

Attitudes of Residents of the Capital Regional District towards P3 Operation of a Sewage Treatment Facility

Prepared for:

Canadian Union of Public Employees – British Columbia

January 2007

pn6024



ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH GROUP

33 Bloor Street East, Suite 900
Toronto, ON M4W 3H1

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
DETAILED REPORT	9
Most important local issue facing the Capital Region	9
Most important environmental issue	10
Awareness and priority of new sewage treatment facility	11
Main consideration for elected officials	12
Support for operation of sewage treatment facility by private company vs. Capital Regional District	13
Argument testing	15
Attitude toward operation of sewage facility after arguments	18
Familiarity with “P3”	19
Premier Campbell’s policies and Partnerships BC	20
Importance of “resource recovery” in the regional district	21
“Right to Know” legislation on toxins	22
APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS	

INTRODUCTION

Environics Research is pleased to submit this report to the British Columbia branch of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) regarding public opinion among residents of the Capital Regional District toward public-private partnerships and the operation of a new sewage treatment facility in the district.

Environics conducted 400 telephone interviews with residents 18 years of age and over of the following municipalities making up the Capital Regional District of BC: Victoria, Saanich, Oak Bay, Langford, Colwood, Esquimalt and View Royal from January 4 to 11, 2007. A survey of this magnitude yields results that can be considered accurate to within plus or minus 5.0 percent, 19 times out of 20.

The objectives of this research project are as follows:

- To determine Capital Region residents' perception of the importance of a new sewage treatment facility
- To measure familiarity with public private partnerships and what they mean
- To measure overall preference for having a sewage treatment facility operated by a private company or by the regional district and the reasons for the preference.
- To measure the impact of a variety of arguments on support or opposition to public-private operation of a sewage treatment facility.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Residents of the CRD tend to consider homelessness, sewage treatment and housing prices to be the most important local issues.

Sewage treatment related issues are clearly identified as being the most important environmental issue facing communities in the CRD.

Most CRD residents have heard a lot about the region needing a new sewage treatment facility and a large majority also feel that building one should be a high priority.

CRD residents feel that the most important considerations for elected officials with regard to how a new sewage treatment facility will operate are environmental standards, saving money and the effectiveness of the facility.

Residents of the CRD overwhelmingly trust the regional district more than a private corporation to operate a new sewage treatment facility. The vast majority also oppose the idea of privatizing sewage treatment. The main reason people give for trusting the regional district more is that it is “not for profit.”

The arguments that are most effective in making CRD residents more likely to favour having the regional district operate a sewage treatment facility are those that make reference to risks to public health and safety

and to the need for community control. The arguments that are most likely to sway people into supporting operation by the private sector are those that relate to saving money.

After being exposed to arguments for and against private sector operation of the sewage treatment facility, almost eight in ten CRD residents prefer that the regional district operate the sewage treatment facility.

Just one-quarter of CRD residents are very familiar with the term “P3,” while over a third admit to not being familiar with the term at all. Most think that P3 is about government and the private sector money being combined to finance projects.

The vast majority of CRD residents think it is unfair for the Campbell government to only help pay for the sewage treatment facility if the region considers having it run by a private corporation. A narrower majority opposes P3s being promoted through Partnerships BC.

A large majority of CRD residents think that the regional district should place a high priority on new “resource recovery” technology as part of its sewage treatment process.

There is almost unanimous approval of the idea of “Consumer Right to Know” legislation that requires all toxic substances to be clearly labelled.

DETAILED REPORT

Most important local issue facing the Capital Region

Residents of the CRD tend to consider homelessness, sewage treatment and housing prices to be the most important local issue.

When residents of the Capital Region (CRD) are asked to identify what they consider to be the single most important local issue, they most frequently mention homelessness (20%) followed by sewage treatment (12%). Other issues mentioned less frequently include housing prices (9%), traffic and congestion (7%), health care (7%), amalgamation of services (5%), environmental issues and pollution (5%) and transportation (5%). Smaller proportions mention a wide variety of other concerns. Clearly the issue of sewage treatment is in the top tier of local concerns of any kind.

Those most likely to identify sewage treatment as the most important local issue include men, 18 to 34 year olds, and those who would vote for the BC Green Party in a provincial election.

Most important issue facing capital region 2007



Q.1

What do you consider to be the most important local issue facing the Capital Region today?

Most important environmental issue

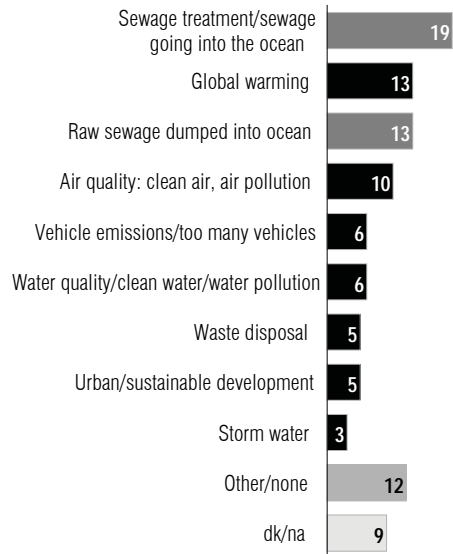
Sewage treatment related issues are clearly identified as being the most important environmental issue facing communities in the CRD.

When CRD residents are asked what they consider to be the single most important environmental issue facing their community today, it is clear that issues around sewage treatment are at the top of the agenda. One-third (32%) identify either sewage treatment (19%) or raw sewage going into the ocean (13%) as the most important environmental issue facing the community. Other environmental issues mentioned frequently include global warming (13%), air quality (10%), vehicle emissions (6%), water quality and water pollution (6%), waste disposal (5%) and urban sustainable development (5%). Another 12 percent mention a wide variety of other environmental issues and nine percent have no opinion.

