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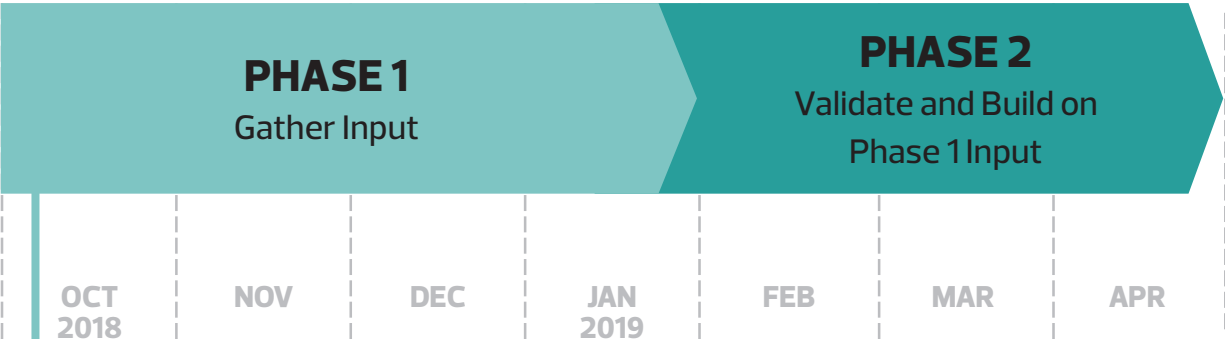
# Background

The City of Edmonton's Waste Services Branch provides services and programs to 215,000 single unit households plus 175,000 multi-unit households. The City also provides Commercial Waste Services for businesses, and opportunities for management of hazardous household waste at Eco Stations. For the past 25 years, Edmonton's Waste Services has focused on programs and technologies to keep waste out of landfill, largely through the sorting and processing of materials at the Edmonton Waste Management Centre (EWMC).

Despite these efforts, the 2017 landfill diversion rate for single-unit households was 39%. A large part of the lower diversion rate is attributable to structural issues at the Edmonton Composting Facility, which had to be closed over winter months. Closure of this waste processing facility resulted in more organic material being landfilled. A 2018 assessment of the Waste Strategy has indicated that only by effecting both operational changes and moving to source separation at curbside will a 90% diversion target be achievable.

It is essential that the City has a strategy to manage Edmonton's waste sustainably, efficiently and collaboratively as we grow into the future. In 2018, Edmonton City Council directed Waste Services to engage stakeholders on potential changes and updates to waste programs and services, to ensure that our strategy is informed and refined by input from Edmontonians as we strive toward a goal of 90 per cent diversion of waste from landfill. The engagement was focused on four sectors: residents, multi-unit stakeholders, non-residential or ICI (Industrial, Commercial and Institutional) stakeholders, and internal City of Edmonton stakeholders.

A two-phase public engagement process was proposed. This document describes the engagement in Phase 1.



**TOPICS FOR PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT**

Topics on which input was gathered included:

- + Changes and options for curbside waste collection, including moving to separate collection of food scraps in a green cart, and four options for changes to how garbage is collected
- + Changes to seasonal grass, leaf and yard waste collection
- + Waste reduction and reuse programming, including food waste prevention
- + Single-use plastics
- + Zero Waste goal for Edmonton
- + Textiles separation and collection
- + Additional sorting of recycling
- + Extended Producer Responsibility

**GOALS OF ENGAGEMENT**

The engagement process was designed to seek input from residents, stakeholders and customers across the four sectors, which will enable the City to develop recommendations and proposed program changes designed to increase waste diversion across all sectors.

Specifically, the City is interested in understanding barriers, solutions and incentives for residents and stakeholders for increasing diversion and adopting proposed changes. What are the different needs and concerns of single unit and multi-unit residents, and stakeholders (including non-residential stakeholders)? What is the role of the City in increasing diversion and implementing waste reduction and diversion programs, particularly in the non-residential sector?



Clareview Recreation Centre October 16, 2018



Clareview Recreation Centre October 16, 2018



Clareview Recreation Centre October 16, 2018

# WHAT WE DID

# What We Did

## Who participated?

The City of Edmonton heard from diverse voices across the City. Through stakeholder mapping, four key sectors were identified as critical for participation in the engagement process: residents, encompassing both single-unit and multi-unit residential households; multi-unit stakeholders, which includes property owners, managers, and management companies of multi-unit residential buildings, and condo boards; nonresidential stakeholders (Industry, Commercial, and Institutions, or ICI); and City of Edmonton departments who would be impacted by changes in waste management.

A comprehensive listing of stakeholders to target for gathering input was developed:

### RESIDENTS

- + Single-unit and multi-unit residents
- + Seniors
- + Newcomers
- + Persons with disabilities and mobility challenges
- + Post-secondary students
- + Edmonton Insight Community

### MULTI-UNIT STAKEHOLDERS

- + Property owners, managers, and management companies
- + Site and building managers
- + Condo boards and tenant associations

### NON-RESIDENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS (INDUSTRY, COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONS)

- + Post-secondary institutional facilities and operations
- + Festivals and events
- + Commercial businesses and associations, including:
  - + Retailers
  - + Large corporations
  - + Small businesses, including home-based businesses
- + Not-for-profit organizations
- + Industrial companies and organizations
- + Waste haulers
- + Large public venues

### CITY OF EDMONTON STAKEHOLDERS

- + City of Edmonton employees (including operational areas)
- + City of Edmonton Waste Services employee





# How did we communicate?

Public drop-in sessions were advertised on radio, in newspapers, on road signs, posters around the city, through social media and on the City's website. Sessions were held in high traffic public spaces that were visible to people passing by.

Multi-unit and non-residential stakeholders were contacted primarily by email and phone calls. E-news publications were also used where possible to inform stakeholders about engagement opportunities. Engagement staff made contact with 196 multi-unit building or site managers, and 90 representatives from the non-residential sector.







1,015,757  
website traffic (entire site)

42,102  
Future of Waste pages traffic

Google  
Display Network

10.9K  
clicks

5.8M  
impressions



132,233  
Posts

795  
Comments



99,035  
Posts



825,100  
People reached

74.3%  
Reach percentage

8.1  
Frequency



Facebook  
Advertising

41.2K  
link clicks

7.4M  
impressions

804  
comments



4,072,260  
Estimated Impressions  
(Adults 18+)



787,860  
Edmonton  
**Examiner**

116,400  
**VUE**  
WEEKLY

1,384,000  
EDMONTON  
JOURNAL

939,000



845,000  
Edmonton  
**metro**

# How did we gather public input?

Recognizing that not all stakeholders and the public can be engaged the same way, different methods and timeframes were used to capture as many people and voices as possible. These included:

## RESIDENTS

- + Drop-in sessions
- + Online survey
- + Intercept surveys at transit centres, recreation centres, events and festivals
- + Social media

## MULTI-UNIT STAKEHOLDERS

- + Drop-in sessions
- + Online survey
- + Scheduled stakeholder meetings
- + Intercept surveys at transit centres, recreation centres, events and festivals
- + Phone call and email conversations
- + E-news publications

## NON-RESIDENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS (INDUSTRY, COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONS)

