Community Input Summary Report

Public Open House 1 | March 27, 2013 | Biomass Feasibility Study

Updated April 18, 2013

University of Victoria

EVENT OVERVIEW

Objective

The purpose of the open house was to publicly launch the project and to begin delivering on the broader community engagement objectives for the project, which are to:

- Inform the public and stakeholders about the project, including the study process and opportunities for involvement;
- Educate about biomass, including its benefits, and the broader context of renewable energy and the energy system;
- Obtain input on priorities and aspirations for the biomass plant at the UVic Gordon Head campus, which will be considered in the development of recommendations and options;
- Explore interests, opportunities, and options with stakeholders; and
- Report back and demonstrate how community input was used in developing a preferred option.

Participants

The event was broadly advertised and open to the general public. Approximately 85 people attended.

Format

The event was held on Wednesday, March 27th between 3:00-7:00pm in order to capture a diverse audience (e.g. students, staff, and general public). The open house was a drop-in / come-and-go format and included the following elements: information and opportunities for providing written comments on interactive boards; comments forms; and discussions with a team of approximately 10 UVic staff and consulting team members.

THIS SUMMARY

This document provides a summary of themes that emerged in the community input received on the interactive boards and comment forms.

The input will be considered in the development of recommended options for a potential biomass plant.

INTERACTIVE BOARDS

The interactive boards contained project information and also provided the opportunity for participants to share comments. To view the boards, please visit the following webpage: www.uvic.ca/biomass.

Response themes included the following points:

Welcome Board

Why did you come today?

- Concern about air quality;
- Concern about proximity to residences and/or wood waste transport;
- Interest in funding arrangement (e.g. public-private partnership); and
- General support of project and/or interest in partnership.

Energy and the University of Victoria

Which energy and climate issues or opportunities matter to you?

- Concern about air quality and emissions;
- Interest in climate change and carbon neutrality;
- Desire for other renewable energy options; and
- Questions about source of funding.

Precedents and Examples

Which aesthetic considerations are important to you?

- Only three responses were provided, and include interest in height, trucking routes, and plant location.

What We Know and What We Need to Learn

What would you like to learn through the study process?

- Location of the plant;
- Emissions;
- Feasibility of other renewable technologies (e.g. geothermal, solar);
- Fuel source considerations (e.g. quantity, type, etc); and
- Trucking access/routes and traffic impacts.

Research and Learning Benefits

What other research and learning opportunities exist?

- Only five responses were provided, and the only common theme was a focus on researching ways to manage and utilize emissions.

Priorities and Aspirations

What are your other priorities and aspirations for a potential biomass plant at UVic?

- A desire to minimize emissions and particulates, and protect air quality (including smell);
- A desire to minimize truck traffic and general impacts on residential neighbourhoods;
- An interest in fuel considerations (e.g. quantity. guaranteed/continuous supply, concern about diverting fertilizer from ecosystems);
- A desire to see more technical information;
- A desire to explore other renewable energy options; and
- Interest in ensuring that costs make sense.

Where do you live?

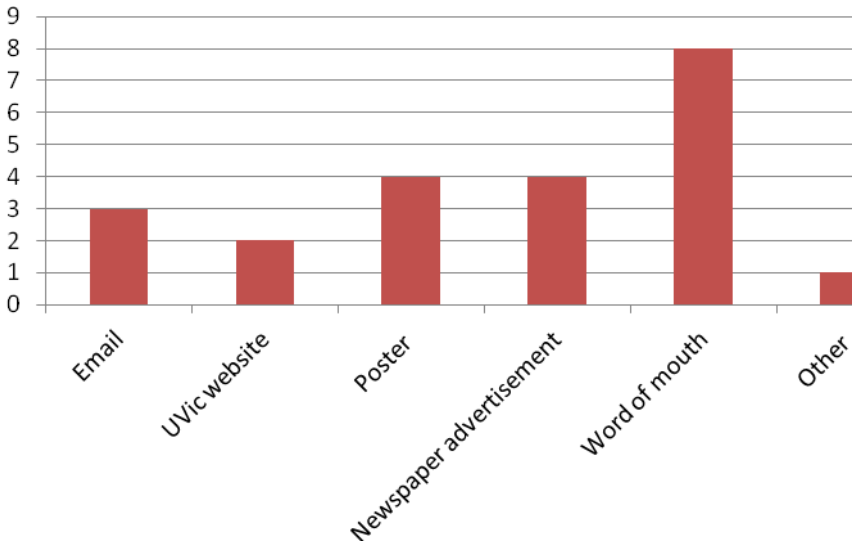
All participants indicate that they live off campus, with approximately half living within 2-3 kilometers of UVic, and the other half living outside this range.

