
TO: Larry Gardner
Manager, Solid Waste

DATE: April 5, 2016

FROM: Sharon Horsburgh
Senior Solid Waste Planner

MEETING: RSWAC, April 14, 2016

FILE: 5365-00

SUBJECT: Complimentary Disposal Services at Regional District of Nanaimo Solid Waste Facilities

PURPOSE

Board representatives suggested that the Regional Solid Waste Advisory Committee (RSWAC) consider introduction of “Complimentary Disposal” service at the Regional Solid Waste Facilities (Church Road Transfer Station (CRTS) near Parksville and Regional Landfill in south Nanaimo) as an option for future service. This was a service provided in the past and was well supported by a segment of the population who were the recipients of free waste disposal.

BACKGROUND

A complimentary disposal program was in place in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) from approximately 1992 – 1998. The program was introduced soon after the RDN user-pay system was implemented for garbage pickup and dropoff; there were concerns by the Board that new fees would result in increased illegal dumping in and around the RDN¹. The Complimentary Disposal program gave RDN residents the opportunity to drop off household waste at the Regional Landfill and CRTS without charge, four times per year. The program began with a complimentary disposal day each season, then was decreased to twice per year, before being cancelled in 1998, when it was determined by the Board that the complimentary disposal service created risks to public safety and environmental protection.²

On a complimentary disposal day, an average of 1,450 customers passed through the Regional facilities, disposing approximately 1,250 tonnes of waste each year.³ This turnout represented approximately 3% of eligible RDN households on a Complimentary Disposal day, and an almost 400% increase in traffic at the facilities. All Landfill employees were required to be on site on complimentary disposal days, and additional staff were hired to assist with traffic control. Employees recall traffic lined up the entire length of Cedar Road, from the Landfill to the intersection of Cedar Road and Highway 19, approximately 1.5km.

At the Regional Landfill facility, customers were directed to drop off their waste in the bin area, but many were sent to the active face of the Landfill if they had a large load and their vehicle was capable.

¹ Regional District of Nanaimo. (1996). *Solid Waste Management Free Day Policy at the Solid Waste Management Facilities* (Freedays rpt 9607-1). Donnelly, Mike.

² Regional District of Nanaimo. (2000). *Solid Waste Management Self-Haul Tipping Fees* (SelfHaulrpt003). Mclver, Carey.

³ Regional District of Nanaimo. (1998). *Solid Waste Management Free Day Policy at Solid Waste Management Facilities* (SW Free Day rpt 9804). Mclver, Carey

Some customers proceeded to the working face without direction, increasing the potential for accidents with Landfill equipment or other residential vehicles. Employees recall long traffic lineups along the Haul Road, between the Landfill face and the exit. All waste was accepted and little to no screening for recyclable or hazardous items took place; waste volume was very high, and bins were emptied continuously. Operational concerns included out-of-district trips, and multiple trips; additionally, each complimentary disposal day took two to three days of clean up, sorting, and moving of all the material brought to the Landfill, which disrupted commercial flow of traffic, and causing the system to slow down.

Staff recall that complimentary disposal days were extremely busy and very hectic. The primary concerns were traffic control and the safety of customers and staff. Photographs from the mid-90's appended to this report illustrate some of the challenges in managing much of the large bulky material received over these one day events.

DIVERSION AND ILLEGAL DUMPING

Recycling/Screening

There are waste diversion policies in place to prevent the disposal of recyclable items in the Landfill; recycling stewardship programs include management for kitchen and yard waste, tires, batteries, electronics, packaging and printed paper, hazardous waste, wood, metal, cardboard and small appliances. These items are banned from the Landfill, and a Complimentary Disposal service would need to involve screening for, and separation of, these items from household garbage.

Illegal Dumping

Complimentary disposal days were introduced in 1992, partially to alleviate concerns that the newly introduced user-pay system would result in increased illegal dumping in the RDN. In 1995, Latimer Consulting Services provided a report entitled "Examination of Changes in Illegal Dumping Since 1992", where it was determined that illegal dumping was not increasing, and that dumping is carried out by residents who would not be enticed by policy changes, rate incentives, or educational efforts to change their behaviour. It was unlikely that residents who participated in the complimentary disposal service were part of that group, as wait times to dispose of waste on a complimentary disposal day were often at least 30 minutes; it's doubtful that residents who dump illegally would wait that long to dispose of their waste appropriately.⁴

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

From 1992 – 1998, approximately 1,450 residents per complimentary disposal day visited the two facilities, resulting in 1,250 tonnes of waste disposal yearly.⁵

In 1996, costs to operate complimentary disposal services at the two facilities were estimated to be approximately \$74,000 per year, or \$18,500 per day; lost revenue was calculated to be \$61 000, and additional staffing costs were \$13,000 per year. Total costs per vehicle visiting the sites on a complimentary disposal day were estimated at \$12.75 each.

