

COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMO

Date: June 21, 2021
To: Civic Operations Committee
From: J. Fretz, Civic Operations Director
RE: Curbside Organic Waste Collection Program Update

Background

Administration has completed the first of three phases of a curbside organic waste collection program and has begun planning and preparing for phase 2 of the program. The first phase included extensive research, planning, and information gathering in the form of public consultation and audits of garbage collection. Phase 2, which is planned for September of 2021, will include collecting organic waste for one year from approximately 2,500 homes across all five collection zones.

Phase 1 Highlights

Public Consultation

Public consultation began in February 2021 with the launch of the Let's Talk engagement website for organic waste collection with information about what organic waste is, what could be included in an organics bin, and why it makes sense for the City to introduce such a program.

During the first six weeks, residents could participate in a quick poll and the ability to ask questions about the program. Of the 1,555 people who responded, 84% of respondents supported an organic waste collection program. Over 100 questions were received via the website's Q&A section, and the most common questions formed the themes for the survey and the virtual information session presentation slides.

On April 6, 2021 staff announced a public survey and virtual information sessions, which included a direct mail-out and an advertising campaign to encourage participation in the survey and information sessions.

Two one-hour virtual information sessions were held; one on April 14 at 12:00 pm and one on April 29 at 6:00 pm. The sessions included a one-half hour presentation on the proposed program, outlining the need for organic waste collection, the project timeline, and answers to common questions received through the Q&A. The latter half of the sessions were open to questions from the audience. Recordings of the sessions are available on the Let's Talk platform.

A public survey was available from April 6 to May 18, 2021 through the engagement website. A total of 4,308 surveys were submitted during this period. Of these surveys, 3,877 were from households that receive curbside collection, representing 16% of total households across Kamloops. In comparing the survey results with neighbourhood demographics, the distribution of the results very closely align with the population distribution so staff are confident that the survey is representative of the community at large.

The survey results showed that 79% of households on curbside collection support organic waste collection, 15% were opposed and the remaining 6% were neutral. The survey asked residents about their concerns related to organic waste collection. The top two concerns from residents were new fees for the service and concern about attracting insects, rodents and wildlife (both with 25% noted as their top concern). The third highest concern was from people who already compost and do not want a curbside collection program (8% noted this as their top concern). Of note, 19% of respondents indicated that they did not have any concerns related to curbside organics collection.

Garbage Collection Audits

The other key aspect of phase 1 of the program was to undertake audits of garbage collection routes. Audits were performed as part of the Thompson-Nicola Regional District's waste composition study – a study focused more broadly on waste landfilled in the region, but was also an opportunity to take a closer look at the types and quantities of organic waste disposed of in residential solid waste collection.

Audits performed from May 17 to May 28, 2021, at the Mission Flats Landfill, analyzed the contents of waste collected from ten collection routes, including routes that are being considered as pilot program routes. The preliminary results show that 43% of waste landfilled by residents could be diverted through an organic waste collection program. This data will provide a baseline to measure performance of the program during the pilot.

Phase 2 Planning Update

Planning is underway for phase 2 of the program, which is set to begin in September 2021 pending the outcome of grant applications. This phase includes applying for a grant through the Green Municipal Fund for the pilot program, planning, participant engagement, program set-up and operations, and analysis and reporting.

The grant application will be submitted in mid-June. If successful, the grant will cover up to 50% (\$265,000) of eligible costs which are estimated at approximately \$530,000. The majority of the costs for the pilot program are associated with acquiring and distributing containers, estimated at about \$225,000. If successful, the grant would cover half the cost of the containers.

Based on a review of the survey results from phase 1, staff have identified the existing solid waste collection routes that will participate in the pilot program. These routes include households in areas where staff expect to observe high volumes of organics and low volumes of organics. These routes also include areas of known wildlife activity, combinations of lane collection and street collection, various family sizes, and other factors such as high and low likelihood of participation.

Next Steps

- Develop City webpage and webform for pilot participants (in progress)
- Develop collection calendars in Waste Wise app for pilot participants (in progress)
- Letter to pilot participants with details about the program, how to register to receive updates and timing of cart delivery and collection (end of June)
- Deliver carts, kitchen catchers and information packages (end of August)
- Engagement sessions for pilot participants (end of August)
- Baseline survey of pilot participants (early September)
- Organic waste collection in pilot areas (3rd week of September)
- Ongoing engagement with pilot participants (September 2021 to September 2022)



J. Fretz, P.Eng.
Civic Operations Director

Author: M. Dick, Solid Waste Services Analyst