



Waste Strategies Reporting Back

Get Involved Online Forum

The Waste Strategies online forum was launched on the Get Involved website in spring 2019. The topics listed below were discussed on the forum. Staff placed items and comments into general categories to summarize.

Pet Waste, Diapers and Feminine Hygiene Products

Pet waste, diapers and feminine hygiene products are not currently accepted as part of the City's green bin program, despite being accepted in other municipalities' green bin programs. The City will continue to request that these items be added to the program, during the procurement of organic processing services. Processing facilities with the ability to treat the pathogens present in these items, or remove the non-organic portions are not presently available in the Kingston area.

Regular Yard Waste Pickup

For information regarding regular yard waste pickup, please refer to the paragraph on bi-weekly garbage collection.

Business Recycling and Composting

Businesses in the City of Kingston are responsible for the management of their wastes, including garbage, recycling and organics. At this time, the City of Kingston does not provide any recycling or organic composting services to commercial businesses, as the

proper management and/or requirement to source separate this waste from garbage at industrial, institutional and commercial (ICI) establishments falls under regulations by the Province of Ontario, under the duties and enforcement of the [Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks](#). [Provincial regulations](#) are in place that provides the ICI sector with direction on how wastes shall be managed – including their responsibility and requirement to separate recyclables and organics from garbage sent to landfill. Groups such as [Sustainable Kingston](#) work with local businesses in the aim of encouraging sustainable practices such as sourcing recycling and composting services from [private waste haulers](#) and processors.

Learning from Other Municipalities

Although the City often looks to other cities and countries for best recycling practices, the regulations that exist in these various jurisdictions may allow for different waste disposal options than what is available in Kingston, or Ontario or Canada. Rules and regulations can vary greatly between countries, province and even cities; hence, the City must take this into account when researching practices in other locations.

Educational Programs

The City's Solid Waste department provides various educational programs for citizens of all ages. Residents can find information about our various recycling programs and guidelines on the City's website and social media accounts as well as through the Kingston Waste application. The Kingston Area Recycling Centre also hosts open houses and provides tours to schools and community groups throughout the year. In addition, recycling and waste reduction presentations focusing on the importance of the 3R's are offered by [Sustainable Kingston](#) on behalf of the City. Up-to-date visual and print material such as the [Waste Sorting Guide](#), are also available to anyone who wishes to pick up a print copy of the information and recycling and organics guidelines.

Large Item Pickup

Large item pickups can be arranged by contacting [private waste haulers](#) and processors. The City does not provide this service and at this time does not have direction from City Council to add this level of service.

Bans on Single-Use Plastics

Initiatives related to the management of, or potential bans on single-use plastics (SUPs), which include items such as, straws, cutlery, Styrofoam take-out containers, plastic grocery bags, etc. are being investigated by the City's Real Estate and Environmental Initiatives department. An engagement forum was created in the spring of 2019 to consult with the community and gain knowledge as to what strategies are being used to reduce SUP usage. The City will report back to council and to the community once the information has been analyzed.

The Government of Canada recently [unveiled a plan](#) to consider bans to certain single-use plastics as early as 2021. The list of materials and timing of the bans has not been determined, but will be guided by science.

Apartment/Condo Recycling and Compost

All multi-residential buildings are eligible to participate in the City's recycling and Green Bin programs. Owners or agents to the owner, such as property management companies may contact the [Solid Waste Services department](#) to request service. Services provided to the multi-residential sector are under review as part of the revised Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP), and in conjunction with the [Province's recycling regulations](#) and [policy statement for organics](#) at multi-residential properties.

Bi-Weekly Garbage and Yard Waste Pickup

Bi-weekly garbage pickup (the collection of garbage once per 2 week period) is one of the ten options currently approved for discussion by City Council. A shift to bi-weekly garbage would allow the City to implement a regular yard waste pickup on weeks when garbage is not collected.

Weekly Collection of Recyclables

The City has been reviewing the feasibility of implementing the weekly collection of both blue and grey boxes for several years. At this time, the financial implications of collection and upgrading the City's recycling processing plant is under review to determine if this change can be made for July 1, 2021. A final recommendation to City

Council to change the service level is required and is tentatively scheduled for the end of 2019.

Unlimited Recycling Bins, Sizes and Lids

At the moment, residents are able to put out one green bin and an unlimited number of recycling boxes to the curb on their collection day, as long as the recyclables correspond to the correct blue or grey week. Each residential unit, at no costs is eligible to pick-up one grey box, two blue boxes and one green bin. In the event of a shift to weekly recycling collection, the current size of the recycling boxes and the limit on the size will be reviewed as curbside sorting will no longer be required if weekly collection is approved.

