



Yorkton Environmental Committee Strategic Plan

2025-2030

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Wednesday, October 31, 2018, the Yorkton Environmental Committee participated in a strategy session that resulted in its new 2019 - 2021 strategic plan. This plan is to be reviewed annually to assure priorities haven't shifted and that new considerations can be taken. During the initial phase, the pressing needs of Committee members were first identified through a series of individual interviews. The common themes that surfaced from these interviews then became strategic priorities. These key themes were then carried forward and referenced throughout the strategic planning process, ultimately becoming the foundation of the strategic plan.

Here, these individual pillars of focus have been combined to create the bigger picture encompassing not only the future of the Environmental Committee, but of the Yorkton region as a thriving, ecologically conscious steward of the environment. Environmental considerations consist of (but are not limited to) sustainable water, waste water and solid waste management. This is the direction of our strategic vision. This vision is supported by our mission to become national leaders in working with City Council, business partners and industry to research, design and implement programs that educate and inspire our community to become champions of our environment. Our values are the guiding principles that support the way in which we pursue our vision and fulfil our mission.

The strategic pillars are priority areas of focus that will move the needle forward on our mission. Opportunities to further our cause have also been identified for potential future investment. Areas that may impact our ability to effectively operate have also been noted for monitoring. Accountability and measurement tracking in the form of objectives and key performance indicators are built into all strategies in order to gauge the progress of implementation.

This strategy is a response to the current, and anticipated priorities of residents, industry and local businesses in and around the Yorkton area. As they evolve, we will be ready. Our ability to listen and respond to the community's needs must be at the heart of everything we do and that is why this plan is a living document meant to be revised, updated and maintained as we move forward. The Yorkton Environmental Committee is looking forward to working for you and with you to make our environment a better place.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Yorkton is located in the East-Central part of Saskatchewan. We are unique community with Yorkton being the only city in Saskatchewan that relies on ground water for drinking water. Within the City, residents total just under 20,000, but when you take a look at the volume of local area residents and businesses that are serviced by Yorkton, that number balloons closer to 100,000. Therein lies the bigger picture; a picture we all share and must invest in.

Currently, the City of Yorkton's Environmental Services and Public Works Department are the central hub managing the water, waste water and solid waste management for the residents in the city, and solid waste for over 40 local communities in the surrounding area. Additionally, Yorkton's facilities also process the commercial and industrial waste produced in those areas as well.

2018 Key statistics

- 52% of waste at the Yorkton waste management facility is comprised of commercial waste; A five-year average of 59%.
- 27% of waste at the Yorkton facility is comprised of in-City waste; A five-year residential average of 23%.
- 21% of waste currently taken in at the Yorkton waste management facility is comprised of out-of-City waste; A five-year average of 18%.

2024 Key statistics

- 63% of waste at the Yorkton waste management facility is comprised of commercial waste; A five-year average of 61%.
- 67% of residential refuse collected at the Yorkton facility is comprised of in-City waste; A five-year residential average of 59%.
- In 2024, the City of Yorkton's Water Utility slippage was 11.48% or 355,278 m3 in Non-Revenue Water (NRW), exceeding the set target of 8.00% or less which would equate to no-more than 247,521 m3. This difference between the 2024 Slippage Rate and the set target of 8.00% or less resulted in \$315,615.16 in revenue losses for the Utility. This NRW can be attributed to system maintenance activities such as water treatment waste

streams, or distribution system maintenance, however slippage generally increases with aging piping infrastructure.

- 2024 Treated Water Volumes and Consumed Water Volumes:
 - o Total Treated Water Volume: 3,094,014 m³
 - o Consumed Water Volume: 2,738,735.65 m³
- Yorkton's top three industrial water users accounted for 42% of total water sales in 2024, highlighting the significant scaling of ongoing expansions and their impact on the city's water consumption demands.

Looking Ahead

The City of Yorkton Environmental Committee is committed to working with community partners in local and surrounding areas. Together, we will work towards a bright future by finding innovative ways to develop a greener, cleaner, more vibrant Yorkton for everyone to enjoy.

VISION AND MISSION

OUR VISION

To be national leaders in environmental sustainability, community engagement, and social programming.

Our MISSION

Serving our community by building partnerships to develop environmentally friendly policies and programs that create a sustainable future.

