

**DATE:** June 6, 2018

**FILE:** 5340-01

**TO:** Chair and Members  
Comox Valley Sewage Commission

**FROM:** Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer

*R. Dyson*

**RE: Comox Valley Sewerage System – LWMP  
committees and public consultation plan**

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### **Purpose**

To recommend to the Comox Valley Sewage Commission an advisory committee structure, committee membership list, and invitation process for the upcoming Comox Valley Sewerage System Liquid Waste Management Planning (LWMP) process, and associated public consultation plan.

### **Recommendations from the Chief Administrative Officer**

THAT the Comox Valley Sewage Commission approve the Comox Valley Sewerage System Liquid Waste Management Plan oversight committees (steering, technical advisory, and public advisory) structure and membership outlined in this staff report and appendixes dated June 6, 2018.

### **Executive Summary**

The provincial LWMP process is designed to allow BC communities to develop their own solutions for managing liquid waste while meeting provincial regulatory requirements. The strategy provided in the plan must ensure the management and disposal of treated waste is sufficiently protective of public health and the environment. Public and stakeholder consultation is a key component of plan development to ensure that multiple interests have been considered and that the LWMP is supported by the community. An approved LWMP confers two critical authorizations to the local government;

1. Regulatory authorisation to proceed with the works identified in the plan, and for treated water discharges.
2. Borrowing authorisation to finance the works identified in the plan, in lieu of obtaining elector assent.

The LWMP guidelines describe a three-stage planning process, each involving meaningful public and stakeholder consultation, and with Ministry of Environment and Climate Change review after each stage.

- **Stage one** identifies existing conditions and community goals and then develops a wide range of options for managing liquid waste in the plan area. The options are considered for regulatory compliance, practicality and achievement of community goals, and pared down to a short list.
- **Stage two** is a detailed evaluation of the shortlisted options, and additional environmental impact studies, if appropriate. Stage two ends with selection of the preferred solution for the key plan components.
- **Stage three** consists of further development of the selected option for implementation, operation and financing. A formal implementation schedule and financing plan are

established, and the completed plan is submitted for approval by the Minister of Environment.

The planning and approval process typically takes at least three years. In some cases it may be appropriate to combine stage one and two, or two and three, however, the full scope of planning and consultation aspects of the LWMP must always be fulfilled.

### ***Steering/Advisory committees***

The LWMP process normally sees the establishment of four committees: a steering committee, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Public Advisory Committee (PAC), and final plan monitoring committee to serve after the plan has received approval from the Minister of Environment. An existing political body may be used to fulfill the role of steering committee (e.g. the Village of Cumberland assigned this role to their municipal council during their LWMP process, and the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Electoral Areas Services Committee served as the steering committee for the south region LWMP), but a new TAC and PAC, or in some cases a combined TAC/PAC must be established to act in an advisory capacity to the steering committee during plan development.

Staff recommend that the Comox Valley Sewage Commission act as the LWMP Steering Committee, and a TAC and PAC be created to support and provide recommendations to the Steering Committee. The TAC will consider technical information related to the LWMP and the environmental impact study on behalf of the Steering Committee, and the PAC will consider public opinion related to the LWMP on behalf of the Steering Committee. Draft terms of reference for the TAC and PAC are included in Appendixes A and B.

Whenever possible, the Comox Valley Sewage Commission will fulfill its capacity as the LWMP Steering Committee during regular meetings. However, special meetings may be required when the combined regular agenda and LWMP related items could result in excessive meeting length, or when time sensitive matters require a decision sooner than the next scheduled meeting.

Following the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change's LWMP guidelines, the CVRD will seek and invite representation from local area residents, various interests groups, stakeholders and senior government agencies for membership on the PAC and TAC. Direct invitations will be sent via email to those agencies, organizations, and stakeholders with interest or jurisdiction in the project area and listed at the end of each committee's terms of reference in Appendix A and B.

Representation from local area residents from different geographic areas and project stages will be sought through social media, newspaper ads, and the CVRD website, and a nomination process through which suitable candidates may be identified. In order to assist in selecting local area residents, those interested or nominated will be asked to submit a letter of interest to introduce themselves and describe their interest in this important liaison role. The K'ómoks First Nation will be invited to participate in the TAC and PAC, and will also be engaged in direct consultation separately to further build relationships and share information on the project.

Should the proposed LWMP Advisory Committee structure and membership be supported by the Comox Valley Sewage Commission, staff intend to send out invitations to the TAC and PAC invitation list and post advertisements calling for volunteers or nominations subsequent to the Comox Valley Sewage Commission meeting on June 12, 2018. Staff are aiming to bring back a final recommended Comox Valley Sewerage System LWMP Advisory Committee membership list to the July 10, 2018 Comox Valley Sewage Commission meeting. This timeline should allow the first TAC and PAC meetings to be scheduled for mid-September 2018.