Issues around sewage treatment tend to be most often identified as the most important environmental issue facing the community among NDP supporters, union households, younger people and those living in the City of Victoria.

Most important community environmental issue

2007



Q.2

In your view, what is the most important environmental issue facing your community today?

Awareness and priority of new sewage treatment facility

Most CRD residents have heard a lot about the region needing a new sewage treatment facility and a large majority also feel that building one should be a high priority.

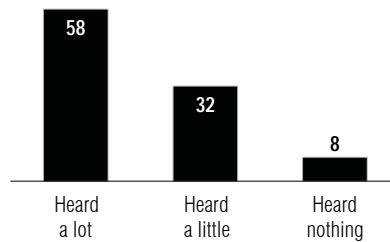
It is clear that the whole issue of a new sewage treatment facility in the CRD is something that has generated a high level of publicity. Almost six in ten (58%) CRD residents say that they have heard a lot about the need for a new sewage treatment facility and another 32 percent have heard a little about this. Just eight percent say that they have heard nothing about the need for a new sewage treatment facility.

Those most likely to say that they have heard “a lot” about this include BC Liberal supporters (66%), those who voted in the last municipal election (65%) and those in union households (64%). Younger people are much less likely to say they have heard a lot about this issue (32%).

On a similar note, six in ten (61%) CRD residents think that building a new sewage treatment facility to serve Capital Region should be a high priority. Another 28 percent think this should be a medium priority and 10 percent think it should be a low priority.

Those most likely to think that building the facility should be a high priority include NDP and Green supporters (67% each), those who voted in the last municipal election (64%), renters (68%) and women (69%). Men (54%) and BC Liberal supporters (47%) are less likely to think this should be a high priority, though a solid majority of both of these latter groups feel that it should be at least a medium priority.

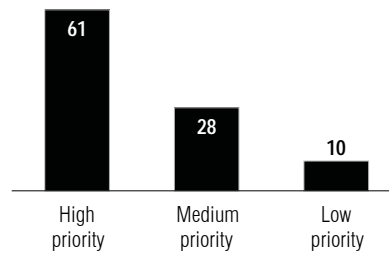
Awareness of Capital Region need for new sewage treatment facility 2007



Q.3

There has been some talk recently about the Capital Region needing a new sewage treatment facility. Is this something you have heard a lot about, a little about or have you heard nothing about it?

Priority for Capital Region to build new sewage treatment facility 2007



Q.4

Do you think that building a new sewage treatment facility to serve the Capital Region should be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority for the regional district?

Main consideration for elected officials

CRD residents feel that the most important considerations for elected officials with regard to how a new sewage treatment facility will operate are environmental standards, saving money and the effectiveness of the facility.

CRD residents were asked what they think is the most important thing that elected officials should be thinking about when they decide how a new sewage treatment facility will operate. The most frequent responses are environmental standards and safety (21%) and saving money (18%). Other considerations mentioned less frequently include efficiency and effectiveness (10%), longevity and long-term sustainability (7%), having an accountable process (5%), the location and number of facilities (4%), having the best and most innovative technology (4%), that the facility works (4%) and getting it done quickly (3%). Another six percent give variety of other responses and 17 percent have no opinion.

There are several notable patterns in how people respond to this question. Among people who think that building a sewage treatment plant is a high priority, 26 percent think that environmental standards and safety are the top priority and another 10 percent mention long-term sustainability. Those who think the facility is a low priority tend to be more focused on saving money. In other words, among those who are most engaged in the whole issue of building a sewage treatment facility, safety and environmental concerns are paramount. Those aged 18 to 34 and residents of Langford also tend to put a higher priority on safety and environmental standards.

Most important factor for elected officials to consider on how new facility should operate 2007



Q.10

What's the most important thing elected officials should be thinking about when they decide how the new sewage treatment facility will operate?

Support for operation of sewage treatment facility by private corporation vs. Capital Regional District

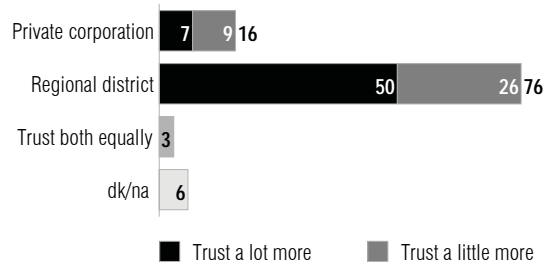
Residents of the CRD overwhelmingly trust the regional district more than a private corporation to operate a new sewage treatment facility. The vast majority also oppose the idea of privatizing sewage treatment. The main reason people give for trusting the regional district more is that it is “not for profit.”

When residents of the CRD are asked who they would trust more to operate a new sewage treatment facility, a private corporation or the regional district, it is clear that there is an overwhelming preference for the regional district. Three-quarters (76%) say that they trust the regional district a lot (50%) or a little (26%) more, compared to just 16 percent who would trust a private corporation a lot (7%) or a little (9%) more. Three percent would trust both equally and six percent have no opinion.

The trust in the regional district to operate the facility is overwhelming across all demographic and geographic segments. While NDP supporters are the most intense in their greater level of trust in the regional district (86%), it should be noted that fully 69 percent of BC Liberal supporters would also trust the regional district more. A solid majority in all the areas of the CRD trust the regional district more, particularly in the City of Victoria (82%).

