Purpose
To provide the status of non-Multi Material BC (MMBC) recycling depots within the Comox Valley Regional District.

Policy analysis
At its March 15, 2012 meeting, the CVRD (Comox Strathcona waste management) board passed the following resolution:

THAT a recycling strategy for the Comox Strathcona waste management service be approved including the following elements:
1. Replacing all current depots in Campbell River and the Comox Valley with one larger depot in the City of Campbell River, the City of Courtenay and the Town of Comox;
   - The larger depots in each city centre will be located on either public land or land leased by the Comox Strathcona waste management service;
   - The criteria for locating the larger depots would include a site that is properly lit, paved, fenced, maintained; accessibility to the site does not conflict with adjacent landowners; and that the depots would be closed after hours;
   - Existing or interim sites will be maintained wherever possible until such time as there are centrally located facilities.
2. Retaining the rural depots on Quadra Island, at Oyster River and in the Sayward Valley at their current locations.

Strategic priorities for the CSWM service includes the following:
Based on Multi Material British Columbia (MMBC) recycling depot program that the five existing recycling depot centres be phased out (Strathcona Gardens, Campbell River Sportsplex, 19A Country Market, Home Depot, CANEX). To date only the Home Depot location has been phased out.

Executive summary
In May 2014, Multi Material BC (MMBC) began operating a provincial recycling stewardship program in communities throughout British Columbia. The CSWM service applied to MMBC to have eleven CSWM recycling depots registered under the MMBC program. There are currently nine CSWM depots running operationally as part of the MMBC recycling depot collection program. Within the Comox Valley, there are two MMBC depots, the Comox Valley waste management centre (CVWMC) and the Courtenay Return-It Depot a privately operated depot located on Puntledge Road in Courtenay.
There are currently two non-MMBC recycling depots located in the Comox Valley. The first is located in Comox, behind the CANEX store and the second is located in Electoral Area B, within the parking lot of the Courtenay Country Market. The annual operating cost for these depots is approximately $111,562, with approximately 921 tonnes of cardboard, mixed paper, tin and plastic being collected annually. The depots are costly and a challenge to operate, as refuse is routinely dropped off at the depots, including chemicals, paint, oil and regular household garbage.

During the month of September 2015, a survey was conducted at the CFB Comox (CANEX) and Courtenay Country Market recycling depots. The survey found that residents who use the depots and also have access to curbside recycling, feel that biweekly pick-up is inadequate for their recycling needs. However, Courtenay and Comox residents have unlimited bi-weekly curbside recycling collection.

For residents within the CVRD’s electoral areas that do not have curbside recycling available, the two non MMBC recycling depots in Courtenay and Comox provide an important service. Until there is curbside available in the rural areas, it is recommended that the depots be maintained.

The lease agreement with CFB Comox is awaiting approval from the Department of National Defence in Ottawa. The term of the renewal is for five years. Currently the CSWM service does not have formal agreement with Courtenay Country Market for the recycling depot. Staff will work to have an agreement in place in the near future. The property has recently been listed for sale and it is anticipated that initially the agreement will be on a year to year basis until a new property owner is in place.

In addition the southern electoral area of the Comox Valley (i.e. Union Bay) does not have easy access and consideration should be given to how to meet the recycling needs of these residents.

**Recommendation from the chief administrative officer:**

**Recommendation #1:**
THAT the Courtenay Country Market and CANEX recycling depots be maintained as part of the larger CSWM recycling depot plan.

**Recommendation #2:**
THAT staff continue to re-evaluate alternative solutions to the non-Multi Material British Columbia recycling depots.

Respectfully:

*D. Oakman*

Debra Oakman, CPA, CMA  
Chief Administrative Officer

**History/background factors**

The CSWM service has nine depots registered as part of MMBC. In the Comox Valley, the CANEX and Courtenay Country Market depots were not included in the MMBC application because it would be too difficult and costly to operate these depots within the MMBC operational requirements. The Comox Valley waste management centre is a full service MMBC depot, serving many rural residents in the Comox Valley. The CVWMC is located along Bevan Road near the Village of
Cumberland and although many rural residents utilize the facility it is not conveniently located in the center of the Comox Valley. The Courtenay Return-It Depot is located on Puntledge Road near downtown Courtenay and is a fully registered MMBC depot accepting all material as part of the program.