**Public Consultation**

Public consultation is a required component of the LWMP process. A Public Consultation Plan (Appendix C) has been developed to support the activities of the TAC and PAC and provide a mechanism to report public feedback to the Comox Valley Sewage Commission and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. In parallel with the formation of these advisory committees, the CVRD is undertaking the first in a series of facilitated public events on June 18, 2018 in Courtenay and June 19, 2018 in Comox. The purpose of these events is to gain an understanding of what residents in the Comox Valley Sewerage System service area value most as the basis for development and evaluation of long term options for sewer conveyance, treatment, discharge. This event will be supported with online consultation, and the information gathered will be provided to the advisory committees prior to their first meeting in the fall. The findings will assist the committees in their work to develop the goals and objectives for the LWMP process.

Prepared by:

***K. La Rose***

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Concurrence:

***M. Rutten***

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General Manager of  
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**Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)**

None	✓
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Attachments: Appendix A – DRAFT Technical Advisory Committee Terms of Reference  
Appendix B – DRAFT Public Advisory Committee Terms of Reference  
Appendix C – LWMP Public Consultation Plan

**Terms of Reference**  
**COMOX VALLEY SEWERAGE SYSTEM LIQUID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN -**  
**TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **Background**

Long term planning of wastewater infrastructure is a critical function for any community. The City of Courtenay and the Town of Comox are jointly served by the Comox Valley Sewerage System, which provides conveyance (pump stations and trunk mains), treatment and effluent discharge functions.

Near term upgrades are required for the conveyance infrastructure, particularly to allow decommissioning of the Willemar Bluffs forcemain which has an elevated risk of failure due to being installed within the intertidal zone along an exposed section of coastline. Medium term upgrades are also required at the Comox Valley Water Pollution Control Centre (Brent Road treatment plant) for both capacity and treatment quality.

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) has elected to follow the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change's Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP) process for planning these upgrades. This is a comprehensive planning process involving extensive public consultation, engineering study, financial analysis and provincial regulatory review.

The LWMP requires consideration of both current circumstances and longer term population growth. It also allows for consideration and planning of water conservation, infiltration reduction, storm water management and resource recovery. These subject areas can be addressed during initial plan development, or during a subsequent plan update, expected approximately every five years. The initial plan development is not expected to address storm water management.

Once completed, and approved by the Minister of Environment, the LWMP provides the regulatory authorization for proceeding with the planned works, and also confers borrowing authority to the CVRD to finance the works. Kept current with regular updates, the approved LWMP will set the strategic directions for the Comox Valley Sewerage System (CVSS) for the next twenty years.

The LWMP process calls for the establishment of four committees. A guiding steering committee will advise the CVRD Board throughout the development of the LWMP, and two advisory committees will advise the steering committee. The Comox Valley Sewage Commission will act as the LWMP Steering Committee, and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Public Advisory Committee (PAC) are being created to gather relevant input and provide recommendations to the Steering Committee. The fourth committee is the plan monitoring committee, which will be created later to oversee the implementation of the completed LWMP.

The CVRD will retain an engineering consulting firm (the Consultant) to provide services related to the LWMP process.

### **Role of the Committees and the PAC**

While the responsibility for the management of the LWMP ultimately rests with the CVRD Board of Directors, the Steering Committee, TAC and PAC will assist in this responsibility by providing input, perspective, specific expertise and recommendations. Members of the committees are expected to participate in meetings and assist with:

- Identifying goals and challenges;
- Generating and reviewing ideas to meet them; and
- Working towards consensus solutions.

To assist with communication and understanding of the process, committee members will be sent the meeting agenda packages and meeting notes for all three committees. Members of one committee are encouraged to attend the other committee meetings as observers.

There may also be several joint TAC-PAC meetings, and the CVRD may combine the two committees into one if it proves advantageous to do so.

The TAC is an advisory group who will consider technical information related to the LWMP and any necessary environmental impact study, on behalf of the Steering Committee. It is the responsibility of the TAC to review and become familiar with the CVRD's LWMP process. The TAC will also provide input and feedback on relevant technical reports, discussion papers, and other documents provided by CVRD Project Staff and the Consultant.

### **Role and Responsibilities of TAC Members**

The role of TAC members is to develop and maintain a broad understanding of the issues and implications for stakeholders, residents and the environment in order to make appropriate recommendations to the Steering Committee. It is also the responsibility of the TAC members to review and become familiar with the CVRD's LWMP process and the function of the CVSS itself.

Participating in the TAC is both a privilege and an obligation. Members have an important liaison role with the responsibility to represent and inform the organizations or communities they have been selected to represent. They are expected to bring their own perspectives to the table, but must be prepared to provide to, and disseminate from the committee, the full range of perspectives, including those with which they may disagree.