The reasons given by CRD residents for trusting the regional district more are as follows: that it is not for profit (39%), public interests are better served (22%), more accountability (19%), would be done locally (9%), more guidelines and regulation (8%) and more cost-effective (8%), government does a better job and has more expertise (6%), dislike of privatization (4%) and the fact that they are elected and it is their job (3%). Clearly the main specific reason people trust the regional district more to operate the facility is the fact that it is “not for profit.”

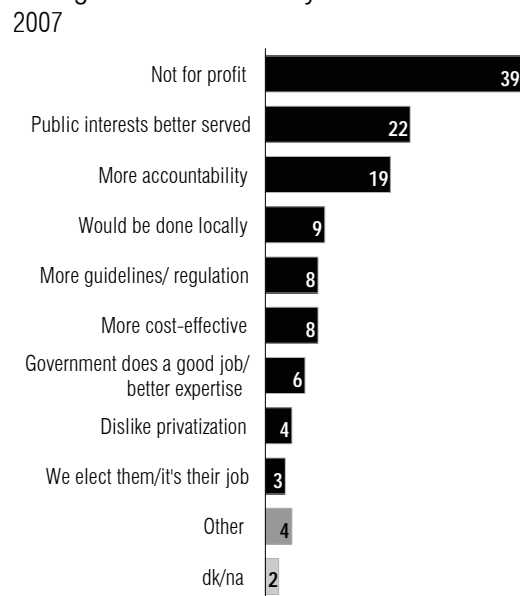
Trust to operate new sewage treatment facility 2007



Q.8

The regional district has been directed by the provincial government to develop a new sewage treatment plan. Who would you trust more to operate a new sewage treatment facility, {ROTATE} a private corporation or {ROTATE} the regional district? Would you trust {a private corporation/the regional district} a lot more or just a little more?

Main reason trust Regional District to operate sewage treatment facility 2007



Q.9

What are the main reasons why you trust {ANSWER TO Q. 8} more to operate the sewage treatment facility?

Among the relatively few people who trust a private corporation more, the main reasons given are that they have more expertise and do a better job (27%), are more cost-effective (17%), less bureaucratic (16%), that it is run for profit like a business (16%) and that government would not do a good job (15%).

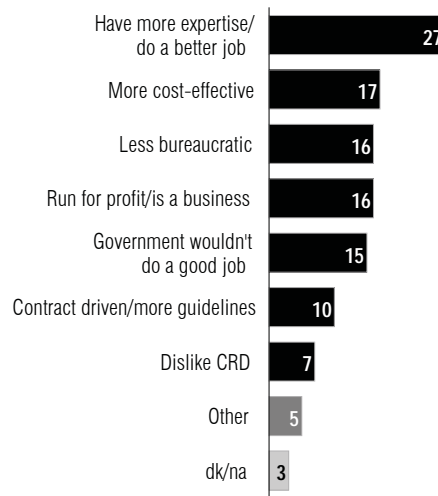
On a similar note, when CRD residents are asked if they support or oppose the idea of privatizing sewage treatment, opponents outnumber supporters by more than two to one. Two-thirds (64%) strongly (42%) or somewhat (22%) oppose privatization, compared to just three in ten (29%) who strongly (10%) or somewhat (19%) support privatization.

Opposition to privatizing sewage treatment is strong in all segments. It is particularly intense among those who have heard a lot about a new sewage treatment facility for the CRD (49% strongly oppose), NDP supporters (52% strongly oppose) and among residents of Langford (50% strongly oppose). It should be noted that even among BC Liberal supporters, a strong majority (57%) are somewhat (22%) or strongly (35%) opposed to the ideas of privatization.

Support for privatization, such that it exists, tends to be higher among younger people, those who did not vote in the last municipal election and residents of Colwood.

It is notable that while strong majorities of CRD residents both trust the regional district more than a private corporation to operate the facility and also reject privatization of sewage treatment, there is more support for “privatization” (29%) than there is trust in a private corporation to operate the facility (17%). This suggests that emphasizing “who do you trust?” will resonate more strongly with CRD residents than will an attack on the concept of “privatization.”

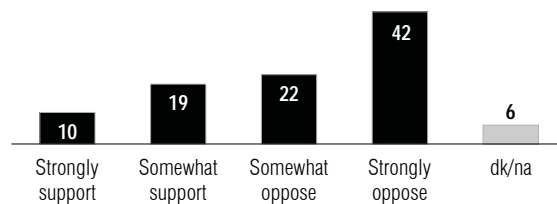
Main reason trust private corporations to operate sewage treatment facility 2007



Q.9

What are the main reasons why you trust {ANSWER TO Q. 8} more to operate the sewage treatment facility?

Privatization of sewage treatment 2007



Q.11

On the whole, would you say that you support or oppose the idea of privatizing sewage treatment - which means that a private corporation would run sewage treatment? Would that be strongly/ somewhat support/oppose?

Argument testing

The arguments that are most effective in making CRD residents more likely to favour having the regional district operate a sewage treatment facility are those that make reference to risks to public health and safety and to the need for community control. The arguments that are most likely to sway people into supporting operation by the private sector are those that relate to saving money.

In this segment, CRD residents were presented with a series of 16 arguments for and against having a sewage treatment facility operated by either the regional district or by a private corporation. They were asked whether each argument made them more likely to favour having the facility operated by the regional district or by a private corporation or if it makes no difference to their point of view.

All in all, since support for having a sewage treatment facility is so high in the first place, most of the arguments in favour of having the regional district operate the facility only serve to confirm people's existing point of view. Nonetheless it is interesting to note that some of the arguments have a greater impact on making people who were initially in favour of privatization of sewage treatment become more likely to favour operation by the regional district.

