
Next Steps in City-Wide (Mandatory) Organics and Waste Utility Program Development

Recommendation

That the report of the Acting General Manager, Corporate Performance Department, dated November 6, 2017, be forwarded to City Council for information.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed approach and timelines for the development of a city-wide Organics Program and the design of an expanded Waste Services Utility.

Report Highlights

1. The next six months will see an unprecedented level of activity regarding changes to solid waste handling in Saskatoon. There is significant research, engagement, communications, planning and project management required to undertake advance organics and solid waste utility opportunities that will take steps towards the City's solid waste diversion target of 70%.
2. As the design for a variable-pricing utility for garbage, recycling and organic waste streams begins with the community in January, changes to existing systems and processes are required. These changes also provide important information about the design of the future program(s).
3. In order to move forward quickly, the Administration has developed a strategy to re-allocate existing resources, both financial and staff time, to complete the preliminary phase of work required by both programs. Additional resources will be required before the end of 2018 to complete future phases of planning and design work. A budget adjustment capital request will be prepared by the Administration following the community engagement process for consideration by City Council at that time.

Strategic Goal

The information in this report supports the four-year priorities to promote and facilitate city-wide composting and recycling, along with the long-term strategy to eliminate the need for a new landfill under the Strategic Goal of Environmental Leadership.

Background

City Council, at its meeting held on August 28, 2017, considered the Waste Utility Design Options report and resolved:

- “1. That the Administration continue to develop a program to expand the Waste Services Utility to include variable-pricing options; and
2. That the Administration engage citizens and stakeholders on variable-pricing options based on the information presented in this

report, and report back in the first quarter of 2018 with a proposed design and timeline for implementation for a utility model.”

At that same meeting, City Council also considered the Organic Opportunities report and resolved:

“That Administration continue research and program development on an organics program for the Residential, Industrial, Commercial and Institutional sectors.”

Report

Next Steps in Program Development for City-Wide Organics

There is significant work required to prepare for the next steps of organics-related decisions that City Council will be making. The City will begin the process of determining how to secure improved and appropriate organic material collection, processing and end use for the community to enable future organics diversion programs and opportunities. This work includes program planning, research, communications, engagement, program development and procurement of new collections and processing capacity.

A dedicated Project Manager will be assigned to lead this work, who along with additional temporary staff, will complete the majority of the work in-house. This team will possess the following specific skills:

- waste diversion and environmental programs
- communications and engagement

Existing staff will also be re-allocated to enable research and program development to proceed in alignment with the proposed expanded Waste Services Utility and the continuing work on the Waste Diversion Plan itself.

Preparing an Expanded Waste Services Utility

Parallel to the service design work that will begin with the community in January, changes to existing systems and processes are required to improve the current state of program delivery. These changes are also expected to help inform the design the utility.

This work includes improving utility processes and systems, and preparing options for ensuring the billing and tracking systems appropriately support the vision of a community co-designed variable-pricing mechanism for garbage, recycling and organic waste streams.

A Project Manager to lead this developmental work will be put in place. A re-allocation of existing staff and the addition of temporary staff with specific skills will also be required from the following divisions:

- Water and Waste Stream

- Environmental and Corporate Initiatives
- Corporate Revenue
- Information Technology
- Communications
- Finance
- Construction and Design
- Major Projects & Preservation

Public and/or Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement in the design of future waste services in Saskatoon will begin in January based on the approach outlined in the Environmental Sustainability – Engagement Approach report that went to Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services on October 10, 2017.

Communication Plan

The 30-Day Waste Challenge kick-started the communication and awareness plan that will continue to raise awareness about the importance of waste diversion and reduction; as well as the opportunities for waste diversion including organics, a waste utility and other items outlined in the Waste Diversion Plan. These plans were further outlined in the October report on Engagement Approach.

Financial Implications

Administration has estimated that between now and May 2018, \$175,000 is required by the Organics Program and \$275,000 for the Waste Services Utility.

Revenues from the Multi-Material Recycling Program (MMRP) generate a surplus within the Waste Services Utility that can be allocated along with existing resources to complete the preliminary phase of work required by both programs.

Actual implementation of program changes are expected to commence following completion of this first phase of work. Once program direction has been set for organics and solid waste, a detailed project budget and timeline will be developed.

Administration will bring forward these plans and budget requirements before the end of 2018 so that City Council can choose when and how to begin implementation.

Administration expects that there will be some urgency to commence implementation in 2018, and as such a detailed funding strategy will be brought forward for consideration by City Council following the community engagement process. While further work by the Administration is required to determine sufficient funding for this future capital request, some existing capital reserve funds have already been identified as available to support the next phase of work. If City Council chooses to proceed with one or both of these programs, Administration will seek necessary approvals on funding requests to complete program planning. The capital request will also include an outline of requirements associated with preparing cart inventory systems (for example field investigations, tagging or identifying carts) or purchase and deployment of additional carts in varying sizes, equipment, organics processing facilities and other capital expenditures.

Policy Implications

A review and amendment to The Waste Bylaw will be required to enable the introduction of a city-wide Organics Program and an expanded Waste Services Utility.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no environmental, privacy or CPTED implications or considerations.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

Administration will provide regular updates on these initiatives through reports to the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services. The following is a preliminary schedule developed by Administration that outlines the focus and timing of these updates. This schedule is anticipated to change as the service design process begins with the community and decisions are made by City Council.

- April 2018 - Presentation of research/best practices and engagement results.
- May 2018 - Recommendations on city-wide Organics program design.
- June 2018 - Recommendations on the design and capital requirements to implement an expanded Waste Services Utility providing a comprehensive Waste Management plan for garbage, organics, and recycling.
- July 2018 - Update report.
- August 2018 - Recommendations on implementation (i.e. project outline of the various changes required to create the future service model for waste in Saskatoon).
- September 2018 - Update report.
- October 2018 - Details about program design, timing and approach to the rollout of changes, and communications plans.
- November 2018 - Rates Report outlining proposed fees associated with the expanded Waste Service Utility (including garbage, recycling and organics).
- March 2019 - Update/progress report on implementation.
- June 2019 - Update/progress report on implementation.
- September 2019 - Update/progress report on implementation.

Included in the 2018 reports (currently anticipated in June 2018) will be a post-budget request for capital funding to be spent beginning in 2018.

Public Notice

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Report Approval

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