

What We Heard from You: RDKS Response to the 2021 Solid Waste Survey

We want to thank the 1,215 citizens who completed the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS) Solid Waste Survey between February and March! This is an excellent response and we appreciate all of your feedback. Your input is helping us finalize our Solid Waste Management Plan. Here are some common themes of what we heard from you through the survey.

Recycling is Confusing

Yes, recycling can be confusing. Here are some answers to a few of the common recycling questions we've heard:

Who Manages and Pays for Recycling?

Recycling in BC is mandated by the provincial Recycling Regulation under the Environmental Management Act and is managed through various Product Stewardship organizations.

These recycling Product Stewardship Programs are funded through eco-fees (such as electronics), deposits (such as beverage containers), and fees paid by producers and manufacturers who sell goods in BC.

Recycling depots throughout the region, run by either local governments or private industry, collect recyclable materials for different Product Stewardship Programs. Material recycling not covered by Product Stewardship Programs are paid for either by individuals or taxes.

Who is Responsible for Curbside Recycling?

Recycle BC is the Stewardship Program responsible for residential packaging and paper product recycling in BC. Currently, the City of Terrace is the only location in the RDKS receiving support from Recycle BC's curbside collection program. All other curbside recycling programs in the region are managed by local government (the RDKS, Band Offices, or municipalities) and are paid for with public funds.

Why Can't I Recycle the Same Things at Work that I Can at Home?

Recycle BC is the Product Stewardship Program that manages residential recycling collected through curbside collection or resident drop-off depots. Businesses and institutions do not receive services from Recycle BC. The Recycling Regulation only requires Recycle BC to accept recycling from residents. The RDKS is lobbying the province to also regulate paper and packaging materials from businesses and institutions. We feel that recycling should be accepted and handled the same for everyone in BC.

Our bylaws require businesses to recycle paper and cardboard. Businesses can voluntarily recycle other materials through a contracted collection service or by bringing recycling to a depot themselves, which the Regional District does encourage. Businesses must pay for their own recycling.

Why Do I have to Bring My Recyclables to Several Different Places?

There are over 20 Product Stewardship Programs in BC that manage many different recyclable materials. The Stewardship Programs coordinate directly with private businesses and local governments to collect recyclable materials; that's why there are so many different depots and businesses that collect recyclables.

You can find recycling information on the Recycle Coach apps on the "MyWaste™" platform.

We understand that more education is needed to clarify:

- ◆ **Who manages and pays for recycling?**
- ◆ **Where non-curb-side materials can be recycled?**
- ◆ **How the recyclables are processed and where they go?**

Are Recyclables Just Being Landfilled?

In recent years, the media has highlighted issues with global recycling markets, which has led to local concerns that recycling is just being landfilled. In particular, some Terrace area residents who watch their organic waste and recyclables put into the same collection truck are worried that it's all just going to the landfill. Fear not; your recyclables and organics are not being landfilled. Local collection trucks are divided inside and keep collected materials separate. All Product Stewardship Programs, including Recycle BC, follow robust reporting requirements with third-party auditing to show that their products are successfully recycled every year. For example, Recycle BC current processes 97% of all plastics collected at processing facilities located within BC and they provide full traceability on the end markets for its material. This is the power of regulating recycling.

We Want More Recycling Options

We've heard that you want more options to recycle. Here are some common themes of what we heard from you through the survey and how the Regional District is addressing them:

The Transfer Station/Landfills Need Better Hours

We want your waste facilities to be convenient for you, the users. That being said, what works for one person may not work for another. User convenience must be balanced with operational costs. Over the next few years, we plan to adjust landfill/transfer station operating hours to better align with local recycling depots, offer seasonal operating hours at some of our facilities and potentially extend hours. Our primary focus is to improve accessibility while trying to keep taxpayers' costs down.

"One-Stop-Drop" For Recyclables

The Regional District provides drop-off options for several recyclable products, such as metal, appliances, tires and propane tanks. We offer recycling where there are no depot options available. Because all Product Stewardship Programs require supervised drop-off locations, there are no unstaffed drop-off locations open 24/7.

