



Waste and Recycling Sites

MINIMIZING NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPACT

Evolution of Waste... to Waste and Recycling

What is the problem with some waste and recycling sites?

Calgary has significant landfill capacity compared with other jurisdictions. While this has prolonged the adoption of diversion activities in all streams of waste in Calgary, the system is changing in response to increased efforts to divert recyclables. Where “waste” was simply landfilled in the past, there are now alternatives, and both municipal and provincial regulations have begun to respond. However, regulatory changes have sometimes been made without fully mitigating risks for other interested parties.

In Calgary, private service providers and operators contribute to the overall success of an effective and efficient waste and recycling system. Garbage containers, collection equipment and trucks, transfers stations and landfills are all parts of Calgary’s infrastructure. Waste transfer stations and material recovery facilities are used to separate recyclable materials if the generator doesn’t want to separate them.

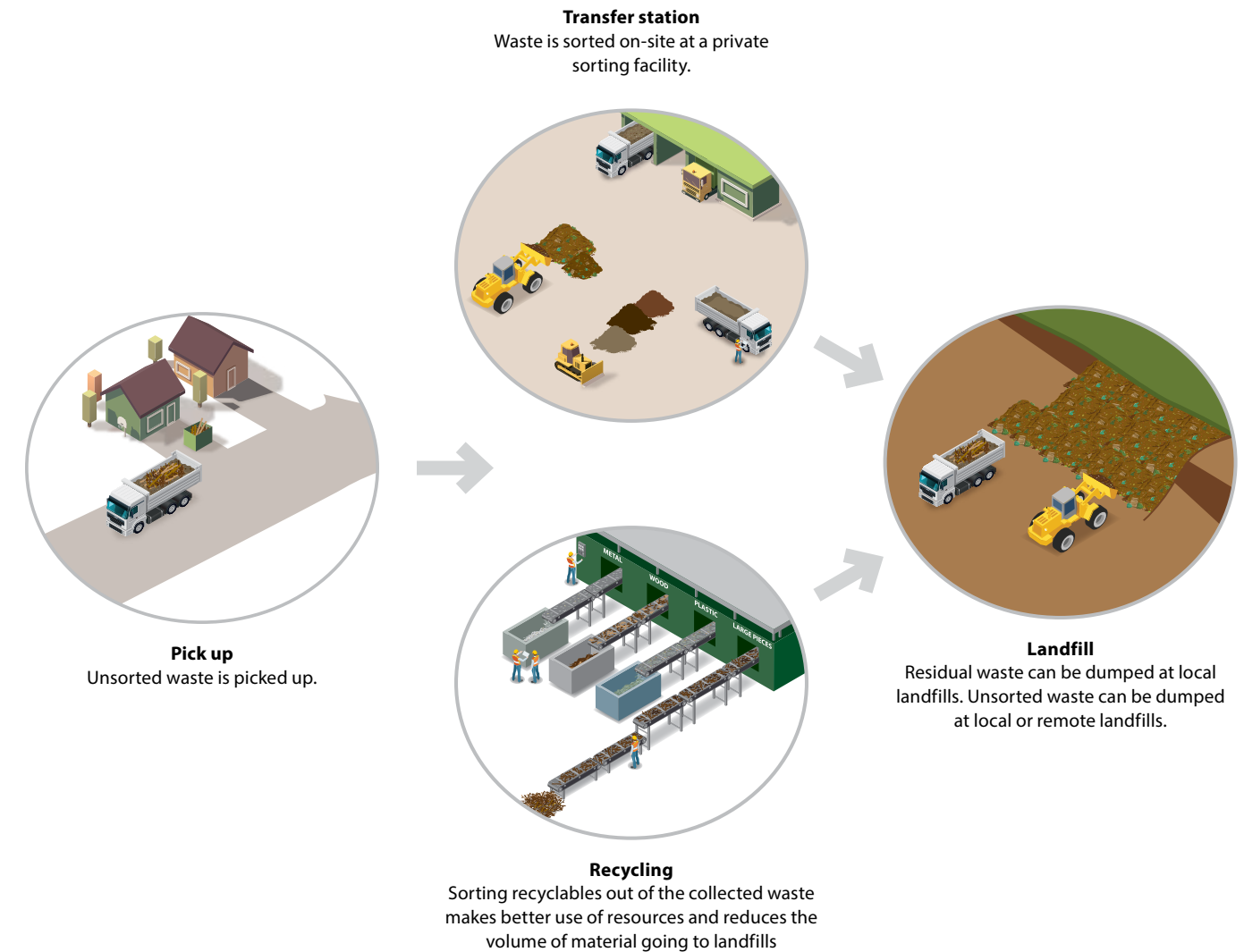
Various private sector waste and recycling sites were developed over the past decade to provide the development industry with cost-effective ways to manage construction and demolition materials. Stockpiling and other site management issues at some locations have created nuisances such as odors and materials escaping off site, unsightly premises, and environmental contamination. If operations at these sites are not properly managed, or create negative impacts to neighbouring properties, complaints can be submitted. Councillors and Administration have received complaints about these nuisances from nearby landowners. Addressing complaints has not always resulted in tangible improvements, therefore constituents have encouraged all regulating bodies to consider new perspectives when addressing negative impacts and future operations.