TAC recommendations will be informed by input and opinion from committee members, broader public consultations, the Steering Committee, the PAC and the Consultant. The role of TAC members is to develop and maintain a broad understanding of the proposed project and the technical issues and implications for stakeholders, residents and the environment in the south region. All members have the authority to contribute to recommendations to the Steering Committee based on the interests of the group or organization they represent or on their own expertise.

It is intended that recommendations to the Steering Committee will be made by consensus, though there may be some that are recorded as non-consensus. A consensus recommendation may include the identification of a specific interest or concern to be noted in the record but not as a limiting factor. A non-consensus recommendation will be made if, after adequate deliberation, the member(s) is/are still not in accord with other members. The non-consensus party must provide a

written submission for the record, outlining the rationale for the non-consensus recommendation, within one week of the distribution of the draft meeting notes.

### **Membership**

The CVRD will seek and invite representation from the key stakeholder agencies and organizations with interest or jurisdiction in the project area (see attached list of invited agencies and organizations). The total number of representatives will be at the discretion of CVRD Project Staff. The appointments will be based on agency and organization representation and will not be personal appointments.

Members will submit one alternate for approval of the whole at the first meeting or immediately to CVRD Project Staff upon resignation of the primary or alternate.

Termination of a member that is falling short of his/her obligations, not considered to be actively participating, or is not abiding by the code of conduct (below) will be at the discretion of the CVRD.

This committee will stand for the duration of the LWMP process at minimum; following the completion of the LWMP, follow-up activities may be required, and some members may be asked to stand for the plan monitoring committee.

A list of committee representatives will be attached once the terms of reference have been finalized.

### **TAC Representatives to the PAC**

The LWMP guidelines require that the TAC also be represented on the PAC. The lead technical consultant, CVRD engineering staff and municipal technical staff will perform this role. These representatives may also advise the Steering Committee and the CVRD Board and will be responsible for in responding to media requests on behalf of the TAC.

### **Code of Conduct**

During meetings, public events, and other activities related to the LWMP project, all participants of the committee will endeavour to conduct themselves as follows:

- Support an open and inclusive process;
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest;
- Treat others with courtesy and respect;
- Listen attentively with an aim to understand;
- Speak in terms of interests versus positions;
- Where a member is espousing a favored position or course of action, they must fully and honestly disclose the reasons for their positions;
- Be open to outcomes, not attached to outcomes;
- Focus on service provision; and
- Share and discuss ideas from a professional perspective.

Members are responsible for coming prepared to meetings and to liaise with groups or organizations to which they are accountable or have a fiduciary responsibility.

Members are responsible for attending all meetings. If an occasion arises in which members are unable to participate in person, their appointed alternate should attend on their behalf.

**Communications with the General Public**

TAC members may find themselves from time to time liaising with the general public, and must do so in accordance with the code of conduct outlined above.

The committee meetings will be closed to the public, however the meeting notes will be made available to the public unless it was agreed to in advance that a particular discussion was to be confidential, in which case, the meeting notes will not be made available. Confidential topics at committee meetings may fall under Section 90 of the *Community Charter*.

The responsibility to respond to public comment rests with CVRD Project Staff and the CVRD Board, unless otherwise indicated.

**Contact with the Media**

Any contact with the media regarding issues related to the work of this committee shall be handled by the CVRD Project Staff or the committee representative. The latter only applies if there is agreement by the CVRD Project Staff and committee. If the matter under questioning by the media deals with CVRD Board policy around issues related to the work of this committee, the matter shall be referred to the CVRD Board Chair. The CVRD Chief Administrative Officer and the Communications Department will provide assistance and/or guidance to those persons responding to the media.

**Frequency of Meetings**

Meetings will be expected to occur both on an ongoing basis (for example, monthly, quarterly or at key milestones) and as required to address pressing LWMP process issues that arise. It is expected that at least five to ten committee meetings will be held over the course of the LWMP process. PAC meetings will normally be held at the CVRD offices during business hours. The committee members will also be expected to participate in public consultation activities, which may include separate meetings, open houses or less formal gatherings.

**Committee Administration**

CVRD Project Staff and the Consultant will be responsible for managing, scheduling and facilitating all meetings, with the assistance of a professional facilitator, and for providing administrative support.

CVRD Staff will ensure the agenda and all material are provided to the members prior to the meeting. Items of new business should be brought to the attention of CVRD Staff prior to the meeting, for consideration and distribution to group members in advance of the meeting; the inclusion of such items will be at the discretion of CVRD Project Staff.

The CVRD Project Staff will appoint a recording secretary for the purposes of preparing meeting notes. The record shall reflect the meeting purpose, key points from the discussion of agenda items, and the ensuing recommendations or action items.

The draft meeting notes will be distributed to committee members for review prior to being finalized. The final meeting notes will be provided to the CVRD Board, the CVRD Project Staff, and the Steering Committee, the TAC and the PAC. Where the Board feels it is necessary, the PAC representative may be asked to meet with and brief the Board on particular items or issues.