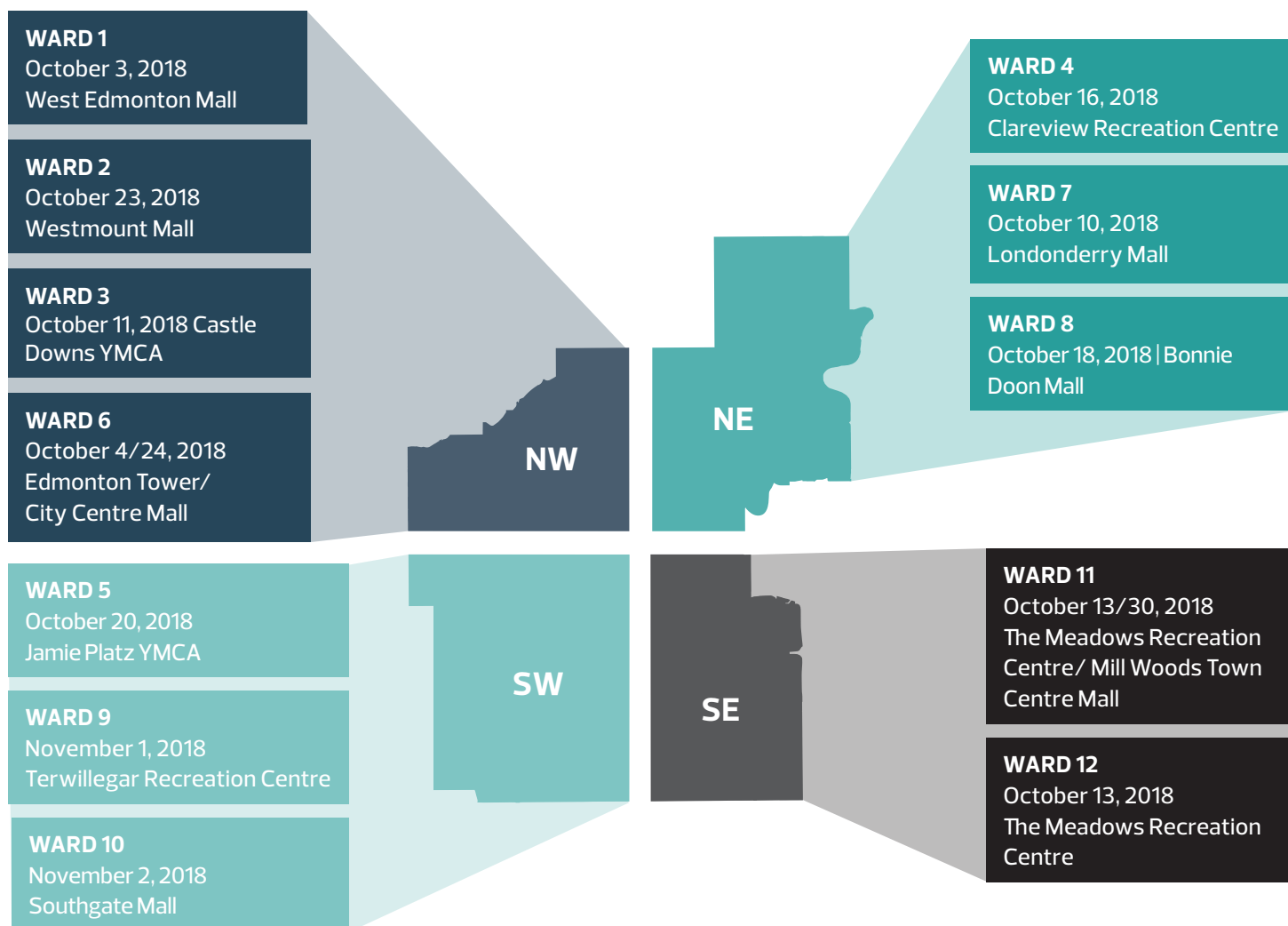
- + Facilitated workshops
- + Telephone interviews
- + Online survey
- + Group discussions
- + Displays and presentations at AGMs (Annual General Meetings), training sessions and conferences
- + Phone call and email conversations
- + Targeted workshops for waste industry members and for not-for-profit organizations

## CITY OF EDMONTON STAKEHOLDERS

- + Drop-in sessions
- + Meetings and workshops
- + Emails and email survey

## PUBLIC DROP-IN SESSIONS

A total of 17 public drop-in sessions, including participation in six Engage Edmonton events, were held at convenient locations across the City between October 3 and November 15, 2018, with at least one session in each ward. Over 2,000 participants in total attended these drop-in sessions.















Six Engage Edmonton sessions took place throughout the city in October and November. These sessions provided opportunities for the public to engage with and learn about various City of Edmonton projects that required public input. Events took place at Northgate Mall, Londonderry Mall, West Edmonton Mall, Mill Woods Town Centre, Edmonton Tower and Southgate Centre.

To make it as easy as possible for residents to participate, high traffic areas such as recreation centres and malls with good transit and vehicle access, were selected for locations. Sessions were

held during early evenings, over the lunch hour, and on Saturdays. Drop-in sessions provided information about the proposed changes using storyboard panels, and gave opportunities for residents to speak with and ask questions of Waste Services employees and subject matter experts. Engagement staff and consultants captured input by recording comments on clipboards and a graffiti wall. An anonymous comment box was provided for the public to leave any questions or comments, which were subsequently answered by City of Edmonton staff.

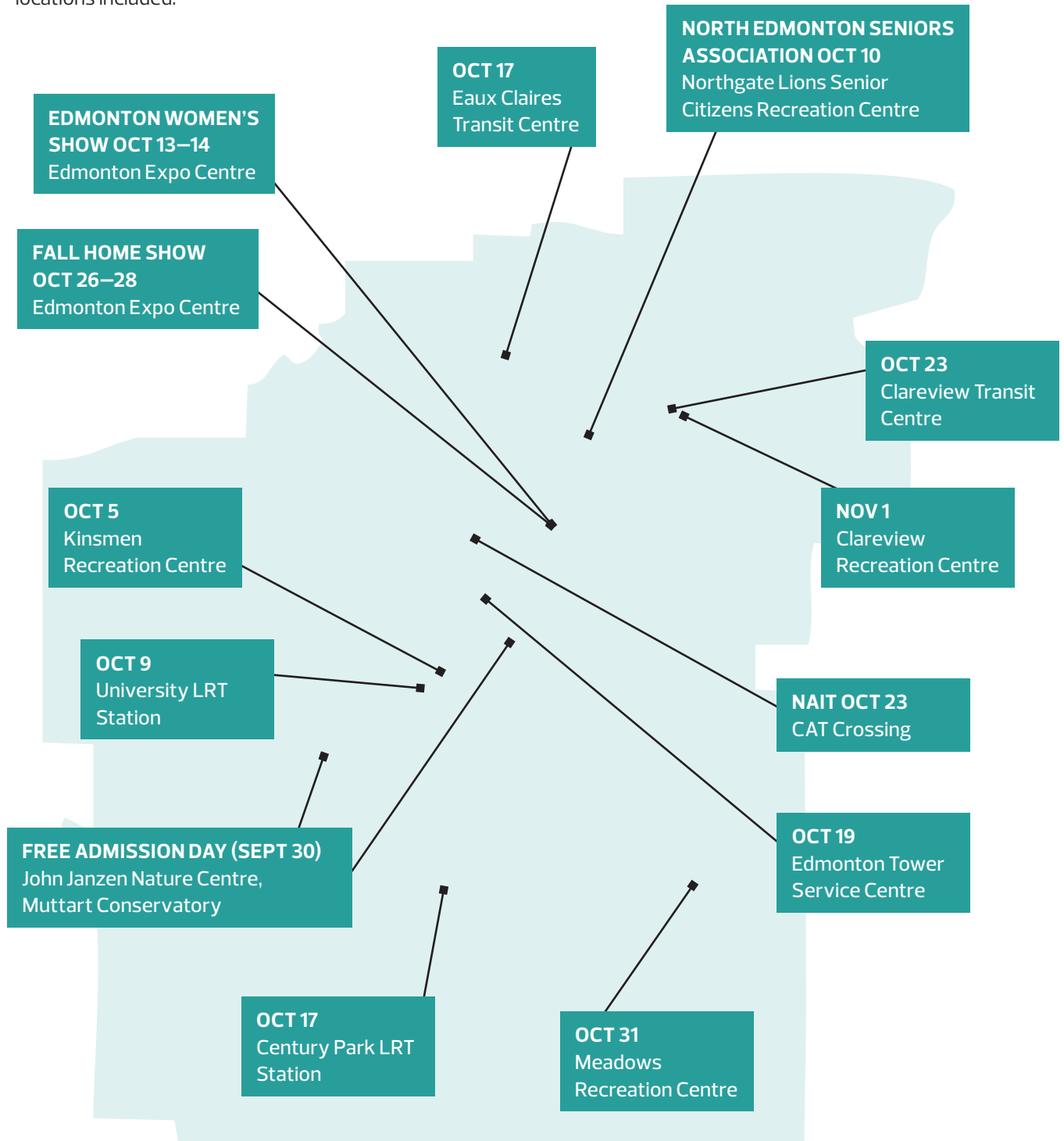
One of the priority topics for input was in regards to proposed changes for how waste is set out at the curb of single unit households for collection. A station outlined the changes the City was considering with respect to waste set outs (i.e., the carts that residents set out for waste pickup) allowing participants to discuss the changes, get clarity on the proposed system and vote on their preferred choice. These options included:

