



# SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

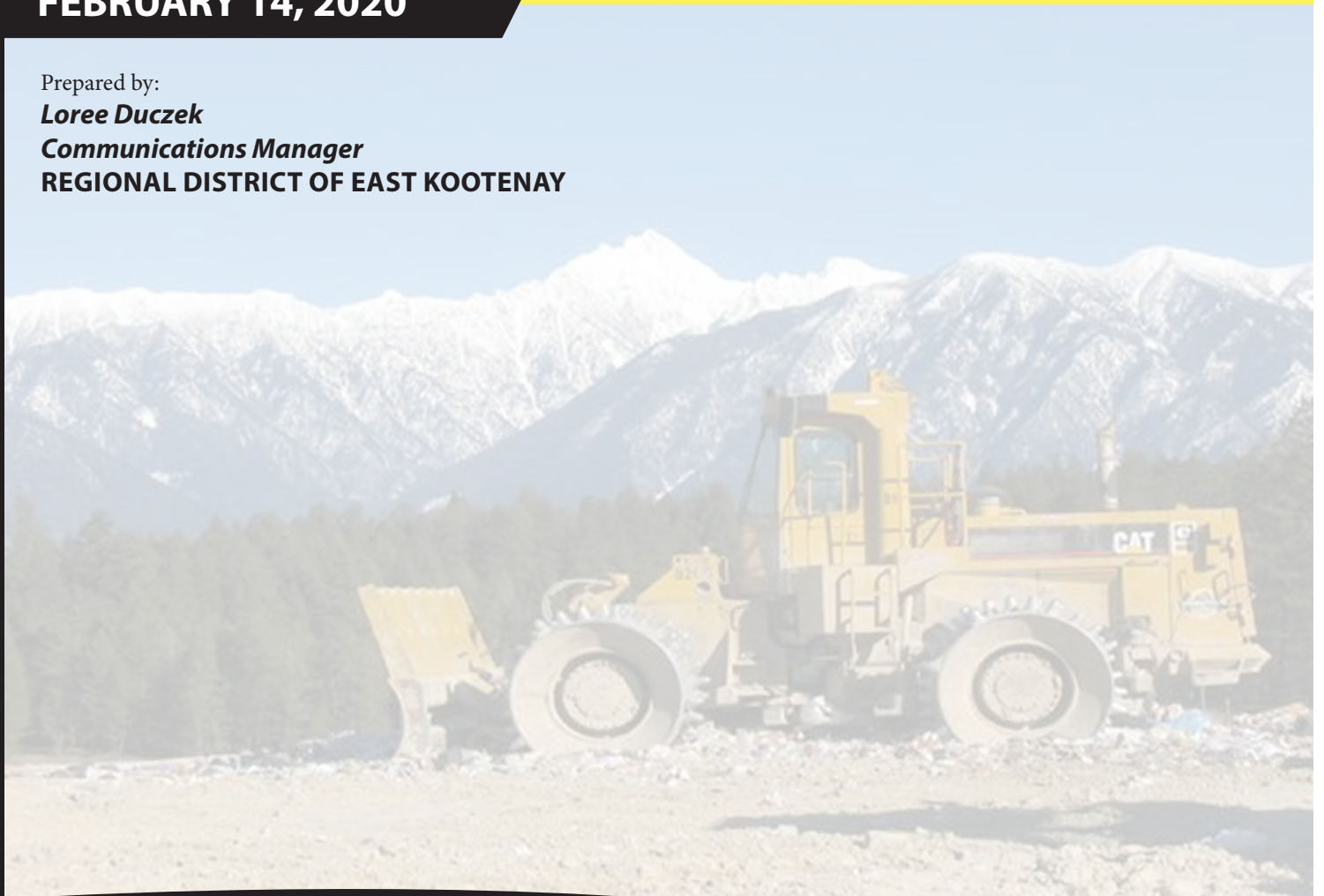
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From 2017 through 2019, the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) undertook a review of its Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). A key part of this planning process was the public consultation, which was initiated with the formation of a well-rounded advisory committee, with technical, non-technical, First Nation, public, community interest, and elected official representation.

Following the establishment of the committee, a communications strategy was initiated with the aim of engaging the public early in the process so that their input and feedback could be part of the plan development, rather than starting with a plan and asking the public for feedback after it was written. This early engagement was critical to the success of our planning efforts.

We utilized all means of communication throughout the planning process including in-person communication via town halls, public markets / fairs, and personal meetings to traditional advertising and outreach through all local media. In addition, we introduced an online engagement tool, which not only provided the public with a robust, single-source of information but also provided the RDEK with extensive data throughout the process.

Aside from engaging the public early, other objectives of the consultation process were to provide consistent information throughout the project phases and create the opportunity for people to comment on the draft plan. While the in-person engagement is more difficult to quantify, the online engagement between January 1 and November 8, 2019 was the most robust participation we've had in the RDEK:

- **Our engagement site had over 9,100 visits**
- **6,974 visitors to the site visited at least one page**
- **4,778 visitors to the site visited at least one page and took at least one further action (downloaded a document, visited multiple pages, contributed to a tool)**
- **4,144 visitors were engaged and contributed to at least one survey**
- **We published two surveys and one comment form that collectively were opened by 6,452 people**
- **We posted 17 different documents which were collectively viewed/downloaded by 1,338 times by 615 people**
- **The draft plan was downloaded 527 times**

During the comment period for the draft plan, which ran from July to November, the following activities were undertaken / observed:

- **RDEK Facebook page had a reach of 13,277 with 197 engagements on posts related to the SWMP Review, open houses and comment period**
- **The plan was available in hard copy and handed out by our summer student at five different markets**
- **The plan was available in hard copy and we had staff manning a booth for the two-day Ktunaxa Nation Council Annual General Assembly**
- **We presented an update on the plan at our six Town Hall Meetings**
- **Emails to our email groups were opened by 6,823 people**
- **1,100 people visited the project page**
- **796 documents were downloaded included 527 downloads of the draft plan**

Throughout the SWMP Review Process, we had strong collaboration from the members of the advisory committee, the public and local media. We provided clear and consistent information across all mediums and had an astounding amount of feedback to our surveys, which helped shape the plan.

