

Attachment 4

Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Strategic Communications Plan

Resort Municipality of Whistler

January 2005

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
1.0 Introduction.....	5
1.1 Background: Wastewater Treatment at Whistler	5
1.2 Issues Summary	5
2.0 Situational Analysis	7
2.1 Strengths.....	7
2.2 Weaknesses	7
2.3 Opportunities	7
2.4 Threats/Vulnerabilities.....	8
3.0 Strategic Communications Objectives	9
3.1 Strategic Approach	9
4.0 Target Audiences	10
4.1 Key Stakeholders	10
4.2 Issues of Stakeholder Groups.....	11
5.0 Key Messages.....	12
5.1 Top-Line Messages	12
5.2 Key Message.....	13
6.0 Communications Tools and Tactics	14
6.1 Recommended Tactics.....	14
6.2 Implementation Timeline	16
6.2 Summary of Communications Objectives and Tactics	18
Appendix 1: News Release and Backgrounder	19
Appendix 2: Speaking Points	25
Appendix 2: Speaking Points	25
Appendix 3: Questions and Answers.....	27

Executive Summary

The following communications plan sets out a communications roadmap for the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) for the upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant in which a private sector partner will design, build and operate the facility.

RMOW released its Wastewater Management Plan in May of 1993. The plan is currently being updated and to ensure the resort community continues to meet its social, environmental, economical and technical needs for the next 20 years. The next phase of the wastewater treatment project is now being prepared, and consideration is being given to a design-build-operate (DBO) approach to the project.

The governments of Canada and British Columbia are providing a grant to Whistler to reimburse 66 per cent of the capital costs associated with the upgrade project.

In other jurisdictions, despite only small opposition to the DBO approach to wastewater treatment, opponents came out early in the process. As a result, municipalities have found themselves unprepared for public and media questioning. This can easily be avoided. Experience shows that successful project communications comes from preparation.

Key communications objectives of the WWTP upgrade are:

1. To communicate the rationale for the DBO model of the upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant clearly, effectively and efficiently to all key audiences;
2. To assure WWTP employees that they will be treated fairly and equitably in a DBO model for the wastewater treatment plant;
3. To engage support for the DBO model of wastewater treatment plant by addressing public and stakeholder concerns;
4. To ensure a smooth transition to a new partner operating the new wastewater treatment plant.

Key audiences for the RMOW include employees, community groups, Whistler residents and businesses, news media, and federal and provincial government.

Top-line key messages are:

- Whistler will be upgrading wastewater treatment plant as part of our long term commitment to environmental sustainability.
- Whistler residents and others will benefit from more efficient and environmentally sound wastewater treatment.
- The new wastewater treatment plant is an innovative partnership that will ensure that environment standards will not only be met, but exceeded.

- The new partnership will generate significant cost savings that can be reinvested in the community while ensuring that the wastewater treatment plant will continue to operate at the highest standards using the best available technology.

Communications tactics include:

- Media and Stakeholder Monitoring
- Face-to-Face Meetings
- Publications (fact sheets, FAQs, Q&As)
- Online Communications (website postings, new page for updates on WWTP)
- Media relations (news releases/backgrounders, interviews, opinion articles)
- Community Relations
- Procurement documents

1.0 Introduction

The following communications plan sets out a communications roadmap for the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) for the upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant in which a private sector partner will design, build and operate the plant. The communications efforts recommended in this plan focus on stakeholder and community relations initiatives to inform the public and stakeholders, and provide for an open and transparent process that will benefit Whistler.

1.1 Background: Wastewater Treatment at Whistler

The Resort Municipality of Whistler released its Wastewater Management Plan in May of 1993. The Plan was updated in 2004 and the municipality expects the revisions to be approved by the provincial government in the first quarter of 2005. The plan follows broad public consultations and meets the social, environmental, economic and technical needs of the community for the next 20 years.

The plan set out a two-phase process for upgrading the wastewater treatment plant over a 15-year period.

The first phase was completed in 1996. The second phase of the project is now being prepared and consideration is being given to a design-build-operate (DBO) approach to the project. Partnerships British Columbia was retained by the RMOW to provide an in-depth business case to review the DBO option for the project.

The wastewater treatment plant upgrade is a being undertaken as part of the Canada/British Columbia Infrastructure Project in which the governments of Canada and British Columbia are providing a grant to Whistler to reimburse 66 per cent of the capital costs associated with the upgrade project—up to a maximum of \$12.7 million.

