

June 7, 2018

To: Members  
Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

Re: Biweekly Curbside Garbage Collection - Pilot Project Results

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RECOMMENDATION

1. That City Council approve an annual biweekly curbside garbage collection schedule from the start of November through to the end of March, with a return to a weekly schedule for a three-week period extending from the end of December to the beginning of January.
2. That City Council approve amending *The Waste Management Bylaw, 2012*, No. 2012-63 to allow property owners to apply to the City of Regina (City) for additional garbage services as identified in this report and generally as follows:
  - a. Primary customers or co-applicants of designated properties who require an additional garbage cart may request one from the City and pay an annual fee for the additional cart which will be billed on their utility bill. The annual fee will be either: \$156.95 per year (\$0.43 per day) for a 360- litre cart or \$116.80 per year (\$0.32 per day) for a 240-litre cart.
3. That the City Solicitor be instructed to prepare and bring forward the necessary amendments to *The Waste Management Bylaw, 2012*, No. 2012-63.
4. That this report be forwarded to the June 25, 2018 meeting of City Council for approval.

CONCLUSION

Adopting a biweekly curbside garbage collection schedule during the winter months, provides the following benefits to the community:

1. Adjusts the curbside garbage collection service to a level that meets the needs of most of the community, evidenced by the reduction in waste generation and cart set out frequency during the winter months.
2. Provides an opportunity for residents who want additional garbage collection capacity to request additional service.
3. Generates cost savings from reduced operational expenditures.
4. Generates revenue to offset the costs of additional optional service.
5. Supports the City's goal of reducing waste by implementing a supporting mechanism (biweekly garbage collection) as outlined in Waste Plan Regina (WPR).

## BACKGROUND

As part of the 2017 Amended General Operating Budget (CM17-5), City Council adopted a one-time service reduction altering solid waste collection to a biweekly schedule in the winter. The intent was that by adjusting the collection frequency, cost savings of \$132,000 would be realized. Along with the goal of achieving cost savings, the service reduction provided Administration with the opportunity to pilot a biweekly collection schedule and measure the impacts on residents as well as City operations. This report provides City Council with the results of the biweekly curbside garbage collection pilot (Pilot) and a service recommendation moving forward.

Biweekly curbside garbage collection began November 20, 2017 and ended March 30, 2018. During the Pilot, the City adjusted to a weekly schedule to provide more service over the traditional holiday season, December 23, 2017 to January 5, 2018.

A communication strategy was developed to inform residents of the service change. Communication efforts began in September 2017 and continued throughout the Pilot. A variety of communication tactics were used, including a collection schedule brochure inserted into utility bills, public service announcements, information on [Regina.ca/waste](http://Regina.ca/waste), social media posts, online ads and radio ads.

Residents were encouraged to sign up for collection day reminders via text, phone or email on [Regina.ca/waste](http://Regina.ca/waste) to assist with adapting to the new schedule. Over 20,000 reminders are sent out weekly to notify households of both garbage and recycling collection. The Waste Wizard online search tool was promoted to provide residents the opportunity to divert discarded material that could be recycled, reducing the amount of waste disposed in their garbage cart.

## DISCUSSION

Performance measures and reporting tools were developed to monitor community reaction to the biweekly collection schedule. As well, financial and operational impacts were collected to provide data to support any recommendation going forward.

### Resident Feedback

Most service requests received prior to the start or shortly after the Pilot began indicated concern about the inability to adapt to biweekly collection. A total of 87 service requests, with this concern, were received in the months of October, November and December. From the beginning of January, twenty service requests were received for the remaining three months of the Pilot. In context of other concerns received through service requests, this is a low percentage.

Market research conducted in March 2018 on waste management services showed that:

- Regina residents are motivated and the vast majority of households recycle all of the time.
- 82 per cent of respondents who receive curbside collection services were satisfied with biweekly garbage collection, 50 per cent being very satisfied.
- 68 per cent agreed that households should be charged more, if they require a larger garbage cart or more frequent pick-up.

The biweekly garbage collection public engagement survey posted on Regina.ca/biweekly from March 26 to April 10, received over 12,000 responses and showed that:

- 66 per cent agreed their household was able to adapt to biweekly collection.
- 61 per cent agree that the City should introduce biweekly collection on a permanent basis over the winter months.
- 61 per cent of respondents identified weekly collection over the holiday season important.
- 56 per cent did not experience any challenges with adjusting to biweekly collection over the winter months.
- Of the 44 per cent that experienced challenges, 70 per cent said that it was because they generate too much garbage to wait two weeks between collections. A further 10 per cent had difficulty adapting to a new schedule, resulting in missed collection.

Overall, the public engagement survey feedback showed that most residents adapted and are supportive of moving to permanent biweekly garbage collection from November to March. The complete survey results are posted on Regina.ca.

### Operational Results

Prior to the Pilot start date, Administration prepared for potential increases to missed curbside collection and dumping of excess garbage in alleys and along streets. Although we saw an increase to missed collection service requests, over 75 per cent related to a weather event in March 2018 that saw 20 centimeters of snowfall. All missed service collections were remedied through subsequent next day collection. Eight service requests indicated an increase in dumped garbage in back alleys. This was comparable to prior year information, indicating that biweekly collection did not contribute to an increase in this activity.