Simplification, Single-Stream Recycling and Cart-Based System

It is not possible for the City of Kingston to combine all of the recyclable materials in one box or cart as that would require costly and extensive upgrades to the City's Material Recovery Facility (MRF) where the recyclables are processed into twelve distinct commodities to be sold to buyers. A single stream recycling system was reviewed as part of feasibility studies in 2014/15 and was ruled out due to the costs to upgrade the recycling plant, and also the lower revenues from the sale of recyclables processed in a single-stream systems. The City is focusing on educating residents about Kingston's recycling system so that sorting becomes more natural and less time-consuming. Moving to a cart-based system will also not be undertaken at this time as infrastructure and vehicles needed for this system is cost prohibitive.

Focus Groups

Following the online forum, the City of Kingston's Solid Waste department held four focus group sessions in which 26 participants discussed and voted on various waste diversion strategies that would help the City reach its goal of a 65% diversion rate by 2025. Participants were able to sign up online to volunteer their time at the focus group sessions.

Participants were asked to vote and provide comments on various questions or scenarios with respect to increasing diversion of materials from landfill in relation to changes in garbage collection, organics, leaf and yard waste diversion, and recycling diversion.

Garbage Collection Options

As part of the questions there were 5 options presented based on the list approved by City Council. Each participant was able to vote for their first, second and third preferred choices in reducing garbage through collection changes. After the sessions, the Solid Waste department calculated the totals for each option based on a ranking system in which a first place choice was worth three points, a second was worth two points and a third was worth a single point. To clarify, the option with the most points was the participants' top choice. Here is a list of the options presented (score) as well as the main comments brought up in conversation.

Eliminate the existing one 'free' bag per week and explore full user pay options including a policy/program consideration for low income individuals. (42)

The full user pay option, where garbage disposal fees are removed from property taxes and a tag is required for all disposed bags of garbage, was the option that was identified as the most liked garbage reduction method during the sessions. This was discussed to be a good strategy since residents would be incentivized to reduce waste and pay less for their efforts to minimize the amount of times they need to set-out waste. Participants felt that this option would be a financial incentive that should make residents more conscious of their waste generation, as every bag would require a tag. Some concerns were raised though. First, some people may continue to landfill divertible items despite the cost, so many indicated that the cost per bag tag would have to be carefully considered, though combining this option with clear garbage bags to help with enforcement was discussed, and proposed as a solution. Additionally, the administrative burden related to establishing the requirements for the eligibility for low-income households was a concern.

Prohibit the disposal of recyclables and organics in the garbage stream and enforce the use of clear bags for garbage. (39)

Many people were in favour of implementing clear bags. The arguments in favour were that this would be easy to implement and enforce (via by-law) and curbside enforcement by collection staff. Clear bags would allow people to see the contents of their neighbours' garbage, which would likely result in residents sorting their recyclables and organics better, to avoid neighbours knowing they are performing poorly. Some privacy concerns were raised (notably regarding personal hygiene, medical products, etc.) despite knowing that a small privacy bag, about the size of a grocery bag, would be allowed with every collection. Other concerns included the use of single-use plastic bags which would end up in the landfill, the regulations regarding how much divertible material would have to be in the bag for it not to get picked up and the extra time taken by the collectors to enforce these. Whether or not a trash can could be used instead of a clear bag would have to be determined, and it is likely that clear bags of garbage with small amounts of recyclable and organics would still be collected as long as the resident was placing out recycling boxes and a green bin to demonstrate that they are attempting as much as possible to divert waste.

Reduce the frequency of garbage collection from weekly to bi-weekly for most eligible properties. This option may allow for bi-weekly collection for yard waste. (32)

Although most participants were in favour of receiving additional curbside yard waste collection, and felt that they could adhere to bi-weekly garbage collection, many worried about the consequences of keeping items such as diapers and pet waste for two weeks which could lead to unpleasant smells and potentially vermin. While there may be some illegal dumping following the implementation, research demonstrates that this is temporary and that bi-weekly collection has been successful in other municipalities. Some participants also believed that residents may see a move to bi-weekly garbage as a deterioration of their services while others were very much in favour and argued that people should only be allowed to put out one free bag every two weeks as opposed to two bags every two weeks, which would maintain current limits. Most agreed that a more frequent yard waste pickup service was needed, although a few believed that a

year-round bi-weekly yard waste collection might be excessive. There were a number of alternative collection ideas proposed for yard waste, including, a request-based and a monthly yard waste collection, as well as the creation of yard waste collection points in every neighbourhood. A bi-weekly collection is achievable since yard waste would be picked up on the garbage/green bin trucks on the weeks garbage is not being collected. A move to a yard waste collection program would require clear guidelines about what can and cannot go in the green bin (i.e. whether or not yard waste would still be accepted with the compost). This option was also voted on separately and 69% of participants were in favour of a move to bi-weekly garbage collection, provided that yard waste collection is offered as well.

