

Memorandum

WMPSC-C 7-2024

Subject: Waste Management Strategic Plan Update

Date: August 27, 2024

To: Waste Management Planning Steering Committee

From: Jennifer Mazurek, Program Manager, Waste Policy and Planning

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide members of the Waste Management Planning and Steering Committee (WMPSC) with an update on the development of Niagara Region's Waste Management Strategic Plan (the Plan). This update includes the vision, mission, guiding principles, goals, evaluation criteria for options, and Long List of options for consideration in the final version of the Plan. Additional background information about the Plan and associated phases, and the Long List, are included in Appendices 1 and 2.

Plan Development Process

The development of the Plan is a multi-phase process, with the initial phases (phases 1 and 2) laying the groundwork for the strategic direction that will shape the future of waste management in Niagara Region.

Phase one focused on foundational activities, including:

- providing a future outlook and reviewing shifting priorities, threats, and opportunities (e.g., regulatory changes, program enhancements, population projections, forecasted waste generation, housing changes);
- updating Niagara Region's 25-year waste tonnage and financial models;
- assessing the current waste management system;
- conducting a policy and program review of comparable municipalities; and
- researching best practices and alternative technologies.

These efforts culminated in a comprehensive gap analysis and extensive stakeholder consultations that informed the Plan's vision, mission, guiding principles, goals, and Long List options.

Building on the foundational work of the first phase, phase two aims to refine the Plan's vision, guiding principles and goals, as well as evaluating innovative program delivery

opportunities. This phase also includes further stakeholder consultations to refine the Plan's recommendations.

Phase three will translate the strategic direction into actionable plans. This phase will focus on:

- developing tonnage and costing projections of the options;
- establishing 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) targets for the 25-year planning period;
- creating an implementation plan for both the short and long-term options; and
- identifying strategies for adapting to legislative and regulatory changes.

Phase One Analysis

During the first phase, opportunities and challenges for the Region were assessed. Key areas of focus included using waste as a resource, waste diversion, the Region's role as a service provider, and asset management. This review considered social, economic, environmental impacts and highlighted risks that will be explored further during Phase 2. The key risks identified involve waste generation rates, uncertainties related to Blue Box transition, including material types and eligibility (e.g., non-eligible sources), and the management of existing waste infrastructure.

In addition, throughout the first phase, feedback from Council members and the public was integral in refining the strategic direction to align with latest developments in waste management and future trends. This input helps to ensure that the Plan is forward-looking and responsive to community needs.

As a result of these foundational activities, mission and vision statements, guiding principles and goals were created, and later updated based on consultation with Council members. A mission statement describes core value and purpose. A vision statement is future-based and provides the big picture of what the Region wants to achieve. Waste Management Services is proposing the following mission and vision statements:

Mission

We provide fiscally responsible waste management and resource recovery services to meet the needs of the community and promote environmental sustainability.

Vision

Leading the way in sustainable and innovative waste management services, to support a thriving community for generations to come.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles provide a framework to inform decision making. The following guiding principles have been established:

1. **Customer Focused:** We design services to be accessible, convenient, and easy for the community to use.
2. **Financially Responsible:** We are committed to long term financial sustainability in delivering waste management solutions that benefit the community.
3. **Environmentally Considerate:** We value environmentally friendly solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our waste management practices.
4. **Future-Thinking:** We manage waste as a valuable resource through innovative practices and sustainable solutions.
5. **Innovative & Optimized:** We continuously explore new technologies and approaches to improve waste management processes and minimize environmental impact.
6. **Collaborative & Engaged:** We actively engage with our community, local organizations, and partners to foster collaborative efforts in waste reduction, resource recovery and regulatory compliance.
7. **Inclusive:** We embrace diversity and strive to serve all members of our community with respect and fairness.
8. **Adaptive:** We adjust our services as needs change and Niagara grows and evolves.
9. **Transparent:** We maintain open communication and actively engage with the community in waste management decision making.

Goals

Goals define the results to be achieved by the Plan. The following six (6) goals have been established:

1. **Optimize waste management resources and infrastructure:** Improve the efficiency of Niagara Region's waste management system and effectively utilize financial resources to deliver services.

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2. **Increase beneficial recovery of material from waste:** Develop programs and initiatives to divert materials away from Niagara landfills for beneficial recovery.
 3. **Increase beneficial reuse of materials:** Promote programs and initiatives that encourage the reuse of materials, reducing the amount entering the waste stream.
 4. **Increase participation in waste management programs:** Enhance community engagement through programs and initiatives that boost participation in waste management efforts.
 5. **Strive to be a zero-waste community:** Promote programs and initiatives to reduce waste generation, thereby requiring fewer resources for waste disposal.
 6. **Reduce the carbon footprint of Niagara Region's waste management system:** Implement programs and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the waste management system, including new/improved infrastructure, operational changes, and advocacy efforts.

Long List Options & Evaluation

A Long List of potential options (Appendix 2) to support accomplishment of the goals, and ultimately the vision, was developed. The Long List was then evaluated using a multi-step screening process (outlined in Appendix 1). The resulting Short List will be the focus of Phase Two engagement and detailed analysis.

The options can be categorized into three types:

- those the Region can implement independently, such as building and operating solid waste facilities;
- those that require partnerships with others such as LAMs or NGOs, like modifying multi-residential building design standards; and
- those that involve influencing other decision-makers such as the Province, through policy changes like advocating for provincial bans or expanding materials covered under extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs.

Next Steps and Timelines

Phase Two engagement on the Short List continues in September with two (2) virtual open houses and a public survey open until September 30, 2024. LAMs will also have the opportunity to provide written comments by November 1, 2024.

Below is a high-level overview of timelines for key project milestones:

Project Milestones	Timelines
Consultation Series One	Complete
Development of Vision, Goals and Guiding Principles; Long List of Innovative Recommendations	Complete
Consultation Phase Two	Q2-Q4 2024
Draft Plan Developed	Q4 2024/Q1 2025
Consultation Phase Three	Q1 2025
Final Plan Presented	Q2 2025

Staff will continue to report on project progress and interested stakeholders can access updates and other project documentation on the Plan's [project website](https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/waste-management-strategic-plan/) (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/waste-management-strategic-plan/>).

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Waste Management Strategic Plan Background Information and Long List Development Process

Appendix 2 Waste Management Strategic Plan Long List