### Financial Results

The cost savings identified in the 2017 Amended General Operating Budget was estimated at \$132,000. The operational area exceeded that target, through reduced labour and landfill disposal costs.

Labour savings did not have any impact on permanent staff. The number of seasonal casual staff was reduced, as collection trucks needed for daily routes decreased from 16 to 11.

### Options

Based on the results of the Pilot, Administration identified the following three options:

#### **Option 1 - Biweekly curbside garbage collection during winter months (Recommended)**

Adopt an annual biweekly curbside garbage collection service from November to March, with weekly collection during the traditional holiday season.

Provide an option for residents to request one additional cart to accommodate households with additional garbage disposal needs. Residents have indicated through the public engagement survey, that one size of service does not fit all and there are households that generate too much garbage for the reduced frequency.

The additional cart fee will be based on an annual fee, charged daily to a residents' utility bill and would be either: \$156.95 per year (\$0.43 per day) for a 360-litre cart or \$116.80 per year (\$0.32 per day) for a 240-litre cart. This fee reflects costs associated with additional cart collection and landfill disposal.

Market research showed that 82 per cent of residents were in favour of biweekly garbage collection and 68 per cent said those requiring additional service should have to pay for it.

#### **Benefits**

- Adjusts the level of service to meet the reduced winter volume of garbage for the majority of residents. Historically, garbage volumes decrease by 30 per cent during winter months.
- Provides a more inclusive service to residents by providing additional collection options.
- Residents are already familiar with biweekly collection and have adapted to the reduced collection frequency.
- Provides those operating home-based businesses from their residence, additional waste disposal capacity.
- Encourages behaviour change by motivating residents to reduce waste by charging for additional garbage capacity.

#### **Risks**

- Residents may object to paying a fee for additional service.
- Risk of residents using their recycling bin for additional garbage capacity (no evidence of this during the Pilot).

For the City to provide this, additional services will require amendments to *The Waste Management Bylaw, 2012*, No. 2012-63, to add and amend sections and Schedule D to:

- Give primary customers and co-applicants the ability to ask for this new, additional service. The City can determine a maximum number of additional carts per household based on operational constraints.
- Provide for the City to charge for these additional garbage service.
- Set the fees for these additional garbage service.

**Option 2 - Weekly garbage collection year-round (Status quo) (Not recommended)**

Provide weekly collection throughout the entire year.

**Benefits**

- Residents are familiar with their garbage collection schedule.
- Households that generate higher than average volumes of garbage, receive the same level of service as those that have do not need a weekly service.

**Risks**

- Does not promote waste reduction or diversion.
- Weekly service delivers a higher level of service than needed for the majority of residents.

**Option 3 - Defer biweekly garbage collection until a residential organics program is provided by the City (Not recommended)**

Waste Plan Regina identified reduced frequency of garbage collection year-round as a supporting mechanism to increase waste diversion. Implementing a biweekly garbage collection schedule alongside a curbside organic waste collection service, reduces the need for weekly frequency of garbage collection.

**Benefits**

- Year-round biweekly garbage collection could be considered. Residential waste audits show that 50 per cent of garbage is organic material and an organic collection service would significantly reduce the volume of garbage, allowing additional households easier adaptability to biweekly garbage collection.

**Risks**

- Does not promote waste reduction and diversion methods or opportunities in the interim.
- Lose the level of acceptance for biweekly curbside garbage collection from residents earned during the Pilot period.
- A curbside organics program may not be approved by City Council in the near future, or if approved may take a number of years to implement.

## RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

### Financial Implications

Administration anticipates moving to biweekly curbside garbage collection during the winter months, would result in a cost savings of approximately \$240,000 from reduced labour and disposal costs. The user fee for additional garbage capacity offsets the cost of the service. This reduction will be included in the 2019 proposed budget.

### Environmental Implications

Biweekly garbage collection encourages residents to be more aware of their waste generation and diversion opportunities. The recommendation will contribute to a more sustainable environment because of the reduced garbage going to the Landfill and thus extending the remaining life.

### Policy and/or Strategic Implications

Waste Plan Regina aligns with *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2013-48* (OCP). The continued implementation of WPR directly contributes to the OCP priorities, specifically:

- *Section B, Goal 1 – Financial Principles, “Use a consistent approach to funding the operation of the City of Regina.”*
- *Section B, Goal 3 – Financial Planning, “Ensure the sustainability of the City by understanding and planning for the full cost of capital investments, programs and services in advance of development approval and capital procurement.”*
- *Section D4, Goal 4 – Conservation and Environment, “Design infrastructure that conserves resources and minimizes impacts on the environment.”*

### Other Implications

This will reduce garbage collection frequency during the winter to over 65,000 households.

### Accessibility Implications

None with respect to this recommendation.

## COMMUNICATION

A communication strategy will be developed to inform residents of the change in service and the additional service option available.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The recommendations contained in this report require City Council approval.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L. Legault".

Lisa Legault, Director  
Solid Waste

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Karen Gasmo".

Karen Gasmo, Executive Director  
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