The MMBC depots include the collection of foam packaging, plastic film and glass for recycling, that wasn’t previously available to residents. The program offers incentives based on the tonnage collected to local governments and private business that manage these depots. In addition, the cost of transportation of the material is provided as part of the program resulting in a significant cost savings to the CSWM service.

All residents in the City of Courtenay and the Town of Comox have access to unlimited curbside recycling. In addition the City of Courtenay has a multi-family dwelling recycling program.

During the month of September 2015, a survey was conducted at the CANEX and Courtenay Country Market recycling depots (attached as appendix A). The purpose of the survey was to gain a better understanding of the demographic of residents that frequent the depots, in order to help understand the true need and benefit of the depots.

There were three hundred and seventy five respondents to the survey. The results of the survey indicated that forty percent of residents that use the CANEX depot reside in the City of Courtenay or the Town of Comox and have curbside recycling. Approximately ninety percent of residents that use the Courtenay Country Market depot primarily reside within electoral areas B & C of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and do not have curbside recycling collection.

Options
The board has the following options to consider:
1. Maintain both the CANEX and Courtenay Country Market depots and re-evaluate the depots in two years’ time;
2. Maintain the Courtenay Country Market located on Highway 19A and close the CANEX recycling depot. This would save the service an annual cost of $62,046 plus additional fees for leasing the facility; or
3. Maintain the CANEX recycling depot and close the Courtenay Country Market. This would save the service an annual cost of $49,516 plus additional fees for leasing the facility.

Due to the volume of recyclables collected at the CANEX depot and given the number of CVRD rural residents that use the Courtenay Country Market, staff are recommending retaining both depots until an alternative solution (possibly curbside collection) is established for the residents of rural areas that do not have curbside collection service.

Financial Implications
The following table No. 1 provides information on the average annual costs to operate the Courtenay/Comox area non MMBC recycling depots. Costs are based on average tonnages received at the depots and the service includes supply of the bins, scheduled service and the cleaning of the sites. This also included a tipping fee for the material.
**Table 1: Non MMBC Recycling Depot tonnage and cost analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depot Location</th>
<th>Annual Tonnage Collected</th>
<th>Lease - Monthly</th>
<th>Annual Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courtenay Country market</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$49,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFB Comox (CANEX)</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>Estimated at $200/month</td>
<td>$62,046 (plus future lease)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>921</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$111,562</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legal**
The lease agreement with CFB Comox is awaiting approval from their office in Ottawa. The proposed term of the renewal is for five years.

There is currently no formal agreement or lease payment for the Courtenay Country Market recycling depot. Staff will work to have an agreement in place in the near future. The property has recently been listed for sale and it is anticipated that the agreement will be on a year to year basis until the property owner is in place.

**Sustainability implications**
Providing recycling services within the CSWM service supports the Comox Valley Sustainability strategy goal 3.3: Waste diversion and recycling programs approach zero waste targets. In addition, recycling also supports diversion goals in the CSWM service solid waste management plan.

**Intergovernmental factors**
The CSWM service is managed by the CVRD and provides waste management services to the CVRD and SRD including all eight member municipalities.

**Interdepartmental involvement**
The engineering services department is leading this work with support from the financial services department.

**Citizen public relations**
Both the Courtenay Country Market and CANEX depots are well utilized and well received by the public. The depots are an asset to the community and the CSWM service remains committed to maintaining the depots at a high level of service to ensure that residents and property owners are satisfied with the service provided.

Prepared by: Concurrence: Concurrence:

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Appendix B – CSWM recycling depot location map
Outreach at Comox Valley Green Bin Recycling Depots

Courtenay Country Market and Canex Locations

Luisa E. Richardson, M.Sc., M.Eco. Ed.
10/28/2015
Executive Summary

This report describes the results of a survey and outreach provided to recyclers using the green bin recycling depots located at Courtenay Country Market (5352 North Island Highway, Courtenay) and Canex Super Mart (1625 Military Trail, Comox) between September and October 2015. The surveys and outreach were conducted on behalf of Comox Strathcona Waste Management (CSWM). Results from the 375 people surveyed showed marked demographic differences between the depots, but similar reasons and preferences for recycling.

Due to its proximity to urban centres (see map in Appendix A), the Canex Depot was 2.5 times busier and had a more varied recycling demographic than the Courtenay Country Market (CCM) depot. Respondents recycling at Canex were primarily from Area B (50%), with another 40% evenly distributed between Courtenay and Comox. Respondents recycling at CCM came predominantly from single family homes in Areas A, B, C (90%), with the majority (69%) coming from Area C. Recyclers from urban areas with curb-side pickup used the green bin depots because they had too much material every two weeks and no room for storage. Biweekly pick-up was not adequate for their needs, even with the allowance of multiple blue-bins.