	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3	OPTION 4
FOOD SCRAPS COLLECTION	Weekly / Bi-weekly in winter (110 L green cart) 	Weekly / Bi-weekly in winter (110 L green cart) 	Weekly / Bi-weekly in winter (110 L green cart) 	Weekly / Bi-weekly in winter (110 L green cart) 
RECYCLING COLLECTION	Weekly year-round (unlimited bags) 	Weekly year-round (unlimited bags) 	Weekly year-round (unlimited bags) 	Weekly year-round (unlimited bags) 
GARBAGE COLLECTION	Bi-weekly year-round (110 L black cart) 	Bi-weekly year-round (240 L black cart) 	Bi-weekly year-round (limit of four black bags) 	Bi-weekly year-round (limit of four clear bags and one black privacy bag) 

A 110L cart and a 240L cart were on display so people could see the actual size of each.

## POP-UP EVENTS AND EVENT DISPLAYS

In an effort to reach as many Edmontonians as possible, Waste Services staff went to locations and events to speak to residents and passersby. At these events, staff provided information about public engagement opportunities, and some of the proposed changes. People were also invited to fill out intercept surveys. The locations included:



# SURVEYS

Multiple online surveys were conducted from October 1 to November 30.

Eight variations of surveys for three broad target groups were created and conducted on the City's website, through the City's Edmonton Insight Community, at public drop-in sessions, at events, with the LegerWeb panel and over the telephone.

## RESIDENTS:

### Public

#### 1,001 surveys

were completed between October 1–10, 2018 with Edmonton residents using a random sample of Leger's LegerWeb panel.

#### 13,559 surveys

were conducted through an Open Link on the City's website between October 1 and November 13, 2018.

#### 94 surveys

were conducted through an Open Link on the City's website between October 3 and November 15, 2018 by those attending the public drop-in sessions.

### Edmonton Insight Community Panel

#### 2,301 surveys

were conducted through the City of Edmonton's Insight Community between October 17 and November 5, 2018.

### Intercept Surveys

#### 272 surveys

were conducted by staff at events between September 30 and November 13, 2018.

Respondents completed the survey during **pop up events** and **festivals**.

Intercept surveys were translated into **Cantonese** and **Mandarin** for the Lantern Festival on September 15 and **Punjabi** for the Diwali Celebration on October 20–21.





### **MULTI-UNIT:**

The multi-unit survey was designed for completion by property owners, managers of businesses, including commercial retailers, industrial companies, institutions and business associations.

### **120 surveys**

were conducted through an Open Link on the City's website between October 16 and November 30, 2018.

### **NON-RESIDENTIAL:**

The non-residential survey was designed for completion by owners and managers of businesses, including commercial retailers, industrial companies, institutions and business associations.

### **Online**

### **116 surveys**

were conducted through an Open Link on the City's website between October 10 and November 30, 2018.

### **180 surveys**

conducted with Edmonton Insight Community through the Mixed Topic Survey for Business in November 2018.

### **Phone**

### **557 interviews**

were conducted by telephone between October 11 and November 28, 2018.



# FACILITATED CONVERSATIONS

## SENIORS AND SENIOR ORGANIZATIONS

Many seniors attended the public drop-in sessions across Edmonton. A facilitated conversation was also held at the Central Lions Rec Centre (November 5) to engage with older adults and record their comments regarding the proposed changes for waste services.

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY ORGANIZATIONS

Engagement staff attended a subcommittee meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to discuss the proposed changes and gather feedback. Emails and follow-up phone calls were made to 26 organizations and associations to better understand how the program may affect persons with disabilities.

## POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS AND ASSOCIATIONS

A session similar to the public drop-in sessions was held at the University of Alberta Students' Union Building (Nov 7). The session was advertised on the City website and communicated to other Edmonton post-secondary student's union organizations through phone calls and email.

## NEWCOMER ORGANIZATIONS

Meetings and conversations with newcomer serving organizations provided information on their current system of educating newcomers about waste and recycling services in Edmonton. Newcomer organizations indicated their preference for involvement in Phase 2 public engagement.

## MULTI-UNIT STAKEHOLDERS AND CONDO BOARDS

Some participants at the public drop-in sessions identified themselves as multi-unit residents and stakeholders, and provided feedback to the facilitators.

Engagement team staff attended the Canadian Condominium Institute (CCI) AGM to promote public engagement opportunities and understand best methods of engaging multi-unit residents, property managers and condo boards. Based on this input, four meetings (November 6–10) were set up in all quadrants of the city to gather input on the proposed changes with multi-unit stakeholders, including condo board members and property managers. Phone calls and e-news publications were used to encourage condo board members to attend the events and participate in the survey.

## INDUSTRY, COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL (ICI) STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to telephone interviews and surveys, phone calls and emails were sent to BIA (Business Improvement Area) Executive Directors and members, City of Edmonton Commercial Waste customers, local institutions, the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, business associations, local festival organizers and large local businesses. Individual and group meetings, and presentations were provided to stakeholders to provide opportunities to learn and provide input on the proposed changes.

Two stakeholder roundtables were also organized: one for non-government organization, with representatives across a broad section of social service, environmental and community organizations; and one for industry, representing businesses and associations that are involved directly or indirectly in waste services and waste management. Note-takers and facilitators gathered input from participants to better understand the interests, barriers and opportunities of the ICI sector regarding opportunities for additional waste sorting and waste reduction, the City's role in future waste programs and services, how the City can work with this sector in providing support for greater waste diversion.

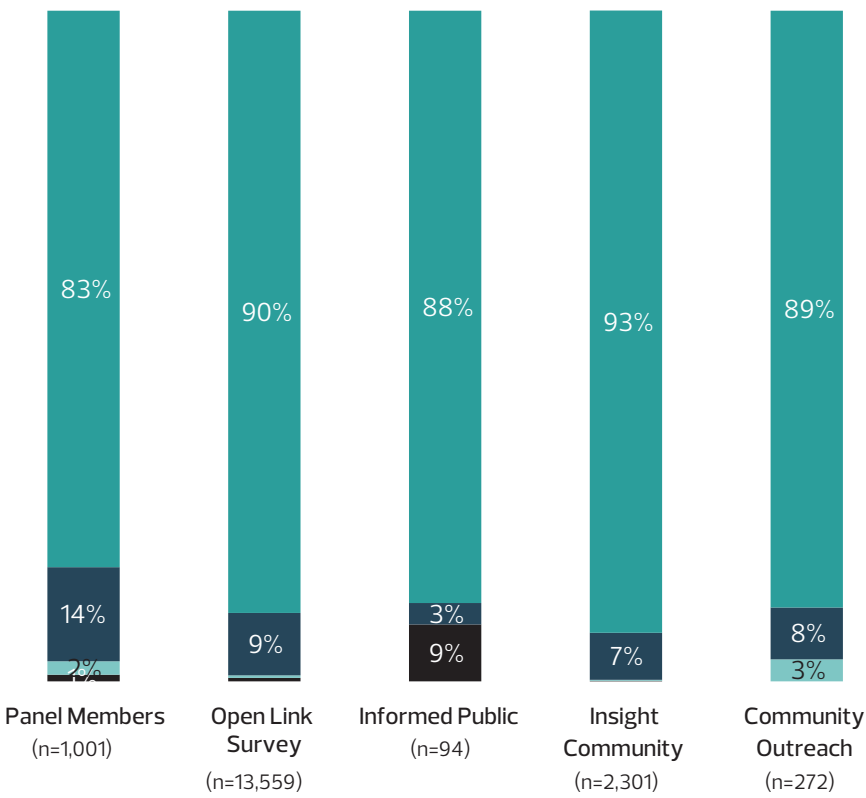
### **CITY OF EDMONTON STAKEHOLDERS**

Through a survey developed and sent through strategic coordinators across the City of Edmonton, representatives from various operational and administrative areas of the corporation were identified for internal stakeholder engagement. Three facilitated workshops were organized for these City of Edmonton representatives at various locations, to understand how the proposed waste program and service changes may impact their day-to-day jobs. A total of 84 representatives attended these sessions.

