

Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan: Implementation Plan and Funding for 2022–2023

ISSUE

Saskatoon’s Strategic Plan: 2018–2021 includes the Environmental Leadership goal which strives to maximize solid waste diversion and optimize landfill operations management and financial sustainability. The fourth and final action from this area is to implement a long-term funding and program strategy for solid waste management and waste diversion.

The Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan (the Plan) outlines actions for program and policy development to optimize service delivery and reach the waste diversion target of 70% from the Saskatoon Landfill. The purpose of this report is to provide the status and next steps for the Plan’s actions, to summarize the operational and capital funding requests that are being developed for consideration later this year, and to review funding options.

BACKGROUND

The Plan was received at the Regular Business Meeting of City Council on January 25, 2021. The next steps section of the Administrative report state:

“A follow-up report is planned in mid-2021 that will provide business cases and financial implications for other immediate and short-term actions in the Plan, in advance of the 2022–2023 multi-year business plan and budget.”

CURRENT STATUS

The Plan provides clear actions to optimize waste management services and progress the target for 70% diversion from the Saskatoon Landfill. A full summary of the Plan’s actions is included in Appendix 1: The Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Action Summary.

Implementation is underway for Recovery Park, the curbside residential organics program, as well as the regulatory approaches to require recycling and organics for the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) sector. In addition to these projects, in-progress actions from the Plan are summarized in *Appendix 2 - Status of Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan Actions*, including:

- Recycling depots’ immediate improvements;
- Provincial household hazardous waste regulation;
- Requirements for storage and safe collection of waste at multi-unit buildings; and
- Vertical landfill gas well installation.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The short-term actions for 2022–2023, and the stages that are proposed to occur, are included in Appendix 2. Operating and capital business cases have been prepared for

these short-term actions in advance of the upcoming budget deliberations. Projects, initiatives, or programs that are in development and either have reporting outstanding, or are new initiatives, are summarized by background, scope, budget, benefits and risks in Appendix 3: Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Plan 2022–2023 Implementation Actions.

Operating Program Considerations

Sustainment of waste diversion work will be included for operating considerations for 2022–2023. A dedicated staff resource will be required to coordinate and complete annual monitoring and reporting, oversee data and studies including biannual surveys and the next waste characterization study in 2024, updating the Plan for 2025; developing partnerships with the community and other levels of government, refining the 10-year work portfolio, including business cases for multi-year budget submissions, communications to increase awareness of waste reduction and support broad implementation, and some project management for capital projects in the Plan. The continuation of a dedicated \$10,000 for waste reduction and diversion in the Environmental Cash grant is also included in this scope.

Operation of the accessible curbside collections program is also considered, with development of program options to relocate residential solid waste roll-out containers to, and from, the street or alley for residents with disabilities. Reporting with further detail is planned for Q2-Q3 2021.

Proposed Capital Initiatives

For the purposes of implementation, work- and budget-planning, seven near-term actions from the Plan have been grouped into business case initiatives as follows:

1. *Green Teams and Leading by Example for City of Saskatoon Waste Diversion*
Incorporates regulatory requirements that will begin to phase-in in 2023 at the start of the ICI mandatory recycling bylaw. The project addresses the development of a corporate sustainability program that will begin with civic waste reduction and diversion to align with the in-progress ICI regulations and expand to other environmental sustainability sectors in subsequent phases.
2. *Emergency Waste Management and Recycling Strategy*
Scope includes the emergency waste management and recycling strategy.
3. *Feasibility Studies to Increase Diversion by 3.5–7%*
Includes feasibility study for the program development for: city options for construction and demolition waste; recycling market development for Recovery Park; and the impacts of a disposal ban at the Saskatoon Landfill.
4. *Multi-unit Organics Pilot and Program Design*
Involves the development of a four-season pilot of a minimum of 20 properties to explore program design element options such as bin-type and size, frequency of collections, storage of organics on-site, reducing contamination, education, bagging

materials, in-unit kitchen catchers, and education. This includes public engagement to finalize the options and recommendations for implementation.

5. Sustainable Food Pilots

The waste-related food pilots include: a food waste reclamation pilot project informed by the results of the Research Junction funded “Promising Practices in Food Reclamation” research that will be completed in the summer of 2021; a school organics program pilot project; and a residential food waste reduction pilot which would enable Saskatoon to use the Love Food, Hate Waste campaign developed by the National Zero Waste Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications by receiving this information report.

