



To: COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Section: Corporate Services – Solid Waste Management

Item Number: CCW 16-191

Meeting Date: May 24, 2016

Subject: Solid Waste Management Infrastructure Projects – Public/Stakeholder Engagement Update

Recommendation:

THAT the current engagement process for providing project information and consulting with the public, stakeholders, and near neighbours to 2976 Horseshoe Valley Road, Springwater, be continued at key project milestones as outlined in Item CCW 16-191, dated May 24, 2016.

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this item is to:

- provide a summary of the engagement process thus far in the development of the Organics Processing Facility (OPF) and Materials Management Facility (MMF);
- summarize information sessions held following release of the preferred location; and
- seek direction on continuing the engagement process as the projects move forward.

Although an Environmental Assessment is not required for either the OPF or MMF, the County has approached these projects with this framework in mind and has undertaken an extensive engagement process. To date, this has included six Public Information Sessions, ten Public Consultation Sessions, and numerous meetings with First Nations, Métis, and various stakeholders and approval agencies. In addition, staff have met regularly with the Community Engagement Committee, individually with concerned residents, with local municipal staff and Councillors, and hosted tours of the short-listed sites and similar facilities last fall for local Councillors and Mayors and Deputy Mayors in municipalities with short-listed sites. These efforts have been with the understanding that open, transparent, and meaningful consultation will be key to the success of this project.

Prior to public release of the preferred location on March 1, 2016, County staff personally delivered information packages to neighbours living within 500 m of the property boundary and couriered packages to owners where this was not feasible (i.e. owners of vacant lands). A letter provided an invitation to a meeting organized for neighbouring landowners, subsequently held on March 23, 2016. Approximately 35 near neighbours (representing 20 properties) attended. The purpose of this meeting was to initiate dialogue between the County and those potentially most impacted by these projects via a facilitated, round table discussion.

In addition, on April 19, 2016, the County hosted two Public Information Sessions to provide details on the facilities, the preferred location, and upcoming studies. Topic-specific stations, manned by County staff from Solid Waste Management, Transportation & Engineering, Planning, and Forestry, allowed for discussion about specific concerns and questions from residents regarding these projects. This included the impact on traffic, the Planning process, trees, and organics processing technology. Approximately 140 residents and stakeholders attended the two sessions.

As the project moves forward, the Project Team has considered how best to continue the engagement process – both relaying information and providing opportunity for consultation – with the public and important stakeholders, including near neighbouring landowners. Outlined within this Item is a request by some near neighbour landowners that the County form a Community Monitoring Committee (CMC). It is recommended that the current methods of engagement continue – public information and consultation sessions be organized at key milestones, project updates and consultant reports be provided to County Council as the projects develop, and neighbouring landowners be consulted as a group with facilitated meetings arranged at key project milestones complimenting the public sessions. Staff would be available to meet individually with landowners to discuss more specific concerns, particularly once the facilities are developed further and potential impacts are better understood.

It is anticipated that with commissioning of the facilities, the engagement process will be re-examined to determine the best method for providing information (such as annual monitoring reports) in the future. This could include consideration of a monitoring committee once operations commence.

Background/Analysis/Options:

Development of the Organics Processing Facility (OPF) and Materials Management Facility (MMF) was recommended in the County's Solid Waste Management Strategy, approved in 2010. The OPF will provide a location where organics (green bin material, potentially materials such as leaf and yard waste, pet waste, and diapers) are processed and converted into other valuable products, such as compost or fertilizer. The MMF will provide a location for consolidation and transfer of waste and recycling from multiple collection vehicles for more economical shipment to other disposal or processing locations, have the potential to co-locate a fleet servicing facility, and future potential for recycling processing.

A comprehensive siting process for both the OPF and MMF was undertaken in 2015/early 2016 which included the evaluation of 502 potential sites. A short list of sites was presented for public, Aboriginal, and stakeholder consultation in fall 2015, followed by a detailed comparative evaluation completed by the County's consultant. This evaluation was extended to consider the option of co-locating the OPF and MMF on a single site. On March 22, 2016, furthering development of a co-located OPF and MMF utilizing 2976 Horseshoe Valley Road West, Springwater, as the preferred location was approved by County Council, with direction to initiate consultation with landowners located within 500 m of the site and host Public Information Sessions.

For reference, previous staff reports, communication material from public information and consultation sessions held in June 2014, December 2014, October 2015, and April 2016, and minutes of Community Engagement Committee meetings can be found at www.simcoe.ca/opf and www.simcoe.ca/mmf.