Eight separate meetings were held for Waste Services employees from different sections across the Branch, to better understand their perspectives on the operational implications of the proposed changes to waste services. A total of 140 employees attended the sessions.

# RESIDENTIAL SURVEY

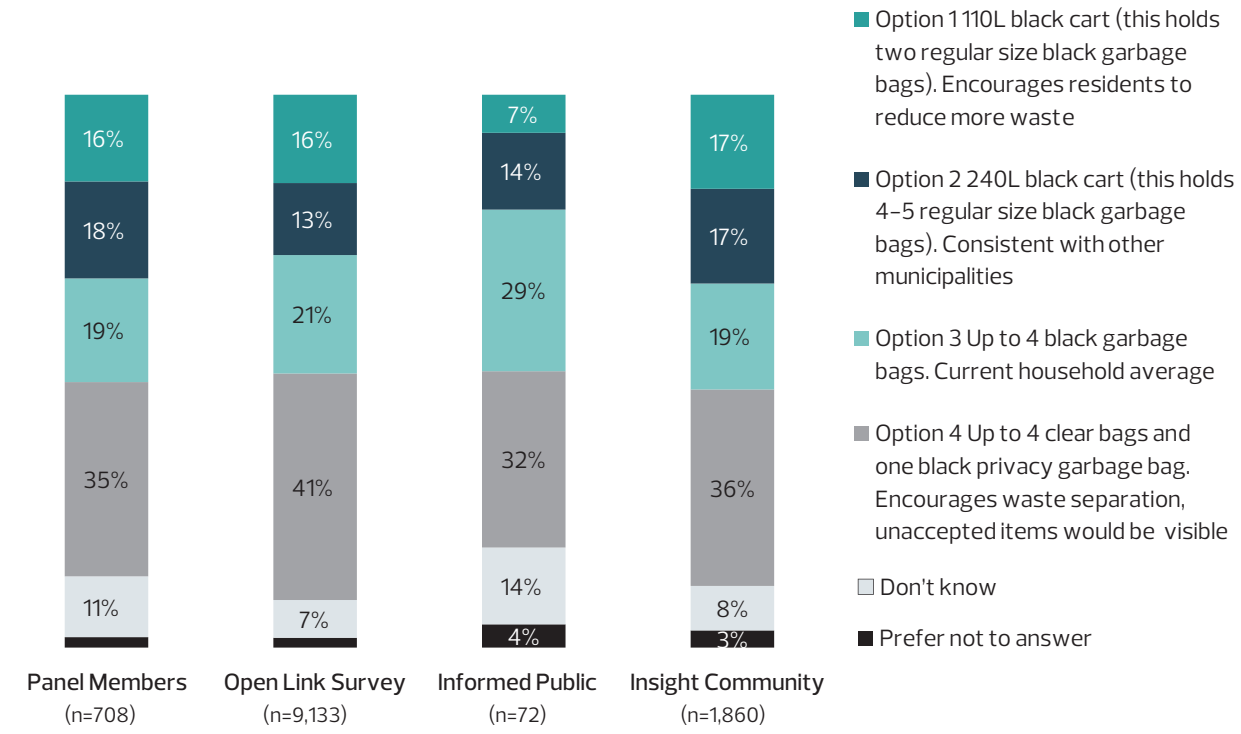
Do you regularly separate things like paper, cardboard, plastics, metal or glass and put them out for recycling?



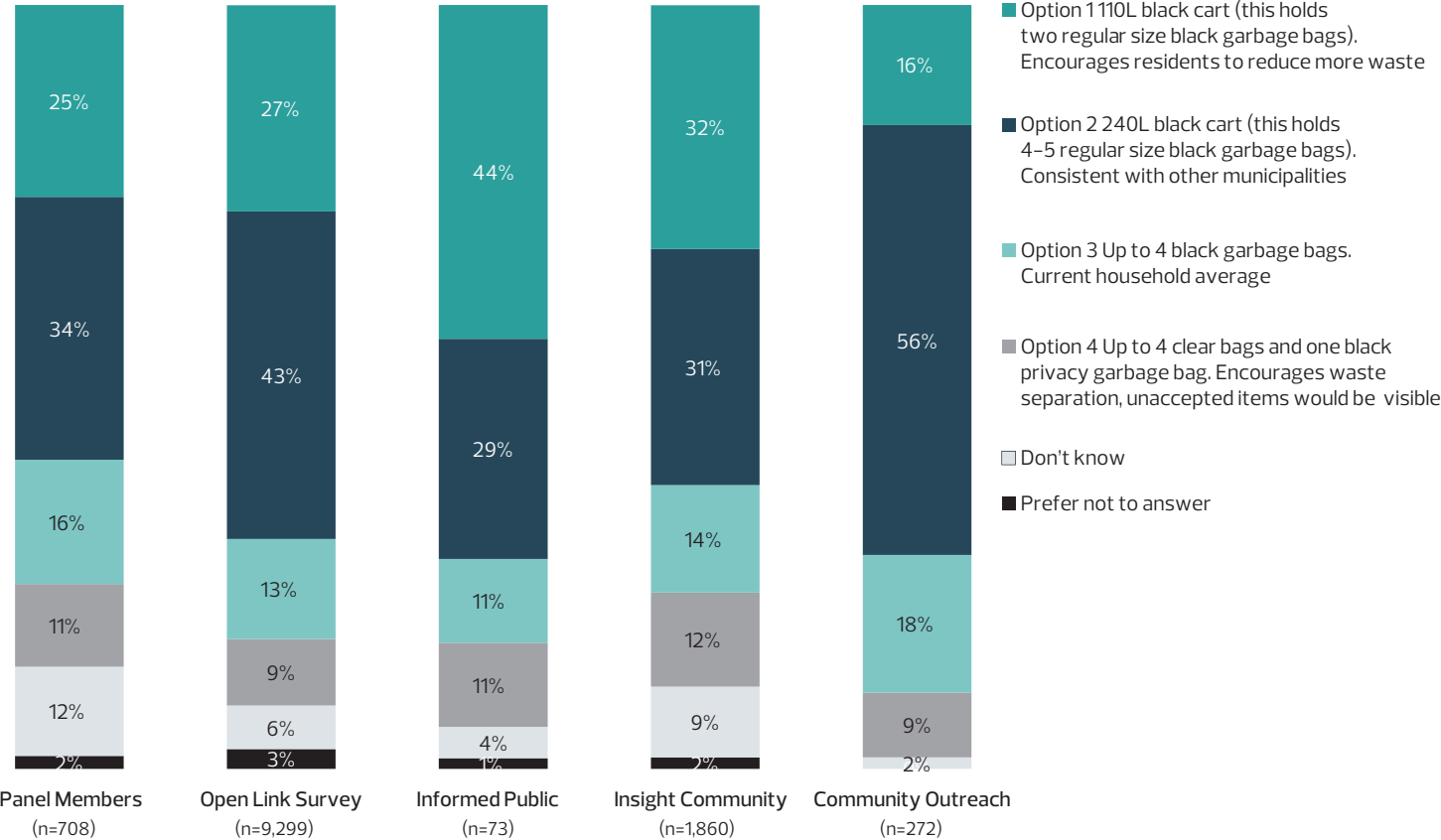
**+ 4/5** Over four-in-five respondents regularly separate recyclables from their waste

**+ 1/3** Over one-third of respondents would separate their organics waste, such as food scraps if required.

The greatest proportion of respondents who live-in single-family residences are least in favour of Option 4.



Generally, the majority of respondents who live in single family residences are most in favour of Option 2.



# WHAT WE HEARD



# WHAT WE HEARD

Of the thousands of conversations that took place during Phase I of the engagement process, several themes were identified. Many of these themes crossed all four sectors (residential, multi-unit stakeholders, non-residential stakeholders, and City of Edmonton staff, including Waste Services employees).

