
Changes to Waste Management in Saskatoon - Engagement Results

Recommendation

That the report of the General Manager, Corporate Performance Department dated June 11, 2018, be forwarded to City Council as information in support of the Recommended Changes to Waste Management in Saskatoon report.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the community engagement and communication results for Saskatoon Talks Trash curbside (single-family) residential waste engagement. The engagement results informed the recommended changes to waste management and will also inform program implementation.

Report Highlights

1. The “Saskatoon Talks Trash: Curbside” engagement campaign ran from February 12 - March 6, 2018. In that time, over 5,000 residents participated in a variety of engagement activities.
2. Engagement results informed the program recommendations being brought forward in the Changes to Waste Management in Saskatoon report.
3. The majority of participants were excited about the introduction of a City-Wide Organics Program, preferring a co-mingled cart for food and yard waste together. Support for the pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) waste utility was mixed, with many concerns identified. Many other themes were identified through engagement, which can inform both the design and implementation of future programs, services, and changes.

Strategic Goals

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.”

City Council, at its meeting held on October 23, 2017, considered the Environmental Sustainability – Community Engagement Approach report that provided an update on the communications and engagement strategies for Waste Diversion and Climate Change.

City Council, at its meeting held on November 20, 2017, considered the Next Steps in City-Wide (Mandatory) Organics and Waste Utility Program Development report. This report outlined the proposed approach and timelines for the development of a City-Wide Organics Program and the design of an expanded waste services utility.

Report

Changes to Waste Management in Saskatoon

The primary purpose of community engagement was to ensure that waste management program changes are feasible, desirable, and community-informed in their design and implementation. Engagement results informed a decision making process, the results of which are being presented in a separate report, entitled Recommended Changes to Waste Management in Saskatoon.

Residents and stakeholders were informed about city-wide organics and a variable-rate waste utility and asked to provide feedback based on their preferences, values, and priorities. They were also invited to share ideas about recycling, depots, and other programs that could contribute to the goal of 70% waste diversion by 2023.

Engagement Results

Between February 12 and March 6, 2018, the City of Saskatoon (the City) engaged residents on curbside waste collections. Over 5,000 residents participated in the community engagement which included an online survey, a series of six Pop-Up events, two community workshops, and an accessible waste collection workshop. Two further “Sensemaking” engagement sessions were held in late April and early May to share and discuss draft recommendations with groups of residents and stakeholders.

Attachment 1, Engagement and Communications Results Summary, provides an overview of the engagement activities and outputs, along with communications activities and materials.

The results of each engagement activity can be found in the following attachments:

- Attachment 2: Engage, Saskatoon Talks Trash: Curbside - Online Survey Summary

- Attachment 3: Saskatoon Talks Trash: Curbside - Community Workshops Feedback Summary – Lura Consulting, April 20, 2018
- Attachment 4: Saskatoon Talks Trash: Curbside - Pop-Up Conversations Feedback Summary - Lura Consulting, April 20, 2018
- Attachment 5: Engage – Saskatoon Talks Trash: Curbside - Accessible Waste Collection Workshop Summary
- Attachment 6: YXE Talks Trash: Curbside - Sensemaking Sessions Summaries

Attachment 7, 2017 Waste Awareness and Recycling Survey Excerpts, includes excerpts from the 2017 Waste Awareness & Behaviour Survey conducted by Inshtrix Research. Relevant pages addressing organics, recycling, and the waste utility have been taken from the full report and compiled into the attachment to provide context from this statistically reliable survey.

What We Heard

Residents and stakeholders shared many ideas for improving curbside collection and increasing waste diversion. Below is a short summary of what the City heard about the three main waste streams; further detail can be found in the attachments.

Garbage

A small majority (approximately 60%) of residents who participated in engagement activities demonstrated support for a PAYT approach. A vocal minority (about 30%) expressed strong opposition, while a third group were uncertain or had further questions.

Supportive residents were interested in PAYT for three main reasons: the diversion incentive, opportunity for individual cost control, and higher standard of accountability for all residents. Many participants expressed interest in choosing their cart size. Residents (both supportive and opposed) were very concerned about the potential for PAYT to cause illegal dumping in their carts and in the alleys, ditches, and surrounding areas. The second highest concern was that a utility would be “double-dipping” or a “tax grab”, on top of property taxes. Other frequently cited concerns included: affordability, fairness (larger families, medical waste, secondary suites, and tenants), variable waste volumes, contamination risk, and preference for waste to remain on the mill rate.

A large number of residents expressed a preference for moving to bi-weekly garbage collection all year, once the organics program is introduced.

Organics

Over 80% of participants expressed clear support for a City-Wide Organics Program. Those who were opposed to the program primarily disliked the additional cost and cart, or were existing backyard composters who disliked the mandatory approach.

The majority of participants preferred co-mingled (food and yard waste together) collection in a single green cart. This was primarily due to greater convenience and in order to have sufficient capacity for grass, leaves, branches, and garden waste.

Participants were not in favour of approaches that required yard waste to be bagged. About half of residents engaged suggested an interest in weekly collection, depending on the cart capacity and the season. Many suggested a schedule of weekly collection from spring to fall and biweekly in the winter.

The top five concerns about the Organics Program are: cleanliness, convenience, program cost, finding space for a third cart, and fairness (for those with backyard composters, small yards, townhouses, or limited food waste).

Recycling

Many participant comments indicated an interest in weekly collection when asked what could improve about their current service level. However, a large majority of respondents preferred to maintain large carts collected bi-weekly when they were presented with a weekly collection scenario.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

Public and stakeholder involvement is the subject of this report. Based on the decision, additional engagement may be required to ensure effective implementation.

Communication Plan

The communications activities used to promote and support engagement are also outlined in this report. Additional communications planning and activities are anticipated as the project moves from recommendations into implementation.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no policy, financial, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations. The implications of any changes to the curbside residential waste programs are reported in the Recommended Changes to Waste Management in Saskatoon report.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

The recommended changes to curbside residential collections are outlined in the recommendations report this month, and will include other due dates for project follow-up.

Public Notice

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

Attachments

1. Engagement and Communications Results Summary
2. Engage, Saskatoon Talks Trash: Curbside - Online Survey Summary
3. Saskatoon Talks Trash: Curbside - Community Workshops Feedback Summary – Lura Consulting, April 20, 2018
4. Saskatoon Talks Trash: Curbside - Pop-Up Conversations Feedback Summary - Lura Consulting, April 20, 2018

5. Engage – Saskatoon Talks Trash: Curbside - Accessible Waste Collection Workshop Summary
6. YXE Talks Trash: Curbside - Sensemaking Sessions Summaries
7. 2017 Waste Awareness and Behaviour Survey Excerpts

Report Approval

Written by: Anna Hopkins, Community Engagement Consultant

Reviewed by: Amber Weckworth, Education and Environmental Performance Manager
Brenda Wallace, Director of Environmental and Corporate Initiatives

Approved by: Dan Willems, Acting General Manager, Corporate Performance Dept.

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