What We Heard Report: Waste Reduction Roadmap

SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

April 2021

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What We Heard Report: Waste Reduction Roadmap

Executive Summary

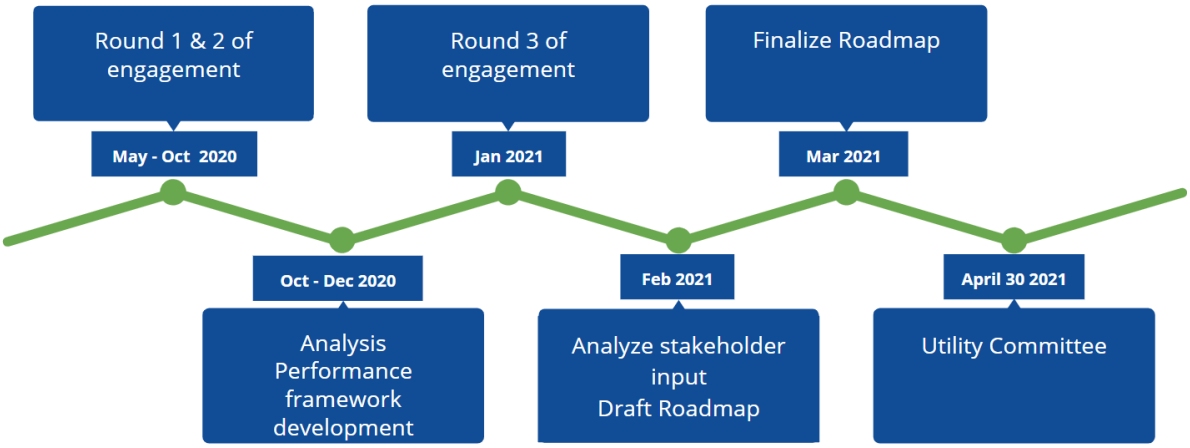
City Council approved Edmonton's **25-year Waste Strategy** in 2019. The strategy adopts a Zero Waste Framework which prioritizes activities to rethink, reduce and reuse. A Waste Reduction Roadmap was developed to identify key actions that will result in fewer materials from residential and non-residential sectors becoming part of the waste stream. Engagement was conducted to connect with the public and stakeholders to hear feedback on waste reduction priorities and steps to take to reduce waste in all sectors. Stakeholders participated in three rounds of engagement using different activities to advise, then refine draft policies.

Round One of engagement focused on **stakeholders** and involved the use of virtual/phone **interviews** to seek a better understanding of current waste reduction initiatives in Edmonton, and stakeholders' needs, barriers and desires. A total of 28 interviews were conducted with a diverse group of stakeholders representing non-profit organizations, government bodies and charitable food organizations. We heard that stakeholders thought it would be useful for the City to provide educational resources for the general public about waste reduction efforts such as repair/swap/exchange programs, best before dates and buying items second hand. Feedback also showed a desire for the City to build waste reduction knowledge by hosting sector-specific workshops on different waste streams (for example food waste and single-use items). In addition, there was a desire for the City to lead the development of waste reduction partnerships with organizations and encourage similar organizations to partner with each other.

Round Two of engagement included a **survey** to gather feedback from **stakeholders** and the **general public** on their current waste reduction behaviours and a list of potential waste reduction programs and services. The survey received 2,731 responses. A significant proportion of respondents believe their individual actions impact the environment and many respondents already take actions to reduce their waste. Participants mentioned the importance of addressing waste reduction in the non-residential sector (generally referred to as the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) sector by the waste industry) through enforcement, incentives and potential fines. Many participants also felt that waste reduction efforts have been hindered due to COVID-19 restrictions, and that single use items and littering are of ongoing concern. A high level of interest was expressed in the following potential waste reduction programs: drop off events for reusable items; neighbourhood yard waste drop offs, community-run events to swap or donate smaller household items, assistance setting up and maintaining a home composting system, and lending libraries for physical items, such as tools and toys.

Round Three of engagement involved a virtual **workshop** with **stakeholders** to share draft actions and the performance framework, and receive their feedback on how the actions and framework could be refined. Fifteen organizations took part in this workshop. There was general support from most stakeholders on the proposed actions, with some suggestions to modify the language to acknowledge that non-City organizations can play a large role in encouraging waste reduction initiatives and increasing innovation. In addition, participants felt that waste reduction activities should target communities who will be in Edmonton for the duration of the 25 year waste strategy. Stakeholders also provided suggestions to the performance framework, such as the adding of measures that address inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility, as well as re-framing certain outcomes to be more inclusive of initiatives developed by not-for-profit organizations, advocacy groups and non-governmental organizations.

Overall, citizens and stakeholders provided thoughtful suggestions for the City to increase waste reduction efforts. This feedback has contributed to the first Waste Reduction Roadmap which will be implemented over the next three years.



Introduction

Project Overview

In 2019, City Council approved Edmonton's **25-year Waste Strategy**, which charts a path forward for managing waste under a Zero Waste Framework.

Edmonton's 25- year Waste Strategy calls for the development and implementation of a waste reduction plan to identify programs and regulations that will result in fewer materials from all sectors (residential and non-residential) becoming part of the waste stream. Our long term goal is to increase waste reduction in support of the zero waste framework by emphasizing rethink, reduce and reuse activities. This requires a shift in mindset to consider waste as a resource.

In the commitment to deliver a waste reduction plan, a Waste Reduction Roadmap is currently in development and will be presented to the Utility Committee in April 2021. The Roadmap will establish desired outcomes and identify key actions to reduce the amount of waste generated in Edmonton over the next three years. The programs and regulations to reduce waste may include operational refinements, increased engagement and partnerships with the community, increased public education and steps to reduce the distribution and consumption of single use items. The Roadmap will also establish a realistic and achievable framework for measuring the impact of waste reduction efforts.

