



Making a difference...together

ERM 24-09

**REPORT TO PORT RENFREW UTILITY SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2024**

---

**SUBJECT Port Renfrew Refuse Disposal – Local Service: 2024 Initiatives Update**

**ISSUE SUMMARY**

To provide an update on the continued operation of the Port Renfrew Garbage and Recycling Depot and to present both short and long-term planning options for the local refuse service.

**BACKGROUND**

The Port Renfrew Refuse Disposal Local Service is administered by the Capital Regional District (CRD) and delivered through a depot collection service model. Funded by the local community through tax requisition, the Pacheedaht First Nation and the CRD's solid waste function under the authority of Bylaw No. 1745, the 2024 budget for the service is \$110,631.

As described in staff reports presented to this committee in 2023, a number of issues are arising for the service, including garbage collection capacity and transportation costs, the pending retirement of the site's long-time caretaker and withdrawal of Recycle BC's support for residential packaging and printed products in relation to site concerns and collection infrastructure. Appendix A contains a complete list of issues and opportunities that have arisen to date or have been identified for future consideration.

Growing activity in this community is putting demands on the existing solid waste system. Increased volumes of waste material being generated, especially seasonally, are taxing the existing depot capacity and funding model for this service. In addition, illegal dumping activity, particularly of construction material and bulky items, has increased.

The current depot attendant is a caretaker who resides on the property as part of his compensation package. This is a longstanding arrangement that has proven mutually beneficial to both the caretaker and the community; however, it is not supported by site zoning, and the practice poses some liability risk to the CRD. Given this, and with the depot caretaker retiring in November 2024, a new approach will be required for operating this depot in the future.

To address these issues and to mitigate impacts associated with increasing expenses, funding through the Growing Communities Fund was pursued, and \$262,500 (75%) has been secured. To access the grant funds, the service is required to supply the remaining 25% of the project costs (\$87,500), of which \$30,000 will be provided through a Community Works Fund Grant. This has been added to the 2024-2028 capital plan. It is expected that this \$350,000 will address the imminent concerns for the service around collection capacity and transportation, the transition of depot management from caretaker to operator model, Recycle BC's concerns and provide opportunity to conduct a study for the future of the service.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### *Alternative 1*

The Port Renfrew Utility Services Committee recommends to the Electoral Areas Committee:

That staff be directed to:

1. Continue implementing site upgrades with funding from the Growing Communities Fund.
2. Work with the business sector on alternative solutions for commercial packaging and printed products.
3. Continue to transition the depot from caretaker managed, to a site operator model for late 2024; and
4. Continue discussions for long-term waste management in Port Renfrew with the Pacheedaht First Nation and the broader community.

### *Alternative 2*

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

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### *Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

The 2021 CRD Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) identifies roles in the solid waste system, including the responsibility of producers, consumers (generators), industry and local governments. Working with local generators of waste material to develop and deliver an efficient service for this community supports goals associated in the SWMP, including having informed citizens who effectively participate in proper waste management practices and reducing the per/capita disposal rate for the region.

The Port Renfrew Official Community Plan update, scheduled to take place in 2024, provides an opportunity to engage with the community, including the Pacheedaht First Nation about a longer-term vision for the service. It is expected that this project will begin in February 2024, once a Citizens Committee representing various interests in Port Renfrew is formed.

### *Financial Implications*

The primary function of the service is to provide local collection of garbage from both residents and businesses. Favourable recycling markets for items like scrap metal and cardboard, as well as collection agreements for regulated items such as paint, tires and batteries, have allowed the serviced to expand and provide a local option for the community to manage its recyclables. Given the withdrawal of Recycle BC support, the downturn in commodity markets and increase in both volumes and costs associated with transportation, there are limits to what the current funding model can support regarding continuing this broad-spectrum service.

The current caretaker arrangement includes residential access to the site and provision of utilities (hydro, water, telephone and septic services), as well as a stipend of \$1,148/month. In addition, as part of the compensation package, the caretaker has access to profitable scrap metal material and beverage containers dropped off at the site, returning and retaining the deposit refund. The revenue generated from this salvaging activity will be better understood in 2025 as site management transitions to an operator and those revenues are returned to the service. Staff

estimate this revenue potential at approximately \$40,000-\$60,000 per year when compared to similar-sized depots in other communities.

In addition, with the caretaker's retirement in 2024, and the transition to having the site managed by an operator, there will be a financial impact on the service in 2025. Options include having the site managed by a CRD employee through a new position (2025) or contracting the work out to a non-profit community organization, as is done with residential recycling services on Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands. Staff recommend posting for a 12-month term position in the summer of 2024, with an extended term or permanent position considered in the 2025 budget. Preliminary estimates for a part-time position are \$50,000 annually. If recruitment is unsuccessful, contracting the work out could be explored, particularly if the community signals an interest in establishing a non-profit community organization model.

Site utilities, including hydro, water and portable toilet service are funded by the service and will need to be maintained for continued operation of the site.

#### *First Nations Reconciliation*

The Pacheedaht First Nation has indicated interest in operating its own waste and recycling transfer station, potentially for the entire Port Renfrew community. Timing for these discussions could progress as improvements at the existing site progress this year.

#### *Social Implications*

An adjustment to the hours the depot is open will need to be explored and right-sized for this community, and the funding available for the service. The recycling depots located in the Southern Gulf Island Electoral Area are open 4-10 hours/week. In comparison, the Port Renfrew caretaker has been opening the depot 56-70 hours/week, depending on the season. In addition, the agreement with Recycle BC requires that an attendant be present during all hours the depot is open. The inability to provide this under the caretaker model is one of the reasons the Recycle BC agreement and associated support is currently suspended.

When the adjustment to hours is made, strategies will need to be considered to address illegal dumping outside of the facility's gate and potentially in the community.

### **CONCLUSION**

There are a number of challenges and opportunities for the Port Renfrew Refuse Disposal Services arising. It is expected that short-term issues such as garbage collection and transportation efficiencies, transitioning site management to an operator model, and addressing site infrastructure concerns can be addressed through funding secured through the Growing Communities Grant. In addition, the hours and services provided at site will need to be reviewed and right-sized for the community and funding available. There is an opportunity to investigate long-term planning for the service through the Port Renfrew Official Community Plan update scheduled to be conducted in 2024.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Port Renfrew Utility Services Committee recommends to the Electoral Areas Committee:  
That staff be directed to:

1. Continue implementing site upgrades with funding from the Growing Communities Fund.
2. Work with the business sector on alternative solutions for commercial packaging and printed products.
3. Continue to transition the depot from caretaker managed, to a site operator model for late 2024; and
4. Continue discussions for long-term waste management in Port Renfrew with the Pacheedaht First Nation and the broader community.

Submitted by:	Russ Smith, Senior Manager, Environmental Resource Management
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT**

Appendix A: Issues and Opportunities Summary