

Additional Information on Prohibition of Organics in Landfill and Black Carts

Prohibition on organics from the landfill and black bins

The following excerpts on material bans were reported to City Council in 2015. Information has been updated wherever applicable.

Landfill bans, paired with other waste diversion measures, can be an effective means for increasing waste diversion. Municipal Refuse Management Regulations require the City to provide diversion options before implementing bans of this type. Municipalities implementing bans consider the following before establishing policy or regulations that ban specific materials from the landfill:

- Ensure suitable and convenient options for waste diversion are already in place for the material being banned. Bans should only be implemented after well established and easily accessible options exist in order to avoid illegal dumping.
- Establish resources (i.e. Environmental Protection Officers) to effectively enforce the landfill ban using incentives or disincentives such as fines under a waste bylaw or differential landfill fees.
- Provide adequate time prior to a landfill ban coming into effect. It is important to ensure an education program is used to make sure all those affected by the ban clearly understand its implications. Common practice is to also implement a grace period where the ban is in place but not enforced.
- Stakeholder engagement is critical for success to ensure that those affected by the ban are able to comply by selecting program elements and enforcement methods that will be effective in the local context.

Municipalities generally use the following mechanisms to ban organics:

Development of Citywide Composting Program – Many municipalities offer convenient curbside collection options for the diversion of food and/or yard waste to composting facilities. In Saskatoon, civic composting programs are voluntary in nature and are not used by the majority of residents. While approximately 35% of households used the compost depots in 2018, only 12% of households subscribed to the Green Cart program. The total combined participation rate is still less than half of all curbside households. In addition, the existing compost depots are located in areas of future development, have limited footprint for accepting increased volumes of materials, and due to the open windrow composting method are limited in the types of materials that can be accepted.

Require Commercial Sector Diversion of Organics – Some municipalities adopt bylaws requiring the Industrial-Commercial-Institutional (ICI) sector (including schools, restaurants, grocery stores, etc.) to divert their organic waste. Most municipalities have composting facilities that can accept material from businesses. Due to the

aforementioned considerations, the current compost depots are not in a position to accept or process food waste loads from the ICI sector.

Fees, Fines, or Outright Prohibition of Loads Delivered to Landfill Containing Organics – Some municipalities use load inspections at the landfill as a way to enforce organics diversion within the community. Load inspections can be resource intensive and can result in haulers choosing to use an alternate landfill in the region that do not have bans.

Curbside Confirmation of Diversion – Some municipalities conduct curbside inspections prior to collecting residential garbage. Incidents where residents have placed organics in the garbage rather than the composting stream trigger some type of enforcement action ranging from an education notice, to non-collection, to fines. Most municipalities using this control method have bag-based, manual waste collections whereby collection staff are already out of the collection vehicle and can visually-inspect the waste from each home. A curbside inspection approach is more resource intensive and less effective with carts and automated collection systems.

In summary, implementing a landfill or black cart ban on organic materials in the absence of established, readily available diversion alternatives is not industry best practice. Material bans, including organics, have been identified as a topic of engagement that will be addressed in Saskatoon's Waste Diversion Plan and ICI Waste Diversion Strategy. It is recommended that stakeholder engagement be conducted prior to implementing any types of bans. Although seasonal options for diverting residential organics are available in Saskatoon, the programs are not comprehensive, nor do they provide a year round diversion option for residents and businesses. The Administration recommends continuing to expand diversion programs in advance of further consideration of bans.

Expansion of the current organics program with a prohibition of yard waste in the black bins

An expansion of the green cart program concurrent with a yard waste ban in black carts could result in increased participation in the green cart program, increased use of the compost depots, or increased backyard composting, ultimately resulting in increased diversion rates. In addition to the aforementioned information on organics bans, the following are considerations for implementation of a yard waste ban in black carts:

- Would require changes to the Waste Bylaw. If the ban is specific to yard waste from the curbside residential sector, the bylaw would have to specify yard waste is prohibited from black carts but not from metal waste bins or other waste containers used by the multi-family and commercial sectors.
- Would require a robust public education campaign to provide information and options to residents well in advance of an effective ban date (recommended no less than one full year).

- Would require additional resources (i.e. Environmental Protection Officers) to inspect carts at the curb and to issue education letters, warning letters, or fines for non-compliance. Could be difficult to enforce if yard waste is bagged prior to being placed inside the carts. Job safety analyses do not allow EPOs to open up bags of waste or manually remove cart contents, primarily due to the risk of injury.
- Could result in increased illegal dumping infractions and misuse of recycling carts and metal waste bins.
- May not be able to be enforced during the winter months (November through March) when yard waste quantities are low and the green cart program and compost depots are not available to residents without additional programs.
- Could result in growth of the green cart program faster than carts, trucks and operators can become available, possibly resulting in service delays.
- Could result in frustration from residents if the perception is that they are either required to pay for a green cart subscription, haul, or pay to have their yard waste hauled to a compost depot, purchase a backyard composter, or potentially be subjected to a fine under the waste bylaw.
- Would not be considered industry best practice to implement a yard waste ban when other year round diversion options are not readily available, or when the seasonal green cart program requires residents to pay a subscription fee.