COMMENT FORMS

Two comment forms were provided at the open house. A total of 17 comment forms were completed by participants, of which 13 focused the participant's experience at the open house itself:

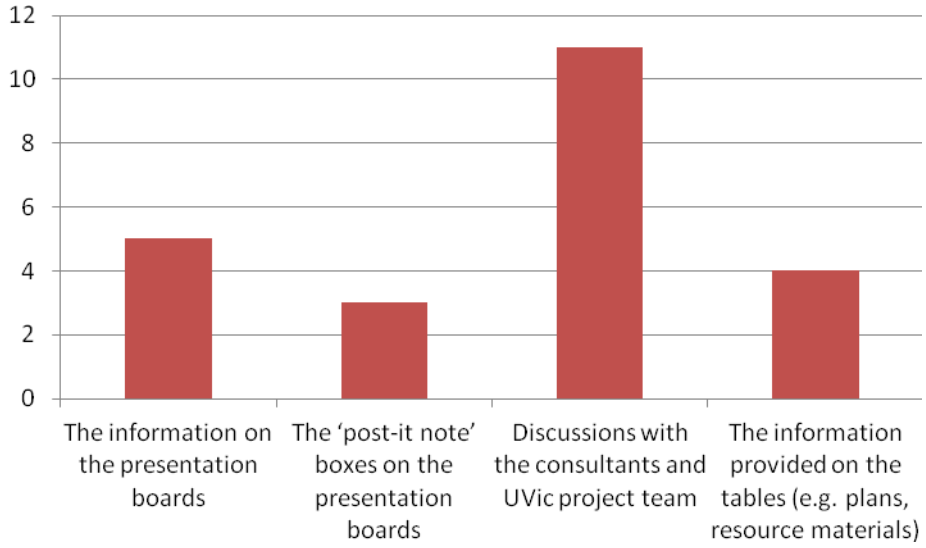
How did you hear about the open house?

Graph 1: Number of participants by outreach channel



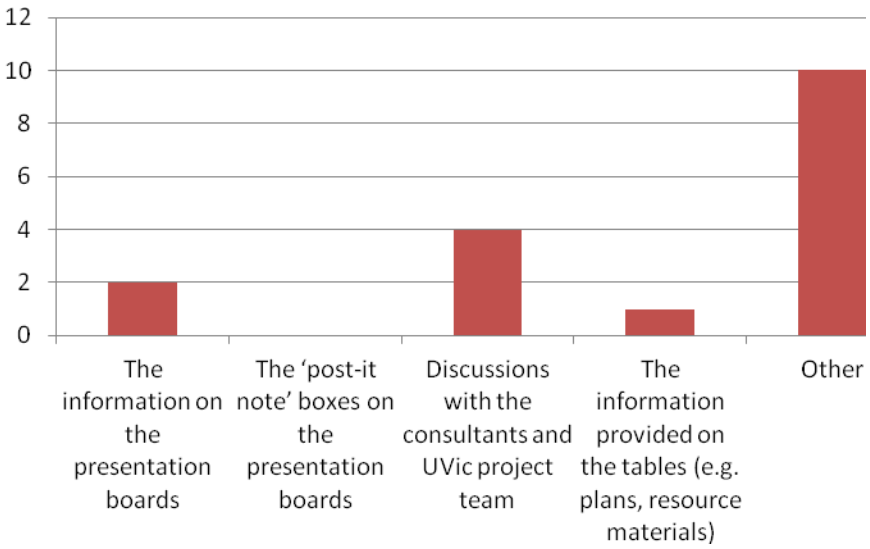
What was the most valuable part of the open house?

Graph 2: Number of participants by open house activity



Which part of the open house could have been most improved?