Operating Cost Summary and Funding

This report outlines waste-reduction programs and initiatives that would require additional resources to progress operating programs or capital initiatives. Further detail is included in Appendix 4: Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan Funding Options. The 2022–2023 additional operating costs outlined in this report are:

Table 1: Waste Diversion Operating New Program 2022-2023 -- Summary

Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan Actions (2021-2023) - Operating	Business Case Name	2022 Funding (\$)	2023 Funding (\$)
	Waste Diversion Program Sustainment	164,000	
Accessible curbside collections program	Accessible Curbside Collections Program – Operations	TBD	
TOTAL		164,000	

The City currently funds its waste operations through a combination of:

- Property taxes: garbage, landfill, and HHW collection;
- Utility fees: recycling fee on utility bills; and
- User fees: landfill tipping/entry fees, green cart subscriptions, and compost depot permits.

The implementation of a provincial stewardship program for household hazardous waste and a review of other stewardship programs, beginning with household paper and packaging, will have implications for the City. Further information on these programs is being brought forward to City Council as it is made available.

Capital Cost Summary

The scope outlined in the detailed business cases for the capital projects is used to define the capital costs for their implementation (*Appendix 3*). A summary of the unfunded 2022–2023 waste reduction estimated capital project cost is:

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Table 2: Waste Diversion Capital Program 2022-2023 - Summary

Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan Short-Term Actions (2021–2023)	Business Case Name	2022 Funding (\$)	2023 Funding (\$)
Business and organization waste diversion regulation compliance	Green Teams and Leading by Example City of Saskatoon Waste Diversion	205,000	174,000
Emergency waste management and recycling strategy	Operational Improvement Projects	82,000	
Construction and demolition waste diversion: City of Saskatoon options	Feasibility Studies to Increase Diversion by 3.5–7%	174,000	564,000
Recycling market development for Recovery Park			
Disposal ban at the Saskatoon Landfill			
Mandatory Multi-Unit Organics	Multi-Unit Organics Pilot and Program Design	500,000	379,000
	Sustainable Food Pilots	304,000	354,000
TOTAL		1,265,000	1,471,000

Waste reduction capital projects are typically funded on a project-by-project basis during business plan and budget deliberations. Waste reduction and diversion initiatives have historically been funded through a variety of mechanisms, including:

- Waste Minimization Reserve;
- Landfill Replacement Reserve;
- Reserve for Capital Expenditures;
- Multi-Material Stewardship Western (MMSW) funds; and
- External grants.

Average capital funding for waste reduction and diversion initiatives has been \$717,000 per year over the past four years. This does not include one-time funding for construction of Recovery Park and development of the curbside organics program. Sustained and predictable funding, similar to the management of corporate building, road, and utility assets, would result in gained momentum and improved outcomes for waste reduction. Options for sustained long-term funding that are explored in the Plan are:

Implement a dedicated waste minimization fee for all households.

- This approach could be explored within the current recycling utility model, even with garbage and organics still funded through property taxes. This approach is used in Calgary and Winnipeg.

Allocate an annual contribution from property taxes.

- The City commonly uses this approach; it is the funding mechanism for the Landfill Replacement Reserve, where a contribution from the Landfill operating budget is set out in the Bylaw. Similar contributions occur to fund other reserves.

Dedicate excess Multi-Material Stewardship Western funding.

- Excess MMSW funds have historically been transferred from the Waste Minimization Reserve and reallocated to other projects without needing to be related to waste reduction. While the amount varies from year-to-year, sustained and prioritized funding for the waste reduction capital program could be identified from MMSW.

NEXT STEPS

Development of the operational and capital projects for the business plan and budget will continue for deliberation in the 2022–2023 multi-year budget.

Operational funding to sustain the curbside residential organics program, the regulatory approaches to require recycling and organics for the ICI sector, and Recovery Park, will be brought forward for consideration in the 2022–2023 budget.

APPENDICES

1. The Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Action Summary
2. Status of Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan Actions
3. Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Plan 2022–2023 Implementation Actions
4. Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan Funding Options

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