Increase the cost of garbage bag tags to encourage greater participation in the diversion programs. (27)

Much like the full user pay system, the increase of bag tag fees would offer a financial incentive for residents to reduce their waste generation and make use of the diversion programs. Some participants suggested that the price be as high as \$10 per tag so to discourage people from wasting, but that free tags could be given to parents with infants or children in diapers or people with medical exemptions. The main concerns were that some residents may continue wasting despite the price, and that the 1 bag limit is already more waste than should be generated in a week. This is based on waste audit details that were provided to participants to show that 15 percent of what is in an average garbage bag is recyclable and 35 percent is organic.

Limit the number of additional ‘tagged’ garbage bags permitted for collection and reduce the number of “two bags of garbage” weeks from three per year to two per year. (15)

Few people were in favour of this option as it was believed to lead to illegal dumping. If this option were to be implemented, participants agreed that there would have to be exceptions for people moving, victims of natural disasters (such as floods), holidays, etc. Some participants were in favour of completely eliminating the “two bags of garbage” weeks.

Organics, Leaf and Yard Waste Diversion Options

Participants were asked to vote as to whether or not they believed the following options would help residents get organic material out of the garbage and into the green bin. These options were additional to the discussions on bi-weekly garbage/yard waste program discussed earlier.

Mandatory use of green bins at multi-residential properties or proof of third-party contractor for organics collection.

96% of participants were in favour of this option though the main concerns came from landlords who brought up the struggles of implementing green bin programs at rental properties or large multi-residential buildings. It is currently difficult to monitor the amount of garbage produced and the contamination rates in the recycling and composting bins since the tenants do not have to limit their waste for it to get picked up. A few participants argued that the City should focus on the promotion of the organics program, notably in multi-residential buildings, since organics constitute on average 35% of the contents of garbage bags.

Provide a choice of two size options to all residents for green bins: 80 L or 45 L.

85% of participants were in favour of offering two different size options for the green bin. The small bin would be easier to maneuver and clean and it would also take up less space. Some participants suggested both sizes of green bins should be allowed at each household while others proposed an exchange program in which residents could exchange their clean 80 L bin for a smaller one so that their 80 L bin be used in multi-residential green bin programs. The main concerns raised were the risk of attracting vermin due to the smell and the need for better green bin liners which currently exist for the smaller sizes.

Options for Recycling Diversion

Removing size restrictions on the height of the blue and grey boxes.

72% of participants reported that removing the height limits on the recycling boxes would help them recycle more. Not only would they allow for more material, but taller

boxes would also prevent overflowing and blowing litter. Some participants requested the use of plastic bags instead of boxes in smaller spaces but perhaps smaller bins could be offered instead. Plastic bags are not an option, as the City's recycling processing plant does not have a machine to rip open plastic bags to release the recyclables.

Price for a cover for the blue and grey boxes.

The options offered were \$0, \$5, \$10 and \$15+. Although everyone seemed in favour of a lid to prevent blowing litter out of the recycling boxes, only about half of the participants reported being willing to pay for them.

The focus groups were a great opportunity for residents to bring forward any other ideas related to waste management and reduction. Although these were beyond the scope of the sessions, the City is making note of them for potential future campaigns or information sessions. Here are some ideas that stood out:

- Better communication and education about waste reduction strategies and the impact of landfilling waste.
- Better communication on the notification tags used when the recycling and/or the green bin does not get picked up by the collector.
- More recycling and organic diversion options throughout the City.
- Work with businesses to help divert waste.
- Community based diversion challenges.
- Reach out to underrepresented groups.
- Better communication about diversion programming.

Community Events

Feedback was collected during community events such as the Memorial Centre Farmer's Market, Princess Street Promenades, Skeleton Park Arts Festival, Artillery Park and Garrison's Family Fun Fest. The total number of feedback sheets collected during these events was 164.

Increase the cost of garbage bag tags to encourage greater participation in the diversion programs.

40.24% approval.

Eliminate the existing one 'free' bag per week and explore full user pay options.

28.66% approval.

Prohibit recyclables and organics in the garbage stream and enforce the use of clear bags for garbage.

56.10% approval.

