

Minimizing Negative Impacts of Waste and Recycling Sites – Officer

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services recommend that Council:

1. Approve a one-time operating budget of \$80,000 in 2021 and \$150,000 in 2022 to be funded from the Budget Savings Account Reserve (operating); and
2. Direct Administration to report back no later than Q3 2022 through the appropriate Standing Policy Committee.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Waste and recycling sites currently do not have clear operating or development standards set by the Province or The City. This can lead to negative impacts on adjoining properties. Notice of Motion PFC2021-0222 directed Administration to establish a cross-corporate work group and appoint a lead officer to investigate solutions.
- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** Investigating and providing solutions to this issue will minimize the risks that waste and recycling sites can create on the site of operation, and to Calgarians, neighbouring property owners, and The City.
- **Why does this matter?** Appropriate operations are important to the health and safety of people on and around the site. They ensure the site does not disturb adjoining properties or public spaces and does not become an environmental hazard.
- This initiative was not anticipated in the work plans for the responsible service lines and it is necessary to obtain additional resourcing and commensurate funding. In addition, leading this initiative requires a skillset and expertise that may not be available amongst current employees and external hiring is most likely necessary. Recruitment has begun for a Senior Planner based on the job description in Attachment 2
- Funding of \$80,000 in 2021 and \$150,000 in 2022 has been requested from the Budget Savings Account Reserve (operating). To accommodate the 24-month position, an additional \$70K will be requested at a later date for the 2023 budget.
- Not wishing to delay this important work prior to the Senior Planner arrival, this report was prepared by utilizing an internal cross corporate stakeholder work group and temporarily shifting resources. The Calgary Fire Department continues with regular site inspections of subject sites.
- Council directed Administration to present the job description for the lead officer to the Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services and to recommend funding should external hiring be required.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A well-run city
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1. This report fulfils directions 1 and 2 of the Notice of Motion as listed in Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

Within the waste management industry, various companies operate sites in Calgary where non-hazardous waste materials are collected, sorted, stored temporarily, and then sold for recycling or sent to a landfill or composting facility. At some of these sites, poor operational practices have resulted in:

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- Non-compliance with the Alberta Fire Code, and resulting fires;
- Inappropriate stockpile height, content and separation of waste; and
- Debris being blown from the site onto adjoining properties or public lands.

Thousands of metric tons of waste, recycling and other materials are stored on some of these sites. These sites do not currently have clear operating standards set by The Province or The City of Calgary and have found a largely unregulated space in which to conduct their operations.

There is a concern for public safety, the potential for environmental contamination of the site and its surroundings and risk of The City having financial responsibility in the event of companies abandoning their sites.

In February of 2021, Council approved Notice of Motion PFC2021-0222, Minimizing the Negative Impacts of Waste and Recycling Sites. It directed Administration to establish an interdepartmental work group to address this issue and to appoint an officer to lead this work.

Delivering on this direction will require contributions from business units across the corporation. This work was not anticipated in the work plans of the responsible service lines and in order to deliver it without impacting previously directed work, Administration must obtain additional resourcing and commensurate funding for the officer. Administration has determined that a new Senior Planner position combines the required skillsets for the officer who is to lead the work group. The position would be for a limited term of up to two years to complete the assignment.

The work group has been formed; an enhanced application circulation, review process and team is in place; and Calgary Fire and City Enforcement inspections have been undertaken as steps to address direction number 5 of the Notice of Motion (Attachment 1). Recruitment is currently underway for the officer and it is anticipated they will be able to commence leading the group at the end of 2021 July.

The Senior Planner (the officer) will have experience in leading interdisciplinary planning projects with a technical/operations focus related to policy, regulations and systems integration. Primary duties will include:

- Coordinating the investigation of an enforceable compliance strategy and development and operating standards, addressing nuisance, community standards, land use regulation and safety;
- Developing project plans, coordinating teams, setting priorities, assigning work to team members, providing progress reports and making recommendations on project delivery to management and Council;
- Identifying and coordinating with internal and external stakeholders to shape and communicate solutions and build support for their implementation; and
- Presenting recommendations to Council.

The job description is contained in Attachment 2.

As the work proceeds, an external consultant may be needed. Depending on the scope of work to be determined, funding for this work may be available in the existing consulting budget or it may require the identification of an additional funding source. If additional funding is needed, Administration will return to the Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services with a business case and funding recommendation.

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

No public engagement was conducted for this analysis and review.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Setting clear operational expectations will benefit Calgarians by mitigating the risk that improper operations of waste and recycling sites can pose to people on and around the site and on adjoining properties or public lands.

Environmental

Establishing clear operating and development expectations will reduce the risk of improper site operations. This mitigates the potential risk of environmental contamination of the site and the adjoining area, which otherwise could pose an immediate risk to public health and safety as well as create financial responsibility to The City in the event of environmental damage over time.

Economic

Poorly operated sites can negatively impact the viability and attractiveness of adjoining properties and businesses, which may reduce property values, business revenues and The City's property tax base. The potential risk of operators abandoning their sites may also place financial responsibility on the City for removal or remediation expenses.

Service and Financial Implications

This work and the appointing of a dedicated officer was not anticipated in the work plans or approved service plans and budgets of the responsible services, for example, the City Planning and Policy Service. The services may have to adjust their work plans to reassign staff and budget or reschedule other work to accommodate this initiative.

New operating funding request

\$300,000

The cost for this two-year term position is \$300,000. A budget of \$230,000 is being requested to be funded from the Budget Savings Account Reserve (operating) for 2021 and 2022. Additional funding of \$70,000 will be required as part of the next budget cycle (2023-2026) and will be requested at the appropriate time.

RISK

The key risks of improperly operated sites are public safety, environmental contamination, negative effects on nearby properties and financial impact to The City.

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SPC on Utilities and Corporate Services
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Improper site operations can lead to unsafe conditions and fires or storage pile collapses. Without proper regulation, stored or processed materials may create an environmental hazard that can contaminate the site, its surrounding area or the groundwater. Abandoned sites may require intervention and financial commitment by The City to protect citizens' health and safety and remediate environmental damage.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. Minimizing Negative Impacts of Waste and Recycling Sites-Officer Job Description

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Stuart Dalglish	Planning and Development	Approve
Michael Thompson	Utilities & Environmental Protection	Approve
Josh White	Planning and Development	Approve