The top comments received through the consultation related to support for composting, support for curbside recycling, concerns regarding illegal dumping specifically related to user fees/increased costs, a desire for continued education and overall satisfaction with the current system.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This Public Consultation Report describes the public consultation that was undertaken by the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) in revising its Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). The public consultation meets the requirements outlined in Section 27 of the Environmental Management Act, which requires that adequate public review and consultation of the SWMP must be completed. In addition, the public consultation process was designed to meet elector approval requirements for any borrowing of funds required to implement the plan once it is approved.

### **1.1 Background and Consultation Objectives**

The RDEK's first solid waste management planning process was initiated in 1992. Its first full SWMP was approved by the Ministry in 2003. The current planning process was initiated in 2017.

The objectives of public consultation associated with the current planning process were as follows:

- **To ensure requirements under the Environmental Management Act are met**
- **To ensure the public consultation considerations outlined in the Guide to Solid Waste Management Planning are addressed**
- **To engage the advisory committee and public early in the process and consider the feedback received during the preparation of the plan**
- **To provide interested parties with open, transparent information throughout the planning process**
- **To provide opportunities for input and feedback during the process and once the draft was released**

## **2.0 PLAN INITIATION**

The SWMP review process was identified as a priority project by the RDEK Board and added to the 2015/2016 Strategic Priorities list. The process was initiated in 2017 with the tendering and selection of consultant Sperling Hansen Associates (Sperling Hansen) to guide the process and complete required background data collection, including:

- **A detailed waste characterization study (waste audit)**
- **A detailed system characterization study (comprehensive overview of current system and existing SWMP goals)**

Following these steps, the public portion of the planning process was initiated.

## **3.0 ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

At the outset of the process, it was determined by the RDEK Board that an advisory committee would be appointed and that the formal public consultation would begin following the formation of the committee.

It was decided by the Board that the committee would include the existing Plan Monitoring Advisory Committee (PMAC), and that we would seek a cross-section of representatives from the region that would reflect public interests, community interests, First Nations, elected officials, technical and non-technical expertise. Having all of the committee members together and sharing their individual perspectives and experiences allowed for fulsome discussion on the many different aspects of the plan. It generated in-depth and fact-based discussion and was a key driver behind the decision to have technical experts, elected officials and members of the public on one committee as opposed to separate committees. Throughout the planning process having this variety in perspectives, understanding and experience led to well-rounded discussion between committee members.

Local First Nations were contacted directly along with technical experts, and a public call went out through our Town Hall Meetings, email lists, social media, local media outlets.

An online application form was posted and was also available in hard copy. A copy of the application form is included in Appendix 1. We received 33 applications for the advisory committee. The applications were forwarded to Sperling Hansen, who reviewed the applications and provided recommendations to the Board that reflected a mix of technical and non-technical, business, public, and First Nations applicants. The Board appointed the committee members in October 2018. In addition, the Board appointed one Director and one alternate from each subregion to the committee as non-voting members.

**The advisory committee was made up of:**

- **14 Voting Members**
- **Five Non-Voting/Technical Advisors**
- **Six RDEK Appointed Directors and Alternates**

Please see Appendix 1 for the committee's terms of reference, membership and list of meetings.

## **4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The public consultation process was executed in two primary stages:

- **PHASE 1 - Prior to drafting of the plan (June 2018 - June 2019)**
- **PHASE 2 - Following completion of the draft plan (July - November)**

### **4.1 Phase 1 - Consultation Summary**

#### **4.1.1 Recruitment for Advisory Committee**

We posted ads on local media, social media and our website. Emails were sent directly to 3,111 recipients in our email groups, with 1,862 opened (59.9%).

The SWMP review was presented at our Town Hall Meetings in each of our six Electoral Areas along with copies of the application form. The Town Hall Meetings included a verbal presentation by RDEK Environmental Services Manager Kevin Paterson or Communications Manager Loree Duczek, which outlined the process, timeline and role of the advisory committee. It was followed by an opportunity for attendees to ask questions.

Samples of the ads, Town Hall Meeting agendas and emails can be found in Appendix 2.

#### 4.1.2 Advisory Committee Meetings

The first advisory committee meeting was held in October 2018 and included a presentation on the consultation plan, introduction to the new engagement tool, and an overview of the process, committee roles and responsibilities, and existing solid waste system.

A total of six committee meetings were held, each with a different focus area. Copies of the agendas, consultant presentations and minutes are included in Appendix 2.

The public consultation started in January 2019.

#### 4.1.3 Initial Survey - Solid Waste & Recycling Services Survey (Survey #1)

From the outset of the process, the intent was to survey the public to find out how they were using the current system, gauge their satisfaction levels and identify areas they would like to see contemplated through the SWMP review process. Both the Board and advisory committee felt it was important to have an understanding of the public's priorities prior to developing the SWMP as opposed to presenting them with a plan and then asking what they thought. As a result, great weight was put into this early phase of consultation with the intention that the draft plan would consider and reflect this input from the public.

The survey was developed using previously successful templates provided by Sperling Hansen. A copy is available in Appendix 2.

