

Waste & Diversion Programs

2020 Annual Report to Council

Prepared by: Waste & Diversion Programs Branch

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For more information, visit stalbert.ca/waste
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PURPOSE

This report is a summary of the programs and services provided by the Waste & Diversion Programs branch in 2020.

This branch provides curbside collection of garbage, organics, and recycling to 20,000 single family and 40 multi-family households. The City operates a year-round Recycling Depot, a seasonal Compost Depot, and coordinates seasonal waste programs such as Large Item Drop Off, Curbside Large Item Pick Up, and Compost Giveaway.

This report provides an update on the full range of services provided by the Waste & Diversion Programs branch according to the “Service and Service Levels Inventory”.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- Drop-off locations, seasonal waste programs, and education and outreach initiatives were modified to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic
- School presentations were adjusted to be delivered online. New educational resources such as games and handouts were created to support teachers and parents
- The Compost Depot hours of operation changed to Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- The Mike Mitchell Recycling Depot is now permanently open Tuesday through Sunday





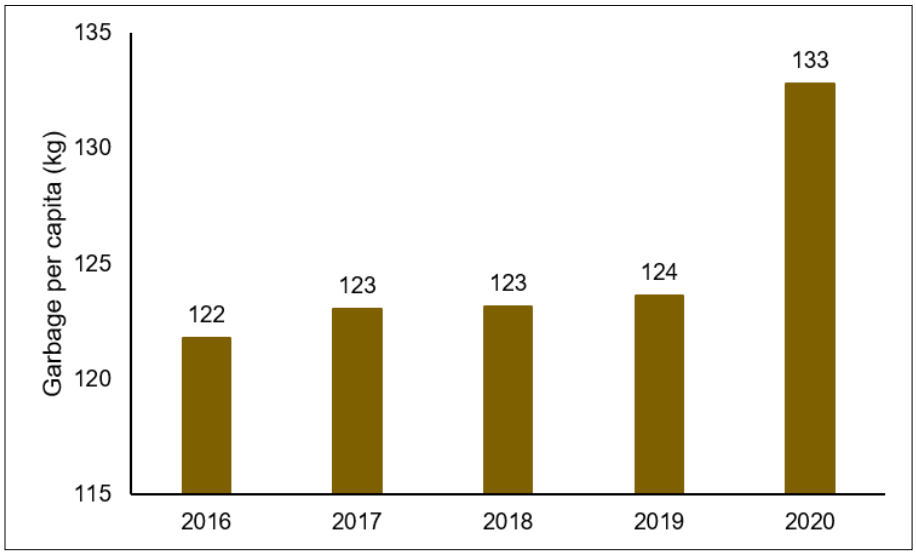
ENVIRONMENTAL MASTER PLAN GOALS

The two goals of the 2014 Environmental Master Plan related to waste management are:

- Reduce solid waste generation to 105 kilograms or less per person per year by 2020
- Increase waste diversion rate to 75% by 2020