Public Engagement

Engagement was conducted to connect with the public and stakeholders to determine current waste reduction initiatives, priorities for the future and feedback on steps to take to reduce waste in the residential and non-residential sectors. The target audience of these engagements was diverse due to many stakeholder groups with differing concerns; broadly speaking, stakeholders included non-governmental organizations, organizations that serve vulnerable populations, non-residential generators, governments, private haulers and residents.

The engagement process on a single-use item bylaw was initially intended to start in Spring 2020. However, due to COVID-19 and public health guidelines, the engagement process was delayed. The delay meant that the focus of the engagement expanded to include the whole Waste Reduction Roadmap. Engagement tactics were adapted to take place online and over the phone.

Stakeholders participated in three rounds of engagement using different activities to advise, then refine draft policies. The input was used to develop, evaluate and refine the list of possible options that would be finalized for inclusion in the Roadmap.

Round One of engagement involved the use of virtual/phone **interviews** to seek a better understanding of stakeholders' current waste reduction initiatives and their needs, barriers and desires. This round of engagement falls on the **advise** level of the public engagement spectrum by encouraging stakeholders to share their feedback and perspectives.

Round Two of engagement included a **survey** to gather feedback from stakeholders and the general public on a list of potential waste reduction programs and services. This round of engagement falls on the **advise** level of the public engagement spectrum by encouraging the public to share their feedback and perspectives.

Round Three of engagement involved a virtual **workshop** to share draft actions and the performance framework with stakeholders, and receive their feedback on how we could adjust them. On the public engagement spectrum, this round of engagement fits into the **refine** process.

"Thank you for thinking about waste reduction!! It is important to remember our carbon footprint, even in the midst of a global pandemic. I appreciate your [engagement on] this topic. Very important! Thanks for all you do."

Chapter 1. Interviews – Round One

How We Collected Input

Interviews were used to better understand stakeholders' current activities, their desired future activities and outcomes, and the associated barriers. Information gathered contributed to the development of the draft actions for the Waste Reduction Roadmap. Interviews were conducted over the phone and online with 28 stakeholders and involved environmental advocacy groups, charitable service organizations, charitable food providers, non-residential generators, the Federal government and the Provincial government.

What We Heard

Stakeholders informed the City about their current work and described opportunities for future actions within the areas of education, outreach and engagement, advocacy and regulation, incentives, partnerships, research and planning. Participants additionally discussed barriers associated with future opportunities.

Education

Stakeholders discussed an interest in having the City provide information specific to each sector and material about steps that can be taken to reduce waste. This includes resources to educate on specific terms and items (e.g. best before dates versus use by dates, compostable versus biodegradable, and safety of reusables). Educational materials can additionally include information about making donations, repair/swap/exchange programs and buying second hand, as well as at home waste reduction activities such as grasscycling and home composting. Providing sample policy checklists to organizations can also increase their capacity. Stakeholders mentioned they would benefit from leveraging City social media channels to promote their reduction activities.

Outreach and Engagement

Stakeholders are looking for assistance from the City to identify gaps and opportunities for reuse and distribution systems, as well as to continue outreach at community events, schools and public facilities. Many stakeholders felt that the City could play a larger role in creating a waste reduction community of practice to share information and best practices and to help create connections between people working on waste reduction. Feedback also showed a desire for the City to build local waste reduction knowledge, and help increase adoption of waste reduction behaviours by hosting sector-specific workshops on food waste reduction and single-use items. These workshops could be targeted to organizations such as restaurants, grocery stores, and retail and commercial tenants.

Advocacy and Regulation

There was support from stakeholders for volume limits on garbage as a mechanism to encourage waste reduction. It was also clear that stakeholders would like the City to continue to advocate for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for goods and packaging, and in general, there was support for more use of bylaws to regulate certain waste streams (e.g. single-use items, food waste). Many stakeholders thought the City could lead by example by applying rescue and redistribution mechanisms to its own purchasing policies for food and textiles.

Incentives

Many stakeholders expressed the need for grants that encourage stream-specific reduction initiatives, start ups and/or projects, particularly for durable goods, electronics and textiles. Some stakeholders suggested the City could also support the development of a repair and swap economy by providing facilities for organizations to host repair, exchange, reuse, share, rent, borrow events, and provide grants to encourage businesses to fix and/or refurbish donated items instead of disposing them.

Partnerships

There was a desire for the City to lead the development of waste reduction partnerships with organizations that can help repurpose materials the City currently collects at their facilities (e.g. working electronics collected at Eco Stations), and generates in its own operations (e.g. reusable construction and renovation materials). Stakeholders also see value in having the City facilitate introductions between organizations, and for the City to promote the services of waste reduction organizations. Many stakeholders suggested the City should also support the expansion of borrowing, repair and refurbishment communities, and supported the notion of developing libraries for durable goods (e.g. tool library).

Research/Planning

Stakeholders mentioned a need for the City to focus on education about waste reduction, and consider net weight reductions as a means of measuring progress. Measurement is a real challenge due to inconsistencies between industries and streams. Stakeholders asked the City to consider using accessibility and customer satisfaction to measure progress.

Barriers

Stakeholders provided a long list of direct actions the City could take to help address their current barriers. At the same time, many stakeholders also identified current barriers that make it challenging to pursue waste reduction initiatives or programs with comprehensive reduction outcomes. The most frequently discussed barriers included:

- Lack of regulation and consistency between jurisdictions
- Financial and staff resource constraints
- Inconsistent messaging and lack of clear public understanding of stream-specific terms and definitions

Chapter 2. Survey – Round Two

How We Collected Input

Waste Services conducted an online survey to gather input from stakeholders and the general public on potential actions to include in the Waste Reduction Roadmap. The survey focused on actions that could have direct impacts on the daily lives of residents and businesses. Survey questions gauged current beliefs and behaviours, public awareness of existing programs, past participation in existing waste reduction programs, and respondents' willingness to participate in potential new programs. The survey included several open ended questions. Some of the open ended questions were specific to a stream; one general open ended question at the end of the survey encouraged respondents to share their thoughts on waste reduction in general.