The argument that has the greatest impact in making people more favourable towards having the facility operated by the regional district is "A private corporation may cut corners that lead to public health and environmental risks." Seven in ten (71%) CRD residents say that this argument makes them more favourable towards operation by the regional district, and on top of that, this is also the argument that has the greatest impact on people who support privatization of sewage treatment, as it makes one-half of them (52%) become more likely to favour operation by the regional district. The effectiveness of this argument can be explained by the fact that so many CRD residents feel that public safety and environmental concerns are the most important consideration in making decisions about the operation of a sewage treatment facility.

Arguments for Regional District operation of new sewage treatment plant

Makes more favourable 2007

A private corporation may cut corners that lead to public health/environmental risks	71
We need to have community control of our sewage treatment	69
When other cities have hired private companies it ended up taking longer and being more expensive	68
Private corporations are looking to make profits and giving them control of our sewage is a step in the wrong direction	67
Sewage treatment is too important to be left in the hands of a private corporation	67
Sewage treatment ought to be publicly-run by an elected and accountable local government	66
If a private corporation operates it, taxpayers will pay more, to pay for the corporation's profit margin	62
Operation by a private corporation will involve lengthy/expensive/secretive bidding processes/contracts	59
If the regional district runs the facilities, it can be in operation much sooner	57

Q.12

I am going to read you a series of arguments that have been made about how a new sewage treatment facility should operate. Does each argument make you more favourable to the facility being operated by a private corporation, more favourable to the facility being operated by the regional district or does it make no difference to your opinion?

The next most effective argument is that “*We need to have community control of our sewage treatment.*” Seven in ten (69%) say that this argument makes them more favourable towards control by the regional district. However, this argument has less of an impact on people who would otherwise support privatization of sewage treatment, as it only makes 36 percent of them become more favourable towards operation by the regional district.

Seven in ten CRD residents (68%) are swayed toward favouring operation by the regional district when they are told that “*When other cities have hired private companies to run sewage treatment plants it ended up taking longer and being more expensive.*” However, this argument has a more significant impact than most other arguments in terms of swaying people who favour privatization of sewage treatment. Almost half (46%) of those who support privatization say that this argument makes them more likely to favour having the regional district operate the facility. We know from other results in this survey that the main reason that anyone supports privatization of sewage treatment or the operation of a sewage treatment facility by a private corporation is that it will save money. Clearly any argument that casts doubt on that notion will drive down any support for a P3 arrangement.

The two other examples of how arguments that show how letting a private corporation operate the facility will actually cost more, are quite effective in reducing what little support there is for privatization or for a P3 operation of the facility. Two-thirds (67%) of CRD residents say that they are more favourable towards having the regional district operate a sewage treat-

ment facility after being told that “*Private corporations are looking to make profits from the management of our water and giving them control of our sewage is a step in the wrong direction.*” And six in ten (62%) are swayed by the argument “*If a private corporation operates the sewage treatment facilities taxpayers will pay more, since we have to pay for the corporation’s profit margin.*” But both of these arguments are particularly effective in swaying people who support privatizing sewage treatment into being more favourable towards having the regional district operate the facility (39% each). It should be noted that both of these arguments deal with money and cast doubt on the idea that a P3 will save money.

Other arguments that are also relatively effective in making CRD residents more likely to favour having a sewage treatment facility operated by the regional district include: “*Sewage treatment is too important to our health and environment to be left in the hands of a private corporation*” (67%); “*Sewage treatment is the kind of thing that ought to be publicly-run by an elected and accountable local government*” (66%); “*Having the plant operated by a private corporation will involve lengthy, expensive and secretive bidding processes and contracts*” (59%); and “*If the regional district runs the sewage treatment facilities, it can be in operation much sooner*” (57%).

It is notable that initial support for having a sewage treatment facility operated by the regional district is so high that even the arguments that are supposed to be arguments in favour of having the facility operated by a private corporation, still make over a third of CRD residents more likely to favour operation by the regional district.

The arguments presented that would be arguments in favour of having a sewage treatment facility operated by a private corporation are consistently quite ineffective in getting most CRD residents to be more favourable to the idea of operation of the facility by the private sector. The argument that has the most impact in this regard is “*A private corporation would take the risks if there are cost overruns. They would lose money instead of the taxpayer if there are problems*” (29%), followed by “*Private corporations have access to new and better technologies and will be more innovative in their management of our sewage treatment facilities*” (27%), “*A private corporation would manage sewage services more efficiently than the regional district*” (26%), “*If a private corporation operates the new sewage plant, it will save taxpayers’ money*” (25%), “*The public sector doesn’t have the expertise to run modern, innovative sewage treatment*” (21%), “*If the facility is publicly run, cost overruns will have to be absorbed by taxpayers*” (18%) and “*The taxpayers of the region cannot afford to pay the full costs of a publicly run sewage treatment plant*” (17%).

As has been noted before, the reason that some CRD residents favour having a private corporation operate the sewage treatment plant is that they think it might save money and as a result the arguments that are most effective in making people more supportive of having the facility operated by the private sector are those that imply that it will save money and/or will absorb any cost overruns.

Other potential arguments in favour of having a private corporation operate the facility that touch on such themes as greater efficiency or more expertise do not seem to have very much impact in making people more supportive of private sector operation.

