

Grand Forks Focus Group Session and Open House

October 19, 2004

Attendance:

Linda Kabatoff, Grand Forks Boundary Hospital
Rob McGregor, Landfill Operator – RDKB
Ron Liddle
John Billwiller, PAC
Dir. Joe Tatangelo
Dir. Tony Lodder
Dir. Stan Jensen
Suzanne White, Grand Forks Gazette (OH only)
Dir. Charlie Madden (OH only)
Tim Dueck, RDKB Public Education Coordinator (OH only)

Raymond Gaudart, Project Team - RDKB
Chris Bullock, Project Team – Western BioResources
Laurie Gallant, Project Team – Footprint Environmental Strategies

Regrets: Keith Mitchell, Buy Low Foods

At Open House:

Focus Group attendees

Focus Group Agenda

1. Welcome and session overview
2. Introductions – name and perspective
3. Project overview and key decisions
4. Video: On the Road to Zero Waste: Nova Scotia
5. Service Levels: Collection System Options
6. Supporting Education and Policy
7. Economics: Business Structure and Cost Recovery Options
8. Decisions and Next Steps.

WHAT WE HEARD

Perspective	Data	Concerns	Solutions
Hospital	Alpine garbage bin only, some staff take organics home for their animals. Sending laundry to Nelson, have linen carts in halls	Feeling pressed for time and money for “new initiatives”. Storage space is an issue.	\$\$ incentive will make it easy to free up staff time, separate organics. Lead time to set up system good but these days are used to big, fast changes. Have RD staff work with hospital to set up system.
Local Government	42% of landfilled materials is organics. People are already backyard composting – varies by location and age and whether or not they are gardeners. In Midway, probably 50% of people are composting. West Boundary area has large organic fraction – big yards and gardens. Very hard to site new landfills in the Kootenays because of steep hillsides and other natural geographic features. Environmental hazards of organics in landfills are high – leachate, methane gas.	How to change attitudes, especially of “non-composters”. Ensure that positive impacts of program on landfills are communicated – from operator’s viewpoint they are HUGE. Transportation costs from outlying communities to central facility may not be acceptable. How to deal with seasonal residents? Don’t want to waste taxpayers money by burying material that can be converted into a value-added product.	Education programs should be targeted – don’t sing to the choir. Need local disposal facility – address distance issue for Midway. Maximize diversion of organics – big picture benefits of becoming a more sustainable community by working with agriculture community on food issues. Can raise landfill tipping fees to make composting more attractive.
Haulers	Level of organization varies between resort owners – for some separating organics won’t be a problem. Haulers are vulnerable to customer reaction to enforcement activity – risky to be enforcer since customers will switch over to a new hauler that won’t give	Weight of organics containers? Will a special vehicle be needed? Inequality of service levels. Low participation rates for recycling may be a bad omen. Fluctuations for commercial enterprises in volumes, service levels, operations. Don’t want to be front-	Treat everyone equally with respect to service levels (frequency) and costs (i.e. Area C and Grand Forks). Participation rates will increase with doorstep service. Make it easy to participate. Can adopt price incentives and rules as part of service agreement/2004 “oops” note

Composting Paradigm Project – A Central Kootenay and Kootenay Boundary Zero Waste Initiative

	them a “hard time”.	line enforcer in case customers cancel service.	when agreement isn’t followed. RDs need to enforce rules especially at landfills (remove the easy option to break rules).
Residents	Midway has no formal garbage system – self-haul or contract only. Animals are attracted to organic material - smells, meat content etc.	Loopholes – “free” transfer stations, roadside composting – plastic bag litter. Open burning. Contamination of compostables in depots. How do we minimize animals getting into garbage or organics containers?	Need education on proper care and disposal of household garbage. Find a way for people without gardens to get compost to people with gardens. Ramp up education for backyard composting – “Bear Proof your composter”.
Consultants	Not economical to transport organics from outlying areas. Taking organics out of landfill will reduce closure costs by 50% - cover materials and other closure requirements are much less significant with the organic portion removed. Landfill life will be extended by a cumulative total of 285 years.	How to quantify social and environmental benefits and consider them in collection costs.	Find a community-based solution for areas where transportation to central facility doesn’t make sense. Emphasize spin-off benefits of central composting – tie into Econ. Dev’t goals. Collection of materials that attracts bears may help. Over the course of 5 focus groups all perspectives should be represented – final summary of input will be reviewed, if gaps are obvious we will seek input from missing perspectives.
Food-based business		Not represented at Grand Forks open house.	Set up a separate bin for fruit and veggies as a starting point. Provide a cost incentive of 20% or more to compost vs landfill.
General	Self-hauling is not a good option for town folk for a variety of reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vehicle access - physical abilities 	Composting of noxious weeds at landfill, at home. Contamination of organic bins with regular garbage. Is the mixture of feedstocks good for	Use clear garbage bags for easy enforcement. Provide in-kitchen compost catchers. Central composting will reach temperatures high enough to neutralize seeds.

	<p>- hassle</p>	<p>finished compost? Monthly garbage service may result in illegal dumping (noted this is related to distance to final disposal facility). Will RDs be persuaded by long-term costs and benefits?</p>	
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Final Decisions/Next Steps:

1. Nova Scotia video available through Raymond.
2. Focus group participants will take work book home and complete – please submit to RD office in Grand Forks by Thursday (upcoming RD meeting). Consultants need books to write report ASAP.
3. Community Consultation report will be published on web – can send around to catch any other comments.
4. May want to invite non-RD rep from Focus Group to final presentation of study (may be in January).
5. Make sure perspective of food-based business and City of Grand Forks are considered – follow up may be necessary.