

Risk and Feasibility Study for the Meadowgreen Recycling Depot

The Risk and Feasibility Study, completed by Sustainability and Water and Waste Operations, identified the following options available to keep the Meadowgreen Recycling Depot **open**:

- 1) Status Quo
- 2) Enhanced education (i.e. signage, decals, campaigns)
- 3) Increased site monitoring through EPOs or security company
- 4) Security camera monitoring
- 5) Site improvements and restricted access at night (fencing/lighting improvements, gate locked at night)
- 6) Site improvements, restricted access at night and staffing (fencing/lighting improvements, gate locked at night, staffing during open hours)

In addition, two options were identified that would result in the Meadowgreen Recycling Depot being **closed**:

- 7) Closure of the Depot and relocation to another site
- 8) Closure of the Depot and no relocation

Feasibility Assessment Analysis Summary

The following provides a summary of the impact of safety, advantages, disadvantages and financial implications of each of the options that were considered in the feasibility assessment.

Option 1: Status Quo

Safety Impact: The significant safety risks to the public and staff would remain.

Advantages

- Compatible with bylaws/enforcement
- Consistent with Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Plan (SWR&DP)
- Centrally located west-side depot continues service levels for residents and ICI sector
- Diversion remains consistent from site

Disadvantages

- Local and Saskatoon residents likely to remain dissatisfied with issues and safety concerns at the Depot
 - Current level of education unlikely to improve conditions
 - Very few jurisdictions have unstaffed, 24-7 recycling depots, those that do experience the same issues
 - Non-compliance expected to remain high
 - Health and safety risks expected to remain high
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Estimated Level of Financial Implications: No Change

Option 2: Enhanced Education

Safety Impact: No quantifiable improvement to safety is expected through education. The safety risks are tied to poverty and addictions in the area. There is no evidence that education will change the behaviours that create the safety risks.

Advantages

- Compatible with bylaws/enforcement
- Consistent with SWR&DP
- Centrally located west-side depot continues service levels for residents and ICI sector
- Diversion remains consistent from site

Disadvantages

- Local and Saskatoon residents likely to remain dissatisfied with issues and safety concerns at the Depot
 - No evidence that additional levels of education on their own will improve conditions
 - Very few jurisdictions have unstaffed, 24-7 recycling depots, those that do experience the same issues
 - Non-compliance expected to remain high
 - Health and safety risks expected to remain high
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Estimated Level of Financial Implications: Low

Implementation of this option could range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, depending on the extent of the education or campaigns. The level of spending is not expected to have a direct effect on safety.

Option 3: Increased Site Monitoring (EPOs and/or Security Company)

Safety Impact: This tactic has been attempted and is successful only when the EPO and/or security company is on site. Those creating the safety risks will wait for the EPO or safety company to leave and then continue improper use of the site.

Advantages

- Compatible with bylaws/enforcement
- Consistent with SWR&DP
- Centrally located west-side depot continues service levels for residents and ICI sector
- Diversion remains consistent from site

Disadvantages

- No significant change to conditions is anticipated, local and Saskatoon residents likely to remain dissatisfied
 - Very few jurisdictions have unstaffed, 24-7 recycling depots, those that do experience the same issues
 - Non-compliance expected to remain high
 - Safety expected to remain an issue
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Estimated Level of Financial Implications: Medium

An additional EPO would cost approximately \$100,000 per year. Monitoring by a security company is estimated to be more expensive and actual costs would depend on the level of service procured.

Option 4: Security Camera Monitoring

Safety Impact: This tactic was not found to have a significant impact in preventing safety issues but may be useful for identifying safety issues once present or enhancing the ability to follow-up on infractions.

Advantages

- Consistent with SWR&DP
- Centrally located west-side depot continues service levels for residents and ICI sector
- Diversion remains consistent from site

Disadvantages

- Not compatible with current bylaws/enforcement, would require amended Waste Bylaw and new processes
- No significant change to conditions is anticipated, local and Saskatoon residents likely to remain dissatisfied
- Very few jurisdictions have unstaffed, 24-7 recycling depots, those that do experience the same issues and security cameras are not anticipated to change this
- Non-compliance expected to remain high since security cameras will enhance ability to follow-up on infractions, not prevent them

Estimated Level of Financial Implications: Medium

In addition to the capital investment for the camera equipment, additional staff time or a contractor would be required to review footage, which would be comparable in costs to the additional staff described above.

Option 5: Site Improvements & Restricted Access at Night

Safety Impact: Some improvements may be expected by restricting access to the site at night, such as through a locked gate, however there is still a potential that the site is accessed. The site is unstaffed during the day and many of the safety issues and infractions occur during the day will continue to occur.

Advantages

- A minor improvement in local and Saskatoon resident satisfaction as some of the issues may be mitigated through restricting access at night
- Compatible with bylaws/enforcement
- Centrally located west-side depot continues service levels for residents and ICI sector, somewhat less convenient due to restricted hours but compatible with hours that Recovery Park will be open
- Diversion remains consistent from site

Disadvantages

- Not consistent with SWR&DP since it includes significant site improvements prior to the comprehensive review of recycling depots that is planned.
- Very few jurisdictions have unstaffed recycling depots, those that do experience the same issues and restricting access at night is not expected to resolve this as many incidents occur during the day
- Non-compliance expected to remain high since many infractions occur during the day.

Estimated Level of Financial Implications: Medium

Capital funding would be required for the site improvements. Staff or a contractor would be required to lock and unlock the gate at specified open and closed times. Additional monitoring overnight would be required to ensure that the site remained secured.

Option 6: Site Improvements, Restricted Access at Night & Staffed During Open Hours

Safety Impact: This combination of tactics is expected to result in significantly fewer safety and compliance issues. There remains a risk that even if the site is secured at night, that fences or gates could be breached.