Responses were solicited through the City's Insight Community, through waste reduction stakeholders and their networks, and social media. Over 2,700 residents completed the survey; 83% of responses came from the Insight Community, with social media-driven responses contributing 11% and stakeholders and their networks contributing 6%. The results of the survey informed the options analysis used to select draft actions for the Waste Reduction Roadmap.

What We Heard

A significant proportion of respondents believe their individual actions impact the environment and that recycling is important to them. There is existing uptake of actions that reduce waste; for example, over half of survey respondents already use items as much as possible before throwing them out and just under half of respondents go bagless by leaving grass clippings on their lawn after mowing. Most respondents are committed to making lifestyle changes that positively impact the environment, although convenience is still a factor when it comes to buying behaviours and habits.

"I take leaves from my neighbours and put them in my compost and till them into my garden. [I also] mow my leaves into my lawn and go bagless."

Current Behaviours – Responses by Stream

Yard Waste

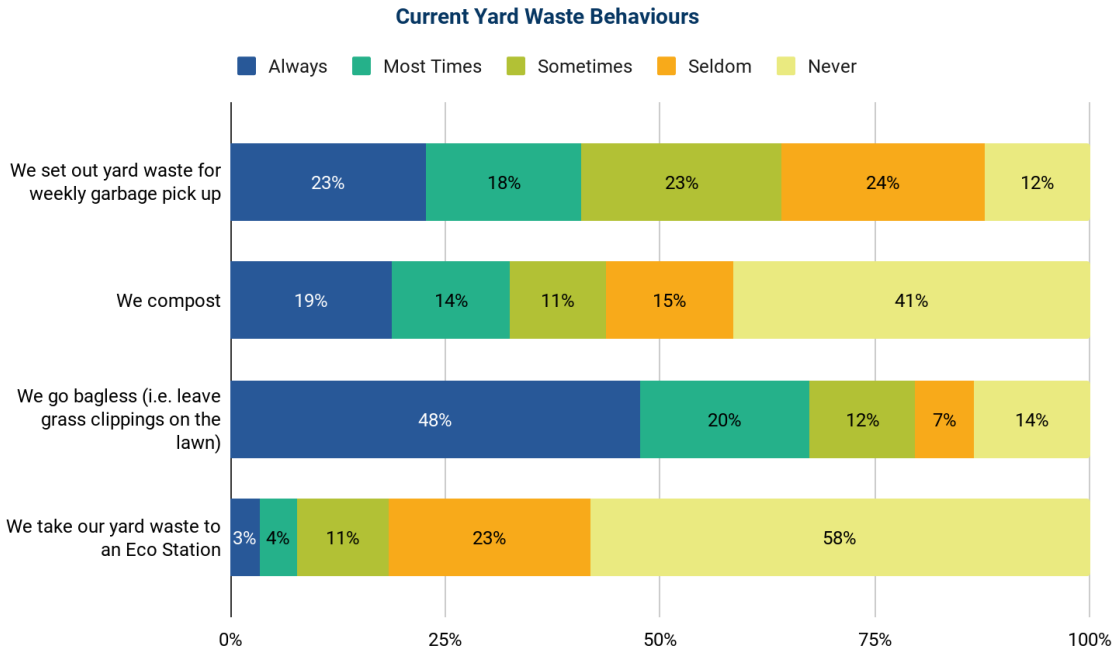
A significant proportion of respondents go bagless when mowing their lawn. However, this survey did not ask people why or when they started going bagless to verify resident's reasons for this (for example, if this was due to the City of Edmonton's social marketing campaigns).

Waste reduction stakeholders tend to compost or leave yard waste on the lawn, and seldom put it into the garbage or take it to an Eco Station. They also have a use for finished compost. In contrast, respondents from the Insight Community and social media tend to never compost their yard waste, nor do they have the right equipment even if they have space and know how to compost. There was also low appetite among these groups for a new program to provide discounted home composting equipment.

The majority of respondents place yard waste in the garbage at least sometimes and do not compost at home. Many respondents do not take yard waste to an Eco Station. Some respondents did not realize they could take yard waste to an Eco Station for free. These results suggest that the yard waste drop off program at Eco Stations is underutilized.

In the open ended responses, many residents spoke about reusing yard waste within their own yards through mulching, composting, or taking a mixed approach of burning branches, mulching and composting, to reuse as much yard waste as possible without bagging. Some residents similarly mentioned giving leaves to avid composters in their neighbourhoods. There is also considerable appetite for alternate, neighbourhood-based yard waste drop off facilities.

While waste reduction stakeholders were mostly aware of existing programs that support home composting, a majority of other respondents were not. There is also very low awareness of the discounted composting units available for purchase through the City.

