



# CURBSIDE ORGANICS PROGRAM

**Communications and Education Strategy**  
September 28, 2022



## Purpose

Curbside residential waste collection services in Saskatoon are changing over the coming months as a new city-wide curbside residential organics program is launched, a new organics utility fee is introduced, and associated curbside waste collection service level adjustments are made. This Communications and Education Strategy will support the successful launch of the program and its operations until the end of 2023.

## Desired Outcomes

As a multi-phase Strategy, the desired outcomes will evolve as this Strategy moves through various phases. The table below outlines these desired outcomes.

**Table 1: Desired Outcomes**

<b>Prior to the program being launched, residents will be:</b>	Aware of the upcoming changes to curbside waste services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to bi-weekly garbage collections year-round</li> <li>• End of subscription green cart program</li> <li>• Start of the city-wide green cart program</li> <li>• Introduction of the organics utility fee</li> </ul>
	Informed on the reasons for the upcoming changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental benefits of conserving resources, extending landfill life, reducing GHGs, protecting land and water, creating a valuable product for waste</li> <li>• Social benefits of equitable service delivery, affordability program (pending approval)</li> <li>• Economic benefits of an affordable service, paying directly for services received</li> <li>• Some of these changes were informed by past engagements and research participation – “we heard you”</li> </ul>
<b>As the program is launched, residents will be:</b>	Prepared for cart deployment and first collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What to expect as a former green-cart subscriber vs. new user</li> <li>• When carts will arrive and what to expect</li> <li>• When collections start and what changes there may be to collection schedules and location</li> <li>• Who can expect a smaller cart and why</li> </ul>
	Knowledgeable on use of the green cart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The types of waste that go into the green cart</li> <li>• How to use compostable bags, kitchen pails and care for the green cart</li> <li>• Scheduled collection dates</li> <li>• Collection locations</li> <li>• Using the available informational tools such as the Waste Wizard</li> </ul>
	Understand the costs associated with the introduction of the curbside organics utility fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware that a change was made</li> <li>• How to read the utility bill</li> <li>• Aware of what the utility fee pays for</li> <li>• Where to get customer service support on billing</li> </ul>
	Understand what has not changed and are comfortable in the aspects of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cart storage and placement</li> <li>• Customer service for missed collection, damaged carts, bylaw enforcement</li> </ul>

	program that have remained consistent with current curbside programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing support program for backyard composters</li> <li>• Where to find information (Waste Wizard, saskatoon.ca, utility account etc.)</li> <li>• Where to drop off excess or oversized yard waste</li> </ul>
<b>In the first year following the program launch residents will:</b>	Build confidence in what is accepted in the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide feedback on what is going well and not well, so early corrections can be made</li> <li>• Have the green cart as part of their routine day-to-day activities</li> </ul>
	Be able to address seasonal issues as they arise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer ick factor and pests</li> <li>• Fall/Spring quantities of materials</li> <li>• Winter freezing, benefits of frequent collections</li> </ul>
<b>Throughout the life of this strategy:</b>	Adjustments will be made to continuously provide other sectors the support and information that may be required to make this, and other waste diversion initiatives a success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Administration and City Council to be able to effectively support the roll-out of the new program by having timely access to the information needed</li> <li>• Businesses to support the program by identifying and/or stocking items that are BPI certified compostable bags</li> <li>• Other sectors to be aware that we are all contributing to the goal of 70% waste diversion and how to find information on the programs or upcoming changes that are relevant to them</li> </ul>

## Background

The new curbside organics program introduces changes to curbside waste collections that will require residents to change their behaviour. The table below compares the features of the 2022 curbside collections programs with the approved 2023 program plan. While there are no changes planned for recycling, it is included as information since it is part of the suite of curbside waste collection services provided by the City of Saskatoon (City).

**Table 2: Comparison of 2022 and 2023 Curbside Collections Program**

		2022	2023
<b>Organics</b>	Participation	Subscription	City-wide
	Collection Frequency	Bi-weekly collection May - November	Bi-weekly collections year-round
	Cart Size	360 litre (L)	360L, Eligible townhouses 240L cart
	Funding Model	Subscription based user fee and stewardship funding (MMSW)	Utility fee
<b>Garbage</b>	Participation	City-wide	
	Collection Frequency	Weekly collections May - September; Bi-weekly October - March	Bi-weekly collections year-round
	Cart Size	Majority 360L cart, 240L available by request	

	Funding Model	Mill-rate funded <sup>1</sup>
<b>Recycling</b>	Participation	City-wide
	Collection Frequency	Bi-weekly
	Cart Size	360L
	Funding Model	Utility fee

Many aspects of the curbside collections program such as where to find collection schedules and cart set out instructions will remain consistent between all three programs, which offers an opportunity to reinforce proper behaviour. Organics is also diverted by the City through the Compost Depots and Christmas Tree Drop-offs. No service level changes are planned for either service at this time.

