

Subject: Solid Waste Services Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy

File Number: ACS2025-PWD-SWS-0006

Report to Environment and Climate Change Committee on 16 September 2025

and Council 24 September 2025

Submitted on September 5, 2025 by Alain Gonthier, General Manager, Public Works Department

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Ward: Citywide

Objet : Stratégie de collecte et de réacheminement des déchets dans les parcs

Numéro de dossier : ACS2025-PWD-SWS-0006

Rapport présenté au Comité de l'environnement du changement climatique

Rapport soumis le 16 septembre 2025

et au Conseil le 24 septembre 2025

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Quartier : À l'échelle de la ville

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Environment and Climate Change Committee recommend that Council:

1. Approve the Solid Waste Services Parks Waste Collection & Diversion Strategy and high-level implementation plan as outlined within this report; and

2. Delegate authority to the Director, Solid Waste Services to further evaluate and determine waste collection service level requirements, on a park-by-park basis, for any parks either not classified or that do not meet the criteria for waste diversion services as outlined in this strategy; and
3. Direct staff to report back annually to Council with a Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy Implementation Plan Update as part of the annual Solid Waste Master Plan update during the 2027-2030 Term of Council.

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité de l'environnement et du changement climatique recommande au Conseil municipal :

1. d'approuver la Stratégie de collecte et de réacheminement des déchets dans les parcs des Services des déchets solides ainsi que le plan de mise en œuvre de haut niveau, selon les modalités exposées dans ce rapport;
2. de déléguer, à la directrice des Services des déchets, le pouvoir de mieux évaluer et de déterminer les besoins en niveaux de service dans la collecte des déchets pour chaque parc, pour tous les parcs qui ne sont pas classifiés ou qui ne répondent pas aux critères des services de réacheminement des déchets selon les modalités exposées dans cette stratégie;
3. de demander au personnel de déposer chaque année, auprès du Conseil municipal, un rapport avec la mise à jour du Plan de mise en œuvre de la Stratégie de collecte et de réacheminement des déchets dans les parcs dans le cadre de la mise à jour annuelle du Plan directeur de la gestion des déchets solides pendant le mandat 2027-2030 du Conseil municipal.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Assumptions and Analysis

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy (Strategy). In line with Action 7 of the Council-approved Solid Waste Master Plan ([ACS2024-PWD-SWS-0004](#)) (SWMP), this report recommends a waste collection and diversion strategy for City of Ottawa (City) parks, as well as a high-level implementation plan for how the Strategy will be rolled out over the next four years. The Strategy was developed based on engagement from the SWMP, results from the Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot (formerly known as the Recycling in Parks Pilot), internal waste

audits, and a municipal scan.

From 2017 to 2025, staff conducted the Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot (Pilot) to determine how best to roll-out a future comprehensive waste diversion program for City parks. Over the Pilot period, staff reviewed and tested various factors known to influence waste diversion including park type, bin location, signage details, lid type, bin type and waste stream. Over the phases of the Pilot, staff provided updates to Council on the results and success of the Pilot while also expanding the service from recycling-only to 3-stream (organics, recycling, garbage) service. In 2024, Council approved the expansion of the Pilot from 33 to 55 parks city-wide.

While the Pilot was on-going, the Province of Ontario was drafting the regulation for the transition of the Provincial Blue Box Program to Individual Producer Responsibility ([ASC2021-PWE-SWS-0008](#)) that would formulate how many public spaces producers would need to service per capita, starting in 2026. Despite the regulatory requirement, there remains great uncertainty on how producers will service public spaces and potential impacts to the City's parks waste collection system.

The City's established park [classification system](#) defines park types designed to meet the social, recreational and environmental needs of its residents and was leveraged through the development of this Strategy. Implementation of park classifications allows those responsible for parkland selection, design, construction, and maintenance to best meet the needs of the community including waste collection and diversion. Strategy design also included consultation with internal City partners in Public Works, Recreation, Culture, and Facilities Services, Infrastructure and Water Services and By-law and Regulatory Services. Staff developed and circulated to internal partners the set of draft options as discussed in Supporting Document 1. For each option, the benefits and risks were evaluated, and the following options are recommended for the final Strategy.

Staff recommend the following:

1. Installing 3-stream (garbage/organics/recycling) receptacles in all District (Destination), Community and Neighbourhood parks with sports fields or similar amenities as determined by Solid Waste Services (SWS);
2. Installing organic waste receptacles in all parks with an off-leash designation as determined by SWS in alignment with the City's [Dogs-in-Parks Designation Policy](#);

3. Updating and standardizing park waste receptacles and signage to be approved by SWS to help address known service-related issues; and
4. Delegate authority to the Director, Solid Waste Services to further evaluate and determine waste collection service level requirements, on a park-by-park basis, for any parks either not classified or that do not meet the criteria for waste diversion services as outlined in this Strategy.

A high-level implementation plan for each recommendation is outlined in this report, with installations and expanded service set to begin in 2026. To ensure Council is regularly updated on communication strategies, performance metrics, and considerations on future waste diversion opportunities, staff will report back annually, as part of the Annual Solid Waste Master Plan updates, during the implementation roll out, starting in 2027.

Financial Implications

The financial implications of implementing a permanent waste collection and diversion strategy in parks were contemplated and planned for in the development of the SWMP and associated Solid Waste Services Long Range Financial Plan 2025-2053 ([ACS2024-FCS-FIN-0008](#)). Pending approval of this report, staff will initiate the detailed planning and costing for the implementation of the Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy to be included as part of the City's future budget process.

Consultation Considerations

City of Ottawa subject matter experts were engaged throughout the development of the Strategy. SWS staff solicited feedback from numerous internal partners on the proposed options to support increasing waste diversion in City parks. Internal partners included subject matter experts in the following areas:

- Parks Maintenance and Forestry Services
- Finance and Corporate Services
- Infrastructure and Water Services
- Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services
- Emergency and Protective Services

Feedback received through public consultations during the development of the SWMP has also been incorporated into this Strategy as outlined within this report.

RÉSUMÉ

Hypothèses et analyse

L'objectif de ce rapport consiste à faire approuver la Stratégie de collecte et de réacheminement des déchets dans les parcs (la « Stratégie »). De concert avec l'action 7 du Plan directeur de la gestion des déchets solides approuvé par le Conseil municipal ([ACS2024-PWD-SWS-0004](#)) (le « PDGDS »), nous recommandons dans ce rapport d'adopter pour les parcs de la Ville d'Ottawa (la « Ville ») une stratégie de collecte et de réacheminement des déchets, ainsi qu'un plan de mise en œuvre de haut niveau pour les modalités du déploiement de la Stratégie dans les quatre prochaines années. Nous avons mis au point la Stratégie d'après la consultation qui a porté sur le PDGDS, les résultats du Projet pilote consacré au réacheminement des déchets ramassés dans les parcs (qui s'appelait auparavant le « Projet pilote de recyclage dans les parcs »), les missions internes de vérification des déchets et un tour d'horizon des municipalités.

