

DATE: February 6, 2020

FILE: 5380-02

TO: Chair and Directors
Comox Strathcona Waste Management Board

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: Comox Strathcona Waste Management depot update – follow up

Purpose

To provide additional information requested by the Comox Strathcona Waste Management (CSWM) Board (Board) for the non-Recycle BC depots in the Comox Valley, to recommend phased closure of the depots and to present a strategy for moving forward, and to update the status of the Campbell River, Quadra Island and Oyster River depot changes.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT the Courtenay Country Market recycling depot be closed effective July 2020 and the Canex recycling depot be closed effective July 2021.

Executive Summary

The Board considered the [CSWM depot update](#) staff report on November 14, 2019. The Board required additional information related to the possible closure of the two non-recycle BC depots in the Comox Valley, at the Courtenay Country Market and Canex locations. The following points were raised and CSWM staff have followed up to address outstanding queries.

Return It Depots capacity

Questions arose regarding the types of materials accepted, as well as the ability of the Comox Valley Return-It depots to handle the additional material volumes that would be coming to these locations if the unstaffed depots are closed.

- Staff visited these locations unannounced, to better understand the statements made at the Board meeting.
 - All Recycle BC materials were being accepted at both Comox Valley depots.
 - Staff were friendly and attentive to customers that were looking for support in where to place recyclables.
 - Parking at the Comox Return-It depot was adequate for the number of visitors present at that time, however at other times the parking space may be a challenge.
- Both sites were visited to discuss the non-recycle BC depot closure and staff engaged with the Return-It depot operators to review potential impacts or concerns.
 - The Courtenay Return-It Centre is supportive and would welcome the additional material from the CSWM depots.
 - The Comox Return-It depot is limited for space and additional volumes are a concern for storage and customer service and parking limitations at their site.

- Both depot owners feel that the personal interaction is required and allows for an educational opportunity to improve recycling. Comox Return-It stressed the importance of customer service to ensure a positive experience at their site
- The Return-It depots accept additional materials when compared to the Non-Recycle BC depots, including glass, plastic film (both flexible and multi-laminate), foam packing (Styrofoam). These materials make a component of the approximately 300 tonnes of material landfilled.

An adjustment phase will occur as the depots are closed and the CSWM staff will work through the challenges. It will be important to have proper communication and education to the public and support the current Return-It depots and curbside collection to handle the volume of material. When there are gaps in the Recycle BC program, the CSWM staff will work with Recycle BC staff to address these gaps.

Curbside collection – Municipalities (Courtenay and Comox) impacts

Staff reached out to confirm there would be no issue with any additional volumes received at curbside through the municipalities. City of Courtenay and Town of Comox staff indicated no concern with the depot closures as an impact on the curbside collection volumes to process.

Comox Valley Regional District roadside collection

In 2020, the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Electoral Areas Services Directors will engage the public to further investigate the roadside collection of garbage and recyclable materials in the CVRD rural areas. Phase one will include a consultation with electoral area residents in 2020 to determine the level of support for roadside collection and identify any barriers to implementation of a program. All feedback gathered in this initial phase will be reported back to the Electoral Areas Services Directors for a decision about next steps, which could include a referendum in late 2020 or early 2021 depending on the direction of the community.

Recycle BC position

Recycle BC was created as an incentive based Extended Producer Responsibility program to encourage diversion and support recycling service delivery. The more Recycle BC achieves diversion targets within depot systems already in place, the more efficient the program will be and the more incentives available to go back into the recycling programs. Jordan Best from Recycle BC, presented as a delegation to the Board on November 14, 2019. There was no concern raised with the depot closures and there was an indication of support of the staff recommendation to the Board based on the comments made at the time. Jordan also commented that existing Return-It depots are audited to ensure performance per their agreements.

Recycle BC also audits the chain of custody to ensure materials handled within the stewardship program are recycled as intended. Materials collected from the non-Recycle BC depots do not include a chain of custody to guarantee the material is recycled. A shifting global market for recyclables, resulting in challenges and lack of transparency to determine if materials outside of the Recycle BC stream, are actually being recycled in a responsible or ethical manner ([CBC Marketplace investigation](#)) and not landfilled in a developing country.

Finally, staff asked Recycle BC about the limitation for the additional material volumes that the Comox Return-It depot receive. The option for more frequent pickups will be available should the material volumes increase.

