

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: November 6, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Jim Gordon, P.Eng., Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations

SUBJECT: Andion Biogas Project Update

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Council receive the corporate report dated November 6, 2023, from the Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations, titled “Andion Biogas Project Update” for consideration and that Council:

1. Thank Metro Vancouver for its October 30, 2023, letter in response to Council’s motion 2023-382 and,
 2. Advise Metro Vancouver that many White Rock residents expressed concerns with and opposition to the biogas facility or its proposed location, and,
 3. Requests that Metro Vancouver closely monitors any facility construction and operation to ensure that all emissions are within the parameters set forth in the permit application attached as Appendix B.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the *Environmental Management Act*, Metro Vancouver (Metro) has been delegated authority from the Province to manage air quality within its boundaries. Semiahmoo RNG GP Corp. (Andion) applied to Metro for an air quality discharge permit pursuant to the *Greater Vancouver Regional District Air Quality Management Bylaw 1082, 2008*. This permit application is for a proposed biogas facility adjacent to and west of Highway 99, south of the City of Surrey and beyond White Rock boundaries and jurisdiction, although prevailing winds could potentially carry emissions westward to the City of White Rock (Appendix A).

On August 31, 2023, Metro asked the City of White Rock for comments on the application (Appendix B). On October 16, 2023, Council considered this matter and the Corporate Report is attached as Appendix C and resolved that Metro respond to the questions shown in the motion below so Council could provide informed comment.

This update report discusses Metro’s October 30, 2023 letter in response (Appendix D).

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Motion # & Meeting Date	Motion Details
2023-382 October 16, 2023	<p>THAT Council receive the corporate report dated October 16, 2023, from the Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations, titled “Andion Biogas Project” for consideration; and request that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Metro Vancouver thoroughly investigate and advise the City of the potential for odours from the proposed Andion biogas facility being carried by prevailing winds to White Rock and negatively affecting quality of life of White Rock residents and, 2. Metro Vancouver thoroughly investigate and advise the City of the potential for gases emitted or wastewater effluents or discharge from the proposed Andion biogas facility being carried by prevailing winds to White Rock and negatively affecting the health of White Rock residents and, 3. Metro Vancouver advise what regulatory tools it has available should design deficiencies, production challenges or poor feedstock management result in emissions of malodorous or unhealthy gases or wastewater effluents or discharge and, 4. Council provide comment to Metro Vancouver after Metro Vancouver responds in detail to the concerns about potential odours, unhealthy gases or wastewater effluents or discharge potentially affecting White Rock residents as noted above.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Andion requested authorization from Metro to discharge air contaminants from a commercial scale food waste and organic feed stocks to renewable natural gas facility located on the eastern edge of the Semiahmoo First Nation (SFN) reserve adjacent to Highway 99. This is beyond White Rock boundaries and jurisdiction, although emissions could potentially affect surrounding communities including White Rock.

Council requested that Metro respond to the motion noted above and Metro responded in detail on October 20, 2023 (Appendix D). Metro advises that its staff have years of experience running and interpreting the results of air quality dispersion models. Its experts projected some occurrence of odours beyond the immediate vicinity of the biofuel facility; however, none of these projections showed odours travelling as far as White Rock.

Metro’s detailed report from its experts may provide some comfort to concerned White Rock residents; however, the positive prognosis for White Rock is based upon the emissions occurring as outlined in the permit application.

If Metro approves the permit application, it will be approved by Metro’s District Director. The District Director refers to a position appointed by the MVRD Board as per their delegated authority from the province to manage and regulate air quality in the region – it is understood that this would be a technically based decision and not considered by the Metro Board.

In response to the question about regulatory tools at its disposal, Metro responded in its October 30, 2023, letter that:

“Should a facility be in compliance with its permit but design deficiencies, production challenges or poor feedstock management result in unacceptable air quality impacts, and it becomes necessary for the protection of the environment, the District Director can amend the permit to delete, change or impose any procedure or requirement that could have been imposed when the permit was first issued.”

The proposed facility does provide environmental benefits through the harvesting of biogas and fertilizer from green waste rather than disposal of this waste in a landfill. Composting options are also available for green waste, but they have similar odour concerns. The projected data and the good intentions of the applicants all point to a successful facility; however, this is not guaranteed. Mitigative action by Metro’s District Director may address possible emissions problems and ensure that the facility operates successfully like many similar biofuel plants across Canada.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The proposed biogas facility is beyond City boundaries and jurisdiction and located on Semiahmoo First Nation land. Council feedback to Metro is planned to be by resolution in a public meeting. As a governmental body with jurisdiction, Metro has its own consultation processes.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

Biogas facilities are known to have environmental benefits through the production of RNG, reduction in greenhouse gases, and recovery of fertilizer and other resources.

OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES

White Rock does not hold authority over the air quality in the Metro Vancouver area or its adjacent SFN neighbor. As a result, Council's primary role is to provide comments as requested by Metro Vancouver.

Council can provide further comments or considerations beyond the recommendations in this report.

CONCLUSION

Andion is partnering with SFN to develop a biogas project on the eastern part of SFN land. Andion applied to Metro for a permit related to projected airborne discharges. Although Metro experts’ investigation shows no impact to White Rock, many White Rock residents are concerned about the location and potential emissions travelling through the SFN lands and into White Rock, which have been and continue to be expressed to Council.

It is recommended that Metro consider White Rock resident concerns and if it approves the

permit, it closely monitors any facility construction and operation to ensure that all emissions are within the parameters set forth in the permit application.

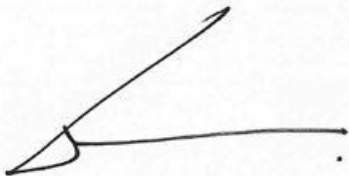
Respectfully submitted,



Jim Gordon, P.Eng.,
Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

It is essential to note that the decision-making power in this situation does not rest with Metro Vancouver Board or with White Rock City Council, and this project falls outside the City's jurisdiction because it is on First Nations Land. While both Metro Vancouver Board and Council primarily focus on policy endorsement, the authority to approve the permit lies with Metro Vancouver's appointed District Director. In fulfilling this role, the District Director must maintain neutrality, objectivity, and independence.



Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer

- Appendix A: Air Quality Environmental Protection Notice – Semiahmoo RNG GP Corp – 1202
- Appendix B: Letter dated August 31, 2023, from Metro Vancouver to the City of White Rock Requesting Comments – Semiahmoo RNG GP Corp -1202
- Appendix C: Corporate Report to Council dated October 16, 2023, Re Andion Biogas Project
- Appendix D: Response Letter dated October 30, 2023, from Metro Vancouver to White Rock Council.