**Resources**

Direct meeting expenses, such as costs related to the provision of a meeting facility, snacks, beverages, photocopying and other related activities will be covered and coordinated by CVRD Project Staff. Committee members will be responsible for their own travel expenses. There will be no remuneration provided to members for participation.

**Liquid Waste Management Plan Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) - Invitation List**

- BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
- BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Vancouver Island Health Authority
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- K'ómoks First Nation
- City of Courtenay Engineering Staff
- Town of Comox Engineering Staff
- Department of National Defence
- Lead Technical Consultant
- Specialist Technical Consultants as required
- CVRD Engineering Staff
- PAC governmental representative
- PAC non-governmental representative
- Facilitator (acting as Chair)



## Terms of Reference

### **COMOX VALLEY SEWERAGE SYSTEM LIQUID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN - PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

#### **Background**

Long term planning of wastewater infrastructure is a critical function for any community. The City of Courtenay and the Town of Comox are jointly served by the Comox Valley Sewerage System, which provides conveyance (pump stations and trunk mains), treatment and effluent discharge functions.

Near term upgrades are required for the conveyance infrastructure, particularly to allow decommissioning of the Willemar Bluffs forcemain which has an elevated risk of failure due to being installed within the intertidal zone along an exposed section of coastline. Medium term upgrades are also required at the Comox Valley Water Pollution Control Centre (Brent Road treatment plant) for both capacity and treatment quality.

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) has elected to follow the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change's liquid waste management plan (LWMP) process for planning these upgrades. This is a comprehensive planning process involving extensive public consultation, engineering study, financial analysis and provincial regulatory review.

The LWMP requires consideration of both current circumstances and longer term population growth. It also allows for consideration and planning of water conservation, infiltration reduction, stormwater management and resource recovery. These subject areas can be addressed during initial plan development, or during a subsequent plan update, expected approximately every five years. The initial plan development is not expected to address storm water management.

Once completed, and approved by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the LWMP provides the regulatory authorization for proceeding with the planned works, and also confers borrowing authority to the CVRD to finance the works. Kept current with regular updates, the approved LWMP will set the strategic directions for the Comox Valley Sewerage System (CVSS) for the next twenty years.

The LWMP process calls for the establishment of four committees. A guiding steering committee will advise the CVRD Board throughout the development of the LWMP, and two advisory committees will advise the steering committee. The Comox Valley Sewage Commission will act as the LWMP Steering Committee, and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Public Advisory Committee (PAC) are being created to gather relevant input and provide recommendations to the Steering Committee. The fourth committee is the plan monitoring committee, which will oversee the implementation of the completed LWMP.

The CVRD will retain an engineering consulting firm (the Consultant) to provide services related to the LWMP process.

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### **Role of the Committees and the PAC**

While the responsibility for the management of the LWMP ultimately rests with the CVRD Board of Directors, the Steering Committee, TAC and PAC will assist in this responsibility by providing input, perspective, specific expertise and recommendations. Members of the committees are expected to participate in meetings and assist with:

- Identifying goals and challenges;
- Generating and reviewing ideas to meet them; and
- Working towards consensus solutions.

To assist with communication and understanding of the process, committee members will be sent the meeting agenda packages and meeting notes for all three committees. Members of one committee are encouraged to attend the other committee meetings as observers.

There may also be several joint TAC-PAC meetings, and the CVRD may combine the two committees into one if it proves advantageous to do so.

The PAC is an advisory group whose primary role is to represent “community interests” – the people, areas and environments that are served, and potentially impacted by the CVSS, and advise the Steering Committee accordingly.

The PAC will:

- Consider community goals as represented by major planning documents (OCP’s, Sustainability Plans, etc);
- Consider public opinion and feedback related to the LWMP on behalf of the Steering Committee;
- Provide feedback on documents provided by the CVRD Project Staff and/or the Consultant;
- Have the authority to provide input and recommendations to the Steering Committee on matters pertaining to the LWMP.

### **Role and Responsibilities of PAC Members**

The role of PAC members is to develop and maintain a broad understanding of the issues and implications for stakeholders, residents and the environment in order to make appropriate recommendations to the Steering Committee. It is also the responsibility of the PAC members to review and become familiar with the CVRD’s LWMP process and the function of the CVSS itself.

Participating in the PAC is both a privilege and an obligation. Members have an important liaison role with the responsibility to represent and inform the organizations or communities they have been selected to represent. They are expected to bring their own perspectives to the table, but must be prepared to provide to, and disseminate from the committee, the full range of perspectives, including those with which they may disagree.

It is intended that recommendations to the Steering Committee will be made by consensus, though there may be some that are recorded as non-consensus. A consensus recommendation may include the identification of a specific interest or concern to be noted in the record but not as a limiting factor. A non-consensus recommendation will be made if, after adequate deliberation, the member(s) is/are still not in accord with other members. The non-consensus party must provide a written submission for the record, outlining the rationale for the non-consensus recommendation, within one week of the distribution of the draft meeting notes.

