

# Append 2 - Engagement Summary What We Learned.docx

## *What we Learned Report*

April 25, 2025



## Executive Summary

In September 2024, Saskatoon City Council directed Administration to investigate the possibility of moving the primary waste collection location for the Eastview neighborhood from the back lane to the front street. Hence, the Eastview Waste Collection Location Project (Project) was initiated.

Prior to the launch of the Project, staff at Water and Waste Operations were not aware of any major concerns regarding the service being provided in the Eastview neighbourhood. Since this project only impacted the residents of the Eastview neighborhood, engagement activities were tailored to them.

In this Project, three public engagement tactics were used from January to March 2025 to assess the willingness of residents to support a change in location regarding waste collection. The tactics used were 1) the creation of an Engage page on the City of Saskatoon's website, 2) an online survey, and 3) hosting a virtual open house. To alert residents to the Project an information flyer was mailed out to Eastview households prior to the launch of the engagement phase of the project.

Findings from the online survey include

- 82 per cent of residents want to keep back lane location for waste collection
- 69 per cent of residents are very satisfied with their collection location
- 12 per cent of residents have experienced issues with back lane collection

In total there were 650 responses to the survey; after being sorted for redundancies and incomplete answers 529 surveys were analyzed. The response rate is 36 per cent based on households in Eastview.

Over the course of the Project, 780 visits were made to the Engage page.

On February 12, 2025, over 30 residents attended a virtual open house hosted by City staff. After a presentation, residents were able to share their thoughts on the matter and ask questions. All but one resident who spoke indicated they preferred back lane collection.

The results from the Engagement activities presented in this report will factor into the Administrative report going to Council regarding the outcomes of the Project.

## 1.0 Introduction

In September 2024, Saskatoon City Council directed Administration to investigate the possibility of moving the primary waste collection location for the Eastview neighborhood from the back lane to the front street. Hence, the Eastview Waste Collection Location Project (Project) was initiated. In this Project, three engagement tactics were used to assess the willingness of residents to support a change in location regarding waste collection. The tactics that were used include 1) the creation of an Engage page on the City of Saskatoon's website, 2) an online survey, and 3) hosting virtual open house. Prior to the launch of the engagement activities in January 2025, an information flyer was mailed out to Eastview households. This report serves as the summary of the outcomes from the engagement activities.

## 2.0 Background

The Project team consisted of two staff from Saskatoon Water and Waste Operations, and two staff from Communications and Public Engagement. It is important to note that City of Saskatoon (City) staff are neutral on the matter.

The impetus for this Project was a Councillor enquiry made in June 2024. The Councillor asked in part that

"That the Administration report back on the review process (including community engagement plan) and resources needed to undertake a pilot project for the conversion of the Eastview neighbourhood from rear lane to front street solid waste, recycling and organics cart collection....".

In September 2024, Saskatoon City Council directed Administration to investigate the possibility of moving the primary waste collection location for the Eastview neighborhood from the back lane to the front street.

To-date the City does not have a standardized approach to assessing the collection location of waste carts. Therefore, this project was seen as being somewhat of a test case regarding the level of information needed by residents to express an informed opinion on the matter.

Since this project only impacted the residents of the Eastview neighborhood, engagement activities were tailored to them.