The introduction of the city-wide curbside organics program is not the only change the City is making to waste programs. Through the Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan (SWRDP) the City is continuously improving existing services and developing new projects and programs to move towards the target of 70% waste diversion from the City's landfill. The following table summarizes the in-progress and planned changes over the next few years by sector. This Strategy will coordinate communications and education activities.

**Table 3: Summary of Annual Changes by Sector**

Sector	2022	2023	2024
<b>Curbside</b>		City-wide Organics	Variable Rate Garbage
<b>Multi-unit</b>		Organics Pilot	
<b>Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional</b>	Recycling Education	Recycling Regulation; Organics Education	Recycling and Organics Regulation
<b>Leading by Example (City of Saskatoon)</b>	Recycling Review	Organics Program	
<b>Self Haul</b>	Recycling Depot Service Level Changes	Recovery Park Opening	Recovery Park Operations

## The Communications Strategy

This section of the Strategy outlines the information that will be communicated to program users and other stakeholders about the program's roll out and how to properly participate. Grounded in past research findings (Appendix 2) and best practices from other jurisdictions and performance of the City's recycling communications, this Strategy takes a multi-phase approach to ensure information is timely and at the right level of detail so that audiences can take appropriate action.

<sup>1</sup> The variable rate curbside garbage collection program that is planned for 2024 will build on this Strategy. It will be included in communications about upcoming changes outlined in this Strategy but will have its own strategy prepared by Q3 2023.



### Phase 1 – 2022 Project Updates and Service Level Changes (Present – December 2022)

#### Scope

- Project updates as information is received and decisions are made by City Council
- Notification of waste management service level changes that begin to take place in 2022
- General communication on all curbside program changes and when residents can expect to hear more

#### Desired Outcome

Prior to the program being launched, residents will be:

- Aware of the upcoming changes to curbside waste services
  - Move to bi-weekly garbage collections year-round starting fall 2022
  - End of subscription green cart program in fall 2022
  - Start of the city-wide green cart program in spring 2023
  - Introduction of the organics utility fee in spring 2023
  - Other curbside changes that are anticipated in 2024+

#### Key Messages

- Change is coming to curbside waste collections in spring 2023
  - A new city-wide curbside organics program will be starting
  - Every household with roll-out black and blue carts will be part of the new city-wide green cart program
- Saskatoon is ready to be green
  - Saskatoon loves being blue – residents have 90% satisfaction with the blue cart recycling program
  - Almost 80% curbside residents support a city-wide curbside organics program
  - Over ¼ of us are already composting through the green cart, compost depots or at home
- The subscription green cart program is ending, here is what to expect:
  - Subscribers can keep their green cart over the winter
  - Subscribers will see more types of materials accepted and year-round collections starting in spring 2023
- Garbage cart collections will move to bi-weekly year round
  - Over half of what used to be collected as garbage in spring, summer, and fall will belong in the new green cart program
  - Bi-weekly garbage collections keep organics program costs lower
- Organics will be charged as a utility fee
  - You'll see a new fee (*to be determined*) per month on your utility bill to cover the cost of the new program

### Phase 2 – Building Anticipation (January – February 2023)

#### Scope

- Building on Phase 1, continue to provide project updates as decisions are made
- Provide more specific timing on cart deployment, started package delivery, and collections changes
- Build the rationale for why there are program changes, including the environmental, social and financial benefits

### *Desired Outcome*

Prior to the program being launched, residents will be:

- Aware of the upcoming changes to curbside waste services (continued)
- Informed on the reasons for the upcoming changes
  - o Environmental benefits of conserving resources, extending landfill life, reducing GHGs, protecting land and water, creating a valuable product for waste
  - o Social benefits of equitable service delivery, affordability program (pending approval)
  - o Economic benefits of an affordable service, paying directly for services received
  - o Some of these changes were informed by past engagements and research participation – “we heard you”