Our plan to address the issues

In February 2021, Councilor Keating introduced a Notice of Motion (PFC2021-0222) to address concerns of the operations on a handful of sites in Industrial areas in Calgary. This work is now being led by the office of Councillor Spencer. Experiences of operators and landowners within Industrial Districts are not widely communicated due to the limited number of users. One site specifically raised the profile of the issue beyond the localized concerns of industrial neighbours since it erupted during the pandemic and adjacent to a major roadway. In addition to specific site issues, the impact to development within the setbacks of the waste sites affected a broader category of interested parties.

In Calgary, private partners contribute to the overall success of an effective and efficient waste system.

At a poorly managed site, unsightly piles of waste are stored on site, ineffectively screened from roadways. When piles are too high, wind gusts can carry waste onto neighbouring properties.



What have we done?

Rules and Enforcement

Administration has been working on bylaws, enforcement, and implementation to better address negative impacts. While there have been changes made (land use bylaw amendments, enforcement agency engagement), the proposed changes to the business license bylaw will direct on site performance by on site operators.

Site Operations

Over the past year, Administration has identified specific operators whose on-site operations have not been properly managed and have produced negative impacts. This direct line from operations to impacts highlighted the need for improved communication between enforcement agencies since each agency has different authority in the overall system.

Clarified Expectations

For all interested parties, reducing the negative impacts of the site operations is a critical component to resolving the complaints. Better definitions in the Land Use Bylaw have provided clarity for operators, interested parties and enforcement agencies. This will result in some enforcement actions being taken in 2023, however, it may not eliminate the negative impacts before the end of 2023.

Strategic Approach

Administration has designed a multi-pronged approach to address Council's direction and achieve the intended outcome of minimizing the negative impacts of waste and

recycling sites in Calgary for the long-term. The approach consists of three distinct strategies, with each strategy addressing one of the key areas identified in the Notice of Motion 2021-2022. This approach is outlined in the table.

In 2021, nine sites were identified as potential concerns. In response to Administration's actions:

- two of these sites are not bringing in any additional waste and are removing waste that has accumulated on site with the expected outcome of the site owners that the sites will be cleaned up entirely,
- two other sites are working within the current guidelines and continue to minimize the negative impacts,
- the remaining 5 sites are expected to make on-site changes.

Expectations of Business License Holders

Existing regulations and enforcement practices are insufficient to address all the issues on the 5 remaining sites. Therefore, Administration is working on proposals to outline site expectations and requirements of business license holders for waste storage sites and waste haulers.

When properly sorted, wood waste can be ground and used for feedlot bedding.