Awareness of expanded MMBC recycling was higher at CCM depot: 32% were aware compared to 20% at Canex. Though slightly over 50% of all respondents indicated a preference for a recycling depot that accepted a wide range of products, slightly less than 50% were not in favour of having such a depot, unless it was in the same location and offered the same 24/7
access as the current green bins. Other concerns included congestion, having to travel into Courtenay or the landfill and unimpeded access to the recycling bins.

Respondents generally felt there should be more, not less, recycling depots, and that recycling should be made easy and convenient. Despite having embraced recycling, it is clear that the majority of green bins users recycle incorrectly, do not understand the complexity of recycling, are in the dark as to recycling changes (e.g. glass, why sort in separate bins when all gets mixed in one truck) and do not know how they fit into the bigger picture of waste management in the Comox Strathcona region.

Recommendations for future outreach and communication include:

- Ensure transparency on how recycling systems operate and reasons for ongoing changes
- Focus on correct recycling and why it matters
- Develop historical and big picture context of waste and waste management
- Maintain the local story of waste as an on-line resource; share via outreach programs and advertising
- Change the signage and function of the green bins:
  - Repaint the green recycling bins with attractive motifs,
  - Include large, colourful signs on the bins on what is/is not recyclable there
  - Allow residents to mix recyclables in all the bins
  - Accompany the change in the green bins with on-site education
  - Create a simple, graphic chart on what is recyclable and where (Appendix E)
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**Scope**

This report describes the results of a survey and outreach provided to recyclers using the green bin recycling depots located at Courtenay Country Market (5352 North Island Highway, Courtenay) and Canex Super Mart (1625 Military Trail, Comox) between September and October 2015. The surveys and outreach were conducted on behalf of Comox Strathcona Waste Management (CSWM). The survey was designed to gather information on the demographics and preferences of the recyclers at each depot and to provide up-dates on expanded recycling options in the Comox Valley.

**Background**

The CSWM is a branch of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) responsible for the management of solid waste produced in the region (Fig. 1, AECOM, 2012). There are two

![Figure 1. Comox Strathcona Waste Management Area](image)
regional waste management centres (landfills), in Campbell River and the Comox Valley, as well as transfer stations and smaller waste disposal and recycling facilities throughout the region (ibid).

In 2006, the regional landfills were forecasted to reach capacity by about 2015. At that time, diversion of waste from the landfills through recycling and other programs was at ~ 21%. The introduction of various recycling services and education programs steadily increased the diversion rate so that by 2011, of the 131,000 tonnes of waste produced, 51% was diverted from the landfills (ibid).

The CSWM goal is to reach 70% diversion by 2022 through waste management programs and education. While reduce, reuse are considered the most effective form of waste minimization (Fig. 2, ibid), outreach experience through the Power of R programs (Fig. 3) indicates that recycling is the most universally embraced action by the public.

Figure 2 Waste reduction actions in order of effectiveness

Figure 3 The Power of R education promotes: Rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse THEN recycle
This may be because while rethinking, reducing and reusing are powerful and effective waste reduction actions, they remain in the realm of private and individual behaviour. Recycling, on the other hand, is a public activity, visibly promoted by governments and industry through services, advertising and branding. Despite being universally embraced, “recycling” is poorly understood by residents who want to recycle “everything” in one easy step. This leads to inappropriate disposal of recycling, especially at the unsupervised green bin recycling depots. These depots are frequently used as transfer stations and contaminated with unrecyclable material (Jesse Lee, personal communication).

In fact, “recycling” is a single word covering a complex range of services and materials. The complexity of what can be recycled and where it can be recycled is growing, as more material is added to recycling streams at various locations through the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Programs (Fig 4). Recycling information is available through various internet sites, but not everyone is computer literate, nor inclined, to take the time to understand and comply with the changes.
Recycling services in the Comox Valley are provided by various agencies to a variety of regions and establishments as described in Appendix B. In addition to the services described, residential recycling options expanded in May, 2014, when Multi-Materials BC (MMBC), a new EPR program for paper and packaging was introduced. Curb-side recyclers could now add additional materials to their weekly recycling. Glass, foam plastic (better known as Styrofoam) and soft plastics could now be taken to MMBC recycling depots.