**Membership**

The CVRD will seek and invite representation from key public, community, business, and stewardship stakeholders with interests in the project area (see attached list of invited public, community, business, and stewardship stakeholders). The total number of representatives will be at the discretion of the CVRD. Appointment of local resident representatives will be performed by the Municipal and Lazo North (Electoral Area B) Directors to ensure the accountability of the process.

Members will submit one alternate for approval of the whole at the first meeting or immediately to CVRD Project Staff upon resignation of the primary or alternate.

Termination of a member that is falling short of his/her obligations, not considered to be actively participating, or is not abiding by the code of conduct (below) will be at the discretion of the CVRD.

The PAC will stand for the duration of the LWMP process, which is expected to be two to three years. At the completion of the LWMP, the PAC will be dissolved and the plan monitoring committee will be struck, and some PAC members will be encouraged to stand, to ensure continuity. A list of representatives will be attached once committee membership is finalized.

**PAC Representatives to the TAC**

The LWMP guidelines require that the PAC also be represented on the TAC, with one governmental and one non-governmental representative. The committee shall elect the non-governmental representative and alternate from amongst its members at the inaugural meeting. The role of the representatives is to represent the PAC in discussions with the TAC, the Steering Committee, the CVRD Board and Project Staff, as needed. From time-to-time, the representatives may also be responsible for in responding to media requests on behalf of the PAC.

**Code of Conduct**

During meetings, public events, and other activities related to the LWMP project, all participants of the committee will endeavour to conduct themselves as follows:

- Support an open and inclusive process;
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest;
- Treat others with courtesy and respect;
- Listen attentively with an aim to understand;
- Speak in terms of interests versus positions;
- Where a member is espousing a favored position or course of action, they must fully and honestly disclose the reasons for their positions;
- Be open to outcomes, not attached to outcomes;
- Focus on service provision; and
- Share and discuss ideas from a professional perspective.

Members are responsible for coming prepared to meetings and to liaise with groups or organizations to which they are accountable or have a fiduciary responsibility.

Members are responsible for attending all meetings. If an occasion arises in which members are unable to participate in person, their appointed alternate should attend on their behalf.

**Communications with the General Public**

PAC members may find themselves from time liaising with the general public, and must do so in accordance with the code of conduct outlined above.

The committee meetings will be closed to the public, however the meeting notes will be made available to the public unless it was agreed to in advance that a particular discussion was to be confidential, in which case, the meeting notes will not be made widely available. Confidential topics at committee meetings may fall under Section 90 of the *Community Charter*.

The responsibility to respond to public comment rests with CVRD Project Staff and the CVRD Board, unless otherwise indicated.

**Contact with the Media**

Any contact with the media regarding issues related to the work of this committee shall be handled by the CVRD Project Staff or the committee representative. The latter only applies if there is agreement by the CVRD Project Staff and committee. If the matter under questioning by the media deals with CVRD Board policy around issues related to the work of this committee, the matter shall be referred to the CVRD Board Chair. The CVRD Chief Administrative Officer and the communication department will provide assistance and/or guidance to those persons responding to the media.

**Frequency of Meetings**

Meetings will be expected to occur both on an ongoing basis (for example, monthly, quarterly or at key milestones) and as required to address pressing LWMP process issues that arise. It is expected that at least five to ten committee meetings will be held over the course of the LWMP process. PAC meetings will normally be held at the CVRD offices during business hours. The committee members will also be expected to participate in public consultation activities, which may include separate meetings, open houses or less formal gatherings.

**Committee Administration**

CVRD Project Staff and the Consultant will be responsible for managing, scheduling and facilitating all meetings, with the assistance of a professional facilitator, and for providing administrative support.

CVRD Staff will ensure the agenda and all material are provided to the members prior to the meeting. Items of new business should be brought to the attention of CVRD Staff prior to the meeting, for consideration and distribution to group members in advance of the meeting; the inclusion of such items will be at the discretion of CVRD Project Staff.

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The draft meeting notes will be distributed to committee members for review prior to being finalized. The final meeting notes will be provided to the CVRD Board, the CVRD Project Staff, and the Steering Committee, the TAC and the PAC. Where the Board feels it is necessary, the PAC representative may be asked to meet with and brief the Board on particular items or issues.

**Resources**

Direct meeting expenses, such as costs related to the provision of a meeting facility, snacks, beverages, photocopying and other related activities will be covered and coordinated by CVRD Project Staff. Committee members will be responsible for their own travel expenses. There will be no remuneration provided to members for participation.