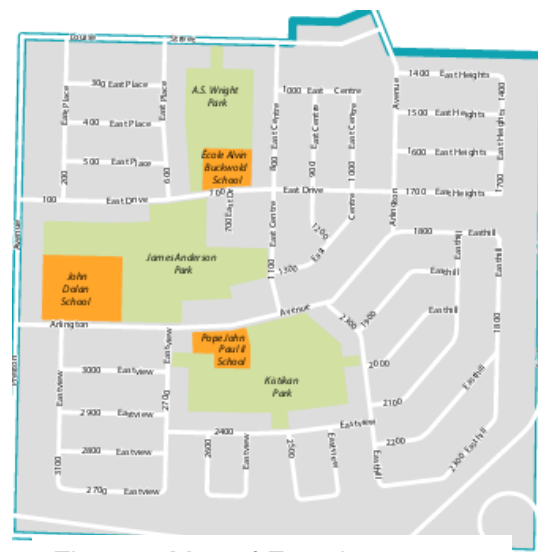


Figure1: Map of Eastview

In 2021, Eastview had 3265 residents with 1,200 dwellings receiving curbside waste collection. Approximately 17 per cent of residents are over the age of 65. Much of the housing development occurred in the 1960's. All streets in Eastview have back lanes, with waste collection location in those back lanes for the vast majority of households. There are some exceptions to this as some households have front street pick up to meet operational needs.

### 3.0 Overview of Engagement Activities

The information flyer was mailed out via Canada Post to households during the week of January 27<sup>th</sup> and provided provide a brief overview of what was happening, how residents could get more information, opportunities to ask questions and express their opinions on the matter (see Appendix A). This is standard practice to provide at least two weeks' advance notice of engagement activities. There were a few households who expressed concerns about receiving the flyer late. It was for this reason that the online survey was reopened for another week. Materials from the virtual open house were posted to the Engage page the day after the event so residents had the opportunity to review the presentation made by City staff and participate in the online survey.

Three engagement tactics were used during this project.

- First is the creation of an Engage page (see <https://www.saskatoon.ca/engage/eastview-waste-collection>) where residents could access information and participate in activities such as accessing the online survey and registering for the virtual open house.
- Second was the use of an online survey that was designed to collect data on residents' thoughts regarding a change in location for waste collection.
- And finally, a virtual open house was held where the City's subject matter experts gave a presentation on waste collection and answered participants questions.

All three tactics provided Eastview residents with information on the matter and allowed for the exchange of ideas.

Residents who did not have access to a computer or did not feel comfortable doing an online survey were encouraged to contact the Customer Service desk for Water and Waste Operations for assistance. The contact information for the service desk was posted on the Engage page and was also available through Customer Care. These responses have been incorporated into this report.

Typically, engagement activities are “measured” by the ability of participants to influence a decision. The City's public engagement spectrum outlines activities and associated levels of participation. In this Project the level participation for residents in both the online survey and during the virtual open house were “involve”. This means there were opportunities for residents to make their views known, and influence staff recommendation(s) made on the matter.

The engagement timeline for the project is as follows

- January 27, 2025 launch of the Project's Engage page
- January 27 to March 5, 2025 online survey open (closed from February 24-26)
- February 12, 2025 virtual open house from 7:00 to 8:30 pm
- Spring 2025, posting of the “What we Learnt Report” on the Engage page

### 4.0 Results from Engagement Activities

This section is divided into two parts: first is a discussion of the results from the online survey. Second is a synopsis and analysis of issues raised by residents at the virtual open house

The online survey consisted of 12 questions - 11 questions related to waste collection location and one question about the survey tool. The survey was designed to eliminate participation from residents from neighbourhoods other than Eastview. The reason for this is that the matter being studied was specific to Eastview and as such should not be unduly influenced by participation from residents who reside elsewhere.

In total 650 people accessed the survey, 25 of these people did not live in Eastview. Of the 625 people who did self-identify as Eastview residents, approximately 529 surveys were completed. There is a difference in the number of surveys submitted and the actual number of surveys analyzed for this report as the survey platform used allows duplicate surveys to be submitted. Staff endeavored to remove duplicate or incomplete surveys.