The Comox Valley Waste Management centre (better known as the landfill or dump) became an approved MMBC depot and the Courtenay Return It bottle depot at 493 Puntledge Rd. began to unofficially accept MMBC materials such as glass and Styrofoam.

In July 2015, Courtenay Return It became an official MMBC depot, accepting all packaging and paper products. This meant people could now recycle all the materials accepted at the green bin depots, as well as glass, Styrofoam, plastic bags and over-wrap. The depot expanded its recycling section, added a separate entrance (Fig. 5), hired staff and created a well-labelled, well-organized recycling facility (Fig. 6).
Expanded recycling for paper and packaging, particularly glass, Styrofoam and soft plastics, created an opportunity for outreach at the green bin recycling depots. Having a better understanding of the needs and knowledge of the recycling public will lead to improved waste management services.

Ensuring that the recycling public is aware of the expansion in recycling options will also lead to more items being recycled correctly.

A combination of these two actions will move the waste diversion rate closer to the 70% target.
Methodology

The outreach planned for 2015 included a survey, plus information gathering through conversations. The survey was also distributed on-line through social media. The responses for each depot were recorded and analyzed separately.

Observations at each depot and conversations with each respondent were recorded.

Up-dated recycling information was handed out to all interested recyclers or made available in answer to peoples’ questions. This information included:

- MMBC Recycling Guide for Residents Using MMBC Depots
- Courtenay Return-It rack cards
- City of Courtenay curb-side recycling guide
- Town of Comox curb-side recycling guide
- Product Care brochures

Sampling Design

The number of residential households potentially served by the Canex and Country Market green bin recycling depots is 39,985, based on the 2011 Stats Canada census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral Area</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courtenay</td>
<td>24,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comox</td>
<td>5,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area A, Baynes Sound</td>
<td>3,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area B Lazo North</td>
<td>2,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area C Puntledge Black Creek</td>
<td>3,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39,985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For this population size, the number of samples required for a 95% confidence level and a +/- 5 confidence interval is 381 surveys (Creative Survey Systems, 2015). This assumes a random sampling method in order to obtain a normal distribution that is representative of the general population.

The actual survey times were chosen to maximize survey responses: Weekdays from 9 – 3 and Saturday from 12 – 4 pm. Therefore the survey results are representative of people recycling between 9 am and 4 pm on weekdays and 12 noon to 3 pm on Saturdays at a 95% confidence level and with a +/- 5 confidence interval.

**Survey Design**

The 2015 survey was designed to:

- Capture certain demographics for the people recycling at the green bins
- Ensure that people were aware of the expanded recycling alternatives through MMBC
- Evaluate their preferences for recycling depot type and location

Survey questions were chosen based on a recently conducted survey in Campbell and adapted to fit the Comox Valley. The adjusted and finalized survey is shown in Appendix D.
Results

The results will be listed in both qualitative and quantitative form.

Qualitative

The following observations were made:

- Most people were committed to recycling as “the right thing to do”; they incorporated it into their routines and lifestyle
- Despite signs at the recycling depots indicating what is and is not recyclable ((Fig 7), people still place Tetra packs and plastic film or bags into the bins (Fig 8)

Figure 7 Signs with recycling instructions at the Canex depot
People also use the depots to dispose of items that are not recyclable at these depots (Fig 9)

Figure 8 Soft plastics and Tetra pack containers in bins despite instruction signs

Figure 9 Electronics, propane tank, Styrofoam, glass, planters
• Others clean up after the polluters, recognizing that depots may be removed if abuse continues (Fig 10)

• Some people remove non-recyclable items and take to Thrift stores for resale

• Others take the incorrectly discarded items to the appropriate recycling centres

• People bring returnables for those who need them most

• Many people do not clean, or even rinse, the food containers, attracting wasps to the plastics and metal bins on warm days

• People notice others recycling incorrectly and follow suite

• Families incorporate recycling into their routine, using the depots to teach their young (Fig 11)

• Some respondents were not entirely sure which electoral area they lived in – especially if their postal address was different to their electoral boundary.
Some respondents living near municipal and RD Area boundaries were also unsure of their electoral area.

Some people were initially annoyed about perceived recycling inconsistencies (e.g. intermittent ability to recycle glass, or the fact that all the bins were mixed in one truck, or that depots were decreasing), but were pleased to receive information explaining the changes or inconsistencies.