**Liquid Waste Management Plan Public Advisory Committee (PAC) - Invitation List**

- Councillor from City of Courtenay
- Councillor from Town of Comox
- Area B Director
- Local residents
  - Croteau area
  - Brent Road area
  - Town of Comox (2)
  - City of Courtenay (2)
- K'omoks First Nation
- Comox Valley Conservation Strategy Community Partnership
- BC Shellfish Growers Association
- Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce
- CVRD Engineering Staff
- CVRD Planning Staff
- Municipal Engineering Staff
- Lead Technical Consultant
- Facilitator (acting as the Chair)



# Comox Valley Sewerage System Liquid Waste Management Plan

Public Consultation Plan

June 2018

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# 1.0 Introduction

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This document outlines the approach for public consultation during the development of a liquid waste management plan (LWMP) for the Comox Valley Sewerage System (the System) works, including conveyance system components and upgrades to the Comox Valley Water Pollution Control Centre (the Treatment Plant).

The two primary objectives for a LWMP are:

- 1) To protect public health and the environment, and
- 2) To properly consult the public.

The strength and rigor of the required public and stakeholder consultation, along with final approval of the plan by the Ministry of Environment, will allow for the selection and implementation of the best long-term solutions for the System. The process will generate community and stakeholder confidence, while also providing the appropriate regulatory and borrowing authorizations.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Wastewater from the City of Courtenay and Town of Comox is transported to the Treatment Plant through a large diameter forcemain that follows the shoreline from the Courtenay River estuary to Goose Spit, along Willemar Bluff and then on to the plant. The section along Willemar Bluff has deteriorated and poses significant environmental and operational risks.

Studies to address those risks led to the development of the Comox No. 2 Pump Station project – a planned re-routing of the at-risk pipe away from the beach which was further supported during the sewer master planning process.

In 2017, the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) carried out an indicative design process for delivery of the Comox No. 2 Pump Station project, finding that:

- Capital and lifecycle costs associated with the project would be significantly higher than previously understood.
- Addition of an inline booster style pump station would increase the risk of overflow at the Courtenay and Jane Place pump stations.
- Given the revised cost estimates, there may be a more cost-effective solution to rerouting this portion of pipe.
- The condition of the foreshore forcemain, including the Willemar Bluff section, is better than expected, offering additional time to ensure the region implements the optimum solution.

In October 2017, after reviewing the above findings, the Comox Valley Sewage Commission (Sewage Commission) directed staff to review alternative options to the

Comox No. 2 Pump Station project to identify the lowest risk and most cost-effective conveyance solution, one that inspires confidence and buy-in from stakeholders.

The CVRD is committed to ensuring that long term planning for the service considers the best approach for the full System, not solely the high-priority Willemar Bluff (Balmoral Beach) portion of pipe. As a result, an LWMP has been selected as the best planning tool moving forward – offering both a comprehensive planning opportunity as well as one that prioritizes public involvement in determining solutions.

## 1.2 CONSULTATION AREA AND TARGET AUDIENCE

The LWMP will be developed for the System, inclusive of the conveyance system and the Treatment Plant. As the scope will address the current system only, which serves the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, CFB Comox, and K'ómoks First Nation, and much of the equipment is located in Electoral Area B, the consultation area will include those municipalities and the portions of Area B located near System infrastructure.

Target audiences for LWMP public consultation activities include:

- K'ómoks First Nation
- Property and business owners in the Comox Valley Sewerage System service area, Lazo, and portions of Area B nearby System infrastructure
- Department of National Defence/CFB Comox
- Environmental stewardship organizations
- Industry associations

## 1.3 REGIONAL INTERESTS

Regionally, interest in the LWMP process will be centered on:

- The long-term viability of the System, and the importance of reliable infrastructure to continued growth in the area.
- Protecting the marine environment by preventing spills and ensuring compliance with environmental standards.

Also, between 2014 and 2016, the first two phases of an LWMP were developed for the CVRD's Electoral Area A (excluding Denman and Hornby Islands). The proposal to proceed with the implementation of a South Region Wastewater System was defeated in a referendum in 2016. The environmental issue in the area continues to persist and has led to interest in delivering wastewater from Area A to the Treatment Plant.

At their May 2018 meeting the Sewage Commission agreed to support in principle the concept of receiving Area A wastewater subject to assessing concerns relating to governance, cost implications and regulations. At the same meeting, the Commission directed staff to assess the impact of accepting Area A wastewater through the Comox Valley Sewerage System LWMP process.

Staff do not expect the potential inclusion of Area A service to make any significant difference to the selection of conveyance alternatives to the Comox No2 Pump Station.

## 1.4 STUDY PROCESS

The LWMP process is a prescribed approach used by many local governments in BC to develop a wastewater management strategy for their communities. It is traditionally a three-stage process, consisting of the following steps:

- 1) “Identify” - Set the goals, determine the baseline conditions, develop a long list of options, and pare down to a short list
- 2) “Evaluate” - Identify any required environmental or technical studies, feasibility study of the short listed options, and select the preferred option
- 3) “Adopt” - Detailed study of the selected option, develop the financing and implementation plans, approval of the completed plan.