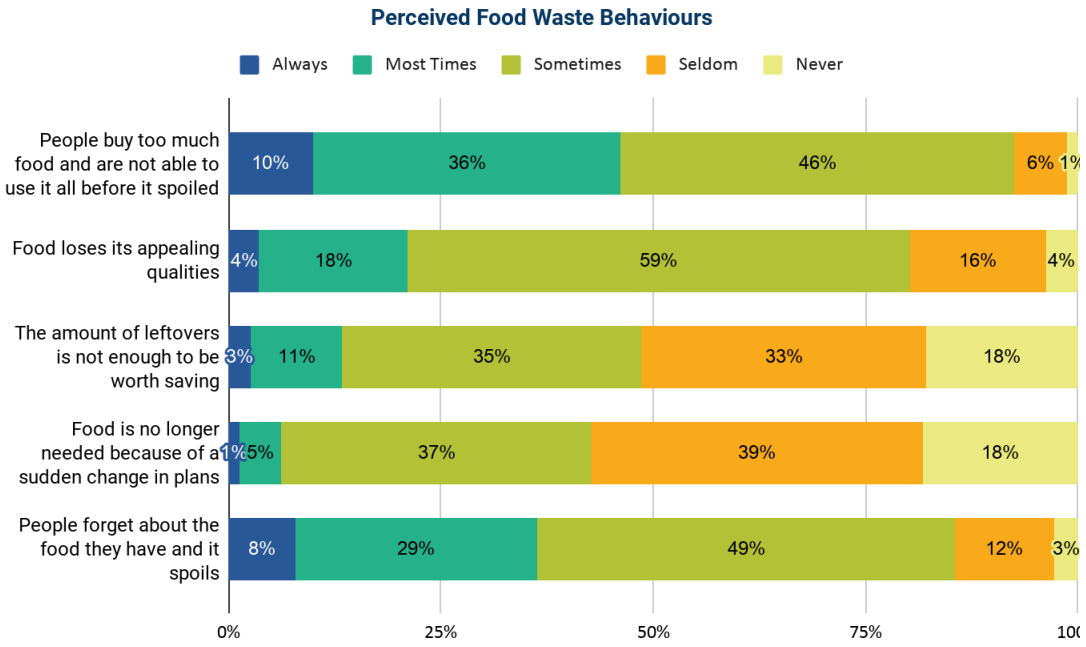


Food Waste

These questions focused on understanding Edmontonians' food waste practices. However, the framing of the questions on food waste made it difficult for respondents to answer. Many people were not comfortable providing an opinion about what other people do (thus often chose a neutral answer – see below). Some respondents also elaborated on their food waste practices in one of the open ended questions.

When asked to rate their perceptions about how food is wasted in Edmonton, most survey respondents opted for a neutral answer (i.e. sometimes) to questions. This may be a reflection of people's discomfort with how the question was worded. It may also suggest that people think that their fellow residents are "middle of the road" in terms of food waste reduction. This also indicates that there is room for improvement and suggests food waste could be a priority waste stream to address as part of waste reduction programs.

Some residents already take advantage of shared composting sites, and residents who grow extra produce sometimes share it with others, including donating to groups. For example, two participants stated: **"I harvest fruit and donate to [the] Food Bank or neighbours as much as possible." and "I take my compost to a volunteer farm in summer and the food bank in winter despite living in a 2 bedroom unit in a tower."**



Textiles

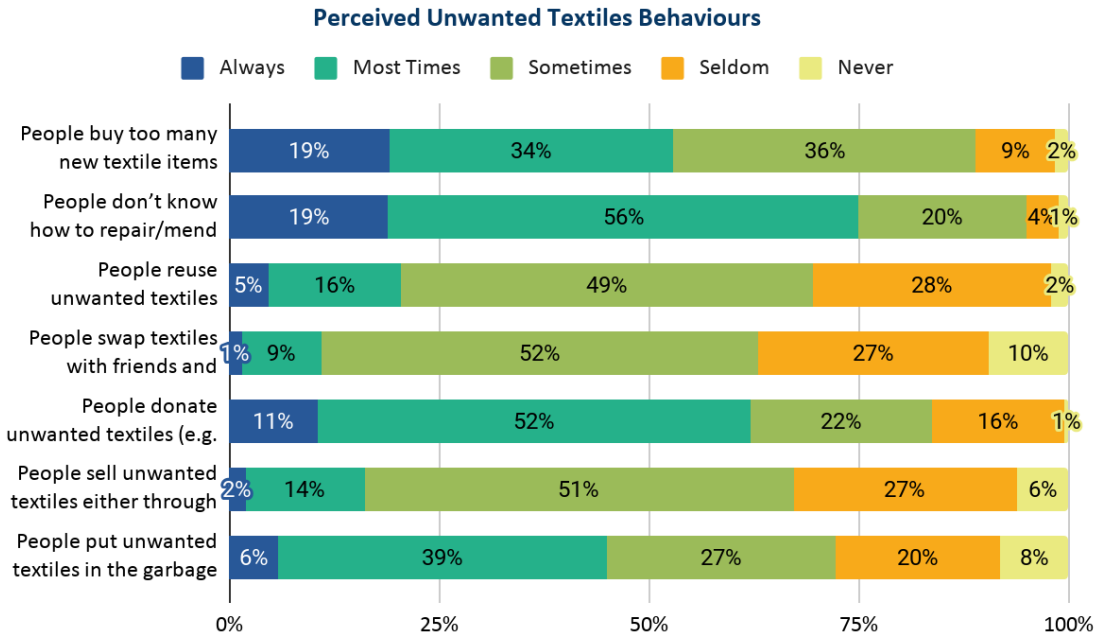
Textiles (e.g. clothing, sheets, towels) were also discussed in the survey. However, the framing of these questions made it difficult for respondents to answer. Participants mentioned there was no way to know what other people generally do; some participants answered the question based on their own habits and experiences.

When asked to rate their perceptions about unwanted textiles in Edmonton, most survey respondents opted for a neutral answer – sometimes. This may be a reflection of people's discomfort with how the question was worded. It may also suggest that people think their fellow residents are in the middle in terms of textile waste reduction. This also indicates that there is room for improvement and suggests textile waste could be another priority waste stream to address as part of waste reduction programs.

In terms of the factors that contribute to people having unwanted textiles, 56% of respondents answered that most times, people do not know how to repair their textiles. This lack of knowledge was a bigger contributor than people buying too many textiles. That being said, some participants felt that buying too many clothes was still an issue, and left comments such as: **"Realistically the problem is on acquisition, not reuse. Buying fewer quality items (and less complicated/mixed) less often is the most important intervention. I buy the majority of my clothes 2nd hand now so feel less guilty if they are turned into rags or disposed of past the point of wearability."**

In terms of managing unwanted textiles, the most common solution was donating unwanted textiles, including to thrift stores, animal shelters or community groups (85% donate their textiles at least sometimes), followed by disposal in the garbage (over 40% most or all of the time). Reflecting the prevalence of donating unwanted textiles, most respondents indicated that they know where donation bins are located and that the bins are maintained and in good condition. It is worth noting that there are a segment of respondents that do not completely know what is accepted in donation bins.