Reduce the frequency of garbage collection from weekly to bi-weekly; this can allow for bi-weekly yard waste collection.

35.37% approval.

Limit the number of additional 'tagged' garbage bags permitted for collection and reduce the number of "two bags of garbage" weeks from three per year to two per year.

32.93% approval.

Mandatory use of green bins at apartments and condos or proof of third party contractor for organics collection.

81.71% approval.

Provide choice of two size options to all residents for green bins: 80L or 45L.

66.46% approval.

Removing size restrictions on the height of the blue and grey boxes.

61.59% approval.

Other comments

- Do more education and promotion, especially in schools since kids then bring the information back home.
- Mandatory businesses (notably restaurants) recycling and composting.

- Have more locations to collect e-waste.
- Large item, e-waste and HHW pick up.
- More clarity and consistency with recycling pick up.
- Have water refill stations throughout the City to eliminate the need for single-use water bottles.
- Ban single-use plastics (notably plastic water bottles).
- Pick up all recyclables every week.
- Pay people or give discounts on taxes/electricity when less waste is put out.
- Build an incinerator.
- Encourage backyard composting.
- Have neighbourhood competitions based on diversion rates.
- More incentivizing and less punitive measures.
- Provide more information and solutions on how to dispose of large items and appliances.
- Send more information through texts/Twitter/on the website (on e.g. events).
- Incentives for businesses with bottle returns or zero waste options.
- Create “community areas” for waste pick up.
- Make information more easily accessible to the general public.
- Some people will refuse to recycle no matter what we do but restricting actual garbage pickup may cause more issues.
- Ticket litterers to keep our City clean.
- Use paper or compostable bags for garbage.

Open Houses

Open houses were held throughout the City (West, East, Central and North locations) in order to collect feedback on waste strategies. Solid Waste Services staff provided explanations on posters explaining the history of the Integrated Waste Management Plan, the waste strategies proposed as well as the potential retrofits to be made to the recycling facility. In total, 90 people participated in the open houses.

Increase the cost of garbage bag tags to encourage greater participation in the diversion programs like the blue box, grey box and green bin programs.

49.35% approval.

General comments included:

- Concerns regarding illegal dumping
- Give students free tags
- Tagged bags will not change people's habits as they will just pay and continue doing what they were doing
- Increase bag tag cost to \$5 each

Eliminate the existing one 'free' garbage bag per week and explore full user-pay options that might require a bag tag on every bag of garbage. NOTE:

Considerations for low-income households would be explored.

19.48% approval.

General comments included:

- Keep free bag as taxes should cover at least one bag per week
- Concerns that exceptions for low-income might negate savings/waste diversion
- Offer considerations based on bag size
- Concerns regarding illegal dumping
- The public expects waste removal as a service covered in their taxes

Prohibit recyclables and organics in garbage collected at the curb and enforce the use of clear bags for garbage.

44.16% approval.

General comments included:

- Concerns regarding privacy (despite privacy bags)
- Waste thresholds for non-collection
- Accept loose waste in garbage cans
- This would further diversion and residents will eventually get used to it

- Would ensure a safer collection for the workers as they could see sharp objects

Reduce the frequency of garbage collection from weekly to bi-weekly. Recycling and compost bins would continue to be collected weekly. NOTE: This option could allow for bi-weekly yard waste collection.

50.65% approval.

General comments included:

- More frequent yard waste pick up is needed
- Concerns with smells and bugs, especially in summer
- Concerns due to pet waste accumulating
- Single home owners can more easily deal with this than people living with many others (students, big families...)
- Concerns regarding illegal dumping
- Residents noted the effectiveness of this program in other municipalities
- Would drive a change in habits
- Is there enough yard waste to be worth the fuel consumption every 2 weeks?
Suggestion of adding HHW to pick up to make it worth it, **please note this is not feasible due to the hazard associated with mixing various hazardous wastes together, and licensing requirements to undertake.**
- Easily manageable if both recycling boxes are collected up every week.

Limit the number of additional ‘tagged’ garbage bags permitted for collection and reduce the number of “two bags of garbage” weeks from three times a year to two times a year.

36.36% approval.

General comments included:

- It would encourage people to limit their waste
- Allow only 1 extra tagged bag and only have an extra bag week after Christmas.
- Don't allow any extra bags

Make use of green bins at apartments and condos – or proof of third party contractor for organics collection – mandatory.

71.42% approval.

General comments included:

- Some people believe that apartments and condos would make the biggest change in the overall diversion of waste
- Tenants often put garbage in the diversion streams – concerns for quality of material placed in the green bins and effect on quality of compost produced
- Need for larger green bins to limit space requirements

Provide choice of two green bin size options to all residents: 80L or 45L.