The survey was sent out to 3,604 recipients on our email group and was opened by 2,454 or 68.2%. In addition, it was posted to social media and our Facebook page got a reach of 18,277 with 3,440 engagements from the initial post. It was posted on our website and the project page, and distributed to local media via a news release. We had 100% uptake in local media. Advertisements were booked in local media including radio, online and print. Samples of the emails, posts and ads can be found in Appendix 2.

A reminder was sent to our email groups and posted on social media. The email was sent to 3,613 recipients and opened by 2,092 (58%) and the social media reach was 2,942 with 179 engagements.

In total, the RDEK received 3,276 responses. There were contributions from every municipality and RDEK Electoral Area with 45.3% of the respondents being rural and 54.7% of respondents municipal. There were several key findings in the survey:

- **88% of respondents were satisfied, happy or very happy with the current garbage collection system**
- **66% of respondents were satisfied, happy or very happy with the current recycling system. There was a desire expressed for increased recycling opportunities and curbside recycling**
- **64% of respondents were satisfied, happy or very happy with the current yard waste management**
- **39% of respondents are satisfied, happy or very happy with the current management of food waste and there was a strong desire expressed for composting**
- **In general, the vast majority of respondents are not willing to travel further than they currently do to access a transfer station or landfill**
- **There is a need for education around Extended Producer Programs as only 10% of respondents indicated they were very familiar with them, while 30% were totally unfamiliar and a further 30% indicated they were aware of only a few**



- **There was strong support for expanding recycling opportunities and the range of recyclables accepted and expanding reduction and reuse programs**
- **Only 44% of respondents supported a user-pay system and there were strong concerns about the impact wide-scale user fees would have on illegal dumping**
- **82% of respondents strongly supported or supported centralized composting of yard waste, and 78% strongly supported or supported centralized composting of food waste**
- **63% of respondents strongly opposed or opposed closure of existing small tonnage rural transfer stations, with only 7% of respondents supporting or strongly supporting closures**
- **Protecting the environment, reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill and keeping costs as low as possible were the three top priorities for respondents in selecting future waste management solutions**

The results of Survey #1 were shared with the advisory committee, compiled in a Survey Summary and widely shared with the public. The survey was sent out to 3,624 recipients on our email group and was opened by 2,353 (65%). In addition, it was posted to social media and our Facebook page got a reach of 11,179 with 431 engagements. It was posted on our website and the project page, and distributed to local media via a news release. We had 100% uptake in local media. The survey results were downloaded 180 times between April and November 2019. A copy of the survey responses, summary, email, and news release, along with a sample of the social media posts, can be found in Appendix 2.

#### **4.1.4 Follow-Up Survey: Waste & Recycling Costs Survey (Survey #2)**

In its discussions, the advisory committee stated a desire to have a better understanding of some of the specific areas within the public survey results, particularly around costs, organic waste management, increased recycling services, and the rationale behind why people do - or do not - support user fees. To garner more detailed information from the public, a second survey was drafted with input from the Chair of the advisory committee and through discussion with the advisory committee members at the April committee meeting where costs associated with service levels were discussed. It was also shared and discussed in detail with the RDEK Board prior to distribution. Survey #2 was sent out to 3,717 recipients on our email group and was opened by 2,402 or 64.7%. In addition, it was posted to social media and our Facebook page got a reach of 7,818 with 665 engagements from the initial post. It was posted on our website and the project page, and distributed to local media via a news release. We had 100% uptake in local media. Advertisements were booked in local media including radio, online and print. The survey and samples of the emails and ads can be found in Appendix 2.

A reminder was sent to our email groups and posted on social media. The email was sent to 3,820 recipients and opened by 2,374 (62.2%) and the social media reach was 5,602 with 348 engagements.

In total, the RDEK received 1,233 responses. There were contributions from every municipality and RDEK Electoral Area with 62.6% of the respondents being rural and 37.4% of respondents municipal. Some highlights of the findings include:

- **The vast majority of respondents (58.0%) supported the RDEK striving to reach the provincial goal of 350kg**
- **81% of respondents in the Central Subregion are willing to pay more per year. Of those who responded they would be willing to pay more, 24% would be willing to pay \$11-\$20 and 22% would be willing to pay \$5-\$10 more**



- 82% of respondents in the Elk Valley Subregion are willing to pay more per year. Of those who responded they would be willing to pay more, 32% would be willing to pay \$50+ and 20% would be willing to pay \$21-\$20 more
- 81% of respondents in the Columbia Valley Subregion are willing to pay more. per year Of those who responded they would be willing to pay more, 23% would be willing to pay \$11-\$20 and 22% would be willing to pay \$5-\$10
- 71.6% of respondents are opposed to user fees / a user-pay system, with an overwhelming 65.8% of those opposed due to concerns of illegal dumping
- There was strong support for increasing options provided in curbside collection, with 24.7% of respondents indicating a desire to see collection of mixed recycling on alternating weeks (at an estimated additional \$84/year)
- There was a strong desire for collection of both mixed recycling and organics, with 35.5% of respondents supporting this option (at an estimated additional cost of \$204 per year)
- The majority of respondents (41.5%) do not wish to see change at the rural transfer stations, while 38.7% supporting upgrading some transfer stations to provide increased recycling opportunities
- 57.4% supported establishing a composting facility that processes yard & garden waste, kitchen scraps and food waste (at an estimated cost of \$10-\$20 per household / year)

The results of Survey #2 were shared with the advisory committee, compiled in a second survey summary and widely shared with the public. The summary was sent out to 3,379 recipients on our email group and was opened by 2,143 (62.4%). In addition, it was posted to social media and our Facebook page got a reach of 2,477 with 68 engagements. It was posted on our website and the project page, and distributed to local media with a news release. We had 100% uptake in local media. The survey results were downloaded 85 times between June and November 2019. A copy of the survey summary, emails, news release, and sample social media posts, can be found in Appendix 2.

