PUBLIC AGENDA
STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, UTILITIES AND CORPORATE SERVICES

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 9:30 a.m.
Council Chamber, City Hall

Committee Members:

Councillor J. Parker, Chair, Councillor K. MacDonald, Vice Chair, Councillor T. Davies, Councillor H. Kelleher, Councillor S. Timon, Her Worship, Mayor C. Block (Ex-Officio)

Submissions providing comments and/or requesting to speak will be accepted for public meetings using the online form at saskatoon.ca/writetocouncil. If your submission includes a request to speak, you will be contacted by a representative from the City Clerk's Office with further information. **Submissions will be accepted no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Monday the week of the meeting.**

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair will call the meeting to order on Treaty 6 Territory and the Traditional Homeland of the Métis People and confirm roll call.

2. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Recommendation
That the agenda be confirmed as presented.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3 - 6

Recommendation
That the minutes of regular meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services held on January 14, 2025, be adopted.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6. ADMINISTRATION AND LEGISLATIVE REPORTS

6.1 Decision Reports

6.2 Approval Reports

6.3 Information Reports

Recommendation
That the reports contained in items 6.3.1 to 6.3.2 be received as information.

6.3.1 **Multi-Unit Garbage - Service Review and Next Steps [EUCS2025-0201]** 7 - 23

A report of the Utilities and Environment Division is provided.

6.3.2 **Multi-Unit Organics – Pilot Findings and Next Steps [EUCS2025-0202]** 24 - 65

A report of the Utilities and Environment Division is provided.

7. MOTIONS (notice previously given)

8. URGENT BUSINESS

9. GIVING NOTICE

10. REQUESTS TO SPEAK (new matters)

11. COMMUNICATIONS (requiring the direction of the Committee)

12. IN CAMERA SESSION (if required)

13. ADJOURNMENT

PUBLIC MINUTES

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT,

UTILITIES AND CORPORATE SERVICES

Tuesday, January 14, 2025, 9:30 a.m.
Council Chamber, City Hall

PRESENT:	Councillor J. Parker, Chair Councillor K. MacDonald, Vice Chair Councillor T. Davies, via teleconference Councillor H. Kelleher Councillor S. Timon
ABSENT:	Her Worship, Mayor C. Block (Ex-Officio)
ALSO PRESENT:	Councillor B. Dubois, via teleconference General Manager, Utilities & Environment A. Gardiner Deputy City Solicitor B. Bleakney Deputy City Clerk S. Bryant Committee Assistant H. Janzen

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Deputy City Clerk called the meeting to order on Treaty 6 Territory and the Traditional Homeland of the Métis People and confirmed roll call.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

City Council, at its Regular Business meeting held on November 27, 2024, made the following appointments for 2025:

SPC on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services

- Councillor T. Davies
- Councillor H. Kelleher
- Councillor K. MacDonlad
- Councillor J. Parker

- Councillor S. Timon

The Committee was requested to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025.

Moved By: Councillor Davies

That Councillor Parker be appointed Chair of the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services for 2025.

In Favour: (4): Councillor Parker, Councillor MacDonald, Councillor Davies, and Councillor Kelleher

Absent (2): Councillor Timon, and Mayor Block

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Moved By: Councillor Kelleher

That Councillor MacDonald be appointed Vice-Chair of the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services for 2025.

In Favour: (4): Councillor Parker, Councillor MacDonald, Councillor Davies, and Councillor Kelleher

Absent (2): Councillor Timon, and Mayor Block

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Councillor Parker assumed the Chair.

3. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

Councillor Timon entered the meeting at 9:33 a.m.

Moved By: Councillor Kelleher

That the agenda be confirmed as presented.

In Favour: (5): Councillor Parker, Councillor MacDonald, Councillor Davies, Councillor Kelleher, and Councillor Timon

Absent (1): Mayor Block

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved By: Councillor Timon

That the minutes of regular meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services held on December 10, 2024, be adopted.

In Favour: (5): Councillor Parker, Councillor MacDonald, Councillor Davies, Councillor Kelleher, and Councillor Timon

Absent (1): Mayor Block

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. ADMINISTRATION AND LEGISLATIVE REPORTS

7.1 Decision Reports

7.2 Approval Reports

7.2.1 Water Conservation Budget Adjustment [EUCS2025-0101]

A report of the Utilities and Environment Division was provided and presented by General Manager, Utilities and Environment Gardiner. She responded to questions of Committee.

Moved By: Councillor MacDonald

That the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services recommend to City Council that Capital Project P.02197 be increased by $128,900 to be funded by NRCan and FCM.

In Favour: (5): Councillor Parker, Councillor MacDonald, Councillor Davies, Councillor Kelleher, and Councillor Timon

Absent (1): Mayor Block

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7.3 Information Reports

Moved By: Councillor Kelleher

That the reports contained in items 7.3.1 to 7.3.2 be received as information.

In Favour: (5): Councillor Parker, Councillor MacDonald, Councillor Davies, Councillor Kelleher, and Councillor Timon

Absent (1): Mayor Block

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7.3.1 Nutana Lane Closure Impacts Mitigation [CC2024-0503]

A report of the Utilities and Environment Division was provided and presented by General Manager, Utilities and Environment Gardiner. Together with Geotechnical Engineering Specialist Heilman and Director of Community Standards Grazier they responded to questions of Committee.

7.3.2 Referral List – Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services – January 2025 [EUCS2025-0102]

A report of the Utilities and Environment Division was provided and presented by General Manager, Utilities and Environment Gardiner.

8. MOTIONS (notice previously given)

9. URGENT BUSINESS

10. GIVING NOTICE

11. REQUESTS TO SPEAK (new matters)

12. COMMUNICATIONS (requiring the direction of the Committee)

13. IN CAMERA SESSION (if required)

14. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

_____

Councillor J. Parker, Chair

_____

Deputy City Clerk, S. Bryant

Multi-Unit Garbage - Service Review and Next Steps

ISSUE

Administration has completed a review of the current service model for multi-unit garbage. This was undertaken in parallel with work to develop the multi-unit organics program. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of findings from the garbage service review and outline next steps for completion and implementation of a revised multi-unit garbage strategy.

BACKGROUND

Engagement with stakeholders was carried out and a report with findings went to City Council on September 10, 2018: Multi-Unit Residential Proposed Changes to Waste Management – Engagement Results. Multi-unit garbage was one of the topics included in this engagement. During engagement, areas of improvement for garbage and recycling were identified to be considered during the development of a multi-unit organics program.

The Solid Waste Program Funding Models: Implications and Considerations for Change report from 2021, provides an overview of solid waste program funding model considerations that relates to multi-unit garbage. In 2024, funding for curbside garbage collections moved from property taxes to become utility funded.

CURRENT STATUS

There are approximately 40,000 habitable units at 900 sites in Saskatoon that receive multi-unit waste services (2024 data). The City of Saskatoon (City) provides a weekly garbage collection to multi-units (apartments and condominiums) primarily using metal bins, funded through property taxes. All multi-units are eligible for weekly garbage collections provided that they meet the Waste Collection Design Guidelines. Property owners, managers or condominium associations obtain their own metal bins and can apply for a grant to offset the costs of the bin. Multi-units may also choose to contract services privately. Approximately 82% of multi-units receive service from the City while 18% have private contracts for garbage service. Multi-units typically will contract private collections services if they do not meet the Waste Collection Design Guidelines or because they require a higher level of service.

The multi-unit sector will likely experience changes in how waste is managed over the next several years. Multi-unit recycling may be included as a residential recycling program that will transition to a provincially managed Full Extended Producer Responsibility program for household packaging and paper products. The addition of organics diversion is also in progress and will add a second diversion stream to multi-unit properties.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

A review of multi-unit garbage was completed to help ensure services are aligned with the needs of the multi-unit sector and to identify areas for improvement. Appendix 1 –

Multi-Unit Garbage - Background and Service Review provides a background of multi-unit garbage programs and further details on the service review. Service levels, cost, and other waste services (current and future) were looked at as part of the analysis.

An important consideration of the multi-unit sector is the various types and sizes of multi-unit properties. Each property has unique site considerations and servicing needs. The service review looked at different property types and developed a list of recommendations to help address the unique needs of the multi sector.

Appendix 1 includes detailed recommendations for five areas of change and improvement that will be considered as part of the revised multi-unit garbage strategy.

Table 1 provides a summary:

Table 1 – Revised Multi-Unit Garbage Strategy

Finance
Look at options to remove multi-unit garbage from property tax. Explore moving multi-unit garbage from property tax to a direct billing - per unit or variable service pricing per container.
Service Levels
Investigate additional service offerings (such as additional collections, waste area cleaning, premium services etc.) and look at a pricing model that accurately reflects costs of providing service.
Waste Design Guidelines and Property Engagement
Update and explore further design regulations or guidelines for solid waste storage in new multi-unit residential properties to align with changes. Look at ways to better engage developers and property managers to improve waste collection servicing at new and existing properties.
Asset Management
Review the Multi-Unit Dwelling (MUD) Metal Garbage Bin Grant. As part of the review explore a service model that includes City ownership and maintenance of metal bins and other containers for multi-unit service.
Route Optimization
Ensure future route planning utilizes new technologies and is completed regularly to ensure routes are optimized for customer satisfaction and efficiency.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Future cost and financial implications will be brought forward in future reporting.

NEXT STEPS

Future work for multi-unit garbage is divided in to three phases. Phase 1 (2025/2026) will look at business cases and decisions required to implement the multi-unit garbage strategy. Phase 2 (2026/2027) will look at developing a detailed implementation plan. If approved by City Council, Phase 3 (2028/2029) is when implementation of the changes will occur.

APPENDICES

1. Multi-Unit Garbage: Background and Service Review

Report Approval

Written by: Daniel Mireault, Project Manager, Sustainability
Reviewed by: Brock Storey, Environmental Operations Manager
Katie Burns, Manager, Education & Environmental Performance Manager
Jeanna South, Director of Sustainability
Brendan Lemke, Director of Water and Waste Operations
Approved by: Angela Gardiner, General Manager, Utilities and Environment

Admin Report - Multi-Unit Garbage - Service Review and Next Steps.docx

MULTI-UNIT GARBAGE: BACKGROUND & SERVICE REVIEW

Background & Service Review

Introduction

The City of Saskatoon (City) is improving residential multi-unit waste services with the design of a city-wide organics program for the multi-unit sector. As part of this work, the City is reviewing the current service delivery model for multi-unit garbage. The following is a review of multi-unit garbage that looks at City-provided service and other considerations that impact multi-unit solid waste services.

This review will explore the following components of multi-unit garbage:

- Background and overview of multi-unit sector
- Existing service level
- Cost overview of service and funding model
- Past public engagement
- Impacts of multi-unit residential recycling and considerations
- Industry scan and alternative options

Background – Through the Years

In 2007, the Saskatoon Waste and Recycling Plan made policy recommendations that covered multi-unit waste services. It stated that providing equitable service to all residents should be a key element of future waste diversion planning. There were approximately 24,000 multi-units in 2007 with many being serviced by a private contractor. At that time, large round 300-gal garbage containers were spread around the city. These containers were often shared and often used by commercial users. In the plan, recycling and organics services were identified as future diversion improvements that should be implemented. The City identified that garbage services needed to be reviewed to improve data and provide a consistent service to prepare for expanded services (addition of recycling and organics).

Throughout the 2000s, the Garbage Container Conversion project saw a large change for residential garbage services in Saskatoon. All curbside properties across the city converted to individual rollout garbage carts and all neighborhoods were brought into the regular collection calendar. Multi-unit garbage was also standardized, and in 2011 many 300-gal garbage containers were removed. Properties were asked to get their own metal container and apply for the Multi-Unit Dwelling Metal Garbage Bin Grant[1].

The 2012 decision to launch curbside recycling and add a utility fee to bills was closely followed by a resolution to add a multi-unit residential recycling (MURR) program. In 2014, the MURR program launched through a sole-source service agreement with Cosmo. The program uses a utility fee model with per-unit billing and partially offsets the cost with funding from SK Recycles (formerly Multi-Material Stewardship). This new program increased costs for many multi-unit properties that had existing recycling service contracts. Cosmo subcontracts out the collection portion of the service agreement.

Overview of Multi-Unit Residential Sector

The definition of multi-unit residential for waste services, as per the Waste Bylaw is:

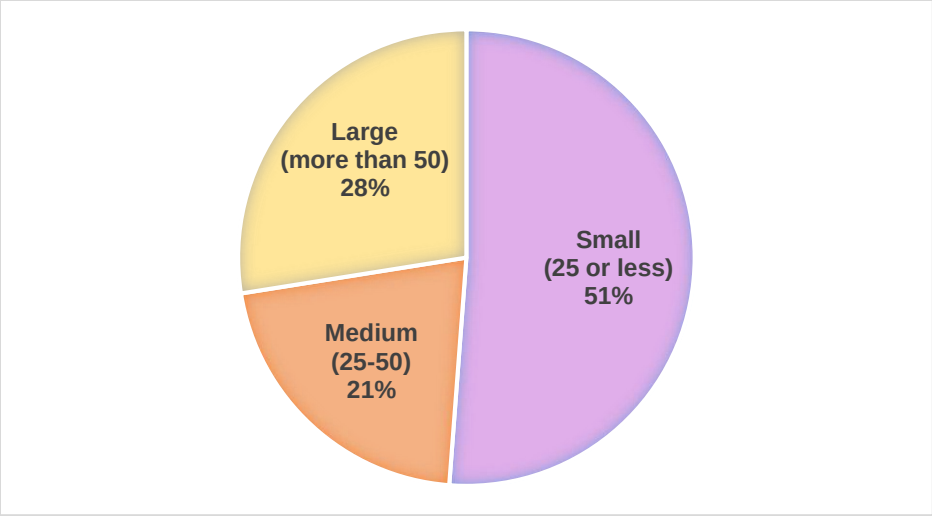
(i) a building or portion of a building designed for or occupied as five or more residences, but does not include an institutional premises; or

(ii) a residence best serviced by stationary containers, as determined by the General Manager.

With the introduction of the MURR utility, multi-unit properties became managed at the Site level.

Around half of multi-unit properties in Saskatoon have 25 or less units. Around 26% have 50 or more units and 25% have between 25 and 60 units. Some townhouses that do not receive curbside collection services are also considered multi-unit service properties.

[1] Multi-unit Dwelling Metal Garbage Bin Grant



Multi-Unit Property Size by Number of Units

Population growth and new properties have and will continue to influence the multi-unit sector. Around 75% of the new multi-unit sites in 2023 were in new neighbourhoods. Most properties were large developments of 50 or more units.

Multi-Unit Garbage Waste Service Level

The City of Saskatoon provides a weekly garbage collection to apartments and condominiums using metal bins. Building property owners, managers, or condominium associations purchase their own metal bins and can apply for an annual grant from the City to offset their costs. Buildings may contract services privately.

There are approximately 900 buildings and 39,000 multi-unit households in Saskatoon[2]. Around 85% of multi-unit properties in Saskatoon use the City-provided multi-unit garbage service.