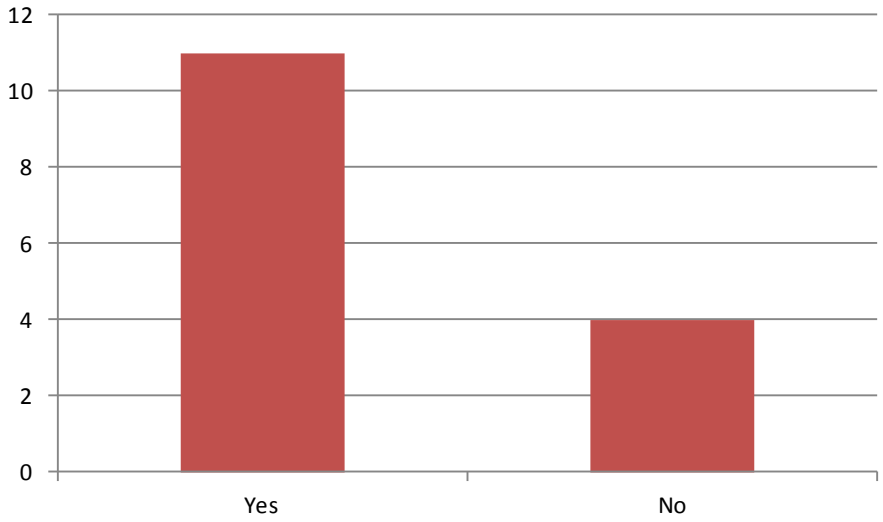
Graph 3: Number of participants by open house activity



Other comments included a desire for more detail and additional event outreach/advertising.

Would you like to see more information on biomass next time?

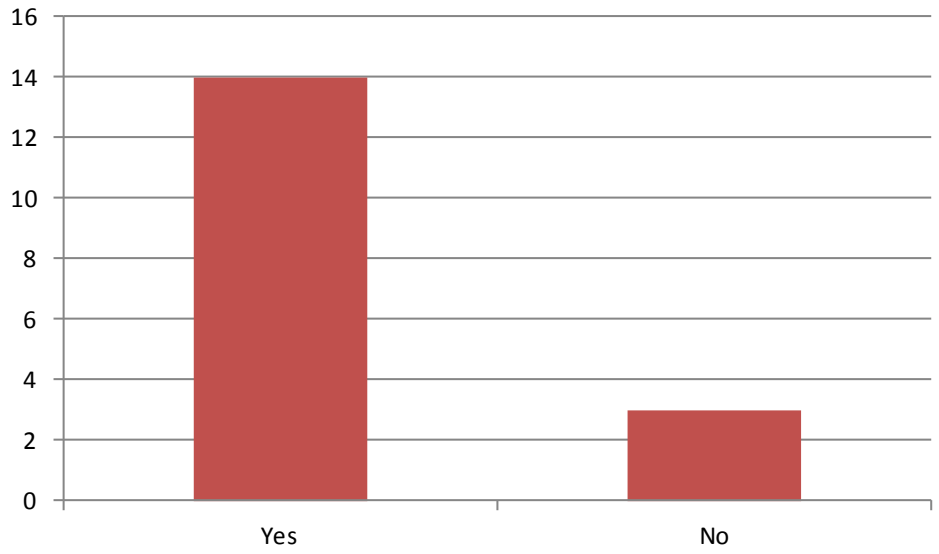
Graph 4: Number of participants by yes/no response



Other comments included a desire for more technical information and specific numbers.

Do you feel that you had sufficient opportunity to provide input?

Graph 5: Number of participants by yes/no response



Do you have any other comments about the open house?

The second comment form was open-ended, allowing participants to provide additional comments.

Three of the four responses focused on a desire for more detail and specific information/numbers. The other response identified a desire for a thorough analysis of other renewable energy sources, including geothermal and solar.

DISCUSSIONS WITH UVIC STAFF AND CONSULTING TEAM

Generally speaking, conversation topics between participants and the project team (i.e. both UVic staff and consulting team members) aligned with comments on the boards.

In addition to the points already identified in this summary report, other points included:

- **Financial viability** - The carbon tax has an impact on financial viability, and there is a risk associated with repealing the carbon tax (including concern about provincial debt in paying for the plant); and
- **Workers/operators** - There are questions about who will run the plant, and what will happen to the jobs of the current plant operators.

NEXT STEPS

During April through August 2013, technical analysis will be undertaken to: determine biomass plant system capacity; assess fuel sources, costs, and quantities; assess emissions; assess sites and building requirements; and undertake preliminary biomass plant designs.