#### 4.1.5 Other Phase 1 Consultation

In addition to the surveys, which saw record public engagement for the RDEK, there were other awareness activities undertaken in Phase 1 of the consultation.

- **Town Hall Meetings**  
We hosted six Town Hall Meetings in June and early July 2019. The SWMP review process was a topic at all meetings. During the presentation, Environmental Services Manager Kevin Paterson reviewed the process to date, explained that the draft would be posted in early July and encouraged people to review the draft and provide comment on the project page or via comment forms available at each of our offices. Copies of the reports, Waste Audit summary, and recycling survey summaries were available for the public to review or take home. Copies of the Town Hall Meeting agendas, advertisements and a summary of the email coverage is included in Appendix 2.
- **General Awareness**  
Our Communications Summer Student participated in numerous community events and festivals from May 2019 to July 2019 when the draft was posted. She had copies of the survey summaries and provided information on the process during these outings.

- **Presentation to RDEK Board during Strategic Priorities Session**

The RDEK Board was provided with a presentation by Environmental Services Manager Kevin Paterson and Communications Manager Loree Duczek during its Strategic Priorities Planning Session. The purpose of the presentation, which can be found in Appendix 2, was to provide them with an update on where the process was at, review the public sentiment in several key areas and encourage discussion as they set their priorities for the coming year to three years. This also provided an opportunity for the Board to show support for aspects of the SWMP by adopting them as part of their Strategic Priorities Plan (SPP).

**Included in the 2019 / 2020 SPP under Management Excellence is a section on Solid Waste Planning that states the following objectives:**

- We support innovative solutions to waste reduction and residual management
- Our waste management programs are responsive to new initiatives while maintaining efficiency
- We will continue to educate the public about waste reduction programs and opportunities

**The Board-adopted priority projects include:**

- Establish Recycle BC Depots
- Solid Waste Management Plan Review
- Waste Diversion Projects
- Regional Composting; and,
- Evaluate Invermere/Radium Transfer Stations.

The goals/objectives section of the plan was adopted July 5, 2019 while the Strategic Plan with project priorities was formally adopted in September 2019.

- **In-Person Meetings**

Environmental Services Manager Kevin Paterson met with the Windermere Loop Road residents to discuss their ongoing concerns with the continued operation of the Columbia Valley Landfill. In addition, he had personal meetings on site and at the home of one resident who lives in close proximity to the Landfill. A copy of the letter submitted to the RDEK and Assistant Deputy Minister by the residents is included in Appendix 2.

## **4.2 Phase 2 - Consultation Summary**

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### **4.2.1 Presentation of the Draft Plan**

At the June 2019 advisory committee meeting, the results of the Waste & Recycling Costs Survey were shared with the advisory committee and a copy of the survey summary was provided to each committee member. Sperling Hansen presented the draft SWMP for review and comment. On June 6, 2019, Sperling Hansen presented the draft plan to the RDEK Board of Directors for review and comment. Following these two meetings, updates were made to the draft plan to reflect comments from the committee and RDEK Board and it was posted for public review and comment.

### **4.2.2 Public Comment Period**

Notification of the public consultation was included in the July 6 Board Highlights, and was distributed to all media, email group contacts and municipalities in the region. It was also posted on the RDEK's website and at our public bulletin boards at both RDEK offices.

The draft plan was posted on the project page and a dedicated comment form was linked from the project page to collect comments between July 12 and November 7, 2019 (16 weeks). Copies of the emails and Highlights is included in Appendix 3.

The RDEK's Communications Summer Student took copies of the summaries and the draft plan and promoted it at public events she participated in through July and August, which included:

- **Jaffray-Baynes Lake Farmers' Market (July 13)**
- **Fairmont Farmers' Market (July 14)**
- **Radium Farmers' Market (July 19)**
- **Valley Appreciation Day in Invermere (July 20)**
- **Kimberley Market (August 8)**

RDEK staff set up a booth and participated in the Ktunaxa Annual General Assembly on July 15 and 16, 2020 and had copies of the plan, summaries, and comment forms available. The AGA is open to, and participated in, by all the Ktunaxa communities within the RDEK boundary including Aqam, Tobacco Plains and Akisqnuq.

## **Open Houses**

To garner additional feedback and provide an opportunity for person-to-person communication, the RDEK planned three Open Houses for the fall of 2019. On October 11, 2019 an email was sent to our email group reminding them of the comment period, providing details on the Open Houses, and providing links to both the draft plan and online comment form. A link was also provided to the project page with a reminder of the information available for public viewing. The email was sent to 4,032 recipients and was opened by 2,328 (57.8%) of recipients. 261 people clicked on various pages on the SWMP project page, including 39 directly to the comment form.

A news release was sent to local media and we had 100% uptake. The details were shared with the Board, on the project page and on social media via direct posts and events pages. The reach on Facebook was over 8,100. Information on the open house and comment deadline were again distributed to all email groups, RDEK elected officials, municipalities and RDEK public bulletin boards via the October Board Highlights on October 18. The email group distribution went to 4,024 recipients, which was opened by 2,375 people (59.1%).

Ads were also taken out in local media, posted on the project page and RDEK events calendar. The Jim Pattison Broadcast Group aired 52 total ads (split between their four stations) and 2DayFM aired 20 30-second commercials between October 15 and November 5 with info on the Open Houses and comment period deadline. Copies of the advertisements is included in Appendix 3.

One Open House was held in each of the three subregions, with the same format for each.