The Yorkton Environmental Committee is committed to serving the residents of local and surrounding communities by preserving our natural resources, engaging in dialogue with our communities and keeping our vision for sustainable living as our north star. As a thriving, developing city, we take a leadership role in supporting city growth while minimizing the impact on the environment. We focus on building relationships with local groups and community organizations to advance environmental goals. We strive to work hand in hand with our residents as partners, in supporting programs aimed at improving the quality of life for everyone we serve.

An empowered community is an active community and together, we can work to ensure the sustainable governance of our water, waste water, solid waste, and recycling programs for the betterment of our future.

OUR VALUES

Environmental Stewardship: We are dedicated to protecting the environment at all times.

Integrity: We operate with honesty, transparency, and fairness.

Accountability: We hold ourselves accountable for making recommendations that are in the best interest of our residents.

Innovation: We look for creative, innovative and effective solutions.

Leadership: We strive to be role models for waste reduction and environmental stewardship.

Teamwork & Collaboration: We are committed to maintaining strong, productive relationships and working alongside our community partners.

Communication: We believe in clear and honest communication with the residents we serve and amongst our partners.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Regionalization of the Yorkton landfill to meet the needs of surrounding communities
- Industrial treatment of waste water
- An effective current management process that allows Yorkton to meet the call for demand
- A proud history of collaboration and teamwork with community groups including:
 - Prairie Harvest Employment Program
 - RecyclAbilities/SaskAbilities
 - Ottenbreit Sanitation Services (OSS)
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Regional groups
 - GR Poier & Sons Green Center
 - Yorkton Business Improvement District (YBID)
 - Sarcan
- A receptive local community with shared values towards preserving our environment and maintaining the vibrancy and livability of Yorkton
- Passionate Committee members lending their expertise from diverse backgrounds
- The creation of the GR Poier & Sons Green Center
- Launching the large-scale compost program
- Household hazardous waste program
- Organics pilot program
- City of Yorkton is the largest municipality in Saskatchewan that relies on ground water for drinking water. Most robust aquifer management system.

MOVING FORWARD

With a strong strategic vision, the City of Yorkton's Environmental Committee is dedicated to making a real difference in the daily lives of Yorkton, and surrounding area residents. We will do this by focusing on the following five strategic priorities over the next five years.

Communication: Establishing a communication plan to effectively educate and raise awareness about initiatives to our key audiences.

Optimize City Resources: Operating effectively by leveraging the support of the City and optimizing resources provided by Council and City Administration.

Strategic Partnerships: Building on current partnerships with community groups and service providers and exploring mutually beneficial relationships with additional organizations in the near future.

Program Efficiency: Reviewing how current programs are administered and finding areas to improve efficiency.

Research: Prioritizing data collection as a means of being informed and up to date with current innovations pertaining to environmental solutions.

Our goal is to make significant improvements within all five key areas identified by 2030 and our strategic plan outlines how we will get there. The plan will be reviewed annually to make sure priorities don't change.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths and Opportunities

- Partnerships and relationships
- Being a national, provincial and regional leader
- Infrastructure
- Administration support
- Committee diversity and representation
- Local community business opportunities
- Value-added projects

WHAT WE'RE MONITORING

- Changing legislation
- Funding
- Unforeseen disruption to services
- Private industry recycling
- Changing recycling markets
- Non-compliance
- Source water protection
- Water and waste water quality

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

1. COMMUNICATION

Strategic Goals

- Strengthen communication with all key audiences (The City of Yorkton and surrounding area residents, industrial customers, business customers and community partners) and ensuring proper education about environmental programs and services
- Launch and champion green initiatives that encourage participation in current and future water and waste water management, recycling, and composting programs including yard waste, by residents

Objectives

- Develop a multi-pronged marketing plan that promotes united participation and engagement from community partners
- Determine communication efficiencies and partnership opportunities (e.g. OSS) in order to maximize outreach while remaining cost-effective
- Increase participation in waste management programs (recycling, compost etc.) by commercial and industrial customers
- Promote sustainable practices by developing and implementing initiatives to increase awareness, education and training for environmental programs

Key Tactics

- Develop and implement public education campaigns to increase awareness and understanding of the recycling and organic programs
- Develop supporting marketing materials and channels to promote campaigns (e.g. social media, updated website, water bills and open house events)
- Educate residents on all aspects of water and waste water management