### *Key Messages*

- The new curbside organics program benefits you
  - o Over the course of the year most residents will have more collections
    - Most residents will have the same number of collection days in the summer, between the black cart and the new green cart
    - Everyone will have more collections in the winter, since the green cart is collected year round
    - Current green cart subscribers will have the same number of collections each year, with more green cart collections and fewer black cart collections
  - o Proper use of the green cart can save you money when the variable rate garbage utility starts in 2024
    - Over half of curbside garbage is made up of organics
    - Proper use of this cart can help you pick a lower cost option
  - o The green cart can save you time
    - Everyone will only have to go as far as the curb to dispose of yard waste, instead of driving to the compost depot
  - o The green cart will take much more materials than the subscription green cart or what typically goes in a home compost
    - We love that 25% of residents are home composters now, so we want to help you compost more
    - The new green cart will take all food waste including meat, dairy, as well as non-food waste like soiled paper, and BPI certified items
    - There is still the home compost program to provide support and rebates
- The new curbside organics program benefits our community
  - o Every curbside household will have the same service
    - All curbside residents will benefit from having an additional cart and no one will be excluded
  - o The utility fee makes the cost of the curbside organics program transparent
    - All curbside households will see the cost of the program on their utility bill
  - o Saskatoon’s waste diversion programs will be in line with all major Canadian cities
    - With your help, our city can be a leader in waste diversion on the Canadian prairies.
  - o We’re all in this together
    - Residents, businesses, and the City coming together to move the needle on waste diversion
    - Businesses and organizations that generate food and yard waste will be required to have organics diversion in place

- The new curbside organics program benefits our environment
  - Organics in the landfill 101
    - Ever wonder what happens to food and yard waste in the landfill?
    - Yes, it can break down, but not in a good way
    - The leachate (think garbage juice) can pollute our land and water, it is expensive to manage
    - The conditions create methane, a greenhouse gas that we'll never be able to fully capture from escaping into the atmosphere
  - Compost is a valuable product that can be used on Saskatchewan farms
    - Compost from the program will meet grade A standards, so it can be safely used to nourish plants
  - Towards 70% - More than half of what we throw out can be composted.
    - Diverting recycling, organics, Household Hazardous Waste (HHW), and other unacceptable material help extend the life of the City landfill and avoid the cost of developing a new one.
    - Divert up to 30,000 tonnes of waste from the City's landfill each year and reduce the need for a new landfill
  - Help reduce environmental impacts of waste
    - Reduce community GHG emissions by 1,140,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2050 by diverting recyclable and organic material from the landfill.
    - Help protect our land and water from contamination caused by organics improperly breaking down in the landfill

### Phase 3 – Cart Deployments and First Collections (March – May 2023)

#### Scope

- Specific instructions on cart deployment and starter-package delivery
- Information on what goes into the cart
- Prepared for the organics utility fee
- Reminders on curbside collection basics (collection calendar, cart placement, etc.)

#### Desired Outcome

As the program is launched, residents will:

- Prepared for cart deployment and first collections
  - What to expect as a former green-cart subscriber vs. new user
  - When carts will arrive and what to expect
  - When collections start and what changes there may be to collection schedules and location.
  - Who can expect a smaller cart and why
- Knowledgeable on use of the green cart
  - The types of waste that go into the green cart
  - How to use compostable bags, kitchen pails, and care for the green cart.
  - Scheduled collection dates
  - Collection locations
  - Using the available informational tools such as the Waste Wizard
- Understand the costs associated with the introduction of the curbside organics utility fee
  - Aware that a change was made

- How to read the utility bill and what the fee pays for
  - Where to get customer service support on billing
- Understand what has not changes and are comfortable in the aspects of the program that have remained consistent with current curbside programs
  - Cart storage and placement
  - Customer service for missed collection, damaged carts, bylaw enforcement
  - Ongoing support program for backyard composters
  - Where to find information (Waste Wizard, saskatoon.ca, utility account etc.)
  - Where to drop off excess or oversized yard waste

