

memo

To: Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine
From: Sarah Wilmot
Date: April 19, 2017
Re: Solid Waste Management Plan Review Process – Overview

Introduction

In British Columbia, the Environmental Management Act (2003) requires each regional district to develop a Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) that is a long-term vision of how municipal solid waste will be managed.

The Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS) has been operating under a SWMP that was approved by the Ministry of Environment in 1995. Now that the bulk of the work described in the 1995 SWMP has been (or will soon be) accomplished, the RDKS is starting to plan for the development of a new SWMP. The 1995 Plan will be superseded by the new SWMP when the new SWMP is approved by the Ministry of Environment and adopted by the RDKS Board.

The SWMP will be developed following the Guide to Solid Waste Management Planning that was published by the Ministry of Environment in 2016. The Guide describes the Ministry's preferred approach to SWMP development and helps to clarify Ministry policy and the provisions of the Environmental Management Act as they relate to the management of municipal solid waste. The Guide also provides updates on provincial targets that should be integrated into regional plans.

This memo describes the overall approach the RDKS intends to take to develop the new SWMP. Subsequent memos will provide more details on individual steps of the process.

SWMP Focus

The 1995 SWMP included the development of a number of new facilities (including engineered landfills, transfer stations and an enclosed composting system) and the programs and policies required to support them (including curbside collection programs and disposal restrictions). Since these facilities, programs and policies have largely been implemented, the new SWMP will focus on monitoring and improving the operational efficiency of RDKS facilities, ensuring all staff and contractors know how to operate facilities to the standard expected by the Administration, maintaining staffing levels, providing staff with ongoing professional development, and maintaining and improving relationships with large generators. Administration also intends to draft detailed servicing plans that clearly define how to operate the new system, including how to respond when systems deviate from forecasts. The RDKS does not expect the new SWMP to call for new programs or major changes to current policies.

Summary of the Ministry's Preferred Content and Process for SWMP Development

The Ministry uses the pollution prevention hierarchy (also referred to as the 5 Rs) to categorize different approaches to managing solid waste. The first three levels (reduce, reuse, recycle) are given priority. The Ministry also wants regional districts to consider waste management in the context of the concept of the circular economy. Eight guiding principles developed by the Ministry provide further details on the Ministry's preferred approaches to managing municipal waste. Regional districts are expected to include these guiding principles in their SWMP, along with additional locally-relevant principles. The eight guiding principles are:

1. Promote zero waste approaches and support a circular economy
2. Promote the 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle)
3. Maximize beneficial use of waste materials and manage residuals appropriately
4. Support polluter and user-pay approaches and manage incentives to maximize behaviour outcomes
5. Prevent organics and recyclables from going into the garbage wherever practical
6. Collaborate with other regional districts wherever practical
7. Develop collaborative partnerships with interested parties to achieve regional targets set in plans
8. Level the playing field within regions for both private and public solid waste management facilities

The Ministry has set provincial targets for solid waste management; regional districts may set their own targets in support of the provincial targets. Regional targets should be achievable, time-bound, and demonstrate continual improvement. The provincial targets are to lower the municipal solid waste disposal rate to 350 kg per person per year by 2020 and to have 75% of B.C.'s population covered by organic waste disposal restrictions by 2020. Small, rural regional districts may be focused on improving the solid waste infrastructure and services, and regional targets and programs should align with local capabilities and opportunities.

The Ministry recommends that regional districts develop annual reports on SWMP implementation and conduct a review of SWMP effectiveness every five years. In addition, the Ministry would like SWMP to be renewed every 10 years, and for SWMP to be "living documents" that are structured to allow minor amendments to be made simply (e.g. by using schedules). Regular review and amendment will help to ensure that SWMP reflect the current needs of regional districts, as well as current market conditions, technologies and regulations.

The Ministry does not layout mandatory processes or steps; a sample process is included in the Guide. The Ministry acknowledges that regional districts may choose to approach their planning process and document submissions differently. The process described in the Guide is largely consistent with the process that has been used by regional districts in the past. The process is illustrated below in a figure copied from the Guide.