- Continue to support recycling and compost education campaigns for commercial and industrial customers presented through mediums this crowd would be susceptible to embracing
- Maintain Recycling Coach App
- Utilize social media strategy to consistently share information regarding waste management education and initiatives to all audiences
- Utilize follow-up public survey(s) to gain better understanding of residents' wants and needs
- Engage with business and industrial customers to better understand their needs
- Offer to provide partners with free education materials for customers
- Make use of local media outlets to spread campaign messaging and raise awareness of initiatives

Measuring Our Performance

We will know we have made progress in achieving the strategic goals for our City by tracking performance on the following key indicators:

- Waste audit
- Recycling audit
- Financials
- Monthly recycling volume statistics
- Contamination rates
- Survey responses
- Feedback on social media channels
- Feedback from open house events
- Water system audit
- Water slippage rate

2. OPTIMIZE CITY RESOURCES

Strategic Goals

- Provide actionable recommendations to the City of Yorkton for regional environmental initiatives
- To have businesses, industry and residents adhere to bylaws regarding environmental initiatives

Objectives

- Increase communication to residents, industry and businesses about City bylaws regarding environmental initiatives
- Continue providing recommendations to City Council to enhance governance of environmental programs

Key Tactics

- Update City bylaws
- Consistently provide quality, timely information to council with recommendations
- Provide consistent updates on initiatives and projects
- Effectively promote guidelines and bylaws
- Actively seek opportunities to obtain provincial and federal government support
- Create civic engagement opportunities for environmental programs
- Explore in-city organics program

Measuring Our Performance

We will know we have made progress in achieving the strategic goals for our City by tracking performance on the following key indicators:

- Feedback from Council on recommendations

- Decrease in recycling and waste/water management violations by residents, industry and businesses
- Number of grant applications submitted for additional funding
- Progress on recommendations to City Council



3. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Goals

- Partner with groups that share same goals as the Environmental Committee
- Productive alliances with local business to participate in environmental initiatives

Objectives

- Build on Environmental Committee's existing strengths with current community relationships

- Leverage Yorkton's status as a leader in environmental programs to develop new partnerships
- Increase understanding of partner needs and identify areas to strengthen
- Bolster support for environmental stewardship initiatives for Yorkton and surrounding communities

Key Tactics

- Continue collaboration opportunities with haulers
- Consistently get feedback and keep an open dialogue between Environmental Committee and community partners
- Engage businesses to promote environmental stewardship

Measuring Our Performance

We will know we have made progress in achieving the strategic goals for our City by tracking performance on the following key indicators:

- Diversion volumes when applicable
- Number of businesses who participate in the City's environmental programs
- Number of partners who collaborate with the Committee on participating commercial recycling, compost and waste management programs
- By-law compliance
- Industrial waste water monitoring

4. PROGRAM EFFICIENCY

Strategic Goals

- Programs administered by the Environmental Committee are running as efficiently as possible (e.g. recycling, compost, water and waste water)
- A sustainable business model of innovative useable resources from waste diverted from landfill

Objectives

- Obtain funding and other resources for sustainability-based environmental programs
- Create/maintain assessment schedule of reviewing and addressing current programs for inefficiencies and areas of improvement

Key Tactics

- Research Federal and Provincial programs and funding options for supporting sustainable waste water treatment plant
- Develop strategic relationships with Chamber and YBID to ensure sustainable environmental program support
- Identify and invest in equipment and tools to make program administration more efficient
- Recruitment of key service personnel

Measuring Our Performance

We will know we have made progress in achieving the strategic goals for our City by tracking performance on the following key indicators:

- Waste audits
- Appropriate number of key personnel
- Reduction in time spent executing waste management processes
- Reducing water utility slippage rates

Timelines

- Conversations with businesses about composting program - ongoing
- Research provincial environmental program options - ongoing
- Investing in new technology and equipment
- Evaluate next steps for organics program - 2024/2025 implementation
- Annual review of programs
- Predesign of waste water system (30% complete by 2025)
- Get back to adequate number of key personnel - end of 2025
- Monitoring water utility slippage rates - ongoing

5. RESEARCH

Strategic Goals

- Be informed and equipped with the right information to make the most effective decisions for the future of our environmental programs

Objectives

- Increase consistency of research and data collection in order to provide more tracking and updates to stakeholders