While everyone had insights and questions about the actual tactics and details about the proposed changes to waste programs and services, Edmontonians from all four sectors expressed a willingness to improve waste diversion in the city. They were eager to see Edmonton reclaim their position as a leader in waste reduction, recycling and waste diversion. Participants were disappointed to learn of the current challenges with the composting facility and the reported low percentage of waste that is currently being diverted from landfill. While some expressed skepticism that the current technology had the capacity to significantly reduce waste, almost everyone was committed to improved waste management strategies.

Participants in all sectors spoke of a need for a shared responsibility towards sustainability and expressed a commitment to the concepts of waste reduction and waste diversion. All called for a system that is transparent and accountable. They want to be informed about how they and thus the City of Edmonton, is progressing towards reducing waste and increasing diversion. They want to see good value for their tax dollars, a good return on investment, including opportunities for incentivizing waste reduction, and to understand the 'why' behind decisions and changes that are being proposed.

# THEMES COMMON TO ALL SECTORS

The following table outlines the themes that were consistent across all sectors, and the most frequent comments about those themes. A more robust breakdown of themes per sector appears in the following section.

## COMMON THEMES AT-A-GLANCE

### RESIDENTS

<b>Education</b>	Info/materials need to be visual  Need clear direction because of big changes.
<b>Space, Convenience, and Safety</b>	Single unit households: concerns about storage of carts, rolling to curbs or alleys.
<b>Support for More Sorting</b>	Participation is the right thing to do
<b>Need for Simplicity and Consistency</b>	Make it easy for residents to understand and do. Make what residents do at home consistent with City facilities and public spaces (e.g., malls).
<b>Single-Use Plastic Packaging</b>	Focus on reducing waste, not just diverting it. Ban single-use plastics and ask suppliers to reduce packaging.
<b>Grass, Leaf and Yard Waste</b>	Need more collection than once a season.  Unable to get to any Eco Station, even if drop off is free.  No place to store while waiting for collection day.  Less collection will lead to illegal dumping.

## MULTI-UNIT STAKEHOLDERS

<b>Education</b>	<p>Low threshold of recycling</p> <p>Need education materials that are clear, concise and understood by many cultures and languages.</p>
<b>Space, Convenience, and Safety</b>	<p>Limited space in units and where waste bins are currently located (parking garages/lots). How will additional carts and bins be accommodated? (particularly for food scraps)</p>
<b>Support for More Sorting</b>	<p>Limited sorting in buildings now. How a program would be implemented?</p> <p>Uncertain how new waste diversion practices would be implemented.</p>
<b>Need for Simplicity and Consistency</b>	<p>Suggestions not provided</p>
<b>Single-Use Plastic Packaging</b>	<p>Suggestions not provided</p>
<b>Grass, Leaf and Yard Waste</b>	<p>No place to store leaf, grass and yard waste to save it for collection day.</p> <p>Increased costs for lawn maintenance companies to take to Eco Station.</p>

## NON-RESIDENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

<b>Education</b>	<p>Need clear and easy to understand training materials</p> <p>Need to train custodial staff repeatedly (high turnover). Needs to be available in many languages.</p> <p>Risk of noncompliance is high – this hurts diversion rating needed for green /sustainability certification. Need clear direction because of big changes.</p>
<b>Space, Convenience, and Safety</b>	<p>Space concerns if additional dumpsters or carts need to be added; don't have room for food scraps collection bin.</p>
<b>Support for More Sorting</b>	<p>Increased sorting helps increase sustainability scores (BOMA Best, LEED certification)</p>
<b>Need for Simplicity and Consistency</b>	<p>System must be simple for tenants to use.</p> <p>Additional support systems may need to be put in place.</p> <p>Custodial staff need readily identifiable and consistent practices.</p> <p>Want to see regionalization (Edmonton Metro Region) across municipalities to apply consistent waste management standards</p>
<b>Single-Use Plastic Packaging</b>	<p>Call for Extended Producer Responsibility from producers and manufacturers</p> <p>Single-use packaging from special events is a big concern.</p> <p>Fast-food services should adopt more recyclable materials.</p> <p>'Back-of-house' waste operations for festivals and events: interest in increasing their sustainability practices, but need support and cooperation from the City.</p> <p>Want to see regionalization (Edmonton Metro Region) to apply consistent standards for: single use plastics</p>
<b>Grass, Leaf and Yard Waste</b>	<p>No place to store leaf, grass yard waste</p> <p>Increased costs for lawn maintenance companies to take to Eco Station.</p>

## CITY OF EDMONTON WASTE SERVICES STAFF

<b>Education</b>	<p>Education is a must</p> <p>Operators can play a role in education.</p> <p>Risk of contamination (e.g. garbage in recycling or mixed with food scraps) and noncompliance is high without education program.</p> <p>Education should start early (e.g. before programs changes, in schools)</p>
<b>Space, Convenience, and Safety</b>	<p>Concerns about curbside collection on narrow streets with parked cars and blocked access to household carts. Collection trucks may need more room to access and lift carts (e.g. room for mechanical arm)</p> <p>Moving to cart-based system reduces risk of staff injury</p>
<b>Support for More Sorting</b>	<p>Welcome increased and better sorting to separate different types of waste</p> <p>Safety concerns about improper sorting (e.g. household hazardous waste) being thrown into carts</p>
<b>Need for Simplicity and Consistency</b>	<p>Make it consistent across single unit households and multi-unit residences.</p> <p>Make it simple for people to comply.</p> <p>Rules need to be applied and enforced consistently.</p> <p>Leadership and City Council must support enforcement.</p>
<b>Single-Use Plastic Packaging</b>	<p>To reach the target waste diversion rates, single-use packaging needs to be addressed</p>
<b>Grass, Leaf and Yard Waste</b>	<p>Concerns – limited collection days may lead to illegal dumping</p> <p>If yard waste is allowed in Kraft paper bags, they may be difficult to collect in wet weather.</p> <p>Need to use Kraft bags (not plastic) to collect yard waste, so it can be composted outdoors at Waste Management Centre</p> <p>Safety concerns with need to periodically lift and carry heavier bags of grass and yard waste</p>

## CITY OF EDMONTON STAFF (REPRESENTATIVES, VARIOUS AREAS)

<b>Education</b>	<p>All staff will need to be educated on changes and expectations.</p> <p>Public facing buildings will need to train visitors (e.g., rec centres, libraries) how to use the new system.</p>
<b>Space, Convenience, and Safety</b>	<p>In winter, windrows may block access to carts and trucks.</p> <p>Access to Emergency Response Vehicles if carts crowd narrow alleyways and streets.</p>
<b>Support for More Sorting</b>	<p>Want to mirror the residential program in all public facilities to demonstrate that the City is 'walking the talk'.</p>
<b>Need for Simplicity and Consistency</b>	<p>All departments should have the same understanding, same rules.</p> <p>Need to discuss how to operationalize this in City spaces, e.g., parks, rec facilities.</p>
<b>Single-Use Plastic Packaging</b>	<p>Single use plastics and much packaging is not recyclable and contributes to increasing the amount sent to landfill.</p> <p>Need Extended Producer Responsibility legislation.</p>
<b>Grass, Leaf and Yard Waste</b>	<p>Concerns about fire hazards, pest attraction.</p> <p>Concerns about risk of illegal dumping in river valley or parks.</p>



*If residents separate food scraps from the rest of their garbage at home for separate collection, the food scraps would more easily be processed, thus decreasing the amount of garbage headed for landfill. This proposed waste service change received strong support from people living in single unit residences.*

## INSIGHTS FROM EACH SECTOR

Although the themes were very consistent across the four sectors, each theme was viewed from the unique perspective of the particular sector and reflects their specialized insights into the areas discussed. Some of the themes do not apply to all sectors—for example black carts for garbage collection—only applies to single unit residents and Waste Services staff. Below are the comments and perceptions of the four sectors.



# SINGLE UNIT RESIDENTS

Those who lived in single and semi-detached houses represented the majority of respondents.

