

**REPORT TO SAANICH PENINSULA WASTEWATER COMMISSION  
MEETING OF THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2026**

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**SUBJECT**     **Saanich Peninsula Liquid Waste Management Plan – Technical Advisory Committee and Review Update**

**ISSUE SUMMARY**

To provide an update of the Saanich Peninsula Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP) review, and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) activities, findings and recommendations.

**BACKGROUND**

Liquid waste management plans allow the Capital Regional District (CRD) and local governments to develop community specific solutions for the management of liquid waste, stormwater and environmental protection in accordance with the *BC Environmental Management Act*. The Capital Regional District (CRD), on behalf of the Saanich Peninsula participant communities (Central Saanich, North Saanich, Sidney), and Peninsula First Nations (W̱SIKEM (Tseycum), BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), STÁUTW (Tsawout) and W̱JOLELP (Tsartlip)), oversees liquid waste management according to the strategies and commitments outlined in the LWMP. The LWMP was approved by the BC Minister of Environment in 1996, has been amended four times, and was most recently consolidated in 2009 (with minor corrections in 2011).

An external consultant completed an audit of the LWMP in late 2019. The audit provided a detailed review of the commitments listed in the LWMP and included an evaluation of whether commitments were met. Details from the audit can be found in a June 18, 2020 report to the Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Commission (SPWWC.)

The audit findings were used as a platform for TAC to evaluate and discuss liquid waste management planning on the Saanich Peninsula, and to determine a proposed direction to revise or update the LWMP.

Recognizing the LWMP is dated, and may benefit from renewal, the SPWWC directed staff to create TAC to review the LWMP at their October 17, 2019 meeting. The TAC's purpose was to evaluate the technical and regulatory components of the Saanich Peninsula LWMP and provide advice and recommendations to the SPWWC and the respective participating jurisdictions regarding planning and priority setting for liquid waste management on the Saanich Peninsula in the coming years.

The TAC Terms of Reference (which were updated in 2024) are attached as Appendix A. First Nations were invited to participate directly in the TAC or independently in a forum of their choice.

Staff have held three meetings; minutes and actions can be found in Appendix B. Broad discussions included current and potential LWMP scope, and deficiencies identified in the audit. Staff confirmed that several commitments identified as “In Progress Non-Compliant” or “Non-Compliant” in the 2019 audit have since come into compliance, including the District of North Saanich joining the CRD Onsite Program bylaw, recent work to assess inflow and infiltration, and various municipal stormwater initiatives. A full summary of current commitment status can be found in Appendix C.

The TAC process also determined that several liquid waste planning related exercises at various levels of government will occur in the near future, including updates to municipal stormwater management plans, and provincial guidance on LWMP development. The TAC generally agreed upon that the Plan needs to be rewritten with modern language, capital project plan inclusion and in collaboration with First Nations. It was suggested that we pause for now and recommend that we revisit in several years once other provincial, regional and municipal planning documents are complete.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### *Alternative 1*

The Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Commission recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That staff defer review and renewal of the Saanich Peninsula Liquid Waste Management Plan pending completion of provincial, regional and municipal planning documents; and
2. That staff include financial planning for the Saanich Peninsula Liquid Waste Management Plan Update in the 2027 business planning process for consideration in the 2027-2031 Financial Plan.

### *Alternative 2*

The Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Commission recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That staff proceed immediately with the Liquid Waste Management Plan review and renewal.

### *Alternative 3*

That this report be referred back to staff for more information.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### *Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

Updating the Saanich Peninsula LWMP is an initiative included in the CRD 2023-2026 Corporate Plan. The delivery of master plans, capital plans, and operational plans for wastewater treatment and conveyance to service current and future population, and address infrastructure deficiencies are also initiatives in the Corporate Plan.

### *Environmental Implications*

While the current LWMP is generally protective of human health and the environment, some First Nations participants have indicated a desire for stronger commitments related to nearshore water quality with the goal of restoring access to shellfish harvesting. There are several other specific environmental concerns that First Nations have raised that could be considered by either local or regional governments in any future LWMP update.

### *Financial Implications*

The LWMP review and renewal would require additional resources. Based on experience with the most recent updates to the CRD's Solid Waste Management Plan, and forecasted staffing and consultant support for technical review, as well as facilitation and public and First Nations engagement, it is estimated that a comprehensive review and rewrite of the LWMP would cost

between \$500,000 and \$700,000 over a three-year period. Current Saanich Peninsula liquid waste related budgets are insufficient to cover these projected costs. For reference, the Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Service budget, including a planning function, has a 2026 requisition of \$32,894. The end-of-year operating reserve balance is projected to be \$214,000. Given the current fiscal constraints and concerns, deferring the update will allow staff and the Commission to consider budget implications within the larger service and budget planning process.

#### *First Nations Implications*

Two of the TAC First Nations participants provided comments on the shortcomings in the current LWMP and requesting more fulsome foundational engagement with their and other First Nations prior to a comprehensive rewrite.

#### *Intergovernmental Implications*

Based on regular meetings staff have had with provincial colleagues, there are indications that the Province is concerned with the age and current relevance of the LWMP, and that the CRD should consider a comprehensive LWMP review and associated public and First Nations engagement.

After completing three TAC meetings, there was a general consensus that a comprehensive review and renewal of the LWMP is required but that the service is not facing an imminent provincial order to renew the Plan. Any update or rewrite would be self-driven at this time. It was also recommended that the TAC continue to meet to discuss liquid waste related topics and work that could be done to address First Nations concerns in preparation for the LWMP renewal process.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Saanich Peninsula Liquid Waste Management Plan has not been updated since 2009 and is due for a comprehensive review. Input will be required from technical experts, local governments, First Nations, and the general public as part of a process that is expected to take three years. While the process can likely wait until the completion of both regional and municipal planning processes, interim discussions can be had in the meantime to support the regional Strategic Plan, and address known technical challenges as well as First Nations concerns.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Commission recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That staff defer review and renewal of the Saanich Peninsula Liquid Waste Management Plan pending completion of provincial, regional and municipal planning documents; and
2. That staff include financial planning for the Saanich Peninsula Liquid Waste Management Plan Update in the 2027 business planning process for consideration in the 2027-2031 Financial Plan.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: Technical Advisory Committee 2024 Terms of Reference

Appendix B: Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee

Appendix C: Status of Plan Commitments, December 2025