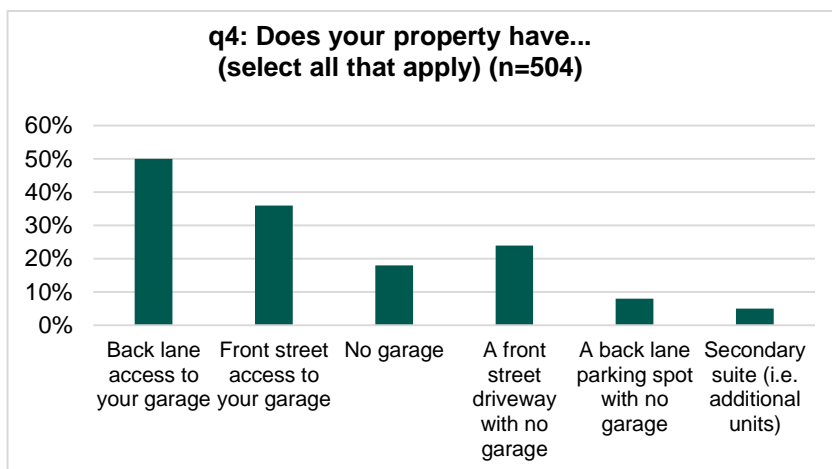
In the following section, questions will have a “n=” which represents the number of responses analyzed. Again, there are slight variations in the response rate due to duplications or participants submitting partial answers. Worth noting is four questions had opportunities for participants to share their ideas/opinions in the form of an open-ended answer. The open-ended answers have been analyzed for themes and summarized where appropriate.

The first two questions in the survey established whether the participant lives or owns property in Eastview. The survey provided a map of the Eastview neighbourhood for participants to use as a reference. Ninety-six per cent of respondents replied “yes”, while the other four per cent did not live in the neighbourhood or did not know which neighbourhood they live in. The second question asked participants to provide their address. This question was optional; and was designed to provide information on – 1) the extent of participation within the neighbourhood, 2) whether there was a pattern of preference for the location of waste collection given the house location (e.g., whether the house is located on a corner, by a park etc.). There was participation throughout the neighbourhood and there were mixed patterns of preference of collection depending on the location of the house. In other words, there were no clear patterns emerging for those wanting front street collection.

Question three asked participants about where they store their waste carts. This graph shows the outcome. Throughout the survey a small percentage of participants expressed concerns over a change in location as they have designed their yard or garage in respect to back lane pick up. This question had an option for respondents to provide more information through an open-ended answer – many of the responses were variations of the selections, there were unique responses in relation to storage in proximity of their garage.



Question four explores the issue of access to the properties in the Eastview neighbourhood. This provides staff with insights into the variation of storage options for residents.



Questions five, six and seven, asked the participants about their preferences regarding the current collection location, if the participants had any issues with back collection and if they identified any specific issue (an open-ended answer).

- **Eighty-six per cent** of the respondents who answered question five (n=511), **are satisfied** with the collection location. Thirteen per cent of respondents or approximately 66 people were not satisfied with the current location.
- **Eighty-eight per cent** of respondents who answered question six (n=451), had **no issues** with back lane collection. For those 12 per cent of participants (62 residents) who have had issues, this includes
  - Cleanliness (for example: tipped carts, inadvertent garbage spills)
  - Scavenging (for example: rummaging through carts, leaving items out for scavenging)
  - Service-level (for example: missed pick up)

