

City of Lethbridge Waste and Recycling Master Plan (W&RC)
Interim Summary of Public Input
April 13, 2011

Overview

The feedback from one-on-one **interviews conducted during February and March** with residents within the two mile zone surrounding the W&RC and the input gathered at the **public workshop held on March 9, 2011** was very consistent in terms of the issues raised. In general, people felt the W&RC has been operated better since the present operator took over but there are still remaining issues that are beyond the operator's control that need some attention. Public feedback indicated a general understanding that the W&RC must expand to meet the community's future needs and that it must be situated somewhere, there were also alternate views expressed that indicated a strong desire for increased recycling and employment of new technologies to eliminate or reduce the need for landfills. Public feedback also indicated some appetite for making the landfill more of a community asset during its operational stages; including suggestions to create an educational asset such as an interpretive centre, and numerous suggestions for the end stage state when the landfill is closed decades from now.

The primary issues that have been identified in the feedback received to date are:

- Traffic
- Dust on 43rd
- Environment and recycling
- Litter and Illegal dumping
- Keeping the roads clean
- Visual effects, landfill height and odor
- End state of landfill

Traffic: High speed, not securing loads, road safety/traffic accidents, flying gravel and litter are all seen as problems on the haul roads, although some (not all) acknowledge the problems are fewer in recent times. Litter is being picked up but enforcement of speed limits and the secure load policy could be improved. Other suggestions include creating smaller depots within the city to accept smaller loads, lower speed limits, a 4-way stop at 43rd St/26th Ave, and fining people who generate litter. Also suggested was a Traffic Impact Assessment to identify traffic volumes and impacts.

Dust on 43rd St.: More dust control is advocated for 43rd, with a strong preference for paving the road as dust is seen as a major year round problem.

Environment: The main concern is the proximity of the W&RC to the Old Man River: is the water protected, is there seepage from the landfill into the groundwater? What happens to storm run-off? Secondly, the emphasis on recycling is positive and the City should increase its efforts in this direction (including composting).. Some urge the City to "keep looking for a greener future" and adopt a "cradle to grave philosophy" – work with the manufacturers and producers of excess packaging to reduce waste. There is also recognition that a lot of good material ends up in the landfill and the City could develop a reuse/recycle store turning one person's trash into another person's treasure. The City could also investigate waste to energy and the feasibility of producing energy from methane.

Litter and illegal dumping: Litter, especially in the form of plastic bags is a problem especially during high winds. The bags get into the canal contaminating water systems and damaging pumps. A major irritant, illegal dumping along the roads is a regular, unwelcomed occurrence and how or whom to report this activity is not widely understood. Some say the pick-up of litter and illegally dumped material has improved with the current operator and others say it is not done soon enough.

Keeping the roads clean: Ongoing maintenance and pothole repair are the major issues of keeping the roads in good shape during all seasons. Getting the Province to ante up to protect 43rd as the future Canamex highway is seen as a potential source of funding for paving.

Visual effects, landfill height and odor: Not surprisingly a landfill not seen is the best landfill and the further away it is from residents, the better. The higher the landfill rises the more it is seen and the greater concerns there are about flying litter in the strong southern Alberta winds. Storm water needs to be managed properly as slopes increase with height. Environmental regulations must be met. Concern that the landfill has been situated on arable land instead of a coulee and high above the river is seen as a mistake. Odor, while mentioned slightly, is generally not perceived as a problem but concern that it could be exists.

End state of landfill: In all consultations people were asked to dream ahead a few decades and muse about what the landfill could become. Everything from a park with trails and recreation facilities, to natural habitat and wetlands or environmental /interpretive centers, along with a golf course were imagined. It is clear that the public would advocate for an exciting and useful public/community asset rather than merely covering it over and writing off the land for future generations. The view and vistas of the river and surrounding coulees and prairies are also considered priceless.

**City of Lethbridge Public Consultation Process
Waste & Recycling Centre Master Plan**

Summary of Public Workshop (March 9, 2011)

A total of 33 people attended the workshop and approximately half of those in attendance (16/33) completed and submitted a comment form at the workshop.

1. All but one person reported ‘feeling informed or very informed’ about the project.
2. Ten had not visited the City’s website.
3. Six had visited the City’s website. Of the six who had visited the website, all found it informative.
4. All reported feeling that they had been heard at the workshop.
5. “I feel that the environment will be protected”(8). “I feel the environment will not be protected” (6). Question marks (2).
6. “I feel optimistic that the City will alleviate my concerns”(11). “I feel not optimistic that the City will alleviate my concerns” (5).
7. Top concerns:
 - a. Ground and surface water contamination
 - b. Pollution (air, odor, water esp. Old Man River)
 - c. Need more recycling vs. expansion; recycling not just waste streaming; should be better way of disposal
 - d. Pave 43rd; dust problem because now more and heavy traffic; wear and tear on roads; impact the added traffic will have on neighborhoods; ditches for run-off water on 43rd are not suitable at high flood times;
 - e. Mountain of garbage in our backyard – just like India; litter is a problem; more seagulls and more garbage being hucked out on the roads; unsightly; garbage and wind
 - f. Visual effects: no above ground garbage pile
8. As the project progresses I will come out to future consultation events (16). As the project progresses I will NOT come out to future consultation events (0).
9. Comments (that are legible):
 - “People driving too fast as it is now – don’t even slow down at the yield sign. More noise /more crime will be out there when you pave the road. This just defeats the reason that I moved out to the country – it was for peace and quiet and also all of the crime that goes with the city. I do not get free dumping or the garbage picked up. But other people will make more garbage than us.”
 - “Should put pressure on Province to begin the cradle to grave philosophy i.e. work with the manufacturers to help reduce waste!”
 - “Keep looking at the greener future – recycle and burn for electricity. I would like to see this in your next proposal.”
 - “Cradle to grave concept. Go to producers re excess packaging.”
 - “I live here and it is my duty to be interested in this project.”