Engagement Process

From the outset, these projects have been approached with an understanding of the sensitive nature of siting waste management facilities and that there would be concerns from neighbouring landowners. Although an Environmental Assessment (EA) is not required for either the OPF or MMF, the County has developed these projects with this framework in mind – which has included undertaking an extensive consultation program. The objectives of the engagement process are threefold – to provide detailed information and awareness of the project (inform), obtain feedback on alternatives and/or decisions in order to inform decision making at critical milestones (consult), and work with relevant stakeholders during the various steps of developing these projects (collaborate). The following methodology has guided the engagement process thus far:

- clear, accessible information is provided to County Council, the public, and stakeholders as the projects are developed;
- information/consultation sessions and meetings are organized at key project milestones, open to the appropriate stakeholders, and undertaken in a format that encourages effective and meaningful dialogue;
- proposed methods of engagement and communication material for public sessions such as storyboards are brought forth to the Community Engagement Committee (CEC) for their review and recommendations;
- timely and transparent staff reports are provided to County Council presenting project updates, consultant reports, and summaries of on-going consultation (including communication material);
- various forms of media are utilized to advertise important milestones (such as staff reports, information/consultation sessions, and paid advertising for print and radio) – this includes media releases, social media, and notification to the project contact list;
- engagement with staff on the Project Team is encouraged and contact information readily available for submission of questions, comments, or concerns; and
- dialogue (whether verbal or in writing) is undertaken in a respectful manner.

To date, the engagement process has included:

- June 2014 – two (2) Public Information Sessions held to provide notification of the OPF project and discuss the County's organics diversion program;
- December 2014 – two (2) Public Information Sessions held to introduce the MMF project and the siting methodology and evaluation criteria for both facilities;
- September 2015 – letters providing information on the projects and details on upcoming consultation sessions sent to neighbours within 500 m of the seven short-listed sites;
- October 2015 – ten (10) Public Consultation Sessions undertaken in the Townships of Springwater, Clearview, and Oro-Medonte seeking feedback on seven short-listed sites;
- numerous meetings and communications with First Nations, Métis, various stakeholders, and approval agencies during the siting process;
- meetings with the Community Engagement Committee at key milestones, coinciding with public information/consultation sessions;
- staff have met individually with concerned residents, local municipal staff and Councillors, and hosted tours of the short-listed sites and similar facilities (in Toronto, Peel Region, and Guelph) last fall for local Councillors and Mayors and Deputy Mayors in municipalities with short-listed sites;
- March 2016 – a facilitated, round table meeting held with neighbouring landowners located within 500 m of the preferred location; and
- April 2016 – two (2) Public Information Sessions organized to provide information on the preferred location and upcoming studies.

These efforts have been with the understanding that transparent, open, and meaningful consultation will be key to the success of this project.

Neighbouring Landowner Meeting – March 23, 2016

On March 1, 2016, prior to public release of the preferred location, the County's Director of Solid Waste Management and the Special Project Supervisor personally delivered information packages to neighbours living within 500 m of the property boundary. Packages were couriered to owners where this was not feasible (i.e. owners of vacant lands). For information, there are 27 neighbouring properties (with owners including the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, Hydro One Networks, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto) within 500 m of the property boundary. It was important that consideration was given to near neighbours and that they were notified, if possible, with release of the staff report on the Committee of the Whole agenda (and subsequently announced on-line and in the media).

Delivered packages contained a letter outlining the recommendation of the preferred location at 2976 Horseshoe Valley Road West, Springwater, and dates of upcoming information meetings (one for neighbouring landowners and two public sessions), business cards for both Rob McCullough and Stephanie Mack, and the staff report with the consultant's final siting report (with a USB flash drive for the large schedules). Follow-up e-mails were sent to landowners who had provided their contact information previously to the County.

A meeting for neighbouring landowners located within 500 m of the property boundary was held on March 23, 2016, with approximately 35 near neighbours (representing 20 properties) in attendance. The date of this meeting was purposeful as it was intended to provide information to landowners immediately after direction was received from County Council on March 22, 2016. The format was a facilitated round table discussion, with the objective to begin building the relationship between the County and its neighbours – those potentially most impacted by the facilities. To ensure meaningful and respectful dialogue, the County retained a professional facilitator, Ms. Sue Cumming, to assist with the arrangements and to be present at the meeting. After a short introduction by County staff, residents were free to ask questions, provide comments, and relay their concerns. For reference, notes from the March 23, 2016 neighbouring landowner meeting are included as Schedule 1. These notes were sent to the landowners on March 31, 2016 as follow-up. The specific request received at the meeting for the formation of a Community Monitoring Committee is addressed later in this item under the title *Furthering the Engagement Process*.