### Key Messages

- What you need to do to prepare
  - Think about the best place for your cart and kitchen catcher
    - As you are preparing plantings for the spring, consider where you can store your new cart
    - A kitchen catcher, for collecting food and soiled paper inside, will be provided. Most people store them on their counter or under the sink in their kitchen for easy access.
  - Download the Saskatoon Waste Wizard app or sign up for collection reminders on [saskatoon.ca/wastewizard](http://saskatoon.ca/wastewizard)
    - You'll get reminders so you never miss a collection, even as the collection calendar changes
    - You can easily search for materials to place them in the right cart
    - If you have questions, you can send suggestions
  - Mark your address on all your carts
    - This helps identify which cart is yours
- It is easy being green – how to use your green cart every day
  - Find your new collection calendar the same way you find it now
    - Saskatoon Waste Wizard
    - [saskatoon.ca](http://saskatoon.ca)
    - Library
  - Place your cart out on collection day following the same guidelines you use for the black and blue carts
    - The location will be the same as other carts (front street, back lane or cul-de-sac)
    - The set-out times and cart spacing will be the same
  - Find out what materials go into the cart the same way you do now
    - Acceptable items list on the webpage and waste guide
    - Saskatoon Waste Wizard app and search tools
    - Waste sorting guide from the starter-package

### Phase 4 – Seasonal Support and Early Corrections (June – December 2023)

#### Scope

- Using program feedback, tailored communications to address specific issues or questions as they arise, such as common contaminants or to improve capture rates
- Provide timely seasonal instructions to help address questions or concerns before they arise

#### Desired Outcome

In the first year following the program launch residents will:

- Build confidence in what is accepted in the program



- o Receive feedback on what is going well and not well, so early corrections can be made
- o Have the green cart as part of their routine day-to-day activities
- Be able to address seasonal issues as they arise
  - o Summer ick factor and pests
  - o Fall/Spring quantities of materials
  - o Winter freezing, benefits of frequent collections

### Key Messages

- We're here to help you
  - o Questions about whether a specific item is accepted in the program – ask the Saskatoon Waste Wizard
  - o Not sure how to deal with excess yard waste in spring and fall?
    - You can still use our free compost depot to drop off yard waste
    - You can store it until the next collection
    - You can order additional carts for an additional fee
  - o Worried about smells, fruit flies, pests or freezing?
    - We've collected all the best tips and tricks from other places to help prevent common issues

### Phase 5 – Operational Communications and Education Program (2024+)

Starting in January 2024, the communications and education program will enter its operational phase. The Curbside Organics Operations Committee, comprised of representatives from the Administration and the organics processor, will prepare and approve an annual plan that targets continuous improvement. Updates on program performance will be communicated annually through the annual Integrated Waste Management report.

### The Education Strategy

This section of the Strategy outlines the programs that the City currently operates or plans to develop to educate residents on the city-wide curbside organics program.

#### Expansion of Existing City Waste Diversion Education Programs

The Education Strategy will be building on the many existing education programs and explore opportunities to design new programs to grow the City's portfolio of programs to new areas as needed. A summary of the current programs and their performance is available in the annual Integrated Waste Management Annual report.

Table 4 outlines existing program and the opportunities to expand them to include curbside organics specific messaging and programing. Many of these education programs are operated through multi-year contracts and have been typically within the scope of the recycling program operating committees. Therefore, incorporation of curbside organics education may require additional negotiations and approvals before changes can proceed.

**Table 4: Existing Education Programs and Expansion Opportunities**

Program and Description	Expansion Opportunity
<b>Waste Wizard</b> The Waste Wizard is the name of the bundle of services provided through a contract with	The database of acceptable program materials will require an extensive update after the subscription green cart program

<p>Recollect that includes the Waste Wizard App, collection calendar, reminders, website search tool, and sorting game for items for diversion or disposal.</p>	<p>ends and before the curbside organics carts are deployed.</p> <p>The collection calendar will need to be updated as collection schedules are revised.</p>
<p><b>Recycling Education Unit</b> A mobile trailer that contains three games used by staff or volunteers to provide interactive education to the public on waste and recycling programs in Saskatoon. Recycling is currently the priority message.</p>	<p>Add 'Green Ambassadors' knowledgeable about the curbside organics program as well as organics specific education material and games to the Recycling Education Unit in 2023.</p>
<p><b>Compost Coaches</b> This program is a volunteer group coordinated by a contractor (currently the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council) focused on home composting. Compost Coaches work with community gardens, staff composting displays at community events, give presentations, and perform home visits for residents who request one-on-one composting help.</p>	<p>Information regarding the Curbside Organics Program could be added to the Compost Coach program, including volunteer training and provide direct support to residents on proper use of the curbside organics cart.</p>
<p><b>Cart Tagging Program</b> This is a recycling education program that does a visual inspection of the contents of blue carts and provides an educational tag on contamination.</p>	<p>A duplication of this program for curbside organics could provide direct feedback to residents during the first year of operation.</p>
<p><b>Newcomers Workshops</b> Workshops target Newcomers and English as an Additional Language (EAL) students. This program is delivered through existing methods using recycling education as a theme for an English-language class facilitated by SWRC.</p>	<p>Update the curriculum to include Curbside Organics Program education.</p>
<p><b>School-Based Environmental Education</b> The City offers a suite of environmental education programs that schools can opt into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Action for a Sustainable Future</li> <li>• Compost Coaches</li> <li>• Environmental Cash Grant</li> <li>• Sanitary Sewer and Yellowfish Road</li> </ul> <p>Schools fall under the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional sector.</p>	<p>In partnership with the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional sector waste diversion regulation education program, school-specific education can be developed that either can be distributed through existing education programs and/or as a stand-alone program (school organics pilot project).</p>

