

Commercial Waste Engagement



In 2020, Strathcona County developed a 10-year Roadmap, which identifies the importance of community-wide responsibility for waste management. As part of the process we heard that the commercial sector needs to play a bigger role in waste management.

From January to May 2025, multiple parties from the commercial sector were invited to provide their feedback through in-person engagement sessions, an online survey, and interviews. We engaged with all players across the system including commercial businesses, property managers, haulers and local processors.

What we heard

From businesses and property managers:

- All businesses should participate in a commercial waste program, with diversion methods tailored to their specific waste needs.
- Education and resources are needed to assist businesses in overcoming barriers with starting waste diversion.
- Flexibility to adjust bin size and collection frequency would help support waste diversion and reduce costs.
- Cost is the primary factor when selecting a hauler.
- While businesses see public recognition as key to participation, property managers suggest exploring alternative incentives. Incentives that reduce costs and promote diversion should be explored.
- The program rollout should align regionally with other municipalities.
- Less than a year is needed for these changes.
- Future program should include measures to ensure compliance and accountability.
- Regulation will be necessary to ensure equity, consistency, and mandatory participation across the ICI sector.

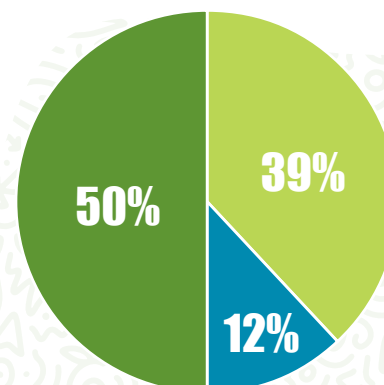
What is most important when choosing a Waste Hauler?

- 1 Cost
- 2 Quality of service
- 3 Flexibility and options
- 4 Administrative efficiency

What type of recognition would encourage businesses to become early adopters?

- 1 Storefront Window Displays
- 2 Mentions in local newspaper
- 3 Display in public area
- 4 Mentions on County Website

What level of control does your business have for managing waste?



What is holding them back from starting waste diversion programs?

- Lack of desire or understanding around waste diversion.
- Cost of adding additional stream(s).
- Lack of control over waste management on site.

[Any future program should be] one where businesses are expected to work within our community's values
– survey respondent

- we have full control of managing our waste
- a centralized head or corporate office controls our waste
- property management provides waste services to the site and we manage waste within our own space

Recycling should be mandatory, and all businesses and residents should be treated equitably. No need for incentives, we need results.

– survey respondent



What we heard

From processors:

- All processors indicated that there is capacity in the region to accept more organic materials should the commercial sector start proper waste diversion.
- If the County was able to secure organics processing it would allow them security around expanding capacity and would also provide economies of scale for businesses in the County.

From haulers:

- The main barriers haulers face with offering diversion options to the commercial sector was limited space and inefficient routes due to low density of organics collection in the commercial sector.
- Support the possibility of the County setting service parameters to help ensure program success.
- Support the possibility of limiting number of haulers to improve route efficiency, increasing customer density, and reduce customer pricing.
- Support the idea of the County securing organic processing to prevent large price fluctuations.

The program must be cost effective and simple to follow to make it work.

– survey respondent

Future waste program

Overall, businesses believe future programs should be accessible, flexible, cost-effective, and transparent.

Themes:

- **Program Similarity:** The commercial waste program should look similar to the current residential program and be regionally aligned.
- **Mandatory and Equitable:** Regulation will be necessary to ensure equity, consistency, and mandatory participation across the ICI sector.
- **Flexibility & Fair Rates:** Commercial program should offer flexible scheduling, fair pricing, and reasonable contract terms.
- **Simple & Transparent:** The program should be simple, clear, and cost-effective, with a transparent process showing end result of waste diversion.
- **Community & Environmental Responsibility:** Waste programs should align with community values.

What's next?

These engagement sessions, survey responses and interviews will be used in shaping future commercial waste programs.

*For more information visit:
strathcona.ca/WasteRoadmap*