It is estimated that the multi-unit sector produces around 17,500 tonnes of garbage every year (7% of the solid waste landfilled in Saskatoon)[3].

[2] 2022 Integrated Waste Management Report, City of Saskatoon (May 2023)
[3] Waste Diversion Opportunities Report, City of Saskatoon, (May 2017)

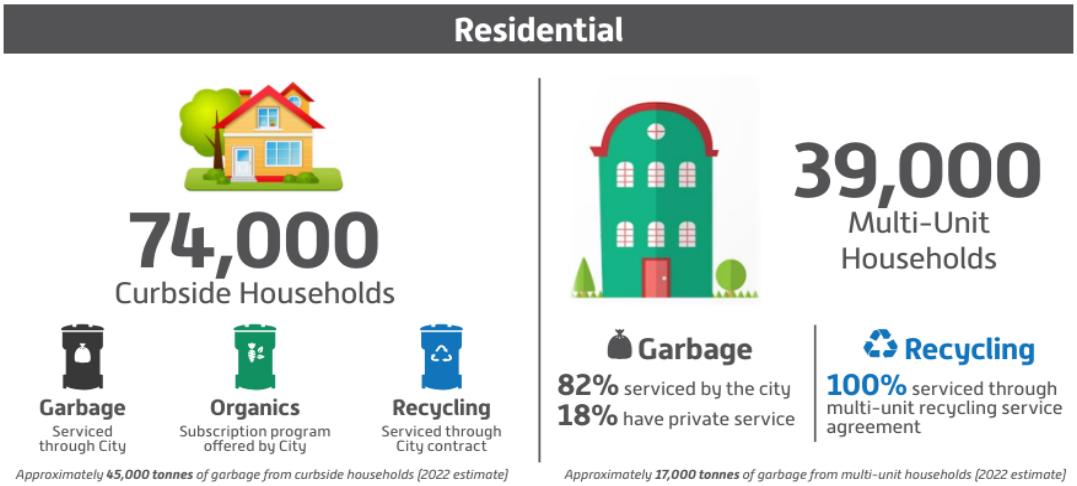


Image from Integrated Waste Management Report, City of Saskatoon, 2022

Larger apartments and complexes are more likely to use a private service provider. Some properties also contract out additional services with a private contractor, such as container rental, cleanup of waste area, and extra collection.

Waste as an Essential Service

Waste management is an essential public service. Mismanagement of solid waste can lead to health and safety risks. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Waste and Garbage collectors and processors (compost, garbage and recycling) were listed as essential[4].

> "These services and functions are considered essential to preserving life, health, and basic societal functioning".

Waste Collection Design Guidelines

On December 11, 2017, the first version of the Waste Collection Design Guidelines for Residential Developments was released by the City. This document laid out requirements for curbside and multi-unit collection. This document was updated in December 2021 to reflect program updates and make improvements based on feedback. The document can be found here.

[4] https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/crtcl-nfrstrctr/esf-sfe-en.aspx

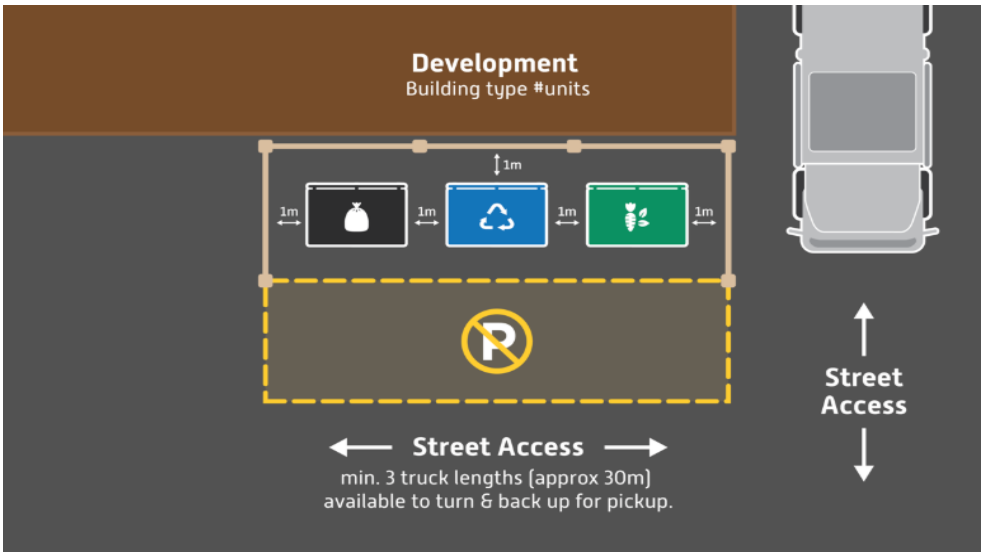
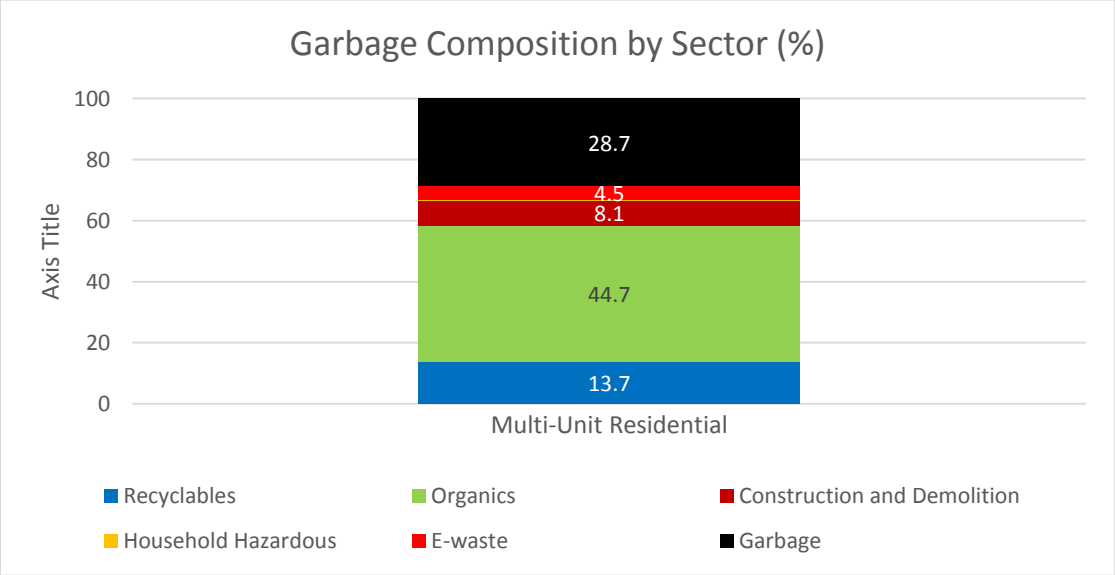


Image from Waste Collection Design Guidelines

Waste Characterization

The 2019 City of Saskatoon Waste Characterization Study[5] reported multi-unit garbage samples contained 63% divertible material (44.7% food waste/yard waste/compostable paper, 13.7% recyclable material, and 4.5% E-waste). The largest material category in the garbage samples was food waste & organics at 29%. Yard waste accounted for 11%.

The overall capture rate for recyclable material was 43%, which includes all materials accepted in the multi-unit residential recycling program in the City of Saskatoon at the time of the study. This was lower than curbside which had a 66% capture rate.



[5] 2019 City of Saskatoon Waste Characterization Study

Cost

Current Costs of providing multi-unit garbage are taken from the 2025 Multi-Unit Garbage Budget. The costs of providing this service is funded by property tax.

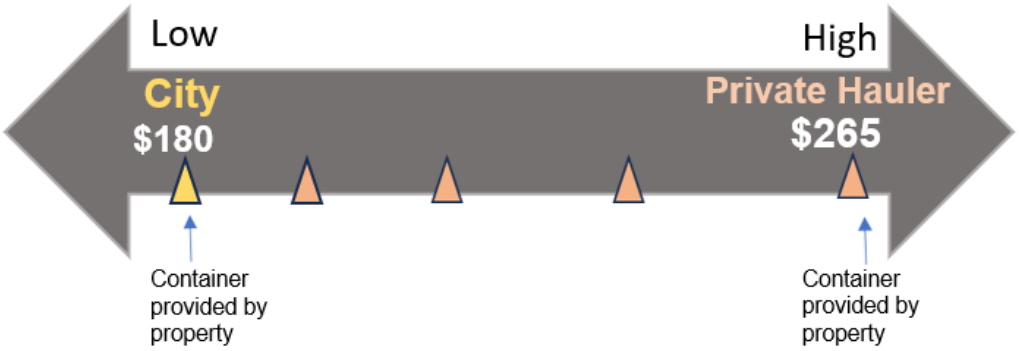
Category	Annual Costs	Further Details
Vehicle Lease, Fuel, and Maintenance	$418,500	Includes Fork Truck rentals and partial costs of supervisor trucks
Salaries & Payroll Costs	$403,000	Includes Fork Truck Operators & allocated portion of admin staff
Landfill Tipping Fee	$1,570,800	Based on estimated tonnages for MU properties per tonnage projections
MUD Grant	$228,500	Intended to offset the price of renting a unit, budgeted at $8/habitable unit, and application based. If we were to provide to each HU, we would need additional funds.
Other (Overhead, Corporate Cross Charges, and Reserve)	$67,700	No program management salaries are included here.
Total	**$2,688,500**	

Multi-unit garbage containers vary in size. The City currently services 7,400 yards worth of container volume per week. When converted to 6 yard containers this results in approximately 1,233 customers. The most common container size is 6 yards – around 53% of containers are this size. The next most common size is 4 yard (21%) followed by 3 yard (12%), 8 yard (9%), and 2 yard (5%).

For the purpose of comparing City pricing with current industry pricing a standardized price was used for the most common service - a 6-yard container emptied weekly. Four private haulers provided service pricing. The estimated cost for the City to service a 6-yard container weekly is approximately $180 per month. It is important to note that the City does not provide containers (metal bins) for multi-unit service.

Monthly pricing estimate for 6yd multi-unit residential waste bin collected weekly. Weight is estimated at 200kg to 300kg per tip.

Price Range for City and Private Waste Service



The lowest cost was the City at $180 per month (based on the 2025 Approved Budget). The price range for private waste haulers surveyed in 2024 ranged from $189 to $285 per month. It should be noted that property managers with multiple sites often get a volume discount and better contract pricing is often available dependent on quantity and location.

Multi-Unit Residential Recycling (MURR)

The MURR program launched on October 6, 2014, and was fully operational by the end of 2015. The service is provided by Cosmopolitan Industries (Cosmo) through a sole-source agreement that covers collection and processing. The agreement included an option for Cosmo to extend the term. The current agreement is in place from 2024 until the end of 2029. Agreement language has also been added that allows the City to transfer responsibility of multi-unit recycling to the Province as it shifts towards a full Extended Producer Responsibility model and sets fixed costs for early termination[6].

All residents living in apartments and condominiums that receive metal bin garbage collection or communal waste collection are part of the program. Unlike multi-unit garbage, multi-unit recycling is a mandatory program for all properties considered multi-unit residential.

New provincial regulations that have been recently introduced will require producers and distributors of regulated materials to cover 100% of the cost of residential recycling programs. SK Recycles (formerly Multi-Materials Stewardship Western) is the organization that will operate the new program on behalf of producers. The new SK Recycles program plan that has been approved by the province requires municipalities to have a garbage program in place to be eligible for participation. Additional reporting on this is planned in the first half of 2025.

Impacts and Considerations for MURR

Space Constraints: During the deployment process one of the greatest challenges was finding space for an additional metal container for recycling. To address this concern, Cosmo used rollout carts (96 gal/ 360L) more often than anticipated to help address space constraints. Around 14% of properties in the recycling program are serviced by rollout carts.

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[6] Recycling Program Update – New Household Paper and Packaging Program [EUCS2024-0904]

Colocation challenges: Best-practice research suggests that colocation is an important aspect of a successful multi-unit diversion program[7]. When recycling is less convenient than garbage it makes participation more challenging. Many property configurations have more garbage containers than recycling. Garbage is usually located in a more prominent location. Some anecdotal information from property managers and Environmental Protection Officers suggests that colocation may also lead to contamination as recycling serves as an overflow for garbage.

Service challenges: With the addition of recycling there are more properties that have issues accessing containers for collection. The Waste Collection Design Guidelines stipulate that 1 metre is required between containers and any other object in the collection area (fence, tree, vehicle, enclosure, etc.). In practice, this is often not possible. Many metal recycling containers are located behind the metal garbage container. On collection day, the metal garbage container is moved out to the side to access the metal recycling container for collection. This leads to inefficiencies in collection and increases risk of misplacing container or damage during collection. All containers need to be placed back in their original position.

Multiple service providers: the service agreement for MURR requires that metal garbage containers have access. Garbage operations will not move a recycling container in order to access garbage.

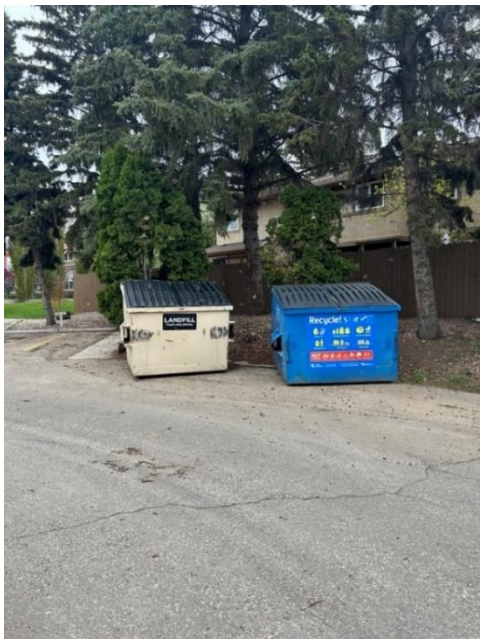
Billing Model: Certainty and easy method to determine costs.

Signage – Many metal garbage containers do not have any signage. With the addition of MURR, signage has become more important. MURR containers have a decal stating it is recycling and includes acceptable materials (visual and words).

Image of 2014 recycling decal and multi-unit garbage container with no decal.

[7] Summary of Findings: Multi-Unit Mandatory Waste Sorting Program (City of Edmonton, June 25, 2021)

Image of garbage decal distributed in 2015 as part of education initiative (left) with Cosmo MURR decal installed in 2018 (right).



Contamination: MURR shows that contamination is usually higher than the curbside recycling rate. The contamination rate has been as high as 23% for MURR (compared to 15% for curbside recycling). The current rate (2024) is 21%.

Education: Education for the multi-unit residential sector is unique because property managers and residents both need to be informed and engaged. Education efforts for curbside residents is simpler as it usually happens directly with the resident. Efforts to educate multi-unit residential properties on how to correctly use garbage and recycling have been challenging. The turnover rate in multi-units is higher so regular interactions are key. Other needs, such as tailoring material for newcomers is also important. An education and communications plan is prepared annually to outline specific activities to be carried out by the City and Cosmo.

