

Environmental Programs – Levels of Service

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon operates environmental programs for the community including the Environmental Cash Grant, Healthy Yards, Curbside Swap, Yellowfish Road, and Sanitary Sewer education. Some of these programs lack formal level of service documentation, and some levels of service have not been included in previous detailed operating budgets included in the Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget (MYBB). Further, progress on climate and environmental commitments were previously tracked and reported on through the Environmental Dashboard and the Climate Action Progress Report. The addition of a new Climate Dashboard embeds these two reporting mechanisms which requires a change to the level of service definition.

This report outlines proposed levels of service for the 2026-2027 business plan and budget. It also includes information on adjustments taking place in 2025 and a work plan to continuously review and improve environmental programs.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee for Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services recommend to City Council that the changes to the environmental program levels of service as outlined in this report are included for consideration during the 2026/2027 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget process.

BACKGROUND

City Council, at its 2024/2025 Preliminary Business Plan and Budget meeting on November 29, 2023, though approval of the multi-year budget approved the levels of service for Student Action for a Sustainable Future, Healthy Yards and Compost Coaches, Saskatoon Curbside Swap, Environmental Dashboard, Climate Reporting, and the Integrated Waste Management report. During the deliberations, City Council resolved to eliminate the Healthy Yards advertising and Boulevard Garden Program support levels of service, resulting in a mill rate reduction of \$11,600. Additional background on specific environmental programs is available in Appendix 1.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The proposed levels of service for operating community environmental programs for 2026 and 2027 have been documented in Appendix 2.

2025 Level of Service Adjustments

Due to the introduction of the green cart utility, the Compost Coaches (a component of Healthy Yards) program has seen a decline in new home composters through the uptake on the compost bin rebate. In 2024, a program review was completed, and a summary of the review is included as Appendix 3. The table below proposes a change to the level of service for the 2025 program that accounts for a phase-out of the Compost Coaches

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program. Savings from the phase-out of Compost Coaches program will be returned to the utilities that funded the program.

Table 1: Healthy Yards and Compost Coaches-Level of Service Change

2024 LOS	2025+ LOS
<u>80</u> in-person education events, classes, workshops per year	<u>30</u> in-person and online education events, classes, workshops per year
This reflects the Healthy Yards programs level of service following the phase-out of Compost Coaches and updated to include online delivery that remains after Covid-19	

<u>200</u> Rain Barrel and Compost Bin Rebates	<u>250</u> Rain Barrel rebates (no compost bin rebates).
Phased out compost bin due to low uptake on home compost education; increased rain barrel rebate due to high demand	

<u>200</u> compost coaches home visits/inquiries per year	<u>0</u> compost coach home visits. Program component ends; no defined level of service
Phased out due to low uptake on compost bin rebate with introduction of green cart program	

2026+ Level of Service Adjustments

As community environmental programs evolve to meet City Council’s Environmental Sustainability Priority in the Strategic Plan, the following level of service adjustments are proposed for 2026-2027.

Table 2: Environmental Awareness Survey-Level of Service Adjustment

2024-25 LOS	2026-27 LOS
No defined level of service in MYBB. Unfunded.	Statistically representative survey every 2 years to measure community awareness and behaviours
This has been a recurring activity since 2012 occurring approximately every 5 years and providing valuable information for planning and delivering community environmental programs. Due to the growth of environmental sustainability strategies, plans and programs, more frequent data is required to continue to deliver on Council’s Environmental Leadership priority, develop effective and responsive project and programs, and monitor performance.	

Table 3: Environmental Dashboard-Level of Service Adjustment

2024-25 LOS	2026-27 LOS
25 indicators updated annually.	Integrate into “Climate Reporting”
This dashboard (hosted on saskatoon.ca) has been integrated into the Climate Dashboard in 2024. Climate mitigation and other relevant environmental indicators will be tracked on the new dashboard.	

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Table 4: Climate Reporting-Level of Service Adjustment

2024-25 LOS	2026-27 LOS
<p>Climate Action Progress Report, GHG Inventories, and Climate Budget</p> <p>Every-second year progress report which includes a verified Climate Budget chapter included in the multi-year business plan and budget.</p>	<p>Integrate Climate Dashboard, update every second year with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate action progress • Corporate & Community greenhouse gas inventories • KPI's on energy, water, waste, transportation, and climate adaptation <p>Climate Action Progress update (Admin Report) every second year.</p> <p>Climate Budget chapter included in the multi-year business plan and budget.</p>
<p>The Climate Dashboard uses a digital platform to report on progress and indicators in a dashboard format that is attractive, user-friendly, and directly aligns with the LEC Plan actions and indicators.</p> <p>For 2026+ it will be further updated to report on all indicators within the new Climate Action Plan and later Green Pathways. It may eventually replace the Climate Action Progress Report, although a summary of the progress will still be reported to EUCS every second year. A climate budget will continue to be included in the multi-year budget.</p>	

Defining a Service Level in MYBB Where There is No Service Level Documented

The table below proposes documenting the current activities as the level of service and including them in future budgets for transparency of program operations and to monitor performance.

