

Regional District of Nanaimo Board – Meeting Date: December 7, 2021

This document contains closed ‘in-camera’ meeting decisions that have been released because they are no longer considered sensitive.

Regional Landfill Future Development

21-651

It was moved and seconded that the Board direct deferment on consideration of a landfill expansion until the end of 2022 to coincide with the anticipated completion of the City of Nanaimo’s Official Community Plan Amendment.

Released: December 24, 2021



REGIONAL
DISTRICT
OF NANAIMO

REGIONAL LANDFILL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATION

The Board direct deferment on consideration of a landfill expansion until the end of 2022 to coincide with the anticipated completion of the City of Nanaimo's Official Community Plan Amendment.

BACKGROUND

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP), approved by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy in 2020, noted that the Cedar Road Landfill will reach capacity in approximately 2040. The plan proposed to investigate future waste disposal options beyond that of the current landfill capacity.

Furthermore, the Landfill Design, Operations and Closure Plan which incorporates all related engineering work for the site is currently undergoing an update. Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions (Wood), the engineering firm that is carrying out this work has identified the potential to increase the life of the Regional Landfill by acquiring additional adjacent lands. The most efficient option in terms of airspace, location and cost effectiveness would be to acquire approximately 10 hectares of land on the south side of the 38 hectares of existing landfill providing about seven million cubic meters of air space.

Adjacent Land Use

Seacliff Properties, the adjacent landowner, is developing the Sandstone project shown in Appendix 1. The development is a 294-hectare proposal consisting of single-family and multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. The property is currently zoned Rural Resource (AR1) and Industrial (I4), and a decision by the City of Nanaimo on Seacliff's rezoning application is expected in the coming months.

Site Access

Should a site expansion be considered, there is opportunity to look at changing access to the landfill off the Duke Point Highway. A benefit of relocating site access, away from Cedar Road, is that much of the landfill activity in the future will move further South and landfill operations and inbound traffic would be less evident to the Cedar Road and current and future residents of the area. A Duke Point Highway access may also be of benefit to the proposed industrial development in the area.

Impact to Solid Waste Operations

The RDN is targeting 90% waste diversion through the SWMP. Even if this goal is achieved, there will be the remainder of the waste stream that will require disposal for the foreseeable future. The most likely outcome post landfill closure for waste disposal is export to another jurisdiction which does pose some risks such as:

- Currently there are BC and USA export options for waste disposal. It is impossible to predict availability and capacity of these options into the future. It is known that many jurisdictions within Canada and the USA are moving to an export model. As demand for these options increase, rates to access these sites are expected to increase.
- Future transportation costs and the regulation around transporting waste, particularly internationally, is impossible to predict and therefore carrying a high risk.
- Catastrophic events such as significant fire or earthquake can generate enormous amounts of waste over a very short time. Exporting waste in such situations can be challenging as the quantity likely exceeds the infrastructure ability to manage the material. Conversely, managing waste locally helps to avoid consequential impacts from the delayed ability to effectively handle waste; it lowers costs and shortens the recovery time for the community. Recent examples that illustrate this are:
 - As a result of the 2016 **Fort McMurray** fire, the local landfill received about 10 years of waste in a six-week period.
 - Flooding in **Grand Forks** in 2018, generated about 67,000 m³ from 417 homes that were destroyed.
 - Predictions are that 500 homes in **Merritt** have been destroyed because of recent flooding.
 - **Cowichan Valley Regional District** currently exports their waste to the United States and the RDN is their “contingency landfill” in the event of a service disruption. There have been several service disruptions this year due to transportation problems and COVID resulting in about 800 tonnes of material shipped to the RDN year to date. Waste is currently being shipped to the RDN due to transportation challenges cause by flooding in the Pacific Northwest.

Discussions with Stakeholders

RDN staff have raised the concept of a landfill expansion with the City of Nanaimo and representative of Seaclyff Properties, the landowner of the proposed expansion area. The City of Nanaimo Council has passed the first two readings of the Official Community Plan amendment for the Sandstone development and a public hearing is scheduled for January 2022. Further, the City has advised of the comprehensive Official Community Plan review (“Reimagine Nanaimo”) which is expected to be complete before the end of 2022. Seaclyff have advised that they are not in a position to discuss or consider the matter further with the RDN. Based on these on these discussions, staff recommend that the RDN defer the landfill expansion consideration to coincide with the completion of the community planning initiatives.

Staff are in the process of engaging with area First Nations and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy on the concept of a landfill expansion. Should the Board direct deferment of the project, staff suggests that discussions with the FN and Ministry continue to obtain their perspective on the concept.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Known cost for exporting waste to other jurisdictions is higher than managing the waste locally. If the RDN was to transition to waste export, costs for the service would increase and remain at about 20% higher than continuing with operation of the landfill. The operation of the Cedar Road Landfill has contributed to the enjoyment of one of the lowest waste utility rates in Canada by the local communities while sitting at one of the highest waste diversion rates globally. The additional investment for a landfill expansion is a consideration to ensure a financially responsible and sustainable future for the region.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Growth Management - Provide effective regional land use planning and responsible asset management for both physical infrastructure and natural assets.

REVIEWED BY:

E. Hughes, Manager, Manager of Strategy & Intergovernmental Services
E. Tian, General Manager, Regional and Community Utilities
D. Holmes, Chief Administrative Officer

RISE AND REPORT- PUBLIC

If adopted by the RDN Board, rise and report on this agenda item and the details of this report.

ATTACHMENT:

Seacliff Properties, Proposed Development