Public Engagement

"Saskatoon Talks Trash: Multi-Unit" engagement campaign ran from February 12 to March 6, 2018. In that time, over 600 people participated in a variety of engagement activities. Residents, property managers, owners, condo boards, and landlords were asked questions on organics, garbage, recycling, and other diversion & reduction. Engagement topics for garbage included satisfaction with current service model, barriers and opportunities for improvement, interest in bulky item collection program, and implications of changing the funding model.

Most participants were satisfied with current frequency and capacity of their garbage service. Several respondents expressed concern or frustration that they are being double billed, as their Condo building receives garbage collection from a private contractor because they cannot be serviced by the City. In regard to switching multi-unit garbage to a utility, the majority (43%) of the 56 respondents were unsure, with 25% expressing support and 32% opposed.

Participants were most concerned about bulky items being dumped in their building's bins, primarily from non-residents. While there was some moderate interest in the City providing a bulky item collection service, there were concerns about cost and where to store these items in the interim. They were very supportive of offering this service to single-family homes, as they felt it would reduce illegal dumping in multi-unit garbage containers.

Industry Scan of Multi-Unit Garbage Service Models

Municipalities across Canada have a variety of service models for providing waste to multi-unit properties. The below table provides a summary of municipalities.

Municipality	Garbage	Recycling	Organics
City of Regina 4 or more units on the same parcel of land.	Private contracted service. Exploring City service (2024).	Bylaw mandates that all multi-family properties must offer recycling.	Bylaw starts July 1, 2025, that mandates food and yard waste.
City of Calgary 5 or more units on the same parcel of land.	Private contracted service. City services are available for a service fee.	Bylaw mandates that all multi-family properties must offer recycling.	Bylaw mandates that all multi-family properties must offer organics.
City of Edmonton Moving to communal vs curbside.	City-provided service.	City-provided service.	City-provided food scrap services being implemented 2023 to 2027.
City of Lethbridge 6 or more units.	Private contract.	City-provided service. Exemption for properties with more than 45 units.	City-provided service.
City of Winnipeg Multi-Family is 8 or more units.	City-service available.	City-service available.	No City service or bylaw.
City of Victoria	Mostly Private	New City service coming 2026.	New City service coming 2026.

The following section identifies the strategic improvement areas for multi-unit garbage and a list of recommendations to be considered over the next 5 years. A table at the end of this section provides proposed timing to bring decisions forward in a coordinated approach.

Findings and Recommendations

1. Finance

A fiscal restructuring is in progress that moves solid waste programs from a property tax funded model to a user fee. The first move to this approach occurred with the launch of curbside and multi-unit recycling. Both services were setup as utility models. Curbside organics was launched in 2023 using the same utility funding model. The most recent change for curbside

residents was the launch of the curbside waste utility in 2024 that saw garbage services moved from property tax to a utility. A pay for service model increases transparency for service costs and funding.

The next step for the City is to improve the funding model for properties that have City multi-unit garbage collection and those that may switch to City services in the future. The goal of this work is:

- Ensuring that only those receiving the solid waste collection services pay for it
- Increase transparency for service costs and establish a transparent link between waste disposal and the cost of waste services
- Open the door for pay for service based on additional service needs, container size, etc.

Recommendation:

Remove multi-unit garbage from property tax. Announce service price for multi-unit garbage. Move multi-unit garbage from property tax to a direct billing - per unit or variable service pricing per container. Determine a funding strategy that includes billing, enforcement, and education.

2. Service Levels

The current service level for Multi-Unit Garbage is a weekly collection frequency using metal bins. Property owners, managers, or condominium associations purchase their own metal bins and can apply for a grant to offset their costs. Buildings may contract service providers privately for garbage services.

There are approximately 82% of multi-unit properties that use the City-provided weekly service. Some properties use the City for base service needs and also use a private service provider for additional tips as needed and to deal with illegal dumping and cleanup of the waste area.

<u>Sector Needs</u>

The multi-unit residential sector has a demand for more service options, including the ability to pay for extra collections. Streamlined service offerings (using one service provider for all service needs) would help with managing waste needs, improving the waste area, and dealing with illegal dumping. Rental properties often face more challenges with behaviour that leads to overfilled containers.

Recommendation:

Explore service offerings for extra services and look at a pricing model that accurately reflects costs of providing service. These service offerings can include:

- Additional collection and an on-demand service
- Twice per week collection
- Waste area cleanup
- Pull/ pushout service for containers that are stacked or must be moved prior to tip
- Bin size change
- Bin cleaning

3. Waste Design Guidelines and Property Engagement

The Waste Collection Design Guidelines for Residential Developments have provided guidance on future developments in Saskatoon and identify important considerations for site layout, serviceability, and requirements for multi-unit solid waste services.

As the City works towards a housing strategy that may lead to more compact housing and targets to achieve greater density, this may lead to further strains on accessibility and the need for new service approaches to effectively service multi-unit properties.

Having guidelines, guidance documents, and resources to work with developers and property managers is an essential component of a successful solid waste service model.

Recommendation:

Explore further design regulations or guidelines for solid waste storage in new multi-unit residential properties.

Look at ways of engaging with developers to ensure there is regular correspondence with this stakeholder.

Look at options for improving site configurations for existing properties and offering site assessments with an emphasis on encouraging best practices and safety. Site assessments could be formalized and streamlined for properties that are changing their waste area, redoing their parking area, or are just curious on how to improve diversion at their complex.

4. Asset Management

Ownership of metal containers is an important aspect of solid waste service that needs to be explored as part of a future delivery model. Building property owners, managers, or condominium associations currently purchase their own metal bins and can apply for a grant to offset their costs. This makes it challenging to change the size and location of a metal bin.

Recommendation:

Review the Multi-Unit Dwelling (MUD) Metal Garbage Bin Grant. As part of the review explore a service model that includes City ownership and maintenance of metal bins and other containers for multi-unit service.

5. Route Optimization

Another important consideration for GHG emissions is route efficiency. Regular planning and review of routes must be completed to ensure efficient routes for all streams. New technologies are emerging that use more inputs to maximize efficiency, such as real-time data (traffic, weather, etc.), service constraints, and driver preference. Transfer stations are another option that can be used to improve route optimization for waste collection by reducing the number of vehicles needed, the distance traveled, and the overall cost.

Recommendation:

Ensure future route planning utilizes new technologies and is completed regularly to ensure routes are optimized for customer satisfaction and efficiency.

Draft Timelines

	Phase 1 2025/ 2026	Phase 2 2026/2027	Phase 3 2028/2029
Finance	➢ Decision on removing multi-unit garbage from property tax. ➢ Determine service fee structure and property tax implications.	➢ Develop a detailed implementation plan with financial implications.	➢ Implement changes.
Service Levels	➢ Start exploring different service offerings for multi-unit in conjunction with similar work for the commercial sector. ➢ Townhouse complex review (multi-unit and curbside properties) ➢ Make a decision on the role of the City in multi-unit recycling collections pending SK recycles outcomes.	➢ Develop a detailed implementation plan and funding strategy.	➢ Implement service level changes and additions.
Waste Design Guidelines & Property Engagement	➢ Review the current waste design guidelines and identify improvements. ➢ Develop engagement & communication strategy for developers/ property managers.	➢ Complete new version of waste design guidelines ➢ Execute engagement and communication strategy.	➢ Review and refine as needed.
Asset Management	➢ Explore a business case for the City providing metal containers. ➢ Make a decision on future of MUD Grant. ➢ Determine cost implications and decide on next steps.	➢ Develop implementation and funding strategy. ➢ Pending MUD Grant decision, look at new grant program for smaller garbage container or retrofit of solid waste storage area.	➢ Implement new strategy.
Route Optimization	➢ Complete a scan of route optimization approaches and new technologies.	➢ Proceed with route optimization process if required.	➢ Implement new routes.

Multi-Unit Organics – Pilot Findings and Next Steps

ISSUE

In the 2022/2023 Multi-Year Budget, City Council approved funding for development of a multi-unit organics program through a phased approach. Building off public engagement completed in 2018, a pilot study was carried out in 2024 to inform the design of a multi-unit residential organics (multi-unit organics) program.

This report provides an update on the multi-unit organics pilot study including the engagement results, introduces guiding principles that will be used to design and assess program options, and outlines next steps.

BACKGROUND

City Council, at its meeting held on May 23, 2017, received the Waste Diversion Opportunities report identifying various tools and approaches to improving waste diversion in Saskatoon, including organics diversion for the multi-unit sector. On February 13, 2018, an overview of Multi-Unit Residential Waste Diversion Opportunities was brought to City Council with a recommendation that Administration explore opportunities for the diversion of organic waste from multi-unit residential buildings and proceed with engagement with citizens and stakeholders.

Engagement with stakeholders was carried out and a report with findings went to City Council on September 10, 2018: Multi-Unit Residential Proposed Changes to Waste Management – Engagement Results.

The Waste Diversion Plan Update report to the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services on January 7, 2019, provided an update on all waste diversion activities. Work was prioritized on the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) sector as the waste diversion potential was higher than the multi-unit sector. Further development of the multi-unit organics program resumed with funding for 2022/2023.

Further details on each sector are provided in Appendix 1 - 2025 Solid Waste Overview – Sectors and Services. The 2022 Integrated Waste Management Report provides an overview of services and diversion and is presented publicly every second year. The next Integrated Waste Management Report will be prepared in Q2 2025 with 2024 data.

CURRENT STATUS

The City of Saskatoon (City) does not have an organics diversion program for the multi-unit residential sector. Properties within the multi-unit residential waste sector are ineligible for the green cart program and were ineligible for the previous green cart subscription program.

The City operates both garbage and recycling collection programs for the multi-unit sector. The City provides weekly garbage collection to multi-unit residential properties

with metal bins, funded through the property tax, or properties can choose to contract services privately to augment the base service level. Building property owners, managers, or condominium associations purchase their own metal bins and can apply for a grant to offset their costs.

The City launched multi-unit residential recycling in 2014, through a contracted recycling service with Cosmopolitan Industries. All residents living in apartments and condominiums that receive metal bin garbage collection or communal waste collection are part of the program and receive recycling service through a metal bin or rollout carts. Unlike multi-unit residential garbage, multi-unit residential recycling is a mandatory program for all properties considered multi-unit residential.

Guided by the Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan, the City is addressing organics waste diversion through an approach which targets the largest waste generating sectors first. In 2023, the City launched the green cart program to collect organics from curbside residential households. A phase-in of a regulation that requires businesses and organizations that generate food or yard waste as part of their operations to divert these materials also began in 2023, with enforcement beginning in the fall of 2024. Additional work is underway to develop an organics diversion approach for public spaces and events, as well as to expand organics to additional civic facilities.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The multi-unit residential sector poses unique opportunities and challenges in waste collection compared to curbside collection. While there are efficiencies, such as communal (shared) containers, there are also challenges such as: higher contamination rates, lower capture rates, high incidents of illegal dumping and unauthorized use of residential containers. Organics waste generation for the multi-unit sector is also a higher proportion of food waste than the curbside residential sector. There are also various types and sizes of properties in the multi-unit sector. Each property has unique site considerations and servicing needs. For these reasons, multi-unit organics programs are not as common in Canada as curbside organics programs.

A pilot study has now been completed to gain and verify information required to design a multi-unit organics program in Saskatoon. The pilot findings will inform a program design which:

- addresses outstanding items from the 2018 public engagement;
- defines the service requirements for the specific sector and waste stream (container size, collection frequency, collection method); and
- projects the expected diversion potential from the program.

Important components of the pilot include specific design elements that can be replicated by the City or properties, as well as collecting direct feedback from participants (properties, residents, and other stakeholders).

Pilot Methodology

The Multi-Unit Organics Pilot Study has been developed to help shape a future multi-unit organics program for the entire city. Lawson Heights Suburban Centre, Lawson Heights, River Heights, and Silverwood Heights were selected for the pilot study due to a mix of different types of multi-unit properties in that area. Sixteen properties that include 24 buildings and 3 multi-unit townhouse complexes participated in the pilot study.

The pilot looked at certain approaches and design considerations for organics diversion at multi-unit properties. It assessed collection frequency, cart capacity, and collection location and helped identify what design best meets the need of the multi-unit sector. Education and resources were also assessed to determine what works best for encouraging proper participation. The pilot provided the opportunity to get direct feedback from residents and property managers through engagement that included surveys and interviews. The pilot included a variety of property managers and condo boards.

Organics service for the pilot were provided through a service agreement with Loraas Disposal north that was awarded through a competitive request for proposal process. The service agreement included provisions of containers, collection, and processing of material. Although the official pilot is complete, participating properties will receive organics service to the end of 2025, while analysis and decision-making is underway. Additional information on the methodology, participating properties, and organics services are available in Appendix 3 - Multi-Unit Organics Pilot Study Findings.

Engagement Findings

The City engaged residents, tenants, and property managers participating in the Multi-Unit Organics Pilot. Appendix 2 - Multi-Unit Organics Pilot (Engagement Report) provides the full results of engagement completed for the multi-unit organics pilot, with highlights summarized below.

Resident and Tenant Engagement

A launch survey at the start of the pilot and a closing survey eight months into the pilot were used to collect feedback for the pilot. The closing survey received 144 responses. Survey responses indicate that 96% of residents participated in the organic pilot at least once. When asked whether they supported the City in implementing a city-wide multi-unit organics program:

- 81% stated “yes”;
- 11% stated that they “somewhat” supported;
- 5% stated “no”; and
- 3% were “unsure”.

Property Management Feedback

A representative from each property provided feedback eight months into the pilot through an interview to gather information on:

- organic service approaches;
- waste funding methods;
- collection frequency;
- container type and location;
- multi-unit garbage and recycling; and
- education.

Engagement outcomes show that most property managers are supportive of a utility funding model for a future multi-unit organics program. Advanced notice of at least one year was identified as a key requirement for smooth implementation. Gathered through interviews with pilot study property management, the outcomes show that 13 of the 15 interviewees prefer a city-provided service for a future multi-unit organics program, as they do not like having to setup and manage service contracts.

Pilot Study Findings

The pilot study shows that successful diversion outcomes are possible with proper design, education, and property engagement. Detailed pilot study findings can be found in Appendix 3 – Multi-Unit Organics Pilot Study Findings.

Capacity analysis findings show that:

- A 360L green cart can comfortably service about 30 units with weekly collection.
- Weekly collection is the preferred frequency by pilot participants as it requires fewer carts.
- Carts are serviced with a rear loader truck that requires each cart to be rolled to the back of the truck to be tipped.
- This collection method along with weekly collection helps address space issues as carts can be tucked next to other waste containers or placed in another accessible location.

Education and outreach are shown to be important aspects of encouraging residents to participate in the pilot. Kitchen pails, BPI certified compostable bags - 10-pack of BPI bags, and information post cards were given out to most properties during deployment. It was found that kitchen pails are a great prompt for getting residents to divert food waste. The two properties that only gave kitchen pails to units that requested them had low participation compared to other pilot properties where every unit received one. The pilot study survey shows that kitchen pails and BPI certified compostable bags are useful tools to encourage residents to participate.