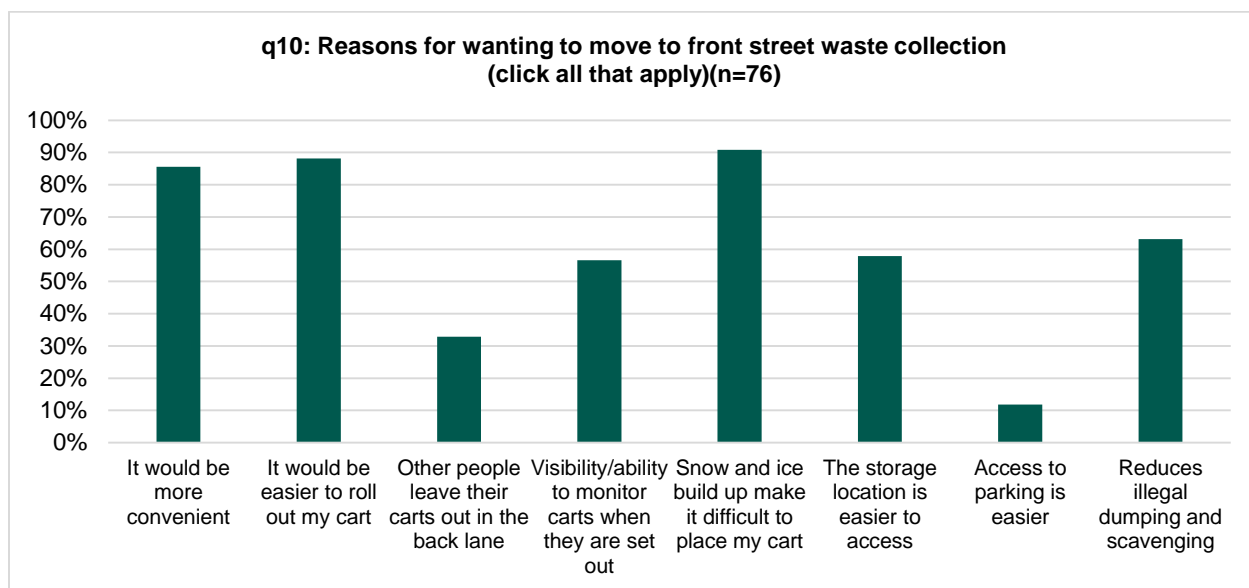
The three most cited issues in question seven were

- 1) Snow or mud impeding the placement of carts (n=35 or 56 per cent)
- 2) Physical barrier to placement of cart due to terrain (n=8 or 13 per cent)
- 3) Physical ability to place carts out (n=6 or 10 per cent)

**Eighty-two per cent** of respondents (n=416) prefer back lane collection. The 15 per cent of respondents (or 76 people) who want front street pick up live throughout Eastview. There were three per cent of respondents who did not express a preference.

Question nine asked “*would you like to see the primary waste collection location for Eastview change from back lane to front street?*”? The results for this question mirrored the results for question eight in that **82 per cent of respondents said no they do not want a change in location**, while 15 per cent said yes to a change in location. With the remaining three percent having no preference.

Seventy-six people filled out the open-ended question, which allow them to share the reasons why they **wanted to move to front street collection**. Reasons included snow build up in the back lane, convenience, and perceived reduction of scavenging. The graph on the following page captures the frequency of the reasons given by respondents.