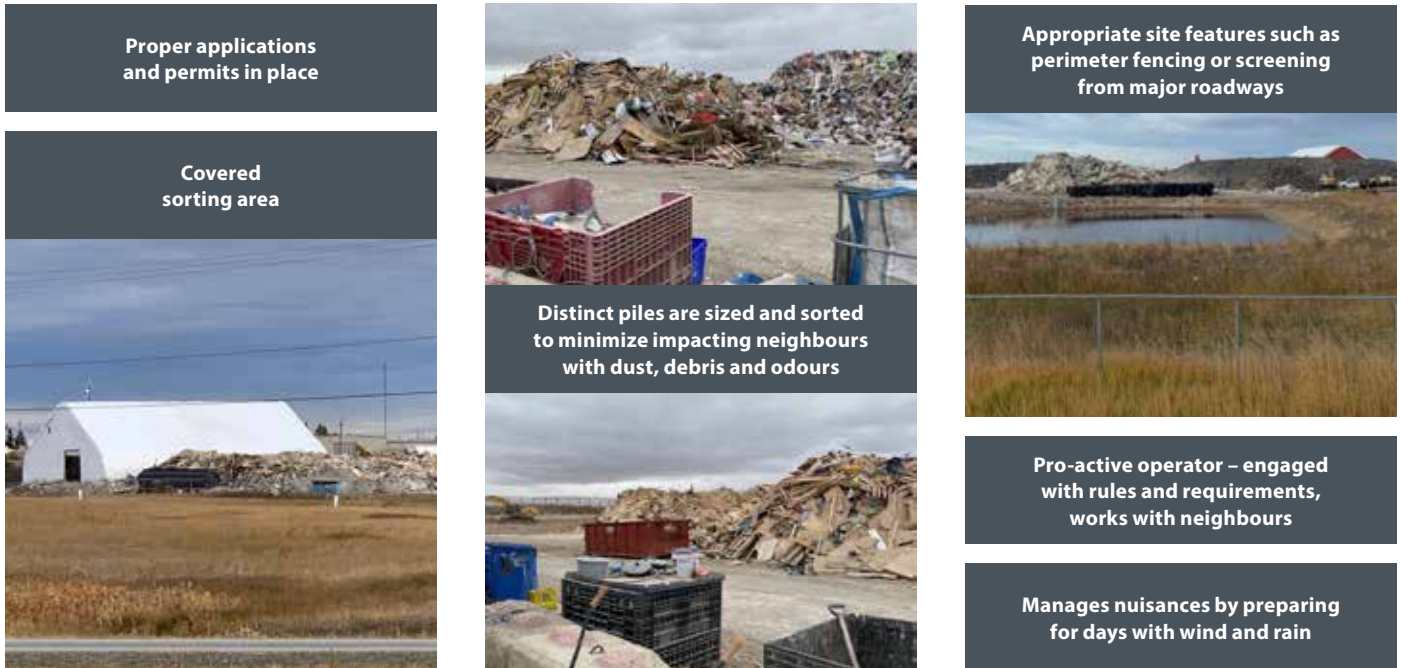


Progress of the strategies identified

✓ complete ■ ongoing ■ future

1. Establish a subject matter expert leadership and mandate to resolve issue with cross-departmental support	
a) Hire and fund a temporary Waste Officer	✓
b) Hire and fund a permanent position	■
2. Examine precedents and jurisdiction related to waste management in Alberta	
a) Seek internal advice regarding risks and liabilities	✓
b) Estimated costs based on recent market rates	✓
3. Use effective enforcement and engagement to ensure there is a compliance on sites	
a) Joint inspections with Alberta Environment and Parks at all sites	✓ ■
b) Joint internal inspections at some sites	✓ ■
c) Enforcement orders and remediation orders issued with follow-up for various compliance issues	■
d) Work with internal partners on existing projects involving industrial areas and waste storage sites	■
e) Enforcement strategy outlining joint inspections, shared complaints, communications and enforcement actions, and feedback until compliance is achieved and maintained	■
f) Direct control Land Use districts enforced	■
g) Apply conditions to Development Permits where appropriate	■
h) Introduce pre-development operations plans that include storm water management plan, pollution prevention plan, emergency response and nuisance mitigation plan	■
i) Develop a guide for operators to know operating requirements for sites storing waste in various forms	■
j) Use existing process to review and provide feedback related to waste related activities at the planning stage	■
k) Provide feedback on development standards and requirements for approval	✓
l) Land Use Bylaw amendments provide clarity on districts and permitted uses	✓
m) Subdivision Development Regulations revised so that food establishments are no longer prohibited in waste facility setbacks	✓
n) Consideration of potential for provincial working group	■
o) Business License Bylaw amendment to include haulers and site operators	■
p) Bonding requirements for operators with plan for onsite storage	■
q) Incentive for operating plans	■
r) Reporting requirements for site operators	■

A well-managed waste and recycling site



A well-managed site isn't trying to replace a landfill or compete with a landfill, it is simply a chance to divert recyclable materials to the appropriate users to keep those items from a landfill.

What is still being completed?

We have made progress but still have some loose ends to tie up including:

- Further amendments that capture the development options on a site and continual engagement with enforcement agencies to ensure consistency.
- Amendments to the Business Licence Bylaw with respect to operators of waste storage sites and haulers will provide the City with tools when an operation is beyond the capacity of the processes used on site. The details are being developed and will be presented to Council for consideration later this year.
- A guide that outlines safe and acceptable practices within an appropriate district for the activities designed to address will outline site plans, operating procedures, scale house operations, on site storage, size of sorting areas, site screening, debris containment, and nuisance management. By providing operators with the details of appropriate sites operations, they will be able to recognize and mitigate negative impacts sooner and with greater effectiveness.

What can be expected?

Administration will continue to engage with operators to ensure our updated regulations and processes successfully address negative impacts of waste and recycling operations while being careful to support this important sector. The City of Calgary will be supporting the necessary infrastructure to divert recyclables from landfills. This will result in a set of regulations and procedures that provide an environment for great work to happen and protects the interested parties from negative impacts from poorly operated sites. There will be a steady decrease in the volume stored on sites and ultimately there will be a consistent set of expectations of the operators.