Additional community consultation will be undertaken in the future, including two open houses. In the meantime, community members can:

- Check the project website for updates at: www.uvic.ca/biomass; and
- Sign up for the project listserv and/or send questions and comments via email to: biomass@uvic.ca.

APPENDIX

Transcribed Comments from Interactive Boards and Comment Forms

INTERACTIVE BOARDS

Board #1: Welcome! What's Happening Today?

Comments

- I believe strongly in the language used to support biomass but want to make sure it lives up to that.
- We live near campus. Consultation with the community is vital.
- Concern re: impact on local air quality - particulates? Toxins? We already have wood smoke issues here.
- Do biosolid plants belong in residential neighbourhoods?
- I am a neighbour concerned about particulate and other emissions
- What do San Juan islanders and Seattle and Vancouver think of this? A proposal which will pollute air there too?
- Concerned about trucking of waste wood, etc. across town to UVic
- We live downwind of UVic. How can burning biomass be cleaner than natural gas?
- Why P3?
- How will you raise funds when province is not funding a public university?
- I am concerned about the implication of the public/private partnership as well as the sustainability of the wood resource
- Just completed undergrad restoration proposal for invasive scotch broom removal. LOVE the idea of recycling cuttings that would otherwise end up at Hartland.
- VIHA Queen Alexandra Royal Jubilee
- BC citizen concerned about climate change.
- May want to invest/partner with new biomass tech

Board #2: Energy and the University of Victoria

Comments

- The 'short' timescale of 100 years is still long enough to do irreparable damage to the climate due to higher carbon concentrations. How can this be carbon neutral?
- Doesn't burning cause pollution?
- Biomass = 200% to 500% increase in harmful emissions
- All sounds impressive, but far more difficult to achieve in a practical sense
- How can it be carbon neutral if we burn biomass faster than it grows?
- In light of VIHA's recent report on poor quality of Cowichan Valley air due to wood smoke emissions, how can we propose burning wood?
- Where does the wood waste come from and how is it transported?
- Will the huge compost pile be burned off instead of composted?
- If there was no carbon tax, would UVic do this project?
- Where is the money coming from? Taxpayers
- Is this huge expenditure covered in your 5 year capital plan?
- Climate change is very important
- Alternative energy renewable should be 'clean' energy - solar, wind, and heat recovery. All of this will be prevented by a biomass plant.
- UVic should try to be carbon neutral with renewable energy

Board #3: Precedents and Examples

Comments

- Not only will new buildings be required but also a trucking route!
- Height of the building is important (not too tall)
- Are any of these plants located in residential areas? UVic's is!

Board #4: What We Know & What We Need to Learn

Comments

- Where would this be built?
- How will the by-product emissions impact on surrounding area?
- Plant location should be built on a parking lot or another non-treed area
- How will the biomass reach the plant? Trucks?
- Concerns about location … cutting down trees? Please build on existing parking lot
- How does the project 'reduce motor vehicle traffic'?
- What UVic needs to learn: particulate emissions, what neighbourhoods of the site think/ know about it, traffic effects on local area
- Where are other biomass plants located in residential neighbourhoods?
- How long will the plant last?
- What about other chemical gases form the wood? Have you thought about them?
- I would like to see that data display on the quantity of wood waste required - volume/ weight/number of demo'd houses and the amount available in Victoria area
- Need to explore use of campus compost as a fuel source mixed with the wood
- How much wood waste is needed? 1 building? The campus?
- Is there sufficient wood waste in Greater Victoria to feed the plant?
- I would like to see feasibility of use of geo and solar to at least supplement burning wood or gas to pre-heat boiler water or as 'add-ons' to existing heat systems at UVic
- Explore generating electricity if feasible from a cost perspective
- How to link with health-related projects?

Board #5: Research and Learning Benefits

Comments

- If ways to utilize and absorb Co2 outreaches its product, that is 'great'?
- How will the methane gas issue?
- Research and consider road/traffic implications
- Torrefaction syngas/gasification
- Student stress release --> tropical and food greenhouses

Board #6: What Are Your Priorities & Aspirations?

