

**DATE:** May 7, 2020**FILE:** 5360-30/ABC**TO:** Chair and Directors  
Electoral Areas Services Committee**FROM:** Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer*R. Dyson***RE:** Roadside Collection in Electoral Areas A, B and C**Purpose**

To gather input from Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Directors on a modified stakeholder engagement approach due to COVID-19 for roadside collection and to inform the Electoral Areas Services Committee (EASC) on diversion opportunities for residents without roadside recycling or yard waste pick up at this time.

**Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

THAT the Public Engagement plan for Comox Valley Regional District roadside garbage, recycling and yard waste collection services presented in the staff report dated May 7, 2020, be approved and implemented.

AND FURTHER THAT staff report back to the Electoral Area Services Committee following public engagement to present the results.

**Executive Summary****Roadside Garbage Collection:**

Staff continue to investigate opportunities for roadside collection of garbage and recyclable materials in the regional districts rural areas. The public communications approach presented in late 2019 included an online survey to be completed in summer 2020 followed by traditional open houses in the fall. Due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, public open houses are likely no longer viable and the results of the survey work could be presented in fall 2020.

Earlier this year on February 20, 2020, staff were presented with an opportunity to attend an open house for residents of Electoral Area B and C, where information related to fire, emergency preparedness, septic systems and waste management were being discussed. Staff spoke with several residents throughout the evening and collected 12 responses to an informal survey on how to best keep residents informed; whether they participated in the 2013 referendum; and reasons why they may not have. Staff learned that newspaper and Directors newsletters were the most popular means of communicating for this subset of residents.

At the open house event, residents were shown a map demonstrating population density across the CVRD rural areas, with the exception of Hornby and Denman Islands. The map was used as a tool to speak with residents about where they lived, and to get a pulse on how they currently manage their solid waste. This map titled, Roadside Solid Waste Collection Study, is included as Appendix A.

The map includes population (household) density which was selected for further analysis as it aligns with the draft criteria proposed by Recycle BC to evaluate the future potential inclusion of

unincorporated areas in curbside collection programs. These criteria are currently under review by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and are:

- The proposed service area has a combined minimum population of 5,000 residents;
- The proposed service area has a minimum household density of 0.42 households per hectare;
- There is a maximum distance of 20 km between proposed service area nodes;
- A roadside garbage collection program has been in place for a minimum of two years within that service area; and
- Island communities must be stand-alone, and meet all criteria above independently.

The population of Denman and Hornby Islands are both under the minimum of 5,000 residents and do not meet the Recycle BC criteria to support funded roadside collection of recyclables. The recycling depots on each of these islands are a big part of the community structure, and supplementing with a roadside recycling service would likely reap little reward.

For the rest of the regional district the highest density settlement areas shown on the map appear in green and can be summarized as:

- Electoral Area A
  - Ships Point/Fanny Bay
  - Union Bay
- Electoral Area B (*density of 0.5 as a whole*)
  - Kitty Coleman
  - Little River
  - Lazo Road
- Electoral Area C
  - Saratoga/Miracle Beach
  - Macaulay Road
  - Doyle Road area off of Macaulay
  - Old Island Highway 19A Corridor

There are several ways to approach the creation of a service area and proceed with electoral approval. Three to be considered are:

- a. Create a single service that includes all properties, regardless of density
- b. Create a single service that only includes the most dense areas
- c. Create multiple distinct services that focus on the dense areas

Reflecting on the results of the 2013 referendum on a similar proposed service, it is understood that not all residents are in favor of roadside collection, but that many are and continue to request this service. Proceeding with a service area that encompasses the entire electoral area will have the least chance of success in approval. It is felt by staff that options (b) and (c) provide the greatest level of support from the electorate. In addition, these options meet the requirements of Recycle BC, for possible inclusion and funding of roadside recycling after two years of operation. Moving forward with either single or multiple service areas would not impact how the procurement would proceed as the contract operations can be independent of the service area lines.