Many participants felt that textiles can be reused for different functions or to make different items, including rags, quilts, masks, or crafts. Some respondents felt that there are not enough options for reusing or recycling textiles, and want more information about potential options. They would also like the City of Edmonton to provide better options for recycling fabrics and teaching others how to fix their clothing. For example, one participant stated: **"It would be great to have fix–it workshops so people can learn how to repair, mend or upcycle their own clothing."**



I personally do all [of the actions]: fixing, reusing as rags, giving to friends, exchanging with friends and donating, so I don't waste textiles. I also don't buy unnecessary stuff, try to stay minimalistic.

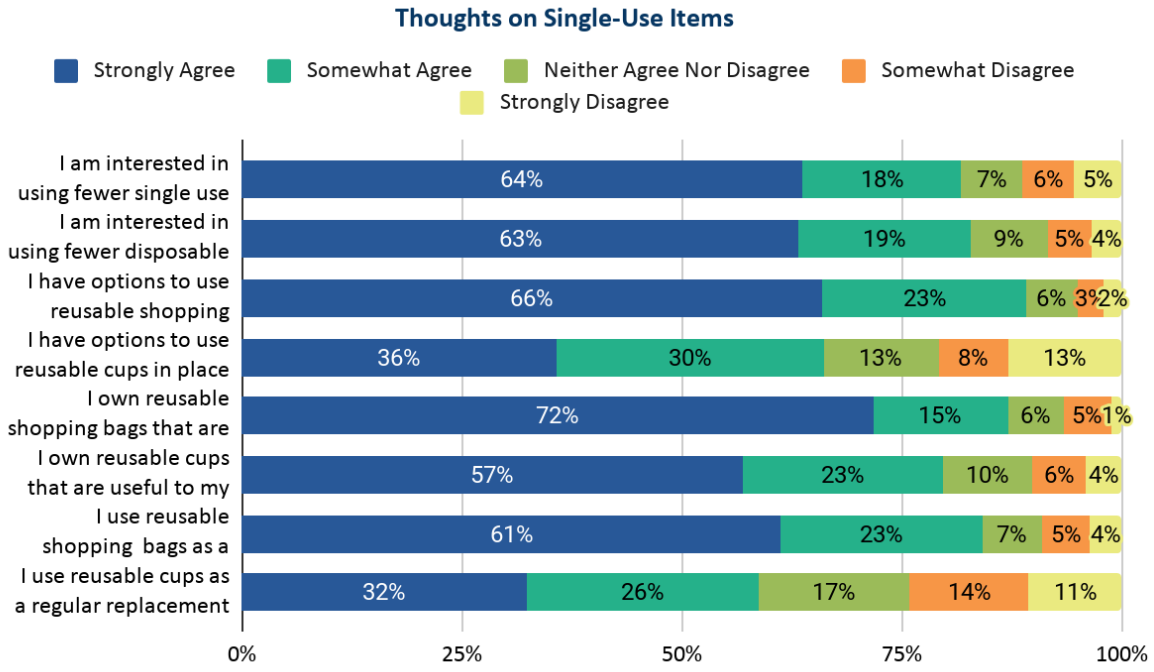
Single-use Items

Respondents also discussed their behaviours, concerns and suggestions regarding single-use, or non-reusable items.

A majority of respondents are interested in using fewer single-use items including shopping bags and disposable cups. Many respondents already own and use reusable alternatives, although more people use reusable shopping bags than reusable cups as a regular replacement. A third of respondents feel they always have options to use reusable cups in place of disposable cups. This may be a result of businesses' reluctance to accept reusable cups due to the pandemic.

When surveyed on their awareness level of the City's reusable dish program "Hello, Let's Eat," 83% of respondents were not aware of the program.

Many respondents want a better response and legislation to reduce product packaging, plastic waste containers for food, as well as other single use plastics and items. For example, one participant stated, **"We need guidelines to limit/reduce the use of plastics [for] prepackaged food items, example single fruits wrapped in plastic or groups of fruits wrapped in plastic that could otherwise be left in bins to be picked by consumers. Excessive product packaging."**



Durable Goods

Durable goods include houseware such as lamps, furniture, kitchen supplies, tools and decor. Respondents are very interested in having access to drop off events specifically for reusable items that would be gathered by agencies that can use them. While not a priority for all survey respondents, waste reduction stakeholders thought it was important to promote lending and borrowing of durable goods, through programs such as neighborhood lending libraries. One participant stated: **"I like the idea of the sharing economy and they seem ideal for fol[ks] living in high density buildings/areas. It would be neat if the city could provide resources on creating hyperlocal lending libraries."** Similarly, another participant suggested that the City could provide more opportunities for repairing items by **"provid[ing] facilities for retirees to volunteer to repair items to be given to charities or sold."**

Out of all survey respondents, 60% were not aware of the grant program for Reuse Fairs, which have historically been organized by community groups to collect reusable items for charities.

In addition, many respondents suggested buying products that are well made and worth repairing rather than replacing. By buying better quality, articles last longer and therefore people can buy less.

Electronics

Residents would like more central places to drop off electronics. This includes drop offs in condo buildings, within neighbourhoods, or at public facilities such as libraries or recreation centres around the city. Some participants also think there are opportunities for community groups or businesses to refurbish computer and electronic materials so they can be reused. One participant mentioned that: **"Some cities have charities or city resources staffed by mostly volunteers that refurbish computer and electronics waste that's then resold at a reduced price... A place like this serves a dual purpose: it helps recycle e-waste and it provides lower cost computer and electronics resources for low income folks."**

Construction and Demolition Waste

Some respondents felt that specific waste should be reduced including construction waste. They expressed an interest in more opportunities to recycle or share building materials from construction, demolition or even home construction remodeling projects. Some respondents also suggested having more de-construction instead of demolition in order to recycle and reuse materials. For example, one participant felt that **"the C&D sector should focus on unbuilding properties instead of demo. Useful resources are being completely destroyed by the current model."** Similarly another participant felt that it was important to **"encourage commercial and residential DE-CONSTRUCTION whenever possible (with drop off areas) instead of demolition."**

Interest in Potential Future Programs

Overall, the three programs that were most frequently selected by respondents to use in their neighbourhood (for free) were: 1) drop off events for reusable items that agencies could use; 2) yard waste drop offs in neighbourhoods for neighbourhood composting or for centralized pick up from the City; 3) reuse fairs, where smaller household items can be swapped between participants or donated to charities, schools, or other agencies at one-day community-run events. These three programs reflect the top choices from the Insight Community, due to the large number of responses from that group, with general support from the other groups of respondents. Please see the chart below for the total most preferred actions to include in the first Waste Reduction Roadmap.