1.2 Issues Summary

- Private sector involvement in wastewater treatment facilities is not new in Canada—in fact the private sector typically builds them. The private sector has been involved in the design, building, operations and/or maintenance in numerous wastewater treatment facilities in Canada—including Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; Edmonton, Alberta; Jasper, Alberta; Banff, Alberta; Sooke, BC; Canmore, Alberta; Kamloops, BC; Moncton, New Brunswick; Port Hardy, BC; and throughout the United States.
- When it comes to non-public ownership or control, the issue has always been politically sensitive. Support or opposition to private involvement with wastewater systems hinge on

- the regulatory standards protecting the environment and successful information campaigns that educate residents and stakeholders.
- The greatest communications hurdle will be to educate residents and stakeholder groups about the DBO model and overcome concerns that running a wastewater system should not be a business proposition.
 - Residents and stakeholder groups need to clearly understand:
 - What role the private company and RMOW would have in operating the facility;
 - The financial benefits of the DBO over other procurement models;
 - The innovations or advantages of the DBO approach; and
 - That strict environmental standards will be met or exceeded.
 - In other jurisdictions, effective communications has been the most important way to ensure that the public is informed and understands the DBO model and its benefits for the community. Experience shows that successful project communications comes from preparation and being able to communicate the benefits of a project early on.

2.0 Situational Analysis

The following section outlines some of the key considerations for the wastewater treatment plant and the DBO option. In particular, the issue is looked at in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and vulnerabilities that RMOW may face during the announcement and procurement phase of the project.

2.1 Strengths

- The wastewater treatment plant upgrade is part of the RMOW's long-term plan—a plan that had considerable consultation and support when it was developed in 1993 and revised in 2004.
- Wastewater treatment is environmentally sound and supports Whistler's sustainability initiatives.
- The wastewater treatment plant will still be owned by RMOW and a private sector operator will simply have a contract to operate the facility. The public interest is protected by performance standards which must be maintained or the contract can be cancelled.
- A strong business case supports the DBO model as the most effective option for the upgrade and operation of the wastewater treatment plant.
- A detailed analysis shows that the DBO option provides the most efficient use of tax dollars by local government.
- RMOW will continue to set utility rates and be responsible for billing customers.

2.2 Weaknesses

- There may be a lack of understanding among residents and other stakeholders about what a DBO means.
- Previously, there has been some criticism from neighbouring communities about wastewater issues, and the project could potentially provoke more criticism.
- Effective communications needs to be done quickly and at times could be slowed down by requirements to contact and seek input from the federal and provincial governments on publications, news releases or other public information on the project.

2.3 Opportunities

- A public information campaign by RMOW and third party validators will help to educate residents on the DBO model and assure them that the municipality is proposing to develop a safe, effective and efficient wastewater facility.

- The 2010 Olympic Games will profile Whistler's responsible environmental initiatives and its support for "sustainable" projects. An upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant supports Whistler's reputation for environmental sustainability and responsibility.

2.4 Threats/Vulnerabilities

- With the 2010 Olympics putting Whistler in the national and international spotlight, opponents to the upgrade or DBO model may see the wastewater treatment plant as a very high-profile opportunity to publicize their issues.
- Attempted linkages may be made to the high profile case in Walkerton, Ontario, even though it has no relation to the RMOW wastewater treatment plant, and the reality that Walkerton is publicly-owned and operated.
- The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) has formed an Anti-Contracting Out Committee to "monitor attempts by employers to contract out and privatize CUPE jobs" and will probably oppose the DBO option for the Whistler wastewater treatment plant. Further, CUPE may associate the DBO decision with the current contract negotiations that are taking place with the RMOW.

3.0 Strategic Communications Objectives

The communications approach and tactics for RMOW will be based on achieving these four strategic communications objectives:

1. To communicate the rationale for the DBO model of the upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant clearly, effectively and efficiently to all key audiences;
2. To assure RMOW employees that they will be treated fairly and equitably in a DBO model for the wastewater treatment plant;
3. To engage support for the DBO model of wastewater treatment plant by addressing public and stakeholder concerns;
4. To ensure a smooth transition to a new partner operating the new wastewater treatment plant.