Additional findings show that most pilot participants state that they have little or no yard waste, as landscape services are often hired out as part of a service contract and material is hauled away, consistent with the 2018 engagement results. However, audits in April 2024 show that that several properties have large quantities of yard waste ending up in their garbage stream and going to landfill.

Landscaping service providers fall under the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) sector. Yard waste can be handled through education and enforcement but there

also are opportunities to include yard waste needs in the design of a future multi-unit organics program. Through engagement we heard that the main concern is finding the option that is most cost effective. A decision on how yard waste will be dealt with by the multi-unit sector will be addressed in the future option analysis report.

Contamination is not a significant issue according to the pilot study. Plastic is the highest contaminate found during the pilot, which is consistent with containerisation found in the curbside green cart program. The level of participation in the pilot varied based on property type. The findings show that owned multi-units or senior living complexes usually have better engagement and participation than rentals. Rentals have a lower rate of participation and higher levels of contamination.

Guiding Principles

A list of guiding principles has been developed to support option analysis and recommendations for a city-wide program design. The guiding principles are informed by past waste diversion program development, feedback from engagement, experience in delivering multi-unit garbage and recycling services, and the City's Triple Bottom Line Policy.

The guiding principles include:

- Service level satisfaction;
- Transparency (funding model);
- Flexibility;
- Waste diversion and GHGs avoided;
- Reduced contamination;
- Sector alignment;
- Integrated waste; and
- Responsibility.

A description of these guiding principles is available in Appendix 4 Guiding Principles – Multi-Unit Organics Program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial considerations will be included in a planned report for Q2 2025, that presents the option analysis for the city-wide multi-unit organics program design. A second report with detailed cost implications of the chosen option will be reported as part of the implementation plan.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Environmental

Waste audits and weights were taken during the pilot to determine how much organic material was being collected and how the garbage material composition changed with the introduction of organics. Weight collected (per unit average) during the pilot varied significantly across the different pilot participants. Average weights collected eight months into the pilot suggest that around 2000 tonnes of organic material could be

diverted through a city-wide program. As a comparison, the Multi-Unit Recycling program diverted 1821 tonnes of recycling in 2023.

GHG

It is estimated that a city-wide multi-unit organics program could avoid 2500 tonnes of CO_2e per year that would have been released as methane gas if the same materials were landfilled. This is the equivalent of removing 550 passenger cars from the roadway.

NEXT STEPS

Administration has developed a list of options and will present four options that could best meet the specific needs of Saskatoon. The detailed options and analysis will be presented in a decision report in Q2 of 2025.

APPENDICES

1. Solid Waste Overview 2025 – Sectors and Services
2. Multi-Unit Organics Pilot Engagement Report
3. Multi-Unit Organics Pilot Study Findings
4. Guiding Principles – Multi-Unit Organics Program

Report Approval

Written by: Daniel Mireault, Project Manager, Sustainability
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Approved by: Angela Gardiner, General Manager, Utilities and Environment

Admin Report - Multi-Unit Organics – Pilot Findings and Next Steps.docx

Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Plan Overview

The City of Saskatoon (the City) takes an integrated approach to waste management by combining solid waste diversion, disposal, and education services. The City prepares biennial reporting on these services through the Integrated Waste Management Report.

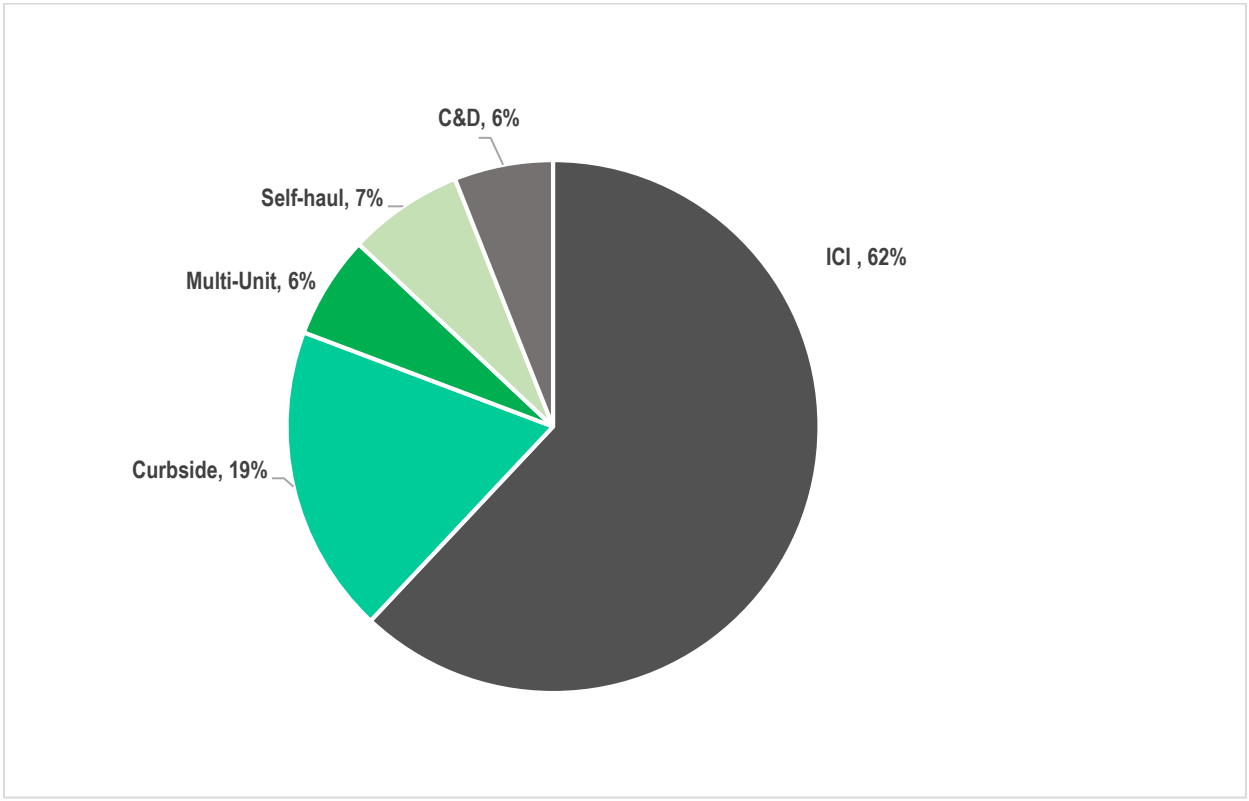
Since January 2021, the Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan (the Plan) and Council direction has guided the City's new the initiatives to reduce and divert waste. Administration prepares a biennial status update and a work plan aligning with the multi-year budging process. Both the Integrated Waste Management Report and work plan were last prepared in June 2023 and updates to both are planned for Q2 2025.

This attachment provides an overview of the City's wide waste generation, a timeline of planning and achievement milestones, a summary of City provided waste services by sector.

Waste Generation

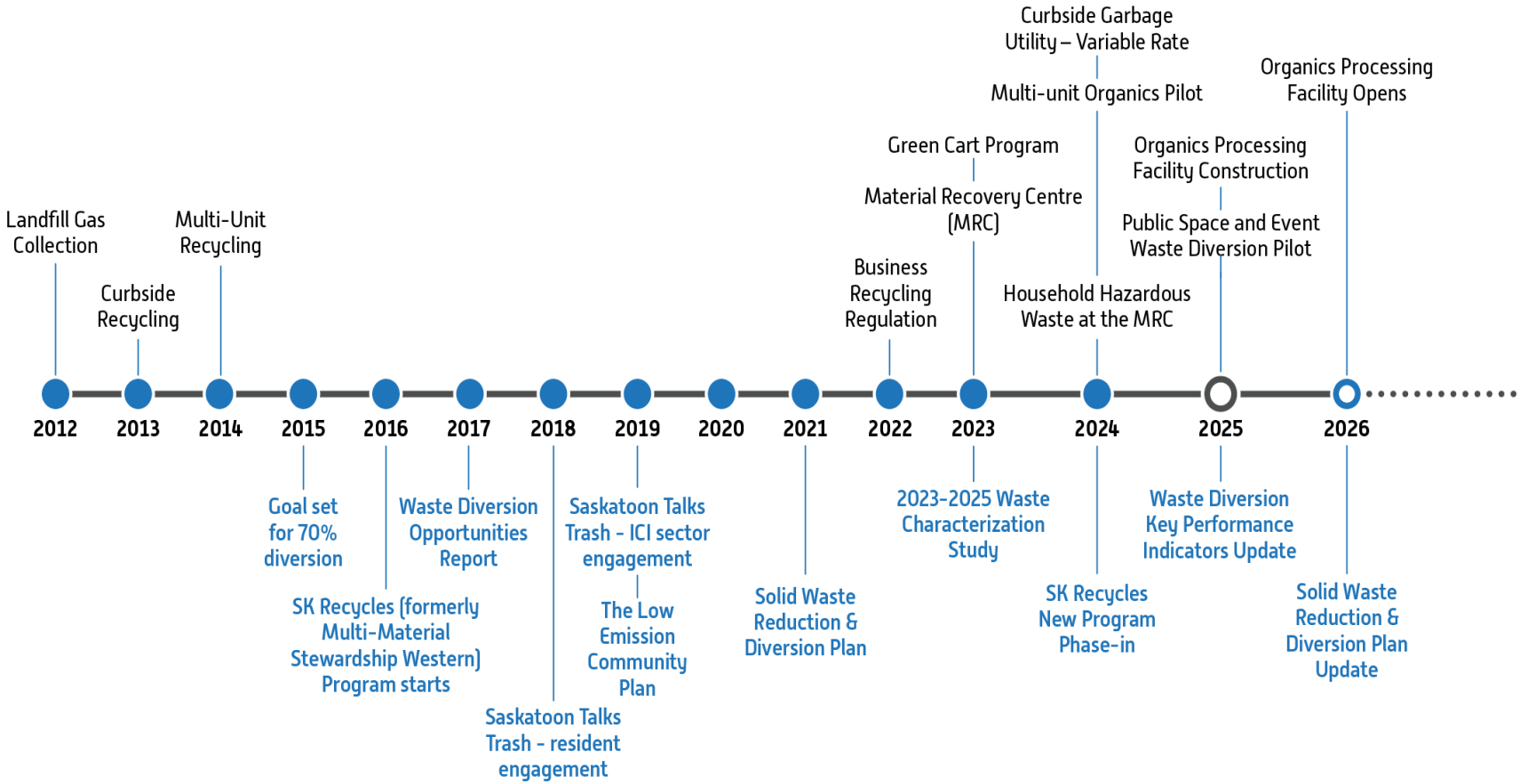
Programs and services are divided into three main sectors: curbside (single family) residential, multi-unit residential, and industrial, commercial, institutional (ICI). Construction & Demolition (C&D) is often included as ICI and self-haul (solid waste brought to the landfill by residents) is included as residential. The following image shows the estimated percentages of waste generated by sector from 2016.

Image 1 – Estimated Waste Percentages by Sector



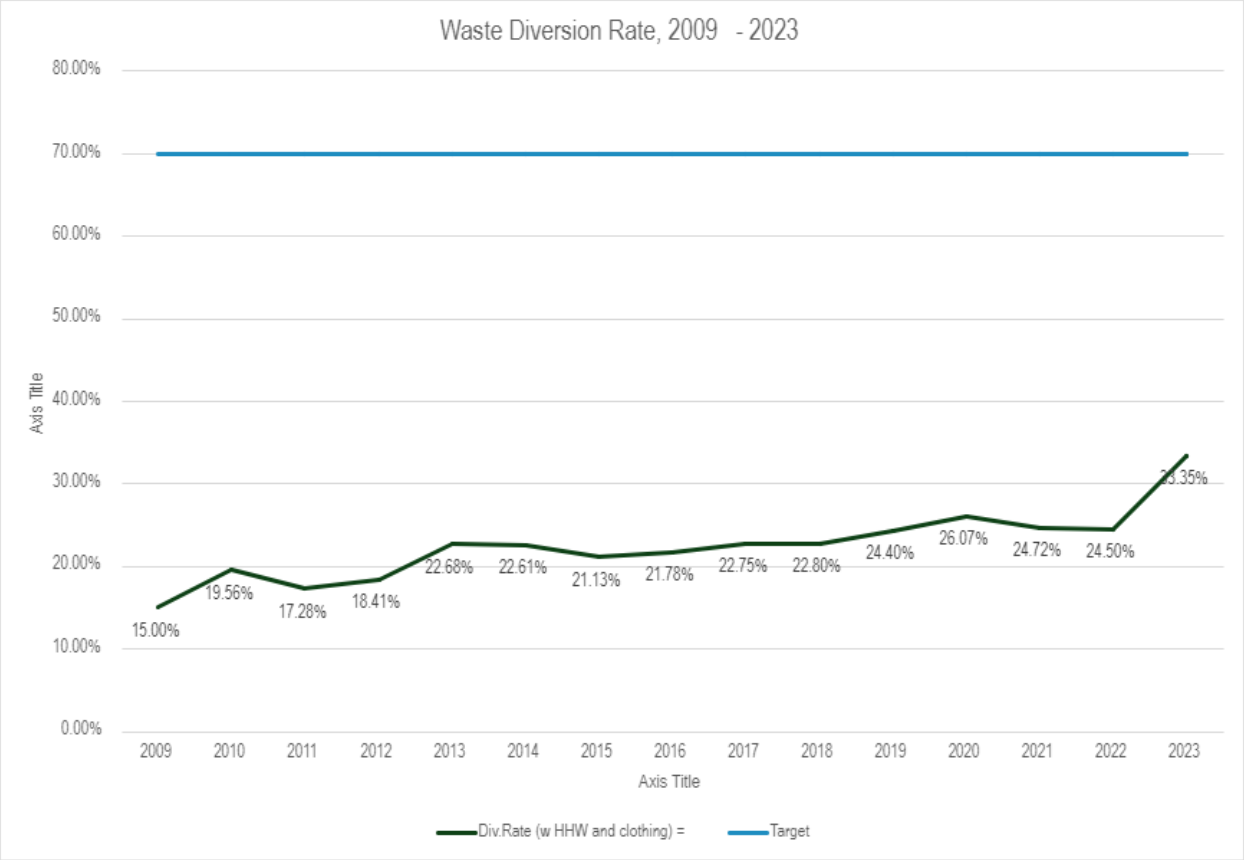
Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Plan Overview

Waste Reduction and Diversion Planning and Achievements Over the past 15 years there have been significant planning and program developments. Major milestones are highlighted in the diagram below.



Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Plan Overview

Council has a target of 70% diversion from the City's landfill. It is calculated as the proportion of waste diverted compared to the total waste handled. Over much of the past decade the waste diversion rate for the City has been relatively stable. However, in 2023 with the introduction of the green cart and opening of the Material Recovery Centre there was an improvement in diversion.



City Services by Sector

Curbside (Single-Family) Residential

Around 19% of the waste generated in Saskatoon comes from the curbside sector. In 2024, Saskatoon surpassed 75,000 active service addresses that receive curbside service.

Curbside Garbage (Black Cart): The City provides collection of household garbage bi-weekly (every second week) year round. At the start of 2024, this service transitioned to a utility-funded program with a variable rate through three different cart size options (Small (120L)/ Medium (240L)/ Large (360L)).