Through public engagement, staff wish to understand if there is a preference for different levels of service - such as weekly vs. bi-weekly collection or inclusion of yard waste pick-up. Having multiple distinct service areas may help reflect that desire.

Creation of a service area that is built around or includes Electoral Area B is supported by the high population density and proximity to municipal collection routes. Electoral Area B has a population of 7,100 residents and a density of 0.56 households per hectare, meeting the Recycle BC criteria on its own.

Defining a service area boundary that is not inclusive of all residents does not prohibit other households from eventually being able to join in the future. Should electoral approval be received, and a service area created there would be opportunity to add to the service area to include neighbouring homes with lower density through a future petition process.

Considering the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 the revised public engagement plan now consists of the following recommended phases:

- Phase one includes online consultation with electoral area residents in spring/summer 2020 to determine the level of support for curbside collection and identify barriers to implementation of a program. The initial consultation is important since a previous referendum to provide curbside service failed and this due diligence will determine if community support exists. This phase includes direct mail with an online survey.
- All feedback gathered in this initial phase will be reported back to the EASC directors for a decision about next steps.
- Following the conclusion of engagement, next steps could include a referendum in late 2020 or early 2021 depending on feedback from the community and direction from EASC. Once an assent process is identified, phase two would inform electors about the assent process and detail service requirements.

The detailed Public Engagement Plan is attached as Appendix B.

#### Current Rural Diversion and Recycling Opportunities:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020, significant changes in solid waste management facilities and services have occurred in the Comox Valley that residents and businesses rely on.

#### Private Return-It Bottle Depots

- Beginning around March 18, both private recycling facilities, the Courtenay Return-It Depot and the Comox Return-It Centre suspended operations.
- These closures were required as the operators were not able to immediately ensure the safe operation for staff and customers. It is difficult for them to maintain physical distancing and to limit staff contact with product as it is typically hand sorted.
- In early April, there were 84 Return-It depots closed across the province. Since then a number of them have been able to modify operations and reopen; as of April 27, only 33 depots were fully closed.
- The Courtenay Return-It Centre is scheduled to reopen May 4, 2020, and we anticipate the Comox facility will re-open soon in response to their competitor opening up.
- CSWM staff reached out to these depots to see how we can support their operations to allow them to reopen safely, but ultimately reopening is a decision made by the individual business owners and not by the CSWM, nor by Encorp.
- The only materials that are accepted at these two depots that are not accepted at the Comox Valley Waste Management Centre (CVWMC) are electronics (<https://www.recyclemyelectronics.ca/bc/>) and deposit containers with a refund:
  - Residents can recycle their deposit containers without a refund through their curbside recycling, or in the Recycle BC bins at the CVWMC.
  - We are temporarily setting aside end-of-life electronics and recycling them through an arrangement with the Electronics Products Recycling Association (EPRA).

CSWM Recycling Depot Closures

The CSWM Board has approved the closure of the Strathcona Gardens depot and the Courtenay Country Market depot effective July 2020. Many rural residents access these depots and will be looking for alternatives to recycle. In addition to the CVWMC recycling depot, there are two private bottle depots in Courtenay and Comox which accept the same materials as these CSWM depots and more. As stated, although the two private bottle depots have temporarily closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Courtenay Return-It Centre is scheduled to reopen May 4, 2020, and we anticipate the Comox facility will re-open soon in response to their competitor opening up.

When the two private bottle depots closed in mid-March we expected a surge in volume to our CSWM unstaffed depots, and monitored them for increased volumes and contamination. No significant change to volumes occurred, and contamination remained at typical levels. A possible explanation for this could be the decreased use of the bins by small businesses closed due to COVID-19, and residents keeping their recyclables at home. Following the closure of these bins, small businesses have the option of contracting directly with a local waste management company such as Emterra or Waste Management Canada for regular pick up from their business, or group of businesses.