Large poster boards were displayed at each location on the following topics:

- **Advisory Committee**
- **Project Goal**
- **Project Timeline**
- **Waste Summary - for each Subregion (the corresponding version was displayed at each Open House)**

The Open Houses ran from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, with a presentation by Environmental Services Manager Kevin Paterson at each Open House at both 2:30 pm and 6:30 pm. There was a table with copies of all the reports, summaries and comment forms. People were able to review the information and ask questions in an informal format. Immediately following the presentation, there was a Q&A opportunity.

A copy of the poster boards and presentation are included in Appendix 3. The following elected officials were present, although they did not all stay for the entire time:

- **COLUMBIA VALLEY OPEN HOUSE** - RDEK Electoral Area F Director Susan Clovechok, RDEK Electoral Area G Director Gerry Wilkie, District of Invermere Mayor Al Miller, Village of Canal Flats Mayor Karl Sterzer
- **ELK VALLEY OPEN HOUSE** - RDEK Electoral Area A Director Mike Sosnowski, District of Sparwood Mayor David Wilks
- **CENTRAL SUBREGION OPEN HOUSE** - RDEK Electoral Area C Director Rob Gay, City of Cranbrook Councillor Ron Popoff

Date	Location	Staff in Attendance	Attendees
October 22, 2019	Kanata Inn Windermere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Services Manager Kevin Paterson</li> <li>Solid Waste Superintendent Jim Penson</li> <li>Communications Manager Loree Duczek</li> </ul>	11*
October 23, 2019	Park Place Lodge Fernie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Services Manager Kevin Paterson</li> <li>Solid Waste Superintendent Jim Penson</li> <li>Communications Coordinator Nathan Siemens (early session only)</li> </ul>	6*
October 24, 2019	Heritage Inn Cranbrook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Services Manager Kevin Paterson</li> <li>Solid Waste Superintendent Jim Penson</li> <li>Communications Coordinator Nathan Siemens (early session only)</li> </ul>	1*

\* Elected officials are not included in the attendance numbers.

In spite of significant advertising and direct emails, the attendance at the Open Houses was poor. Most of the people who attended wanted to know more information on specifics, such as recycling. Several even brought boxes of material in to ask how to sort or recycle it. Informal feedback received when we asked attendees and other members of the public was that they felt they had already contributed their thoughts early in the process, there was nothing significant changing for them, and that they were satisfied with things so chose not to comment.

#### 4.3 First Nations Consultation

Invitations were extended to the Ktunaxa Nation Council and its member bands within the East Kootenay (Aqam, Tobacco Plains, Akisqnuk) along with the Shuswap Band to participate as members of the advisory committee. The Akisqnuk did have a representative appointed to the committee, who was active in all of the meetings she attended and provided valuable input from the First Nations perspective. One of the key areas of concern raised was the protection of the land / environment, specifically the impact illegal dumping has and the potential for this impact to increase should wide-scale tipping fees be introduced. She offered

suggestions for potentially working together to address illegal dumping including incorporating their Guardian of the Land program as a future consideration.

Staff participated in the Ktunaxa Annual General Assembly in July and provided copies of the plan and comment forms. An in-person meeting was held with the Ktunaxa Nation Council Lands Sector representative who was provided a copy of the Plan. In addition, the plan was submitted through the Ktunaxa referral portal for formal comment. Outside of the formal referral response and comments presented at the advisory committee, we had not received additional feedback from the First Nations by the November comment deadline. As a result, a copy of the plan and follow-up request for comment was sent to each band and the comment deadline for First Nations was extended to mid-December. In December, the Aqam band requested a further extension to the comment deadline to allow the KNC to provide more feedback and we extended the deadline to mid-January. Outside of the formal referral response and request to extend the deadline, we did not receive any additional comments.

A copy of the formal referral response is included in Appendix 3. In its reply, the Nation commented on concerns around the management of waste pharmaceuticals and prescription medications and the potential for pharmaceuticals to leach into the environment. They requested the waste management plan include the management and recycling of pharmaceuticals and their containers to better control the amount of pharmaceutical material that can potentially enter the receiving environment. The SWMP was amended to incorporate this request. In Section 2.3.1 references in paragraphs three and four were updated to include pharmaceuticals and Section 3.5 was updated with regard to promotion and education efforts.

The Ktunaxa Nation also expressed concerns regarding air quality associated with burning events in the Elk Valley. This was addressed in Section 3.3, No. 6 in the plan.

#### 4.4 Comment Period Summary

Outside of comments received from residents of Windermere Loop Road who want the Columbia Valley Landfill in their neighbourhood closed, there was general support for the direction the plan is taking. There were seven comments in support of composting and five concerned with illegal dumping (three of which oppose user fees for this same reason). A copy of all comments received during the formal comment period is included in Appendix 3.

## 5.0 STRATEGY DECISIONS AND LEVEL OF PUBLIC SUPPORT

The input received at advisory committee meetings between October 2018 and April 2019, along with the results of the two surveys were considered prior to drafting the SWMP. The action items included and endorsed in the plan are a balance of the comments and input received from the public and advisory committee and Board. Note that the strategy option that was included in the plan is italicized.

### 1. ENCOURAGE INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT REUSE AND RECYCLING IN THE COMMUNITY

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Support external initiatives*
  - Do not support external initiatives
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** Supported by the advisory committee. The committee's definitions of success related to the SWMP included achieving greater diversion and meeting the per capita goal for waste. The committee also encouraged exploring potential partnerships with higher levels of government or initiatives, such as Love Food, Hate Waste.

- **Public Comments:** 89% of survey respondents supported or strongly supported expanding reduction and reuse programs throughout the region. Further, public comments provided through Survey #1 and in the comments on the draft indicated support for collaboratively working with other companies and organizations to pursue reduce and reuse initiatives. 58% of respondents in Survey #2 supported striving to reach the provincial goal of 350kg/person with a further 29.5% supporting reaching the provincial average - both of which would be achieved through supporting initiatives promoting reuse and recycling in the community.

