



Comox Valley Sewer Service LWMP

Phase 2 Outreach – Summary Report
September to December 2018

January 7, 2019

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1.0 Executive Summary

After a busy summer laying the foundation for the Comox Valley Sewer Service Liquid Waste Management Plan (officially launched in June), the fall brought the opportunity for a second round of public engagement. The LWMP will identify the path forward for the service, including the approach for new/upgraded infrastructure.

The public participation focus in this phase was two-fold:

- **INFORM:** Introduce the LWMP process and teach about the sewer service.
- **ENGAGE:** Collect feedback on draft goals and objectives, developed by the newly-created public and technical advisory committees.

To achieve these goals, multiple tools were used, each designed to maximize the opportunity to engage the community.

It included:

- *Open Houses:* Two open house events were held at the Comox Valley Water Pollution Control Centre (treatment plant) with roughly 120 attending to learn more about the existing sewer system and about the planning process getting underway.
- *Facilitated Sessions:* In late November, following initial meetings by advisory committees, two facilitated sessions were held (one in Comox, one in Courtenay) to collect feedback/input on draft goals and objectives. That input was put back to the committees for review before final goals and objectives were set.
- *Online Consultation:* To supplement the facilitated sessions, a survey was created on ConnectCVRD to mimic the feedback process at the in-person events. An online ad campaign was implemented to draw audiences to the online engagement tool.

From October through December 2018, approximately 662 residents visited ConnectCVRD to learn more about the process and 160 residents provided direct feedback on the goals and objectives through the open house, workshops or online survey.

Themes of feedback included general support for the goals and objectives outlined by the TAC/PAC, and eagerness to know about long-term plans for the sewer system.

Next steps for the project team are to maintain what is becoming a consistent outreach approach, with promotion of both in-person and online consultation opportunities, during Phase 3, long-listed options.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 PROJECT BRIEF & CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

In Spring 2018, the Comox Valley Regional District launched a liquid waste management planning process for the Comox Valley Sewer System, which provides a comprehensive planning opportunity that prioritizes public involvement in determining solutions. To outline how the public would be consulted in this process, a public engagement plan was drafted using five stages of outreach beginning in June 2018. The plan uses a suite of tools, focusing around a series of in-person events (facilitated

sessions, workshops, info sessions and open houses), and online consultation. This report summarizes the results from Phase 2. An outline of those phases is below.

PHASE	OBJECTIVES	TOOLS
<p>PHASE 1: Educate/Kick-Off (May-Aug. 2018) COMPLETE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INFORM: provide info about the sewer system and LWMP start • INVOLVE: connect with public to collect feedback on goals/values in sewer planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Content: create dedicated pages on regional district + ConnectCVRD websites • Advertisements: Promote online tool and sessions • Facilitated Session #1 • Online Consultation Survey
<p>PHASE 2: Kick off & Goals/Objectives (Sept.-Dec. 2018) COMPLETE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INFORM: introduce LWMP process • COLLABORATE: work with the public advisory committee • CONSULT: collect feedback on goals and objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open House #1: including promotional and info materials • Facilitated Session #2 • Digital Content • Online Consultation Survey
<p>PHASE 3: Longlisted Options (Jan-Mar. 2019)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COLLABORATE: PAC/TAC meetings, long list established • CONSULT: host a facilitated workshop for public to review and rank long list options, support with online consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated Session #3 • Digital Content • Online Consultation Survey
<p>PHASE 4: Shortlisted Options (Mar-May. 2019)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COLLABORATE: PAC/TAC meetings, short list established • CONSULT: host a facilitated workshop for public to review and rank short list options, support with online consultation • INFORM: Sewage Commission signs off on shortlist of options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated Session #4 • Digital Content • Online Consultation Survey
<p>PHASE 5: Preferred Option (Summer-Fall. 2019)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COLLABORATE: PAC/TAC meetings, consensus on preferred solution • INFORM: Sewage Commission signs off on preferred solution • INFORM: Present preferred solution to community and report on feedback obtained from public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Content • Open House #2: including promotional and info materials

The goals set to guide this engagement are:

1. Provide information about the LWMP process.
2. Offer opportunities for active public involvement.
3. Clearly explain how feedback will be received and considered.
4. Create a record of engagement at the end of the process.
5. Demonstrate how engagement was considered and how input influenced final decisions.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS PHASES

Phase 1 of consultation centered on collecting feedback to establish the values of the community as they pertain to decision making in the sewer planning process, along with promoting the new online consultation tool and advertising for public advisory committee nominees. This included hosting two facilitated sessions and an online consultation survey to collect feedback on priorities and values for sewer planning. It generated 1,900 visits to the digital platform with engagement by +120 via the in-person and online opportunities.

3.0 Phase 2 Consultation Results

The primary objective of this phase of consultation was to announce the official start of the LWMP process, and collect the public’s input on draft goals and objectives outlined by the PAC/TAC. Participants were asked to provide their comments on the importance of individual goals as well as identify any that should be added or removed.

3.1 BY THE NUMBERS

110	People who attended the open house/tour of the CVWPCC
662	Visitors to digital platform to learn more about the project
51	People who filled out a survey at the facilitated sessions or online

3.2 THEMES OF FEEDBACK

- *General support for the goals identified:* Most goals were ranked on the ‘important’ side of the spectrum with very few having any indication of lesser interest, especially for conveyance and treatment. There was particular strength around the goals of ensuring infrastructure works for the long-term, being able to adapt to changing conditions and community growth.
- *Rankings from Courtenay and Comox residents similar:* The responses for all goals from Courtenay and Comox residents were relatively similar, while Area B residents generally ranked all of the goals higher for treatment and resource recovery.
- *Area B residents highlight environmental concerns more than those in other areas:* When broken down by area of residence, those in Area B raised issues about environmental protection as a higher priority than those in Courtenay and Comox.

- *Interest in long-term planning:* The most common questions and comments at open houses were about how the wastewater treatment plant will expand to accommodate community growth, and interest in the CVRD’s long term plans for future growth.

4.0 Conclusion

With Phase 2 of the public consultation process complete, the community is becoming familiar with the “Let’s Talk Poop” branding and expressing appreciation for the clear process and opportunities for engagement.

With the comments to date, it appears that interested residents are supportive of the process so far – in particular the most immediate step of goals and objective-setting – and look forward to continuing to be involved.

5.0 Next Steps

The public engagement process found its rhythm with the completion of the Phase 2 process. Continuing to present valuable opportunities for input and maintaining regular outreach will be important as we move into subsequent phases. Among the next steps are:

- *Maintain the ConnectCVRD digital content:* Ensuring that there is regularly-updated materials will assist in encouraging ongoing interaction, including project updates in between active engagement opportunities.
- *Promote further opportunities for feedback:* Continue to grow the audience that is participating in the engagement process.
- *Collect comment/input on long-list of options:* The next stage of the planning process will be an important one as the public is asked to provide comment on the long-list drafted by the advisory committees. The CVRD will create informational materials as well as offer opportunities for feedback in January 2019.

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