In addition to the above programs, waste reduction stakeholders and respondents recruited through social media said they would also like to have help to set up and maintain a home composting system (for example, City staff could provide personalized assistance remotely or expanded hours of operations at Compost S'cool). The group of respondents from **edmonton.ca/surveys** additionally wanted discounted composting units. This was the only group that ranked this option in their top three choices.

Over 40% of waste reduction stakeholders indicated that they would also be very likely to use the following:

+ City-hosted repair events or fix-it fairs for small household items
+ Access to discounted home composting units to reduce barriers to home composting
+ Lending libraries for physical items.

"Sounds like a good idea to have a reuse event which coincides with a 'big bin' garbage event. People could gather reusables for these events instead of directly throwing them out."

Most preferred actions to include in the first Roadmap	Order of preference by group			
	Insight N=2264	Social Media N=269	WR Stakeholders N=175	Edmonton.ca/ survey N=23
Drop off events specifically for reusable items that would be gathered for agencies that can use them	1. (62%)	1. (58%)		1. (61%)
Opportunities to drop off yard waste in your neighbourhood (yard waste could be composted there by volunteers or taken to a central city-run location)	2. (53%)	2. (49%)	1. (44%)	1. (61%)
Reuse Fairs: one-day community-run events where smaller household items can be swapped between participants or donated to charities, schools, or other agencies	3. (45%)	4. (36%)	3. (39%)	3. (43%)
Help to set up and maintain a home composting system (E.g. City staff provide personalized assistance remotely, expanded hours of operations at Compost S'cool)	4. (33%)	3. (39%)	2. (43%)	
Lending libraries for physical items (eg. tools and toys) to foster the sharing economy	4. (33%)		2. (43%)	
Access to discounted home composting units to reduce barriers to home composting (Note: likely in select locations across the city, not every neighbourhood)				2. (48%)

Survey respondents also discussed a need for more municipal involvement, including picking up food scraps and yard waste alongside recycling and garbage from homes and businesses, fixing waste systems to include a more advanced recycling facility and a new composting facility, and being more transparent about city waste management. Participants mentioned the importance of focusing on non-residential waste through enforcement, incentives and potential fines. This includes food waste in grocery stores and food services that should be reduced. Many participants also felt that waste reduction efforts have been hindered due to COVID-19 restrictions, and that single-use items and littering are of concern.

In addition to general waste reduction comments, respondents had specific perspectives and suggestions for managing specific waste streams both inside and outside of their homes, including yard waste, food waste, textiles, single-use items, durable goods, electronics, and construction and demolition waste.

Chapter 3: Workshops – Round Three

How We Collected Input

The purpose of round three of engagement was to obtain feedback on the draft Roadmap actions and performance framework from stakeholders. Stakeholders were invited to a virtual workshop, which guided participants through:

- How stakeholder input from round one and two was used in the process
- Overview of the selection process for draft actions
- Draft actions for the Roadmap
- Overview of the draft performance framework

We wanted to know how the proposed actions might support each stakeholder's work, and if there were ways to adjust the actions to support their organization better. We additionally asked if there were other actions that should be included in the first Roadmap to better support organizational priorities.

All invitees were sent pre-reading on the proposed actions, and invited to use a virtual white board to provide responses to specific questions about the proposed actions. The whiteboards were also used during the workshop. A total of 15 stakeholders attended the workshop.

What We Heard

Stakeholders in round three discussed specific actions within the categories of rethink, reduce and reuse. Other comments and suggestions were discussed in regards to policy, advocacy, implementation and the performance framework. There was general support from most stakeholders on the proposed actions, with some suggestions to modify the language to give other organizations a larger role in encouraging waste reduction initiatives and increasing innovation.

Rethink

Many stakeholders think that establishing a waste reduction working group to identify priority actions for the non-residential sector and support their implementation is a critical action, as this sector, which is a primary generator of waste, is often ignored. A working group can be useful to discuss opportunities between organizations and for specific waste streams. Stakeholders think the working group should match the diversity of the non-residential sector, as diverse voices are needed to match the broad focuses and needs in the sector. The working group can also be a way to work towards harmonizing solutions, actions and policies with other municipalities, the province and the federal government. Stakeholders also realize that a working group provides an opportunity to discuss policy restructuring on a systematic level to focus on relocalization. Since the non-residential sector manages its own waste, stakeholders stated that education on how to manage their different waste is also important.

Stakeholders supported the action to offer more waste reduction programming to Edmonton residents, and wondered if the terms "facilitate" and "encourage," rather than "offer" might be better word choices to promote collaboration between other organizations and leverage programs that aren't conducted by the City. By increasing collaboration with other organizations, stakeholders wondered if there might be space or funding for non-governmental organizations (NGO) to deliver programming that align with City goals. Stakeholders also suggested that their waste reduction programs could be promoted using City communication channels.

There was a high level of interest for the City providing City-approved content for NGOs to deliver waste reduction messaging and programming. Stakeholders stated that any content sharing would be a tangible step towards combined efforts to work together towards a zero waste future. Other stakeholders felt that the City shouldn't just provide content, but also "directional advice to NGOs about how they could best work together with the City." We heard that it is important for the City to be clearer with NGOs regarding the direction the City is going and what they need from NGOs so NGOs can align efforts.