77.92% approval.

General comments included:

- Stop allowing yard waste in green bins

Removing size restrictions on the height of the blue and grey boxes.

46.75% approval.

General comments included:

- Residents look forward to the potential of being able to put both boxes out every week (less likely for excess material to end up in the garbage)
- Must ensure that it is not a health and safety issue (e.g. wet paper may get heavy on rainy days)

None of the above. Please elaborate below in the comment box.

Comments

- Make producers and businesses responsible for disposal (from collection fees to costs related to recycling) and they will be encouraged to make recyclable/compostable packaging

- More discussion with landlords, building operators and superintendents at multi-residential buildings to understand their challenges with waste and getting their tenants to adhere to policies
- Engage with multi-residential stakeholders; building owners, tenants, property management companies, waste haulers, etc.
- Some people argued that building an incinerator would be the solution; converting waste to usable energy – need to do this before all the landfills fill up, join with neighbouring municipalities
- Residents concerned about potential increases in taxes
- Several people wanted to see more education and promotion (e.g. the harms of contamination) – notably for the youth (teach them about littering) and in public areas (make sure signage is at eye level)
- Make sure to discuss changes with the public and take time to implement them based on what residents can manage
- Encourage and educate restaurants on composting
- Student volunteer involvement to spread awareness on Queen’s campus
- Advocate for overall reduction along with diversion
- Ban plastic bags and single-use plastics in local retailers
- Have more Giveaway Days
- Build more public water bottle filling stations.
- The Household Hazardous Waste depot has limited hours - longer hours and more locations would be beneficial

Waste Diversion Strategies Online Survey

An online survey was available through the Get Involved website to allow residents unable to attend the open houses, to provide feedback on the Waste Strategies. A total of 144 residents participated in the survey.

Increase the cost of garbage bag tags to encourage greater participation in the diversion programs like the blue box, grey box and green bin programs.

- Yes: 44.8%

- No: 42.7%
- Not sure: 12.6%

Eliminate the existing one ‘free’ garbage bag per week and explore full user-pay options that might require a bag tag on every bag of garbage. NOTE:

Considerations for low-income households would be explored.

- Yes: 13.9%
- No: 75.7%
- Not sure: 10.4%

Prohibit recyclables and organics in garbage collected at the curb and enforce the use of clear bags for garbage.

- Yes: 35.0%
- No: 51.7%
- Not sure: 13.3%

Reduce the frequency of garbage collection from weekly to bi-weekly. Blue and grey boxes and green bins would continue to be collected weekly. NOTE: This option could allow for bi-weekly yard waste collection.

- Yes: 40.6%
- No: 46.2%
- Not sure: 13.3%

Limit the number of additional ‘tagged’ garbage bags permitted for collection and reduce the number of “two bags of garbage” weeks from three times a year to two times a year.

- Yes: 43.0%
- No: 47.2%
- Not sure: 9.9%

Make use of green bins at apartments and condos – or proof of third party contractor for organics collection – mandatory.

- Yes: 87.4%
- No: 9.8%
- Not sure: 2.8%

Provide choice of two green bin size options to all residents: 80L or 45L.

- Yes: 80.4%
- No: 6.3%
- Not sure: 13.3%

Removing size restrictions on the height of the blue and grey boxes.

- Yes: 75.0%
- No: 5.6%
- Not sure: 19.4%

Do you have any other solutions for getting more recyclables and organic material out of the garbage?

- More education about compost and recycling through flyers and social media, as well as information about the recycling process (what happens to recyclables in Kingston) and the impacts of waste
- More frequent yard waste collection
- Pressure businesses and industries to only sell recyclable and compostable materials (ban or introduce extra tax on single-use plastics)
- Offer different bin sizes (bigger recycling, smaller composting)
- Use compost for community gardens in Kingston
- Provide lids for bins
- Propose a mandatory training session for students who come from out of town so they learn how to divert properly
- If moving to full-user-pay, explain how taxes will be affected
- Create more convenient recycling drop offs

- Encourage backyard composting
- Large item pick up
- Create a video about de-stigmatizing the green bin
- More diversion receptacles throughout the City
- Collect all recyclables every week
- Promote reducing and reusing

Do you have any additional comments?

- Residents concerned about potential increases in taxes
- Concerns regarding animals and pests for bi-weekly waste collection.
- Must teach people that even though something is recyclable that does not make it environmentally friendly
- Consider incineration
- Concerns regarding illegal dumping
- Incentivize/reward residents