⁴ Regional District of Nanaimo. (1996). *Solid Waste Management Free Day Policy at the Solid Waste Management Facilities* (Freedays rpt 9607-1). Donnelly, Mike.

⁵ Regional District of Nanaimo. (1998). *Solid Waste Management Free Day Policy at Solid Waste Management Facilities* (SW Free Day rpt 9804). McIver, Carey.

Based on 1996 complimentary disposal tonnages (53% garbage, 14% Construction and Demolition, 33% Scrap Metal and Yard Waste), but with 2015 tonnage rates, lost revenue could be \$39,000 per day if a complimentary disposal program is re-introduced as it was in 1992. At 2015 rates, additional staffing costs could be \$3,500 per day, resulting in a possible loss of \$42,500 in costs and lost revenue to operate a complimentary disposal day at two facilities. Additionally, costs to haul recyclables and pay recycling fees could increase costs by \$1,500.

“Complimentary Disposal” is not really free. Not collecting a fee for residential garbage means that costs to cover Landfill expenses are not met, including Landfill airspace, engineering costs, environmental monitoring, and contributions to Landfill equipment and other purchasing needs. Additional staffing required to manage high traffic volumes is also not covered by the users. Users who pay for their drop-off are subsidizing those who don’t.

OPTIONS

There are options to re-introduce complimentary disposal at Regional facilities, with restrictions that would reduce traffic volume, thus increasing safety, and allowing for appropriate sorting and separation of items.

Drop Off by Municipality or Electoral Area

Individual Municipalities or Electoral Areas could be granted one day per year where the resident is permitted to drop off their waste without charge at either facility. Dividing the areas up by population would control the amount of traffic on site in one day, allowing for proper screening and sorting of waste.

Uncertainties

Complications could arise with Electoral Area drop off as the Scale Clerks would be required to check the address of each customer to confirm eligibility of free drop off. The hauler of the waste may not be the resident, and the resident may not be present during drop off. Unless some form of Area permit was provided, each driver passing through the Scale would need to provide address information; backlash could be experienced if a customer was from the free Area on a given day, but paid for their dropoff because they were unaware of the day.

The RDN may wish to restrict vehicle size and/or waste weights, as questions could arise regarding whether or not the waste is residential or commercial. Another option could be to restrict the weight of “complimentary” waste to a certain number of kilograms, with a fee being applicable over that weight.

Trash It! Ticket

Trash It! By Area

Customers could be provided with a “Trash It! Ticket” with their residential tax package, utility billing or annual collection calendar; this system would help prevent out-of-district trips and multiple loads. The ticket could provide information regarding the approved drop off date for their Area, as well as facility locations, and outline the requirements to drop off (pre-sorting, recycling requirements, hazardous waste information). Customers would be required to provide and relinquish their ticket upon drop off.

Uncertainties

Distribution of the Trash It! Tickets could be complicated; many residents are not the owner of the home in which they reside, and tickets would need to be provided to the resident by the home owner if sent out with tax packages.

The RDN may wish to restrict vehicle size and/or waste weights; questions could arise regarding whether or not the waste is residential or commercial.

Area complimentary disposal days may require additional staff on hand at both facilities in order to appropriately manage traffic volume and screen waste items.

Trash It! Any Day

Customers could be provided with a "Trash It! Ticket" with their residential tax package, utility billing or annual collection calendar that could be used on any day of the year, regardless of residential Area. The Ticket could provide information regarding facility locations and outline the requirements to drop off (pre-sorting, recycling requirements, and hazardous waste information). Customers would be required to provide and relinquish their Ticket upon dropoff.

Uncertainties

Distribution of the Trash It! Tickets could be complicated; many RDN residents are not the owner of the home in which they reside, and tickets would need to be provided to the resident by the home owner if sent out with tax packages.

The RDN may wish to restrict vehicle size and/or waste weights; questions could arise regarding whether or not the waste is residential or commercial.

Trash It! by Weight

In addition to either *Drop Off by Area* or *Any Day Drop Off*, the RDN could introduce a weight restriction for the free waste.

Trash It! Decisions by Area

Some Electoral Areas may show more interest in free dropoff than others, and drop off services to particular areas based on the level of interest could be explored. Based on historical numbers, 3% of the eligible population participated in complimentary services at the facilities. An increased tax rate for an area could be discussed, or a discussion could ensue to help residents understand that "complimentary drop off" is not really free, and that disposal services come at an expense. For example, if Area H were to enter into an agreement with the RDN for complimentary services four times per year, 105 out of 3,509 residents (2011 population) might take part in the service per day. Services provided to those 105 people could cost \$22 per person, or \$2,300 per day. To cover these costs four times per year could cost each Area H resident an additional \$2.60 per year.