We also heard that it is important for the City to keep advocating for EPR legislation, however stakeholders stated that it is important to make sure the outcomes of EPR legislation include reduction as a target focus. One stakeholder, for example, said: "we need to ensure the policy is set up right to ensure reduction is part of the goals." Stakeholders felt that EPR is important but not the only or best solution. Source reduction needs to remain a priority, for example, "if people feel that EPR and recycling solves everything, then they are less motivated to take steps to reduce in the first place." Stakeholders suggested that the City of Edmonton should continue to advocate for EPR to meet its needs, while continuing to work with Calgary and other municipalities in advocating for the right EPR that can meet the needs of similar municipalities. One stakeholder stated that "it's important for Edmonton and Calgary to minimize any gaps between them...there should be collaboration." We also heard that beyond EPR, the City should continue to advocate to the province for landfill disposal bans. There was agreement that future iterations of the Waste Reduction Roadmap could include a focus on this type of advocacy and policy development.

Reduce

Similarly to approved content for nonprofits, stakeholders mentioned that it would be beneficial for the City to share consistent content and messaging, especially for charity organizations that accept previously used goods. Stakeholders would like to see more awareness and education on zero waste activities that focus on rethink/reduce/reuse without imposing more work on the City or its partners.

In regards to the action of developing a single use item (SUI) reduction strategy and bylaw, there was shared consensus that the focus of the strategy and bylaw should be on retailers, as they generate a larger volume than individuals. Some stakeholders felt that this might not be feasible within the 3 year timeframe of the first Roadmap and could be considered for future Roadmaps. The importance of working with other municipalities on this topic was also stressed. One participant stated: "the more consistent we can be, the more powerful the results will be." Consistency with the Edmonton

Metropolitan Region, is also important to stakeholders from an operational standpoint so implementation and enforcement is consistent. Stakeholders would also like the City to be well informed about all discussions and initiatives happening in industry and throughout government, and international best practices to look for ideas, collaboration opportunities and be able to leverage the work being done in different areas, organizations and governments. Since the Federal plan is more concerned with plastic than other single-use items, the City bylaw can restrict (using fees, for example) single-use items that the federal government is not addressing (e.g. coffee cups, "compostable" plastics).

While stakeholders were supportive of the action to pilot a grant or rebate program for single-use item reduction, they highlighted concerns about what kinds of organizations could apply for grant and rebate programs. In one of the breakout groups, there was high support for grants (as they can help increase innovation), especially if they can be accessible to organizations not registered as a charity. There was less support for rebates as they can give some organizations an advantage over others. This action may be most beneficial to local or small businesses that can adapt easily because of their smaller scale operations.

Stakeholders suggest that while single-use item reduction is a good start, the City should consider a more inclusive range of target materials to reduce in City operations (eg. surplus office furniture). We heard that if the City is implementing the use of more reusables, the City should consider supporting local businesses as much as possible. In addition, the City can support a reduction in single-use item by providing infrastructure such as permanent water refill stations and dishwashing facilities in its event spaces. The City can also require businesses and/or events to have water refill stations and dishwashing facilities to encourage the use of reusable dishes.

Reuse

Working with internal and external partners to establish reuse opportunities, including at bin events, was of interest to stakeholders. However, they emphasized the importance of clear criteria, stringent permits and program guidelines for any potential partners so that roles, responsibilities and expectations of both the City and its partners are explicit. Stakeholders offered creative ways to reuse durable goods and suggested a durable good hierarchy, where first priority is given to items that can be redistributed, then upcycled, and then repurposed, for example, within the arts community. Stakeholders additionally encouraged collaboration with non-profit and charity organizations to develop, assist and run big bin events. The City could also develop resources, and potentially conduct workshops, to help organizations develop and run their own big bin events.

We heard that there was an appetite for organizations to be spotlighted in a directory for residential and non-residential sectors. However, some stakeholders think it might be problematic to have for-profit retailers alongside charitable organizations within a directory. To manage this, stakeholders proposed a solution to have a clear vetting process that prioritizes charitable organizations who redistribute materials within the local community first.

There was consensus among stakeholders to expand the scope of the Reuse Fair Grant program to include other waste reduction activities. Stakeholders felt that this action would provide more opportunities for the development of community events such as repair cafes, upcycling workshops and fix-it fairs.

Policy and Advocacy

We heard from stakeholders that developing new policies and advocacy opportunities would additionally align with efforts to reduce waste. For example, participants suggested that the City should consider a policy that bans the disposal of, or increases disposal fees for certain materials. Stakeholders acknowledged the challenge of this when a municipality does not control local disposal sites. Disposal bans could be a policy instrument that municipalities continue to advocate to the provincial government for.

Stakeholders also indicated that municipalities would benefit from making waste policies consistent across the Edmonton Metropolitan Region and across sectors. If expectations of people at home and at work are consistent, regardless of where they live in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, people will know what they are supposed to do. In addition, some stakeholders that operate over multiple jurisdictions find it challenging that programs and requirements aren't standardized. This can be challenging for education and operations. Stakeholders would like to see the City develop relationships with the ICI sector so that two-way reporting can happen and data is more transparent across sectors.

We also heard that the reduction strategy for plastics should extend beyond single-use items to include plastics associated with durable goods (e.g. clothing hangers). Some stakeholders would like to see bylaws and strategies developed for other material streams such as food waste and textiles to encourage the City to expand beyond SUI.

Stakeholders additionally think that there should be more consideration for COVID-19 and reusable items. Messaging should be clear and consistent to organizations and citizens about how to reuse items and where to go to drop off or pick up/purchase reusable materials.

Implementation Ideas

There were many implementation ideas posed by stakeholders to increase waste reduction efforts in the city. For example, participants felt that waste reduction activities should target communities who will be in Edmonton for the duration of the 25-year Waste Strategy. Thus, it is important to reach younger audiences and leverage social media platforms that resonate with users, along with tactics that appeal to those audiences. Partnering with local start-ups and gaming companies to reach younger audiences would also be beneficial. Waste reduction and overall sustainability should be made relevant for many audiences so that citizens will be interested in buying into a call to action. Stakeholders also think that education and communication, supported by a sizable budget will make a big difference in the success of waste reduction efforts in this roadmap.