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## SEPARATING FOOD SCRAPS (ORGANICS) AT HOME FOR GREEN CART COLLECTION

If residents separate food scraps from the rest of their garbage at home for separate collection, the food scraps would more easily be processed, thus decreasing the amount of garbage headed for landfill. This proposed waste service change received strong support from people living in single unit residences.

- + The vast majority of people that participated in the public drop-in sessions, meetings and workshops were supportive of separating these materials at home.
- + Many people currently compost in their backyard and were intrigued with the additional ability of the city to compost bones and other hard-to-compost items using the proposed green cart program.
- + Many residents have either participated in a green cart-type program while living elsewhere, or have experienced it while visiting other cities or municipalities that have such a program. Participants at the public drop-in sessions often commented that they have been anxiously waiting for this program to be introduced in Edmonton.
- + The proposed 110L green cart was considered too big if it was only going to contain food scraps that would be picked up weekly in the summer and biweekly in the winter. If grass clippings or other yard waste could be added to the green cart, the 110L size was considered too small.
- + Most questioned if food waste could be put into bags before being put into the green carts to reduce the smell and avoid dirty carts. They referenced biodegradable and compostable garbage bags as possibilities in the green carts, and were surprised to learn that they were not truly biodegradable.
- + The major concerns were potential odours and attraction of rodents.
- + Residents wondered if costs would be affected and questioned whether their costs would go up, down or stay the same. People who produced very little waste questioned why their rates were the same as people who produced a lot of waste. Many people would like to see waste reduction incentives as part of the changes.
- + People expressed displeasure at having to do more work (sorting) for less service with no cost reduction, or for an annual increased cost. They compared Edmonton's rates with those in other municipalities and felt Edmontonians paid more than their counterparts in Calgary and other major centres.

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## BLACK CARTS WITH BIWEEKLY COLLECTION

The options presented (two sizes of black carts, or a limited number of black or clear bags) generated a lot of discussion. A significant majority of people preferred black carts to black or clear bags because of the potential mess made by animals and birds that tear apart bags on garbage day.

- + While the 240L black cart was the preferred option overall, there was significant support for the 110L cart as well. People wondered if the City could provide customized options, allowing residents to choose a small or a large cart, depending on their needs.
- + From the public drop-in sessions, small household sizes, seniors and people who currently compost at home tended to prefer a smaller 110L cart whereas large families and families with children in diapers preferred the 240L black cart.
- + Some people with front street pick up were concerned about the aesthetics of having the carts stored in the front of the house or the difficulty of bringing them to the front street for pick up.
- + There were comments and concerns raised around the integrity of the carts and how easily they might roll down a driveway in the wind or how often they would need to be repaired.
- + Many people asked who had to pay for the carts and how much would this new program cost them as taxpayers.
- + Comments and conversations identified that space requirements, size of family and number of children in diapers were deciding factors in the preferred size of cart.
- + Many people asked if it was possible to buy an extra cart or pay for extra garbage when needed, citing 'tag-a-bag' systems in other jurisdictions. People were interested in paying extra for being able to set out more garbage if the cost was reasonable. They also wondered if there would be a cost-reduction incentive if they reduced their waste, choosing a smaller 110L black cart.
- + Dissenting views on the biweekly collection of garbage were very limited. People understood the rationale of biweekly collection of garbage and were accepting of the idea. Many said that waste used to be picked up on an irregular schedule that was less than once a week. Others recognized that with food scraps being removed from the garbage, there would be a lower volume of waste and less smell associated with the garbage.
- + People with mobility issues find it easier to set out a garbage bag than to use a cart. Depending on the situation, a cart is not possible for those living with certain mobility challenges. They welcomed the idea of the Assisted Waste Program offered by the City and received material on that service.

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## SPACE AND CONVENIENCE OF CARTS

People acknowledged that green carts and black carts would represent a big change in how they manage their household waste.

- + Storage of carts between pick up days was a concern. Most people thought that, with a little thought and rearranging, they could find a place for the carts.
- + People mused about the convenience of the bins and needing to wheel them to the curb or alley. Most decided it was not that different than their current practices.
- + People recognized that these changes had occurred in municipalities across Canada and these concerns could be solved by following the examples of other jurisdictions.

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## EDUCATION

Participants identified education as the key component to making these changes and implementing a successful waste management system. They commented that teaching people what to recycle and how to sort waste is essential.

- + An extensive campaign, utilizing print, TV, radio, social media, bus stop ads etc. was suggested to attract the attention of the public.
- + Several people suggested that education focus on school children who bring the information home and are happy to instruct parents on the proper way to recycle and sort.
- + Most participants have been exposed to different sorting practices across jurisdictions, which can lead to confusion and contamination (improper sorting).
- + Most participants said they recycled and would be interested in upgrading their recycling knowledge.
- + Organizations who assist newcomers learning about life in Canada indicated that they currently teach classes in recycling and sustainability. They would be pleased to update and enhance any information to assist newcomers with understanding the importance of waste reduction and diversion in Edmonton.

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## KEEP IT SIMPLE AND CONSISTENT

People thought that a successful waste diversion program should be a simple and consistent waste program.

- + Most participants have been exposed to different sorting practices across various municipalities, which can lead to confusion and contamination (improper sorting). They would like to see a regional approach to waste management, so that when people in Edmonton visit surrounding communities and vice versa, the waste sorting methods would be the same.
- + Participants thought that the messaging around recycling and waste diversion over the years has become confusing. They would like to see a simple approach developed. The public who participated in the sorting exercise at the public drop-in sessions often commented that they had been recycling the wrong things.

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## SUPPORT FOR OTHER TYPES OF SORTING

People were interested in generating less waste. They thought that with more education and support from City of Edmonton, they could reduce the amount of waste they are generating.

- + Many participants were not aware of the purpose and services provided by the Reuse Centre and Eco Stations.
- + Those participants who did know about the Reuse Centre and Eco Stations found them inconvenient to access. The hours of operation, cost, travel time and need for a vehicle were limiting factors and a concern if residents will be expected to drop off more items at these locations in the future.
- + People loved the Big Bin events in their community and thought that more frequent Big Bin events, with a coordinated push from community leagues, would lead to reducing waste and increased community building.

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## SINGLE USE PLASTICS AND PACKAGING

Most residents who participated in the public drop-in sessions support the elimination or reduction of single use plastics. They felt that their efforts as citizens would be a minuscule contribution to waste diversion if the commercial sector continued to use plastic and Styrofoam in disposable dishes and packaging, for anything from lettuce to television sets.

- + Citizens want the City to become active in banning excess packaging; working with the province to establish appropriate legislation.
- + Residents questioned the use of single use blue bags for the City's recycling program and requested blue recycle bags be replaced with blue carts, if the City is moving to a cart-based system. They suggested that blue bags for recyclables seemed inconsistent with a program that is trying to reduce items, including single use plastics, from landfill. Some people were concerned with different trucks and processes required for the drivers if both bags and carts were part of the regular waste set-outs.

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## GRASS LEAF AND YARD WASTE

Although the engagement process was not intended to discuss previous City Council decisions on grass clippings, leaves and yard waste, it became the primary topic for people attending the public drop-in sessions. Edmontonians strongly objected to the proposed schedule of one collection day per season (spring, fall) for leaf and yard waste. The proposed schedule was perceived as highly insufficient; asking people to take leaves and yard waste to Eco Stations outside of these pickups, even at no cost, was not well received. Comments included:

- + Leaves don't fall at the same time; there could be leaves every month from September to November.
- + People don't necessarily clean up the yard just once in the spring and once in the fall.
- + The leaves picked up by residents are often from City owned trees.
- + The City encourages people to create nice yards through programs like Front Yards in Bloom or bylaws for noxious weeds. People felt the policies were conflicting—encouraging responsible yard maintenance, yet not supporting citizens in the disposal of yard waste.
- + Residents explained they either drive a small car or don't drive at all and use public transit, which hinders their ability to access Eco Stations with leaf and yard waste.
- + People thought that asking thousands of citizens across Edmonton to drive to the Eco Stations is harmful to the environment.
- + Eco Stations are not open on Sundays and the lineups, when open, are too long.
- + People objected to reduced service, if monthly costs continue to increase. With the proposed changes, people have to use gas and wear and tear on their personal vehicle to drive to the Eco Stations, thus increasing their personal costs.
- + Reducing collection days for grass clippings, and leaf and yard waste will lead to dumping in vacant lots, the river valley, at recycling depots and in commercial bins.