3.1 Strategic Approach

It is very important that RMOW come out early in the process to inform the public and key stakeholders about what is happening and why.

The media, interest groups and general public will need to be convinced that a DBO model will be environmentally sound. In order to garner public support for the DBO option, the RMOW should highlight that the upgrade will ensure the facility continues to meet or exceed strict environmental standards.

An economic argument alone may not be persuasive enough because cost savings will not offset public concerns over the environment and public health.

Finally, although the number of unionized workers is small, their union and the labour movement may take advantage of intense media interest in the 2010 Olympics to make the transfer of workers under the DBO model as a vehicle to promote an anti-privatization agenda.

To contain this issue, RMOW must assure employees early on that they will be treated fairly and equitably.

4.0 Target Audiences

4.1 Key Stakeholders

The following stakeholders will be key for RMOW:

COMMUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WWTP Employees/Union• RMOW Employees• Residents and Businesses• AWARE (Association of Whistler Area Residents for the Environment)• Whistler Chamber of Commerce• Tourism Whistler
NEWS MEDIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whistler Pique• Whistler Question• Squamish Chief• Major BC news media• National and International news media (if required)
EXTERNAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provincial Government<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Hon. Murray Coell, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (responsible for 2010 Olympics)○ Communications branch, Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services○ Ted Nebbeling, MLA (West Vancouver-Garibaldi)○ Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection• Federal Government<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Federal Minister Responsible○ John Reynolds, MP (West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast)• Potential private sector bidders on the wastewater treatment plant project• Vancouver Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games• Squamish Lillooet Regional District (regional district)/Squamish residents Environmental groups (e.g., Sierra Legal Defence Fund)

4.2 Issues of Stakeholder Groups

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ISSUES TO COMMUNICATE
Employees	Job security will be major concern that must be addressed early, and how the change will impact on them (e.g., successorship rights, benefits etc).
Union	CUPE needs to be informed of DBO approach for the plant. CUPE has been vocal in its opposition to any private sector involvement in government – at all levels.
Residents	Whistler residents need to be informed about the upgrade, as well as the DBO option and its benefits. In addition, residents need to know that rates and billing will continue under municipal control.
Businesses/Whistler Chamber of Commerce	Business should be kept informed of the progress of the upgrade as well as RMOW's rationale for the DBO approach.
AWARE	Need to inform this environmental group about the "sustainable" benefits of the project, and how the project is in keeping with Whistler's support for sustainable environmental initiatives.
District of Squamish	Residents and politicians in the District of Squamish need to be informed about the project as well as the DBO option and its benefits
Sierra Legal Defence Fund	Have taken an interest in wastewater issues and may be interested in the Whistler project.
News Media	Local news media should be priority for information. Regional media—primarily Vancouver based outlets—may follow in media interest. National and international media will take an interest if there is any controversy.
Tourism Whistler	Organization is devoted to marketing Whistler and they will need to be informed about benefits of project, and about mitigation strategies to ensure there is not any negative publicity about the resort.
Ted Nebbeling, MLA	MLA will want to know about issues impacting his riding.
Hon. John Les/Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development	Communications Branch of the Ministry will need to review all public communications about the project before anything is sent out. Minister's office should be kept in the loop on all communications.
John Reynolds, MP	MP will want to know about issues impacting his riding.

5.0 Key Messages

5.1 Top-Line Messages

Subject: Design Build Operate (DBO) Project: Wastewater Treatment Plan

Background

After careful deliberation, Council has resolved to proceed with a DBO approach to the planned upgrade of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. An Expression of Interest will be issued this spring.

Contact Person(s)

Primary: Brian Barnett, GM Engineering & Public Works, 604-935-8191
Secondary: Diana Waltmann, Information Officer, 604-935-8104

Spokesperson(s)

Primary: Brian Barnett, GM Engineering & Public Works
Secondary: Hugh O'Reilly, Mayor

5.2 Key Message

The municipality is committed to moving toward sustainability and continuing Whistler's success as outlined in Whistler 2020, the resort community vision, values, priorities and directions. After careful consideration, Council has determined that a design-build-operate approach to the planned upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant will best meet the resort community's sustainability objectives. This approach will offer a more innovative and efficient approach to design and construction and will better address the sensitive mountain environment and receiving waters and realize a significant cost savings to the taxpayer.