Historical data can be found in previous Annual Reports on stalbert.ca/waste

GARBAGE PER CAPITA

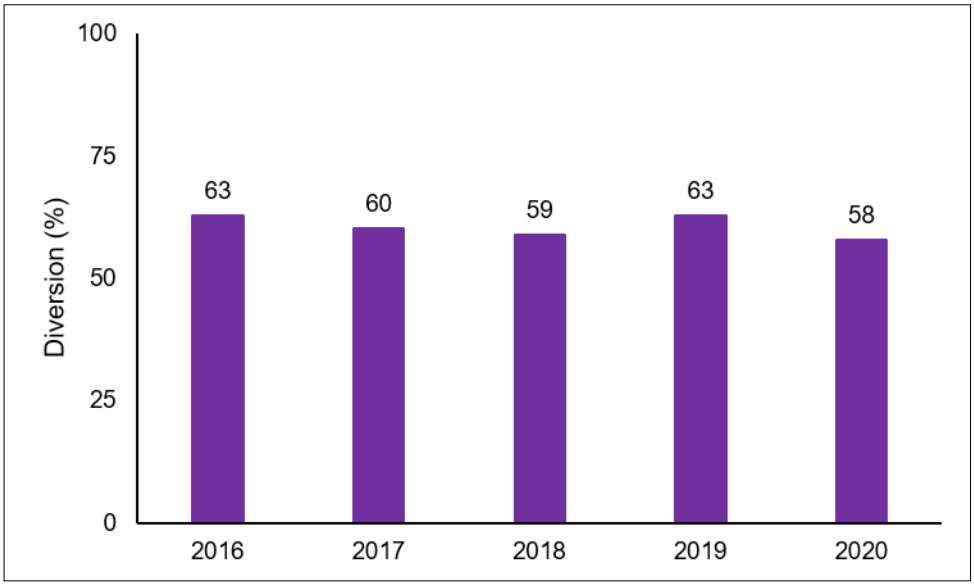


In 2020, St. Albert residents generated 133 kilograms (kg) of garbage per capita.

Garbage per capita is calculated by dividing the total amount of garbage from the Brown Garbage Cart by the city's total population (2018 Municipal Census Report). It is important to note that the City does not provide curbside waste collection to residents living in some multi-residential buildings.

The increase in per capita garbage production compared to 2019 equates to a city-wide increase of approximately 600 MT of garbage. Due to COVID-19, residents worked, learned, and played from home for the majority of 2020. Garbage that was previously discarded at work or school was disposed of in the Brown Garbage Cart, which likely contributed to the increase in garbage production observed.

WASTE DIVERSION



Waste that is diverted from the landfill includes materials from the Blue Recycling Bag, Green Organics Cart, and electronics collected at the Mike Mitchell Recycling Depot.

In 2020, residents diverted 58% of waste from the landfill. This number is likely lower than previous years due to the increase in garbage generated at home.

FUTURE REPORTING

In 2021, the City will be collaborating with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board's Metropolitan Region Servicing Plan - Solid Waste Collaborative to standardize metrics and data related to waste. The objectives of the project are to develop shared terminology, measures, and key performance indicators.

CURBSIDE COLLECTION

The City of St. Albert provides curbside waste collection of garbage, organics, and recycling to 20,000 single family and 40 multi-family households. Multi-family households that do not receive City collections contract private haulers to collect and remove their waste.

The following charts show the monthly weights of garbage, organics, and recycling (metric tonnes; MT) collected curbside, comparing 2019 to 2020.

Historical data can be found in previous Annual Reports on stalbert.ca/waste

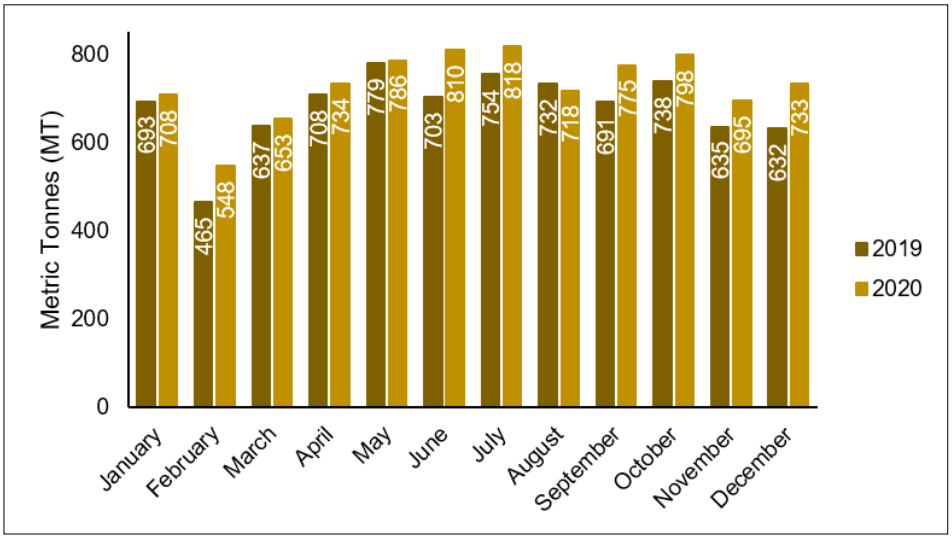
CART MAINTENANCE AND WASTE EXEMPTION PROGRAM

In 2020, City staff responded to 2,160 requests from residents for cart maintenance. This included deliveries to new homes, change in sizes, and repairs or replacements for damaged carts.