## MULTI-UNIT STAKEHOLDERS

Residents that live in condominiums and apartments are challenged in their ability to reduce waste and increase their waste diversion. Older buildings that were constructed before recycling programs do not necessarily have the space to provide on-site recycling services for residents. Newer buildings may have incorporated sustainability measures during construction but may not be applying them in day to day operations. These factors mean that waste diversion in multi-unit residential buildings is significantly less than waste diversion in single unit residences. Some people who live in multi-unit buildings indicated a willingness to recycle and sort more, but were unsure whether property managers would be able to implement recycling bins or even accommodate new carts for food scraps. They were also unsure how their multi-unit complex would integrate recycling in their building.

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### SPACE AND CONVENIENCE

Participants (including residents of multi-unit buildings, property managers and building managers) suggested that the biggest barrier to recycling and separating food scraps was the limited amount of space available in the units, and on the floors and grounds of the properties.

- + Residents explained that they do not have space for additional containers to sort food scraps in their individual units.
- + Building managers were concerned about the space required per floor and in the building that food scraps collection and increased recycling would require. Managers were also concerned about odours and the attraction of rodents between collection times for food scraps collection.
- + Some properties have recycling bins in addition to garbage bins on their property. Managers think that space is not available to add another large bin for food scraps.
- + Property managers expressed that participation in recycling was low and recycling bins are often contaminated with garbage and other non-recyclable items. This is an ongoing issue for many buildings. A lack of familiarity with proper sorting of recyclables caused building owners and managers to wonder if residents would be willing to make the changes required to increase their proper sorting of recycling as well as separating food scraps.

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## EDUCATION

Education and awareness are very important if the City hopes to increase waste diversion in multi-unit residential properties.

- + Because there is currently less participation in recycling in the multi-unit sector, residents may not be as familiar with recycling and diversion methods as those who have been recycling for years.
- + Education materials must be clear, concise, highly visual and understood by many cultures and languages.
- + Due to high turnover in rental multi residential units, education efforts need to be ongoing and repeatable. For example, educational material could be made available as part of move in packages.
- + Newcomer organizations expressed an interest in passing along new approaches and creating sustainability habits among newcomers to Canada. These groups assist newcomers with learning about life in Canada and are eager to share the latest developments.

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## GRASS, LEAF AND YARD WASTE.

Decreasing the collection of grass, leaf and yard waste to one collection period in the spring and one in the fall was problematic for property managers.

- + There is no place to store excess materials in between collection periods.
- + There would be an increased cost for lawn and yard maintenance companies to take grass, leaf and yard waste to the Eco Station. Unlike their single residential unit neighbours, these businesses would pay commercial costs to take yard waste to an Eco Station.
- + Lawn and yard companies do not have the spatial capacity or time to take grass clippings and yard waste to the Eco Station, particularly if they need to wait in line.

## NON-RESIDENTIAL SECTOR: INSTITUTIONS, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRY (ICI)

The non-residential sector represents a significant percentage of waste generators in Edmonton. This sector is generally interested in additional waste diversion because of sustainability policies and corporate social responsibility obligations. They feel that it's the right thing to do, taking into consideration environmental and social considerations as part of their business model. However, cost is still a deciding factor when participating in a waste management program or choosing a waste hauler. Competition for tenants, employees and customers, as well as corporate social responsibility commitments, sustainability policies and branding, were the main factors in the ICI stakeholders' interests for greater waste diversion programs. Even those most committed to sustainability factors were challenged by the cost and change management required in implementation.

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### SEPARATING FOOD SCRAPS AND SUPPORT FOR OTHER TYPES OF SORTING

Property managers explained that most tenants who are large corporations or organizations like the Government of Alberta are demanding recycling to help them reach their waste diversion targets and, in some cases, requesting food scraps separation in their lease agreements.

- + The capacity of waste haulers is an important consideration of those properties participating in waste management programs. Some property managers who had been sorting food scraps in office towers had stopped doing so because they changed haulers who no longer provided a separate food scraps collection service. They consequently received feedback from tenants to bring back a food scraps separation program.
- + Other companies used haulers with the understanding that haulers were separating waste for them. Some companies are not certain if their waste is being separated and properly diverted from landfills, as reported by haulers. They suggested that regular waste audits and detailed reporting would resolve the uncertainty.
- + Lack of space for an additional food scraps collection bin was a concern, particularly among independent grocers and office towers. Additional noted barriers included inconsistency in sorting practices and subsequent contamination of recycled material, foul smells and attraction of rodents.
- + Grocers in particular were interested in a food redistribution or recovery program that would help unused, edible food be consumed by those in need, rather than have it being composted or sent to landfill.
- + Not-for-profit organizations identified the potential and opportunity inherent in additional sorting of edible food, textiles and reusable materials. Food redistribution programs and social enterprise opportunities could be beneficial to the not-for-profit sector.
- + Festivals and events were interested in increasing their sustainability measures but commented that they need support and cooperation from the City when it comes to space requirements, infrastructure and bylaws for 'back-of-house' waste operations.
- + Associations representing persons with disabilities explained that some people may not be able to meet the expectations of a full recycling and/or additional sorting programs due to issues with fatigue, memory lapses, mobility and/or strength.

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## EDUCATION

Education was extremely important for the ICI sector. This especially applies to those organizations who are attaining or maintaining professional designations such as BOMA Best Platinum, LEED certification and other sustainability designations. Failure to comply with waste reduction, recycling and waste diversion standards puts their professional designations at risk. This applies to a wide range of organizations within the sector, from large office towers to post-secondary institutions. In addition, most contamination of recyclables and sorting of other types of materials is a result of a lack of awareness and education.

- + The impact of non-compliance and improper sorting is high. Certification audits require high diversion ratings.
- + Training materials must be clear, easy to understand and scalable to a large, diverse audience
- + Multiple languages and cultural perspectives are important considerations in any education program.
- + There is a high turnover in custodial staff, thus training needs to be a regular occurrence.
- + Training approaches such as video or eLearning formats would increase efficiencies and learning.

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## SINGLE USE PLASTICS AND PACKAGING

In the ICI sector, implementing sustainability programs for waste diversion is seen as 'voluntary' because it is not mandated by the City or province. Many institutions and businesses felt their waste diversion practices lacked clout with tenants, vendors and customers.

- + The ICI sector would welcome policy and bylaws from the City as well as legislation from the province to decrease the amount of waste going to landfill. There is a call for Extended Producer Responsibility legislation in Edmonton and Alberta.
- + The ICI sector would like the City to work with the Metro Edmonton Region to develop and apply consistent regional standards regarding single use plastics.
- + Wrapping and packaging materials such as single use plastic and Styrofoam are major barriers to greater waste diversion for businesses such as the conference centres and institutions, making it challenging to reach their waste diversion targets. The food service industry should adopt more recyclable materials, but representatives also acknowledged that they have little control over what happens to their products once taken off-site, which speaks to the need for consistency across homes, businesses, and facilities.
- + Some from the ICI sector said that people would adopt new, sustainable practices if single use plastics were banned.
- + Others from the ICI sector explained that consistency across jurisdictions, particularly in the Edmonton Metro Region would be helpful, as retailers often have businesses in different jurisdictions with different rules.

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### SIMPLE AND CONSISTENT

The ICI sector in particular placed a high value on waste reduction, recycling and diversion efforts that are simple and consistent across the board.

- + Having malls, parks, venues, City-owned facilities, commercial buildings and schools use the same method of sorting would lead to less contamination overall and greater buy-in from the community.
- + The City needs to be 'leading by example' and implement food scraps separation at all public facing facilities at the same time as residential programs are established.
- + Some organizations, such as city festivals and commercial establishments, prefer to simplify their processes by hiring haulers who do the sorting and diversion automatically, allowing the sorting to be done offsite.