Table 5: Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Waste Diversion Support-Level of Service Defined

2024-25 LOS	2026-27 LOS
<p>No defined level of service in MYBB. Funded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual communications plan and awareness campaign. • Self-declaration exemption. • Biennial sector engagement – survey. • Collect material types and volume data from waste haulers
<p>This reflects the level of service in the approved program implementation reporting.</p>	

Table 6: Yellowfish Road and Sanitary Sewer Education-Level of Service Defined

2024-25 LOS	2026-27 LOS
<p>No defined level of service in MYBB. Funded.</p>	<p>35 school groups and presentations</p>
<p>This reflects a realistic annual target based on the last 3 years of program delivery.</p>	

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Table 7: Environmental Cash Grant-Level of Service Defined

2024 LOS	2025+ LOS
No defined level of service in MYBB. Funded.	Grants to support community environmental projects by non-profit groups are allocated annually.
This general level of service statement may be refined following the review. Growth of funding based on population growth is proposed to be applied going forward to maintain the effectiveness of the grants.	

No Change in Level of Service for 2026-2027

The tables below maintain current levels of service for future budgets.

Table 8: Student Action for a Sustainable Future-No Change to Level of Service

2024-25 LOS	2026-27 LOS
12 classes per year receiving in-class audits, teaching sustainability and climate science lessons, PD events and individual support for teachers, and an annual Student Showcase event to support their environmental action projects.	
No recommended changes to level of service. Reviews occur with contract renewals.	

Table 9: Saskatoon Curbside Swap and Integrated Waste Management Report-No Change to Level of Service

2024-25 LOS	2026-27 LOS
2 City wide events, support for community events	
1 biennial report alternating with 1 biennial advertising campaign	
No recommended changes. Review will occur with the Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan update	

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The phase-out of Compost Coaches starting in 2025, will result in a reduced expenditure for the water and waste utilities education budgets. These funds will be returned to the utility in 2025 and may be reallocated to other education requirements.

The information presented in this report will be used to develop the 2026-2027 MYBB.

A summary of the financial implications in the 2026-2027 MYBB based on changes to the levels of service proposed in this report is provided in the table below.

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Table 10: Service Level Changes: Environmental Health Business Line (Mill Rate)

Community Environmental Program	Previously defined, refined or new for 2026	Service Level (\$)		
		SL Change	2026 ΔSL\$ (000's)	2027 ΔSL\$ (000's)
Environmental Awareness Survey	New SL Definition	SL ¹ requirement has grown	\$ 25	\$0
Environmental Dashboard	SL transition to Climate reporting	None	\$0	\$0
Climate Reporting	New SL Definition	Inflation	\$17.1	\$0
Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Waste Diversion Support	New SL Definition	None	\$0	\$0
Environmental Cash Grant	New SL Definition	None	\$3 ²	\$1
Saskatoon Curbside Swap	Previously defined SL	Move to Utility-SL	-\$5	\$0
TOTAL			\$40.1	\$1

Table 11: Service Levels: Other Business Lines (Utilities)

Community Environmental Program	Previously defined, refined or new for 2026	Service Level (\$)		
		SL Change	2026 ΔSL\$ (000's)	2027 ΔSL\$ (000's)
Healthy Yards and Compost Coaches: Compost Coach in-person education events, classes, workshops	Redefined SL	Reduced SL	-\$18.2	\$0
Healthy Yards and Compost Coaches: Rain Barrel and Compost Bin Rebates	Redefined SL	Increased SL		
Healthy Yards and Compost Coaches: compost coaches home visits/inquiries	Redefined SL	Reduced SL		
Yellowfish Road and Sanitary Sewer Education	New SL Definition	None	\$0	\$0
Saskatoon Curbside Swap	Previously defined SL	Moved from EH-SL	\$0 ³	\$0
TOTAL			-18.2	\$0

¹ Surveys are currently carried out on a five-year cycle. This change moves to two-year cycle due to growth in data requirements from the number of strategies that the department is managing and reporting

² Applies a growth rate in-line with the rate of population growth to ensure the level of service is maintained.

³ Utilizes communications funding for waste reduction already budgeted in the waste utility.

NEXT STEPS

Community environmental programs will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are aligning with Council’s Environmental Sustainability Priority, advancing adopted strategies and plans, meeting performance targets, applying best practices, and optimizing resource requirements. The work plan for reviews includes:

Table 12: Sustainability Department Service Level Reviews Work Plan

Community Environmental Program	Scheduled Review	Explanation of Schedule/Timing
Environmental Cash Grants	2025	This review is currently in progress.
Climate Reporting	Ongoing	Reviewed after each reporting milestone
Environmental Awareness Survey		
Student Action for a Sustainable Future	Q1-2 2026	Align with contract renewal
Integrated Waste Management Report	2026	These will be completed as part of the Solid Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan update.
Curbside Swap		
Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Waste Diversion Regulation Support		
Yellowfish Road and Sanitary Sewer Education	2027	Allow 5 years of combined program operations post-covid to provide sufficient data for review.
Healthy Yards	TBD	This program review will align with Water Conservation/ Green Pathways implementation plan updates since it supports their implementation.

Further information on the proposed 2026-2027 portfolio of work for the Sustainability Department will be brought forward in an information report to the SPC Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services in June 2025.

APPENDICES

1. Community Environmental Programs Detailed Descriptions
2. Service Level
3. Compost Coaches Summary Report

Report Approval

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