27 households (six new, 21 renewals, seven removals) participated in the Home Health Care Waste Exemption Program to assist with their home health care waste disposal needs. Households withdraw from the program when they no longer require the service.

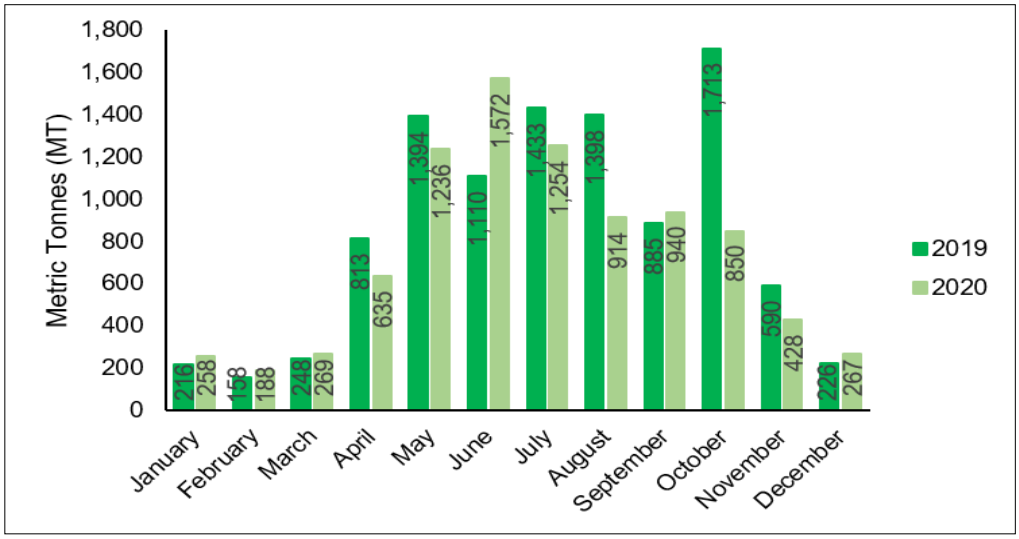
BROWN GARBAGE CART

In 2020, 8,778 MT of garbage was collected through the Brown Garbage Carts and sent to landfill. This is a 7% increase in weight compared to 2019 (8,167 MT), likely due to additional waste being generated at home instead of at work and school.



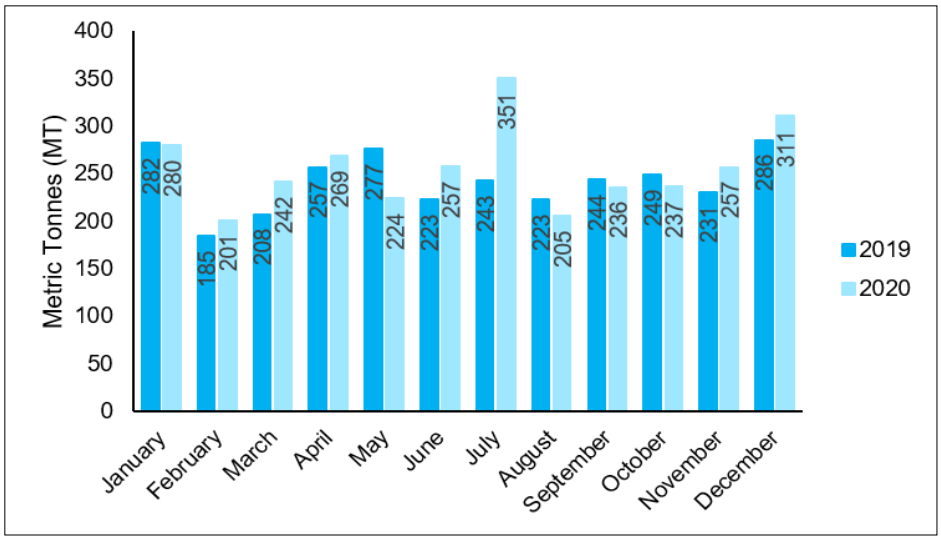
GREEN ORGANICS CART

In 2020, 8,811 MT of organics was collected through the Green Organics Carts. This is a 13% decrease compared to 2019 (10,184 MT), which had a wet summer resulting in more grass and yard waste being collected and composted.