From this meeting, material was prepared for the Public Information Sessions to address some common questions and concerns. It should be noted that it was relayed at this meeting that some questions may not be able to be answered at this point in project development. County staff are committed to updating County Council, the public, and near neighbours as the projects progress and to subsequently update information on the project webpages. It is anticipated that concerns regarding traffic and the environment will be considered and addressed in preliminary studies to be undertaken this summer (the Traffic Impact Study and Environmental Impact Study). These reports will be presented to County Council and made available to the public.

Public Information Sessions – April 19, 2016

On April 19, 2016, Public Information Sessions were held at the Simcoe County Museum. Two sessions, held from 2:00 to 4:00 pm and from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, were organized in a modified open house format with topic-specific stations. This format was purposeful – stations were established based on common questions being received (such as those pertaining to traffic, required Planning approvals, organics processing technology, and the impact on the forest tract). Attendees were provided an opportunity to seek specific information and to speak directly with staff and consultants most knowledgeable on the various topics.

The following attendance was noted at the sessions:

- approximately 60 residents and stakeholders from 2:00 to 4:00 pm
- approximately 80 residents and stakeholders from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Communication material presented was available following the sessions on the project webpages. For reference, storyboards from the sessions held on April 19, 2016 are provided as Schedule 2.

Notification of Events

Consistent with a formal EA process, notification and advertising for the sessions was extensive and included:

- notification by letter on March 1, 2016 to landowners within 500 m of the preferred location (as was discussed above);
- notification by letter on April 1, 2016 to landowners within 500 m of the other six short-listed sites;
- newspaper advertisements County-wide on April 7 and April 14;
- e-mail sent to contact list on April 8;
- “Managing Your Waste” newsletter sent to all households (approximately 122,000) the week of April 11 (see attached as Schedule 3 for reference). The size of this edition was increased to provide comprehensive information on the preferred location;
- media releases on April 7 and April 18 providing details on the sessions;
- letters sent to member municipalities, the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia, various First Nations communities, Métis Nation of Ontario, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC), and local Conservation Authorities; and
- information on the County’s main website, the OPF and MMF webpages, and through social media (Facebook and Twitter).

County Representation

The sessions were attended by ten County staff – including representatives best to answer specific questions regarding the Solid Waste Management facilities, traffic, Planning-related matters, and forestry. This included Mr. Mark Aitken – CAO, Ms. Debbie Korolnek – General Manager, Engineering, Planning & Environment, Mr. Rob McCullough – Director, Solid Waste Management, Ms. Stephanie Mack – Special Projects Supervisor, Mr. Christian Meile – Director, Transportation & Engineering, Mr. David Parks – Director, Planning, Development & Tourism, Mr. Nathan Westendorp – Manager, Development, and Mr. Graeme Davis – County Forester.

Representatives from GHD included Dr. Tej Gidda, Mr. Brian Dermody, and Mr. Blair Shoniker who have been actively involved with this project and the siting process. Also in attendance were the Warden, Deputy Warden, and various members of County Council.

Community Engagement Committee

The Community Engagement Committee (CEC) was formed in 2014, with a mandate to provide a forum for focused discussion on public engagement during the siting and procurement process. The non-voting committee consists of a First Nations representative, three public representatives, and County and local municipal staff. Details on this committee and its mandate are outlined in the Council-approved Terms of Reference, available on the OPF webpage.

The committee met on March 7, 2016 to discuss the results of the siting evaluation, the format of the upcoming sessions, and the draft communication material. For reference, minutes of this meeting, including the CEC's recommendations to the Project Team, can be found on the project webpages. Information on the revised format and draft storyboards for April 19 were also sent to the CEC for review on April 11, 2016. Comments and recommended revisions and/or additions to the storyboards were incorporated into the final version. Again, the Project Team considers the input, feedback, and recommendations of this committee to be a valuable contribution to developing effective engagement.

Submitted Correspondence

During the evaluation of the short-listed sites, a deadline for submission of comments on the sites was set in order that the County's consultant be provided the information prior to on-site visits and for review and consideration in the comparative evaluation. Comments and petitions received up to November 17, 2015 (via submission at the consultation sessions, e-mail/mail to the County directly, through the project webpages, and forwarded from the potential host municipalities) was included in the final siting report.

Although this deadline has since passed, comments and questions regarding these projects may still be submitted via the project webpages or sent directly to staff and/or members of County Council. Staff is maintaining a record of correspondence and, for reference, has included various letters and e-mails from the public sent to the Warden or members of County Council (not previously brought forward to County Council) in regard to the projects as Schedule 4. In addition, comments and questions received at the April 19, 2016 sessions (comment sheets and flip charts were provided), are also included in this schedule. The record of correspondence will be maintained as the projects progress.