**Quantitative**

By early October, 375 surveys were completed. This sample size, though slightly lower that 381 surveys required, still predicts the population demographics at the 95% confidence limit with a +/- 5 confidence interval (ibid).

**Survey respondents per depot**

The number of face-to-face interviews held at Canex and Courtenay Country Market (CCM) depots is shown below. An additional 6 people completed on-line surveys through social media. The on-line info was combined with the face-to-face data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey location</th>
<th>No of people surveyed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country Market (CCM)</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canex</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-line via social media</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>375</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recycling traffic at each depot

Between 9 am to 4 pm, Monday through Saturday, the average number of people recycling at the Canex depot was 2.5 times greater than that observed at the Country Market Depot. This may be due to location of each depot relative to population density (see map, Appendix A).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hourly Recyclers</th>
<th>Canex</th>
<th>CCM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average/hr</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min/hr</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max/hr</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From what type of residence/establishment are you recycling??

A comparison of the residence/establishments recycling at each depot is shown in the following table and pie graphs below (Fig. 12).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of residence/establishment</th>
<th>Canex</th>
<th>CCM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single family, duplex</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condo/strata</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Home</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailer Park</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Programs</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other Canex: Helping a friend, business and home, campground, renting a suite

*Other CCM: Comox Reserve, Kyuquot
The lack of variability in the CCM respondents is most like because the majority (~90) were from rural residences, therefore from single family, detached homes. This is not surprising considering the location of the depot in Area C (see map, Appendix A). The Canex respondents showed more variation in this category; this depot is more centrally located between rural and urban areas (see map, Appendix A).

Because businesses are not included in the residential recycling services, they were removed from the remaining survey analyses, except for the questions on MMBC awareness.
Where do you live?

The different areas from which people come to recycle at the Canex and CCM depots are shown in the table and graphs below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where do you live?</th>
<th>Canex</th>
<th>CCM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area A</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area B</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area C</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtenay</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comox</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other Canex: Unsure of which electoral area or municipality, or lived on the base

*Other CCM: Unsure of their electoral area, one respondent from Kyuquot and one from the Comox Band reserve

The greatest number of respondents at Canex came from Area B (50%), with similar percentages coming from Courtenay or Comox. The greatest number of respondents at CCM (70%) came from Area C. This is not surprising considering the depot locations (see Appendix A).
Recyclers from rural vs. municipal residences

The data above was combined to determine the proportion of recyclers from rural (Regional District) vs. municipal (Courtenay and/or Comox) areas. The bar graph below shows that the majority of recyclers at both depots come from the rural areas in the Regional District: 60% at Canex and 90% at CCM.

![Bar graph showing recyclers from municipal vs. rural residences](image)

Do you have curbside recycling? Canex depot

Of the 40% respondents at the Canex depot who came from Courtenay (41 respondents) or Comox (52 respondents), the greater majority have curbside recycling as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have blue bin recycling (Canex)</th>
<th>CT</th>
<th>Comox</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you have curbside recycling? Courtenay Country Market depot

Of the 10% respondents at CCM who came from Courtenay (11 respondents) or Comox (1 respondent), 61% have curbside recycling service as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have blue bin recycling (CCM)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: sample size is too small to make predictions!

Why do you recycle here if you already have curbside recycling?

Responses were combined for Canex and CCM.
How often do you recycle here?

Are you aware of expanded recycling for glass, Styrofoam, soft plastics at MMBC depots? All respondents including business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canex</th>
<th>CCM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat*</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Aware of expanded recycling at the landfill, but not at Courtenay Return It depot.

It is possible the greater awareness about MMBC recycling at the CCM is due to many of them taking returnables to the Courtenay Return It depot, with a well labelled MMBC recycling section. Canex respondents are more likely to use the Comox Return It, which does not include MMBC materials.
Would you prefer to recycle at a depot that offers a wide range of recycling programs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canex</th>
<th>CCM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends*</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Depends: Mainly on location, convenience and congestion if only one location available.

This preference (yes, no or depends) is enlarged upon in the next sections on feedback.

