

Haines Solid Waste Working Group  
Report to the Assembly  
Proposed Solid Waste and Recycling Plan  
October 3, 2017

The Haines Solid Waste Working Group (SWWG) was tasked with making recommendations to the Haines Borough Assembly on solutions for improving solid waste disposal in Haines.

SWWG has met for over a year. During that time the group heard from operators and community members; had presentations with representatives from the Southeast Alaska Solid Waste Authority (SEASWA) and public works officials from Juneau, Petersburg, and Gustavus; talked with the Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA); considered many community plans; and defined the following problems, goals, solutions, assumptions, and challenges.

**Overview of Current Situation:**

Currently, Community Waste Solutions (CWS) provides both self-haul and pick-up options. It charges 25 cents per pound for self-hauled Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and all waste is buried at the landfill; nothing is shipped out.

Haines Friends of Recycling (HFR), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, currently recycles approximately 250,000 pounds of self-sorted recycling every year. Recycling is free except for small charges for appliances, electronics, and fluorescent tubes.

Illegal dumping and burning are commonplace.

**Problems**

***Lack of direct Haines Borough participation in solid waste management, and of a broad-based community funding mechanism for a municipal solid waste disposal system, have resulted in expensive individual disposal costs, inadequate public access (resident and visitor) to convenient disposal resources, and a financial incentive for illegal/improper dumping of MSW outside of an appropriate waste handling system. Specific problems include:***

- 1 A struggling operator with inadequate revenues to capitalize equipment necessary for efficient and environmentally sound operations and no Borough back-up plan should current operations be terminated.

- 2 Substantial Illegal dumping and burning and lack of stringent enforcement of littering, nuisance dumping, and burning laws.
- 3 ) Lack of convenient public garbage cans, dumpsters, and recycling facilities
- 4) Inadequate/infrequent options for disposal of hazardous waste, junk cars, tires, and other special waste categories.

### **Goals**

***Create a tax-based system that is managed by the Borough, that requires all MSW and recyclables to be shipped to an appropriate landfill/processing or recycling facility, and encourages recycling and overall waste reduction.***

*A tax based system guarantees that the cost will be as low as possible and removes the incentive to illegally dump or burn (because people have already paid for the disposal, tipping fees will be nominal, and littering/burning laws will be enforced). Borough management provides long-term stability and ensures environmental regulations are being met; encouraging recycling will save money for the overall system.*

### **Recommendations**

- 1 Dedicate an increase in sales tax (e.g. a 1% sales tax would raise \$500,000 and a tipping fee schedule to fund solid waste management. This means that everyone who buys anything in Haines is now participating in solid waste disposal. This 1% is estimated to raise \$500,000 per year to pay for the bulk of MSW management, (staffing, shipping, recycling and capitalization). A nominal tipping fee on MSW will make up any shortfall and provide an incentive to recycle (recyclables are free).
- 2 Borough issues an RFP for operation of a solid waste transfer station and disposal (details TBD, but include mandatory shipping of all MSW and compliance with all state and federal regulations). A responder to this RFP provides the location, all equipment, staff and facilities to receive, bale and load MSW to borough specifications. They will collect the tipping fee for MSW. They will also provide a space for a recycling trailer from HFR. They will be required to ship all MSW to an appropriate facility out of state. If this operator is CWS they will cease operations at the landfill during the term of the contract per Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation regulations.
- 3 Borough issues an RFP for handling of recyclables (details TBD). Two separate RFPs will be issued for recycling, one for single stream recycling and one for self-sorted recycling. While single stream recycling encourages more people to recycle, there is contamination and a significant amount is just land-filled. With self-sorted recycling 100 % of the material sent to be recycled is actually recycled. Haines Friends of Recycling

(HFR) submits an RFP to handle self-sorted recyclables using its current facility and a trailer to be sited at the Transfer Station. No tipping fee will be charged to drop off recyclables at Haines Friends of Recycling or the transfer station. HFR will continue to operate as they do now. HFR, CWS, or another business may bid on the RFP for single-stream recycling.

- 4 Borough issues an RFP for handling of compost (details TBD). Composting significantly reduces the volume of MSW, reduces the smell and attraction of animals, and provides a source of fertilizer for our growing community of gardeners and farmers.

### **Assumptions**

- The Borough is authorized under statute to operate a transfer station(s) without a state permit and without compensating existing permit holders (source: RCA Judge Walker). The Borough may operate its transfer stations under a contract with a private entity(s).
- Although many other communities require mandatory collection, Haines has been trained to self-haul MSW. In every scenario, CWS (which holds the only collection certificate) can still offer collection service.
- Landfills in Southeast Alaska are a bad idea. It simply rains too much and we have an unlined landfill with water infiltration.
- Sending waste to Class 5 landfills in areas (Eastern Oregon and Washington) with six inches of rain per year is a good idea.
- Single-stream recycling is easier and more people will do it (source: SEASWA et al) but there is significant contamination and many materials end up in the landfill.
- Self-sorted recycling brings money back into the community and the recyclables are actually recycled. (source: HFR and Lakhan, C. 2015. A Comparison of Single and Multi-Stream Recycling Systems in Ontario, Canada. Resources 2015 (4):384-397; doi: 10.3390/resources4020384 [www.mdpi.com/journal/resources](http://www.mdpi.com/journal/resources) )
- Nominal tipping fees, estimated at \$.02 to \$.08 for MSW should be sufficient to cover any operational costs of Borough transfer stations and waste export costs that exceed revenue of the dedicated sales tax, while retaining a financial incentive for recycling.
- In addition to the tipping fees, some items will have an extra charge TBD (junk cars, hazardous waste, tires, appliances, electronics, batteries, etc.). This will still be nominal to encourage proper disposal.

- The plan will cost the average family of four in sales tax and nominal fees the same or less than they would pay with the current system.
- According to the IRS, a 1% increase in sales tax for a family of four in Haines making between \$50,000 and \$60,000 per year is \$174. That is \$14.50 per month. We are assuming that most families pay more than \$14.50 per month to correctly dispose of MSW. At current rate of 25 cents per pound for self-haul MSW, that equates to 58 pounds per month.

### **Challenges**

- 1) How to address MSW imported into the Borough? For example, CWS could bring in MSW from Skagway under the following conditions: All MSW must be shipped out and the Borough is paid 2 times the cost per pound of shipping. Ie. If Republic charges \$.07 then the Borough receives \$.14 from Skagway.
- 2) There will need to be a public education effort to show that this plan is both a good deal economically and environmentally. The public will have to vote for the sales tax to support the plan.
- 3) Develop a consistent public education program to help people reduce their waste stream.
- 4) Encourage development of a Re-Store to reduce the waste stream.
- 5) Hazardous Waste: The Haines Borough will collect hazardous waste and charge a nominal tipping fee.
- 6) Junk Cars: The Borough will continue to offer disposal of junk cars with a tipping fee.
- 7) Laws on illegal dumping and illegal burning will be strictly enforced.
- 8) See Brad's document on the economics. We know how many cruise ship passengers and we know how much they spend. This will help give us an idea of sales tax generation. Contact Carolyn Wootan for these numbers.
- 9) Is there a need for a second transfer station, perhaps at Mosquito Lake?
- 10) Glass needs to be addressed.