Education and communications of changes

Recent social media activity indicates there is a high level of interest in the recycling depot closures. Some residents who use the depot have expressed a strong opinion for them to stay open. Other residents have indicated a clear desire for CSWM to provide appropriate recycling options, but there appears to be an information gap about the level of services the depots actually provide. In general, there appears to be a lack of knowledge about recycling options available to the public, including what can be recycled and where.

The heightened interest in recycling options provides an opportunity to educate residents about the need for CSWM depot closures and the benefits of recycling through the Recycle BC system. A communications plan is attached to this report (Appendix A) with goal of informing and supporting the public leading up-to and following depot closures. This will include an advertising plan and signage at the bins, to give notice about the closures and provide options for disposing of recyclables after the closure date. A broader education effort around recycling options and waste reduction will be addressed through online content, community events in Campbell River and the Comox Valley, and in classrooms through the school curriculum.

Recycle BC Depot option in Campbell River South

The Board directed staff to submit an application to Recycle BC in the south of Campbell River. CSWM contacted Recycle BC and discussed the possibility and a follow up email request was made. A letter was sent from the CSWM Board Chair to formalize this request. Staff will continue to work with Recycle BC on options ahead of the closure of the Sportsplex site, in July 2021. CSWM staff will be meeting with the Campbell River Return It depot owner to discuss changes and receive input and discuss any concerns regarding closures.

Oyster River and Quadra Island follow up

On December 11, 2019, staff met with both Director Abram and Director Leigh to review options available to support improvements at these location. Both Directors have asked that we engage with their communities to better understand the use and needs for their communities. Early in 2020, staff will begin this outreach and bring back findings to the CVRD Directors and Board for consideration.

Financial Impact

With the previously approved closure of the Campbell River non-Recycle BC depots over the next two years, it is anticipated to reduce the annual cost of the depot contract from \$575,000 to approximately \$420,000 in 2021. As per the following table, the additional closure of the Comox Valley depots would further reduce costs for the two remaining depots to approximately \$130,000.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Quadra Island depot	43,956	46,154	48,462	50,885	53,429
Oyster River	73,535	77,211	81,072	85,125	89,382
Canex	173,036	90,844	-	-	-
Sportsplex	98,410	51,665	-	-	-
CCM	45,059	-	-	-	-
Strathcona Gardens	34,638	-	-	-	-
Annual total	468,634	265,874	129,533	136,010	142,811

Prepared by:

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Attachments: Appendix A – “CSWM Depot Closures Communications Plan”



Project Name: CSWM Depot Closures

File: 5380-02

Purpose

- To inform and support the public leading up to and following the closure of four Comox Strathcona Waste Management (CSWM) depots, giving notice about the closures and provide options for disposing of recyclables after the closure date.

Communication Objectives:

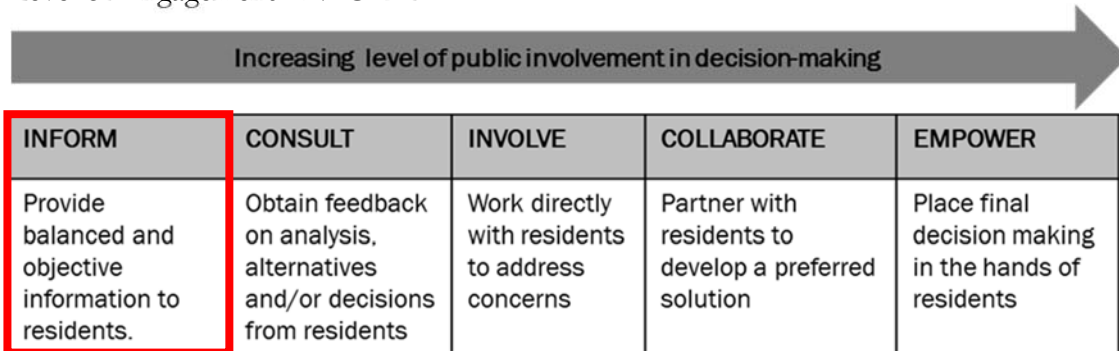
- Inform the public of depot closures in advance of the closure date
- Increase understanding of reasons behind depot closures and awareness of the alternative options
- Increase awareness of benefits of utilizing Recycle BC program supported locations
- Increase understanding of what is recyclable and acceptable through curbside program, Recycle BC depots and waste management centres