- When asked for a representative price, Waste Management Canada stated that weekly pick-up of single stream recycling in a 97 gal toter would cost \$107 per month, while a 4 cubic yard front load bin would be \$155 per month.
- Commercial recycling at the CVWMC is \$60/tonne. The equivalent of 16 cubic yards self-hauled to the CSWM depot for commercial recycling would be about \$50/month (800 kg).

The Canex CSWM depot in Comox will also remain open until July 2021 offering limited recycling opportunities for those unable to access alternatives.

Prepared by:

***S. Willie***

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Sarah Willie  
Solid Waste Analyst

Concurrence:

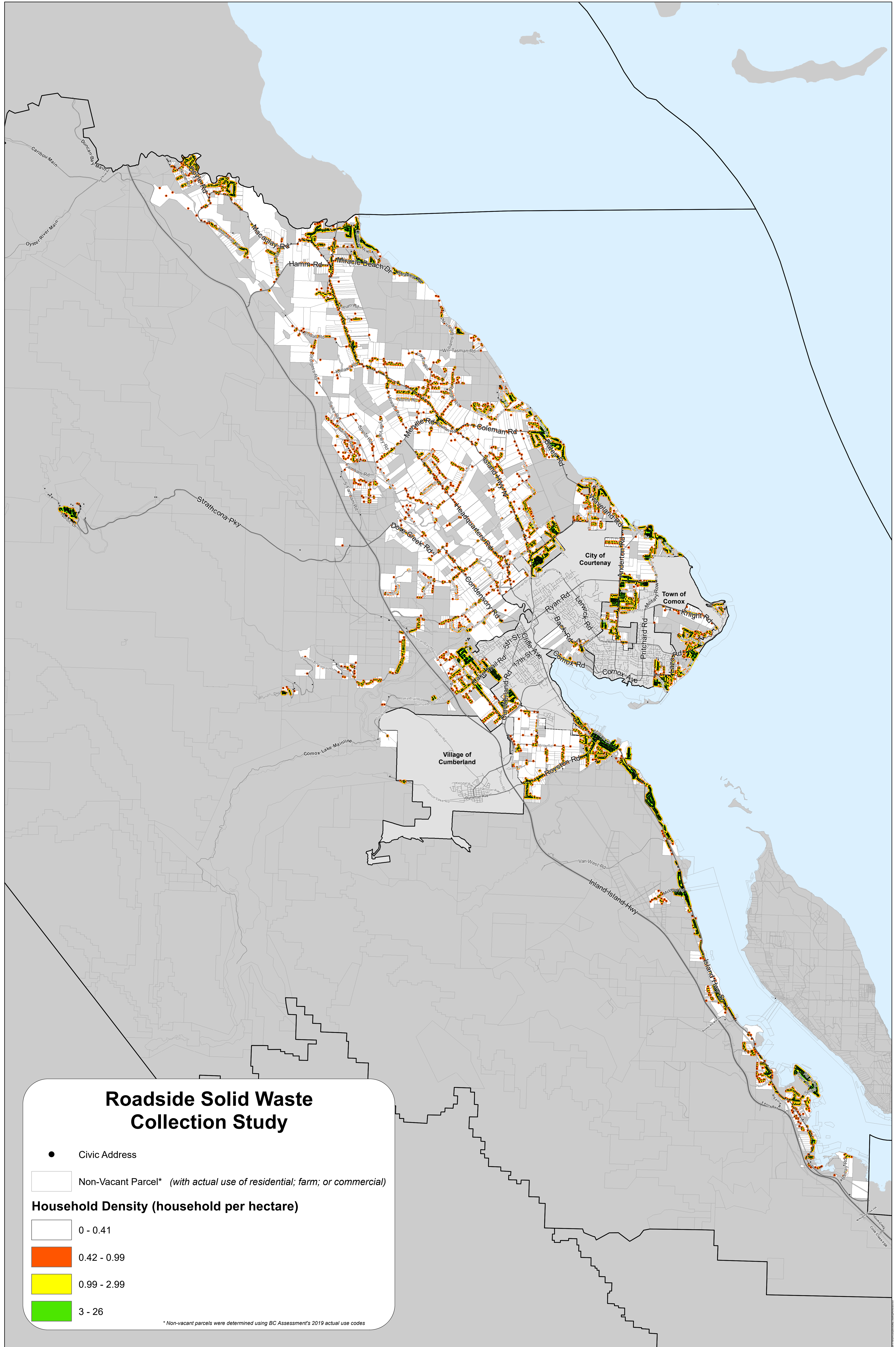
***M. Rutten***

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M. Rutten, P.Eng.  
General Manager of Engineering  
Services

Attachments: Appendix A – “Roadside Solid Waste Collection Study Figure”  
Appendix B – “Public Engagement Plan”





## Roadside Solid Waste Collection Study

● Civic Address

□ Non-Vacant Parcel\* (with actual use of residential; farm; or commercial)

### Household Density (household per hectare)

□ 0 - 0.41

■ 0.42 - 0.99

■ 0.99 - 2.99

■ 3 - 26

\* Non-vacant parcels were determined using BC Assessment's 2019 actual use codes



## Rural Roadside Solid Waste Collection Phase 1: Public Engagement Plan

### OVERVIEW

Roadside collection of garbage and recycling from the Comox Valley Regional District rural areas could provide advantages including the diversion of recyclables, convenient disposal and removal, reduced emissions and cost savings for residents. Electoral Area Directors advise that residents in their constituencies are interested in a new service and Recycle BC has presented new criteria for providing services to unincorporated areas. All these factors point to the potential for a new service in Electoral Areas A, B and C. However, before moving forward to the formal assent process required for a new service, it's important to engage the community to more fully understand the degree of their support in principle and to learn about possible barriers to implementation.

This public engagement plan provides an overview of the first phase of public engagement on rural roadside collection, which will inform the community of the opportunity and collect feedback on interest before moving to Phase 2, which would include a formal assent process.

### AUDIENCES


Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 9,500 homes in Area A, B and C (excluding Royston, Denman and Hornby Island)</li> </ul>
Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste processors and haulers</li> <li>Recycle BC</li> <li>Local environmental groups</li> <li>Media</li> </ul>
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EA Directors</li> <li>CSWM Board</li> </ul>

### ENGAGEMENT GOALS

Before considering the creation of a new service, it is important to understand the scale of interest within the community. Engagement in Phase 1 of the rural roadside collection program will focus on providing information about the possible service, while also collecting feedback on the opportunity. The goal is to determine if there is interest in proceeding and under what conditions.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of public participation was used to define engagement goals of “inform” and “consult” for this project. These goals are about providing information, listening and acknowledging concerns, and showing a commitment to work with the public to exchange information, ideas and concerns.

Increasing level of public involvement in decision-making



INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Provide balanced and objective information to residents.	Obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions from residents	Work directly with residents to address concerns	Partner with residents to develop a preferred solution	Place final decision making in the hands of residents

**Goal 1: Inform homeowners about potential rural roadside collection**

- Provide objective information about a roadside collection program, its benefits and challenges, and the process required to implement such a program if community support is determined to be sufficiently high.

**Goal 2: Consult homeowners about barriers to implementation in their neighbourhood**

- Collect feedback on challenges or concerns using a range of tools accommodating a range of accessibility. Due to COVID-19 protocols, no in-person opportunities will be provided.

**Goal 3: Consult homeowners about level of support or conditions of support**

- Provide materials and tools that allow residents to report their level of support by geographic area, in order to inform CVRD staff about whether to proceed with service development.
- Report back to residents on outcomes of Goals 2 and 3 using same materials/tools.

**OPERATIONAL MILESTONES**

Potential delivery of a rural roadside collection program will include two public engagement phases.