Arguments for private corporation operation of new sewage treatment plant

Makes more favourable 2007

A private corp. would take the risks if there are cost overruns & lose money if there are problems	29
Private corporations have access to better technologies & will be more innovative in their management	27
A private corporation would manage sewage services more efficiently than the regional district	26
If a private corporation operates the new sewage plant, it will save taxpayers’ money	25
The public sector doesn’t have the expertise to run modern, innovative sewage treatment	21
If the facility is publicly run, cost overruns will have to be absorbed by taxpayers	18
The taxpayers of the region cannot afford to pay the full costs of a publicly run sewage treatment plant	17

Q.12

I am going to read you a series of arguments that have been made about how a new sewage treatment facility should operate. Does each argument make you more favourable to the facility being operated by a private corporation, more favourable to the facility being operated by the regional district or does it make no difference to your opinion?

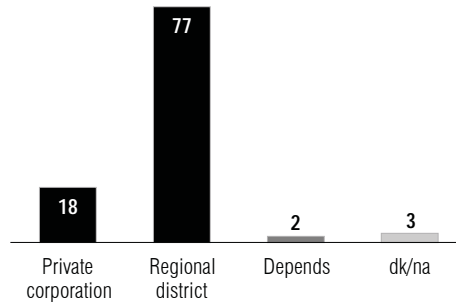
Attitude toward operation of sewage facility after arguments

After being exposed to arguments for and against private sector operation of the sewage treatment facility, almost eight in ten CRD residents prefer that the regional district operate the sewage treatment facility.

After having been exposed to a variety of arguments for and against having a private corporation operate the facility, CRD residents were asked once again who they think should operate the sewage treatment facility after it has been built. Almost eight in ten (77%) think that the regional district should operate the facility compared to just 18 percent who think that a private corporation should operate it. Two percent say it depends and three percent have no opinion.

This preference for having the regional district operate the facility is overwhelming among all segments of the population and there is almost no shift in opinion on this issue compared to when people were asked a very similar question before being exposed to the arguments. The preference for having the facility run by the regional district is strongest among NDP supporters (88%), homeowners (79%), women (80%) and residents of Victoria (84%). Support for having the facility operated by a private corporation is low in all segments but is somewhat higher among BC Liberal supporters (26%), 18 to 34 year olds (25%) and residents of Colwood (31%).

Who should operate new treatment facility? 2007



Q.14

Now that we have discussed all these considerations, who do you think should operate the new sewage treatment facility after it has been built? Should it be operated by...?

Familiarity with “P3”

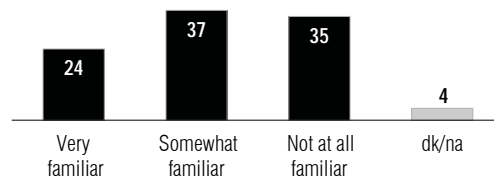
Just one-quarter of CRD residents are very familiar with the term “P3,” while over a third admit to not being familiar with the term at all. Most think that P3 is about government and the private sector money being combined to finance projects.

Residents of the CRD display a wide range of levels of familiarity with the term public private partnership or P3. One quarter (24%) describe themselves as being “very familiar” with the term and another 37 percent describe themselves as being “somewhat familiar.” Four in ten (39%) either have no opinion (4%) or are not at all familiar with the term “P3” (35%).

Those who have heard a lot about a sewage treatment facility are most likely to be very familiar with P3s, while those who have heard little or nothing about a new facility were more likely to be unfamiliar with this term. Familiarity with the term tends to be somewhat higher among both BC Liberal and NDP supporters and among those who voted in the last municipal election and those in union households. Familiarity is much lower among Green supporters, younger people and those who did not vote in the last municipal election.

Those who are very or somewhat familiar with the term “P3” were asked how a P3 works. By far the most common answer (50%) is that the government and a private company have a partnership where they combine money to fund a project. Other explanations were given by much smaller numbers of people and these include “divided or joint responsibility” (9%), that the private sector is the only beneficiary (7%), that the public sector contracts to the private sector (5%), “private enterprise funded by the government” (4%), “public funds go into a private corporation” (3%), the public pays and it has a negative impact on the public (3%), and partnership between government and the public (2%). Another seven percent give a variety of other answers and 18 percent have no opinion.

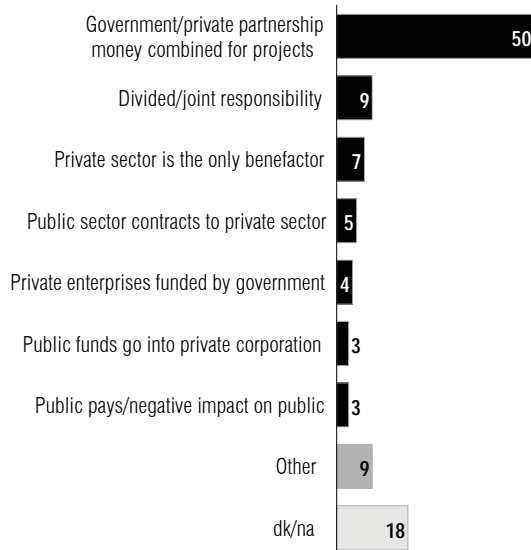
Familiarity with the term Public Private Partnership or P3 2007



Q.6

Are you very, somewhat or not at all familiar with the term public private partnership or “P3”?

How does a P3 work? 2007



Q.7

As far as you know, how does a “P3” work?

Premier Campbell's policies and Partnerships BC

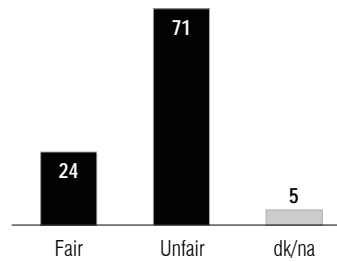
The vast majority of CRD residents think it is unfair for the Campbell government to only help pay for the sewage treatment facility if the region considers having it run by a private corporation. A narrower majority opposes P3s being promoted through Partnerships BC.

