

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL REPORT

Operations

For the June 24, 2024 Council Meeting

DATE: June 20, 2024 File No.

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Adam Goodwin

RE: Organic Waste Collection Program – Engagement Input Summary

RATIONALE:

Based on the decisions of Council during the May 27, 2019 Regular Meeting and December 14, 2020 Regular Meeting to launch an organic waste collection program in Oliver, during the [February 20, 2024 Regular Meeting](#) and the [April 2, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting](#), Council supported the engagement and education phase of the implementation of this program. This Committee of the Whole report and presentation presents the results of this phase of the implementation of the program.

OPTIONS:

1. Council may wish to support the staff recommendation
2. Council may wish to amend the staff recommendation and then approve the amended recommendation
3. Council may wish to refer to staff for additional information

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive the report titled 'Organic Waste Collection Program – Engagement Input Summary' as included in the June 24, 2024 Committee of the Whole agenda package for information.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS:

Staff are presenting the results of the engagement phase of the implementation of the organic waste collection program. Staff will return with a recommended update to the Solid Waste Services Bylaw 1292 based on research of other municipalities' organic waste collection programs, the results of the engagement phase of the project, and based on input and feedback from the Regional District and Waste Connections Canada.

BACKGROUND:

As noted in the accompanying presentation slides, Council has made numerous decisions up to this point about the organic waste collection program. This includes: During the May 27, 2019 Council meeting, the December 14, 2020 Council meeting, the February 20, 2024 Council meeting, and the April 2, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting. Staff continue to work towards implementing the new program as quickly as possible, within the capacity of the Town and its partners.

Current phase

The project has identified five major phases as the Town works towards implementation (see Figure 1). The Town has completed the getting ready phase, and is currently wrapping up the early engagement phase with this report.

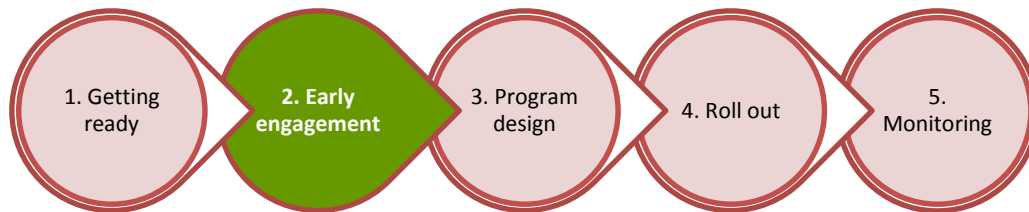


Figure 1. Overview of the implementation project phases

Overview of early engagement phase

The early engagement phase included the following:

- The development of a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ) document
- The development of a questionnaire/survey (see attachments to this report for a copy of the document and background about the methodology)
- A variety of communication and education activities (see attachments for examples):
 - Social media posts

- Media release
- Town Newsletter story
- Emails to partners
- Town webpage
- Two pop up events at local grocery stores

Summary of engagement results

Overall, the questionnaire/survey was open for 54 days. There were 320 participants in the survey, with 96% of participants being Town solid waste customers (Waste Connections of Canada picks up their solid waste on behalf of the Town of Oliver). Of the participants, 95% read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. A summary of the key results for the questions is provided in Table 1.

Question/Topic	Results
Reducing the amount of waste that goes into the Oliver Landfill is the right thing to do.	Yes: 94% No: 5% Don't know: 1%
Based on the information in the FAQ, do you have any concerns about the program?	Yes: 20% No: 80%
How can the Town best support you with the transition to the new program (pick top three)?	Schedule: 23% What can go: 19% Workshops and opportunities to ask questions: 15% Provide a free household kit: 14% Provide tips on items such as diapers: 8% Provide coupons to support the purchase of things like bags: 7% Tips on how to reduce waste: 5% An app: 4%
What household kit option would best support your household?	30 free bags: 7% Bin with a lid: 24% Both: 68%

Table 1. Summary of key results for quantitative questions in the questionnaire/survey

Related to the concerns identified by participants, Town staff went through the comments to identify the types of concerns shared by participants. Of the individuals that indicated they had a concern (20% of questionnaires), approximately 61% of the concerns were about why the Town did not already have the program and the approximately year-long implementation process. The other concerns (approximately 39%) were primarily about pests/animals, smells, heat, and the change in schedules to the Town's solid waste services (see the summary of qualitative themes for additional analysis).