Key Tactics

- Actively collect and consistently provide data on projects to key stakeholders
 - Industry - weekly
 - Solid Waste/Contractors - daily, weekly and monthly
- Implement and maintain systems of tracking project progress
- Build assessment system into all initiatives

Measuring Our Performance

We will know we have made progress in achieving the strategic goals for our City by tracking performance on the following key indicators:

- Meeting Minutes
- Reviewing built-in assessments markers of projects
- Review asset-management metrics

Timelines

- Source water management aquifer recharge study - beginning of 2025
- Organics program recommendations - 2024/2025
- SK Environment - review non-program HHW materials sent back - ongoing
- Energy efficiency project assessment (gas recapture)

NEXT STEPS

To protect our environment and ensure a brighter, safer, healthier future, it will take all of us doing our part. We are dedicated to taking a strategic leadership role to fulfill our vision.

With a renewed sense of purpose and shared vision, the City of Yorkton Environmental Committee is on track to build on our strengths while looking for ways to meet the challenges of tomorrow. We will do this through innovation, teamwork and collaboration with our community partners.

By implementing the strategies outlined in this plan, we will be ready to adapt to changing conditions. We will invest in the opportunities identified like value added projects and business opportunities anchored by sustainable recycling methods. We will continue to monitor variables beyond our control like changing legislation, funding and changing and emerging markets. We will implement strategies critical to the success of City-wide and surrounding areas. We recognize that effective communication empowers everyone we serve and will focus on promoting education about all environmental issues affecting the City.

We understand that quality of life starts with the core services provided by the City and green programs play a pivotal role in that. We must continuously strive to ensure our community is informed and has meaningful opportunities for involvement. Our core values will continue to be the foundation of our work and guide the way in which we operate. Our number one priority will always be to serve the residents of Yorkton and surrounding area.

We will continually measure our performance while communicating our progress. With this plan as our guide, we have all the right components for success.

APPENDIX

Interview Summary Notes

Communication and Education

- Must communicate to community and effectively let the community know about what's going on
- Get people involved with programs
- People don't understand why they should go along with certain initiatives like recycling
- No explanation of why - bigger picture of environmental issues expensive, very expensive to recycle. - Why do we need to recycle? It's expensive to build new landfill cells
- Diversion and recycling is key
- Always struggled with public education on recycling - we have some of the best programs in province but people don't use them so why is that?
- More representation from general public as opposed to just people with vested interest - arm's length public

Support from the City

- City could provide some additional reinforcement/support
- Business perspective - recycle at what cost?
- Costs less to put in landfill - why spend our money?
- It's a lot of work, why we are doing this needs better explanation
- City could give more direction/ some better direction from administration and City council would be great so volunteers understand the bigger picture and can make better decisions City staff should be helping out. Should be playing larger role
- Environmental Committee to take things about recycling to city counselling for bylaws
- There are lots of city people that have other more business experience we can draw from
- Approach council to mandate to have business recycle
- Bylaw, from City = strong encouragement

Clear/Realistic Vision/Mission

- What is our vision? What are we trying to accomplish? Clarity is needed and the vision needs to be redefined
- Goal needed- been spinning tires
- Mission statement not relevant anymore- at the time it seemed reasonable, part of purpose is to deal with issues as they come up and advice council
- Hard for everyone to understand complexity of whole picture
- Lost touch with why we are a Committee
- No explanation of why - No benefit, poor education, lack of understanding,
- End goal - realistic?
- Wanted to go back for a reduction goal
- Something that could be promoted - too far unattainable expectation
- Mandate is broader than just waste and recycling - waste water - never spend any time talking about that - look at scope of mandate

Program Efficiency

- Programs in Yorkton socially based programs for troubled youth - most effective program?
- Materials collected by Prairie Harvest Employment Program go to SaskAbilities
- Two organizations for efficiencies to reach end goal/ difficult decisions
- Goal not attainable - decided ahead of time

Documentation/Research Support

- More tracking, more information available on spreadsheets. Lots of info more discussions
- Tried mulching and different programs. Now tracking better with landfill
- More numbers, breaking each component down and figure out what's needed
- Wants a summary of the Yorkton site - letting people know what's going on in community, updates on what we're doing, survey talking about usage of program - this will help us be more effective operationally explore more options and make better/innovative decisions for accomplishing what we want e.g. glass crushing tool
- Status updates on topics previously discussed or how initiatives are going