Key Points

- All employee positions will be protected with the same pay and benefits. The municipality is involving the WWTP staff in the project and will collaborate with them to ensure their career goals can be realized.
- The upgrade of the Wastewater Treatment Plant will ensure Whistler is able to meet or exceed the environmental standard for effluent treatment, as well as eliminate odour issues. The project will be consistent with the municipality's commitment to moving toward a sustainable future using the Natural Step framework.
- The competitive approach of a DBO will ensure the best environmental solutions to wastewater treatment and biosolids handling at a significant cost savings to the taxpayer; DBO programs have saved an average of 15 percent over traditional procurement methods on capital construction alone, while at the same time decreasing risk to the municipality.
- The upgrade to the Wastewater Treatment Plant is part of the revised Liquid Wastewater Management Plan, currently in final approval stage by the provincial government. Whistler received a \$12.66 million grant as part of the federal-provincial infrastructure program in 2003.
- Under a design-build-operate approach, the municipality will continue to own the Wastewater Treatment Plant and continue to be responsible for setting utility user rates.

6.0 Communications Tools and Tactics

A series of communications strategies are recommended below to generate profile among the key target audiences. It should also be point out that, while not included below, ongoing intelligence gathering—through political and media monitoring—will take place throughout the entire process. Specific recommendations for communications tactics are listed below.

6.1 Recommended Tactics

MEDIA RELATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most people get their information from the news media, and the wastewater treatment plant will be no different. RMOW Council and designated staff should be prepared to meet with the media—particularly the Whistler Pique and Whistler Question—and explain what is being done and why.• News releases and/or information bulletins should be released to the news media when appropriate, and accessible information and fast-responses to enquiries will be important.• Consideration of opinion articles may be an important tool for RMOW in the event that there is an organized campaign against the DBO.• Media spokespeople need to be designated.
MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDER MONITORING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is important that the RMOW understands what is being said in the media and by stakeholders about the wastewater treatment plant upgrade. Monitoring of news clippings, the newswire services and websites needs to be done on a daily basis.
FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A series of personal meetings should be scheduled with key stakeholders. The goal of the face-to-face meetings is to reinforce the information already sent to stakeholders, and also to answer any questions that groups or organizations may have.
PUBLICATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An important tactic for RMOW is to produce supporting publications that provide information on the wastewater treatment plant upgrade and the impact on employees and the community.• One or two page fact sheets and Q&As should be written and posted on the website as PDF files. These can easily be printed for background information at public or stakeholder meetings.• Procurement documents are also an important source of information on the project.

ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RMOW's website will serve as a consistent information source for stakeholders and members of the general public wishing to find information about the wastewater treatment plant and the DBO option.• The website will become a key source of communications between RMOW and the general public. It will be the most efficient medium in which to deliver RMOW's information about the benefits of the second phase of the wastewater treatment plant.• E-mail distribution should be a key feature of keeping stakeholders informed.• A simple newsletter in HTML format could be considered. |
|--|

MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDER MONITORING

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is important that the RMOW understands what is being said in the media and by stakeholders about the wastewater treatment plant upgrade. Monitoring of news clippings, the newswire services and websites needs to be done on a daily basis. |
|---|

6.2 Implementation Timeline

COMMUNICATIONS TACTIC	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE
Employee communications	Plant manager to be briefed on Council decision	Jan. 10
Council: Speaking points for Council	Speaking points provided to Council in the event of questions from employees, media or community (for sending updates on the project)	Jan. 12
Media relations	Media spokespeople assigned	Jan. 10
Employee communications: Face-to-Face meeting with employees	General manager to inform employees about Council decision on DBO and given assurances about fair and equitable treatment. Basic timeline provided.	Jan. 13
Employee communications:	All RMOW employees should be informed of the decision via internal communications vehicles (i.e., newsletter, email, website)	Jan. 13
Media and stakeholder relations: Question and Answer document	Q&A document about WWTP to be written for RMOW and updated on an ongoing basis.	Jan. 13 Ongoing
Media relations	Meetings with the Whistler Pique and Whistler Question as soon as the news release is issued	Jan. 13
Print materials: Fact Sheet(s)	Initial fact sheet of 1-2 pages in length explaining the project, its benefits, DBO model, job protection for employees, brief background, etc.	Jan. 13
Stakeholder relations	Email distribution list to be compiled of key stakeholders in community	Jan. 17 - 21
Media relations	News release and Backgrounder need to be sent out announcing Council decision to pursue DBO with wastewater treatment plant upgrade sent to media and key stakeholders, posted on website.	Jan. 24 - 28
Media relations: quick response system	Inaccurate or misleading news stories or other public information needs to be corrected quickly. Monitoring should identify problems, and local communications coordinator should draft response ASAP.	Ongoing

<p>Web Communications: WWTP page</p>	<p>Frequently Asked Questions posted on website. Consideration should be given to building a new page on the RMOW website, possibly as a sub-section of "Village Enhancement." This page would be dedicated to the WWTP. This page may include an e-mail sign-up section for people to receive updates on the project. For the near term, news releases can be posted under Latest News, while fact sheet and FAQs can also be posted under Village Enhancement.</p>	<p>Jan. 24 - 28 (ongoing)</p>
<p>Community relations: Letter</p>	<p>Letter from RMOW to businesses and residents explaining new WWTP, using similar messaging as fact sheet. Letter posted on website.</p>	<p>Jan. 24 - 28</p>
<p>Stakeholder relations: face-to-face meetings</p>	<p>City Engineer to meet with key stakeholders in the community, including Whistler Chamber of Commerce, AWARE, etc.</p>	<p>Feb - March</p>
<p>Media and stakeholder relations: Monitoring</p>	<p>Daily monitoring of news clippings, wire services and websites for breaking news on the wastewater treatment plant upgrade</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

6.2 Summary of Communications Objectives and Tactics

SUMMARY TABLE: KEY COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES AND TACTICS				
Objectives	To communicate the rationale for the DBO model of the new wastewater treatment plan clearly, effectively and efficiently to all key audiences	To reassure RMOW employees that they will be treated fairly and equitably in a DBO model for the wastewater treatment plant	To engage public support for the DBO model of wastewater treatment by addressing public and stakeholder concerns	To ensure a smooth transition to a new partner operating the new wastewater treatment plant.
Tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media relations: news releases, backgrounders • Fact sheets • Letter to residents and businesses from RMOW • Opinion columns • Presentations to Chamber of Commerce etc. • Face-to-face meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face meetings with employees • Employees first to know information about DBO • Print materials including Q&A for employees • On-line communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring media and web communications • Quick response media relations • Public forum • Letter to residents from RMOW • On-line communications (website updates) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness and transparency • Employee communications

Appendix 1: News Release and Backgrounder

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. . . .The municipality will pursue a design-build-operate approach to the planned upgrade for the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Council made the decision in a meeting Monday, January 10. Plant staff were updated on the decision this morning.

Council favoured the design-build-operate (DBO) approach over traditional design and construction tenders after a two-year review and analysis by municipal staff and a recommendation by an independent blue ribbon panel showed it best meets the resort community goal of moving toward sustainability while providing significant cost savings to the taxpayer.

“Council is confident that the DBO approach offers the innovation in environmental technology, and the efficiency required to maintain Whistler’s high standards as a destination resort community,” says Mayor Hugh O’Reilly. “We’ve looked at this very carefully, investigated other DBO projects in resort communities similar to ours and feel that it will best meet our sustainability objectives.”

Studies have shown that a competitive DBO approach can provide significant cost savings. The municipality established a budget of \$22.31 million, and received a grant of \$12.6 million through the federal-provincial infrastructure grant program. The actual cost of the upgrade will be determined through the process, but savings are expected to be at least 15 percent over traditional procurement methods on capital construction alone, while at the same time decreasing risk to the municipality.

Also key, says O’Reilly, are the environmental and social sustainability objectives the DBO are expected to achieve. “We feel that the treatment plant would be compliant (to provincial effluent standards) using either method of delivery, but our goal is to have the best treatment facility and a competitive process fosters innovation in technological solutions to sensitive habitat will help give us that edge. We want to retain our current status as one of the

best in the country,” he added, referring to the Sierra Legal Defence Fund rating Whistler second in Canada.

MORE...

Private sector operation of wastewater treatment plants is not new to Canada; the Banff, Jasper and Canmore plants were upgraded through similar programs and are operated by the private sector.

As with traditional approaches, the RMOW retains ownership of the plant, the land and the provincial permit to operate the plant. An expression of interest and request for proposal through a two-phase process will be issued by the municipality to select the private sector partner(s) who will design and construct the planned upgrade to meet municipal goals, and then operate the plant to meet or better the environmental standards established through the provincial permit.