CRD residents were told that “Premier Campbell has said that the BC government will pay one-third of the capital cost of sewage treatment in the Capital Regional District, but ONLY if the region agrees to consider having the sewage treatment run by private corporations.” Seven in ten (71%) CRD residents consider this to be unfair to the residents and taxpayers of the CRD, compared to just 24 percent who think it is fair. People in all demographic groups agree that this policy is unfair including 58 percent of BC Liberal supporters. Only among the relatively small minority of CRD residents who favour having a private corporation operate the facility and who favour privatization of sewage treatment is there a tendency to think that this policy is “fair.”

CRD residents were also told that “Partnerships BC is the BC government agency that promotes and develops public private partnerships or P3s. Premier Campbell has said that Partnerships BC must review how the Capital Region district’s sewage treatment facility could be operated as a P3.” A majority (54%) are opposed to the provincial government promoting P3s in this way, while a significant four in ten (40%) support this approach.

Those most likely to oppose the provincial government promoting P3s in this include those who trust the regional district more to operate a sewage treatment facility (66%), those who oppose privatization of sewage treatment (72%), those who prefer that the regional district operate the facility (65%), NDP (66%) and Green (61%) supporters and 35 to 54 year olds (61%). Support for the provincial government’s approach is stronger among those who trust a private corporation more to operate the facility (84%), supporters of privatization (74%), those who want a private corporation to operate the facility (81%), BC Liberal supporters (57%), 18 to 34 year olds (50%) and residents of Colwood (47%).

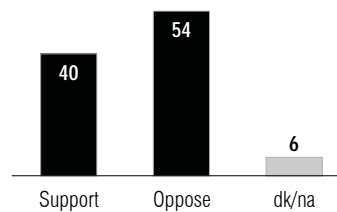
Fairness to taxpayers of BC government plan 2007



Q.13

Premier Campbell has said that the BC government will pay one third of the capital cost of sewage treatment in the capital regional district, but ONLY if the region agrees to consider having the sewage treatment run by private corporations. Do you think this policy is fair or unfair to residents and taxpayers of the regional district?

Support for provincial government promotion of P3 2007



Q.15

Partnerships BC is the BC government agency that promotes and develops public private partnerships or P3s. Premier Campbell has said that Partnerships BC must review how the Capital Region district’s sewage treatment facility could be operated as a P3. Do you support or oppose the provincial government promoting P3s in this way?

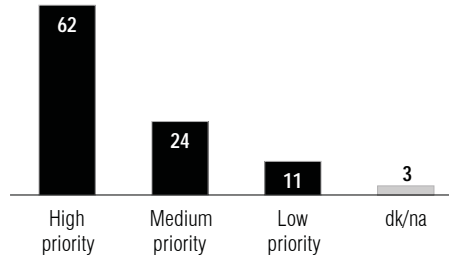
Importance of “resource recovery” in the regional district

A large majority of CRD residents think that the regional district should place a high priority on new “resource recovery” technology as part of its sewage treatment process.

CRD residents were told that “some BC communities are bringing in new technology to do what is called ‘resource recovery’ as part of sewage treatment. For example, the city of Vernon reuses all of its wastewater for agriculture, golf courses and other uses as part of its sewage treatment process.” Over six in ten (62%) think it should be a high priority for the regional district to bring in this kind of resource recovery in the CRD. Another 24 percent think this should be a medium priority and just 11 percent think it should be a low priority. Three percent have no opinion.

It is notable that among those who think that building a sewage treatment facility is a high priority; fully 77 percent also think that a high priority should be placed on exploring resource recovery technology. Those who trust the regional district more to operate the facility also tend to think this technology is a higher priority. It is also notable that the greatest enthusiasm for resource recovery is among NDP and Green supporters, those who voted in the last municipal election, women and residents of Victoria.

Using new resource recovery technology 2007



Q.5

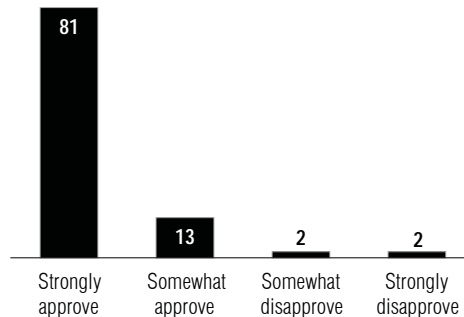
Some BC communities are bringing in new technology to do what is called “resource recovery” as part of sewage treatment. For example, the city of Vernon reuses all of its wastewater for agriculture, golf courses and other uses as part of its sewage treatment process. Should it be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority for the regional district to bring in this kind of resource recovery in the CRD?

“Right to Know” legislation on toxins

There is almost unanimous approval of the idea of “Consumer Right to Know” legislation that requires all toxic substances to be clearly labelled.

CRD residents were asked “Given that many known toxins are being added to the products we purchase, would (they) approve or disapprove of Consumer Right to Know legislation that would require labelling of all toxic substances associated with a product or service.” An almost unanimous 94 percent strongly (81%) or somewhat (13%) approve of this idea compared to just four percent who disapprove at all. Approval of Consumer Right to Know legislation is overwhelming across all segments, especially among women, NDP and Green supporters and those who favour having the regional district operate the facility.

