



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Presented by: Brian Brost, Acting Director, Utilities & Environment

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TAMRMS#: B06

Styrofoam Recycling at the Depot

Presented by: Brian Brost, Acting Director, Utilities & Environment

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the February 25, 2019 Agenda Report titled “Styrofoam Recycling at the Depot” be received as information.
2. That the City of St. Albert implement a one year pilot program for the recycling of expanded polystyrene at the Mike Mitchell Recycling Center with project funding of \$12,000 from the Stabilization Fund and;
3. That Administration report the findings of the of the pilot back to Council by Q2 2020.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Council of the options and costs to accept expanded polystyrene at the Mike Mitchell Recycling Depot, while considering environmental and safety concerns such as air quality and fire prevention.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL’S STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #6: Environmental Stewardship: Explore innovative environmental and conservation opportunities.

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

This would be an additional item acceptable at the Recycling Depot “City of St. Albert Services and

Service Levels Inventory”:

“The recycling depot is a staffed depot open 40 hours per week, 5 days/week. The depot accepts recyclables (paper, cardboard and aluminum) as well as hazardous chemicals, paint, oil, tires, electronics, batteries and scrap metal.”

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

On January 21, 2019 Council passed the following motion:

(AR-19-052)

That the deadline extension for the following item be approved:

Time Extension Request - Styrofoam Recycling at the Depot be extended from January 2019 to the February 25, 2019 City Council meeting.

On October 15, 2018 Council passed the following motion:

(CM-18-068)

That Administration bring forward by January 31, 2019 options and costs to accept expanded polystyrene at the Mike Mitchell Recycling Depot to be recycled.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Historically expanded polystyrene (trademark named Styrofoam) hereinafter referred to as EPS has not been accepted as part of the recycling program in either the Blue Recycling Bag or at the Mike Mitchell Recycling Depot. With the recent inquiry on the potential of recycling EPS, Administration has learned of a company with capabilities to process EPS at the recycling depot. Our current recycling contractor that processes the curbside recyclables does not have this capability to process EPS, therefore Administration would recommend that if EPS is going to be recycled, it only be accepted at the Recycling Depot.

EPS is a problematic material to include with materials that are acceptable for recycle for several reasons. Packaging and other sources comprised of EPS often break down into small pieces during collection and trays are normally contaminated with food residue. The small pieces of EPS cannot be recovered for other use and they also contaminate other recyclables such as paper and cardboard. Recyclables must be empty, clean and dry to be recycled. EPS is also approximately 98% air and cannot be condensed mechanically, meaning transportation of the material is very expensive by weight when compared to other recyclable materials.

Administration has investigated possible impacts, including financial, operational and environmental impacts to process EPS.

Financial

A company that offers EPS processing would densify the materials in a mobile truck unit. It is estimated it would cost the City approximately \$6,000 annually to process the collected EPS at the Depot. This value is based upon a comparator for the amount of materials received by Strathcona County at their Enviro Station in 2018. Strathcona County is currently collecting 30 to 40, two-yard sized storage bags of EPS every two weeks. Although the above value is based upon an estimation of quantity that would be received comparative to Strathcona County, the costs to process the EPS would increase with greater participation of the program and volume of EPS being recycled.

The City would also need to purchase or rent a sea container to store the EPS on site until the processing company condenses the material. This will keep the EPS clean and dry. To purchase a sea can the cost is approximately \$5,000. There would also be costs associated with site signage and advertising to promote the program. This would be approximately \$1,000, for a total for \$6,000 in one-time capital costs.

Environmental

Alberta Environment and Parks has informed Administration that permits are not a requirement for this type of processing as the materials are not being incinerated. The contractor has conducted air quality tests which they have shared sample tests. The City Environment Branch staff have reviewed the tests and have no concerns with the process.

City Fire Prevention Officers have also reviewed the process and stated that collection and storage method of using a sea can would be appropriate to prevent potential fires and hazards.

Administration recommends that the City conduct a pilot program for one year to determine the amount of EPS collected. Following the pilot, Administration will report the findings including uptake of use, operational impacts and costs associated with the pilot for Council consideration.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

N/A

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

- Increased service levels at the Recycling Depot, accepting EPS to be densified and recycled
- Divert EPS from the landfill
- Increased costs to the recycling utility. Can increase depending on participation of the program

Financial:

Approval of the one year pilot for this program would cost \$12,000 (\$6,000 for contractor processing, \$5,000 for a Sea Container, and \$1,000 for signage and advertising). It is recommended that this be funded through the Stabilization Fund given the one time operating nature of the program.

Legal / Risk:

None at this time.

Program or Service:

Conducting a pilot of this program can be conducted without any impacts to existing services. The current complement of Recycling Depot staff will be able to undertake onsite relocation of the EPS storage into the sea container within the Public Works Yard.

The Contractor would perform the processing away from the public, in the City Public Works Yard. This would be an open ventilated area. This is similar to freon removal services that is also done on site at the Public Works Yard.

Organizational:

None at this time.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

If Council does not wish to support the recommendation, the following alternatives could be considered:

Alternative 1. No action. Continue to place the EPS into the garbage stream

Alternative 2. Direct Administration to commence recycling of EPS without conducting a pilot program, with project funding of \$12,000 from the Stabilization Fund for 2019 and further, Administration bring forward proposed operational budgets for continuation of the project in 2020 for Council consideration.

Report Date: February 25, 2019

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Committee/Department: Utilities & Environment

Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble