

## **Public Engagement Session on Solid Waste Management for the City of Dawson**

### **What We Heard Report – Executive Summary:**

Date of Session:	Wed. April 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2024
Location:	Tr'ondek Hwech'in Hall , Front St., Dawson
Time	6pm to 8 pm
Facilitator	Neil Fletcher, Cassiar Consulting, Cassiar Creek Dawson
Number of Participants:	100 – 120 people in person, approx. 50 online

### **Introduction**

In 2023 City Staff were directed to develop recommendations to implement curbside residential recycling collection in a cost-effective manner. The recommendations were presented to council in Sept and Nov 2023. In Feb 2024 Staff were directed to develop implementation plans for the recommendations.

This document summarizes “what we heard” from Area residents during a public engagement session focused on the recommendations and related Solid Waste Management issues please refer to the detailed report for more information. The recommendations were based on the following principles:

1. Reducing the volume of waste dumped at the Landfill is environmentally and financially beneficial to residents.
2. Residential recycling collection will reduce the volume of waste dumped at the landfill by diverting more recyclable material away from the landfill.
3. Doing so in a manner that is fiscally responsible to the municipality is critical for adoption and long-term sustainability of the additional service.
4. Attaching the cost of waste collection and disposal to waste production encourages waste reduction, recycling, and reuse.
5. Incorporating Municipal Best practices that have been tried and tested in other municipalities, where appropriate, will reduce the risks to the municipality that are inherent in change.

### **The Recommendations**

1. Transition Commercial waste collection to the private sector and eliminate the annual Commercial waste Mgt Fee. Recover lost annual fees through tipping fees.
2. Utilize the now available municipal staff time to:
  - 2.1. Extend Residential collection services to currently unserved neighbourhoods, where viable, and mitigate loss revenues by discontinuing neighbourhood bin rentals in those locations.
  - 2.2. Add residential recycling collection with garbage pickup on week one and recycling pickup on week two.
3. Move to one or two bag of Garbage per Week per Household, with the option to buy additional baggage.

### **Objectives of the Public Session**

- Understand community perspective on current waste management practices and recommendations.
- Clarify public information around the issues of waste Management.
- Identify community priorities for future waste management initiatives.
- Use knowledge gained to inform next steps and develop or alter implementation plans.

## **Landfills**

Landfill sites are expensive to set up, to operate, and to close when they are full. They pose long term environmental challenges as leachate must be monitored long after closure, they tend to be messy, and yet they are needed in every community.

As the Yukon population continues to grow, landfill sites are filling up faster, land costs continue to rise, and locating appropriate places for a landfill site increasingly difficult.

As the knowledge of the long-term costs associated with landfill sites has developed it has become increasingly clear that it is a good financial strategy for municipalities to consider policies and practices which extend the lifespan of existing landfills

The environmental cost of landfill sites is more difficult to assign a dollar figure to – Landfills produce methane which contributes to global warming. Landfills produce leachate that must be monitored and sometimes treated as sewage for many years.

## **Tipping Fees**

The Yukon Government has been in discussions with Yukon Municipalities for several years, developing plans to rationalize the landfill sites and related practices in the Yukon. This has been driven by the need to raise all sites to the best environmental practices, reduce the environmental impact, do so in a cost-effective manner, ensure fairness with all residents paying for landfill costs, and building in a financial incentive for residents to reduce waste production.

The result is interim or final regional waste agreements with each municipality. The agreements core elements are:

- Each municipality will establish a residential tipping fee that applies to all residents or non residents who drop off residential waste. This in combination with the YG fee identified below, ensures that all residential users are paying their share of the landfill costs. The tipping fee is also a proven tool to encourage reduction and recycling.
- Each municipality will establish commercial tipping fees but it up to the municipalities discretion to determine resident or non resident or special category commercial tipping fee rates. This fee will ensure that all commercial users (in the municipality and outside the municipality) pay their share the landfill costs.
- In turn the Yukon Government will pay the municipality an annual fee based on the number of non municipal residents who live in the landfill catchment area and use the landfill site
- The Yukon Government will also assume 50% of the landfill closure liability / costs.
- The Yukon government will fund installation of infrastructure to enable tipping fees up to a cap of \$400,000.

## **Tipping Fees in Dawson**

Dawson agreed to an interim Regional Agreement in 2023, identified tipping fees in the 2024 budget and anticipated implementing tipping fees upon hiring a waste supervisor, installing weigh scales, and hiring a scale attendant in 2023.

A waste supervisor was recruited in Feb 2024, weigh scales are problematic at the Dawson landfill such that tipping fees may have to be by volume, and an attendant is yet to be hired.

It is anticipated that tipping fees will be implemented within at the Dawson Landfill site by May-June 2023.

Tipping fees and the associated agreements are considered separate from these discussions.