Approval of Consumer Right to Know legislation requiring labelling of all toxic substances associated with a product/service 2007



Q.16

Given that many known toxins are being added to the products we purchase, would you approve or disapprove of Consumer Right to Know legislation that would require labelling of all toxic substances associated with a product or service? Would that be strongly or somewhat?

APPENDIX:
SURVEY QUESTIONS

December 21, 2006

**CUPE BC
Capital Regional District Sewage Treatment Campaign
Final Questionnaire
PN6024**

Introduction

Good afternoon/evening. My name is _____ and I am calling from Environics Research Group, a public opinion research company. We are conducting a survey of residents of the Capital Regional District about some important issues facing the Region.

Please be assured that we are not selling or soliciting anything. This survey is registered with the national survey registration system.

IF ASKED: The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. We choose telephone numbers at random and then select one person from each household to be interviewed. To do this, we would like to speak to the person in your household, 18 years of age or older, who has had the most recent birthday. Would that be you?

IF PERSON SELECTED IS NOT AVAILABLE, ARRANGE FOR CALL-BACK
IF PERSON SELECTED IS NOT AVAILABLE OVER INTERVIEW PERIOD,
ASK FOR PERSON WITH NEXT MOST RECENT BIRTHDAY

To start out . . .

1. What do you consider to be the most important local issue facing the Capital Region today? **DO NOT READ – CODE ONE ONLY**

- 01 – Waste management/garbage/landfills
- 02 – Employment/jobs
- 03 – Growth/too many people
- 04 – Education
- 05 – Environment/pollution/smog
- 06 – Crime/violence
- 07 – Traffic/congestion
- 08 – Sewage treatment
- 09 – Water quality
- 10 – Homelessness
- 11 – Housing prices
- 98 – Other (SPECIFY _____)

99 – DK/NA

2. In your view, what is the most important environmental issue facing your community today? **DO NOT READ...CODE ONE ONLY**

01 - Waste Disposal
02 - Raw Sewage dumped into ocean
03 - Global Warming
04 - Air quality: clean air, air pollution
05 - Urban/Sustainable Development
06 - Forest Conservation
07 - Habitat Protection
08 - Water Quality: clean water, water pollution
09 - Storm water
10 – Sewage treatment/Sewage going into the ocean
11 - None
98 – Other (SPECIFY _____)
99 – DK/NA

3. There has been some talk recently about the Capital Region needing a new sewage treatment facility. Is this something you have heard a lot about, a little about or have you heard nothing about it?

01 – Heard a lot
02 – Heard a little
03 – Heard nothing
VOLUNTEERED
99 – DK/NA

4. Do you think that building a new sewage treatment facility to serve the Capital Region should a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority for the regional district?

01 – High priority
02 – Medium priority
03 – Low priority
VOLUNTEERED
99 – DK/NA

5. Some BC communities are bringing in new technology to do what is called “resource recovery” as part of sewage treatment. For example, the city of Vernon reuses all of its wastewater for agriculture, golf courses and other uses as part of its sewage treatment process. Should it be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority for the regional district to bring in this kind of resource recovery in the CRD?

- 01 – High priority
- 02 – Medium priority
- 03 – Low priority
- VOLUNTEERED**
- 99 – DK/NA

6. Are you very, somewhat or not at all familiar with the term public private partnership or “P3”?

- 01 – Very familiar
- 02 – Somewhat familiar
- 03 – Not at all familiar
- 99 – DK/NA

IF VERY/SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR, ASK

7. As far as you know, how does a “P3” work? [**Note to interviewer:** if respondent asks say “P3 stands for public private partnership”.] **ACCEPT ALL RESPONSES**

ASK ALL

8. The regional district has been directed by the provincial government to develop a new sewage treatment plan. Who would you trust more to operate a new sewage treatment facility, [ROTATE] a private corporation or [ROTATE] the regional district? Would you trust [a private corporation/the regional district] a lot more or just a little more? **READ AND ROTATE**

- 01 – Trust a private corporation a lot more
- 02 – Trust a private corporation a little more
- 03 – Trust regional district a little more
- 04 – Trust regional district a lot more

VOLUNTEERED

- 05 – Trust both equally
- 99 – DK/NA

9. What are the main reasons why you trust [**ANSWER TO Q. 8**] more to operate the sewage treatment facility **ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES**

ASK ALL

10. What's the most important thing elected officials should be thinking about when they decide how the new sewage treatment facility will operate? **DO NOT READ...CODE ONE ONLY**

- 01 – Saving money
- 02 – Getting it done quickly
- 03 – Environmental standards/safety
- 04 – Having an open and accountable process
- 05 – Listen to the people
- 06 – Innovative/ best technology / cutting edge
- 07 – Publicly owned and operated
- 08 – Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 99 – DK/NA

11. On the whole, would you say that you support or oppose the idea of privatizing sewage treatment - which means that a private corporation would run sewage treatment? **PROBE:** (Would that be strongly/somewhat support/oppose?)

