



POINT ROBERTS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Point Roberts, WA

TO: Point Roberts Property Owners
DATE: March 13, 2018
SUBJECT: POINT ROBERTS SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Dear Property Owner:

Since May 10, 2016 the Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee (PRCAC) has been working with community members and county staff to review our garbage collection services.

As we all know, the very things that make Point Roberts a wonderful place to live, work and visit, such as our natural beauty, diverse culture, and low density, can also present challenges to developing the public infrastructure and community services that we need. One of these important services, which can significantly affect our way of life, is garbage collection.


Due to these inherent challenges, in 2010 our previous service provider, Point Recycling and Refuse, ceased to be economically viable and went out of business; these same challenges exist today, resulting in the current service provider, Cando Recycling and Disposal, currently operating at a net financial loss. *As has been demonstrated, unless these challenges are addressed, the provision of sustainable, quality services, at low costs, cannot be achieved.*

In the 2010 Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Final Order, when we changed service providers, strong recommendations were made to address these challenges. We have worked on this project for almost two years, using community input from our 2016 on-line survey, and are now recommending changes to service provision.

In addition to existing media coverage and meeting minutes, please find attached a 'Frequently Asked Questions' project information sheet, which also identifies further sources of information, including a Town Hall meeting, that we have placed on the county web site. It is our strong belief that these recommendations will result in sustainable improvements in service levels, at low costs, as we continue to grow.

Thank you.

Sincerely,


Jeffrey Christopher
PRCAC Chair



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS about the POINT ROBERTS SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE PROJECT?

Point Roberts is a unique locale, abundantly rich in natural beauty with a friendly, independent and diverse culture. It is also remote and not populous, with a high degree of seasonal residency, which presents challenges to the solid waste management system. The project goal is to provide sustainable, quality levels of service, at low costs, and reduce illegal dumping.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

In Point Roberts, low economy of scale, high operating costs, high seasonal occupancy rates and contradictory regulatory mechanisms result in challenges to providing quality levels of service at low costs. These challenges then result in increased illegal dumping and illegal cross border disposal, and threaten the actual stability and continuity of service provision.

HOW REAL ARE THESE CHALLENGES?

In 2010, as a direct consequence of these challenges, the service provider Point Recycling and Refuse, LLC ceased to be a viable business operation, and went out of business. As noted by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) in their final order:

"...the primary burden now rests with the County to reassess its policies and ordinances regarding the Point Roberts area and to attempt to develop a framework for a more sustainable recycling and solid waste policy for its residents." –WUTC 2010 Final Order

These challenges are as real today as they were in 2010. As a result of these challenges, our current service provider Cando Recycling and Disposal, while operating frugally, still incurred a net financial loss in 2017. As has been demonstrated, unless these challenges are addressed, the provision of sustainable, quality services, at low costs, cannot be achieved.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT PROJECT?

The approved 2016 *Whatcom County Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan* recommends that the county 'Conduct a community involvement and engagement process to identify potential adjustments to infrastructure and regulatory requirements to improve levels of service.'

On May 10, 2016 county staff attended the Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee (PRCAC) meeting, and inquired as to how they could best work with the community to conduct a review to ensure that waste management needs were being met.

At the direction of PRCAC, staff designed and implemented an on-line community survey to measure satisfaction and solicit comments regarding transfer station operations, curbside collection services and commercial services, with emphasis on levels of service, costs of service, illegal dumping, recycling services and service provider stability. Robust community input was received from 314 on-line survey responses, with significant candid commentary. The survey results were presented to PRCAC, and used to inform subsequent community discussions regarding solid waste services.



At the June 13, 2017 PRCAC meeting, staff were requested by formal motion to develop a model to implement a property tax fee-based, property specific, mandatory curbside collection system. At the October 10, 2017 PRCAC meeting, recommendations were made to 1) eliminate the exemption from mandatory residential curbside solid waste collection services for developed residential parcels with an on-site sewage system, 2) require a minimum residential curbside collection service level of every other week, with 32 gallon can, bundled with recycling, for these parcels, 3) collect payment for the minimum service level as a fee on annual property tax bills, and 4) have the service provider invoice directly for any additional requested services above the minimum service level, such as for larger can size, more frequent collection, or carry out/ drive in services.

On December 5, 2017 staff provided a project update to county council members at the Public Works, Health and Safety Committee. At the February 12, 2018 PRCAC meeting, staff presented draft amendments to ordinance to implement the committee recommendations. The committee requested that an informational mailer be sent to residents describing the recommendations.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT RECOMMENDATION?

"In other areas of the county, service areas are large so the exemption program isn't killing those collectors," he said. "The Point is a unique situation and may need to be treated differently." - Council Member Dan McShane, **2001 All Point Bulletin**.

PRCAC and staff recommendations are to amend WCC 8.10 and WCC 8.11 by adding:

WCC 8.11.030(C) Effective January 1, 2019 requests for exemptions for single-family and multi-family residential dwellings located in Point Roberts will not be approved, and existing exemptions will terminate.

WCC 8.10.040(D) Effective January 1, 2019 single-family residences located in Point Roberts, with on-site sewage systems, shall no longer be exempt from mandatory curbside collection services. As a minimum level of service, the minimum required curbside collection service shall be every other week garbage collection of a 32 gallon can and three bin source separated recyclables. The cost of the minimum level of service, as per the approved UTC tariff, shall be billed as an annual fee on the property tax bill, at the rate of one minimum level of service per real property. Service levels above the minimum level of service, as may be requested of the service provider, for larger cans, increased frequency of pickup, carry out or other services, will be invoiced directly by the service provider as per the approved WUTC tariff.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

This type of system is called a *flat fee/user-pay discrete hybrid system*, where each household pays a monthly fee for a basic level of service, and then pays a unit fee for any service requested above the basic level. Every other week collection with recycling, at the above minimum level of service, will cost an estimated \$17 per month (estimated \$200 per year) as established by the WUTC, and be incurred as a property tax fee. Seasonal residents, typically not home during weekly pick-ups, may elect to pay a carry-out fee for the service provider to retrieve and return their cans and recycling bins (now set at \$1 per 25' round trip).

The curbside collection customer base will increase from 300 to 2,300 which will provide increased economy of scale. Increased economy of scale will provide for higher levels of more sustainable service, at reduced costs, with reduced illegal dumping and cross border disposal, and the ability to implement improvements at the transfer station.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

If approved, the recommended services will be implemented on January 1, 2019. For this to happen, the following steps will take place:

- A Town Hall meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on April 14, 2018 at the Community Center to answer questions that anyone may have
- A public hearing will be scheduled for the Whatcom County Council to consider approval of the above amendments to ordinance, which may be found at <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/1569/Linked-Agenda-for-Current-Regular-Meetin>
- Cando Recycling and Disposal will apply to renew their WUTC tariff
- Cando Recycling and Disposal will invest in necessary equipment upgrades, personnel, routing software, web site design, and complete other implementation details
- Staff will provide the County Treasurer with a list of single family residential dwelling tax parcel numbers that will be receiving the new curbside collections services
- Services will begin January 1, 2019

WHAT OTHER INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE?

For more information, please go to <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/674/Solid-Waste-Management> , where you can find:

- Point Roberts Solid Waste Survey Results
- Frequently Asked Questions
- 2010 WUTC Final Order
- 2017 Council Update
- Proposed Amendments to Ordinance
- Cando WUTC Tariff
- Cando 2017 Annual Report Excerpt
- PRCAC Agendas and Minutes
- All Point Bulletin Coverage