Relevant Background

- The unstaffed CSWM depots experience a high level of contamination of otherwise recyclable materials. Of the approximately 1,800 tonnes of material collected from the CSWM depots in 2018, 18 per cent was contaminated with garbage, including household and commercial garbage, furniture, lightbulbs, appliances, yard waste, dog feces, fish guts, motor oil and paint.
 - As a result, a large portion of otherwise recyclable materials can no longer be recycled and ends up in the landfill, and creates a safety issue for people who use the site and the staff that have to manage the contaminated waste.
 - Annual costs would increase to \$825,000 if the depots underwent changes to improve use of the sites including: reduced hours of operation to daytime hours only; improved fencing, paving, lighting, security; and full-time staff for all open hours of operation.
- The CSWM Board has approved the closure of the Strathcona Gardens depot effective July 2020, and the Sports Plex depot. Effective July 2021, both located in Campbell River.
- CSWM staff are recommending the closure of the Courtenay Country Market depot effective July 2020 and the Canex CSWM depot effective July 2021.
- The vast majority of users of the CSWM depots live within municipal boundaries and have access to full, unlimited curbside recycling collection.
- These depots are also all reasonably close to Recycle BC Return-It depots, as well as the Comox Valley and Campbell River Waste Management Centres. Residents have multiple Recycle BC locations to access, that accept even more recyclable materials than the CSWM depots and will therefore be diverting a larger volume of material.

Promise to the Public/IAP2 spectrum

- The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of public participation was used to define engagement goals for this project.
- Level of Engagement: INFORM



- Provide balanced and objective information to residents, partners and stakeholders for the CSWM depot closures, why the closures are happening, and what are alternative options for residents, and to educate about how to recycle effectively.

Target Audience, Stakeholders

- Campbell River residents
- Courtenay residents
- Electoral Area (EA) B, C and D residents
- Recycle BC
- CSWM Board Directors, EA Directors
- Municipal staff
- Media

Opportunities and Risks:

- There is a high level of interest in these closures on social media.
 - Some residents who use the depots have expressed a strong opinion for them to remain open
 - Other residents have indicated a clear desire for CSWM to provide appropriate recycling options, but there appears to be an information gap about the level of services the depots actually provide.
 - In general, there appears to be a lack of knowledge about recycling options available to the public, including what can be recycled and where.
- This heightened interest in recycling options provides an opportunity to educate residents on the need for CSWM depot closures and benefits of recycling through the Recycle BC system.

Timeline:

- **Phase 1:** Communications plan rollout for the Strathcona Gardens and Courtenay Country Market CSWM depot locations (closure July 2020), with the majority of communications focused one month prior to closure, June 2020.
- **Phase 2:** Communications largely occurring June 2021 for the Sports Plex and Canex CSWM depots (closure July 2021).

Tools and Techniques:

The table below indicates the communications rollout for 2020. This plan will be repeated in 2021.

Tool/Task	Description	IAP2 Spectrum	Budget	Date
News release	Distribute to media in Campbell River and the Comox Valley	Inform	N/A	June 2020
Social Media	Social media advertising campaign Facebook and Twitter posts focused on education around depot closures	Inform	\$300	Weekly, June-July 2020
Signage	One large aluminum composite sign per site, with anti-graffiti lamination	Inform	\$2,000	April 2020
Web Content	Develop web content to focus on depot alternatives and improving recycling practices at home. Utilize AVICC videos, Recycle BC materials. Share via social media.	Inform	N/A	Completed, for roll out June-July
Print ads	Half page Notice of Closures and Now Closed Ads to run in the Campbell River Mirror and Comox Valley Record.	Inform	\$5,600	Campbell River Mirror June 5, 12, 19, 26, July 3 Comox Valley Record June 4, 11, 18, 25, July 2
Community Education	Community Events Educator will attend 15 community events across the CSWM service area. Examples include Campbell River Home Show, Fish and Game Outdoor Show, Campbell River SalmonFest and Canada Day events. Electoral Areas A, B and C biannual newsletters and outreach events.	Inform	Educator time included in separate contract \$300 for printed materials	April 2020 – March 2021

Tool/Task	Description	IAP2 Spectrum	Budget	Date
School Curriculum	Curriculum Educator engages students in school districts 71, 72 and 84. The program includes resource kits for educators as well as classroom workshops focussing on waste reduction	Inform	Educator time included in separate contract	September 2019 - June 2020

Budget

- Phase 1: \$8,200
- Phase 2: \$8,200

Roles and Responsibilities

- Marc Rutten – Project lead and Media spokesperson
- Christianne Wile – Public and stakeholder communications lead
- Lyndsay Fraser – Communications strategy implementation

Approval History

Created by:	L. Fraser, February 2, 2020
Amended:	