

MULTI-FAMILY RECYCLING STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A multi-family recycling strategy is an important element of achieving Council's 80/20 by 2020 waste diversion goal.

An extensive engagement process found that the majority of multi-family residents and industry stakeholders support a city-wide multi-family recycling program. Stakeholders preferred a solution where the private sector provides the recycling service and The City's role is creating a bylaw and providing communication, education, monitoring and stakeholder engagement. Waste & Recycling Services developed a strategy that would require owners of multi-family buildings to arrange for on-site recycling facilities under an amended Waste & Recycling Bylaw (20M2001).

The strategy (Attachment 1) gives building owners and residents the flexibility to tailor service levels and related costs within the bylaw. It recognizes that private industry is best prepared to service the collection needs of a variety of building types. The strategy will require 6-8 months to prepare a bylaw and a transition period of 12-18 months for residents, private industry and The City to prepare for implementation.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services recommends that Council direct Administration to:

- 1) Design a multi-family recycling program, as outlined in Attachment 1 for implementation in 2016; and
- 2) Return to Council with amendments to the Waste & Recycling Bylaw (20M2001) no later than 2014 September.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2007 November 26, Council approved Waste & Recycling Services' strategy to achieve 80 per cent diversion of waste resources from landfills by 2020 (80/20 by 2020) (UE2007-035).

On 2011 March 07, Council directed Administration (UE2011-06) to Report back through SPC on Utilities and Environment no later than 2014 February with recommendations for a multi-family recycling program that considers partnerships with the private sector to be implemented in 2015-2017.

BACKGROUND

The multi-family sector is the smallest of the four waste sectors in Calgary producing an estimated 13 per cent of all waste to City of Calgary landfills. Multi-family residences sent 78,000 tonnes of garbage to landfills in 2012. About 22 per cent of this amount, or 17,000 tonnes, consisted of recyclables that ended up in the landfills in 2012.

This waste is generated by 163,000 dwellings that are in multi-family buildings with five units or more. Thirty-five per cent of multi-family buildings already receive a recycling service from the private industry. To date, recycling in multi-family buildings is voluntary. The City maintains a network of Community Recycling Depots, which are available for multi-family residents to use.

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Recyclable collection in the multi-family sector is more complex than in other sectors. High density buildings have very different collection needs than lower density buildings. Ownership styles such as townhouses, condominiums, condo rentals and apartments also affect how services are arranged and managed. These factors demonstrate that any multi-family recycling strategy must be flexible.

A multi-family recycling program would reduce the amount of recyclable materials going into the landfills, in response to citizen demand for more convenient, on-site recycling options.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

The complex nature of the multi-family sector means there is no “one size fits all” solution unlike single family homes.

Five options, as outlined in Attachment 2, were tested with residents and industry stakeholders. The stakeholder groups preferred a program that would be flexible and practical in accommodating diverse building needs and where services could be tailored at an affordable rate. They preferred that The City focus on communication, education, ongoing monitoring and stakeholder engagement. The engagement found that a City-delivered service is less desirable and would not meet resident and industry needs.

Learnings from other cities highlight the importance of mandating recycling in this sector, creating flexible solutions to accommodate varied building styles and creating awareness of the program through communication and education.

The preferred solution, a City-mandated recycling service with private sector collection, has a number of advantages. The main advantages of this strategy are:

- **Oversight** – A City bylaw will mandate that a minimum level of service is provided. This will include: on-site storage, separate from garbage and including specified recyclables, with communication, education, ongoing monitoring, stakeholder engagement and enforcement by The City.
- **Value for Money** – The strategy will leverage the existing private recyclers and allow for customization to meet the unique needs of the marketplace; It will avoid large administrative costs by The City related to billing and contract management. It is estimated that a private recycling service will cost one third the cost of other options. Program costs must be balanced against the estimated additional recycling tonnage that can be captured – approximately 9,000 to 12,000 tonnes.
- **Flexibility** – This strategy provides more flexible and customized service. This allows residents and building management to select service providers based on their specific needs and recycling goals.
- **Diverse Marketplace** – The strategy does not place a limit on the number or type of service providers operating in the multi-family market. It is estimated that 30 different providers currently service this market.
- **Lower Complexity** – Allowing the private recyclers to work directly with the multi-family building owners will drive efficiency. Private industry has demonstrated its ability to function effectively. Multi-family unit owners will be able to choose the private company

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that delivers the best value for their unique situation.

A City-mandated recycling service with private collection services is recommended and is included as Attachment 1. City action items related to this program include:

- Amending the Waste & Recycling Bylaw, ensuring that specified recyclable materials are collected on-site and adequate storage capacity is available. Draft bylaw amendments will be prepared no later than 2014 September for program implementation in 2016.
- Facilitating revisions to development standards within the land use bylaw to accommodate multi-family recycling.
- Developing an education and communication plan with residents, building management and industry.
- Developing a Community Recycling Depot reduction plan with savings used to fund program costs.
- Ensuring program facilitation, monitoring and implementation by The City

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Stakeholder engagement was critical to developing this strategy with a number of private companies already involved in recycling and a wide variety of building types. An engagement strategy was designed and implemented by Waste & Recycling Services, the engage! business unit and third-party consultants to ensure all sector stakeholders had the opportunity to provide input into strategy development.

Strategic Alignment

The diversion of recyclables from the landfills is a critical step in achieving Council's Fiscal Plan for Calgary's waste diversion goal of 80/20 by 2020. This report also reflects the waste management goal within the 2020 Sustainability Direction.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

Diverting materials from landfills requires changes in behaviour by Calgarians. Implementation of waste diversion programs will make Calgary a more attractive place to live and increase Calgary's reputation as an environment-friendly city.

Environmental

Diverting waste from landfills is a critical component of reducing Calgary's impact on land, air and water. Diverting waste redirects natural resources back into the economy and reduces future contamination and environmental liability.

Economic

Diversion programs create jobs and business opportunities in the transportation and processing of these materials.

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Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

Incremental City costs associated with this program are related to The City's role in communication, education, ongoing monitoring, stakeholder engagement and enforcement. Costs are estimated to be \$350,000 annually and will be funded from reductions in the Community Recycling Depot program built into the 2015-2018 business plan and budget.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

There are no direct capital budget implications related to the strategy recommended in this report.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment was an element of all project phases. The process looked at operational risks, market risks, financial risks and waste diversion participation risks. Mitigation strategies have been developed and integrated into the recommended option to limit the potential occurrence and impact of any of these risks. This mitigation is primarily driven through a bylaw which states the minimum acceptable recycling activity and material types included in the program.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

Maximizing the capture of recyclables from the multi-family sector is an important element of achieving Council's 80/20 by 2020 waste diversion objective. The recommendation is based on detailed stakeholder engagement and option analysis. This strategy provides a balance between resident demand for cost efficient, flexible service and supporting private industry which actively serves the sector. The basis of the program is a multi-family recycling bylaw which will ensure a minimum standard of recycling across the city.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Multi-Family Recycling Strategy
2. Multi-Family Recycling Strategy Engagement and Analysis