

Memorandum

WMPSC-C 5-2026

Subject: Waste Management 2026 Workplan

Date: April 27, 2026

To: Waste Management Planning Steering Committee

From: Catherine Habermehl, Director, Waste Management Services

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Council with an overview of the Waste Management Services 2026 Workplan. The workplan outlines the priority initiatives proposed for 2026 and reflects the first year of implementation of the Niagara Region Waste Strategy, while also responding to operational risks, infrastructure needs, regulatory requirements, and emerging financial pressures facing the waste management system.

Background

Niagara Region is responsible for planning and delivering waste management services that protect public health, maximize diversion, ensure long-term disposal capacity and do so in a financially responsible manner. The proposed 2026 workplan is shaped by several key drivers, including increasing disposal and collection costs, changing legislation and market conditions, aging infrastructure, and the need to improve diversion performance and customer experience.

2026 Workplan Overview

The 2026 Workplan focuses on a balanced mix of strategy development, service optimization, financial planning, and infrastructure readiness. Projects have been grouped into five interconnected areas:

- **Waste Reduction and Diversion:** Advancing initiatives to reduce waste generation and improve diversion outcomes, including development of a food waste reduction and diversion strategy, improvements to waste management in public spaces and parks, and a coordinated approach to reducing illegal dumping.
- **Service Delivery and Policy Modernization:** Reviewing and modernizing service levels and planning tools, including a comprehensive review of drop-off depot

services and updated waste collection guidelines for new developments to ensure growth is supported by effective and accessible waste systems.

- **Collection Systems and Financial Responsibility:** Preparing for future collection contract procurement through optimization of service models and development of a funding strategy to mitigate anticipated cost increases.
- **Disposal Planning:** Advancing strategic planning including an assessment of short-term disposal options beyond 2031 and development of an excess soil management strategy.
- **Infrastructure, Asset, and Digital Enablement:** Maintaining and preparing critical waste management assets through targeted capital planning, facility upgrades and assessment of operations software and digital public education tools to improve data management, transparency, and customer access to information.

Key Considerations for Council

The 2026 workplan emphasizes planning and system design to avoid reactive and higher-cost decisions in future years. In addition, several initiatives respond directly to Council direction, emerging regulatory requirements, and known financial and operational risks. Work undertaken in 2026 will inform future budget requests, procurement decisions, and service changes.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Catherine Habermehl,
Director, Waste Management Services