De 2017 à 2025, le personnel a mené le Projet pilote consacré au réacheminement des déchets ramassés dans les parcs (le « Projet pilote ») afin de déterminer le meilleur moyen à adopter pour déployer un éventuel programme complet de réacheminement des déchets pour les parcs de la Ville. Au cours de la durée du Projet pilote, le personnel a examiné et sondé différents facteurs dont on sait qu'ils influent sur le réacheminement des déchets, dont le type de parc, la localisation des bacs, les détails des panneaux indicateurs, le type de couvercle et de bac ainsi que le flux des déchets. Dans les différentes phases du Projet pilote, le personnel a soumis au Conseil municipal des comptes rendus sur les résultats et le succès de ce projet pilote, tout en rehaussant le service pour passer du recyclage seulement au service de ramassage des trois flux des déchets (matières organiques, matières recyclables et déchets). En 2024, le Conseil municipal a donné son approbation pour étendre le Projet pilote à 55 parcs plutôt qu'à 33 parcs sur l'ensemble du territoire de la Ville.

Pendant le déroulement du Projet pilote, le gouvernement de l'Ontario a rédigé le règlement d'application pour la transition du Programme provincial des bacs bleus avec le principe de la responsabilité individuelle des producteurs ([ASC2021-PWE-SWS-0008](#)), qui permettrait d'exprimer le nombre d'espaces publics que les producteurs devraient servir par habitant à partir de 2026. Malgré cet impératif réglementaire, il y a toujours beaucoup d'incertitude quant aux moyens grâce auxquels les producteurs serviront les espaces publics et aux impacts potentiels sur le réseau de collecte des déchets dans les parcs de la Ville.

Le [système de classification](#) des parcs établi de la Ville définit les types de parcs destinés à répondre aux besoins sociaux, récréatifs et environnementaux des résidents et a été valorisé dans le cadre de la mise au point de cette stratégie. La mise en œuvre de la classification des parcs permet aux responsables de la sélection, de l'étude, de la réalisation et de l'entretien des terrains à vocation de parc de répondre parfaitement aux besoins de la collectivité, notamment dans la collecte et le réacheminement des déchets. L'étude de la Stratégie a aussi consisté à consulter les partenaires internes de la Ville à la Direction générale des travaux publics, à la Direction générale des loisirs, de la culture et des installations, à la Direction générale des services d'infrastructure et d'eau et dans les Services des règlements municipaux. Le personnel a mis au point et a fait suivre, à ses partenaires internes, l'ensemble des options provisoires analysées dans la pièce justificative 1. Pour chaque option, nous avons évalué les avantages et les risques, et nous recommandons d'adopter les options suivantes pour la version définitive de la Stratégie.

Le personnel recommande :

1. d'installer des bacs pour les trois flux des déchets (déchets, matières organiques et matières recyclables) dans tous les parcs de district (destination), communautaires et de quartier dotés de terrains de sports ou de commodités comparables selon les modalités déterminées par les Services des déchets solides (SDS);
2. d'installer des bacs à déchets organiques dans tous les parcs portant la désignation Chiens permis (sans laisse) selon les modalités déterminées par les SDS pour cadrer avec la [Politique sur les chiens dans les parcs](#) de la Ville;
3. d'actualiser et de normaliser les bacs à déchets dans les parcs et les panneaux indicateurs à approuver par les SDS pour permettre de résoudre les problèmes de services connus;
4. de déléguer, à la directrice des Services des déchets, le pouvoir de mieux évaluer et de déterminer les besoins en niveaux de service dans la collecte des déchets pour chaque parc, pour tous les parcs qui ne sont pas classifiés ou qui ne répondent pas aux critères des services de réacheminement des déchets selon les modalités exposées dans cette stratégie;

Nous exposons dans ce rapport un plan de mise en œuvre de haut niveau pour chaque recommandation; les travaux d'installation et d'extension des services devraient être lancés en 2026. Pour veiller à ce que le Conseil soit, à intervalles réguliers, mis au

courant des stratégies de communication, des indicateurs de rendement et des considérations sur les perspectives dans le réacheminement des déchets, le personnel lui rendra des comptes chaque année, dans le cadre des mises à jour à apporter au Plan directeur annuel de la gestion des déchets solides, pendant le déploiement de la mise en œuvre à partir de 2027.

Répercussions financières

Nous avons analysé et planifié, dans la mise au point du PDGDS et du Plan financier à long terme des Services des déchets solides 20252053 ([ACS2024-FCS-FIN-0008](#)), les répercussions financières de la mise en œuvre d'une stratégie permanente de collecte et de réacheminement des déchets dans les parcs. En attendant l'approbation de ce rapport, le personnel lancera la planification détaillée et le calcul des coûts de la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie de collecte et de réacheminement des déchets dans les parcs à inclure dans le prochain processus de budgétisation de la Ville.

Considérations relatives à la consultation

Nous avons consulté des experts de la question dans l'élaboration de la stratégie proposée. Le personnel des SDS a demandé les commentaires des nombreux partenaires internes sur les options proposées pour permettre de réacheminer plus de déchets dans les parcs de la Ville. Faisaient partie des partenaires internes, les experts de la question dans les secteurs suivants :

- Services de l'entretien des parcs et des forêts;
- Direction générale des finances et des services organisationnels;
- Services d'infrastructure et d'eau;
- Direction générale des loisirs, de la culture et des installations;
- Services de protection et d'urgence.

Nous avons tenu compte, dans l'ensemble de ce rapport, des commentaires exprimés dans les consultations publiques pendant l'élaboration du PDGDS.

BACKGROUND

The City of Ottawa operates and maintains over 4,500 hectares of parkland at more than 1,300 sites. Solid Waste Services (SWS) is responsible for the collection of waste from public space waste receptacles in parks across the City. Previously delivered by Parks Maintenance and Forestry Services (PMFS) within Public Works, city-wide parks

waste collection service was transferred to SWS in Spring 2022 to help standardize and streamline services. This service, delivered mainly through City staff and supplemented through contracted services, includes general waste (i.e. garbage) collection services from approximately 3,000 waste receptacles in parks across the City as well as collection services to support the Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot (previously the Recycling in Parks Pilot program) (Pilot). The location, type and number of waste receptacles per park is determined during the park development phase by City Planners and is adjusted based on year-over-year observations by staff around usage requirements. Many parks have waste receptacles that require collection on a summer seasonal basis between mid-April to mid-November, while a reduced number of waste receptacles are located in parks that are serviced through the winter season.

