

## 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.

### **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, with the exception of resident representatives who may provide an alternate only if one is available.

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.

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.

**Honorarium**

In acknowledgement of the volunteer nature of the representatives on the PAC, and to encourage participation through to the end of the process, committee members will be entitled to claim an honorarium of \$125 per PAC meeting. Committee members will be required to submit a claim in writing or via email to receive the honorarium.

**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 (3)
  - City of Courtenay (3)
- K'omoks First Nation
- Comox Valley Conservation Strategy Community Partnership
- BC Shellfish Growers Association
- Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Comox by the Sea business improvement association
- CVRD Engineering Staff
- CVRD Planning Staff
- Municipal Engineering Staff
- Lead Technical Consultant
- Facilitator (acting as the Chair)