- **Phase 1: Introduce and Gauge Support (Inform and Consult)**  
Engagement in this phase (outlined in this strategy) focused on increasing understanding on the community’s potential support for a new service, and potential concerns or issues CVRD staff should be considering.
- **Phase 2: Assent Process for Service Creation (Inform and Empower)**  
Public engagement plans for this phase will be developed if Phase 1 results in a mandate to proceed – where possible – with the implementation of a rural roadside collection program.

Milestone	Spring 2020	Summer 2020	Fall/Winter 2020	Winter 2021	Spring/Summer 2021	Fall/Winter 2021
<b>Phase 1</b>						
Phase 1 Engagement Plan developed/approved						
Analysis of existing household density data						
Community Consultation – Area A, B, C						
Waste Hauler Consultation – operational limitations and procurement input						
Geographical Analysis Incorporating Consultation Results						
‘What We Heard’ community consultation results						
<b>Phase 2 (tentative)</b>						
Staff recommendation on potential service delivery model and assent process						
Phase 2 Engagement Plan developed/approved						
Procurement process initiated to understand costs						
Phase 2 Public Engagement campaign						
New service assent process undertaken						
Results of assent process reported						
Procurement awarded (if approved)						
Service implemented (if approved)						

## TOOLS

<b>Project Webpage</b>	A one-stop resource for all audiences to stay current on the project
<b>Connect CVRD Online Consultation Page</b>	The hub for consultation, with information, discussion topic and feedback opportunities available all the time
<b>Direct Mail</b>	Information pamphlet to inform the community and provide an option to collect feedback from those who prefer non-digital tools.
<b>Poster</b>	For community poster boards and post boxes to draw attention to the feedback opportunity.
<b>Stakeholder Letter</b>	To accompany direct mail for non-residents with interest in this topic.
<b>Press Release</b>	Local print, radio and television media can help to share raise awareness for opportunities for input
<b>Social Media</b>	A cost-effective and immediate way to raise awareness
<b>Briefing Note</b>	Consistent messaging for staff and directors ensures effective project communications
<b>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)</b>	Can be used on website, in staff and board briefing materials and to prepare staff for responding to residents
<b>Print Advertising</b>	Paid advertising will assist in raising awareness about consultation – both digital and print opportunities.
<b>Cross-promotion</b>	Utilize the EASC communications strategy as a means to disseminate information to the community where possible.



## ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE AND ACTIVITIES

Phase 1 activities will focus on informing the community about the potential opportunity and consulting on their level of interest. The below timeline outlines how the engagement process will roll out. Timeline and activities for Phase 2 will be a part of a subsequent plan, depending on outcome of this first stage.

### May-June 2020

- Draft, submit, review and finalize Phase 1 engagement plan
- Craft key messages and collect all required technical information for material development
- Develop tools outlined in engagement plan, with targeted launch in July.
- Create and launch project-specific webpage as foundational information hub

### July-September 2020

- Provide factual and objective information to community via direct mail about the service opportunity and include opportunity for hard-copy survey submission
- Launch online consultation page with information, discussion boards and survey
- Promote the consultation opportunity with both paid and unpaid tools, including print ads, press release, posters and social media
- Monitor and manage questions via both traditional and online feedback tools.

### September-November 2020

- Wrap up engagement period, updating online information to reflect completion of consultation
- Collate and summarize results and draft summary report for CVRD staff
- Provide summary report to EASC for consideration of next steps
- Report back to survey participants via email and EASC engagement tools

## EVALUATION

A summary of the informational and consultation tools used and feedback collected will be created, reporting what was asked, key themes of the response and metrics of the results. It will provide a comprehensive summary of the Phase 1 engagement plan, including copies of all materials.

Measures of the process and success include:

- Distribution numbers
- Respondents to survey – print and online
- Results of the survey, by degrees of feedback and geographic area
- Number of discussions and posts including questions/comments
- Media coverage – volume and accuracy
- Social media engagement