In 2017, SWS launched the Recycling in Parks Pilot to determine how best to roll-out a future comprehensive waste diversion program for City parks. The Pilot included the placement and signage of 3-stream carts for garbage, blue box (glass/metals/plastics), and organic materials, designed to decrease contamination between streams and allow for ease of collection. The name of the Pilot changed from Recycling in Parks Pilot to Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot in 2024 to reflect the expanded offering of diversion opportunities based on expansions that have been made below.

History of the Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot (2017-2024)

Between 2017 and 2024, SWS implemented the Pilot over four distinct phases as outlined below:

Phase 1 (Summer 2017)

The initial phase of the Pilot consisted of the installation of large recycling carts in the parking lots of seven parks across the City. The placement of carts in parking lots was an operational requirement due to the carts being serviced by full-size, front-end loader trucks under the City's multi-residential contract, which were unable to gain access to the inner parkland. The decision to utilize the City's multi-residential contractor provided the City with financial efficiencies as the addition of these locations was considered an add-on to the existing contract.

Although this initial pilot was well intended and provided valuable insights for subsequent pilots, staff identified several issues that ultimately led to the first pilot being deemed unsuccessful. As noted in the Collection of Recyclables in City Parks / City Festivals Inquiry Response ([EC 04-17](#)), carts were often under-utilized and highly contaminated resulting in entire recycling carts becoming contaminated and disposed of as garbage. Possible contributing factors to these issues included that the recycling carts were often not being paired with garbage carts as well as unclear labelling which

relied on wording only. Both issues were considered and addressed as part of the Phase 2 Pilot the following year.

Phase 2: (Summer 2018)

During the Spring of 2018, planning for the Phase 2 Pilot began with the selection of 50 parks based on a variety of park types. For this phase, carts were placed close to the garbage receptacles and had three different lids in order to test if lid size and bin colour affected capture and contamination rates.

As the Pilot progressed, it was determined that the best lids for preventing contamination had restrictive openings. However, these lids were also easy to clog, which gave the impression of overflowing carts, and they proved challenging to use from an accessibility lens.

This Pilot also determined that the large recycling carts did not need to be emptied as frequently which assisted in operational efficiencies. There was less contamination overall and it had good uptake by residents.

Phase 3: (2019 - 2020)

In 2019 and 2020, the waste streams were expanded to include organics and dog waste, following Council approval to allow dog waste and plastic bags into the City's Green Bin Program as outlined in the Source Separated Organics Program Update ([ACS2018-PWE-GEN-0003](#)). Existing garbage receptacles were removed, and large wheeled collection carts were installed in 10 parks for garbage, blue box recycling, and organics (including dog waste). Two four-season waste audits were conducted between Fall 2019 and Summer 2020 to determine the composition, capture rates, contamination rates, and overall diversion rates for these parks during the different seasons.

Overall, the Pilot saw 72 per cent (5,350.48 tonnes) of waste from the 10 parks, that would have otherwise been landfilled, diverted to the recycling and organics carts. Further analysis of the recycling streams indicated that 75 per cent of what could be recycled (also known as capture rate) was placed in the recycling cart, and 79 per cent of organics material was placed correctly in the organics cart. Both diversion and capture rates for all 10 parks remained relatively consistent throughout the two four-season waste audit sessions.

The data from this Pilot continued to demonstrate that recycling in parks was successful in increasing diversion among the parks as well as capture rates for the recycling and organics stream.

At the same time, the regulation for the transition of the Provincial Blue Box Program to

Individual Producer Responsibility (IPR) was being drafted and included language around public spaces and parks.

In 2021, the final Blue Box Regulation was released and specified a formula of how many public space receptacles producers would need to service per capita beginning in 2026. The regulation defines public spaces to include outdoor parks, playgrounds, sidewalk areas, or public transit stations or stops, and requires public space containers to be collected by producers before receptacles are full. Despite the regulatory requirement, there remains great uncertainty on how producers will service public spaces, including the City's parks.

Phase 4 (2021 – 2023)

In the Spring of 2021, the Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot was expanded to an additional 34 parks. SWS engaged with Councillors to expand the existing Pilot to parks of different sizes and locations throughout the City. In addition, SWS staff worked with counterparts in West Parks Operations to include one destination park in this Phase. The inclusion of a destination park required different planning and waste collection methodologies and increased effort for servicing. For these reasons, only one destination park was included in this Phase.

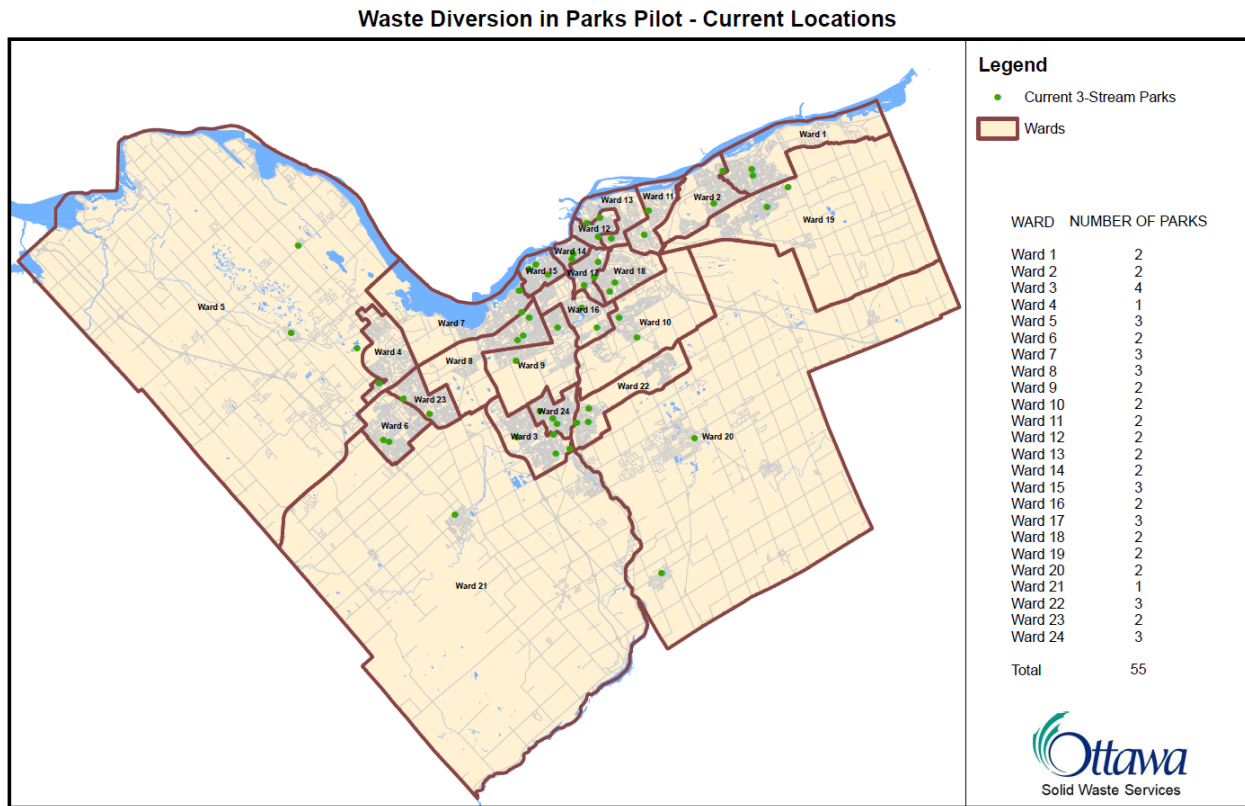
For this expansion, SWS leveraged the experience gained in both the placement and number of receptacles needed to service a park as well as the collection frequencies needed to minimize any resident dissatisfaction.