The LWMP process allows combining of two stages into one, where appropriate and advantageous. Given the amount of engineering work already done, staff recommend combining stages one and two in order to advance the process efficiently.

While much engineering work has already been completed, the LWMP involves key steps that create critical opportunity for public engagement. These include the creation of public and technical advisory committees, setting of “outcomes goals”, review of existing information, development of service options, identification of a preferred option, completion of environmental condition and risk studies, and assessment of financial and implementation plans.

## 2.0 Public Consultation Framework

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A successful LWMP requires extensive public consultation. This framework outlines proposed engagement for the process.

### 2.1 PRINCIPLES

The following principles will guide public consultation throughout the LWMP process:

- Follow IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation – This acknowledged best practice of public engagement (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower) will guide consultation.
- Meet provincial LWMP Requirements– The specific requirements of the LWMP process ensure meaningful input is sought from the public – these will guide consultation plans.
- Support the work of the LWMP Technical Consultant/Engineer - Public consultation will support and align with the efforts of the technical consultant.

- Demonstrate transparency and competency in planning – By openly sharing information and working through planning and decision-making processes with interested and affected parties.
- Offer options for community involvement– By using a range of tools, the public will be able to engage in a method that suits them.

## 2.2 OBJECTIVES

- Provide information about the process of engagement and tools to be used.
- Offer opportunities for active public involvement.
- Clearly explain how feedback will be received and considered.
- Create a record of engagement at the end of the process
- Demonstrate how engagement was considered and how input influenced final decisions.

## 2.3 TEAM ROLES

The development of the technical portion of the LWMP will be managed by the CVRD's Engineering Department with the support of consulting engineers and an independent facilitator to assist with moderating meetings.

The CVRD's Operational Communications, with support of communications consultants and a public engagement facilitator will plan, deliver and manage the public engagement and community outreach portion of the LWMP development work.

Management of the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) will primarily be led by the Engineering Department with the support of consulting engineers and an independent facilitator to assist with moderating meetings.

## 2.4 CONSULTATION MILESTONES AND ESTIMATED TIMELINE

DATES	PROJECT MILESTONES
May-Aug 2018	<b>1. Educate the public about wastewater in the CVRD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INFORM – provide information via advertising and website</li> <li>INVOLVE – host a facilitated workshop for public to start discussion with public about the sewage system and value decisions around planning, support with online consultation.</li> </ul>
Sept 2018	<b>2. Kick-off LWMP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INFORM – public open house to introduce the LWMP process and public consultation options</li> <li>COLLABORATE – introduce public and technical advisory committee (PAC/TAC).</li> </ul>
Oct-Dec 2018	<b>3. Establish LWMP Goals and Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COLLABORATE – PAC/TAC meetings, goals and objectives established</li> <li>CONSULT – host a facilitated workshop for public to review goals and objectives, support with online consultation.</li> </ul>
Jan-Feb 2019	<b>4. Develop Long List of Options</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COLLABORATE – PAC/TAC meetings, long list established, reviewed and evaluated to select short list.</li> <li>CONSULT – host a facilitated workshop for public to review and rank long list options, support with online consultation.</li> </ul>
Feb-Mar 2019	<b>5. Study Short List of Options</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COLLABORATE - PAC/TAC meetings for feasibility study of short list options, additional technical studies as required.</li> <li>COLLABORATE – PAC/TAC review, evaluate and rank options</li> <li>CONSULT – host a facilitated workshop for public to review and rank short list, support with online consultation.</li> </ul>
Apr-Jul 2019	<b>6. Present Preferred Solution*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sewage Commission signs off on preferred solution</li> <li>INFORM – host public open house to present preferred solution to community. Report on feedback obtained from public consultation process, supported by online discussion forum.</li> </ul>

*\*Conveyance components may be split from remaining LWMP processes once preferred conveyance solution is selected. Communications support for a separate assent process will be coordinated as details are confirmed.*

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Aug-Dec 2019	<p><b>7. Completing Stage 1&amp;2 - Working Towards Final Draft Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COLLABORATE – PAC/TAC meetings to refine draft</li> <li>• COLLABORATE - submit LWMP stages 1 and 2 final report and Environmental Impact Studies to Ministry of Environment for review.</li> </ul>
Jan-Mar 2020	<p><b>8. Develop Draft Stage 3 Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INVOLVE – PAC/TAC meetings, review Ministry feedback, develop implementation and financing plans</li> <li>• CONSULT – facilitated session for community input on implementation and financing, supported with online consultation</li> <li>• COLLABORATE – PAC/TAC considers community input and refines draft to develop final report and all supporting documents.</li> </ul>
Spring 2020	<p><b>9. LWMP Completion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sewage Commission approves Stage 3 Final Report</li> <li>• COLLABORATE – submit Stage 3 final report to Ministry of Environment</li> <li>• INFORM – provide final report to the community, report back to participants/ community on public consultation value, results and affect.</li> </ul>

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## 3.0 Consultation Methods and Tools

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Multiple complementary consultation approaches will be used to ensure the public has many opportunities to be informed and engage/provide input in a meaningful way in a format that is convenient for them.