Qualitative analysis

From the qualitative data analysis, six large themes were identified from the data (see the relevant attachment for additional information about the coding methodology). These six themes are:

- Environmental and program benefits
- Animals, pests, and heat
- Implementation costs, timelines, and roll out
- Ongoing education
- The facility and composting process
- General concerns

Based on a review of the qualitative data, the top two themes that emerged in terms of quantity of comments are the animals and pests theme, and the theme around the implementation of the program. Related to specific concerns, the three most significant themes are:

- Animals and pests
- Smells
- And the change to a municipal service

Theme	Summary of data	Example quotes
Environmental benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residents understand the environmental benefits of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Separating organics is quick, simple, and easy and fantastic for the environment. Keep up the good work.”• “Would the town require compost to go in bags? If so, isn’t it just better for the environment if we compost in our own yard?”• “I experienced this transition in [other BC community] and it was simple and significantly reduced actual garbage being put out biweekly”
Animal and pests and heat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attraction of rodents, pests, and wildlife.• Public education on proper waste handling to mitigate pest issues.• Secure bins to decrease smells and attraction of animals.• Impact of Oliver’s heat on smells and the composting process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "How will you protect or deter animals (coyotes, etc) who may be attracted to the area?"• "Won't the green bin start to get stinky with all that meat, dairy products, and other food waste? Won't animals be attracted to the smell?"• "Attracting wildlife in residential areas with bins full of disposed food waste."

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Concerned by bins full of food waste being left out on the streets at night in neighborhoods attracting wildlife."
Implementation costs, timelines, and roll out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential cost reduction due to decreased tipping fees. • Choose the right contractor for the organics program. • Continuous training and regular updates to the community during the roll out. • Clear communication on program progress and success. • Distribute/provide paper bags and household composters. • Including apartment buildings and other non-Town waste collection customers in the program. • The time taken to implement the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "As mentioned, the cost for adding this program should decrease a fair amount, as there are fewer tipping fees per tonne being charged back to the Town." • "My concern is that I will have to pay more and I'm already stretched financially." • "Make sure you get the right contractor that knows this organics world, otherwise it will become a nightmare to manage." • "Run many and ongoing training sessions to keep on track. Online, in-person, brochures." • "Would using leaves in brown bags be acceptable in your program?" • "I would like to see affordable biodegradable bags that are purchased in groceries to carry purchase out, then reuse for organics later." • "I am concerned about you taking a full year to start this program"
Ongoing education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing community education and efforts to manage waste effectively. • Community activities and educational programs to support the new initiative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I want to see information about what the town will do after the program starts. Like someone going around town to help people learn more about the program. More educational activities."
The facility and composting process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about what is considered compostable and the decision-making process at the landfill. • Questions about the composting facility's authenticity. • Inquiries about the type of waste bags used and their compliance with regulations. • Concerns about bin capacity and composting temperatures. • Questions about specific items like coffee pods and biodegradable bags. • Disagreement with providing free bags and plastic compost bins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Concerned about the limits on what is considered to be compostable food waste... e.g., the landfill staff are deciding what will initially be allowed." • "Are the kitchen bags biodegradable, or reusable? Does organic waste have to be put in bags?" • "I am concerned about the capacity/ability of the new program to be sufficiently hot to process meat and bone in compost."

<p>General concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several general concerns were raised by questionnaire participants around if there will be a benefit to launching the program, and moving black bin pick up to every two weeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I do not want to participate in a organics waste collection program, as I have seen it done in other communities that I have lived in, and found no benefits.” • “My concern is with black bin pick up going down to once every 2 weeks.” • “I think black cart/garbage bins would continue to be picked up once a week, for pest, animal and smell control.”
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Pop up engagement overview and analysis

As noted, Town staff participated in two pop up events at local grocery stores. During the first pop up booth, Town staff had 25 deep/engaged conversations with residents, and during the second pop up event, Town staff participated in 37 deep/engaged conversations. In addition, Town staff said hello to approximately 117 individuals that did not want to participate/engage, or lived in other areas such as Osoyoos and RDOS. Overall, the themes from the pop up events aligned with the responses to the questionnaire.

Summary and Next Steps

Overall, participants provided important input into the final design of the Town’s organic waste collection program. While some individuals are concerned about the solid waste program changing, overall there was strong support for the program. This will help Town staff continue to research and design the final draft program design that will be shared with Council at an upcoming Regular Meeting.

General: N/A

Organizational: N/A

Financial: N/A

Legal/Statutory Authority: N/A

Strategic Plan: Community Enhancement

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Organic Waste Collection Program - Engagement Input Summary.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Attachment A - Methodology Overview.pdf- Attachment B - Raw Qualitative Data.pdf- Attachment C - Organics Survey - April to May 2024.pdf- June 24 2024 COW Report.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 20, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Rochelle Lougheed - Jun 20, 2024 - 3:44 PM

Wayne Anderson - Jun 20, 2024 - 3:56 PM