Curbside Recycling (Blue Cart): Blue cart recycling is currently provided through a multi-year service agreement with Loraas Disposal North. The service is setup as a utility-

funded program. Over the coming years this will change as the province shifts towards a full Extended Producer Responsibility model.

Organics - Food and Yard Waste (Green Cart): The Green Cart program launched in 2023. Food and yard waste is collected bi-weekly by the City and currently brought to the Loraas Organics facility north of Saskatoon. Plans for a City-owned organics facility are in place for 2026. Starting in December 2024, Green Cart collection shifted to monthly service for the winter months (December, January, February and March).

Multi-Unit Residential

Around 6% of the waste generated in Saskatoon comes from the multi-unit sector. There are approximately 40,000 habitable units at 900 sites in Saskatoon that receive multi-unit waste services. Properties receive communal waste services.

Multi-Unit Garbage: The City of Saskatoon provides a weekly garbage collection to apartments and condominiums using metal bins. Building property owners, managers, or condominium associations purchase their own metal bins and can apply for a grant to offset their costs. Buildings may contract services privately.

Multi-Unit Recycling: Blue cart recycling is currently provided through a multi-year service agreement with Cosmopolitan Industries. The service is setup as a utility-funded program. Over the coming years this will change as the province shifts towards a full Extended Producer Responsibility model.

Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional

Saskatoon's businesses and organizations generate 68% of all waste. 169,000 tonnes of waste go to Saskatoon and area landfills each year.

ICI Garbage: Garbage service for this sector is primarily provided through the private sector. The City has some commercial contracts for garbage services.

Business Recycling: In 2022, Waste Diversion Regulations for the ICI Sector were introduced starting with recycling. As per the Waste Amendment Bylaw (Bylaw No.9775), all businesses and organizations in Saskatoon are required to separate recyclable materials from the garbage.

Business Organic Waste: All businesses and organizations that generate food or yard waste in Saskatoon are required to separate organic materials from the garbage. The education phase began in October 2023 and enforcement begin in October 2024.

Material Recovery Centre & Landfill

In October 2023, the Material Recovery Centre (MRC) opened at the Saskatoon Regional Waste Management Centre. The MRC is designed to be a one-stop facility that functions to provide easy, efficient, and cost-effective waste diversion and landfill transfer. The MRC will improve the City's waste diversion rate with more materials being diverted from the landfill, getting us one step closer to our goal of 70% diversion.

City of Saskatoon
ENGAGE

MULTI-UNIT ORGANICS PILOT

Engagement Report

December 2, 2024

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In 2024 the City of Saskatoon (City) engaged select residents, tenants and property managers in the Multi-Unit Organics Pilot Study to help shape a future multi-unit organics program for Saskatoon.

We explored the following:

- **Support** for a multi-unit organics service
- The **opportunities and barriers** associated with a multi-unit organics service
- **Education and awareness materials** that were effective and useful
- The importance of **kitchen pails and BPI bags** for organics collection
- **Specific considerations** for a multi-unit organics program

Why Are We Doing This Work?

The City of Saskatoon (City) is developing a multi-unit residential organics program that will explore opportunities to divert organic waste from multi-unit buildings. There are many reasons for the City to divert organic waste away from the landfill, including:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Improved environmental health
- Delaying the need for a new landfill

The program aligns with the *City of Saskatoon 2022-2025 Strategic Plan*; in particular, the outcome to maximize solid waste diversion and to implement actions in the *Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan* within proposed timeframes to achieve 70% diversion from the Saskatoon Landfill.

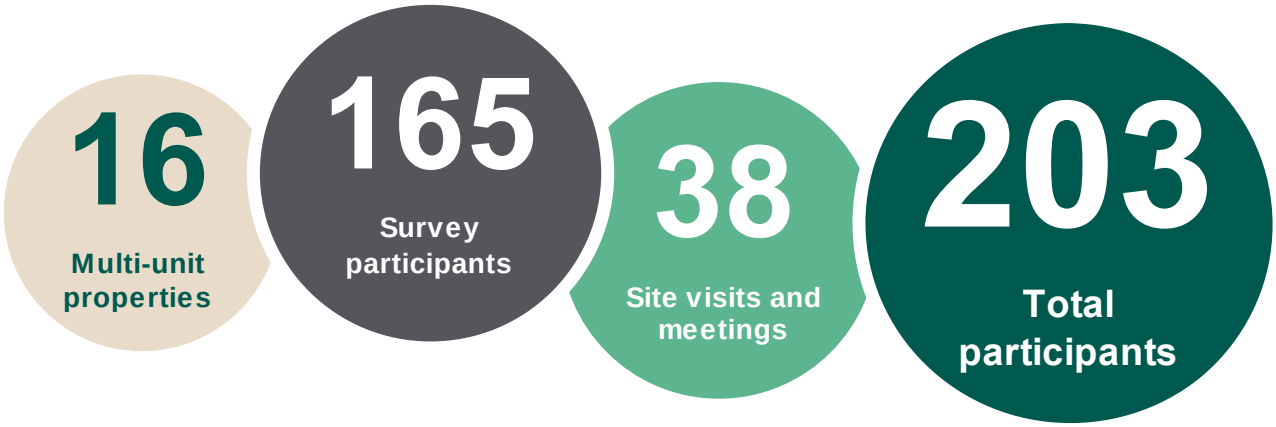
Using What We Learned

Based on feedback from participants, in addition to best practices from other cities and internal considerations, City Administration is developing a recommendation for a Multi-Unit Organics Program, which will be presented to City Council in 2025.

This condensed report outlines the feedback from all activities that informed the engagement goals for the project. For more information and detailed results please see the Engagement Report.

We thank all participants who provided their feedback for this and other City of Saskatoon projects.

WHAT WE DID



The City engaged with a mix of different types of multi-unit properties within the Lawson Heights, River Heights and Silverwood Heights neighbourhoods. By focusing on one area for the pilot, the City could more easily monitor the pilot and collect direct feedback from participants.

Who We Engaged With:

- Condo Boards
- Multi-unit housing providers
- Property managers
- Residents
- Tenants

How We Gathered Input:

- Meetings with property managers and condo boards
- Pop-ups at individual properties
- Surveys for participants

Questions we asked participants:

- **What did they think** of the pilot program?
- **What information** did they need to use the green bin**?**
- **What considerations** are needed for a future program?
- **How can the City help** make organics collection clean, safe and accessible?

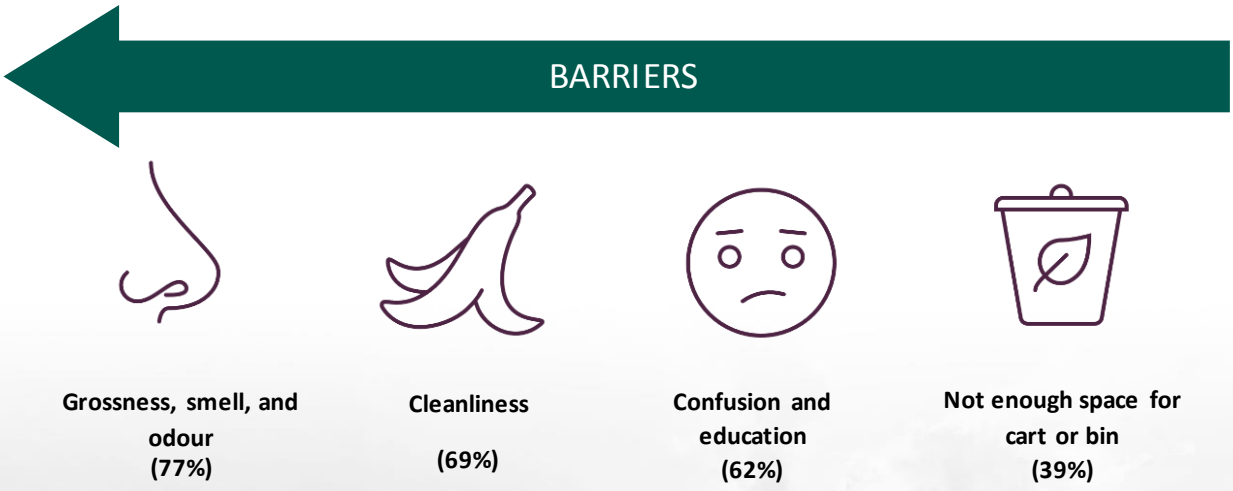
WHAT WE HEARD

Thoughts On Organic Waste Diversion

- Waste diversion and having a positive impact on the environment is important to most participants.
- Most of the participants (62% of participants) felt that 25% or less of their household waste consisted of food waste.
- Participants favoured receiving education through pamphlets and handouts (93%), condo boards/property managers (85%) and the City's website (62%).

Barriers to Multi-Unit Organics

Participants prioritized the following barriers to multi-unit organics collection as being the most important:

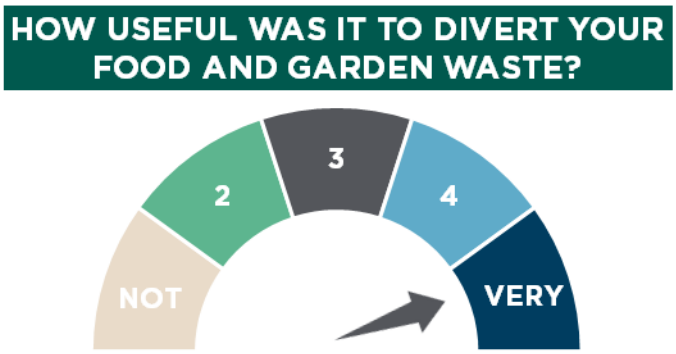


Other barriers provided by participants included:

- **Frequency** of emptying the containers
- **Illegal dumping and/or misuse** of green containers
- Regularly emptying collection containers in property **common areas**
- **Safety considerations** for transporting waste by those who are lacking in mobility.

Support the Pilot Study

Participants felt that diverting their food and garden waste was “very useful”. The majority of participants enjoyed and “always used” their green carts (80%), kitchen pails (81%) and BPI bags (83%). Other findings included:



- Most participants felt that **BPI bags were very important** (66%) for their participation, since they reduce the smell and improved the cleanliness of organic waste collection.
- On average participants felt that their **concerns about the grossness and cleanliness of carts were the same** as those prior to the pilot study.
- Most participants (85%) **understood the importance of keeping organic waste out of the landfill**.

Education Materials

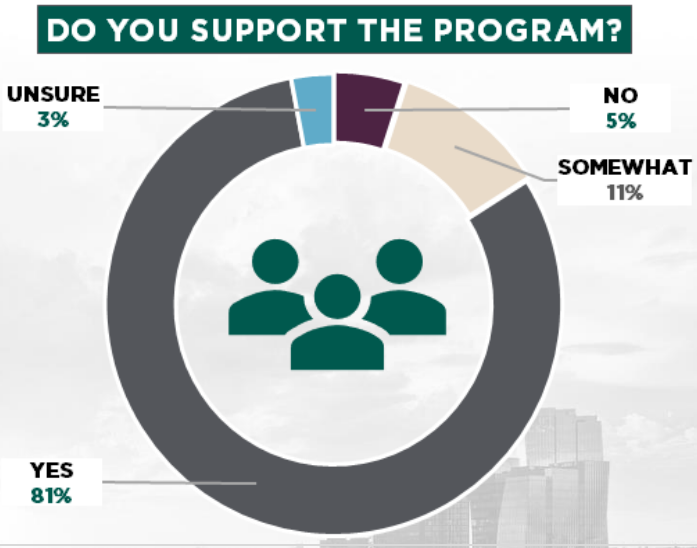
Most participants were very satisfied (81%) with the signage and education materials. From the educational materials provided during the pilot study, participants provided the following ranking based on their helpfulness:

1. Kitchen pail and postcard (71%)
2. Kitchen magnet “What Goes In” (57%)
3. Posters in the building (33%)
4. Signage on bins (30%)
5. Email from property manager/condo board (29%)
6. Website (7%)

Support for the Program

When asked whether they supported the City in implementing the Multi-Unit Organics Program across Saskatoon, most participants stated “yes” (81%).

Throughout the meetings, interviews and surveys, participants expressed their support for the process and for the City in improving waste diversion in Saskatoon.



Other Considerations

From the various comments provided throughout the engagement activities, the following topics were emphasized by participants:

Accessibility: some participants had difficulty carrying their bags/kitchen pails to the green cart and lifting the green cart lids; accessibility considerations need further exploration

Adapt: a few participants called on the City to be flexible in how the program is implemented and adapt to the individual needs of specific properties, such as working with the property manager to increase the number or change the distribution of green bins on the property

Bin liners: participants found that the liners used for the green carts would often fall down, leading to the need for more regular cleaning and maintenance of the green carts; participants asked for the City to find a solution to secure the bags to the green carts

Pickup frequency: some participants found that collections every two-week was not frequent enough and instead preferred weekly collection schedules

Support: many participants supported the program and supported the City for their efforts, stating it was easy to do and that more residents should get involved

NEXT STEPS

What learnt from participants, in addition to best practices from other cities and internal considerations, will be used to shape a future multi-unit organics program for the entire City. Findings on this engagement and a recommendation for a Multi-Unit Organics Program will be presented to City Council in 2025.

We thank all participants who provided their feedback for this and other City of Saskatoon projects.

City of Saskatoon ENGAGE

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

1 BACKGROUND

The City of Saskatoon (City) is developing a multi-unit residential organics program that will explore opportunities to divert multi-unit organic waste. There are many reasons for the City to divert organic waste away from the landfill, including:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Improved environmental health
- Delaying the need for a new landfill
- Building on previous engagement results from *Saskatoon Talks Trash: Multi-Unit (2018)*, which showed that 80% of residents and 53% of property managers supported an organics program.

To continue this work, the City conducted a pilot study for organics diversion at multi-unit residential properties. From January to September 2024, the City is engaged select property managers, owners and tenants from 15 different multi-unit properties in the development of the program. Selected properties were provided with green collector bins for their building, as well as kitchen pails and BPI (Biodegradable Products Institute) bags for use during the pilot study. Numerous communications and marketing tactics were used to promote participation in the pilot study, including educational signage and pop-ups.

Throughout the pilot study participants were asked:

- What did they think of the pilot study?
- What future improvements can be made to the program?
- How can the City help make organics collection clean, safe and accessible?

What we learned from participants, in addition to best practices from other cities and internal considerations, will be used to shape a future multi-unit organics program for the entire city. A recommendation for a Multi-Unit Organics Program will be presented to City Council in 2025.

1.1 Strategic Goals

The program aligns with the *City of Saskatoon 2022-2025 Strategic Plan*; in particular, the outcome to maximize solid waste diversion and to implement actions in the *Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan* within the proposed timeframes, to achieve 70% diversion from the landfill.

It also ties into the *Official Community Plan* (4.2 - Recycling and Diversion) and the objective to promote recycling and diversion to keep recyclable, organic, and other recoverable materials from entering the landfill and policies to facilitate city-wide waste diversion initiatives throughout all sectors, including policy, collection, and educational programs.