Furthering the Engagement Process

With direction on the preferred location, continuing the engagement process for the projects is crucial as the County moves forward with site-specific studies, the approvals process, procurement, and ultimately construction and commissioning. The Project Team has given much consideration on how best to provide information and opportunity for consultation to the public and important stakeholders. Most challenging is determining the best method in which to consult with neighbouring landowners as, understandably, they will have concerns and questions as the projects progress. Providing a forum for productive dialogue – where concerns and questions can be heard, responses provided, and information relayed directly to the neighbours – is important.

At the neighbouring landowner meeting, some of the near neighbours expressed their desire to have the County form a Community Monitoring Committee (CMC) immediately. Staff committed to bring this request forward to County Council for their direction. This type of committee, which has been historically required by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) in environmental permits (mainly for large projects such as landfills), is traditionally set up following facility commissioning. The mandate of a CMC could be, for example, to review operational information, environmental monitoring reports or new approvals or amendments to existing approvals. It is understood that some neighbours wish to have a CMC set up at these early stages, allowing for a few representatives of the larger group to meet and dialogue directly with staff and be provided consultant reports and updates.

As the County has previously committed to meeting with the neighbours as a group (there are only 27 properties within 500 m of the property boundary) and providing regular updates and consultant reports to County Council and the public, it is unclear how a CMC would add value to the engagement process at this time in project development (prior to commissioning of the facilities). Such a committee could, however, hinder direct, meaningful dialogue with those property owners who wish to represent their own interest. Staff is doubtful that having a small, vocal minority represent the larger group of neighbours on a CMC (or a similar committee) would bring benefit to the consultation process currently being undertaken or provide the best forum for fostering productive dialogue.

It is therefore recommended that the current method of engagement continue and neighbouring landowners be informed and consulted as a group with facilitated meetings organized at key project milestones. As has been offered from the outset of this project, staff would be available to meet individually with landowners to discuss more specific concerns, particularly once the facilities are developed further and potential impacts are understood. In addition, public information and consultation sessions will also be organized at key milestones and recommendations from the Community Engagement Committee sought on the methods of engagement and communication material presented. County Council and the public will be provided timely project updates and consultant reports as development continues.

It is anticipated that with commissioning of the facilities, the engagement process will be re-examined to determine the best method for providing information (such as annual monitoring reports) in the future. This could include consideration of a monitoring committee once operations commence.

Upcoming opportunities for engagement include:

- in early summer, discussion on the procurement of organics processing technology will be undertaken – this will include public consultation;
- to coincide with public consultation, a neighbouring landowner meeting to be held to discuss technology;
- a neighbouring landowner meeting to be held this fall (date to be confirmed) to discuss findings of the initial studies (Environmental Impact Study, Traffic Impact Study, etc.). This will follow a staff report to Council on the findings; and
- public meeting(s) related to Planning approvals (anticipated to be submitted in early fall).

Financial and Resource Implications:

Costs associated with consultation for these projects have been included in the 2016 and previous Solid Waste Management Operating and Capital Budgets. Approximately \$145,000 has been spent to date on the engagement process – this includes advertising and newsletters, having project consultants attend public sessions, professional facilitation, and set-up for consultation events.

Relationship to Corporate Strategies:

In regard to long-term processing of organics, the Solid Waste Management Strategy (Strategy) recommended development of a centralized composting facility within the County. Public input indicated support for in-County processing as well as for the addition of pet waste and diapers to the program. This item also supports the Strategy recommendation to develop transfer capacity infrastructure to manage garbage and recyclables generated within the County.

Reference Documents:

Organics Processing Facility project webpage

www.simcoe.ca/opf

Materials Management Facility project webpage

www.simcoe.ca/mmf

Attachments:



for CCW 16-191
Schedule 1.pdf



for CCW 16-191
Schedule 2.pdf



for CCW 16-191
Schedule 3.pdf



for CCW 16-191
Schedule 4.pdf

Schedule 1: Notes from neighbouring landowner meeting held March 23, 2016

Schedule 2: Storyboards from Public Information Session held April 19, 2016

Schedule 3: Managing Your Waste newsletter (March 2016 edition)

Schedule 4: Correspondence (from November 18, 2015 to May 10, 2016)

Prepared By: Stephanie Mack, P.Eng., Special Projects Supervisor

Approvals:

Date

Rob McCullough, Director, Solid Waste Management

May 11, 2016

Debbie Korolnek, P.Eng., General Manager, Engineering, Planning and Environment

May 11, 2016

Trevor Wilcox, General Manager, Corporate Performance

May 15, 2016

Mark Aitken, Chief Administrative Officer

May 17, 2016