Public feedback

Green bin depots vs. MMBC depot

Slightly over half of the respondents indicated that having a one-stop depot for all recyclables made sense and that they would prefer such a location. Positive comments included:

- Courtenay Bottle depot (CBD) offers a great service, fabulous expansion
- They would recycle no matter where the facility was located.
- They would adapt and change their routines to incorporate the new location
- CBD is more convenient for people from Area A and from Courtenay
- CBD is great because it’ll help people know how to recycle correctly

However, the remainder, slightly below 50%, preferred to recycle at the current green bin locations because:

- The location is convenient, close to home or on their way to town, or work, or shopping
- Recycling at the green bins is easy, especially if just have papers and cardboard
• Having to go to downtown Courtenay to recycle is a deterrent due to traffic and congestion
• The CBD is too busy, too congested
• Road access to the CBD is hard at busy times of day
• Some had negative experiences at the CBD in the past and refused to go there
• Some had a distinct preference for the Comox Return It, cleaner depot, friendlier staff
• Going all the way to downtown Courtenay for the infrequent recycling of glass or Styrofoam is not worth it
• People on shift or who work out of town like the option to recycle 24/7

**More recycling, not less**

• To get to 70% diversion, have more recycling facilities, not less
• The reduction in recycling depots has been keenly felt
• More recycling depots are needed, and also more recycling options at the depots
• Bring back glass at these depots
• Have transfer stations handy for people so they can leave their unrecyclable material
• Recycling is becoming a pain, a challenge, some young, busy families have stopped recycling, too complicated
• Make it easier, not harder
Rural recycling

- Many newcomers surprised no curb-side pick-up, would be happy to pay for the service as long as the cost was reasonable
- Reason curb-side proposal failed:
  - Cost of the service was not clearly explained
  - No explanation about future costs
  - Cost would be according to the assessed value of the house
  - Some may live in a $600,000 home, but live on a pension
  - Seniors with long time home by ocean, would have to pay exorbitant rates

- An exception to all comments: Don’t make rural recycling too easy, then people will not try to reduce their waste!

Social work

Several social agencies use the green recycling bins to help adults with disabilities earn a living through residential and small business recycling. They indicate that the adults are used to this depot and would probably not adapt well to a change in location

Suggestions for the CSWM

- Recycling system needs to be stronger, more options in town, the dump is too far, not really an option
- The region is too cut up, so rural residences watch curb-side recycling trucks drive by.

“Think outside the box” and cooperate municipally/regionally
• Recycling should be a social enterprise for disadvantaged people who need jobs

• Get a summer student to work at the depots and educate people

• It’s silly to sort, then watch trucks mix all the material: Re-paint the bins with what is/is not recyclable, have all the recycling in same bins

• There is no advertising about recent changes in recycling. Info comes via word of mouth:
  Too confusing

• At least one respondent felt the CSWM and the CVRD were doing a fantastic job, given the complexity of the different regions

• Many felt the CSWM should look at other areas and learn from them:
  o BC is supposed to be a “green” province, but recycling here is really backwards
  o Rural recycling should be mandated, not referendum-based. In rural Nova Scotia, rural recycling was mandated, despite opposition from “unsophisticated old boys” – in the end, everyone conformed and now, on recycling day, all bags are out there, neatly organized: Organics, recycling, waste
  o Enclose recycling area with high chain fence, like in rural Alberta. You drive in and recycle everything. Can’t dump after hours due to fence
  o You can recycle everything in: Calgary, Edmonton, Quebec, Lower Mainland, Whistler, why not here as well?
  o Why not have larger blue boxes at home; have them picked up by trucks, not people?
Suggestions for municipalities

- Silly to have yard waste pick-up in Nov, Dec, Jan. Waste of money
- Decrease garbage pick-up to biweekly, increase recycling to weekly
- Biweekly recycling not good enough, not frequent enough, no room for storage
- Even with unlimited bins, we still need to come to the green bins because we have too much stuff accumulating over two weeks

Education opportunities

Apart from observations showing people recycling the wrong materials at these depots, comments made by survey respondents indicate ample education opportunities

- I only come here when I have books
- Blue box too picky, these depots take more stuff
- Aren’t gable top containers included with cardboard?
- Aren’t soft plastics recyclable here?
- I can’t believe glass can’t be recycled here
- Why do we sort materials, only to have them mixed in the trucks?
- Reducing waste to reduce our ecofootprint is just a political ploy
Summary

A total of 375 people who recycle at the Canex or Courtenay Country Market (CCM) green bin recycling depots were surveyed in September/October, 2015. Results of the survey showed marked demographic differences between both depots, but very similar reasons and preferences for recycling. Perhaps due to its proximity to urban centres, the Canex Depot was 2.5 times busier than the CCM depot.