Other City goals and/or initiatives the program supports include:

- *Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan*, which identifies mandatory residential multi-unit organics as an action.

- *Low Emissions Community Plan* identifies Action 24: Improve and expand waste management programs and services to increase reduction and diversion. By 2050, achieve reduction and diversion rates of 90% for organics, 95% for plastics and 90% for paper.

1.2 Summary of Engagement Strategy

A summary of the participants, level of influence, engagement objectives and activities completed are provided below.

Table 1: Summary of engagement goals

Phase	Participants	Level of Influence	Objective	Engagement Activities
1	Property Managers Owners/Tenants	Consult	***Launching:*** Understand interest and considerations for the pilot program	*Correspondence Survey
2	Property Managers Owners/Tenants	Consult	***Learning:*** Determine support and improvements for program	*Correspondence Interviews Survey

** Correspondence refers to emails, phone calls, and virtual meetings with participants.*

A summary of engagement activities, dates, and number of participants engaged is provided in the table below.

Table 2: Summary of engagement activities

Participants	Activity	Timeframe	Participants
All	Launch Survey	Q1, 2024	21
All	Interviews and Site Visits	Q3, 2024	38
All	Closing Survey	Q3, 2024	144
		Total Participants:	**203**

1.3 Participants

A total of 15 multi-unit residential properties were selected within the Lawson Heights, River Heights, and Silverwood Heights neighbourhoods. Properties contained a mix of demographics and building types. Properties contained up to four buildings with 20 to 200 units. Property managers and condo boards were also engaged throughout the pilot, whenever possible.

Engagement with all participants aimed to be inclusive in terms of age, gender, culture, citizenship, income, and other demographics.

2 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Participants provided their feedback through surveys, interviews or by contacting the project team directly. All engagement activities are described below.

2.1 Launch Survey

The City conducted an online survey from January to March 2024 to determine the interest in participating in the pilot study and considerations for the program. The survey included 12 (owners/tenants) to 16 (property managers) closed- and open-ended questions. Respondents were able to write-in an "other" preference for numerous questions and provide explanations for their answers.

2.1.1 Intended Audience

The survey was intended for property managers, owners and tenants from the 15 multi-unit properties participating in the pilot study.

2.1.2 Marketing Techniques

The following techniques were used to reach the intended audiences.

1. Print Materials
    a. Posters and postcards were developed to explain the program and provide education on green cart usage. These were displayed around the participating buildings and distributed to every household.
2. Starter Kit
    a. A starter kit was provided to each participant which included a hot stamped kitchen catcher, a sampling of BPI-certified compostable bags as well as the informational postcard.
3. City Website
    a. Updates to the City's website were made to encourage participation in the online survey.
4. Email
    a. Personalized emails were sent to property managers and/or condo boards asking for their participation and to share the information with their tenants.
5. Signage
    a. Custom signs were developed based on the property layouts to aide residents in using their green carts. Some signs were informational and identified the different types of waste bins outside their property. In other cases, directional signage was installed to help guide residents to their green cart for easier disposal.

2.1.3 Analysis

Mixed methods were used to analyze the data. Qualitative methods included thematic analysis and open coding of responses. The results were analyzed for the following indicators:

- Most popular opportunities and barriers (count)
- Level of support (count) for various program elements
- Thematic analysis of considerations related to the pilot study and/or different program options.

2.1.4 What We Heard

A total of 21 community members participated in the survey, with roughly 55% being owners, 11% being renters and 29% being property managers/condo board representatives.

Thoughts On Waste Diversion and the Pilot Program

Property managers were somewhat happy (average 3.5 out of 5) with their current waste collection servicing. Concerns with their current waste collection services included not having enough room for waste bins, missed pickups and lack of communications with the service provider.

Waste diversion and having a positive impact on the environment, was important to participants (Figure 1). Most participants (85%) stated that they were planning on participating in the pilot study.

Figure 1: Importance of waste diversion

Understanding of Organics

When asked to speculate on what percentage of their household waste was food waste, most responded with 25% or lower (62% of participants), followed by 25-50% (23% of participants). Participants had a good understanding of what could go into their green bins and kitchen pails (Figure 2).

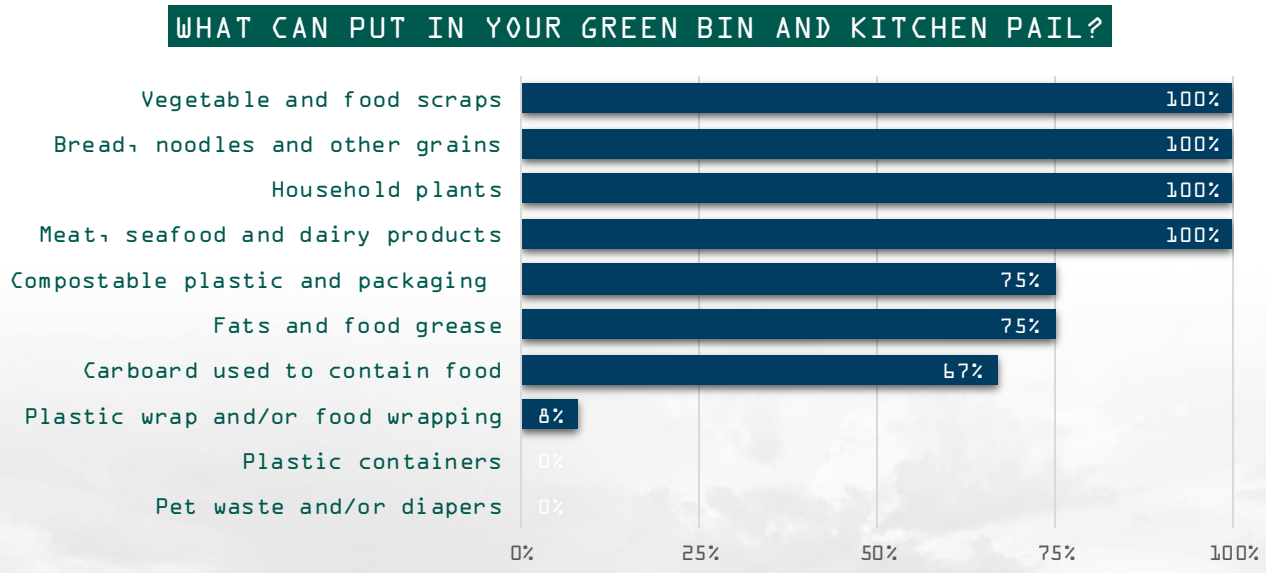


Figure 2: Knowledge of organics and what can be composted

From the proposed education methods for the future pilot program, participants provided the following ranking:

1. Pamphlets and handouts (93%)
2. Through condo boards/property managers (85%)
3. Website information (62%)
4. Videos, radio and multimedia (46%)
5. Social media (39%)
6. Door to door information (23%)

Suggestions for other educational methods provided by participants included holding pop-up events at malls and involving those who already participated in the program to showcase the benefits. One participant stressed the need for in-person education, stating that information sent via mail could be viewed as being "junk mail" by many residents/tenants and that direct approaches were more preferred.

Barriers to Multi-Unit Organics

When asked to identify the most important barriers to participating in a multi-unit organics program, respondents provided the following ranking:

1. Grossness, including smell and odour (77%)
2. Cleanliness of the organics container and surrounding area (69%)
3. Confusion and not enough education, such as not knowing what goes in (62%)
4. Not enough space for the organics container or cart (39%)
5. Pests (31%)
6. Limited update and/or misuse of the containers (23%)
6. Not convenient (23%)
7. Do not generate enough material to make it worth the effort (8%)

Other suggested barriers included the frequency of emptying the containers, enforcement for those who illegally use/misuse the bins, ensuring there are containers in common areas that are regularly emptied, and transporting the kitchen pails for those who are lacking in mobility.

2.2 Interviews and Site Visits

A total of 14 interviews and site visits were held at pilot properties throughout August 2024, during the second phase of engagement.

2.2.1 Intended Audience

Interviews and site visits were used to collect feedback from those directly involved with management/oversight of the pilot property or were direct contacts during the pilot study. Interviewees included members of condo boards and property managers. Many of the interviewees were residents at a pilot property.

2.2.2 Marketing Techniques

No marketing techniques were employed for these activities.

2.2.3 Analysis

Qualitative methods were used to analyze the data, including the thematic analysis and open coding of responses. The results were analyzed for the level of support for the various program elements and considerations.

2.2.4 What We Heard

Servicing and Logisitics

The majority of interviewees supported the City providing the organics waste collection service for their multi-unit properties, as long as the City met the needs of their building and provided the lowest cost for the service.

At the start of the pilot study most buildings preferred biweekly collections; however, throughout the pilot study many buildings changed to weekly collections. The was primarily due to the cleanliness and smell of the carts, especially during the summer months.

The location for the organics waste containers depended on the space available and access to the location. Some interviewees expressed their concerns for cross contamination due to their proximity to other waste containers (i.e., garbage and recycling) and the impacts on parking.

Education

The majority of interviewees liked the educational materials that were provided during the pilot study. One participant noted that they were confused as to whether garden waste was considered organic waste, while other participants suggested having a larger container for seasonal yard waste (i.e., spring and fall).

Interviewees enjoyed using the kitchen pails and the City providing BPI bags for individual use. A few interviewees suggested having BPI bag dispensers in an accessible location on the property would be of benefit. Another interviewee noted that common eating areas create unique challenges, since this requires regular emptying of a shared waste container.

2.3 Closing Survey

The City conducted an online survey in August 2024 to gain feedback on the pilot study and additional considerations for the program. The survey consisted of fourteen closed- and open-ended questions, with some additional questions for property managers. Respondents were able to write-in an “other” preference for numerous questions and provide explanations for their answers.

2.3.1 Intended Audience

The survey was intended for property managers, owners and tenants from the 15 multi-unit properties participating in the pilot study.

2.3.2 Marketing Techniques

The following techniques were used to reach the intended audiences.

1. City Website
    a. Updates to the City’s website were made to encourage participation in the online survey.

2. Email
    a. Personalized emails were sent to property managers and condo boards asking for the survey link and information to be shared with residents and tenants of each property.
3. Signage
    a. Posters for the closing survey were put in as many buildings as possible with a QR code to the survey

2.3.3 Analysis

Mixed methods were used to analyze the data. Qualitative methods included the thematic analysis and open coding of responses. The results were analyzed for the following indicators:

- Level of support (count) for various program elements and considerations
- Thematic analysis of considerations related to the pilot study and/or different program options.

2.3.4 What We Learned

A total of 144 property managers, representatives, residents and participated in the survey, with 96% of them stating that they used the organics service offered during the pilot study. Participants were from all but three pilot properties.

Feedback on the Pilot Study

Most participants felt that their building's green cart was easy to locate (96%) and access (94%). One participant suggested that residents will have to work with their property managers to ensure the distribution of green bins aligns with their usage, since some bins were used more than others. Many participants felt that their property managers do a good job with keeping in touch with them on waste issues (72%).

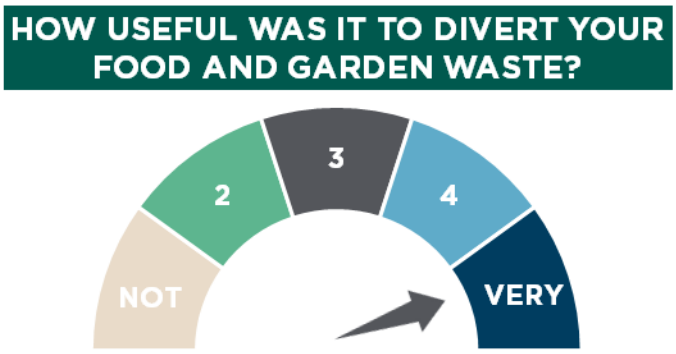


Figure 3: Usefulness of organic waste diversion

When asked how useful it was to divert their food and garden waste, participants on average stated it was "very useful" (Figure 3). Most participants indicated that they "always" used the green carts, kitchen pails and BPI bags (Figure 4).

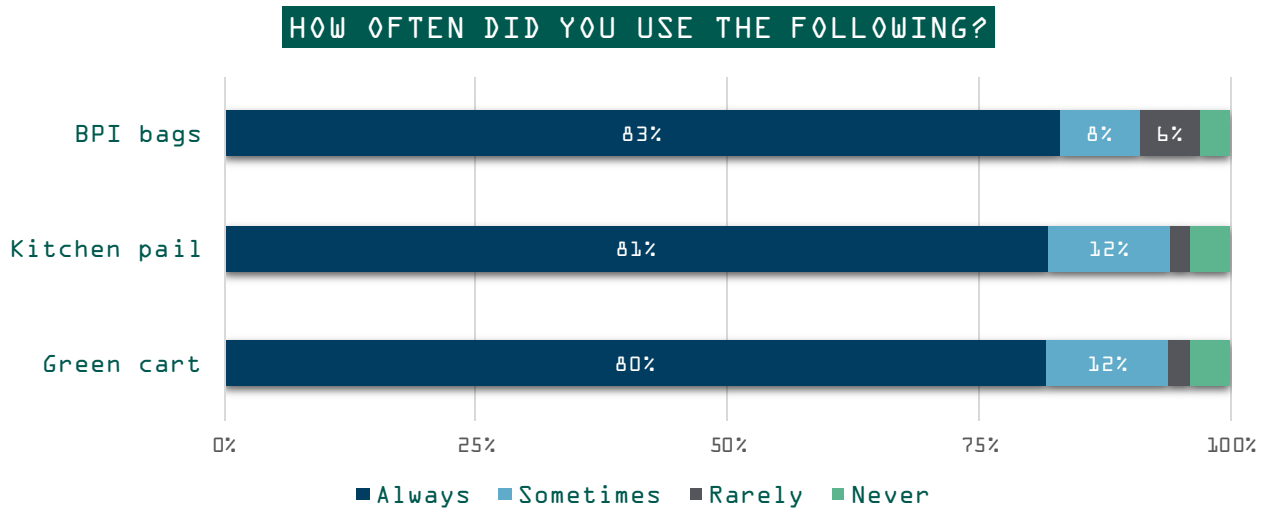


Figure 4: How often participants used the organics supplies

Results were similar when participants were asked whether they enjoyed using their green carts, kitchen pails and BPI bags (Figure 5).