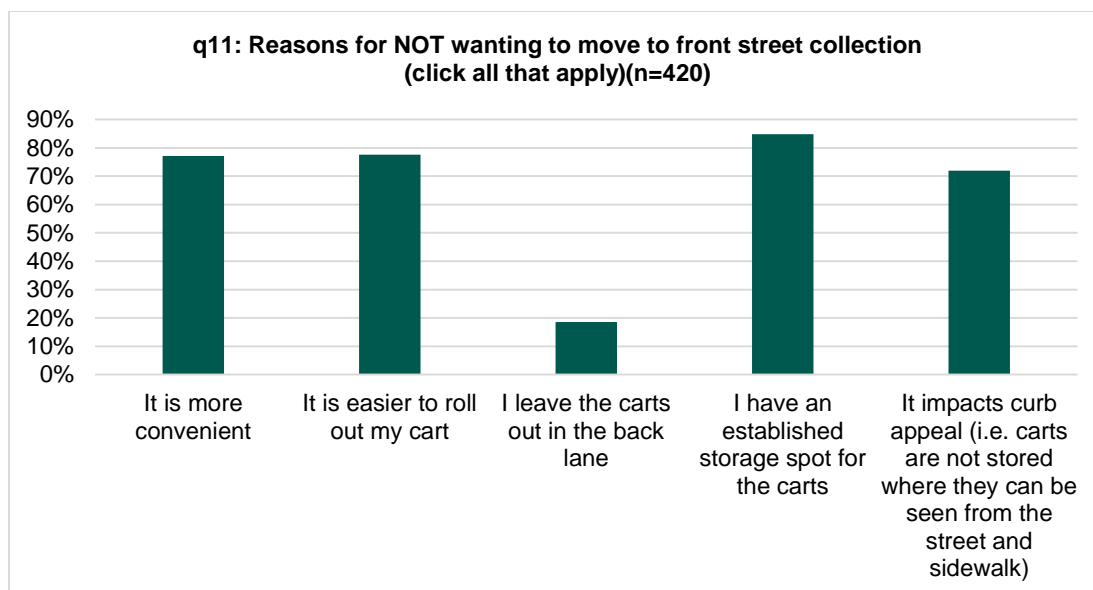


One theme that has emerged throughout the survey was the physical effort it takes to roll out the carts, whether it is impeded by terrain (e.g., slope of driveway or backyard) or by the exertion it takes to physically move a full cart. Increased promotion may be beneficial to increase residents awareness of the service the City offers for those residents that have difficulties with moving carts. The Assisted Waste Collections program is for residents who are physically unable to roll out their waste carts on collection days and do not have someone else living in their home who is capable of doing so. The program includes assistance relocating the black (garbage), blue (recycling) and green (organics) carts to and from the collection location from a predetermined location on the residents' property. This is a free service for residents living in single family homes with curbside waste collection. Residents can find more information on the following website [Assisted Waste Collections](#).

The last question in the survey related to the location of carts, asked respondents why they **did not** want to move to front street collection. Three themes emerged from the answers to the open-ended question

- 1) Lack of set location for carts (for example: snowbanks would prevent the placement of carts)
- 2) Impact on traffic flows (for example: carts taking up space for parking, carts being placed on busy thoroughfares)
- 3) Aesthetics (for example: smell of having carts by the house, visual of having carts on the street)

Respondents also chose answers from a list – see graph next page.



From the survey it can be concluded that the majority of residents who were able to fill out the survey are not in favour of switching to front street collection. Despite the challenges that back lane collection may have – e.g., snow, mud and the occasional missed pick up, residents want to keep back lane collection.

The survey provided staff with insights into how residents view waste location in the Eastview neighbourhood. For future surveys, the findings can be augmented by collecting basic demographic information such as age group as well as number of occupants per household. This information could be analyzed for connections to location preference.

There were some concerns raised over the timing of the survey – i.e., some residents did not receive the information flyer in a timely manner. To address this issue the survey was reopened for another week.

In terms of the design of the survey respondents overwhelmingly thought that the survey was clear and understandable, offered a venue to fully express their opinion plus understood how the information collected is going to be used. Lastly, completion of the survey took a reasonable amount of time.

The second engagement event was the virtual open house that occurred on February 12, 2025 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. There were over 30 attendees along with five staff from the City. Saskatoon Water and Waste Operations made a fifteen-minute presentation, which covered current waste collection information in the Eastview neighbourhood, information regarding front street and back lane collection, and insight into how decisions are made on such matters. The slides from the presentation are in Appendix B.

After the presentation the “floor” was opened to take questions from the attendees. Alternating between live questions and those composed in the Q&A section of the online TEAMS channel, staff ventured to listen to the concerns of residents and answer their questions. The event was originally slated for 60 minutes but due to the number of questions and feedback, it went over the allotted time by thirty minutes.

The following is a summary of the themes that emerged during the question period. Broadly there were three subject areas – 1) procedural matters, 2) issues that would arise if collection was moved to the front street, and 3) general comments about waste.

Two themes emerged in the subject area related to procedural matters – why is this project happening (what prompted it?) and why don't we get a vote on it? Longer term residents recalled that during the 2010's they were asked to vote on the matter. This is interesting as the concept of a vote was not raised in the survey. In response to a call for a vote, City staff made the connection between having residents' voices heard through engagement activities is akin to a vote on the matter.