BLUE RECYCLING BAG

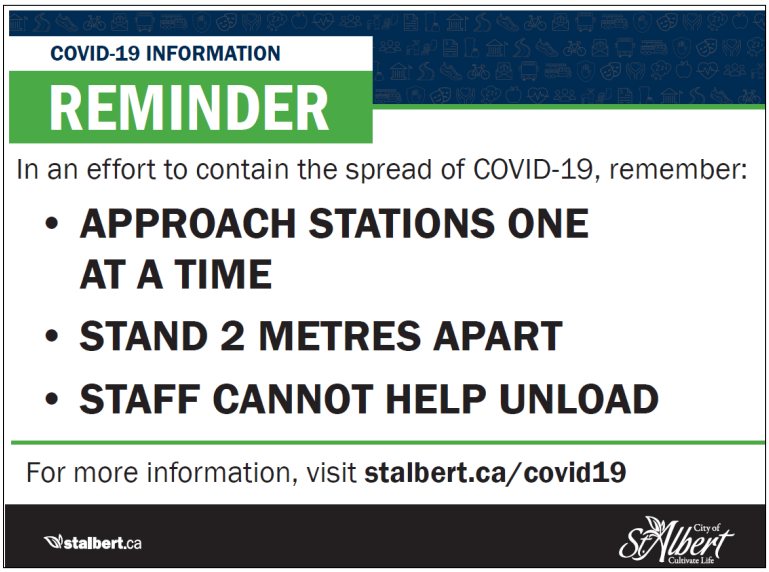
In 2020, 3,070 MT of recycling was collected through the Blue Recycling Bags and sent to a materials recovery facility to be sorted. This is a 6% increase compared to 2019 (2,908 MT). This may be related to cardboard and packaging associated with residents online shopping during COVID-19.



DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

The City of St. Albert operates a year-round Recycling Depot and seasonal Compost Depot for residents to drop-off household waste in a convenient and environmentally-friendly way. Depots are open to residents of St. Albert only; proof of residency may be required. Non-residents and commercial vehicles will be turned away by on-site staff.

To contain the spread of COVID-19, City staff were not permitted to help residents unload or handle any materials brought to the Mike Mitchell Recycling Depot or the Compost Depot. Residents were asked to deposit all material into the appropriate bins or areas on their own.



MIKE MITCHELL RECYCLING DEPOT

New Hours of Operation

In the summer of 2019, the Mike Mitchell Recycling Depot piloted extended hours of operation (seven days a week). Beginning in February 2020, the Depot permanently increased its hours of operation. It is now open six days a week: Tuesday through Sunday. The Depot remains closed on Mondays and statutory holidays.