Advantages

- Improvements in local and Saskatoon resident satisfaction, as many of the issues may be mitigated through restricting access at night and staffing
- Compatible with bylaws/enforcement
- Centrally located west-side depot continues service levels for residents and ICI sector, somewhat less convenient due to restricted hours but compatible with hours that Recovery Park will be open
- Diversion remains consistent from site, may be improvements due to reduced contamination
- Consistent with the approach of the majority of jurisdictions across Canada with a similar population size to Saskatoon
- Non-compliance issues are expected to be reduced with the combination of staffing and restricted access at night

Disadvantages

- Not consistent with SWR&DP since it includes significant site improvements and changes to staffing levels prior to the comprehensive review of recycling depots that is planned.

Estimated Level of Financial Implications: High

In addition to the capital and staffing costs outlined in the above option, there would also be costs for staffing the site during the day. For safety, a minimum of two staff would be required during open hours, as well as shelter/facilities for the staff for breaks and shelter from weather.

Option 7: Closure of the Meadowgreen Recycling Depot and Relocation to Another Site

Safety Impact: This option is dependent on where the depot is relocated to but is expected to bring the safety issues more in-line with those experienced at the other three recycling depots that the City operated. Some illegal dumping is expected to continue at the Meadowgreen site following the closure but may be mitigated through education on alternative options.

Advantages

- Compatible with bylaws/enforcement
- Centrally located west-side depot continues service levels for residents and ICI sector
- Diversion remains consistent from new site
- Local residents expected to be satisfied that Depot is closed

Disadvantages

- Not consistent with SWR&DP since it includes significant site improvements and changes to staffing levels prior to the comprehensive review of recycling depots that is planned.
 - Very few jurisdictions have unstaffed, 24-7 recycling depots, those that do experience the same issues
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- Non-compliance expected to remain high
 - Safety expected to remain an issue
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Estimated Level of Financial Implications: High

Since a suitable site that meets the specifications for a recycling depot was not available, a new site would need to be established that would involve staff expenses on planning, approvals and engagement, as well as capital costs such as asphalt, lighting, fencing, signage and bins.

Option 8: Closure of the Meadowgreen Recycling Depot and No Relocation

Safety Impact: This approach is expected to eliminate the safety issues at the Meadowgreen Recycling Depot. Some illegal dumping is expected to continue at the site following the closure but may be mitigated through education on alternative options.

Advantages

- Compatible with bylaws/enforcement
- Consistent with SWR&DP
- Local residents expected to be satisfied that Depot is closed, Saskatoon residents likely to have mixed satisfaction
- Non-compliance and safety issues at the site will be eliminated

Disadvantages

- No centrally located west-side depot continues service levels for residents and ICI sector
 - Diversion may decrease slightly, but other options available on west-side (Cosmo, Loraas, Landfill) for recycling drop-off
 - Illegal dumping may increase in other locations
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Estimated Level of Financial Implications: Low

This option will ultimately eliminate the operating costs, following an initial period when illegal dumping is anticipated to continue at the entrance of the closed site.

Recommendation

This review of options to address safety at the Meadowgreen Recycling Depot recommends closure of the depot and no relocation.

Rationale

During the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021, the frequency and severity of bylaw infractions and safety risks were escalating. The completion of this review coincided with a fire in February 2021, that highlighted the need to address safety. It was clear from the work completed in this review that the continued risk of operating the Depot exceeded the benefits of the additional recycling services it provided.

The only two options identified that would most address the safety issues were the recommended option of closure and no relocation, or the option which combined site improvements, restricted access at night and staffing during opening hours. The option of restricted access at night and staffing during opening hours was not compatible with the direction provided by the *Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Plan* since it involved making significant investments into a depot prior to opening Recovery Park and a comprehensive review of the depots, which is expected to result in adjustments to the number of depots and service levels.

Some safety improvements could be expected with the closure of the Meadowgreen site and relocation. An investigation of re-opening the Edmonton Avenue former recycling depot was considered because it meets the infrastructure requirements (paved surface, fencing, etc.) but was found to be too small for operations and the safe collection of the bins, which was why it had likely been selected for closure originally. No alternative site with existing infrastructure was found.

The recommended option of closure with no relocation closely aligned with the plan previously proposed by Administration to close the Meadowgreen Depot at the time that Recovery Park opened. This recommendation speeds up the timeline of closure by a couple of years, which does result in a lower level of service for the West side of Saskatoon and would mean longer driving distances for some to access a depot. However, this approach prevents significant investments into a site that has already been identified for closure.

Next Steps

The closure of the Meadowgreen Recycling Depot will be recommended through the Standing Policy Committee - Planning, Development and Community Services. Next steps for the site will be outlined in the report. The site will be monitored for illegal dumping following the closure and if needed, additional options to address recycling or bulky waste, for Meadowgreen and the surrounding neighbourhoods, will be developed and brought forward for consideration.

The *Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Plan* will continue to guide the work on the remaining three recycling depots, with continued work planned for safety and contamination improvements. Additional reporting is planned to specifically address the use of security cameras at recycling depots.

A request to the 2022-2023 multi-year budget is being prepared for the *Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Plan*'s short-term action is to complete a comprehensive recycling depot review. This will be initiated in 2023, after new programs have been implemented, including Recovery Park and the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional sector recycling regulation. The comprehensive recycling depot review will factor in the approach taken by the Province of Saskatchewan in their review of the Household Packaging and Paper Regulations and associated programs. This review is considering a full extended producer responsibility model that may shift financial and administrative responsibility from the City to the companies that manufacture, import, and distribute paper and packaging that are accepted in our residential recycling programs.