## 2. ENCOURAGE MUNICIPALITIES TO DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER POLICIES AND BYLAWS THAT PROMOTE WASTE REDUCTION

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Encourage municipalities to implement bylaws or policies*
  - Do not encourage municipalities to implement bylaws or policies
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** Supported by the advisory committee. Discussion was around bag limits, having all municipalities on the same page with regard to strategies to reduce waste generation. Also, in its definitions of success brainstorming session, the committee included having more municipalities on curbside recycling as one of the items they would consider a successful result of the SWMP process.
  - **Public Comments:** We did not directly ask the public about municipal bylaws and while we received several comments regarding the need for enforcement, they were all related to illegal dumping. We received 2 comments from the public in Survey #1 supporting stronger bag limits for municipalities. No comments were received during the comment period on this issue.

## 3. EXPAND EPR PRODUCT RECYCLING AT MAJOR TRANSFER STATIONS

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - Maintain status quo with EPR programs
  - *Expand EPR programs at major transfer stations*
  - Expand EPR programs at all transfer stations
  - Leave EPR program contracts to be managed by private business
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** Supported by the advisory committee; however, cost was a key concern and it was emphasized costs would need to be managed. Education about the EPR programs and availability was another key driver for the committee.
  - **Public Comments:** Expansion of EPR programs was strongly supported by the public. 91.8% of the survey respondents in Survey #1 indicated support or strong support for expanding the availability of EPR programs and we received 97 comments in favour of expanding EPR opportunities in the region.



#### 4. EXPAND DIVERSION OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOOD WASTE, YARD WASTE, SCRAP METAL, ETC.

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - Research new options region wide
  - *Upgrade rural transfer stations as practical to expand opportunities in this area*
  - Staff and upgrade rural transfer stations to expand opportunities in this area
  - Remain status quo
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** While the committee supported expanding diversion opportunities, at rural sites, there were concerns regarding the potential costs of upgrading these sites, specifically when the concept of staffing and regulating hours was presented as an item for discussion. In addition to the cost concerns, there was strong opposition expressed from some committee members in regard to staffing/regulating hours as they felt this would leave to an increase in illegal dumping. The advisory committee supported looking at increasing opportunities where practical at rural transfer stations.
  - **Public Comments:** In Survey #1, 30% of residents expressed they were unhappy or very unhappy with yard waste management, with 41% satisfied. Rural residents expressed a desire to have increased opportunity to divert yard waste at all rural transfer stations. 82% of respondents either strongly supported or supported centralized composting of yard waste, which reflects an expanded opportunity. Composting was one of the most supported themes across all surveys and public feedback efforts. While we did not receive as many direct comments on scrap metal and wood waste, 92% of respondents supported expanding availability of recycling in the region. Only 19.8% of respondents in Survey #2 supported upgrading and staffing some rural sites to provide increased opportunities for yard waste, metal, wood; 37% supported upgrading this sites (but not staffing them) to provide these opportunities; 41.5% of respondents were opposed, with many stating concerns over rising costs. We did receive comments from a few respondents concerned about burning of wood waste and supporting other options. This was also echoed by the Ktunaxa Nation and addressed in the Plan. We received seven comments in support of increasing these services at the rural sites.

#### 5. ENSURE CONSISTENT SIGNAGE IS USED THROUGHOUT THE REGION TO EDUCATE USERS ON RECYCLING

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Ensuring signage is consistent across the region*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** The advisory committee supported consistent signage.
  - **Public Comments:** We received 14 comments across both surveys and in the open comment period supporting clear and consistent signage. Additionally, there was strong support for ongoing education and signage was mentioned in that context as well.

## 6. DEVELOP REGION-WIDE STRATEGY FOR RECYCLING ACCESS

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - Cease commercial recycling and focus on EPR based residential recycling
  - Maintain the yellow bin program
  - *Maintain the yellow bin program, but look for opportunities to drive recycling into the EPR programs*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** At the outset of the discussions, the contract for the yellow bin program was up for renewal, so all options were discussed by both the advisory committee and the RDEK Board regarding what would happen if the contract was no longer feasible. The primary focus of discussions from elected officials and technical advisors on the committee was the challenge for smaller collectors to find market for the product consistently and at a cost that was affordable for taxpayers. While some committee members also shared concerns about the costs of the service, others maintained that the benefit is keeping that waste out of the landfill and supported maintaining access to recycling services. The RDEK renewed a five-year contract for the yellow bin program, so the option supported was to look for opportunities to drive residential recycling into the EPR program. Committee members agreed that it was important to be part of the conversation encouraging residents to participate in the new Recycle BC Depots.
  - **Public Comments:** This was not specifically asked of the public; however, we did receive one comment asking for us to continue to provide the access to the yellow bins, two comments asking us not to move any yellow bins and two comments asking us to remove the bins by the Memorial Arena in Cranbrook. There were also 13 comments asking for increased access to the yellow bins.

## 7. ESTABLISH A BYLAW THAT MANDATES RECYCLING PROGRAMS IN THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Establish a bylaw that could enhance recycling in the commercial sector*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** Supported leaving this action item in the report in the event there are future changes to the yellow bin program.
  - **Public Comments:** No comments received

## 8. DEVELOP A FOOD WASTE REDUCTION EDUCATION PROGRAM

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Develop a more focused education program on food waste reduction*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** The advisory committee strongly supported education in all areas. With 29% of the waste in our recent waste audit being made up of compostable materials, there was a great deal of discussion about the need for continued education with regard to food waste.