We currently don't have depots aimed to provide drop-off options for all recyclables; however, we have heard many residents ask for a "one-stop-drop" through the 2021 solid waste survey. Through our new Solid Waste Management Plan, we are committed to streamlining recycling and making it as convenient as possible for our citizens. We may look into "one-stop-drop" depots in the future.

Curbside Recycling and Composting in Kitimat

The Regional District is not currently responsible for waste management services in Kitimat. The District of Kitimat is rolling out a curbside collection for organic materials and residential recycling this Fall. More details can be found on [Kitimat's website](#).

Curbside Collection of More Materials

In our 2020 survey, residents asked for curbside collection of more materials, such as bulky items (e.g. used furniture), glass, foam and soft plastics packaging.

Materials like foam packaging, plastic bags, and plastic overwrap require special handling, which is why Recycle BC only accepts them for recycling at Recycle BC depots and not through the curbside collection program. Without Recycle BC subsidy, the cost of collecting these items through curbside collection would be cost prohibitive to regional taxpayers.

The Regional District is actively working to secure financial support from Recycle BC for the curbside recycling collection in the Greater Terrace Area (Thornhill, Jackpine, Old/New Remo, Lakelse Lake, etc.). We will not be able to collect materials that are not allowed by Recycle BC. We are also lobbying the province to mandate recycling of more materials under the Recycling Regulation, such as single-use items, bulky furniture and mattresses.

We Need Ways to Save Reusable Items from Landfilling

One person's waste could be another's treasure. Reusing items is a great way to keep things out of the landfill. We have heard that many communities, such as Hazelton and Terrace, want better opportunities to increase reuse of used furniture and construction and demolition waste. People are concerned that "good items" are being wasted at the landfills and transfer stations.

Through our new Solid Waste Plan, we want to promote existing reuse organizations and help our communities recover more reusable items. We plan to host reuse events, such as a "Junk in the Trunk" event, local flea markets or repair events. We will also look into collecting reusable goods at our landfills and transfer stations and offering items for sale or free in a reuse facility, such as an off-site Re-Use-It or Re-Build-It Store or share shed at a the landfill / transfer station. These reuse facilities may be run by the Regional District or in partnership with non-profit organizations.

We Can Get Energy from Our Waste and Avoid Landfilling

In our survey, we heard that some want to see local energy recovery options for waste, rather than waste being landfilled. Energy recovery or "waste-to-energy" is currently considered too costly to implement with our small population and large region.

In order to meet provincial waste management regulations, our waste facilities and infrastructure have undergone some major upgrades over the past few years, including construction of a new landfill, the expansion of an existing landfill and three new transfer stations (two with recycling depots). Waste-to-energy is not considered an option if we want to maintain the financial sustainability of solid waste services in the region.

Recycle BC depots in the RDKS:

- ◆ Do Your Part Recycling in Terrace
- ◆ Hazelton Bottle Depot
- ◆ Stewart Transfer Station
- ◆ Kitwanga Transfer Station

Prevent Illegal Dumping by Improving Public Access to Solid Waste Facilities!

People throwing their garbage (and recycling) in our beautiful backcountry is something that frustrates all of us. Enforcement for illegal dumping falls outside of the Regional District's jurisdiction; however, we are working with Conservation Officers and other provincial partners to identify strategies to stop illegal dumping, such as increased enforcement and fines, education campaigns, and restricting access and installing game cameras at repeat dump sites.

Your feedback on the survey identified that having good access to solid waste facilities is an important way to stop illegal dumping. We will work toward having better hours at our facilities, as well as align the landfill / transfer station hours with recycling depot hours. We may also pilot free disposal for residential waste (such as limited free bag tags) as a method to prevent illegal dumping. If the pilot is successful, we may implement an ongoing program.

Next Steps

Your input has helped us set the priorities and future strategies for our Solid Waste Management Plan. The Plan will be finalized in the fall of 2021 and will guide how we manage waste for the next decade.

If you have any questions, please call the RDKS Environmental Services Coordinator at 250.615.6100 or visit our website at www.rdks.bc.ca/solidwasteplan.