

Metro Vancouver Reference Panel shares water-centric vision with Regional Engineers Advisory Committee

Living Water Smart provides a framework and direction for doing business differently in updating the region's Liquid Waste Management Plan



In April 2008, the Metro Vancouver Board appointed a 9-person Reference Panel to provide comments and advice on the region's strategy for updating its Liquid Waste Management Plan. The Reference Panel reports directly to the Metro Vancouver Waste Management Committee.

Dialogue with Municipal Engineers

In February 2009, **Kim Stephens** and **Christianne Wilhelmson** of the Reference Panel met with the Regional Engineers Advisory Committee (REAC) to provide an update on the Reference Panel process.

"REAC is a key group in terms of representing the municipal perspective in plan development," reports **Kim Stephens**. "It was therefore important that the Reference Panel initiate a dialogue with REAC and build trust. So we met with REAC to explain the Reference Panel process, with emphasis on what we reported to the Waste Management Committee in July 2008."



"When we met with elected representatives in July 2008 to present our assessment of the Metro Vancouver's strategy document, we endorsed the proposed Goals, Strategies and Action Strategies... and with suggestions to make it stronger," explains **Christianne Wilhelmson**. "At that time we also challenged Metro Vancouver to provide visionary leadership, focussing on protecting the marine environment and recovering resources from our waste. The region needs to turn innovative ideas into real action. In meeting with REAC we wanted to give them a sense of how the Reference Panel process has been unfolding in the months since last July and challenge them to show leadership as well."



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A Model for Integration

"We explained that a significant contribution by the Reference Panel was our suggestion to organize and communicate the Liquid Waste Management Plan around three theme areas: Sewage Treatment, Built Environment, and Natural Environment," continues **Christianne Wilhelmson**. "These themes resonate more with the public and are focussed on the issues that need to be addressed in the updated plan."

"It was Ken Hall, UBC Professor Emeritus and a member of the Reference Panel, who inspired us to apply a Venn diagram way-of-thinking to conceptualize integration," adds **Kim Stephens**. "In a subsequent conversation, a provincial colleague observed that the larger the 'circle of integration', the more receptive senior governments will be to Metro Vancouver's request for funding towards the \$1.4 billion treatment cost."

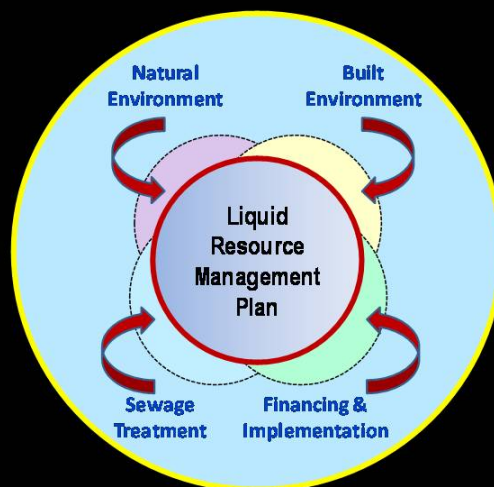
The Reference Panel identified these theme areas for structuring the Plan Elements:

- **SEWAGE TREATMENT:**
technology choices, level of treatment and innovation
- **BUILT ENVIRONMENT:**
asset management, cost control and greening of the urban landscape
- **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:**
protection and/or improvement of stream habitat and marine receiving environment

Feedback from REAC members was enthusiastic. "The presentation by Kim and Christianne was well rounded, well prepared, and well delivered. They succeeded in building a bridge to REAC," stated **Raymond Fung**, Director of Engineering and Transportation, District of West Vancouver.



The 'theme areas' have evolved into a 'model for integration' in the region



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Living Water Smart

"When we reported out to the Waste Management Committee in July 2008, we urged Metro Vancouver to change the name of the plan to Liquid RESOURCE Management Plan," reports **Christianne Wilhelmson**. "The reason being that we need to change the way we look at waste so that is it not something that we need to get rid of, at the cost our land and our oceans. The Board accepted our recommendation and asked the Province to make it happen."

"We view the name change as a way to start the paradigm-shift that will result in doing business differently.....the New Business As Usual as we framed it in our July 2008 presentation," states **Kim Stephens**. "This would be consistent with the framework and direction provided by Living Water Smart, BC's Water Plan."



B.C.'s Plan to protect and preserve water resources through planning, regulatory change, education, and incentives such as economic instruments and rewards.

Creating Our Future

Throughout their presentation to REAC, both Kim and Christianne repeatedly stressed the importance of having a shared vision.

"Once we know what we want our watersheds and neighbourhoods to look like, the next step is to decide *what the tools are that will get us there*,"



observed **Vincent Lalonde, City of Surrey General Manager, Engineering**. "All of us need to understand and care about the goal if we are to create the future that we all want."