Respondents recycling at Canex were primarily from Area B (50%) with another 40% evenly distributed between Courtenay and Comox. Of the 40% recyclers who came from Courtenay or Comox, 87% had blue box recycling, but again, came to recycle at the depots because they had too much material recycling over two weeks and no room for storage. Even after using up to three blue bins, these recyclers indicated that the biweekly pick-up was not adequate for their needs.

Respondents recycling at CCM were predominantly from rural areas (90%) and the majority from Area C (69%). In line with this, the majority of the respondents came from single family homes. Of the 10% of recyclers that came from Courtenay, just over half had curb side recycling, but chose not to use it because they had too much material piling up over two weeks and no room for storage.

Awareness of expanded MMBC recycling was higher in at CCM: 32% were aware compared to 20% at Canex. This difference could be attributed to the readily visual MMBC recycling expansion at the Courtenay Return It depot.
Preference for recycling at a place that offered a wide range of recycling was similar for both depots. Just over half felt it would be beneficial to be able to recycle everything in one location and that they would be willing to change their habits and routines. The remainder felt that travelling into downtown Courtenay or the dump did not qualify as an improvement over the green bin depots. Respondents generally felt there should be more, not less recycling depots, and that recycling should be made easy and convenient.

Despite having embraced recycling, it is clear that the majority of recyclers at the green bins do not understand the complexity of recycling. Many recycle incorrectly at the green bins, and the majority are in the dark as to recycling changes (glass, bins sort then mix) and the bigger picture about waste in the CV.
Recommendations:

The observations and results described in this report indicate that outreach and communication needs to focus on recycling: Where to recycle what and why the system operates the way it does.

On-line sites give specific instructions and brief descriptions of recycling processes, but neither on-line sites not local history books nor the local museum contain any historical perspective on the current state of waste management in the CV or in the CSWM region. The story of waste is lost to people, and without this perspective, it is hard to understand the various details of the current status of waste management or where people fit in.

People respond positively to this type of information as it allows them to make informed decisions (e.g. see water conservation success in Campbell River). Recommendations to address this lack of understanding include:

- Develop the context and story of waste and waste management in the region and have it readily available on-line and through outreach programs and advertising
- Change the signage and function of the green bins:
  - Repaint the green recycling bins with attractive motifs,
  - Include signs on what is/is not recyclable on the bins
  - Allow residents to mix recyclables in all the bins
- Couple the change in the green bins with on-site education
• Make a readily understood graphic of the different recycling options for a colourful sign at the bins and for hand-outs (see Appendix E)
Appendix A: Comox Valley Recycling Depots
Appendix B: Background Information on Recycling in the Comox Valley

Recycling services in the Comox Valley are provided by various agencies to a variety of regions and establishments. Residential recycling is overseen by one of two levels of local government depending on the electoral district in which people live and the type of residence they occupy.

In the Comox Valley, the electoral districts include three municipal areas: The City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox, the Village of Cumberland and three rural areas: Regional District Area A, B and C.
• Municipal governments provide the following:
  
  o Bi-weekly curb-side recycling
    
      ▪ For detached single family homes and duplexes
      
      ▪ Within the municipal boundaries of the City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox and the Village of Cumberland
      
      ▪ Materials accepted are listed on the respective municipal websites

• The Regional District provides the following recycling depots and services:
  
  o 24/7 unsupervised recycling green bin depots (see map in Appendix A)
    
      ▪ For all types of residences in municipal areas (including townhomes, condo/strata, trailer homes and apartments) and rural residents from Areas A, B and C
        
      ▪ accepting paper, cardboard, tin, hard plastic containers 1 – 7 for
  
  o Comox Valley (CV) Waste Management Centre, 7 days a week, 8:30 am – 5:30 pm (see map in Appendix A)
    
      ▪ For all types of residences in municipal areas (including townhomes, condo/strata, trailer homes and apartments) and rural residents from Areas A, B and C
      
      ▪ Accepting a full range of EPR items (see CSWM website)
  
  o A pilot weekly curb-side organics pick-up program for detached single family homes and duplexes in the Town of Comox and Village of Cumberland
Additional residential recycling for EPR Products is available through some stores and recycling depots:

- **Encorp Return It depots:**
  - Courtenay Bottle Return It: Returnables and a wide range of Extended Producer Responsibility items
  - Comox Return It: Returnables and Paint Plus

- Various retailers participate in the Retailer Take back Programs

*Returnables: Containers with refundable deposit fee*

Private companies can be contracted to provide curb-side garbage and recycling for residences that do not fall under the municipal waste collection programs. Commercial, institutional and industrial establishments are expected to pay for recycling services, whether through private companies or at the CV Waste Management Centre.

