

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Commissioners
FROM: Sarah Reeves, Executive Director
Josh Tyler, Director of Operations
DATE: June 24, 2020
RE: Drop-Off Center Update – Facility Status

Just over two months ago, CSWD reacted quickly and efficiently to a shocking new reality by closing all CSWD facilities to public access so we could assess the threat to our employees and customers. We learned a lot in the first days and weeks of the shutdown, and we are applying those lessons to our next phase of operations: Reopening facilities under a “new normal”. Though much is unknown about the near future, one thing is clear - this reality requires continued vigilance against the spread of the Coronavirus. Just as Governor Scott enacts his “quarter turns” to safely and gradually reopen Vermont’s businesses, we are also applying lessons learned over the past 3 ½ months to safely begin to provide services to our members. Staff has been cautious and deliberate in reopening each facility with an emphasis on employee and public safety in regard to the operational challenges that the Coronavirus presents.

The following factors are steering our planning for which Drop-Off Centers will open next, when they will open, and what level of service we can provide:

- 1) Staffing:** Staffing is the most important factor in determining whether we can open additional facilities.
 - Physical distancing requirements mandate an increased level of staffing for metering and guiding customers through the facility safely and quickly.
 - We must have enough roll-off driver and loader operator availability to serve all open sites.
 - As we learned early on, potential Coronavirus exposures can reduce available staff dramatically and without warning. This means that while these conditions are in play, we may still need to close any facility with little or no notice.
- 2) Facility capacity:** Site capacity ensures that we can safely accommodate customers in line and inside the facility.
 - Adequate space inside the facility to manage customers and traffic safely.
 - This was particularly important with the first two to three DOCs we reopened as they are experiencing more visits than normal.
 - The site must have ample queuing distance: historically on busy days, lines into some of our facilities back up onto main roads.
 - Locations with poor queuing will be a lower priority for reopening.

Factors 1) and 2) pertain to staff and customer safety: they must both be met before proceeding to factor 3).

3) Area of the District (Chittenden County) serviced. Facilities that meet conditions 1) and 2) have been and will be considered for reopening based on the level of demand for service in that area expressed by past visits to that DOC and others in that vicinity during normal times. We have and will prioritize facilities that serve the most members in our community. Once we've reached a baseline level of service in the high demand areas, we will prioritize more distant DOCs in areas with unmet need.

Following these criteria, we determined the following reopening priority:

*All facilities hours of operation are 8:00 to 3:30

1. Williston DOC opened Thursday, March 26
 - a. Days open: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday
2. Essex DOC opened Saturday, May 16.
 - a. Days open: Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday
3. Milton DOC opened Friday, June 5
 - a. Days open: Friday and Saturday
4. South Burlington DOC opening Saturday, June 27
 - a. Days open: Friday, Saturday and Monday
5. Hinesburg DOC opening mid-July
 - a. Days open: Saturday
6. Richmond DOC opening TBD
7. Burlington DOC opening TBD

Material acceptance and pricing has also been a significant change to DOC operations. It was determined early on that to provide a baseline level of service while maintaining substantial site throughput and employee and public safety, the existing pricing structure needed to be modified. Pricing moved to a tiered flat rate, to minimize the exchange of money at the operator booth. The pricing shift along with a reduced material acceptance allowed customers to move past our attendant booth efficiently and enter the facility to dispose of material quickly to reduce interaction time between both the public and staff. These were put into place to minimize potential exposure time at our facilities and keep the flow of traffic moving through each site.

Lessons learned to date:

- The tiered material pricing system is efficient in minimizing queuing time and booth interaction.
- Minimized material acceptance increases site throughput and decreases exposure time between public interactions and public/staff interactions.
- Limiting trailer access to DOCs increases throughput, improves safety, and decreases queuing time
- Centralizing and consolidating certain materials to one location to accept larger, bulkier and harder to manage items optimizes operations throughout the DOC system and reduces materials management costs.
- Reassessing the acceptance of materials that have multiple management outlets outside the system of district facilities optimizes queuing capacity, facility throughput and more efficient material management.

While many of the short-term operational changes have been necessary to address challenges that the Coronavirus presents, some of the facility wide concepts provide an opportunity to rethink how the district has historically managed our DOCs. The overarching thing we have learned is that DOC operations will not go completely back to the way things used to be. The unprecedented amount of trip data and observational information generated from the Coronavirus pandemic have given staff a better perspective in addressing operational concerns that needed serious attention before the Coronavirus descended.