“Extra Garbage” Tag Program

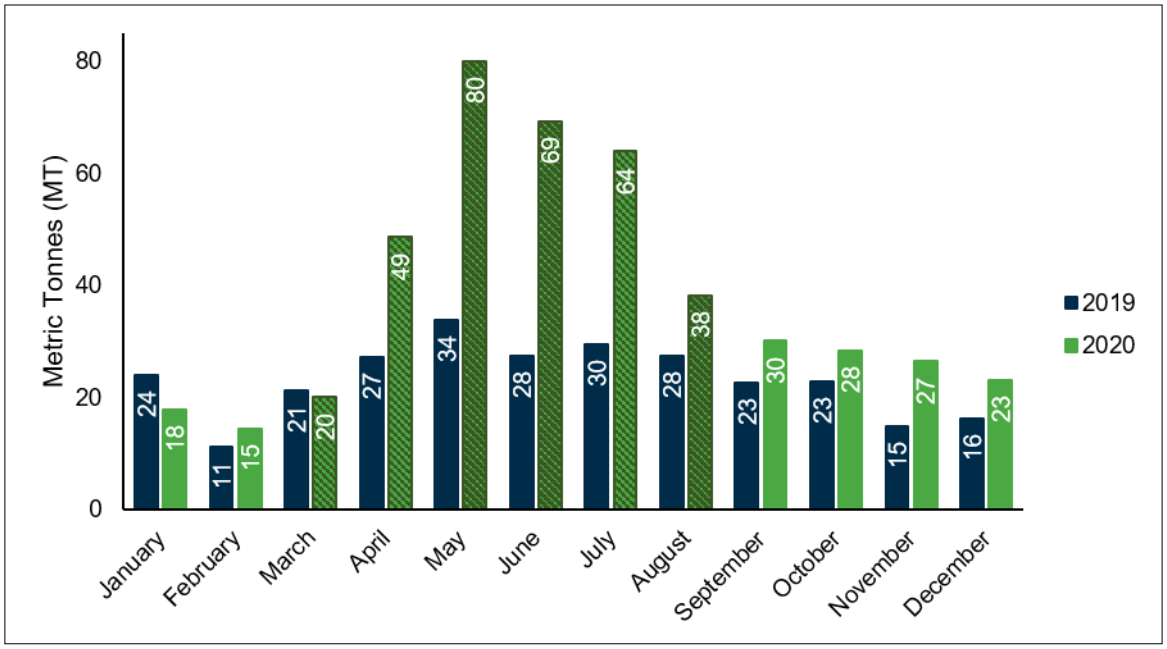
Residents who have additional garbage can bring it to the Recycling Depot. Each bag of garbage requires an “Extra Garbage” bag tag, which can be purchased for $2.25 at St. Albert Place, Fountain Park and Servus Place.



Due to City facility closures, from March 20 to August 3 “Extra Garbage” bag tags were not required (shaded bars in below graph); garbage could be disposed of at the Depot, free of charge. There was a limit of two bags, per household, per day. This resulted in additional operating costs associated with the free disposal.

On December 16, City facilities closed again to the public due to new provincial restrictions. For the remainder of 2020, residents had to purchase “Extra Garbage” bag tags over the phone, and tags were available for pick up at the Depot the following day.

In 2019, residents brought 280 MT of garbage to the Depot. In 2020, this number increased by 65% to 461 MT.



Materials Collected - Tonnage

The City receives funding through Alberta Recycling Management Authority's rebate programs for electronics, oil, paint, and tires; however, this funding does not cover the cost of operating the Depot.

Below is the amount of materials collected in 2020. The Recycling Depot saw an increase in volume of most materials. This could be related to residents participating in spring cleaning during the early months of COVID-19.

Historical data can be found in previous Annual Reports on stalbert.ca/waste

Material	Amount
Recycling (mixed paper, cardboard, etc.)	364 MT
Paint	206,000 L
Aerosols (paint)	10,825 cans
Aerosols (other)	10,775 cans
Household hazardous waste	87,800 L
Oil	61,500 L
Fluorescent lightbulbs	5,507 kg
CFL and LED lightbulbs	986 kg
Batteries (automotive)	781 units
Batteries (dry cell)	11,856 kg
Glass	115 MT
Styrofoam blocks	1,057 kg
Tires (automotive and bike)	48,800 tires
Electronics	219 MT



COMPOST DEPOT

The City's Compost Depot is located on Villeneuve Road (between Ray Gibbon Drive and Hogan Road). It is open from April through October; exact open and closing dates are weather-dependent.

Residents can drop off yard waste such as branches, grass, leaves, and garden waste at the Compost Depot. Natural Christmas trees are also accepted after the holidays.

New Hours of Operation and Identification Check

Historically, the Compost Depot was open seven days a week (7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.)



City staff monitored hourly attendance (number of cars) at the Depot and noted very few residents visited the Depot before 10 a.m. Staff recommended to City Council to reduce the hours of operation to six days a week (10 a.m. to 10 p.m.) and close on Mondays and statutory holidays to reflect actual usage. The new hours of operation were effective on July 1, 2020.