# CITY OF EDMONTON WASTE SERVICES STAFF

Collectors and other employees of Waste Services offered valuable perspectives to consider when implementing a new waste strategy. All staff felt strongly about the need to reduce waste, reuse, recycle and divert waste from landfill. Staff emphasized the importance of education, enforcement and safety when implementing the waste strategy. They also identified the cost of improper waste set-outs and sorting, and highlighted several requirements to consider when implementing these proposed changes.

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## ENFORCEMENT AND EMPOWERING COLLECTORS

Collectors acknowledged that the changes being proposed represent a significant shift in how residents manage their waste. Staff are committed to the changes and believe they play an important role in implementing the changes. This role can only be fully realized if collectors are empowered, and supported in the decisions they make along their route. Collectors want clear direction from leadership and Councillors to follow specific rules when collecting. For example, if the bylaw restricts waste collection to black carts and there are four black bags beside the cart, they need to feel confident that they can leave the bags. They don't want to be told at the end of the day to go back and pick up items that are not permitted for curbside collection. Their work needs to be supported by clear and consistent application of any changes made to bylaws.

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## EDUCATION

Educating citizens is the first step in a successful waste management program and system. Collectors thought the education program should be implemented well before the strategy is implemented. Several examples were given of other jurisdictions (e.g. Montreal) that had long lead times in their education efforts. Collectors felt that a city wide, consistent education program would be the best way to reach residents.

- + There is a significant amount of contamination of recyclable material in both blue bags (houses) and blue bins (condos and apartments) because of lack of education, awareness and enforcement that leads to inconsistent sorting. Citizens may not understand how contamination in recycling negates the very efforts they are trying to achieve.
- + People need to be educated in a variety of formats, including different languages and using highly visual graphics.
- + Some thought that educating children in schools would be an effective way of educating the adults at home.
- + Staff expressed that Edmontonians are ready for a more sophisticated understanding of waste management. For example, the method of handling yard waste and food scraps can generate different GHG (Greenhouse Gases) calculations and impact the City's GHG credits. Residents are interested and should be educated in the 'why' behind the decisions being made. Waste Services staff thought that the GHG potential could be factored into an ongoing conversation.

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## **MOVING TO A CART-BASED AUTOMATED COLLECTION SYSTEM WITH SEASONAL GRASS, LEAF AND YARD WASTE COLLECTION**

Collectors are in favour of introducing black carts for garbage and green carts for food scraps. Increasing safety and injury prevention were seen as major benefits from collectors' perspectives. Many collectors have lived and worked in jurisdictions around the world and are familiar with the various options available. They are pleased the City is moving in the direction of automated collection, where trucks with mechanical arms pick up carts and dump the cart contents into the back of the truck.

- + Automation means less chance of injury for collectors, due to lifting heavy items, slipping on ice, and general wear and tear on collectors' shoulders, knees, etc.
- + Automation means collectors can no longer pick up 'questionable' items and extra bags, because the automated trucks can only pick up carts.
- + Collectors support residents being able to customize the size of black cart they want because the truck can pick up both sizes of carts. They want to avoid sending the wrong message to residents.
- + Concerns about picking up yard waste in Kraft bags: bags will be heavy to lift and bags may tear if they get wet from rain/snow; need for different vehicles to collect these by hand. Also, there is greater risk of injury to collectors if they are expected to manually load Kraft bags, when they haven't loaded manually for a while, based on their shifts.
- + Concerns about blocked access when picking up carts in tight alleys, with illegally parked cars and general lack of space around the set out.

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## **SINGLE USE BLUE BAGS VS BLUE CART**

Continuing to use single use blue plastic bags for recyclable materials does not sit well with collectors and other Waste Services staff.

- + The use of blue bags is inconsistent with best practices and the move to ban or restrict single use plastics.
- + Residents will want to add other types of bags to 'bag pick up day'.
- + The continuation of blue bags rather than a blue cart creates an inconsistency between bags and carts. This inconsistency between waste and recyclable materials will require two different types of trucks.
- + The use of carts for food scraps and garbage means that collectors will no longer be manually loading the garbage. There is greater risk of injury to collectors if they are expected to manually load the blue bags when they haven't loaded manually for a while, based on their shifts.



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## ILLEGAL DUMPING AND CONTAMINATION

Multi-unit collectors and recycling depot attendants suggested that there would be significant contamination in the bins at Community Recycling Depots, apartments and condos if residents do not want to comply with the new program. People currently tend to 'dump' excess garbage in those bins.

- + Staff are particularly concerned about illegal dumping of grass, leaf and yard waste between seasonal pickups, particularly at Recycling Depots.
- + Multi-unit recycling bins already see a high level of contamination. Collectors are concerned that organics bins will face similar issues due to lack of enforcement for sorting.

The City needs to take illegal dumping and contamination seriously, particularly in the early days when people are still learning about the changes, and compliance with the changes may be low.

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## CAPACITY OF ECO STATIONS AND REUSE CENTRE

Operations at Eco Stations and the Reuse Centre need to be increased if the City is directing residents to use those facilities more often.

- + If additional traffic will be generated at Eco Stations and the Reuse Centre, they will require additional staff and will need to be open at times that are convenient for the public.
- + Ensuring rates and accepted items are consistent across Eco Stations and the Edmonton Waste Management Centre (e.g. if we don't charge for yard waste at Eco Stations, we can't charge for yard waste at the EWMC)



## CITY OF EDMONTON STAFF

Preliminary meetings were held with select City of Edmonton staff representatives for multiple operational and administrative areas, to learn how the proposed changes would impact the work that they do. In-depth workshops will take place in Phase 2. Some insights included:

- + **Consistency and Education.** There's a need for consistent sorting across all City locations including buildings, parks, and festivals on city property.
- + **Alleys and Roadways.** Participants were concerned that the proposed changes may result in additional traffic down the alleys and roads which will affect the wear and tear on infrastructure.
- + **Vehicular Accessibility.** Snow clearance on roads result in windrows that could block trucks access to carts. There were several questions around the ability of automated trucks to be able to navigate narrow alleys. Emergency Response Services, such as fire, police and ambulance want to ensure safe and easy access to front streets and back alleys.
- + **Increased Costs.** New bins and carts in all facilities, parks and back-of-house areas caused people to wonder about the costs and would each department be responsible for their own costs. Others thought that trucks would require a new maintenance schedule that could increase costs. Different processes for snow removal that ensured the removal of windrows were also seen as a concern for potential increases in costs.
- + **Illegal Dumping.** City facilities, most notably parks, currently experience significant levels of illegal dumping. There is concern that dumping will increase if people must change the way their waste is managed. They think that leaves, grass clippings and yard waste, as well as garbage will contribute to existing problems.
- + **Fire Hazard and Pest Control.** Leaves that are stored for long periods could attract rodents and other pests. Excess leaves may prompt people to burn them in a burning barrel, thus increasing fire hazards in neighbourhoods.
- + **Change of Habits and Processes.** City staff also acknowledged that these proposed changes also mean doing things differently in their own work spaces. Custodial staff will also be impacted and need to learn about the changes. Some wondered if custodial costs and time would increase with the additional sorting duties required.

# NEXT STEPS

# NEXT STEPS

## HOW INPUT FROM PHASE I IS BEING USED TO INFORM DECISIONS

A second series of public and stakeholder engagement is scheduled for Phase 2. The information and input from Phase I will be:

- + Used to inform and shape recommendations for seasonal collection of grass, leaf and yard waste, and recommendations for moving to a cart-based collection system for single unit households. These recommendations will be presented in a report to City Council in February 2019, and will be tested as part of a trial program with a select number of households, beginning in the spring of 2019.
- + Used to shape the format of Phase 2 public engagement (February – April 2019). During Phase 2, Waste Services will seek to ensure that input from Phase 1 is validated with the public, and to build on input gathered during phase 1 and gather more in-depth information, as part of shaping future decisions about waste programs and services.
- + Results from Phase 1 and Phase 2 public engagement will be used to develop Edmonton's new 25-year waste strategy, which will be presented to Utility Committee and City Council in 2019.





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**SHAPE** OUR CITY

**Edmonton**