The positions of the seven staff at the plant will be protected. “The resort community’s most valuable asset remains its employees, “ said Brian Barnett, general manager of engineering and public works. “The staff at the treatment plant will be treated fairly and equitably, in accordance with their collective agreement, will be involved in the upgrade project and that their career goals can be realized.” The positions will be transferred to the private sector.

An expression of interest will be issued this spring. Construction is expected to begin in 2006, with completion in 2007. Once complete, the plant will have the capacity to meet peak demands anticipated in Whistler 2020 – Moving Toward a Sustainable Future, the resort community vision and priorities adopted by Council in December.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER
BRIAN BARNETT, GM ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS
604-935-8191
DIANA WALTMANN, INFORMATION OFFICER
604-935-8104**

Background

The municipality is planning a significant upgrade to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, consistent with the 1993 and revised 2004 Liquid Wastewater Management Plan. A pre-design report was prepared in 2003, showing the anticipated cost of the upgrade to be \$25.92 million (2003 dollars)* and a federal-provincial infrastructure grant application for \$12.6 million was received for the project in 2003.

Municipal staff conducted a thorough investigation of two procurement options for the delivery of the upgrade: a design-build-operate option and a traditional engineering option. Staff also arranged for an independent opinion from industry experts through a blue ribbon panel review.

Council authorized staff to proceed with a design-build-operate approach to the planned upgrade of the Wastewater Treatment Plant at their meeting of January 10, 2005, noting the innovation and cost efficiency achieved through a DBO would provide significant savings, decreased risk and improved environmental performance.

What is DBO?

Design-Build-Operate approach is not new in the provision of municipal services. The Resort Municipality of Whistler contracts a number of its operations to the private sector, such as garbage and recycling services and transit. A design-build-operate or DBO is where the private sector is contracted to design and construct facilities to meet municipal goals, then operate the facilities and services to the standards determined by provincial permits, long-term contractual agreements and covenants, etc. This differs from the traditional procurement method, where design of a facility and the construction of a facility are separately tendered with the local government continuing to operate the service. A DBO is an example of public-private partnership.

Benefits of a DBO over traditional procurement method

The DBO approach is more cost efficient because it integrates the design, construction, and operating elements into a cohesive process. The competitive nature of a DBO encourages innovation and cost efficiency.

The municipality retains ownership of the facility, land and the provincial permit to operate the facility.

The contract will have a financial penalty if there is an environmental permit exceedence, so the operator is more motivated to comply with effluent treatment standards. No such penalty exists while the municipality operates the plant. The municipality remains accountable to the provincial government for effluent quality.

Project Goals and Objectives

Goals:

1. Odour shall be non-detectable at the property line.
2. The effluent will remain in compliance with the wastewater permit limits
3. The treated biosolids will continue to meet the provincial grade A standards.

Key objectives are:

- ▶ The project must be consistent with the municipality's objective of moving toward a sustainable future and the Natural Step framework.
- ▶ The project must be energy efficient and follow the BC Hydro Power Smart initiative.
- ▶ The facility must comply with LEED silver standards, where applicable.
- ▶ The design must provide the municipality with a flexible platform to accommodate future change.

Staff

There are currently six employees and one supervisor at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. All positions will be protected, the staff will be involved in the upgrade project, and the municipality will assist in them realizing their career goals. They will become employees of the private sector, but under their same collective agreement with the same rate of pay and benefits.

Blue Ribbon Panel

The WWTP Blue Ribbon panel appointed by Council was:

1. J. Richard E. Corbett, Vice President, Environmental Engineering, Associated Engineering Ltd.
2. Mark Hodgson, Director, Infrastructure, Government & Utilities Advisory, Price Waterhouse Coopers LLP
3. Don Kochan, Director of Environmental Services, Town of Canmore
4. Donald Lidstone, Lidstone Young Anderson, Panel Chair
5. Gordon Lindsay, Vice President, North America Construction (1993) Ltd.
6. Dennis Mitchell, Principal, Manageering Limited
7. Joe Rekab, Principal, BTY Group
8. Keith Shepherd, Director of Finance and Administration, Municipality of Jasper
9. Ted Tisdale, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Chilliwack