- **Public Comments:** The public was strongly in support of continued education on all aspects of the solid waste and recycling services. We received 205 comments in support of enhanced public education.

## 9. ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES THAT FOCUS ON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Encourage community initiatives that focus on food waste reduction*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** The advisory committee strongly supported education in all areas. With 29% of the waste in our recent waste audit being made up of compostable materials, there was a great deal of discussion about the need for continued education with regard to food waste. Members of the public discussed programs like the food recovery program in Kimberley as local examples of that could be promoted or encouraged.
  - **Public Comments:** The public was strongly in support of continued education on all aspects of the solid waste and recycling services. We received 205 comments in support of enhanced public education.

## 10. CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AND PROVIDE EDUCATION FOR AT-HOME FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Continue to provide education on food waste reduction*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** The advisory committee strongly supported education in all areas. With 29% of the waste in our recent waste audit being made up of compostable materials, there was a great deal of discussion about the need for continued education with regard to food waste. The Elk Valley members of the committee were opposed to continuing to provide education and information on backyard composting due to concerns over bears and human/wildlife conflict, but did support education in other areas around food waste management options and benefits.
  - **Public Comments:** The public was strongly in support of continued education on all aspects of the solid waste and recycling services. We received 205 comments in support of enhanced public education.

## 11. EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP CENTRALIZED OR SUBREGIONAL ORGANIC WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - Continue with small-scale composting of yard/garden waste and encourage backyard composting
  - Develop one regional facility
  - *Develop subregional facilities*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** The committee supported exploring opportunities to develop

composting in the RDEK and the efforts to secure capital funding for subregional facilities. There was discussion about whether other options were explored including private business and whether there was a plan if the funding application was unsuccessful. As organics management is a high priority in the SWMP, the RDEK will continue to look for further opportunities for organics diversion. Elk Valley representatives on the committee were not in support of backyard composting due to wildlife concerns, so felt a subregional option that prevented conflict with bears was a better option. As with other components of the plan, cost and the need to keep them as low as possible were discussed. The committee supported efforts to secure funding and expressed support for finding ways to keep organics out of our landfills, particularly given 29% of the waste being buried is organic.

- **Public Comments:** Composting was the most discussed / supported theme throughout the public consultation period. In Survey #1, 1,799 of 3,259 respondents reported throwing food waste in the garbage, while 885 disposed of it directly at the transfer station/landfill. 1,164 compost at home. Of 3,276 respondents (55%) were very unhappy or unhappy with the current food waste management system and the lack of options for composting was the primary reason expressed for their dissatisfaction. 81.5% of respondents strongly support or support centralized composting of yard waste and 78% support or strongly support centralized composting of food waste. We received 582 comments in support of composting in some capacity, 149 of which supported curbside composting. 11 other respondents requested a compost program where compost could be used locally. 22 respondents were opposed to composting citing wildlife concerns (18) as their primary reason for opposing it. Other factors were concerns over smell and belief it should be handled by the private sector. In Survey #2, 35.5% of respondents supported collection of mixed recycling and organics at an estimated additional cost of \$204/year; 9.3% supported collection of organics weekly at an additional cost of \$102/year; and, 30.5% supported no change to the current collection service. 54.7% of respondents were in favour of establishing a composting facility that processes yard and garden, kitchen scraps and food waste at an additional cost of \$10-\$20/year. In the Comment Form on the draft plan, 11 respondents supported composting with four indicating they were happy to see regional composting included in the plan. One person was opposed to composting due to concerns about wildlife conflict.

## 12. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL CAPACITY FOR YARD WASTE DIVERSION IN THE RDEK

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - Continue with yard waste diversion at large transfer stations and landfills
  - Consider expanding yard waste opportunities at all transfer stations
  - *Look at options for providing additional yard waste diversion*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** The committee discussed the feasibility of providing additional service levels at rural transfer stations. This led to discussion around service levels at rural transfer stations, whether they should be staffed or whether providing a yard waste area (for example) was feasible under the current structure. There were also suggestions about yard waste pick up days in municipalities and potential for including yard waste in regional

composting as ways to increase diversion. The committee supported looking into options for providing additional yard waste diversion.

- **Public Comments:** In Survey #2, respondents ranked wood waste material fifth out of eight priorities for increased recycling/diversion opportunities.

### 13. CONTINUE TO DIVERT WOOD WASTE FROM LANDFILL AND EXPAND WHERE POSSIBLE

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - Continue with current wood waste diversion and look for opportunities to divert where possible.
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** In the waste audit, clean/compostable wood waste accounted for 2.5% of the overall waste stream. There was three times as much wood waste observed in samples from rural transfer stations than from urban transfer stations. Construction/demolition waste, which included a significant amount of wood waste accounted for 11%. The advisory committee consistently discussed keeping an eye on cost for new or increased services; however, supported expansion of wood waste diversion opportunities where possible and practical.
  - **Public Comments:** In Survey #2, respondents ranked wood waste material fifth out of eight priorities for increased recycling/diversion opportunities. We received eight comments supporting increased wood waste management (three of which were opposed to burning of wood waste and seeking new options) and a further 19 comments supporting expansion of Reuse Centres to incorporate building/construction materials.

### 14. COMPLETE DETAILED RURAL TRANSFER STATION OPTIMIZATION STUDY FOR COLUMBIA VALLEY AND CENTRAL SUBREGION

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Complete optimization study*
  - Do not complete study
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** This item was identified during the Solid Waste System Characterization Report and could identify services gaps and opportunities to streamline the existing system. The RDEK Board is supportive of completing service reviews for all RDEK services and this technical data would contribute significantly to any future review. As a result, the committee supported inclusion of this item in the SWMP.
  - **Public Comments:** No comments received.