### 3.1 ONGOING

#### 3.1.1 PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website will be the central location for project information and details of how the public can engage with the LWMP process. It will be the hub for accurate, timely information about the process and the link to the online consultation/discussion tool and will include:

- Up-to-date project information
- Link to online consultation/discussion forum
- Calendar of public events, PAC/TAC meetings
- Resource materials (eg Glossary, FAQs, staff reports, studies)

#### 3.1.2 ONLINE CONSULTATION/DISCUSSION FORUM

The CVRD's online consultation/engagement platform, Connect CVRD, offers the public the opportunity to engage when it is convenient for them, broadening the consultation reach through ease of access. The platform is very intuitive, easy to use, allows for public debate, discussion and comment and is moderated 24/7 ensuring questions are answered promptly and discussions are managed in a constructive and respectful tone. Connect CVRD also measures participant engagement, distinguishing between aware, informed and engaged users.

To encourage public participation an engagement strategy will be executed, inclusive of the following actions:

- Issuing a news release about the Connect CVRD platform launch
- Targeted advertising and social media push to support launch and get residents registered on the site
- Radio advertisements with a call to action for residents to join the conversation.

#### 3.1.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

Using the CVRD's Facebook and Twitter accounts, brief, shareable updates will be regularly provided. Any social media updates will link to the online consultation/discussion forum, where commentary and questions will be monitored. The goal will be to provide information as new information is available and project milestones are achieved.

### 3.1.4 PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

As part of the LWMP process, a PAC will be established that connects interested and affected parties, environmental and business organizations to the project. They will be tasked with gathering and relaying public feedback. Information gathered via the public consultation process will support the PAC in its work.

To encourage participation via the PAC and ensure the right people are at the table, active recruitment will be undertaken from:

- General public, with the goal of fair representation from interested and affected parties, across geographic areas, and from those with relevant experience
- Business organizations, such as Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) and the Chamber of Commerce
- Environmental organizations, such as the Comox Valley Conservation Partnership.

### 3.1.5 PHONE/EMAIL LOGS AND COMMENT SHEETS

Project team members will be provided with phone/email logs, where they will record comments or questions received from members of the public. Comment sheets will also be made available at all open houses/public events/presentations, to encourage ease of feedback from event participants.

### 3.1.6 TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Traditional media channels (radio, print and television) will be used as appropriate to keep the public informed as project milestones are achieved. The focus of any advertisements, news releases, and media outreach will be to direct the public to opportunities (open houses/public events and Bang the Table) where they can learn more about the LWMP process and provide comment/input.

## 3.2 MILESTONE-SPECIFIC

### 3.2.1 OPEN HOUSES AND PUBLIC EVENTS

Facilitated sessions and public open houses will be held during the LWMP process. These will mark important milestones in the development of the plan, including preliminary education, launch, long list of options, shortlisting proposed options, presentation of preferred solutions, and presentation of financing requirements and implementation schedule.

One example of such an event is a public tour of the Treatment Plant at Brent Road, and possibly the pump stations – these events encourage public involvement and increase knowledge of wastewater matters in general.



These events are effective for consultation purposes or sharing large amounts of information and offering the opportunity for the public to meet with members of the project team to have their questions answered or seek specific information.

### 3.2.2 PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Using tools like advertising or handouts, promotional materials will be used specifically as the LWMP process is launched, in order to draw attention to the opportunity for involvement and explain the process which will roll out as the planning begins.

### 3.2.3 INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

Easy to read materials will be provided both in hard copy and online to assist in explaining the background and ongoing work related to the LWMP. This information will be designed for ease of reading and written with the general public as the target audience. Examples include project display boards, FAQs, project backgrounders/pamphlets, glossary.

### 3.2.4 NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters will be produced to update residents when project milestones are achieved. These newsletters will be distributed via post or email to interested and affected parties and stakeholders and will also be made available online and at the public open houses. The newsletters will include project contact information should recipients have questions and directions on how to participate in the online consultation/discussion forum.

## 4.0 Outcomes and Products

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### PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

The proceedings of consultation activities will be documented and available to regulators and members of the public at the conclusion of the LWMP process. It will include:

- Overview of consultation activities
- Listing and samples of informational materials created and provided to the public, interested and affected parties and stakeholders
- Record of consultation reach and participation
- Synopsis of feedback themes, trends and findings
- Summary of incorporation of public feedback in the final plan

### COMMENT LOG / INPUT RECEIVED

All input/comments received, including comment logs, will be provided to the CVRD in their raw form at project end, to form part of the official record of the public consultation process.