the top three most important criteria when developing a sewage treatment facility. And, at other engagement events where there was opportunity for dialogue there was talk about the provision of public sector jobs, and opportunities to keep water and heat resources in public hands.

CRD residents clearly see the importance of public infrastructure and that should be honoured.

No further expansion of Private Operation

During the initial planning phase for sewage treatment there was a robust discussion about procurement, and after hearing from residents the CRD board went ahead with a plan that included a fully public wastewater treatment plant and a P3 solids energy recovery centre. While ideally the entire project would be publicly owned and operated, we ask that the CRD honour their previous commitment and not have any expansion of the P3 portion of the project.

We have heard the commitment to maintain the current balance of funding with respect to limiting the P3 component to the solids-energy recovery portion. We were pleased to have this confirmation both in writing and as part of the Chair's report from Director Helps at the January 27 CALWMC meeting that other than the portion of the project that is already P3, the CRD is not contemplating expanding the private or public-private procurement or operating model portion of the current funding plan.

We believe that despite these assurances, it is critical to ensure that new P3 procurement opportunities do not arise as the project moves forward, for example as part of the Commission's mandate.

Private Transition back to Public

We remain concerned about the existing P3 and would like to see a plan to transition the solids-energy recovery portion into public delivery as quickly as possible.

CUPE suggests that any portion of the project that does go ahead as a P3 should be transitioned back into public hands in a timely manner. 30 years is too long for a private corporation to make money off of CRD resident's sewage.

P3 Funding

Although we understand that it is not the CALWMC's intention to re-examine procurement or funding options we would encourage elected officials to ask the new federal government if the \$83 million committed to the solids energy recovery centre must remain tied to the Public Private Partnership fund.

It is our understanding that the new Federal Government is currently examining the P3 fund and its future. If the P3 fund was eliminated would the CRD be able to have an entirely publicly owned and operated project? Or would this project's funding be grandfathered and remain a P3? We believe these are questions that should be answered before moving forward with the procurement and implementation phases of this project.

Core Area Wastewater Treatment Program Commission Oversight

While we understand that the CRD is bound to have a commission in place to oversee the implementation phase of the eventual plan because of the Provincial funding agreement, if there is any opportunity to change the shape or scope of the commission we believe that this would be in the best interest of CRD residents.

Currently the commission has no elected representation, and we worry that in this form it could lack transparency and accountability. Once the commission begins their work there should be some type of feedback mechanism in place for the public that is structured and broadly accessible.

The Commission will also be in charge of procurement, and while the CRD's CAO has informed us that the Commission must implement the project based on CRD policies and the funding agreements in place, we want to reiterate that there should be no further expansion of private funding or operation.

Integration of Municipal Solid Waste

The Integrated Resource Management Task Force has been working to explore the potential integration of municipal solid waste with liquid solid waste and will report on their findings at the end of this month.

CUPE local 1978 members currently work at Hartland Landfill and should integration occur we have concerns around whether this would expand the private operation of this project.

The CRD should also consider the subcontractors and contracting out language in CUPE local 1978's collective agreement should they want to proceed with integration.

"ARTICLE 29, SUB-CONTRACTORS 29.01 All sub-contractors of the District shall provide wages which are at least equal to those specified in this Agreement when work of a similar or same nature is performed."

"ARTICLE 36, CONTRACTING OUT 36.01 No regular employee shall be laid off and placed on the recall list, terminated, or failed to be recalled to their classification as a result of contracting out."