In Spring of 2022, city-wide parks waste collection, historically delivered through PMFS, was transferred to SWS. This service, delivered mainly through City staff and supplemented through contracted services, includes general waste (i.e. garbage) collection services from approximately 3,000 waste receptacles in parks across the City as well as collection services to support the Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot.

2024 Expanded Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot

As part of the 2024 budget process, Council approved the further expansion of the Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot from 33 to 55 City parks based on funding to support the expansion to one additional park per Ward (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Map of Current Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot Locations



As communicated in the February 8th, 2024 memo to Council, staff sought feedback from Members of Council to help identify one to three priority parks in each Ward to be considered as part of the Pilot expansion to parks of different types and sizes across the City. The parks were selected based on the following criteria:

- Parks with various amenities that would benefit from recycling and organics programs;
- Parks of different sizes and types;
- Parks that are situated closer to main access roads (compared to a park deep inside a community); and,
- Parks that are accessible by a truck (the size of a large delivery van).

Staff began to explore other temporary waste diversion options in parks that included the placement of marked organics bins in dog-friendly parks. This temporary effort was initiated to help inform the proposed permanent program to increase the capture rate of organics in City parks, in line with the Solid Waste Master Plan.

On June 25, 2024, the City of Ottawa’s Solid Waste Master Plan (SWMP) was approved by Council to guide how the City will sustainably manage waste over the next 30 years.

Amongst many other initiatives, the SWMP prioritizes Recycling in Parks and Public Spaces. The initiative is Action Suite 7 in the SWMP, under Objective 2 – Maximizing the Recycling of Waste. The action is described as a broad-scale, comprehensive waste diversion program, with recycling and organics carts in parks and public spaces across the City with a proposed timing of 2025 – 2028.

The Strategy was developed based on research gathered and feedback learned throughout the development of the SWMP. Strategy recommendations have been further informed by data gathered from the Pilot, internal City staff input and a municipal scan.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy (Strategy) including a high-level implementation plan. Aligning with Action Suite 7 of the SWMP, which focuses on waste diversion programs in parks and other public spaces, the recommended strategy leverages the successful Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot to establish a city-wide waste diversion program in parks. The discussion section of this report provides an overview of the Strategy development, the City's park development process, best practices documented through the municipal scan and Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot and next steps for implementing an effective and consistent strategy for residents of Ottawa to maximize waste diversion in parks.

SWS Parks Waste Diversion Strategy Development

The development of a Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy and high-level implementation plan to establish a city-wide waste diversion program in identified parks across the City was one of the first projects to be initiated following the approval of the SWMP. SWMP research and engagement feedback was used to inform the Strategy which has been developed based on park classification and usage, lessons learned from the existing Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot and an environmental scan of municipalities with successfully implemented parks waste diversion programs. In developing this Strategy, it was essential to ensure that services are operationally efficient and cost effective, but also equitably accessible to all community members accessing parks city-wide.

As part of the research phase for the development of the Strategy, a review of the City's park development process as it relates to waste collection services, best practice research and a municipal scan of communities in Ontario to gather information about existing parks waste diversion programs was completed. High-level details of each are outlined below:

Park Development Process Overview

The City's parks planning and development process, including planning for park waste collection requirements is led by City Planners in the Recreation, Cultural and Facilities Department. Projects undertaken by staff within the Infrastructure and Water Services Department typically fall into two categories: lifecycle, which are existing parks identified for amenity upgrade and renewal, and new park development, which include siting and planning for brand new parks within neighborhoods across the City. Multiple internal and external partners across City Departments are involved in the park development process, including SWS who is consulted on the placement of waste receptacles in parks in order to ensure they can be serviced efficiently. The process and consultation varies depending on the type of project undertaken and historically, there has been no standard approach developed to guide the number of waste receptacles installed at City parks. Generally, they are placed at all park entrances and vary based on size, type and function of the park in line with standards and guidelines established through the City's Parks Development Manual.

To further support the park development process, the City of Ottawa has an established [classification system](#) to define park types designed to meet the social, recreational and environmental needs of its residents. The park classifications as outlined below serve as a reference tool to guide the development of new parks. Implementation of park classifications allows those responsible for parkland selection, design, construction, and maintenance to best meet the needs of the community.

Park Classifications

City parks are classified into six different park types: District (Destination) Park, Community Park, Neighbourhood Park, Parkette, Urban Parkette/Plaza and Woodland Park. Park type descriptions can be found in Table 1:

Table 1: Park Classifications

Park Classification	Description	Size (minimum hectares (ha))
District (Destination)	Large, centralized parks used for city-wide functions, tourism, or sports tournaments	10 ha
Community	Parks that service a specific community or group of neighbourhoods with range of facilities offered for passive or active recreation	3.2 – 10 ha

Park Classification	Description	Size (minimum hectares (ha))
Neighbourhood	Parks within walking distance for local residents, can provide active or passive recreation	1.2-3.2 ha
Parkette	Small parks within walking distance for residents providing central green and gathering space for predominately passive recreation.	0.4 – 1.2 ha
Urban Parkette/Plaza	Small parks associated with the urban fabric that provide context-sensitive outdoor, multi-functional amenity space all within a confined space.	0.2-0.4 ha
Woodland	Parks that involve more protection than intervention, but may include providing pathways or nature trails, small seating areas and limited amenities as appropriate	1.2 -3.2 ha

To ensure consistent service levels are offered to residents, the strategy was developed in accordance with the established park classifications. This will ensure that all parks within the same classification receive the same level of service, as determined by the Strategy and managed by SWS.