- 01 - Strongly support
- 02 - Somewhat support
- 03 - Somewhat oppose
- 04 - Strongly oppose
- 99 – DK/NA

12. I am going to read you a series of arguments that have been made about how a new sewage treatment facility should operate. Does each argument make you more favourable to the facility being operated by a private corporation, more favourable to the facility being operated by the regional district or does it make no difference to your opinion. **READ AND RANDOMIZE THE ORDER OF ALL ARGUMENTS IN Q. 12...REPEAT THE QUESTION IF NECESSARY SO THAT PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS RESPONDING TO THE IMPACT OF EACH ARGUMENT**

- 01 – More favourable to facility operated by a private corporation
- 02 – More favourable to facility operated by regional district
- 03 – No difference

VOLUNTEERED

- 04 – Do not believe the argument
- 99 – DK/NA

- a. Sewage treatment is too important to our health and environment to be left in the hands of a private corporation.
 - b. If the regional district runs the sewage treatment facilities, it can be in operation much sooner.
 - c. Sewage treatment is the kind of thing that ought to be publicly-run by an elected and accountable local government.
 - d. We need to have community control of our sewage treatment
-

- e. Having the plant operated by a private corporation will involve lengthy, expensive and secretive bidding processes and contracts.
- f. If a private corporation operates the sewage treatment facilities taxpayers will pay more, since we have to pay for the corporation's profit margin.
- g. Private corporations are looking to make profits from the management of our water and giving them control of our sewage is a step in the wrong direction.
- h. When other cities have hired private companies to run sewage treatment plants it ended up taking longer and being more expensive.
- i. A private corporation may cut corners that lead to public health and environmental risks
- j. If a private corporation operates the new sewage plant, it will save taxpayers' money.
- k. A private corporation would manage sewage services more efficiently than the regional district.
- l. A private corporation would take the risks if there are cost overruns. They would lose money instead of the taxpayer if there are problems.
- m. Private corporations have access to new and better technologies and will be more innovative in their management of our sewage treatment facilities.
- n. The taxpayers of the region cannot afford to pay the full costs of a publicly run sewage treatment plant.
- o. If the facility is publicly run, cost overruns will have to be absorbed by taxpayers.

p. The public sector doesn't have the expertise to run modern, innovative sewage treatment.

13. Premier Campbell has said that the BC government will pay one third of the capital cost of sewage treatment in the capital regional district, but ONLY if the region agrees to consider having the sewage treatment run by private corporations. Do you think this policy is fair or unfair to residents and taxpayers of the regional district?

01 - Fair

02 - Unfair

99 - DK/NA

14. Now that we have discussed all these considerations, who do you think should operate the new sewage treatment facility after it has been built? Should it be operated by...? **READ AND ROTATE**

01 - A private corporation

02 - The regional district

VOLUNTEERED

03 - Depends

99 - DK/NA

15. Partnerships BC is the BC government agency that promotes and develops public private partnerships or P3s. Premier Campbell has said that Partnerships BC must review how the Capital Region district's sewage treatment facility could be operated as a P3. Do you support or oppose the provincial government promoting P3s in this way?

01 - Support

02 - Oppose

99 - DK/NA

16. Given that many known toxins are being added to the products we purchase, would you approve or disapprove of Consumer Right to Know legislation that would require labelling of all toxic substances associated with a product or service? Would that be strongly or somewhat?

- 01 - Strongly approve
- 02 - Somewhat approve
- 03 - Somewhat disapprove
- 04 - Strongly disapprove
- 99 – DK/NA

17. If a provincial election were held in BC today, would you vote for the candidate of the... **READ AND ROTATE PARTY NAMES – CODE ONE ANSWER ONLY**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 01 – BC Liberal Party | GO TO Q. 19 |
| 02 – New Democratic Party | GO TO Q. 19 |
| 03 – Green Party | GO TO Q. 19 |
| VOLUNTEERED | |
| 05 – Other party (SPECIFY) _____ | GO TO Q. 19 |
| 06 – Not eligible to vote | SKIP TO Q. 19 |
| 07 – Abstain/will not vote | ASK Q.18 |
| 08 – Refusal | ASK Q.18 |
| 99 – Undecided/DK/NA | ASK Q.18 |

18. Would you say that at the present time you are at least leaning or slightly favourable to one of the parties or candidates in your riding? **TRY TO DETERMINE A PREFERENCE**

- 01 – Leaning to BC Liberal Party
- 02 – Leaning to NDP
- 03 – Leaning to Green Party
- 98 – Leaning to other party (SPECIFY) _____
- 05 – Abstain/will not vote
- 06 - Refusal
- 99 – Undecided/DK/NA

ASK ALL

19. Did you vote in the last municipal election in November 2005?

- 01 – Yes, voted
- 02 – No, did not vote
- 03 – Was not eligible (underage or lived away)
- 99 – DK/NA

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

And now, I'd like to ask you some questions about you and your household. Please be assured that all your responses will be kept entirely anonymous and absolutely confidential.

D1 Do you (or does a member of your household) own or rent your accommodation? CODE ONE ONLY

- 01 – Own
- 02 – Rent
- VOLUNTEERED**
- 98 – Other
- 99 – DK/NA

D2. Do you, or does anyone in your household belong to a labour union?

- 01 - Respondent belongs to union **ASK Q.D3**
- 02 - Other household member belongs to union **SKIP TO D4**
- 03 - No one belongs to union **SKIP TO D4**
- 04 - Both self and other belongs to union **ASK Q.D3**
- 99 - DK/NA/REFUSAL **SKIP TO D4**

D3. Do you belong to a...

- 01 - Private sector union, or
- 02 - Public sector union
- VOLUNTEERED**
- 99 - DK/NA

ASK ALL

D4. In what year were you born?

01- SPECIFY _____

D5. Which municipality do you live in? **READ ONLY IF NECESSARY**

01 – Victoria

02 – Saanich

03 – Oak Bay

04 – Esquimalt

05 - Colwood

06 - View Royal

07 - Langford

08 – Other (SPECIFY _____)

99 – DK/NA

This completes the survey. In case my supervisor would like to verify that I conducted this interview, may I have your first name?

First Name: _____

RECORD:

D6.Gender

01 - Male

02 - Female