Uncertainties

Communicating a request for interest in a free day to the various areas could be difficult, as well as increasing the understanding that disposal could come at a cost in another area of service.

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

There is a possibility that providing complimentary disposal to residential self-haul customers is discriminatory⁶. The Municipal Act allows the RDN to set rates for different classes of people, property or types of land use; however, charging fees to some residents and not to others could be considered discriminatory. It may not be legal to waive tipping fees for residential, but not for commercial, users.

SUMMARY

Complimentary disposal services were introduced in 1992 to offset concerns regarding illegal dumping in response to the new RDN user-pay system. The program ran until 1998, when complimentary disposal services dropped from four per year, to two, and then was eliminated due to public safety and environmental protection concerns.

There are recycling stewardship programs in place for electronics and small appliances, packaging and printed paper, hazardous waste, wood waste, and cardboard, among others. Screening for these items must be maintained for each load. An average complimentary disposal day saw 1,450 customers pass through the two facility's scales, disposing of 1,250 tonnes of waste per year, and representing 3% of eligible RDN households. This volume resulted in a 400% increase in traffic at the facilities, resulting in little to no sorting or recycling of waste. Operational concerns included out-of-district trips, and multiple trips; additionally, each complimentary disposal day took two to three days of clean up, sorting, and moving of all the material brought to the Landfill, disrupting commercial flow of traffic, and causing the system to slow down.

In 1995, a consulting service provided a report entitled "Examination of Changes in Illegal Dumping Since 1992" which determined that illegal dumping was not on the increase since the RDN user-pay system was put in place, and that it was unlikely that the complimentary disposal program was utilized by those who dump their waste illegally.

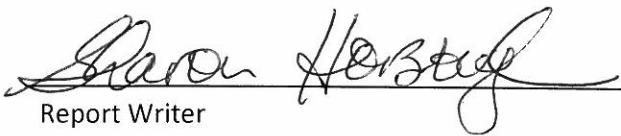
Not collecting a fee for residential garbage means that costs to cover Landfill costs are not met, including Landfill airspace, engineering costs, environmental monitoring, and contributions to Landfill equipment and other purchasing needs. Additional staffing required to manage high traffic volumes is also not covered by the users. In 1996, costs to operate Complimentary Disposal services at the two facilities were estimated to be approximately \$74,000 per year, or \$18,500 per day. Based on 1996 complimentary disposal tonnages (53% garbage, 14% Construction and Demolition, 33% Scrap Metal and Yard Waste), but with 2015 rates, the RDN could have a possible loss of \$42 500 per day in revenue and staffing costs to operate a complimentary disposal service at two facilities if the program was re-introduced as it was in 1992.

A new program could be implemented at the Regional facilities that would reduce the traffic volume and allow for appropriate screening of items. This new program could involve complimentary disposal acceptance from particular Municipalities and Electoral Areas on certain days, where each area could be given a different day for complimentary dropoff at either the Regional Landfill or the CRTS. Other options include distributing a "Trash It! Ticket" to residents that they would provide and relinquish at the time of drop off. Tickets could be distributed with residential tax packages, utility billing or annual

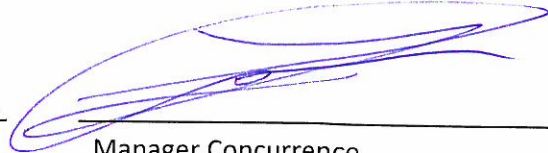
⁶ Regional District of Nanaimo. (1998). *Solid Waste Management Free Day Policy at Solid Waste Management Facilities* (SW Free Day rpt 9804). Mclver, Carey.

collection calendar, and may provide particular disposal days by Area, or could be used on any day of the year. Areas could be given the opportunity to accept a tax increase in exchange for complimentary service, and weight restrictions could be implemented to reduce the likelihood of commercial loads. There are several uncertainties for all these options: how to determine the source of the waste if the program is implemented by Area; how to distribute Trash It! Tickets to residents; limiting load size, and; how to communicate that complimentary waste disposal comes at a cost that must be subsidized by users and non-users alike.

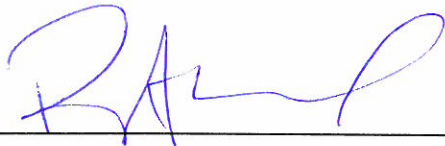
Charging fees to some residents and not to others could be considered discriminatory. Introducing a program that a small percentage of the population participates in, means that costs are transferred to a larger population of those who do pay. Additionally, it may not be legal to waive tipping fees for residential, but not for commercial, users.



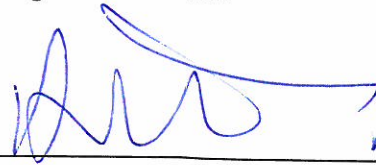
Report Writer



Manager Concurrence



General Manager Concurrence



CAO Concurrence

PHOTOS