<b>Education-First Enforcement</b> The Waste Bylaw is usually enforced through an education first approach, with follow-up to ensure infractions have been corrected.	Provide Environmental Protection Officers have updated education materials to support their education-first enforcement efforts.
<b>Customer Service Support</b> Customer service is a source of information and support directly to residents. They can provide quick, accurate responses to inquiries and troubleshoot issues.	Ensure that Customer Support staff have all the information and tools available to respond to resident questions and concerns during each phase of the strategy's roll-out and that feedback is provided to the education and communication team on issues or themes that arise.

### New Education Program Opportunities

With the introduction of the curbside organics program there is the opportunity to explore organics specific education programs or expanding reach to include harder to reach segments. Table 5 outlines new and expanded program opportunities.

**Table 5: New and Expanded Program Opportunities**

<b>New Education Program</b>	<b>Proposed Scope</b>
<b>Roll-out Education Program and Starter Package</b>	<p>This is a short-term program that supports the roll-out of the program and the communications campaigns that are planned. It will include neighbourhood-based information sessions to help familiarize residents with the programs and answer questions.</p> <p>It will include the delivery of a starter package to every curbside home, including the kitchen catcher and a "how-to-guide" for organics.</p>
<b>Retailer Communication</b>	<p>This program will familiarize local retailers with the upcoming program including information on acceptable compostable single use items and bags. It will include direct mail-outs, "shelf talkers" for retailers to place next to BPI certified compostable bags, and reinforcement that only BPI certified bags are permitted and not other single use items.</p>
<b>Staff Education</b>	<p>Many staff are also residents of Saskatoon and are likely to get questions from family and friends on the city-wide organics program. This Strategy will partner with the Leading by Example/Green Teams Program to educate staff on organics in the workplace and how it will be the same materials that are accepted in the curbside organics program.</p>
<b>Targeted Neighbourhood Education</b>	<p>Through data from recycling and garbage collections, identify neighbourhoods that may need additional support to use the program properly (i.e. lower set out, lower capture rates, higher contamination)</p>

	This could involve a partnership with a community-based NGO to deliver education on the use of the program from the community for the community. This could also use the community-based social-marketing approach to identify barriers to proper participation and where possible address those barriers. The program's design will apply the equity toolkit.
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### Organics Processor Education

The Processor will be responsible for programs related to their facility:

- Employ staff responsible for education and communication
- Provide access to the Receiving Site and/or Processing Facility and staff for filming of promotional videos
- Collaborate with the City on promotional campaigns, media outreach and educational programming
- Communicate the benefits of processing the organics material
- Provide public tours by request at their Receiving Site and/or Processing Facility
- Provide an education program which is designed and staffed, as needed, by the Processor with the City's input

### Delivering and Adapting this Living Strategy

This Strategy is intentionally high level due to the iterative nature of education and communications. As each phase is prepared, the scope, desired end state, and key messages will be confirmed or refined as needed. As well, a more detailed tools and tactics plan will be developed.

### Responding to Performance Data and Resident Feedback

One of the key features of this Strategy is its intention to be responsive to performance data and resident feedback.

Methods of collecting this data and feedback include:

- Organics processor reporting through the operations committee, which will provide direct feedback on common contaminants
- Collections tracking, which can provide information on participation rates
- Waste characterization studies that can provide information on both contamination and capture rates
- Customer service monitoring, to understand common question or issues
- Enforcement monitoring to understand what topics and where both educational and enforcement measures have been taken
- Statistically representative surveys that can provide information on knowledge, behaviour, barriers, and preferences