Comments

- Biogas releases 200% to 500% more hazardous emissions than natural gas
- Clean air [transparency - tell me what comes at stake]
- No net increases in particulates and other toxic emissions
- There is already a fairly high tolerance for wood smoke in BC, generally, we've noticed. We're from Alberta. Will this not add to it? How not?
- Clean air
- no truck traffic
- In a residential area -- ?? Concerned about: trucking, noise, smell, and cost; smell from burning fumes; guaranteed sources of fuel and continuous sources
- Will immediate neighbourhoods benefit or just provincial buildings like VIHA?
- Trucks, pollution, and cost - what is the impact on the community?
- Doesn't seem well thought out?
- Aren't we moving away from burning? Recent VIHA report
- Information / tech data / graphs vague
- Where are the hard numbers?
- Lack of technical info
- Fertilizer for forests
- How much biomass needs to be burned?
- Cost
- Is this project going to cost more than the savings long term?
- Expand system to QA down the hill
- Why not consider heat from thermal - earth or sun? Burning wood seems primitive.
- New gasification tech is lower emissions that natural gas, very clean, and proven tech in USA (California)
- Link biomass project to food production - green houses

COMMENT FORMS - SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How did you hear about the open house? (please check all that apply)

Response	# of responses
Email	3
UVic website	2
Newspaper advertisement	4
Word of mouth	8
Other:	1

Additional Comments

- Media / Radio
- Newspaper article - online and print
- This was not well advertised

2. What was the most valuable part of the open house? (please check all that apply)

Response	# of responses
The information on the presentation boards	5
The 'post-it note' boxes on the presentation boards	3
Discussions with the consultants and UVic project team	11
The information provided on the tables (e.g. plans, resource materials)	4
Other:	0

Additional Comments

- There was a dismal lack of quantitative information

3. Which part of the open house could have been most improved? (please check all that apply)

Response	# of responses
The information on the presentation boards	2
The 'post-it note' boxes on the presentation boards	0
Discussions with the consultants and UVic project team	4
The information provided on the tables (e.g. plans, resource materials)	1
Other:	10

Additional Comments

- All good
- Answering the vital question - where will this be built?
- Early in process would like to see direct link to health and sustainable food production on campus
- Email address to forward further comments and suggestions
- Few people had any relevant details
- Immediate neighbours on the Gordon Head side adjacent to UVIC should be notified by flyers
- Notably - sites under current consideration (re: presentation boards)

4. Would you like to see more information on biomass next time? (please check one)

Response	# of responses	Corresponding Comments
Yes	11	Many questions still to be answered: smell from fumes? Costs re: all the trucking around? Suitability in a residential area? Etc ...
No	4	How is burning biomass green? It is not!

If yes, please elaborate:

- Participation of students - ie food production, stress release of a natural environment like a tropical garden green house
- Also include other alternatives
- Full disclosure of stack emissions, including actual results in comparable Dalkia plants
- More technical info
- Would like to see an analysis of wood required and amount available
- More specifics, actual numbers

***this question had a lower response rate than others*

5. Do you feel that you had sufficient opportunity to provide input? (please check one)

Response	# of responses	Corresponding Comments
Yes	14	Too much info to digest adequately so that I could ask informed questions
No	3	My question: if there were no carbon tax on natural gas, would UVIC even consider this project? Note: the only thing green about this project is saving green money!!

If not, why?

- I am sure there will be other opportunities
- Sort of: questions are very general - no questions on this farm about actual plant
- Everyone wanted aspects of the project, no one was interested if the project should be done.

COMMENT FORMS - LONG ANSWER QUESTION

Do you have any other comments about the open house? If so, please include them here.

Comment Form #1

All the info seems so generic for me at this time. I realize that this is a preliminary meeting at this time. How often would the trucks be delivering material to the plant? Time of day? Will all materials be utilized so that there is zero waste? If there are waste products, how will they be disposed of?

Comment Form #2

I have some questions that I was not able to get answers to at the info sessions. I am hoping someone can contact me with answers - I can be reached at XXXXX

Comment Form #3

There was a distinct lack of specific detail and numerical information available at the info-session. Also, the project seems to be at the point where we are being asked about what should be changed about the project, not if the project should be done. This is ratification, not truly involving consultation.

Comment Form #4

I would like to see a thorough analysis of use of geothermal and solar to supplement (if necessary) the burning of wood or gas i.e to pre-heat water in boilers or to retrofit buildings with supplemental heating system that use energy obtained other than from burning.