

### **Reduction in Black Cart Garbage Service ISSUE**

This report addresses the implications of reducing the black cart garbage service (garbage collection) provided by the City of Saskatoon (City).

#### **BACKGROUND**

At its regular meeting on July 29, 2019, when considering the 2020/2021 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget Property Tax Options report, City Council resolved, in part:

- “4. That the Administration report back to the September Governance and Priorities Committee meeting on reducing the frequency of black cart garbage pickup in some months from weekly to bi-weekly.”

#### **CURRENT STATUS**

Collection for normal household garbage and non-recyclable waste is currently provided on a weekly basis from May to October and on a bi-weekly basis from November to April.

#### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

##### Bi-weekly Collection Year-Round

Adjusting the Black Cart Garbage Service schedule to bi-weekly collection for the entire calendar year would eliminate hiring seasonal operators; and fuel, maintenance and payment costs on the collection trucks. The City currently has 26 collection trucks and leases additional trucks as needed. Approximately 12-14 of these trucks would be required to perform year-round bi-weekly collection, and the remaining 12-14 trucks currently in use could either be transferred to the organics program or retired. The City would not have to lease additional trucks for the garbage collection.

Although there is a very limited to non-existent market for used garbage collection trucks, if trucks were retired, they would be sold on the open market for whatever price the City can get for them. As this is largely unknown at this time, any profit from the sale of the trucks is not calculated into the savings from the reduction in service. The Administration estimates that savings of approximately \$500,000 could be realized from adjusting to bi-weekly service year-round (\$309,000 in fleet fuel and maintenance costs, and \$191,000 for seven seasonal collection operators that would not be required).

##### Bi-weekly Collection Extended by One or Two Months

Alternatively, reducing garbage collection to bi-weekly for an extra month or two during the year would only save on the fuel from not running the trucks and the hourly wages of the staff during that timeframe. Seasonal operators would still need to be hired back, and there would be no trucks that could be repurposed or retired. Maintenance and payments on collection trucks would still be required year-round. The estimated savings of reducing weekly service by two months would be less than \$100,000.

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### Advantages and Disadvantages of Reduction to Service

Any reduction in garbage collection service may lead citizens to utilize other alternatives for their household waste, which may prompt an uptake in the Green Cart Program for yard and food waste. This would greatly improve the diversion of waste from the landfill and reduce the City's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The City receives a subscription fee from Green Cart Program users, however, this fee does not cover the full cost of the service. The remaining cost of about \$55 per household is covered by property taxes. Currently there are approximately 10,000 Green Cart Program subscribers and if that number doubled, the cost to the City for the program would increase by \$550,000. This could negate any savings from the reduction in garbage collection service.

Other considerations of reducing collection to bi-weekly during the summer months include the potential for:

- increased odours and nuisance complaints;
- overfilled waste carts, leading to missed collections and subsequent complaints;
- increased infractions of improperly placed waste or illegal dumping; and
- increased contamination in the recycling and organics programs.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

The Administration estimates that annual savings of \$500,000 could be realized by adjusting to bi-weekly service year-round. Alternatively, the estimated savings of reducing weekly service by two months would be less than \$100,000. Both of these options have advantages and disadvantages, as outlined in the report.

If the subscription for the Green Cart Program were to double, there could be an additional 3,300 tonnes of organics diverted from the landfill and an emissions reduction of approximately 1,000 to 2,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. The range is due to whether the organics that are collected are primarily yard waste (lower GHG emissions reduction potential), food waste (higher GHG emissions reduction potential) or a combination of both.

### **NEXT STEPS**

There is currently no further action or follow-up required.

### **Report Approval**

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