



Planning & Development Advisory Council Meeting



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



Meeting Agenda

Planning and Development Advisory Council (PDAC) Meeting

June 17, 2025

2:00pm-4:00pm ChST, Office of the Governor Conference Room and Microsoft Teams

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Public Comments

II. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Planning Updates— CNMI Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (CISWMP)

III. OTHER MATTERS

- A. PDAC Member Updates
- B. Scheduling next PDAC Meeting



**COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATED SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE COMMONWEALTH
OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**



Planning Updates

Overview

Draft Responsiveness Summary

Next Steps

§ 25.8 Responsiveness summaries.

Each agency which conducts any activities required under this part shall prepare a Responsiveness Summary at specific decision points as specified in program regulations or in the approved public participation work plan. Responsiveness Summaries are also required for rulemaking activities under § 25.10. Each Responsiveness Summary shall identify the public participation activity conducted; describe the matters on which the public was consulted; summarize the public's views, significant comments, criticisms and suggestions; and set forth the agency's specific responses in terms of modifications of the proposed action or an explanation for rejection of proposals made by the public. Responsiveness Summaries prepared by agencies receiving EPA financial assistance shall also include evaluations by the agency of the effectiveness of the public participation program. Assisted agencies shall request such evaluations from any advisory group and provide an opportunity for other participating members of the public to contribute to the evaluation. (In the case of programs with multiple responsiveness summary requirements, these analyses need only be prepared and submitted with the final summary required.) Responsiveness summaries shall be forwarded to the appropriate decision-making official and shall be made available to the public. Responsiveness Summaries shall be used as part of evaluations required under this part or elsewhere in this chapter.

Responsiveness Summary for the Public Participation Period on the Development of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan

Identified the public participation activity conducted

On Tuesday, April 1, 2025, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Office of Planning and Development (OPD), on behalf of the CNMI Inter-Island Solid Waste Management Taskforce (ISWMT), disseminated the latest draft of the CNMI Comprehensive Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (CISWMP) for public consumption. CNMI OPD conducted public hearings within each senatorial district of the CNMI to garner public input on the development of the CNMI CISWMP. The first of the three public hearings was held in the first senatorial district (Rota), in the Office of the Mayor of Rota Social Hall, on Monday, May 19, 2025, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. The second public hearing was held in the second senatorial district (Tinian and Aguiguan), in the Tinian Public Library, on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. The third and final public hearing was held in the third senatorial district (Saipan and the Northern Islands), in the American Memorial Park Museum Theater, on Thursday, May 22, 2025, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. The general public was welcome to provide their views, significant comments, criticisms, and suggestions on the development of the CNMI CISWMP until the public participation period concluded at 12 a.m. on Monday, May 26, 2026.

The public was consulted on the CNMI's priority solid waste management projects and programs, inclusive of projects and programs funded by the Additional Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act (ASADRA) and the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) grant funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Public hearing attendees were briefed on cost estimates, project timelines, waste characterization data, and the formal process for plan finalization and EPA submission.

Summarized the public's views, significant comments, criticisms, & suggestions

In the first senatorial district (Rota), the general public expressed enthusiasm for the development, submission, and approval of the plan so that the municipality could avail of much-needed federal funding for its solid waste management activities. Concerns were raised, primarily the impact that the Tatachok Dump and future Tatachok Small Community Exempt Landfill (SCEL) will have on Rota's groundwater.

Described the matters in which the public was consulted

**Summarized the
public's views,
significant comments,
criticisms, & suggestions**

In the second senatorial district (Tinian and Aguiguan), the public outlook on the hearing was generally positive, with community members expressing appreciation for the collaborative effort behind the solid waste plan and offering constructive feedback. Key topics of discussion included the continued availability of federal funding, incineration/bioconversion/waste-to-energy, tax incentives for recycling, and enhanced community engagement through community-led instead of ISWMT-led public hearings, implementing school programs, reuse programs/ foundations in the community, and youth engagement.

In the third senatorial district (Saipan and the Northern Islands), the public response to the plan was generally positive. Feedback during the hearing primarily focused on seeking clarification, with questions centered on the plan's current length, available federal funding, and the strategic intent behind proposed investments in solid waste management equipment and staffing.

Below is a detailed compilation of the general public's views, significant comments, criticisms, and suggestions; and the ISWMT's responses in terms of modifications of the proposed action or an explanation for rejection of proposals made by the public. This compilation includes comments received from the CISWMP Info Hub (<https://opd.gov.mp/ciswmp.html>), which currently serves as the official depository for the development of the CISWMP.

1. **"Has there been a study done to see if the present dumpsite is seeping into our freshwater lens, and if the [Rota SCEL project] goes forth, can the people of Rota be assured that our precious freshwater lens is protected?"**

Yes. To meet federal and local eligibility requirements for the Small Community Exempt Landfill (SCEL), comprehensive groundwater testing is required to confirm the absence of contamination at the proposed site. Initial testing was conducted in late April; however, unforeseen challenges in transporting samples to a U.S. EPA-certified laboratory necessitated a second round of testing in late May. The results confirm site suitability, and the next phase will involve procuring contractors for the SCEL's assessment and design.

Because assessment of the Tatachok Dump is already included in the Plan, this proposal was rejected.

**Set forth the agency's
specific responses to
modifications of the
proposed action or an
explanation for rejection
of proposals made by
the public**

4. **“Proposed Environmental Education Center – It is better to fund programs through the school system as opposed to constructing a new facility.”**

5. “It would be better to establish an alternative dumpsite located further away from public areas and the main highway, as the current site poses concerns due to the strong odor and other potential exposure to hazardous materials.”

12. "Is there an 'incinerator plan' incorporated into this Solid Waste Plan?"

13. "What would be more beneficial down the long run with the limited amount of funds that we might have? What [the U.S. military] is using right now [in terms of incineration] is permitted by [the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality]."

14. "[The U.S. Department of Defense] also have waste-to-energy, which is in several discussions that we have because of the overflow of solid waste that's going into our [federally noncompliant] dump right now is an issue. One of the discussions were using an incinerator that converts that waste into energy."

18. "Incinerator; is this an option being considered? It's a question to the panel."

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**Provided an opportunity
for other participating
members of the public
to contribute to the
evaluation on the
effectiveness of the
public participation
program**

Evaluations

Upon the conclusion of each public hearing, the public was invited to evaluate the effectiveness of the public participation program. Below are evaluations received from the general public:

1. "Try to simplify the document or any documents. Some people have low attention spans."
2. "More details on every topic, like reusing of disposed solid waste."
3. "All good. Great job on the presentation!"
4. "Great job!"
5. "Cross that bridge along the way if needed."
6. "I believe you should summarize better and focus on public voice and input instead. Send out a summarized version to the public ahead of time. Explain those points during the public hearing. Have the public control the conversation and [the presenting team] answers. Have it be community-led, not data-focused! I like listening either way though!"
7. "Perfect!"

An advisory group, the Planning and Development Advisory Council (PDAC), also evaluated this public participation program. Below are evaluations received from PDAC:

[PLACEHOLDER FOR PDAC EVALUATION]

**Need evaluation from an
advisory group**

NEXT STEPS

PDAC Meeting



CNMI

- Finalize & Publicize Responsiveness Summary (Jun 18)
- Modify Plan (Jun 20)



USEPA

- Interagency Contractor Review (Sept)
- Final Determination (Dec)



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