Many questions and comments shared by residents were regarding their concerns if the location of the collection were to move from back lane to front street. Issues raised included:

- Issues with snow removal both on the street and in the back lane (n=4)
- Issues with on-street parking (n=3)
- Safety concerns with traffic flow being impeded by carts or carts being knocked over by cars (n=9)
- Difficulties with maneuvering carts to the street due to physical abilities (n=5)
- Concerns that back lanes will not be maintained (n=2)
- Yard was designed for back lane pick up (n=3)

The last subject area has to do with residents' concerns about waste in general. Three themes emerged including:

- Concerns about carts being left out, whether it be back lane or front street
- The impact on aesthetics if the collection location was to move to the front
- The smell of the carts, especially in the summer

Reflecting on the virtual open house, there are improvements that could be made – first, such an event relies on residents having the appropriate computer equipment. This may influence who participates and who cannot. At the event we were fortunate that City staff and residents were able to stay longer than the event was scheduled for. In future, planning for more time for questions would be recommended.

## 5.0 Assessment of Engagement

The engagement activities planned for the Project were well implemented and produced information that City staff can use to inform reports for decision makers. Both the survey and the virtual open house had good participation rates which in turn lends itself to good information that reflect residents' views.

## Appendix A: Information Flyer mailed to Eastview Residents

January 27, 2025

# Eastview Waste Collection Location

## OVERVIEW

In June 2024, Saskatoon City Council directed administration to investigate the possibility of moving the primary waste collection location for the Eastview neighborhood from the back lane to the front street.

We would appreciate your time completing a short survey because your household is in the Eastview neighborhood where we are exploring this option.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please tell us how the change in waste collection location would impact you. A short survey is online at: [saskatoon.ca/eastviewcollection](https://saskatoon.ca/eastviewcollection). We want to understand what your waste collection location preference would be, as well as any opportunities and challenges that you face with your waste collection.

## NEXT STEPS

A virtual information session is being held on February 12th where City staff will present information and take questions. To join the virtual information session, please go to the project's engage page [saskatoon.ca/eastviewcollection](https://saskatoon.ca/eastviewcollection). On the engage page, you will also find a link to the survey. Please take time to fill out the survey and share your views on this matter.

## BACKGROUND

The City has identified it is typically more efficient, safe and that there are less waste bylaw infractions when waste carts are collected from the front street rather than from back lanes. Criteria impacting collection efficiency and safety in the back lanes include:

- Permanent obstructions (trees, utilities, property obstructions)
- Limited lines of sight and maneuverability
- Risks caused by snow and ice conditions
- Degradation of back lane conditions causing increased lane maintenance
- Difficult cart placement due to slopes and shoulders
- Higher rates of waste carts being left out, litter, illegal dumping, and scavenging

The proposed change to the cart collection location would impact approximately 1,200 properties.



Customer Care Centre | 306-975-2476 | [waste@saskatoon.ca](mailto:waste@saskatoon.ca)



January 27, 2025

## Eastview Waste Collection Location

We acknowledge that changing the waste collection location is not a small decision and will affect each resident differently. All input will be considered and is meaningful in helping to make an informed decision. It is important that we hear back from every resident to ensure the wishes of the entire neighborhood are captured. While community input is an important factor, the decision will also consider operational, safety and financial impacts.

### HOW WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE USED?

City Administration will review the feedback and present a recommendation about collection locations to the Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services Committee in 2025.

For more information on waste collection, please visit [saskatoon.ca/waste](https://saskatoon.ca/waste).

To learn more about back lane maintenance, visit [saskatoon.ca/backlanes](https://saskatoon.ca/backlanes).

**Appendix B**

**PowerPoint Presentation given at the virtual open house.**

*Click on the slide below and the deck will open for you in a pdf.*