Best Practice, Municipal Scan & Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot

A review of waste industry best practices related to increasing waste diversion targets in public spaces and an environmental scan of Ontario municipalities who have successfully implemented waste diversion programs in parks and/or public spaces were completed to inform the development of the Strategy. Findings supported staff’s understanding of best practices, many of which are already in place through the Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot. These include:

- Having clear and consistent signage to ensure effective communication and ease of use for community members accessing the waste containers in city parks and knowing what waste goes where.
- Co-locating multiple carts in one location to avoid making users travel in order to sort waste.
- Locating the carts in the right areas to maximize effectiveness i.e. placing visible and easy to locate carts in high traffic accessible areas.

- Selecting the type and size of carts best suited to the environment and local conditions to increase use and reduce weather and vandalism damage – such as the robust 360L carts used as part of the City’s Pilot that have proven to be cost effective, operationally efficient and easy to use for both staff and members of the community.

A municipal scan was conducted to gather insight from other municipalities with currently implemented waste diversion in parks programs. A survey consisting of sixteen questions was developed and shared with a broad group of participating municipal members of the Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario. Survey questions were made available through an online form and participants were given a period of six weeks to respond. Information gathered through the scan indicated that established waste diversion programs in public spaces across Ontario is still low with Toronto being the only identified Ontario city other than Ottawa to have a well-established 3-stream parks waste diversion program in place.

The City of Toronto was further consulted to better understand their program, it’s efficiencies and to document lessons learned for consideration by the City of Ottawa in the strategy development.

Finally, in developing the Strategy, it was important to understand successes and lessons learned through the established Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot. Feedback was gathered from supervisory and operational staff responsible for both general waste collection in parks and collection from the pilot parks. This feedback was used to draft a strategy that would be most suited to Ottawa parks space and residents.

The information gathered through best practice research and the municipal scan was used to support the development of strategy options. These options were then circulated to a broad group of City partners across multiple departments including Public Works, Recreation, Culture, and Facilities Services, Infrastructure and Water Services and By-law and Regulatory Services and feedback was used to draft the options for further analysis.

Options Analysis

The following set of draft options for the Strategy were developed for evaluation by internal City staff. A fulsome analysis, including benefits and risks of the proposed options, can be found appended to this report as Supporting Document 1:

- 1. Install 3-stream waste receptacles (garbage/organics/recycling) into all District (Destination), Community and Neighbourhood Parks with sports**

fields or similar amenities as per the City's established Park Classification System.

This option would see the existing 360L 3-stream carts located at 55 pilot parks currently, installed using a phased-in approach in all District (Destination), Community and Neighbourhood parks with sports fields or similar amenities.

2. Install organics waste receptacles into parks with an off-leash designation as identified through the City's [Dogs-in-Parks Designation Policy](#).

This option proposes to install the existing 360L organic carts used as part of the 3-stream system, through a phased-in approach in all parks city-wide with an off-leash designation, excluding those to be serviced by 3-stream. This would mean that organics carts and collection service would be made available city-wide in all parks with an off-leash designation outside of District (Destination), Community and Neighbourhood parks.

3. Update and standardize park waste receptacles and signage to help address known service-related issues (i.e. illegal dumping, pest control and maintenance issues) and support operational efficiency.

This option would have SWS staff working with Parks Planning staff to identify new standard park waste receptacle(s) to be used for garbage and installed in all City parks not identified for 3-stream waste diversion service. The preferred container would have an easily accessible lid and consider factors such as coordinating with existing park infrastructure and addressing SWS concerns around operational efficiencies, maintenance issues and service-related issues including illegal dumping, pest control and odors. This new standard would be installed in all parks with existing garbage receptacles and service. In addition, any required signage to be installed on garbage cans would also be standardized across the City to ensure clear and consistent messaging around waste disposal requirements in City parks. Parks would be prioritized for replacement in line with the City's park development and lifecycle projects in order to maximize efficiencies and cost savings.

4. Consider future installation of beverage-specific lids on blue bin recycling carts in all 3-stream locations and/or sports fields specifically to reduce contamination

This option would consider the future installation of more restrictive dome-styled beverage specific lids on the existing 360L blue box recycling carts in order to further

reduce material contamination compared to the current more open-style lid. This option could be piloted in specific locations to assess effectiveness prior to a city-wide roll out or replacement of existing lids.

5. Scale up waste diversion services to support events held in City parks managed through Centralized Allocations

This option would include the delivery of recycling and/or organics carts by SWS staff to park locations with events booked through the City's Recreation and Cultural Facilities Department's Centralized Allocations Branch, typically over the weekend, with waste collection service taking place on Mondays, as well as cart removal and return. Consideration would need to be given to providing day of/weekend waste collection services to support demand in more heavily used parks. Details and feasibility of this option require input and discussion with the Centralized Allocations Branch within RCFS. These events would fall outside of those events coordinated through the [City's Event Central Office](#) where event organizers are responsible for establishing their own waste management plans.

6. Green parks – take your waste home – removal of waste receptacles in smaller parks with limited amenities (i.e. Parkettes, Urban Parkettes/Plazas)

This option would consider the removal of existing waste receptacles at Parkettes and or Urban Parkettes/Plazas with limited amenities in order to reduce waste collection requirements and encourage residents to help maintain clean greenspace by taking their waste home with them.

The above draft strategy options were circulated for internal partner review to seek feedback from departments involved in park planning, programming, development and maintenance operations. This included partners in Parks Maintenance and Forestry Services as well as representatives from Recreation, Culture and Facilities Services, Infrastructure and Water Services Department and By-Law and Regulatory Services.

Feedback gathered from the options analysis review informed the development of the Strategy recommendations and a high-level implementation plan, with associated costs, as outlined below.

