

**REPORT TO SALT SPRING ISLAND LIQUID WASTE DISPOSAL LOCAL SERVICE COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, 05 MARCH 2008**

SUBJECT COMPOSTING PILOT - STRATEGY TO PROCEED

PURPOSE

To present to the Salt Spring Island Liquid Waste Disposal Local Service committee (SSILW) for consideration, options for strategy to establish a pilot composting program for Salt Spring Island.

BACKGROUND

The committee directed Capital Regional District (CRD) staff to undertake a conceptual design for a composting facility which would address the long term commitment of SSILW to deal with all aspects of liquid waste disposal on island rather than trucking the solids portion to Vancouver Island. An initial phase of this work identified the need for a pilot compost facility. The purpose of this phase would be to identify process issues such as availability of feed stock, marketing issues and criteria and process issues from equipment selection to staff certification and training to product quality and volume. A short term borrowing was used for initial funding for the project including undertaking of a conceptual design for the pilot, preliminary works on the pilot facility and funds to make safety and operational improvements to the dewatering portion of the works. It was envisioned in the approval of the 2008 operating budget that additional funds for establishing the pilot process would be realized from suspending the hauling of waste sludge to the regional landfill.

Approved Project Status

The primary safety issues for the site: electrical grounding, a new electrical kiosk for the pump station, a new solids handling conveyor, a potable water supply for the site and miscellaneous works, have been completed. Installation of drainage and temporary compost pads for the pilot process have also been undertaken. The CRD has approached various provincial ministries respecting the project including Ministry of Environment and the Agricultural Land commission for approval and have obtained a DVP from the Islands Trust for the proposed site use.

Issues

Some issues have been raised by the neighbours as a consequence of the proposal to the Islands Trust to approve a DVP for the compost facility. Some of these issues raised pertain to the pilot compost proposal while others appear to relate more to the existing site operations. A number of these latter issues: equipment location, site organization, site drainage, setbacks to drainage courses, odour emissions and general site appearance, were identified by the committee to be addressed following a successful pilot compost process at a time coinciding with reduction in existing debt payments and with the development of a design for a permanent compost facility. Due to a new policy of the CRD to move from short term finance agreements to longer term borrowing strategies it would appear that a more appropriate strategy may be to advance the timing of the on site works and to seek approval for long term borrowing for a much broader project rather than delaying on site works which will be required regardless of the success of the pilot project.

Site Operation

The current site operation was modified in 2007. The practice of loading dewatered material directly to the bin was discontinued as it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain sufficiently low moisture content to be acceptable for land filling at the regional landfill. The material has more recently been deposited directly to a bed of wood chips overlying the bin loading slab. Deposited in this manner, the material, at least during the summer and dryer fall months, could be loaded to the bin by machine, with far lower moisture content. This winter, owing to the high rainfall, and exacerbated by the roof damaged by snow load, has proven far less effective. The additional handling of the material in this manner has perhaps lead to more opportunity for odours to be generated and certainly provides for a more unsightly premises and extraordinary working issues for the CRD operator. As a consequence of this winters operation, staff suggest the need to focus more attention on the dewatering operation and site organization, perhaps in advance of, but certainly part of the pilot composting project.

With the support of the committee, staff will retain the services of a consultant to prepare a conceptual design for the upgrade of the dewatering facility and to identify how an updated facility would be integrated with the proposed pilot compost operation and a long term permanent facility. Specifically the consultant will be asked to review:

- Options and costs to improve the septage receiving facility for improved grit capture and disposal, comminuting or grinding of septage solids, improved flow measurement and odour abatement.
- Review of mixing requirements for septage storage to improve consistency of solids loading to the press and costs for installation.
- Options and costs to improve the processing capacity for the dewatering press, including installation of a second press wheel or specification for an alternate dewatering technology.
- Options and costs for expanded treatment capacity and storage capacity for pressate from the dewatering facility.
- Options and costs for improved solids loading from the press to the compost pilot and compost permanent facility.
- Suggested relocation of all equipment to ensure capture of fugitive emissions from each process.

It is anticipated the cost estimates will form the basis for a larger capital project and public approval process. The estimated cost for the consultant's preliminary study would amount to \$15,000. It is anticipated the time for the completion of the study will be three months.

It is anticipated the consultants work will form the basis for a work plan which should then be communicated to the neighbours surrounding the property. As this plan might be delayed for some months, and as there has been considerable interest in the proposal for the site, it is recommended that the committee agree to meet with the residents to identify the interim work proposed prior to initiating composting on the site.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That SSILW receive this report for information and direct staff to retain a consultant to carry out the preliminary cost analysis for dewatering system upgrade works at an estimated cost of \$15,000.
2. That SSILW direct staff to proceed with implementation of the composting pilot project as planned, delaying any upgrade works to the existing dewatering system until funds are available or the compost pilot is completed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The capital project, established to complete the work on the pilot facility, has funds totalling \$35,114 unspent to date. Funds expended on the consultant's work would reduce funding available to complete the pilot project. The committee has also identified some \$37,000 in contingency which remains uncommitted at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Salt Spring Island Liquid Waste Disposal Local Service committee:

1. receive this report for information and direct staff to retain a consultant to carry out the preliminary cost analysis for dewatering system upgrade works at an estimated cost of \$15,000; and
2. direct staff to prepare a newsletter to residents outlining the anticipated process.



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