



CITY COUNCIL REPORT

TITLE:

SERVICING OF GREEN BIN DEPOT LOCATIONS

PRESENTER:

Corey Wagner

DEPARTMENT:

Public Works

ATTACHMENTS:

DATE:

2/5/2026

CLEARANCE / APPROVALS:

Todd Burton General Manager

Dave Wardrop City Manager

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the report from administration detailing the proposed options for Green Bin Depot locations and service be received;

And further that:

1. City Council adopts administration's recommendation of not returning the compost bins to depot sites or
2. City Council directs staff to pursue the alternative option of limited compost bin locations and a rental truck for the season.

BACKGROUND:

During budget deliberations it was brought forward by Council for administration to provide a recommendation for green bins at depot locations within the city.

In 2025, the Solid Waste Department provided a total of 23 green bins at 5 depot locations, including 34th Street, Westridge, Rideau Park, Sportsplex, and 1st and Richmond for residents to use. More often than not the material collected from these green bins was not suitable for the intended composting operation. Green bins are often contaminated with unacceptable materials such as non-compostable plastic bags, oversized branches or trees, construction and renovation materials, or refuse. Once the green bins are contaminated the entire contents of the load gets discarded and placed in the landfill cell, using valuable landfill space for materials that should have been diverted. This material is landfilled because introducing even small amounts of contamination into the compost rows runs the risk of the entire windrow being rejected by the lab testing as grade "A" compost, which is required to meet quality assurance requirements to be eligible for funding. In the past, material processed from the depots have seen high levels of plastics and other materials within the lab results, deeming the batch to be discarded after a full season of labour

and equipment time was spent processing the material.

Contaminated loads are also often discarded as unacceptable materials are found buried in bins once collected and dumped on site, which can cause equipment breakdowns when passed through the compost turner, disabling all operations as the department only has one unit to complete this work. The inability to properly turn windrows can result in inconsistent processing and batches not achieving required results. This may result in the batch having to be discarded.

The growth of the City's residential curbside organics program is outstanding, with an estimated 11,000 households voluntarily enrolled. Administration has found that residential green bin materials collected at the curb have a much lower probability of being discarded due to contamination, as compliance through the program is very high.

ANALYSIS:

In order to increase the lifespan of the landfill, improving all diversion efforts, including composting, is a main priority of the solid waste department. Over the past several years it has been identified that the current unstaffed depot sites are not only being abused with high levels of contamination, but are also causing concerns for Council, residents and the Solid Waste Department as complaints received require urgent response to handle messes at depot locations.

In an effort to balance the department's staffing and resource needs and have the ability to increase service at the landfill with the Diversion Depot, administration is recommending the closure of all compost bin depots and the relocation of all compost depot bins to the Eastview Landfill site. The increase in summer hours at the landfill allows residents more flexibility and having access to the free residential diversion depot 7 days a week during the summer months will ensure residents can divert materials. Summer hours are proposed to become effective mid-April.

Since the removal of the bins from depot locations in late Fall of 2025, we have not seen any illegal dumping of materials. Administration is concerned that if depot sites are re-opened, illegal dumping of all types of materials will resume triggering complaints and necessary site cleanups, similar to the past.

Should Council wish for green bin depots to remain open, the recommendation of administration is to eliminate the 34th Street location, as well as the Sportsplex and Rideau park locations. These three locations have the highest levels of contamination, and the most likelihood of loads being landfilled once collected.

The 34th St depot was the number one site for contamination, complaints and discarded bin materials by far. The demands on staff to continually clean the site were far more than the department could provide at times. Often landfill operators with loaders and shuttle trucks would be required as the amount dropped at the site was not manageable to be cleaned by hand.

The Sportsplex is a very busy facility during compost season with a lot of school-related sports activities.

This location also gets unsightly due to misuse and illegal dumping which results in requests for immediate clean up due to scheduled activities. Quite often we were unable to safely service the site when requested due to the high level of congestion caused by students and traffic coming and going all day long.

The Rideau Park location, another location where safety concerns from operators have been brought forward, can be very busy during the summer months with the splash pad located nearby and a large number of children in the area.

If Council chooses to have existing compost depots, administration proposes the Westridge and the 1st and Richmond locations remain open. Capacity could be increased at the Westridge Community Center from 4 to 6 bins and the 1st Street and Richmond location increased from 5 to 6 bins. These two locations are utilized the most and both have the room for increased capacity. They also tend to see the least amount of misuse and contamination, which we hope will continue to be the case should they remain in operation. If depot locations are opened, administration recommends that additional funds for the rental of a front load truck be authorized to be spent, for the 7-month period of April 15th to November 15th, at an estimated cost of \$84,000. Procurement of the rental truck would occur right after Council's decision, in an effort to ensure securing a truck for this season.

Should the proposed depot sites be re-opened, and excessive contamination and misuse is found to be occurring this summer, administration would be prepared to report back to Council to provide an update and have Council revisit the decision.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS:

As the changes proposed for the depots are a service level change, it is required that Council choose to accept or decline the proposal before administration moves forward on implementation.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

The proposed option to remove the depots and moving to one main diversion drop off site aligns with Council's strategic priorities of exploring alternative service delivery models and addressing long term impacts and sustainability of the environment.

This proposal also aligns with the Climate Action Plan and shows the support for the City's commitment to positive environmental practices. Knowing that contamination of the bins is a main issue with the bins located at depots, ultimately contributing to the landfilling of that material, does not align with the priorities set forth within the City. Ensuring diversion of materials is critical and can be achieved through the use of the curbside collection program and the use of the diversion depot at the landfill. These two options ensure environmental impacts are reduced and diversion rates can be increased for the green bin materials, moving forward.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Adopting the proposed removal of the depot locations for green bins will result in a savings for the 2026 budget with a reduction in fuel costs of approximately \$10,000. The rental of a front load truck for 7 months, estimated at \$12,000/month would also not be required, which is currently not in the 2026 operating budget. Additionally, labour and equipment time could be reallocated to completing other landfill tasks to ensure compliance on site.

The City's annual reporting of the success of the compost program has seen a reduction in the qualifying tonnage that is being captured each year, reducing the funding the City is receiving. The City's funding has dropped from between \$70,000-\$80,000, to an average of \$62,000 over the last 3 years. Continued contamination and the need to dispose of materials to the tipping cell, is a factor contributing to the reduction in program funding being received.

With both options administration is recommending not proceeding with purchasing a new front load truck.

RISK ASSESSMENT:

The decision to remove all community depot locations has the potential for green bin material to be landfilled, if residents chose to not divert materials to the Diversion depot or through curbside collection. In order to reduce this risk, the Diversion depot is scheduled to be open 7 days a week in the summer months to ensure residents have access to properly divert materials, such as organics. The availability of the diversion depot, combined with the weekly residential collection program, offers residents several options to properly divert materials as needed.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:

A communication and education strategy will be implemented to ensure a high level of awareness is provided on the compost depot changes proposed, the increased operating hours at the landfill and diversion depot, ensuring residents know of the options for proper diversion of green cart material offered to them. The use of public service announcements, social media messaging and radio and local paper advertisements, are some of the platforms which will also be used to educate and communicate with residents on the changes.

CONCLUSION:

That the report from administration detailing the proposed options for Green Bin Depot locations and service be received as presented by Council and that Council either adopt administration's recommendation of not returning the compost bins to depot sites or Council directs staff to pursue the alternative option of limited compost bin locations and a rental truck for the season.