Appendix 2: Speaking Points

WWTP Employees and CUPE

- As you know, the municipality is planning to undertake a \$20 million upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant. The upgrade is included in Whistler's long-term wastewater management plan.
- At a Council meeting on January 10th, it was decided to proceed with the project using a design, build, and operate procurement approach.
- We wanted you to be the first to know about this decision.
- As part of this upgrade, the municipality will be looking for a partner to design, build and operate the plant. What this means is that Whistler will be transferring the operation of the plant to a private company.
- You will be treated fairly throughout this process. Nobody will lose their jobs. All plant employees will be offered positions by the new operator at the same wages and benefits as you currently have. You will continue to be represented by CUPE.
- Whistler will continue to own the wastewater treatment plant and the operating permit will continue to be in Whistler's name.
- We will be issuing a request for Expressions of Interest sometime in the spring for a private sector partner to design, build and operate the plant. A decision about a private sector partner is expected by 2005. And construction is expected to begin in 2006.
- Employees will be updated throughout this process about what is happening and how it will impact you.

Exempt Employees

- The municipality has been planning to undertake a \$20 million upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant for several years. The upgrade is included in Whistler's long-term wastewater management plan which was completed in 1993 and updated in 2004.
- At a Council meeting on January 10th, it was decided to proceed with the project using a design, build, and operate procurement approach.
- We wanted you to be the first to know about this decision.
- As part of this upgrade, the municipality will be looking for a partner to design, build and operate the plant. What this means is that Whistler will be transferring the operation of the plant to a private company.
- WWTP employees will be treated fairly throughout this process. Nobody will lose their jobs. All plant employees will be offered positions by the new operator at the same wages and benefits as you currently have. WWTP staff will continue to be represented by CUPE.
- Whistler will continue to own the wastewater treatment plant and the operating permit will continue to be in Whistler's name.
- We will be issuing a request for Expressions of Interest sometime in the spring for a private sector partner to design, build and operate the plant. A decision about a private sector partner is expected by 2005. And construction is expected to begin in 2006.
- Employees will be updated throughout this process about what is happening and how it will impact you.

Appendix 3: Questions and Answers

What does DBO, design-build-operate mean?

In this approach, the municipality retains the private sector to design and build the upgrade to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, as well as operate the facility over a long-term period. The successful firm or partnership of firms is determined through a public process.

Will anyone lose their job?

All municipal employee positions will be protected.

Will they stay municipal employees?

They will become employees of the private sector, under the existing collective agreement, which is the same rate of pay and benefits.

Why is the municipality handing over the operation of important municipal infrastructure to the private sector? What is the benefit to the community and what are the downfalls?

Design Build Operate projects are not unique. They have been initiated in Banff, Jasper and Canmore at their wastewater treatment plants, for example, and municipal staff have investigated these operations.

The municipality normally contracts the private sector for design and construction of projects. The municipality has successfully contracted important services to the private sector, such as garbage and recycling collection. A very thorough investigation of DBOs shows that the partnership would provide better regulatory compliance at a lower cost, as well as a reduced risk to the taxpayer, if the project is overbudget, for example.

What is the downside?

It's important to note that the municipality would retain ownership of the facility, land and the provincial permit to operate the facility. There may be misinformation about the private sector's ability to operate the plant to the same high standards as the municipality.

How can you ensure the environment is protected? What about downstream communities?

The contract will have a financial penalty if there is an environmental permit exceedence, so the operator is more motivated to comply. It's important to note that no such penalty exists while the municipality operates the plant.

Who would be accountable?

The municipality is accountable to the province for effluent quality.

What about the smell?

One of the major goals of the upgrade is no detectable odor at the property line. We are confident the upgrade will eliminate the current odor issue at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

How do you account for the significant difference in costs between a DBO and traditional approach?

DBOs are more cost efficient because it integrates the design, construction, and operating elements into a cohesive process. The competitive nature of a DBO enables the municipality to be more cost efficient and innovative.

How did Council come to this decision? (What was the decision-making process?)

A very thorough investigation was undertaken by municipal staff and consultants over the course of two years, including a comprehensive review by an independent blue ribbon panel. Council is confident in the analyses which show that this approach will best meet the resort community goals and needs in moving toward a sustainable future.

How does this affect CUPE negotiations?

The municipality is currently in contract negotiations with CUPE representatives for the Utilities, Bylaw and WWTP staff. The planned upgrade is not related to these negotiations.