To increase waste diversion from rural residences in Areas A, B and C, the CSWM assessed support for road-side garbage and recycling collection through a referendum in 2013. The Comox Valley Record (Appendix C) reported that 73% of those voting turned down the proposal due to the proposed annual cost and the inability to opt out.
Appendix C: Comox Valley Rural Recycling Referendum Results

Comox Valley rural roadside garbage pickup, recycling soundly defeated

by Scott Stanfield - Comox Valley Record
posted Nov 18, 2013 at 3:00 PM

Rural residents won't receive roadside garbage collection and recycling any time soon in the Comox Valley.

In a referendum Saturday, voters in electoral areas A, B and C soundly rejected a proposal for solid waste pickup that would have serviced about 7,500 homes in the Comox Valley Regional District. Denman and Hornby islands, Royston and Mount Washington were to be excluded from the service.

According to unofficial results, 73 per cent of 4,289 voters said no. The turnout percentage was 29 per cent. Several advance votes were held.

Late last year, area directors asked CVRD staff to explore solid waste collection in rural areas because it appeared public interest might be growing for a roadside service. Seventy-five per cent of 150 rural residents who participated in a telephone survey had indicated they would support such a program.

Some residents were angered about not being able to opt out of the service, which would have cost about $150 per household per year. The CVRD board had awarded a three-year service contract to BFI Canada.

The recycling portion of the pickup service was expected to help the CVRD achieve 70 per cent diversion from landfills.

Official results will be posted by Wednesday.

Check www.comoxvalleyrd.ca and www.comoxvalleyrecord.com and Thursday's Comox Valley Record.

reporter@comoxvalleyrecord.com
Appendix D: Comox Valley Green Bin Recycling Depots Survey

2015 Canex Depot Survey for Comox Strathcona Waste Management

*Required

1. From what area of the Comox Valley are you recycling? *
   
   ○ Area A (Baynes Sound - Denman and Hornby Islands)
   ○ Area B (Lazo North)
   ○ Area C (Puntledge - Black Creek)
   ○ Town of Comox
   ○ City of Courtenay
   ○ Village of Cumberland
   ○ Other: _______________________

2. Are you recycling from: *
   
   ○ Single family, duplex
   ○ Condo/Strata
   ○ Townhome
   ○ Apartment
   ○ Trailer Park
   ○ Business
   ○ Other: _______________________

3. How often do you use this depot? *
   
   ○ Once a week
   ○ Once every two weeks
   ○ Once a month
   ○ Occasionally
   ○ Other: _______________________

4. Do you have curb-side recycling? *
   
   ○ Yes
5. Why do you recycle here? *

Check all that apply

- [ ] No curb-side pick-up
- [ ] Convenient location
- [ ] Too much material for blue bin
- [ ] Recycling builds up too quickly between pick-up
- [ ] More convenient than blue-bin pick-up
- [ ] Missed blue-bin recycling day
- [ ] Renovations/Moving/Cleaned out garage
- [ ] Other: 

6. Are you aware of the improved and expanded recycling options (e.g. clear or coloured glass, Styrofoam, plastic bags etc) at MMBC depots? *

MMBC Depots: Courtenay Return It, 493 Puntledge Rd., and CV waste management centre, 3699 Bevan Rd

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Somewhat

7. Would you prefer to recycle at a depot that offers a wide range of recycling programs? *

MMBC Depots: Courtenay Return It, 493 Puntledge Rd. and CV waste management centre, 3699 Bevan Rd

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Depends

8. If not, why not?

9. Comments
Appendix E: Create an Easy to Understand Recycling Chart

Green bins:
- Paper, cardboard, HARD plastic household containers
- 1–7, tin cans
Visit: http://www.cswn.ca/recyclingdepots.html

Curb-side - Unlimited amounts:
- As above plus more items
- Town of Comox http://comox.ca/services/waste/ for detailed lists

MMBC Depots:
- As above plus glass,
- “Styrofoam”, plastic bags and over-wrap
Visit: http://recyclinginbc.ca/
References