### 15. CONSIDER FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDED TRANSFER STATION UPGRADES

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Consider feasibility of implementing recommended upgrades*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** This item was identified during the Solid Waste System

Characterization Report and could identify services gaps and opportunities to streamline the existing system. The RDEK Board is supportive of completing service reviews for all RDEK services and this technical data would contribute significantly to any future review. As a result, the committee supported inclusion of this item in the SWMP.

- **Public Comments:** No comments received.

#### 16. COMPLETE LANDFILL CRITERIA CONFORMANCE REVIEW AND UPGRADING PLAN FOR 3 SUBREGIONAL LANDFILLS

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Complete conformance review and upgrade plans*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** Fully supported meeting these regulatory requirements.
  - **Public Comments:** No comments received.

#### 17. LEGACY LANDFILL CLOSURE CONSIDERATIONS

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Make plans for the closure of legacy landfills*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** Fully supported meeting these regulatory requirements
  - **Public Comments:** No comments received

#### 18. REVIEW USER FREE STRUCTURE AND UPDATE TO ENCOURAGE MSW DIVERSION

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - Maintain the current user fee schedule
  - *Consider options for expanding user fees in specific areas to shift burden away from solely relying on tax base*
  - Implement wide-scale user fees to move the system to a “user pay” concept versus the current “taxpayer supported” service
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** The committee felt wide-scale user fees were not an appropriate way to incentivize waste diversion in the RDEK. The committee expressed concerns about the impact wide-scale user fees would have on illegal dumping. While there were some committee members who did support consideration of wider-scale user fees, the predominant position of the committee was against user fees due to concerns over illegal dumping.
  - **Public Comments:** There was opposition to wide-scale user fees from the public. In Survey #1, 44.8% of respondents indicated support or strong support for introduction of user fees while 46% were opposed or strongly opposed. Additionally, we received 102 comments opposed to user fees, compared to 31 in favour of user pay. In Survey #2, a total of 71.6% of



the 1,233 respondents were opposed to introduction of user fees for household waste, and of those, 65.8% cited concerns over illegal dumping as their reason why. 28.3% supported a user pay system. In the Comment Form on the draft plan, four people were opposed to introduction of wide-scale user fees. In addition, of the 151 comments received regarding illegal dumping, impacts of charging user fees was the number one reason given for their concerns.

## 19. DEVELOP A REGION-WIDE ILLEGAL DUMPING PREVENTION STRATEGY

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - Leave illegal dumping to the individual jurisdictions responsible
  - *Develop a region-wide strategy that will incorporate the jurisdictions and address this issue on a regional level*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** Strongly supported by the advisory committee. Illegal dumping and devising strategies to deal with it were consistently topics of discussion by committee members.
  - **Public Comments:** We received 151 comments regarding illegal dumping and the concerns from the public about current practices and the potential for it to get worse if wide-scale user fees are introduced, hours at facilities are reduced, or rural transfer stations are staffed with regulated hours. Though not speaking directly to a strategy, the public strongly supported any efforts to curb illegal dumping. We received over 30 comments regarding monitoring for illegal dumping and enforcements - both of which would be contemplated in a prevention strategy.

## 20. INCREASE PROMOTION AND EDUCATION EFFORTS FOR EPR PROGRAMS

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Increase education efforts on EPR programs*
  - Leave the education to the individual EPR administrators, who are required to provide education to the public
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** The advisory committee strongly supported education in all areas. The committee recognized the value of the current RDEK education program and the opportunity to create more local awareness about the EPR programs in our region. Additionally, there was discussion that if we don't educate our residents, recyclable materials will end up in our landfills. In Survey #1 9,188 respondents reported throwing at least one EPR material in the garbage at the end of its operating life (*Note: some respondents provided this response in multiple categories, which is why the total number of responses is higher here*)
  - **Public Comments:** The public was strongly in support of continued education on all aspects of the solid waste and recycling services. We received 205 comments in support of education. Further, the lack of knowledge and awareness about EPR programs speaks to the need for such education: only 10% of respondents in Survey #1 indicated they were very

familiar with them, while 30% were totally unfamiliar and a further 30% indicated they were aware of only a few EPR programs.

## 22. PROMOTE HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DROP-OFF IN CRANBROOK

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Promote the new household hazardous waste drop off in Cranbrook*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** The advisory committee emphasized the need for more education about the services that are provided across the region and supported promoting the new HHW drop off in Cranbrook.
  - **Public Comments:** The public consistently supported increased education on all diversion opportunities. We received 205 comments between Survey #1 and the comment form supporting increased education and awareness initiatives.

## 23. INCREASE PROMOTION AND EDUCATION FOR ORGANICS DIVERSION

- **Strategy Options Discussed:**
  - *Increase education efforts for organics diversion*
- **Level of Public Support:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** The advisory committee strongly supported education in all areas. With 29% of the RDEK's buried waste consisting of organic material, education was seen as a critical function in promoting awareness and behaviour change. Additionally, it was recognized by the committee that there would be a need for significant education if changes to the current system were implemented, such as regional/subregional composting or curbside pick up of organics.
  - **Public Comments:** The public was strongly in support of continued education on all aspects of the solid waste and recycling services. We received 205 comments between Survey #1 and the Comment Form supporting increased education and awareness initiatives. While Survey #2 focused on respondents' interest in composting and options around service delivery, education/awareness initiatives were not queried.

## 6.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

After the plan is approved by the Minister, a Plan Monitoring Advisory Committee (PMAC) will monitor the implementation of the plan and make recommendations to increase its effectiveness. A description of the plan monitoring committee tasks and composition are included in the terms of reference which can be found in Schedule C of the plan.