Strategy Recommendations & High-Level Implementation

The Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy is recommending the following for implementation:

- 1. Install 3-stream (garbage/organics/recycling) receptacles in all District (Destination), Community and Neighbourhood parks with sports fields or similar amenities as determined by SWS, in alignment with the City's established [Park Classification System](#) and detailed below.**

Summary of Recommendation & High-Level Implementation Plan:

- 360L garbage, organic and recycling carts (as pictured below in Figure 2) would be installed in all District and Community parks as well as in all Neighbourhood parks with sports fields (or similar amenities as determined by SWS), not already serviced through the Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot.
- Waste receptacles and service would be implemented to align with the existing Waste Diversion In Parks Pilot, with the number of receptacles and placement (including signage) determined by SWS in collaboration with City Planning and Parks Maintenance Staff based on park usage, seasonal access and operational requirements.
- Pending approval of the Strategy, SWS will work with Ward Councillors to identify two parks per Ward (48 parks total) for implementation in 2026 with an effort to evenly distribute across Wards and align to operational resources and requirements.
- Following the first year of implementation, SWS would then work with City staff and Councillors to identify an additional 100 parks per year for 3-stream service to be fully implemented as a phased-in approach, over a 4-year period by 2029 as outlined below.
- To ensure cost efficiencies, parks would be further prioritized based on new parks being developed, operational requirements and capacity with continued best efforts made to ensure equal distribution across Wards for equitable access to residents and visitors accessing parks across the City.
- Staff will work with cross-departmental partners to develop and document park waste collection guidelines to support strategy implementation.

Figure 2: Current and Proposed 3-Stream Waste Receptacles to be Installed at District, Community and Neighbourhood Parks.

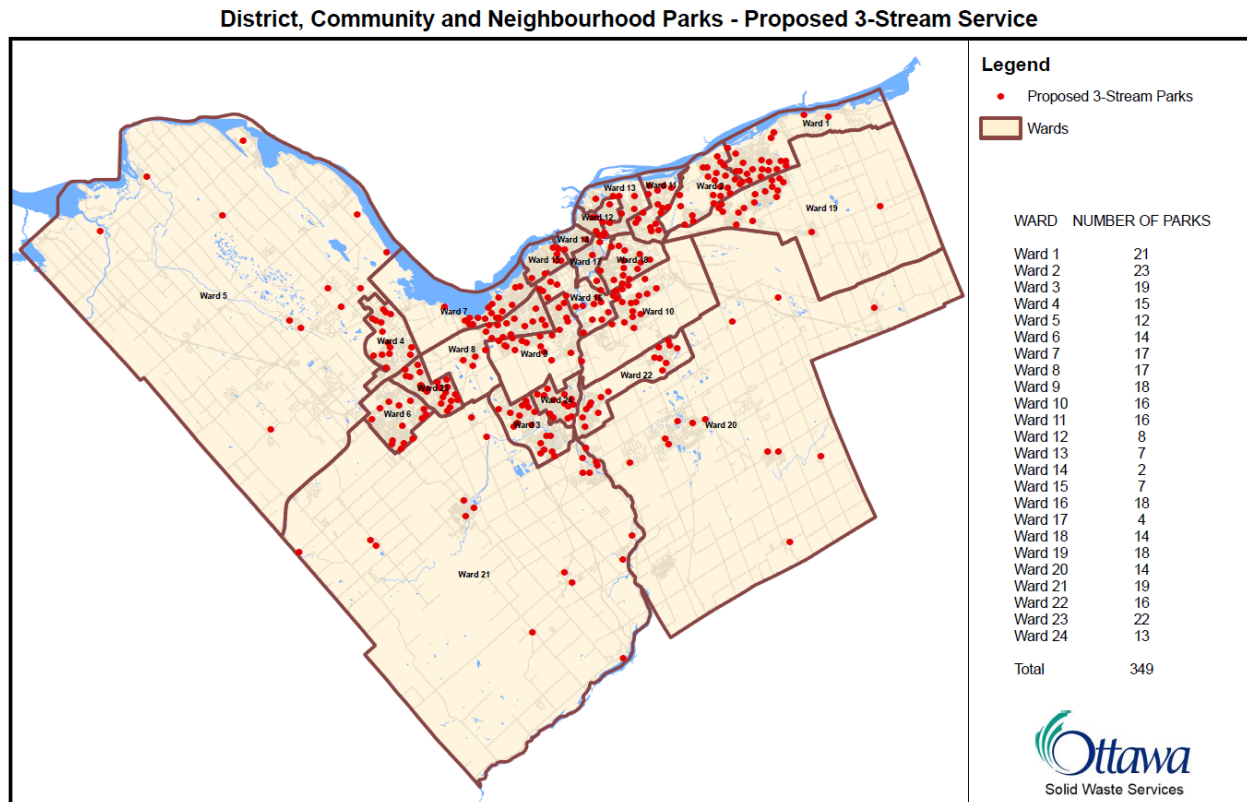


Table 2: High-Level Implementation Schedule

Total Estimated Number of Parks to Receive 3-Stream Service				
Year 1 - 2026	Year 2 - 2027	Year 3 - 2028	Year 4 - 2029	Total
48	100	100	101	349

Below is a map (Figure 3) outlining the distribution of proposed parks to receive 3-stream waste diversion services, pending approval of the Strategy for implementation between 2026-2029.

Figure 3: Map of District, Community and Neighbourhood Parks Proposed for 3-Stream Waste Diversion Services



2. Install organic waste receptacles in all parks with an off-leash designation as determined by SWS in alignment with the City’s [Dogs-in-Parks Designation Policy](#) as detailed below.

Summary of Recommendation & High-Level Implementation Plan:

- 360L organic carts would be installed in all City parks with an off-leash designation not identified for 3-stream service.
- Waste receptacles and service would be implemented to align with the existing Waste Diversion In Parks Pilot, with the number of receptacles and placement (including signage) determined by SWS in collaboration with City Planning and Park Maintenance Staff based on park usage, seasonal access and operational requirements.
- Pending approval of the Strategy, SWS will work to procure equipment and resources in order to start implementing organics collection in all parks with an off-leash designation in 2027 as outlined below.
- Pending approval of the Strategy, SWS will collaborate with partners to identify and prioritize parks with an off-leash designation for the installation of organic

carts, determining the number of carts as required based on factors such as park usage, seasonal access and operational requirements.