Stakeholders noted the benefit of the City conducting regular waste composition studies. The data generated from studies could be used to identify priority opportunities for waste reduction (such as materials that are high volume and high density).

Feedback on performance framework

We also wanted stakeholder feedback on the performance framework and shared a diagram that displayed the connection between actions, outcomes and the overall goals, asking if the relationships between the actions, outcome and overall goal made sense to them.

Stakeholders suggested adding measures that address inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility, as well as re-framing certain outcomes to be more inclusive of initiatives developed by not-for-profit organizations, advocacy groups and non-governmental organizations. We also heard, when measuring outcomes, that there should be a mix of measuring what we are doing and how well we are doing it (it's not just about doing 10 presentations, but also about meaningfulness to citizens and helping to promote behaviour change). It was acknowledged that this is often harder to measure.

Feedback on next steps

Lastly, we asked stakeholders how they would like to see the results of the Roadmap to be communicated moving forward. Stakeholders said they would like the City to maintain email and direct communication for project updates. One suggestion was to use storytelling, as it can help normalize behaviour and build momentum. This includes sharing stories about the actions, programs and projects that are being taken or conducted by citizens, community groups and organizations to build momentum. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of building relationships with organizations and working with them to communicate with their members. Working with these organizations would be beneficial to increase knowledge of waste reduction efforts throughout the City.

What Happens Next?

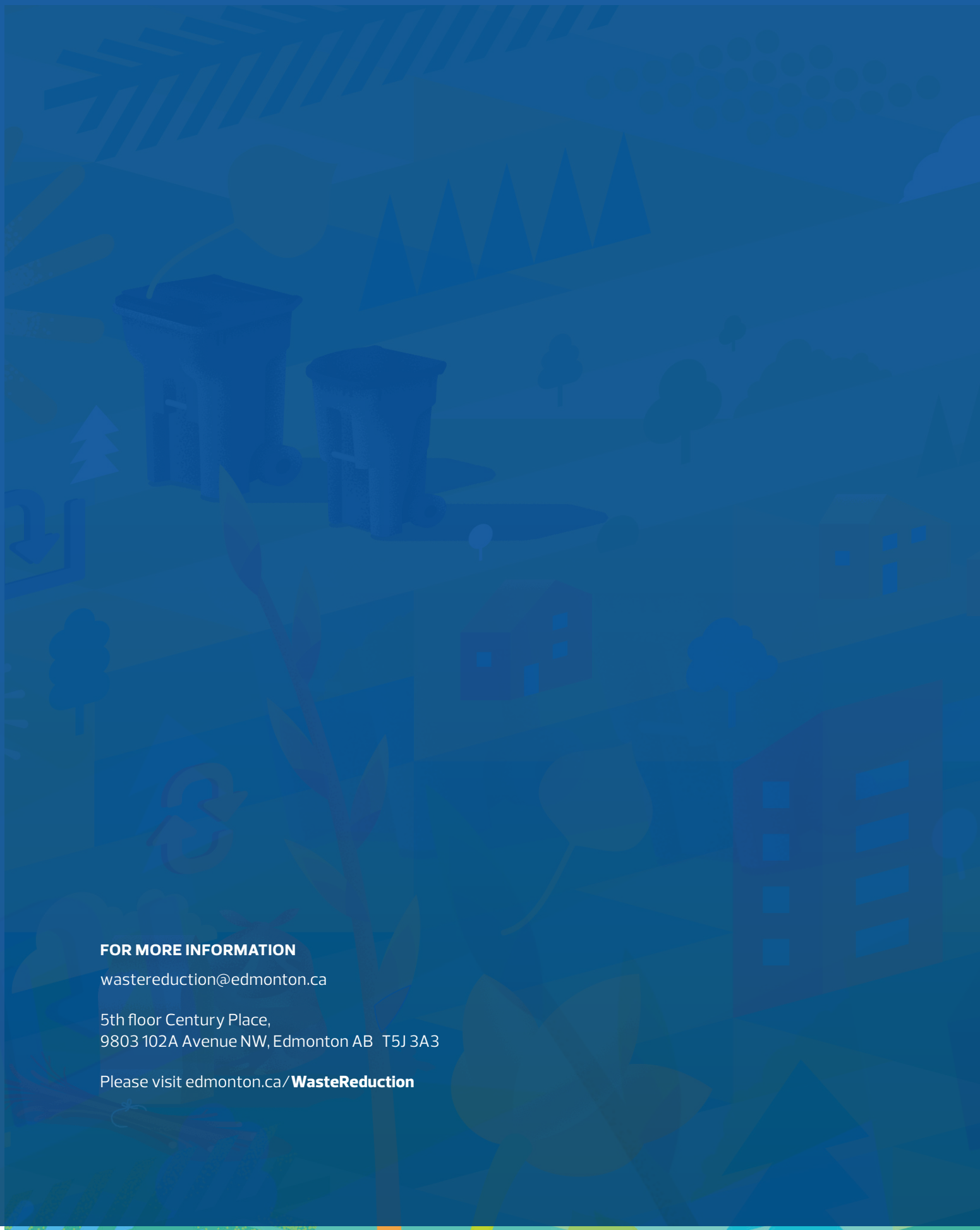
Feedback from the general public and stakeholders has contributed to the development and completion of the first Waste Reduction Roadmap. The Roadmap reflects the thoughtful and passionate concerns and suggestions from citizens and stakeholders for the City to take aggressive actions to reduce waste. After the Roadmap is approved, it will be implemented over the next three years. Additional actions may be identified by a non-residential sector working group that will be formed in the first year.

In the third year (2024), more engagement will be planned to support the development of the next Waste Reduction Roadmap.

How to Stay Informed

To find information about the Waste Reduction Roadmap, actions underway and how to get involved, please find information on **edmonton.ca/WasteReduction**.

A public newsletter has also been created for citizens that are interested in learning more about waste reduction and the implementation of the Roadmap. Over 1,000 residents signed up during the waste reduction survey in round two of engagement, and sign up remains open on **edmonton.ca/WasteReduction**.



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