

WASTE COLLECTIONS AUDIT

Recommendation

That the September 4, 2024, Office of the City Auditor report OCA02610, be received for information.

Report Purpose

Information only.

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of the Waste Collections audit.

REPORT

The Waste Services Branch in the City Operations Department provides waste management services, including curbside waste collection services for the City of Edmonton. Waste collection services are provided by City employees (internal) and contracted collectors (external).

In September 2019, Council approved the 25-year Waste Strategy to help the City keep more waste out of the landfill and maintain stable waste rates. Key initiatives under this strategy include the Source Separated Organics and Automated Curbside Cart Collection programs. These programs are aimed at better aligning the curbside collection of waste with its waste processing systems by reducing waste generation, promoting recycling and composting, and reducing landfill waste.

The objective of this audit was to determine if the Waste Services Branch is effectively managing its curbside collections program to support waste reduction and divert waste from the landfill.

Overall, the Office of the City Auditor (OCA) found that the Branch is effectively managing its curbside collections program. The Branch has implemented an effective performance management system for its curbside collection programs, aligning with its strategic goals and business plans. This system:

- Defines outcomes.
- Uses consistent key performance indicators derived from different data applications.
- Includes an informed education and outreach program based on feedback from various

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sources.

However, the OCA also found the Branch can improve the delivery of its curbside collections program and management of waste carts:

- There are data integrity issues with the application implemented to assist in managing the curbside collection program and verifying service delivery. These issues include incomplete and inaccurate non-collection data and a lack of data quality assurance processes. This affects the optimization of data and makes the data less useful for management decisions.
- Data quality in the service verification application depends on how collectors are inputting the data. The OCA found issues with data input accuracy, due to a lack of training and guidance documents for collectors. Specifically, the OCA found collectors have an inconsistent understanding of the definition of non-compliance of cart set out to the *Waste Services Bylaw*.
- The Branch lacks documented support for the current division of resources between internal and external service providers.
- Although billing is accurate and maintenance timely, the OCA found that the Branch lacks cart inventory management processes such as cart inventory validation and processes to review discrepancy in cart reports.

The OCA made the following recommendations to the Waste Services Branch :

1. Implement data assurance and control processes for its service verification application to improve data integrity for decision making and reporting.
2. Enhance training and guidance documents for collectors using the service verification application to improve the quality of the data available for management decisions.
3. Assess the division of internal and external service providers for collection services to determine if it continues to provide the best value for the City and residents.
4. Improve inventory management to provide more oversight over City cart assets.

Policy

Bylaw 16097, Audit Committee Bylaw, section 14(d) states that "Committee will review all reports from the City Auditor dealing with completed audit projects."

Attachment

1. Waste Collections Audit Report