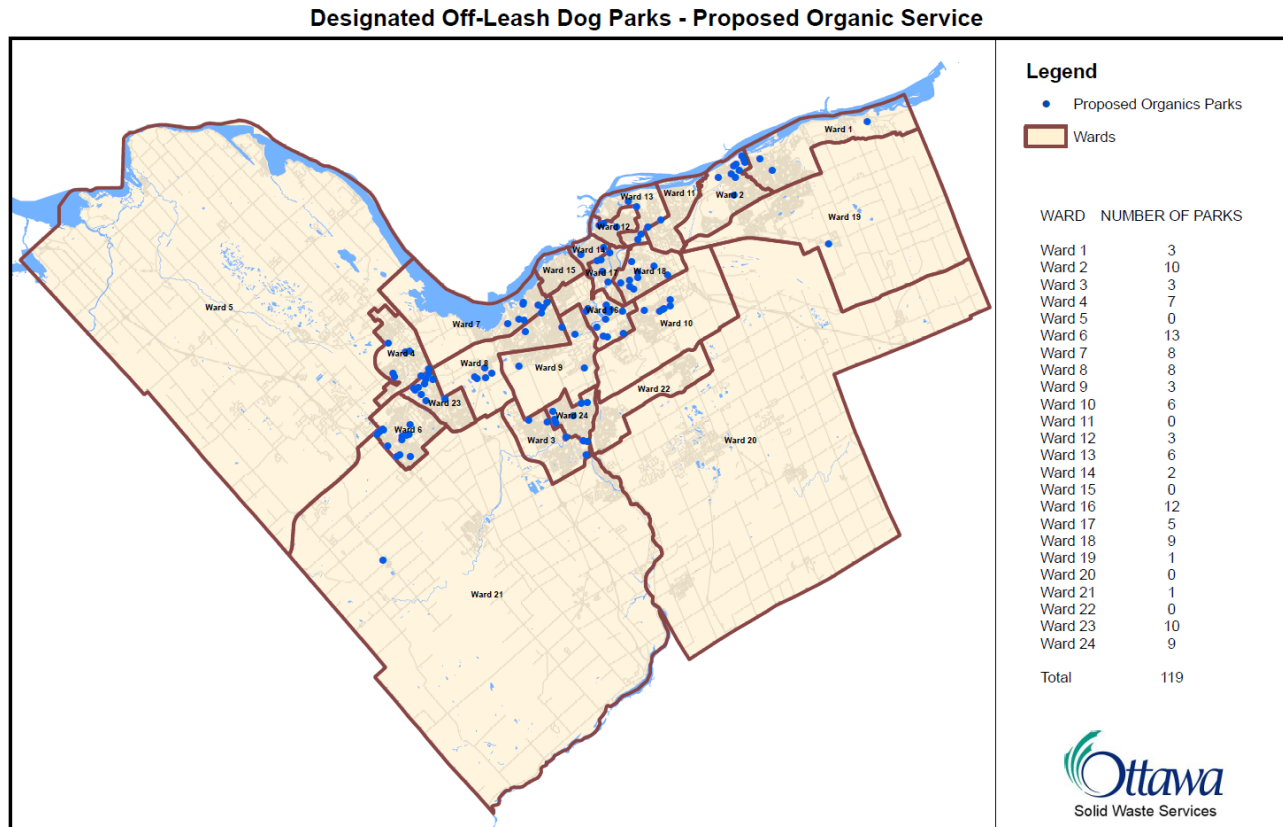
- To ensure cost efficiencies, parks would be further prioritized based on new parks being developed, operational requirements and capacity with continued best efforts made to ensure equal distribution across Wards for equitable access to residents and visitors accessing parks across the City.
- Staff will work with cross-departmental partners to develop and document park waste collection guidelines to support strategy implementation.

Table 3: High-Level Implementation Schedule

Total Estimated Number of Parks with an Off-Leash Designation to Receive Organics Service				
Year 1 - 2026	Year 2 - 2027	Year 3 - 2028	Year 4 - 2029	Total
0	119	0	0	119

Below is a map (Figure 4) outlining the distribution of proposed future parks with an off-leash designation to receive organic waste diversion services, pending approval of the Strategy for implementation between 2026-2029.

Figure 4: Map of Proposed Future Parks with an Off-Leash Designation to Receive Organic Waste Diversion Services.



3. Update and standardize park waste receptacles and signage to be approved by Solid Waste Services to help address known service-related issues (i.e. illegal dumping, pest control and maintenance issues) and support operational efficiency as detailed below:

Summary of Recommendation & High-Level Implementation Plan:

- SWS in consultation with City Planning and Parks Maintenance staff will evaluate and identify a new style of waste receptacle to be used for garbage and installed at all City parks not identified for 3-stream waste diversion service through this Strategy.
- The new standardized waste receptacles and any required standardized signage would be installed at all parks with existing waste receptacles used for garbage, not identified for 3-stream service (i.e. smaller Neighbourhood parks with limited amenities as well as Parkettes and Urban Parkettes/Plazas).
- The new style of waste receptacles proposed will prioritize accessibility and design standards to coordinate with existing park infrastructure and support ease of use among residents and park visitors.

- SWS will consider receptacles with accessible lids and increased capacity to address common concerns and issues around maintenance, odors, insects/pests and illegal dumping of waste not generated in City parks.
 - The new style of waste receptacles would be procured in line with City procurement policies and prioritized for installation through the new park development process and lifecycle projects in order to maximize cost efficiencies.
 - Waste receptacles that are still serviceable but removed as part of the 3-stream installation process will be used to replace waste receptacles in poor condition as determined by SWS.
- 4. Delegate authority to the Director, Solid Waste Services to further evaluate and determine waste collection service level requirements, on a park-by-park basis, for any parks either not classified or that do not meet the criteria for waste diversion services as outlined in this Strategy.**

Summary of Recommendation & High-Level Implementation Plan:

- This will provide authority to SWS to review and evaluate parks for potential waste diversion services as required on a park-by-park basis, in cases where the park classification is not yet established, or the amenities and/or park usage does not align to the classification or criteria established in the Strategy.
- SWS would work with City partners to identify additional parks for potential service as needed and report back to Council as appropriate as part of the implementation plan updates.

Future Strategy Considerations

In addition to the recommendations to be implemented above, staff are also committed to continue exploring additional opportunities to further increase waste diversion in City parks as detailed below, with a commitment to bring forward findings and recommendations for Council consideration as part of the annual updates, following the proposed strategy implementation beginning in 2026.

Exploration of continued waste diversion opportunities through this strategy would include:

- a) Consideration to pilot the installation of alternative pet-waste containers and beverage specific-style lids on recycling carts in select parks to further reduce material contamination and increase diversion rates as required based on expansion and ongoing monitoring of the Parks Waste Diversion Program, pending Council approval and implementation of the Strategy.

