

2017 Waste Diversion Communications Highlights

BACKGROUND

Current City of Saskatoon waste diversion programs are achieving a waste diversion rate of 21.8%. In order to begin moving toward the diversion target of 70% by 2023 and the long term goal to achieve Zero Waste, a comprehensive plan must be established to identify the programs and policy options that will identify the path to meeting this target.

What is possible?

Based on the Waste Diversion Opportunities Report, work has begun on the development of a Waste Diversion Plan that will provide a potential long-term roadmap for the City's waste management programs and recommended policies and initiatives that City Council could adopt to achieve full implementation. See the Waste Diversion Opportunities Report for more detail; shortlisted items include:

- A Utility Model for Waste – Modifying the approach to financing the solid waste management program to ensure that funds can be allocated to cover the true costs of waste management in Saskatoon and rewarding composting and recycling activities over landfilling.
- Organics – City-wide mandatory organics program for single-family homes
- Collection Frequency – Optimizing collection frequency to maximize waste diversion
- Enforcement – Disposal bans for the ICI sector, with expansion to the residential sector
- Program Improvements – landfill improvements; a recovery park, Household Hazardous Waste and other programs for the Industrial, Institutional, and Commercial Sector
- Modifying how we measure success in terms of waste generation

The City is currently preparing to engage the public in October 2017 to gather input on future changes to waste management as identified in the Waste Diversion Opportunities Report.

COMMUNICATION GOALS:

The goals of this plan are to generate ownership, involve residents and get broad public support for the final decisions reached by Mayor and City Council.

Targets, Issues, Process, Engagement Opportunities

- Educate and build an understanding of key issues within the waste diversion plan - raise awareness of current state (2016 waste characterization).
- Build support for potential Waste Diversion Plan recommendations and get community involved with shaping future programs for waste diversion.
- Develop performance metrics for the community and report on key milestones.

Outcomes, Opportunities, Next Steps

- Engage community to prioritize and refine initiatives.
- Build awareness within the community regarding 'what we heard' during the engagement phase.
- Use feedback from engagement to help build the waste diversion plan.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:

- **Phase One: Pre-Engagement campaign (1 month –October 2017)**
Activities will focus on launching a 30 day waste challenge campaign. The goal is to prepare the community for a conversation on waste diversion.

- **Phase Two– Engagement (1-2 months – starting January 2018)**

Communications to alert residents to opportunities to engage in a discussion on waste diversion might include radio announcements, billboards and signage.

- **Phase Three – Reporting/Data Analysis (1-2 months –starting March 2018)**

Gather and analyze data needed to inform future planning. Communications will focus on reporting outcomes, ‘what we heard’, and how the City plans to continue engagement in the future.

KEY MESSAGES:

Waste Diversion:

- Each of us can control our waste to create a more sustainable, healthy community. Together we can have a big impact for a cleaner environment.
- Canadians produce more waste per capita than almost any other country.
- Every week the average home in Saskatoon produces 16 kg of waste. Once it goes into the garbage it ends up in the landfill.
- Waste diversion directs garbage away from landfills through reuse, recycling, or composting.
- Our residential recycling programs provided a successful first step toward our waste diversion goal.
- Diverting waste away from landfills prevents pollution that can harm our health and the environment.
- By investing in waste diversion we are investing in a more sustainable tomorrow.

What’s in our garbage?

- Organics - 58% of what’s going in household garbage is food or yard waste.
- Recycling -10% of what’s going in household garbage is recyclable material that could be recycled.
- More than 75% could be diverted from the landfill if new programs for diversion are made available.

Saskatoon’s waste diversion target

- The community has set a target of diverting 70% of our waste from the landfill. This means that 70% of our waste will be reused, recycled or composted.

Why we need to divert more?

- Simple actions can have a really big impact. By making activities such as recycling and composting part of your daily routine we can help the environment while saving our tax dollars.
- Diversion creates jobs: recycling 14,000 tonnes of waste creates nine jobs and composting it creates seven jobs, but landfilling it creates just one job (FCM).
- Recycling uses less energy than disposal in a landfill and manufacturing with recycled materials is more energy-efficient than with virgin materials.
- Our landfill is filling up. Every year we are adding almost 100,000 tonnes of garbage.
- The cost of inaction – both financially and environmentally - is too high for us not to act.
- Changes we make now can extend the life of the landfill and help save us from future costs of siting a new landfill or hauling waste out of the city.
- Waste is expensive to manage and represents a missed opportunity to extract value from materials in the waste stream.
- Cost of decommissioning our existing landfill and building a new one is estimated at over \$125 million! Our legacy of garbage is a burden we can’t expect future generations to pay for.
- Putting organics in the landfill causes them to break down slowly while releasing methane, a potent greenhouse gas (GHG) 21 times stronger than carbon dioxide.