



St. Clements

The place to be

Changes to Waste Disposal Fees

Summary of campaign & public consultation results

April 29, 2021

Background

In an effort to maintain the quality and affordability of living in St. Clements, and, to avoid an increase to property taxes, the RM of St. Clements made the decision in 2020 to introduce changes to its waste disposal fees. This is the first fee increase considered in over a decade and would help address rising infrastructure costs and meet new environmental standards at a time when sources of non-tax revenue and provincial funding has decreased.

Opting for increases in user fees was considered the best solution because it would ensure that a larger share of the cost for waste management services is paid by those who use those services the most. The changes also shift a greater proportion of waste management fees onto non-residents and commercial users who would now pay the same fees under the new by-law.

While the proposed changes and fee increases outlined in [By-Law No. 01-2020](#) received first reading at a Council meeting on January 7, 2020 and were then introduced to residents, formal project launch plans were put on hold given the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 30, 2021, the campaign was officially re-launched to residents throughout the RM with a target date for changes to come into effect of August 1, 2021.

Engagement

The campaign was designed to target all residents, particularly those using the transfer stations and landfill, as well as commercial haulers. The main objectives of the campaign included the following:

- Create awareness of the proposed changes to waste management fees;
- Build understanding of rationale for the changes, including how proposed changes reflect Council's commitment to affordability for residents and are part of a comprehensive plan for core services (articulated in St. Clements' strategic plan);
- Create opportunity for resident feedback, questions and suggestions to be considered prior to second and third reading of the by-law in late April, 2021.

These objectives were executed through the following tactics and channels:

- Posted revised project information to designated page on **RM website** (received 47 views);
- Posted five informative posts to **RM Facebook** (reach of over 4,095 people);
- Issued a **news release** that was posted on the RM website (downloaded 48 times);
- Issued a **Connect notice** to the community (861 emails sent, 674 read);
- Included information in the **April RM newsletter** (2,426 delivered, opened 1,525 times, link to waste management webpage clicked 45 times);
- **Handouts and signage on-site** occurred at the Landfill and Transfer Stations with handouts given to all attending customers;
- Mailed **letter to 28 commercial haulers**;

- **FAQ & messages** provided to council and staff.

Results

The RM received a total of 69 responses from residents either via email, phone or through social media. All feedback was inputted into Service Tracker for easy analysis and reporting. Of the feedback received, 13 expressed support for the proposed changes, 37 residents expressed concerns, and many 19 provided general comments or suggestions for other improvements or changes for waste management services.

What we heard:

<p>Support for proposal included:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fee increase is reasonable/fair, particularly as fees have been unchanged for 10+ years • Support for increased fees for commercial and non-residents, including support for even higher increases than tabled • Support for fee increases for residents generally, but also suggestions for ways to make this more appealing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allowing one free bag of garbage per week ○ Phasing in increases in fees (e.g., \$0.25 at a time) ○ Reduction in fee increase proposed (e.g., \$1.50 per bag) ○ Consider potential for residents with reduced incomes due to COVID • Making waste disposal more cost effective overall through partnership and collaboration with neighbouring municipalities (e.g., group pricing, grants from other levels of government) • Support for increased fees is contingent on seeing improved environmental/recycling programs • Support for increase, but concerned about potential for more illegal dumping
<p>Concerns over the proposal included:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed rate increase is too high, specifically for bag disposal • Concern that residents receive very few services for taxes paid (this view was predominant among respondents that are seasonal residents in the northern part of the RM) • Bag disposal should be free, specifically for those who do not have garbage pick-up • Concerns fee increase will lead to increase in illegal dumping • Some felt an increase in/inclusion with property taxes would be a better option.
<p>Other ideas for improvement:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crack down on illegal dumping • Explore wood chipping and composting services, particular given backyard composting can attract wildlife in rural/cottage areas • Improve options for hazardous waste disposal (e.g., accept at transfer stations) • Expand options for bulky waste disposal (e.g., quarterly pick up)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand focus on recycling (e.g., incentives for recycling, garbage and recycling pick up for more residents, modeling after Winnipeg’s 4R Depots) • Improve conditions and professionalism at landfill and transfer stations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E-cards or other improved card, receipt and tracking options ○ Power at sites, enhanced working conditions
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In addition to the above themes, various viewpoints were shared on transfer stations. This included support for closing transfer stations, particularly in the south where there is garbage and recycling pick-up available (Clark Road or Dunning Road were suggested), as well as respondents seeking assurance that transfer stations would remain open, particularly in the north. Some offered other suggestions to achieve efficiencies such as opening transfer stations in close proximity to each other on a limited/alternate schedule.

RM response to input received

The RM would like to thank residents for their input. After reviewing the comments, questions and input received, St. Clements is responding to feedback received in the following ways:

Fee changes beginning August 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fee changes will be implemented August 1, 2021 and a review scheduled for February 2022 in time for the next budget cycle.
Action on illegal dumping & litter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RM will review existing By-Law 4-2008 related to illegal dumping to address what more can be done to enforce against this practice. - Residents may notify the RM of illegal dumping in ditches so a crew can be sent to clean it up. Residents are advised to contact the Province directly at 204-346-6266 if illegal dumping or litter is noted along highways or provincial roads. - Each spring when seasonal staff and green team students are hired, we focus on litter picking at the landfill and transfer stations. - The RM works in partnership with local non-profits and schools on litter clean up and is open to discussions with community groups who may be interested in contributing to a greener, cleaner community. - The RM partners with the Red River Operation Clean Up (RROC) to help reduce the debris left along the banks of the Red River and enhance the water quality.
Easier safe disposal of hazardous material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A free, Household Hazardous Waste Depot will be opening at the Libau landfill on June 1, 2021. This will allow residents to safely dispose of flammables, corrosives, fluorescent lights and paint.

<p>Continued improvement in recycling and environmental stewardship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since 2015, household recycling in the RM has more than doubled. We have partnerships with several environmental stewardships that divert other recyclable or harmful materials from the waste stream such as electronics, batteries, metal, used oil, pesticide containers, ozone depleting substances and tires. - Council has approved the RM's participation in a woody waste pilot project. Logistics are being discussed with more information to come.
<p>Improving on-site conditions and administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This year's budget includes designated funds to connect the Clarke and Gull Lake transfer stations to hydroelectricity. - Waste tracking card improvements are being made with a reissue of these cards expected later this year. More info to come. - Receipts for fees paid are available from landfill and transfer station attendants upon request.

As these changes move forward, the RM will continue to provide updates and seek input from residents on improvements to waste management services.