- b) Consideration and evaluation of further scaling up waste diversion services to better support various events held in City parks managed through Centralized Allocations and RCFS to align with the Solid Waste Master Plan's Action Suite 3 – Waste Minimization and Diversion at Special Events.
- c) Consideration of future removal of existing waste receptacles in a select number of smaller City parks including Parkettes and Urban Parkettes/Plazas with limited amenities as determined by SWS, to further reduce waste collection requirements and encourage residents to help maintain clean greenspace by taking their waste home with them.

Pending approval of the Strategy, SWS would look to prioritize this work to be completed over the proposed strategy implementation period beginning in 2026, leveraging lessons learned along the way that would be brought back to Council for consideration and approval as required through the planned annual implementation updates.

Communication and Outreach

To support the city-wide Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy, the communications approach will focus on delivering clear, consistent messaging across multiple platforms, with strong engagement from Councillors. Each Councillor will receive a digital toolkit containing ready-to-use messaging, FAQs, and social media content for use on their own channels and with respect to parks in their wards.

Ottawa.ca will be updated as needed to reflect the expanded scope of the Program and to support public understanding. City of Ottawa social media and the ReCollect app will be used to promote the Program, reinforce key messages, and help manage public expectations.

This work will be carried out in advance of the campaign launch to allow time for adjustments based on Councillor's feedback.

The communications approach will be informed by lessons learned from the Green Bin program roll-out in 2011, changes made to that Program in 2019, and the current Waste Diversion in Parks Pilot. The Pilot, which has evolved since its launch in 2017, includes three-stream waste collection (garbage, recycling, and organics) and has tested signage, cart design, and contamination reduction strategies. These learnings will directly shape messaging, especially as the program expands beyond recycling to broader waste diversion goals.

Communications will continue to evolve based on ongoing implementation and any updated messaging or communication strategies will be included in the annual update report.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Upon approval of the Waste Diversion in Parks Strategy and high-level implementation plan, staff will develop a detailed implementation plan, to support the initial strategy roll-out beginning in 2026 and report back to Council with an update in 2027, once the new term of Council is established. In addition, performance measures to assess increases to diversion rates against targets established through the SWMP will be developed and included as part of the SWMP performance metrics.

SWS will collaborate with cross-departmental partners to ensure that waste diversion services and requirements are prioritized and documented as part of the City's park development and planning process and that future opportunities for additional waste diversion in parks is explored.

Following the initial year of implementation, staff will report back to Council with annual reports on progress for the 2027-2030 Term of Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications of implementing of a city-wide Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy were contemplated and planned for through the development and approval of the SWMP and associated Long-Range Financial Plan (LRFP). Both capital and operational cost estimates were forecasted and documented as part of the plan to be considered through the future budget approval process to align with the proposed strategy implementation.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to Committee and Council approving the recommendations in this Report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

This is a city-wide report.

CONSULTATION

Public Consultation

Feedback received through public consultations during the development of the Solid Waste Master Plan has been incorporated in this report. As a result, public consultation for this report was not required.

Internal Consultation

Subject matter experts were engaged throughout the development of the proposed strategy. SWS staff solicited feedback from numerous internal partners to consult on the proposed options to support increasing waste diversion in City parks. Internal partners included subject matter experts in the following areas:

- Parks Maintenance and Forestry Services
- Finance and Corporate Services
- Infrastructure and Water Services
- Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services
- Emergency and Protective Services – Bylaw and Regulatory Services

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The City of Ottawa is committed to ensuring that all actions within and resulting from the Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy are in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, 191/11. Additionally, the City's Accessibility Design Standards (ADS), where applicable, as well as the City of Ottawa's Accessibility Policy will be followed.

As this report is a part of the broader Solid Waste Master Plan, consultations with persons with disabilities has been undertaken in its development and will continue to occur as further actions are identified. Following approval of the recommendations outlined in the report, staff would continue engaging with City partners, including staff in the Accessibility Office and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, as well as the wider community as appropriate. Continuing to engage with residents with lived experience will help identify and mitigate barriers and challenges prior to implementation.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of the Comprehensive Asset Management program enables the City to effectively manage existing and new infrastructure to maximize benefits, reduce risk, and provide safe and reliable levels of service to community users. This is done by establishing clear and consistent levels of service, such as those established in the report.

To minimize risk related to service interruption or asset condition, capital and operational funding that is adequate, predictable and aligned with service expectations, is recommended. Where there is misalignment, having in place appropriate risk mitigation strategies for service interruption is necessary.

When the City commits to the acquisition of new assets, as described in the report, consideration must also be given to the City's commitment to fund future operations, maintenance and renewal costs. It must also account for future depreciation when reviewing long-term financial sustainability. When reviewing the long-term impacts of asset acquisition, it is useful to consider the cumulative value and lifecycle costing of the acquired assets being taken on by the City.

The recommendations documented in this report provide an analysis of the target levels of service, the recommended capital and operating funding, and the risks associated with service implementation. The report also notes the inclusion of the associated operational and capital costs for these services in the Solid Waste Long Range Financial Plan, to be considered as part of the annual budget process. Funding levels below those recommended may result in greater risk of not achieving the target service levels set out in this report.

If approved, inventory of assets and financial forecasts will be included under the Solid Waste Service Asset Management Plan.

CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of the Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy is expected to contribute positively to the City's climate goals by reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with landfilling organic waste and supporting increased recycling. The Strategy aligns with both the Climate Change Master Plan's overall framework to reduce GHG emissions from municipal operations and the Solid Waste Master Plan's objectives to maximize waste diversion and reduce environmental impacts in public spaces.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

Solid Waste Services reports on the use of delegated authority annually to the Environment and Climate Change Committee as outlined in Schedule J – Public Works Department of the Delegation of Authority By-law 2025-69.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

All risks and associated mitigation measures have been outlined within the body of the report.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

This is a city-wide report.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The SWS Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy aligns with the 2022-2026 Term of Council priority: “a city that is green and resilient”. Outcomes that support this priority include increasing waste reduction and diversion in parks and public spaces by promoting participation in waste diversion and recycling programs and supporting municipal and provincial targets to divert organic waste from landfills.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: Parks Waste Collection and Diversion Strategy Options Analysis

DISPOSITION

Upon approval of this report, staff will begin implementing the recommended strategies starting in late 2025. Concurrently, staff will develop detailed implementation plans for the remainder of the roll-out period, spanning 2026 to 2029, as outlined in this report. In addition, staff will continue to explore additional opportunities to further increase waste diversion in City parks as detailed in this report, providing annual updates to Council in the next term.