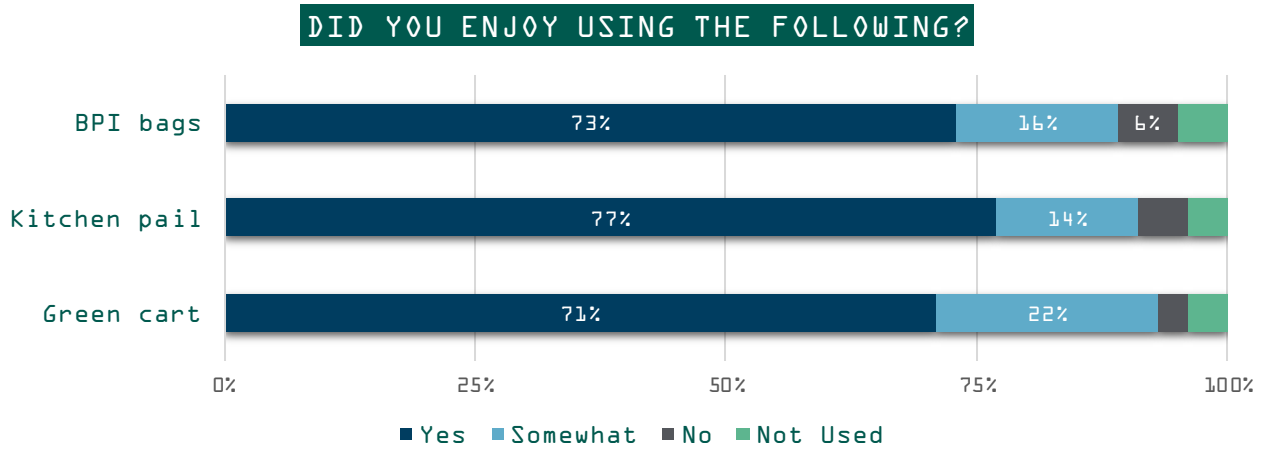


Figure 5: How participants enjoyed using the organics supplies

Most participants felt that BPI bags were “very important” (66%) for their participation in the pilot study, with some indicating they were “somewhat important” (14%) or “not important” (12%). Participants expressed that the BPI bags made the process cleaner, were easy to use, were strong enough for their purpose, contained unwanted smells and held a good amount of waste. Others felt that the bags were too small, would not remain in place and were prone to leaking.

Many supported the City in providing the BPI bags, since it simplified the process and reduced the costs for participants. One participant felt that biodegradable bags were difficult to find in local retail stores, while another participant felt they were cheap and easy to find online. A few participants suggested that the City provide more information on where replacement bags can be regularly bought locally.

On average participants felt that their concerns about the grossness and cleanliness of carts were the same as those prior to the pilot study (Figure 6). Some participants expressed their disappointment towards others who did not use the BPI bags, thereby increasing grossness and cleanliness concerns. A few participants found the smell to be overwhelming due to the low airflow within their buildings.

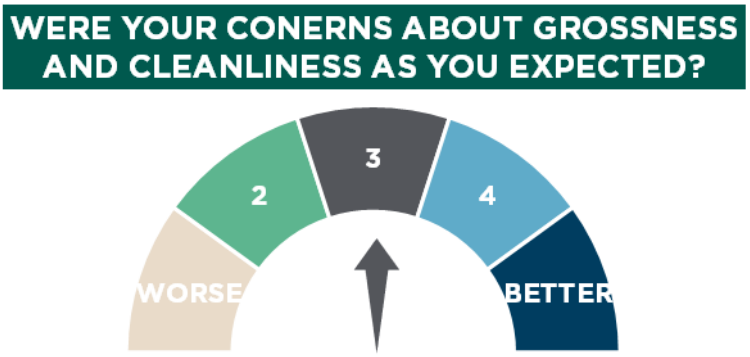


Figure 6: Concerns for grossness and cleanliness

Educational Materials

Most participants were "very satisfied" (81%) with the signage and education materials they received during the pilot study, followed by those who were "somewhat satisfied" (16%). From the education materials provided, participants provided the following ranking based on their helpfulness:

1. Kitchen pail and post card (71%)
2. Kitchen magnet "What Goes In" (57%)
3. Posters in the building (33%)
4. Signage on bins (30%)
5. Email from property manager/condo board (29%)
6. Website (7%)

Most participants felt they understood (85%) the importance of keeping organics out of the landfill, followed by those who felt they "somewhat" understood (10%). Suggested improvements for education materials included the following:

- Continue to provide BPI bags, especially at the onset of the program
- Describe how to best deal with kitchen grease in this process
- Describe what happens to the organic waste following pickup
- Give each property compost/dirt created from the process for their use and to show the benefits of their efforts
- Information on why composting is important
- Instructions on what not to put in the green bins, along with what to put in
- Post signs at garbage and recycling containers/shoots as reminders
- Provide information on how to use BPI bags, where to get them and that they dissolve over time
- Provide demonstrations and presentations at property meetings and encourage discussions to find common challenges/solutions
- Use both "yard/garden" and "food" terms on signs to avoid confusion
- Work directly with seniors and those with disabilities to understand their needs.

Support For the Program

When asked whether they supported the City in implementing the Multi-Unit Organics Program across Saskatoon, most participants stated "yes" (81%), followed by those who stated "somewhat" (11%) or "no" (5%). Final comments provided by respondents included the following main themes:

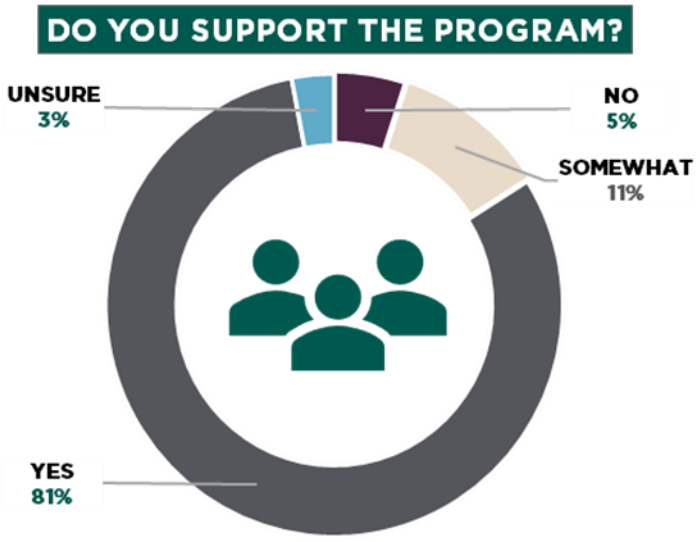


Figure 7: Support for the program

Accessibility: some participants had difficulty carrying their bags/kitchen pails to the green cart and lifting the green cart lids due to their low mobility; accessibility considerations need to be explored, such as having collection bins on each floor (i.e., near garbage disposals) or providing door-to-door collections services for those in need.

Adapt: a few participants called on the City to be flexible in how they roll out the program and adapt to the individual needs of specific properties, such as working with property managers to increase the number of bins or change their distribution on the property; it was suggested that the City may need to provide more green bins on a seasonal basis, such as in the fall when there is more indoor plant material

Bin liners: the second most popular theme; participants found that the bin liners within the green carts would often fall down and called on the City to find a solution to secure them to the green cart; some suggested that the green bins may need to be regularly cleaned and maintained

"But invariably it would collapse down into the bin. If you want to use the big bags then maybe find a way to secure them at the top of the bin."

Bugs: some participants saw an increase in the number of insect pests during the pilot study, such as fruit flies and mites

Costs: one participant felt that the costs of the program outweighed the benefits, since their green bins were rarely used; another participant did not want to see the costs for the program included within their taxes and increase their costs of living; another participant was concerned about the impacts the additional waste trucks could have on their roadways and parking

Pickup frequency: the third most popular comment; some participants found that collections every two-week was not frequent enough and instead preferred weekly collection schedules

Support: the most popular theme; many participants supported the program and supported the City for their efforts, stating it was easy to do and that more residents should get involved

"I didn't expect to like doing this so much, I can work on not being wasteful"

"I'm glad this program was made available to smaller multi-unit dwellings so we can all do our part in better waste management"

3 EVALUATION OF ENGAGEMENT

Evaluation is discussed in terms of feedback received during engagement activities and through informal comments, data limitations and opportunities for improvement.

3.1 Evaluations

Survey participants indicated support for both the level of engagement conducted and the opportunities provided. For the surveys, participants generally agreed or strongly agreed with the information that was provided being clear and understandable (97%), with feeling they were able to provide their opinions fully (98%), and in understanding how their input would be used (87%).

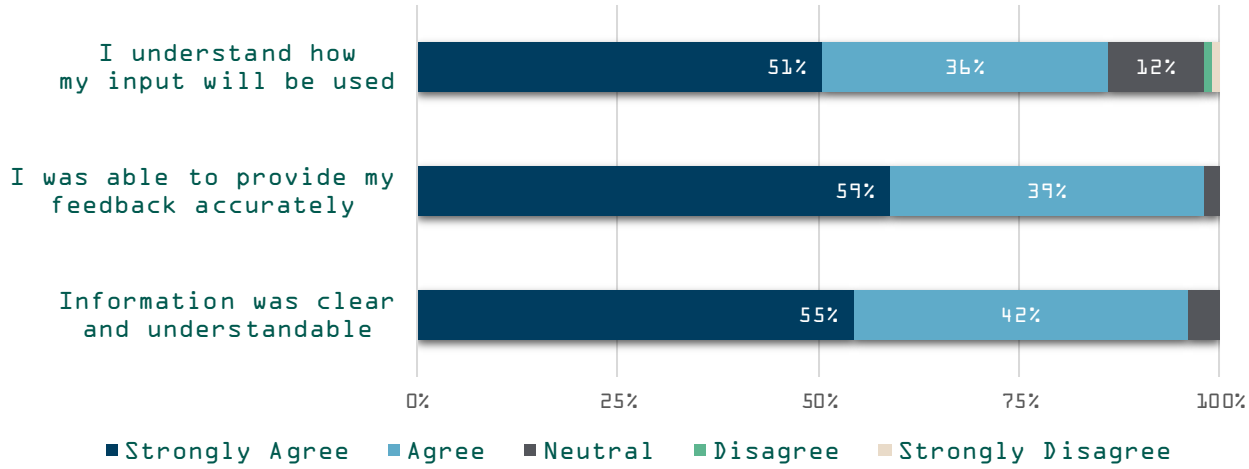


Figure 8: Survey evaluation

Throughout the meetings, interviews and surveys, participants expressed their support for the process:

> *"I appreciated the easy to answer multiple choice questions and the multiple opportunities to provide comments. Thank you."*

> *"Many surveys I fill out don't have "other" boxes that a person could add comments to. I'm glad you added them!"*

One participant suggested receiving feedback on how residents can encourage their neighbours to get involved:

> *"Perhaps a question about ways in which people can encourage their neighbours to participate because some people I meet seem to be nonchalant about this program."*

A few participants were confused as to how their feedback would be used:

> *"I have no idea how my input will be used, but I sure hope, somebody will take the time to read my comments."*

3.2 Data Limitations

Numerous communications, marketing and engagement tactics were used throughout the pilot study to gain feedback from the diversity of residents, tenants and property managers within the selected properties; however, many either did not participate in any of our methods and/or the pilot study. The results are considered to provide the best available indication of how the participants perceived the program at the time of the pilot study.

3.3 Opportunities for Improvement

Based on participant feedback, the following opportunities for improvement will be considered for future engagement activities:

- Any written or verbal information should use plain language and easy-to-understand terms
- Providing in-person and door-to-door engagement is especially useful for seniors and persons with disabilities.

4 NEXT STEPS

What we learned from participants, in addition to best practices from other cities and internal considerations, will be used to shape a future multi-unit organics program for the entire city. This Multi-Unit Organics Program will be presented to City Council in 2025.

We thank all participants who provided their feedback for this and other City of Saskatoon projects.

City of Saskatoon ENGAGE

Multi-Unit Organics: Pilot Study Findings

Executive Summary

The City of Saskatoon (City) is developing a city-wide organics program for the multi-unit sector as part of the implementation of the Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan. A pilot study and targeted engagement plan were completed to inform the options and recommendation for this program. This report provides a summary of the pilot study and engagement findings.

The pilot study took place during 2024 in Ward 5. An effort was made to involve a range of property managers and condo boards in the pilot. Organics service was provided to pilot participants through a competitive request for proposal process and ensuing service agreement with Loraas Disposal North that included providing containers, collection, and processing of material. It assessed collection frequency, cart capacity, and collection location and helped identify what design best meets the need of the multi-unit sector. Education and resources were also looked at to determine what works best for encouraging proper participation. The pilot provided the opportunity to get direct feedback from residents and property managers on specific elements of the organics pilot at their complex.

The pilot showed that successful diversion outcomes for organic material in the multi-unit sector are possible with proper design and engaged residents. Education, signage, and good communication were noted as an important part of setting residents up for success. Residents stated that BPI bags and kitchen pails were important tools for participating in the organics pilot, especially during the launch phase of the service. Regular interactions and good signage were also mentioned as important considerations.

Weekly collection was the collection frequency preference for most pilot participants as every 2-week collection was a bit too infrequent in the spring and summer months. Cart location and layout of the waste area played an important role in the participation rate. A convenient location close to garbage and recycling usually led to a higher participation rate. Carts worked well as valet collection (moving the cart out and returning as part of collection day service) helped with space limitations and finding a suitable location for the green cart. One green cart with weekly collection could service approximately 30 units.

Some types of properties, such as owned multi-unit and senior living complexes had better participation than other properties. Rentals had the most issues with a lack of participation and higher contamination. Plastic was the highest contaminate during the pilot. Some pilot properties had a high amount of yard waste from maintenance (grass cutting, landscaping, maintenance etc.). Yard waste will need to be addressed through the Business Organics Bylaw or a future city-wide organics program.

In terms of engagement findings, 96% of residents that completed the survey stated that they participated in the pilot study at least once. When asked if they supported a city-wide program, 81% stated that they did.

Further details on the pilot study and engagement findings are detailed below.

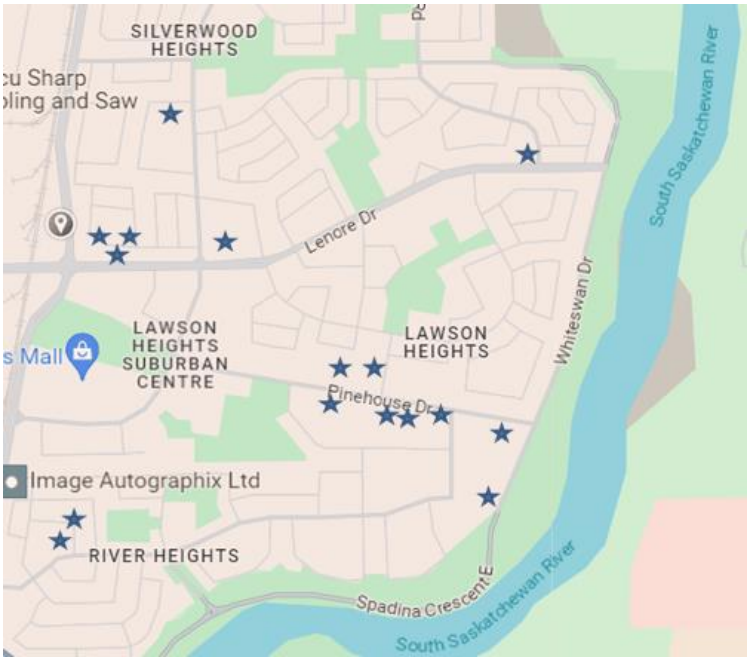
Pilot Study

Pilot Study Area

The pilot looked at the different components of a program for multi-unit residential organics. It provided the City with the opportunity to get direct feedback from residents on specific elements of the organics pilot at their complex.