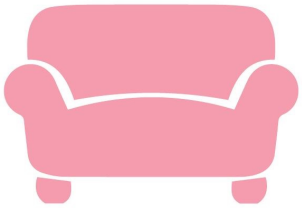
City staff presence was increased at the Compost Depot to follow COVID-19 guidelines, increase customer service, and to prevent misuse like illegal dumping. Identification checks were also conducted to ensure only St. Albert residents had access to the Depot. This reduced misuse from non-residents and Contractors from the Edmonton Region.



Materials Collected - Tonnage

1,913 MT of leaf and yard waste and 50 loads of tree chippings were collected at the Compost Depot and sent to be composted.

SEASONAL WASTE PROGRAMS



The City of St. Albert offers seasonal waste programs to allow residents to reuse, recycle, or dispose of items that are not accepted in the curbside program.

CHRISTMAS TREE PICK-UP

1,178 natural Christmas trees were collected from households from January 6 to 10 (Zone B) and January 13 to 17 (Zone A).

COMPOST GIVEAWAY

In May and October, over 200 MT of finished compost was available to residents for pick-up at the Mike Mitchell Recycling Depot.

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

The 2020 Take It or Leave It event, scheduled for June 13, was cancelled due to COVID-19. Staff will assess the community need for this event in the future.

CURBSIDE LARGE ITEM PICK-UP

The 2020 Curbside Large Item Pick Up took place from June 15 to 19 (Zone A) and June 22 to 26 (Zone B). 166 MT of garbage went to the landfill, while 12 MT of electronics, and 61 MT of scrap metal were recycled. Mattresses were not accepted for collection in this year's program, as requested by the Contractor.

LARGE ITEM DROP-OFF

The summer Large Item Drop-Off event was cancelled due to COVID-19. The fall Large Item Drop-Off took place on Saturday, September 19 with 203 vehicles participating. Six 40 yard bins were sent to the landfill and two 40 yard bins of scrap metal were recycled.

COVID-19 protocols were followed where residents were asked to self unload items, observe physical distancing, and wear a face covering. "Extra Garbage" bag tags had to be attached to each item prior to the event; staff did not handle tags.

CURBSIDE LEAF PICK-UP

The Curbside Leaf Pick-Up program allows residents to set out bagged leaves at the curb to be picked up and composted. 92 MT of leaves were collected from reusable containers or paper yard waste bags. The program was held from September 30 to October 11, and again from October 28 to November 8.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



Education and outreach events, engagement, and programs were impacted by COVID-19. City staff were unable to deliver the Curbside Waste Education Program, host information booths, or go into schools for presentations between March and December 2020.

Communication through Citylights and social media were also limited, as messaging focused primarily on COVID-19 announcements, guidelines, and restrictions.

With a smaller presence online and in the community, City staff noticed improper waste sorting and set-out as a result. It is important to continue education and outreach in 2021 and beyond to ensure residents are using the waste programs and services correctly, and to create champions within the community.

SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

The City offers presentations for grade four and seven classes. These presentations are based on the Alberta Science Curriculum, with corresponding educational worksheets and optional additional hands-on games and activities.

- Waste and Our World: Grade four students learn about the four streams of waste collected by the City of St. Albert, what happens to waste once it is disposed of and the various diversion programs available.
- Waste and Our Habits: Grade seven students learn about the importance of waste diversion and the impacts of our current throwaway society.
- Green Organics Cart School Program: Schools participating in the program can receive a kick-off or refresher presentation to learn “What Goes In?” the Green Organics Cart. This presentation is also available as a short pre-recorded video.