In Step 1, the regional district will set the scope, notify interested parties, establish advisory committees, and identify the planning and consultation processes that will support the remainder of the process.

In Step 2, the regional district will gather background information and implement the consultation process to establish principles, goals and targets, and identify options for waste management.

In Step 3, options for managing waste will be evaluated and the regional district will consult with interested parties (including the general public), and determine the preferred approaches.

In Step 4, the plan will be prepared and adopted; this includes submission of the final plan for the minister’s approval.

The separation of the process into four distinct steps is not required; however, regional districts should be able to demonstrate that they have undertaken a comprehensive process. Unlike the past, regional districts will not be requested to “check in” with the Ministry when moving from one step to the next. This means that distinct Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 reports are no longer required.

Consultation is not shown as a separate step in the planning process because it will happen during all steps.

The Ministry has provided a template for a SWMP, sample strategies, and a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities for various parties involved in SWMP development.

RDKS Comments on Ministry Guide

The Ministry invited comments from regional districts during the development of the Guide. RDKS Administration reviewed the draft Guide and provided feedback to the Regional Board and sent a letter to the Ministry. The RDKS offered the following comments on the Guide:

- The Ministry should confirm that it will continue to provide direct support and oversight for solid waste management planning;
- The Ministry should provide clarity on subjective references to “adequate” communication and stakeholder consultation;
- Stakeholder engagement strategies should be at the discretion of regional districts who best understand their constituents and local systems, services and opportunities;
- The Ministry should confirm if it will continue to provide guidance and legislation for producers of materials covered by the Recycling Regulation;

- The Ministry should clarify the guiding principles to ensure that the goals align with regional district capacities and local opportunities, and should confirm that it will provide guidance, legislation and enforcement.
- The RDKS is concerned with the Ministry’s proposed timelines and schedules for SWMP revisions, since the RDKS’s focus will be on ensuring current facilities and services are cost effective and running efficiently.

The RDKS used the opportunity to inform the Ministry that it intended to develop a new SWMP following completion of the facilities, programs and services in the 1995 SWMP. The RDKS also informed the Ministry that it believed it was appropriate that the development of the new SWMP be supported by the existing Solid Waste Plan Monitoring Advisory Committee (PMAC) and that it did not require the establishment of additional committees. The RDKS informed the Ministry that the new SWMP would reflect the Board’s preferences, and would reflect the RDKS’s priorities, financial resources, and capacity. As a result, the focus would be on ensuring current facilities and services are cost effective and run efficiently; competing region wide priorities meant that solid waste services would no longer be a priority.

Proposed Process & Next Steps

The following process is proposed:

| Steps | Actions | Timeframe |
|--------|--|---------------------------|
| Step 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDKS Board passes a resolution to initiate the planning process • Set the scope • Notify interested parties • Supplement PMAC membership if possible to strive for balance and representation (PMAC to be used as joint public and technical advisory committee for the SWMP development process) • Develop the overall consultation processes • Set the project budget | Spring -Fall 2017 |
| Step 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble background information about the plan area (including current waste management practices) • Establish principles, goals and targets • Identify options for waste management • Begin the consultation process | Spring – Winter 2017 |
| Step 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine options to develop complete strategies • Evaluate strategies in terms of effectiveness and affordability • Continue to follow the consultation process | Winter 2017 – Summer 2018 |
| Step 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft the SWMP • Publish SWMP for final consultation • Revise the SWMP as required based on input and submit for Ministry approval • Board adoption of approved SWMP | Summer 2018 – Winter 2018 |

A technical memo will be developed for each step of the process. Each memo will include excerpts from the Guide that describe the Ministry's preferences and recommendations, followed by draft content relevant to the RDKS. For example, the Step 1 memo will include a draft resolution for the Board, a definition of the SWMP area and scope of work, a list of all interested parties, a draft letter of notification and terms of reference for the advisory committee. The draft content in the memos will be reviewed and revised by RDKS staff, PMAC, and the RDKS Board prior to use.