The City selected Ward 5 (Lawson Heights, River Heights, Silverwood Heights) as a pilot area as it has a mix of different multi-unit property types. 16 multi-unit properties that included 24 buildings and 3 multi-unit townhouse complexes participated in the pilot. Pilot participants included condos and rentals.

Image 1: Map of Pilot Study Area



Notes on limitations of the pilot study

It should be noted that Ward 5 and the pilot area has a diverse mix of multi-unit property types, but some specific demographics and sizes were not included in the pilot.

Smaller apartments: Apartments with 25 or less units make up 49% of the properties currently serviced with multi-unit waste services. Smaller apartments, converted multiplexes, 6-to-12-unit apartments are more common in the central neighborhoods. The smallest unit in the pilot study had 23 units (20 Assiniboine Dr, River Heights).

Invitation process: Involvement in the pilot study was optional. Only those properties that had a willingness or interest in the pilot participated. This may have led to a bias of more positive experiences and feedback.

High Contamination: The pilot area did not include any neighbourhoods with historically high rates of contamination and illegal dumping (as observed from multi-unit recycling and garbage). Based on multi-unit recycling data from 2014 to 2023, Lawson has average contamination rates.

Table 1: Pilot Property List

Address	*Property Details*	*Organics*	*Garbage*	*Recycling (Cosmo)*
255 Russell Rd Silverwood Heights	Large Apartment (6 buildings) 206 units	6 x 360L carts Weekly	4 x 6yd (City service)	2 x 6yd
222 Lenore Dr Silverwood Heights	Townhouse Complex 116 units	3 x 360L carts Weekly	6 x 6yd (Loraas)	4 X 4yd
748 Lenore Silverwood Heights	Medium Apartment 27 units	3 x 360 L carts Weekly	1 x 6yd (City service)	1 X 4 yd
333 Silverwood Rd Silverwood Heights	Medium Apartment 31 units	1 x 360 L cart Every 2 weeks	6yd bin (City service)	1 X 4yd
110 La Ronge Rd Lawson Heights	Large Apartment Complex 276 units	5 x 240L carts 2 x 360L carts Every 2 weeks	2x 4yd (City service) 3 x 6yd (Loraas)	3 X 6yd
201 Cree Pl Lawson Heights	Medium Apartment 35 units	1 x 360 L cart Weekly*	2 x 6yd (City service)	4yd
217 Cree Pl Lawson Heights	Large Apartment (2 buildings) 70 units	2 x 360 L carts	2 x 8yd (City service)	6yd
303 Pinehouse Dr Lawson Heights	Medium Apartment 42 units	2 x 360 L carts Weekly	1 x 4yd (Loraas) Indoor	3yd Indoor
305 Pinehouse Dr Lawson Heights	Medium Apartment 38 units	1 x 360 L cart Weekly*	1 x 4yd (Loraas) Indoor	3yd Indoor
315 Pinehouse Dr Lawson Heights	Medium Apartment 50 units	2 x 360 L carts Weekly	6yd (City service)	4yd
186 Pinehouse Dr Lawson Heights	Large Apartment (3 buildings) 96 units	3 x 360 L carts Weekly	3 x 6yd (Loraas)	6yd
242 Pinehouse Dr Lawson Heights	Large Apartment (3 buildings) 96 units	3 x 360 L carts Every 2 weeks	2 x 8yd (GFL)	6yd
455 Pinehouse Dr Lawson Heights	Townhouse Complex 59 units	3 x 360 L carts Every 2 weeks	4 x 4yd	6yd
111 St. Lawrence Cr River Heights	Large Apartment 123 units	3 x 360 L carts Every 2 weeks	3 x 6yd	3 x 6yd
20 Assiniboine Dr River Heights	Small Apartment 23 units	1 x 360L cart Weekly	1 x 6yd	1 x 6d Shared
145 Sandy Court / 2703 Spadina Cres E River Heights	Townhouse Complex 78 units	2 x 360L Carts Weekly*	3 x 4yd	2 x 3yd

**Collection frequency was adjusted to weekly during the pilot*

General Engagement Findings

Append 2 - Multi-Unit Organics Pilot (Engagement Report) provides the full results of engagement completed for the multi-unit organics pilot. An effort was made to involve a range of Saskatoon property managers in the pilot, as direct feedback was used for informing the program design.

Pilot Study Feedback from Residents: Residents were invited to complete a survey 8 months into the pilot in Aug 2024. The survey had 144 responses from pilot participants. Survey responses indicated that 96% of residents participated in the organic pilot at least once. The survey confirmed that BPI bags, kitchen pails, and post cards were at the start of the pilot were important tools for participation in organics diversion.

81% of survey respondents stated that they supported the City implementing a city-wide multi-unit organics program and 11% said they "somewhat support" a city-wide program. This is slightly higher to what we heard in 2018 engagement[1].

Property Feedback: A representative from each property also provided feedback through an informal interview that collected feedback on organic service approaches, waste funding methods, collection frequency, container type and location, multi-unit garbage and recycling, and education.

Kitchen pails and City-led education were highly supported by all interviewees. 13 of the 15 interviewees stated that they preferred a city-provided service for a future multi-unit organics program, as they did not like having to setup and manage service contracts. All interviewees were comfortable with a service fee for multi-unit organics but stressed that knowing the exact costs in advance (at least a year) was important for financial planning.

Property Type Information

Property type and property configuration is a unique consideration for the multi-unit sector. The following findings were made during the pilot specific to property types.

Condo Apartments: Strata properties, such as condominiums or townhouses, with owners living in the building, tended to have higher participation rates than rentals. Communication with each unit was generally easier as condo boards often had an email list or method of notifying each unit.

Townhouses: There were three townhouse complexes that participated in the pilot study. Location of carts was an important aspect of participation. Yard waste was higher at properties with areas for gardening.

Senior Living: Engagement was high at senior living complexes that participated in the pilot study. Most condo boards were very involved with waste services at their building and were willing to help implement changes to encourage diversion. Convenience of recycling and organics compared to garbage was a challenge as garbage was usually the most convenient/ accessible container.

[1] Saskatoon Talks Trash: Multi-Unit (Community Engagement Results)

Rentals: Properties that were strictly rentals had the lowest participation of the property types. Contamination was the highest of all property types. Illegal dumping and parking issues were more common around waste areas than at non-rental properties.

Program Design Findings and Considerations

Cart Capacity and Location

The pilot used mostly 360L (96 gal) rollout carts. One property used a smaller size (240L) cart for indoor use. Carts were placed close to recycling or garbage containers where possible. Capacity analysis found that one 360L green cart can comfortably service about 30 units with weekly collection. Several residents noted that the 360L green cart was hard to move once it gets to ½ full as food waste is heavy. The 240L green cart may be an easier size to move as it is smaller and still provides a reasonable capacity. Properties with more yard and garden waste preferred the 360L during spring and fall during peak times of yard cleanup.

Carts were serviced with a rear loader truck that required each cart to be rolled to the back of the truck to be tipped. The cart was wheeled back following collection. This collection method (valet collection) helped with space limitations and finding a suitable location for the green cart.

Collection Frequency

The pilot trialed weekly, every 2 weeks, and 2 times per week collection frequency. Weekly was the preferred frequency by pilot participants. Collection every 2 weeks led to odour issues in the warmer months. 2 times per week worked well at several properties but it depended on location, property size, and preference. Properties with weekly collection liked having fewer carts than they may need with every second week as it saved space.

Education

Education and outreach were important aspects of encouraging residents to participate in the pilot. Kitchen pails, BPI bags (10-pack), and information post cards were given out to most properties during deployment. It was found that kitchen pails were a great prompt for getting residents to divert food waste. The two properties that only gave kitchen pails to units that requested them had low participation compared to other pilot properties.

Image 2: Postcard for pilot study launch

Poor signage was identified by several properties as a concern early in the pilot and an effort was made to improve signage on the green carts, green cart area, and garbage container. Several garbage containers in the pilot were green in colour which added to confusion.

Image 3 and Image 4 show some of the signage developed for the pilot study (May 2024)

Yard Waste

Most pilot participants stated that they had little or no yard waste, as landscape services are hired out as part of a service contract and material is hauled away. Audits in April 2024 showed that several properties have large quantities of yard waste ending up in their garbage stream and going to landfill.

Landscaping service providers are responsible for ensuring all organic waste is placed in separate labelled containers and ensuring organic waste is removed and taken to an appropriate facility. Yard waste can be handled through education and enforcement of the organics bylaw but there also may be opportunities to include yard waste needs in the design of future multi-unit organics program. Through engagement we heard that the main concern is finding the option that is most cost effective.

How to provide the program design?

The following section explores the different decisions required to achieve the multi-unit organic program design described above.

Program Funding

The City has recently made changes to curbside waste services that move the funding model for services to a pay for service model. The first step was the launch of curbside recycling that was funded as a utility program. Curbside Organics followed the same utility funding model. The final change for curbside residents was the launch of the curbside waste utility that saw waste fees moved from property tax to a utility. A pay for service model increases transparency for service costs and funding.

Multi-unit garbage is currently funded through property tax. Most property managers and condo boards (87%) that participated in the pilot were supportive of moving multi-unit garbage to a utility. All property managers and condo boards in the pilot were supportive of a utility model for a future multi-unit organics program.

Some of the common feedback specific to billing, included:

- provide advanced notice of rates to plan for annual budget process.
- have all solid waste services (garbage, recycling, and organics) on the same invoice if possible so it is convenient.

In terms of cost, a price of $1.50 - $3.50 per unit per month was considered reasonable for the service received in the pilot. Multi-Unit recycling (2024 rate) is $4.10 per unit per month. An important consideration for pricing is multi-unit garbage costs and cleanup costs required to address illegal dumping. Other concerns related to cost included lane maintenance costs and bin maintenance costs.

Key Decisions - Service Approach

The options for providing a city-wide multi-unit organics program are using a bylaw approach, a city-provided service, or a hybrid of these approaches.

A bylaw approach uses a waste bylaw to ensure each property has a separate container for organics (source separation) and a method to ensure organic waste is removed and taken to an appropriate facility. This approach is similar to the requirement in the new bylaw regulation included in The Waste Bylaw[2] being used for business organics.

A City-provided program means that the City can provide or contract out service for all multi-unit properties. The City determines the service provider, sets the service level(s), and all properties are included as part of the program design.

A hybrid approach involves aspects of a bylaw approach and a City-provided service. In this scenario, the City provides an optional service or acts like a private service provider. All options would be regulated through The Waste Bylaw so there is a regulation that can be enforced.

Diversion Potential

Waste audits and weights were taken during the pilot to determine how much organic material was being collected and how the garbage material composition changed with the introduction of organics. Weight collected (per unit average) during the pilot varied significantly across the different pilot properties. On average, early audits in Spring 2024 showed lower overall tonnage than those completed in July and September 2024.

Visual audits with pictures and documentation were completed throughout the pilot. In April and July, weighted audits were completed to determine average weight diverted through the pilot.

[2] Bylaw 9844 – The Waste Bylaw, 2022

Image 5 and Image 6 show sample images from visual audit (July 2024)

A floor scale was used on site to weigh material at pilot properties right before their collection day. A standard tare weight was used depending on the green cart manufacture (IPL = 17.45, Toter=16.20). As some properties stored containers indoors, it was not always possible to get access to the green cart.

The audit in April weighed green carts at 12 different pilot properties on their collection day. The goal sample size was 700 habitable units. The weekly rate of organic material was 500kg which is about 0.5 kg per unit per week. For the comparison below, the 745 units that were accessible in April and July are used.

Table 2 – Audit 1 Weights (April 2024)

Sample	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12
Weight	48	50	27	13	19	63	2	53	45	8	4	42
# Units	78	59	96	96	35	70	27	42	38	31	50	123

Total Weight (kg)	411
Number of Units	745
Avg per unit/ per week	**0.55kg**

The audit in July weighed green carts at the same 12 properties on their collection day. These properties had a combined count of 745 habitable units. The weekly rate of organic material was 500kg which is about 1kg per unit per week.

Table 3 – Audit 2 Weights (July 2024)

Sample	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12
Weight	138	109	41	47.45	20	86	7	58	47	16	64	102
# Units	78	59	96	96	35	70	27	42	38	31	50	123

Total Weight (kg)	736
Number of Units	745
Avg per unit/ per week	**0.99kg**

The increase in diverted organic waste from April to July can likely be attributed to increased education. Door-to-door material (handout, magnet, 10-pack of BPI bags) were distributed to most habitable units participating in the pilot in June. 3 properties had dispenser units installed so that BPI bags were available next to the green cart location. Signage at many of the properties was also improved in May/June for garbage and the green cart area. Seasonality also likely contributed to the increase in usage as people were more likely to go outside in the warmer weather and garden waste increases during the summer months.

If we take the audit results above and apply them to a city-wide estimate, a refined model suggests that 2059 tonnes of organic material could be diverted annually. That equates to a 29% capture rate of the organic material currently going to landfill from the multi-unit sector.

Table 4 - Business Case Estimates (2023)

Capture rate of total organics	Overall Waste Diversion Contribution %	Tonnes/ per year	Scenario possibility	Probability
10%	4%	700	*Low – minimum diversion*	Low/ Medium
15%	6%	1,050	*Low – estimate*	Medium
25%	10%	1,750	*Low/Medium range diversion*	High
50%	20%	3,500	*Medium range diversion*	High
75%	30%	5,250	*High range diversion*	Low/ Medium
100%	40%	7,000	*High – maximum*	Low

Additional Images from Pilot Study

Dispenser unit at pilot property, July 2024

Multi-unit garbage decals added during pilot study, July 2024

Guiding Principles for Multi-Unit Organics

Service Level Satisfaction
A high quality and reliable service is provided. Service levels are set to provide a balance between service and cost.

Affordability
A relative measure of how well a household can pay for a service. The additional diversion stream does not significantly increase costs of solid waste services for any property, building, or tenant. The funding model is equitable.

Transparency (Funding Model)
A funding model that aligns with the user directly paying for services. In multi-units, it is challenging to make this per unit as waste services are communal.

Flexibility
The program offers a service that meets the needs of most properties. Service options are available to help make the program work for all property configurations. An opt-out option may exist for those that have a specific requirement and require an alternative service.

Diversion & Greenhouse Gas Emissions Avoided
The program design encourages diversion of food waste from landfill, which avoids the generation of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.

Contamination
Steps are taken to reduce contamination and ensure levels do not reach a point where it is excessively challenging to process the material into high quality compost.

Sector Alignment
Curbside residential and the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional sectors have operational organics programs with different approaches. Sector alignment strives to ensure all sectors have access to diversion opportunities such as recycling and organics. The service level for organics waste in the multi-unit residential sector should be in line with other sectors.

Integrated waste
The City of Saskatoon (City) will take an integrated approach to designing a program that balances the protection of human and environmental health with affordability, convenience, and efficient use of resources. An effort will be made to ensure all streams of solid waste services are complimentary and work together.

Responsibility
It is clear who is responsible for what specific elements of the program from education to collection. Residents know how to use they program and how to participate, property managers and condo boards know what they are responsible for, and the City clearly determines what their role is in a program and communicates the requirements that must be met.