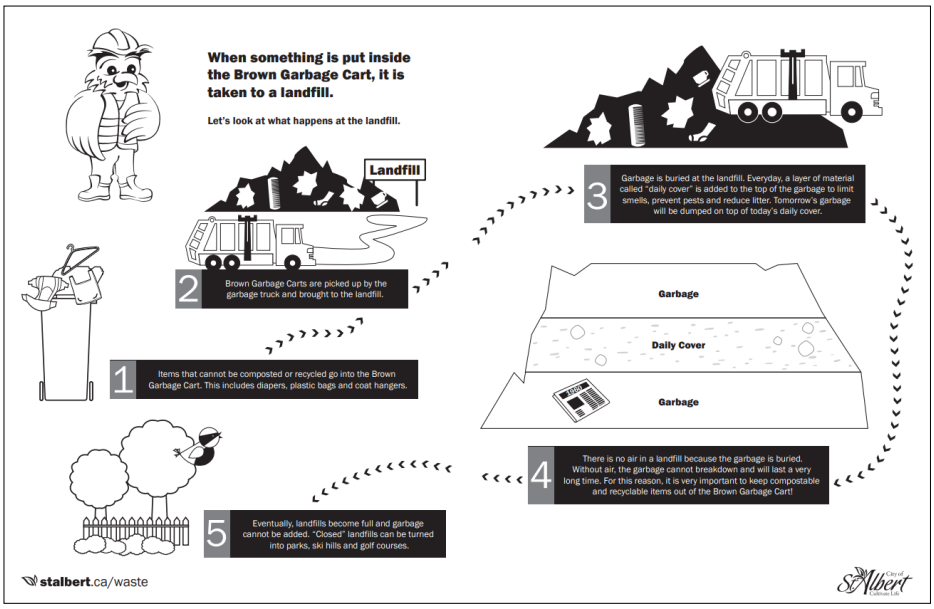


School presentations were modified to be delivered online. 23 presentations were delivered to 1,109 students and teachers.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR CLASSROOMS

City staff developed new hands-on games, and informative activity sheets catered to elementary-aged students. These resources can be used with lesson plans or independently.

All of these tools and resources are available online at stalbert.ca/waste.



CURBSIDE WASTE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Since 2017, the Curbside Waste Education (CWE) Program Team has visited St. Albert neighbourhoods throughout the summer. This Program focuses on educating residents on proper sorting and set-out. Households who have properly sorted and set out their waste receive “Thank You” stickers, while “Oops!” stickers and door knockers are provided to households with incorrect sorting and/or set out.

Due to COVID-19, the CWE Program did not take place in 2020. Staff have noticed increased non-compliance with waste sorting and set-out guidelines since the CWE Program was not delivered this year.



“BE WASTE WISE: GREEN ORGANICS CART” ENGAGEMENT

Based on the observations with reduced education and outreach, Staff conducted a week-long study at the organics processing site, Roseridge Waste Management Services Commission.

This was to determine the common contaminants (unacceptable material) residents were placing in their Green Organics Cart and also to see if incorrect sorting was from specific neighbourhoods. Unacceptable materials (such as garbage or hazardous waste) may increase program costs and lower the quality of the finished compost.

Examples of unacceptable material observed in St. Albert’s organics included plastic bags, food packaging, single-use drink cups, and construction and demolition materials.





In October, the City launched the “Cultivate the Conversation” engagement platform. From October 13 to December 7, this new tool gathered information about how residents use their Green Organics Carts and shared ideas on how the City should address contamination.





The page on the Cultivate the Conversation platform received 1,710 visitors and 133 survey participants.

Staff will use this feedback to develop future education and outreach campaigns, with a focus on reducing contamination in the organics waste stream.

SINGLE USE ITEM REDUCTION STRATEGY

The City's Single Use Item Reduction Strategy (SUIRS) was planned to begin in April 2020. This included education and outreach, public engagement, and research. However, due to COVID-19 all work associated with the SUIRS has been placed on hold.

In October 2020, the Government of Canada announced a plan to achieve zero plastic waste by 2030. This comprehensive plan includes banning some single-use plastic items.

The City will continue to align, collaborate and share ideas with municipalities in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region on reducing single use items.

Staff will continue to closely monitor the Federal Government's plan and determine an appropriate time to launch the City's SUIRS in 2021.



CONCLUSION

In 2020, the Waste & Diversion Programs branch continued to provide excellent services through curbside collection, drop-off locations, and seasonal waste programs while maintaining our service levels.

New hours at both the Mike Mitchell Recycling Depot and Compost Depot allowed staff to provide additional services to residents, and continue to divert waste from the landfill where possible.

While some seasonal programs and education and outreach plans were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, City staff continued to promote waste diversion through online platforms.

Moving forward the City will continue to promote proper waste sorting and reduction, and continue collaborating with surrounding municipalities in Edmonton Region.



