

**Report to Council  
Village of Haines Junction  
November 10, 2021**

**RE: MEETING REQUEST CLOSURE OF COMMUNITY LANDFILLS**

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**Recommendation:**

That Council review this report and, by resolution, provide direction to staff

**Background:**

In 2017, Environment and Climate Change Canada published *Solid Waste Management for Northern and Remote Communities: planning and technical guidance document*.

In 218, Yukon Government released *Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste: recommendations towards a solid waste management system for Yukon* ("MCSW". (Appendix "A" Key Findings)

Since then, progress on the recommendations has been slow and several reports on our landfill have been commissioned.

In 2021, Council adopted two resolutions:

Resolution #1

*That the Village of Haines Junction directs Lang & Barret LLB Law Group to negotiate a lease agreement between the Village of Haines Junction and the Yukon Government.*

This resolution was adopted when the Village was notified that it did not have an agreement to occupy the Yukon Government owned land on which the landfill resides.

Resolution #2

*That the Village of Haines Junction directs Lang & Barret LLB Law Group to negotiate a Regional Landfill agreement between the Village of Haines Junction and the Yukon Government; and*

*That this Regional Landfill negotiation does not bind or otherwise commit the Village of Haines Junction to enter into a Regional Landfill Agreement.*

This resolution was adopted when Council decided to find out what type of agreement was possible.

**Current Status:**

Susanne Tremblay of Destruction Bay has requested that Council Meet with her, Silver City representative David Cartier, and a representative from Kluane First Nation to discuss the closure of their transfer stations and the lack of consultation from the Yukon Government.

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**Conclusion:**

Council by reviewing this report and then giving, by resolution, direction to staff will exercise their oversight on this matter.

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**Appendix “A”**

**Key Findings 2018 Ministerial Committee**

**1.1. Executive Summary - Key Findings**

**High Cost of Waste.** Yukon currently has 14 unincorporated community landfills (three operated by Highways and Public Works, 11 by Community Services), five waste transfer stations (operated by Community Services), and eight municipally operated landfills, meaning Yukon operates 27 waste management facilities to serve 38,641 residents. The estimated operating and maintenance cost (not including landfill closure) of managing Yukon’s waste streams which includes operating landfills, recycling depots and compost facilities, and transporting waste and recyclables is approximately \$10.5 million per year or \$275 per person per year (See Appendix I - YG Costs).

**Rationalization of Services.** Many jurisdictions have launched waste management strategies that have sought to improve their waste management facilities and services in rural and isolated communities. As a result of increasing awareness around environmental liabilities and the life-cycle cost of landfilling, landfills are being closed across Canada. Moreover, the majority of the landfills in operation in Yukon provide a wide-range of services and accept a variety of materials at little to no upfront cost to residents.

**Regionalization.** Several jurisdictions have opted to implement legislation that allows or facilitates regional cooperation for waste management. Three landfills in Yukon currently accept waste from areas outside their municipal boundaries through regional agreements: Dawson, Whitehorse and Watson Lake. Expanding upon this model for the rest of Yukon would provide support for regional (municipal) sites, while reducing the number of active landfills and associated long term environmental liabilities.

**User Fees.** The primary cost-recovery process for solid waste in Canada is currently taxation and utility fees. Growing regulatory requirements, increasing volumes of waste, and potentially toxic legacy waste has led to solid waste systems which can be considered underfunded. The Committee believes that adequately funding this system cannot be accomplished through transfer payments from the Yukon government alone. Users, industry, and governments, must pay a reasonable portion of the cost of the waste they generate if a sustainable system of management of solid waste is desired. In particular, this Committee believes that the timely implementation of the Designated Materials Regulation (DMR) is a critical action in relation to the financial sustainability of waste management.

**Best Practices.** The variety of ways in which solid waste is managed in Yukon presents a significant challenge in making improvements to the overall system. Implementing territory-wide service levels and new initiatives requires the support and buy-in of all of the operators and facilities. Solid waste systems have a great number of interdependences and to continually improve the system it is helpful for solid waste managers to be consistent in following best practices.

**First Nations Participation in Solid Waste Management.** Though many First Nations in Yukon do not have a role in waste management in the same way municipalities do, the Committee carefully considered the current and potential future role of First Nations. For example, the Committee sees significant economic development opportunities for both municipalities and First Nations in the regionalization of our solid

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waste system in handling and transporting solid waste. The Committee feels strongly that solid waste management is an issue which affects all Yukoners, including First Nations, and any solutions to be implemented should involve First Nations groups where possible.

**Implementation Working Group.** A collaborative approach to improving waste management practices throughout Yukon requires that the Yukon government work closely with all affected First Nations and municipalities throughout the implementation of the following recommendations. In order for this working group to have the authority and capacity to make the changes suggested in this report, specific roles will need to be identified and positions will need to be funded for the short to medium term. This can either be done in a formal agreement between governments or by providing a clear mandate and resources to Community Service