## **What We Heard**

### **Key Themes and Insights**

#### **Commercial Collection - Transition to Private sector**

Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can form the base for additional services such as enhanced recycling collection.</li></ul>
Proposed Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will transfer cost burden to nonprofits, institutions, apartments.</li></ul>
Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep service but start charging per bag collected, transition over time.</li><li>• Continue commercial collection and reduce pickup rate to once per week.</li></ul>
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why do you want to change the system?</li><li>• Are there any private sector companies that can supply collection services?</li><li>• Will this lead to less recycling?</li><li>• What is the incentive to a private sector collection service to divert?</li><li>• Where is there a cost savings?</li></ul>

#### **Residential Collection extension to unserved Neighbourhoods**

Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Best system possible for wildlife management</li><li>• Can be a mess at the bin</li><li>• Bins are used by those who are not meant to be using them</li></ul>
Proposed Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost to homeowner to acquire box / bin.</li><li>• Dangerous attractant to wildlife / bears</li></ul>
Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Move to a locked neighbourhood bin or cardlock to ensure garbage accountability.</li><li>• Allow an opt out with bag tags for people who want to transport their own garbage.</li></ul>
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does adding collection service save money?</li><li>• Has City staff talked to the Conservation Officers about this proposal?</li><li>• What about road crews having to grade the roads, plow the roads, around the waste boxes?</li></ul>

#### **Adding Residential Recycling Collection Services on alternating weeks with Garbage collection**

Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cardboard is the only recyclable currently collected from both residential and commercial</li></ul>
Proposed Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Generally positive feedback about adding recycling collection</li></ul>
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will residential recycling collection address the accessibility challenge of the diversion centre being outside the urban area?</li><li>• What will be the recycling streams that have to be separated?</li></ul>

#### **1 Bag limit per household per week**

Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There should be costs or limits associated with waste</li></ul>
Proposed Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will pose a problem for large families or extended households</li></ul>
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What about the smell of garbage sitting for up to two weeks in the summer?</li><li>• Where is garbage or recycling meant to be stored?</li></ul>

#### **Community Involvement**

Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We should utilize volunteers more.</li><li>• We should not rely on volunteers</li></ul>
Proposed Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not include volunteers, advisors</li></ul>
Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage the input of CKS or community advisors and volunteers</li></ul>
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why did the City stop using CKS for recycling and diversion?</li></ul>

#### **Tippling Fees ( not part of the current recommendations – slated to be adopted May/June 2023**

Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We like the existing services</li></ul>
Proposed Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will encourage illegal dumping.</li><li>• Will kill salvage</li><li>• Will add work on other government organizations</li></ul>
Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't charge excessive tipping fees or else it will encourage illegal dumping</li></ul>

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will items taken to the free store be charged a tipping fee?</li> </ul>
<b>Recycling Facilities</b>	
Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inaccessible , out of town and open limited hours</li> <li>• Dirty site, needs better signage, grumpy staff</li> <li>• Inadequate – cardboard going to landfill</li> </ul>
Proposed Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility won't be able to manage the additional volumes from curbside collection.</li> </ul>
Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent former CKS Downtown location and operate as a drop-off facility</li> <li>• Allow off hour drop off bins.</li> <li>• Clean up.</li> <li>• Add capacity.</li> </ul>
<b>Salvaging</b>	
Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We like the free store.</li> <li>• We like salvaging material from the landfill .</li> </ul>
Proposed Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that tipping fees will kill salvaging</li> </ul>
Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work out a way to ensure salvaging and the free store continue.</li> <li>• Consider a credit system for salvagers.</li> <li>• Look to the Yellowknife landfill for inspiration</li> </ul>
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will salvaging continue?</li> </ul>
<b>Composting</b>	
Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current Compost collection and composting system inadequate</li> <li>• City staff and Consultants constantly negative on composting</li> </ul>
Proposed Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not increase composting</li> </ul>
Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a better composting system.</li> <li>• Collect compost</li> <li>• Allow time for the landfill attendant to manage composting pile at the landfill</li> </ul>
Questions	
<b>Data and Numbers</b>	
Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers City uses are suspect and often contradictory.</li> <li>• It is not clear that recommendations are based on numbers</li> </ul>
Proposed Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will discontinuing services without reducing staff save money?</li> <li>• How will extending residential services save money?</li> <li>• What are the diversion goals?</li> <li>• What is the current rate of diversion?</li> <li>• What is the actual makeup of our waste stream going to the landfill?</li> </ul>
Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make current data and sources more readily available</li> <li>• Provide monthly data updates on the City of Dawson website</li> </ul>

## Summary

The municipality acknowledges the concerns and suggestions raised during the engagement session. The following list identifies key issues discussed

- Partnering with local organizations for educational programs on waste reduction, recycling, reuse
- Options for Unserved residential neighbourhoods
- Commercial service options.
- Commercial cost allocation options
- Salvaging
- Enforcement of Illegal Dumping
- Wildlife protection
- Clarity on data, sources, and making it available to the public
- Audit of waste stream to identify components.
- Goals for diversion from the landfill

## Path Forward

### Next steps

1. Release the executive summary and the detailed reports of “What We Heard.”
2. Staff will Review the feedback and discussion and
  - a. identify areas of common agreement
  - b. further research areas of uncertainty
  - c. develop a more detailed financial analysis of options.
  - d. revise recommendations based on feedback and analysis.
3. Develop small working groups on specific areas to develop recommendations.
4. Revise recommendations.
5. Review Revised recommendations with a 2<sup>nd</sup> public session likely in July / august.
6. Develop implementation plan and share for additional comment.
7. Present to Council for final approval.

## Contact Information

For more information or to provide further comments, please contact: Owen Kemp-Griffin,  
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