



Standing Committee Report Electoral Area Services Committee

To: Electoral Area Services Committee
From: Travis Kendel, Director of Engineering Services
Date: September 4, 2025
Subject: Transfer Station Improvements – Options and Financial Implications

Objective: To present an options framework for improvements to the Trader's Cove and North Westside Transfer Stations, reflecting community feedback, financial implications, and operational feasibility.

Discussion:

The RDCO operates two rural transfer stations in Electoral Area West: Trader's Cove (TC) and North Westside (NWS). Both facilities serve as critical waste management infrastructure. Recent delegations, correspondence, and past community engagement have raised safety concerns, dissatisfaction with service limitations, and offered improvement suggestions.

Historically, North Westside residents have indicated a preference for staffed transfer stations versus curbside collection. The rationale for the transfer station preference is familiarity, centralized access, reduced potential for animal attraction, and the ability to drop off recyclables and yard waste in a controlled environment.

On June 5, 2025, the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC) received a staff report summarizing transfer station improvements and perceived safety concerns. This report outlines an options framework for improvements to the Trader's Cove and North Westside Transfer Stations, with associated funding needs and an estimated magnitude of impact on user fees.

The options presented in Table 1 are structured to build upon one another and correspond to escalating financial implications. Given the widespread concerns about affordability, initially selecting an option with a lower financial impact may foster greater community support by minimizing financial strain, while simultaneously facilitating enhancements in service delivery and laying the groundwork for future service expansion.

Options Framework and Link to Public Feedback

Each option below reflects a progressive response to received community input, and more detail is available in Table 1.

- **Status Quo** addresses raised perceived safety concerns through the existing service contract
- **Option A** provides simple, low-cost improvements (expanded hours and additional attendant staff)
- **Option B** responds to cited restrictions (congestion and material acceptance)

- **Option C** incorporates infrastructure upgrades aligned with opinions expressed through delegations

Table 1 – Tiered Options

Option	Scope	Benefits	Missed Opportunities
Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain current service levels and hours • Address all safety concerns (e.g., yard waste chute, potholes). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest cost • Addresses safety issues • Avoid tax increases associated with service improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address service level concerns (e.g., hours, service expansion) • May not satisfy community association expectations
Option A Status Quo + Minor Enhancements	All of Status quo, plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended TC hours in April • Expand yard waste capacity in May • Additional NWS Attendant, Jun-Aug • Land Acquisition (NWS & TC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower cost • Extends hours to expectations • Enhances Fire Smarting • Enables future site expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address all service level concerns (e.g., congestion) • May not satisfy community association expectations • Acquires land, but does not expand site footprint
Option B Targeted Service Enhancements	All of Option A, plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited 'Yard Waste' site expansion (NWS & TC) • Eliminate yard waste 'limits' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds directly to the top resident request • Improves site functionality and user experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires larger rate increase
Option C Full Site Expansion & Modernization	All of Option B, plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility connections (electricity, internet) • Full site expansion (NWS & TC) • Cardboard compactor (NWS) • Washroom facilities • RFID access control (TC) • Paving at NWS • Food Waste Collection (NWS & TC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future proofs both facilities • Enables composting and other advanced services • Aligns with community association requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest cost and tax impact • May have low public support for tax increases (13–14% in Electoral Areas) • Requires phased implementation

Recent community association delegations referenced there is community capacity and willingness to support and fund improvements. Those delegations relayed several concerns, which are detailed in Table 2, and are compared against the progressively tiered service options presented in this report within Table 1. These delegations relayed several concerns which are detailed in Table 2, and are compared against the progressively tiered service options presented in this report in Table 1.

Table 2 – Comparison of community concerns and progressive servicing options.

	STATUS QUO	Option A	Option B	Option C
Safety Concerns <i>(all locations)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pot Holes <i>(all locations)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bin Replacement <i>(NWS)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Extended Hours <i>(TC)</i>	✗	✓	✓	✓
Additional Attendant <i>(NWS)</i>	✗	✓	✓	✓
Extra Yard Waste <i>(All locations)</i>	✗	✓	✓	✓
Aquire Land <i>(All locations)</i>	✗	✓	✓	✓
Yard Waste Expansion <i>(all locations)</i>	✗	✗	✓	✓
Full Site Expansion <i>(All locations)</i>	✗	✗	✗	✓
Cardboard Compactor <i>(NWS)</i>	✗	✗	✗	✓
Washrooms <i>(NWS)</i>	✗	✗	✗	✓
Access Control <i>(All locations)</i>	✗	✗	✗	✓
Full Utilities <i>(All locations)</i>	✗	✗	✗	✓
Paving <i>(All locations)</i>	✗	✗	✗	✓
Food Waste <i>(All locations)</i>	✗	✗	✗	✓
Security Monitoring <i>(All locations)</i>	✗	✗	✗	✓
RATE CHANGE	No Change	\$10 - \$20	\$25 - \$60	\$65 - \$160

In the past, North Westside residents considered curbside collection services comparable to those services provided in urban areas. North Westside residents have indicated a preference for maintaining transfer stations due to familiarity, centralized access, potentially reducing animal attraction, and providing a controlled environment for dropping off recyclables and yard waste. At that time, it was observed that transfer station costs would be higher than those for curbside collection. If the tiered service options proposed in this report are implemented, the delta of the cost premium over curbside collection will grow.

Table 3 below includes annual rate adjustments required in 2026 and expected capital contributions to implement the presented options.

Table 3 – Cost estimates, not including inflationary adjustments

	Annual User Fee Adjustment (2026)	
	Operating Cost	Capital Cost
Status Quo	No Change	-
Option A (Minor Service Enhancements)	\$10 - \$20 per household	-
Option B (Targeted Service Enhancements)	\$25 - \$60 per household	\$200,000
Option C (Full Site Expansion and Modernization)	\$65 - \$160 per household	\$650,000*

**\$450,000 of the \$650,000 is assumed to be debt funded and added to User Fees.*

Table 1 does not include any adjustment for inflation. Inflation is estimated to be an additional \$46/HH as of 2025. This includes escalation in landfill tipping fees, contract expenses, salaries, and other baseline expenses that have increased since the last rate change in 2016.

EASC endorsement of a Service Level Option (Status Quo, A, B, or C) will provide direction to staff on how to develop the 2026-2030 Financial Plan and associated bylaw amendments to service fees.

To fund these service enhancements and prepare for the future, the EASC may wish to defer a rate change by temporarily funding additional operating expenses through the operating reserve in 2026 and 2027. Reserve balances as of 2025 are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 – Reserve Balances for EA East and West Waste Collection

Reserve Type	Value (2025)
Operating	\$401,000
Capital	\$236,000

Staff recommend limiting the use of the operating reserve to a maximum of two years. The remaining funds would be available to maintain service levels through unforeseen challenges, and to 'bridge the gap' when service contracts are renewed in 2029. Increased contract expenses likely will occur in 2029.

Prior to 2028, staff plan to bring forward a comprehensive user fee review for all utility services to the EASC for endorsement before proceeding to the Board. Reviewing future rate adjustments at that time enables the EASC to consider the total and cumulative impact of all service rate adjustments.

Next Steps:

Staff recommend that the EASC consider a phased approach, starting with Option A, and exploring Options B and C in the future. This path minimizes immediate financial burden on rate payers while also enabling future expansion and service improvement.

Option A would include extending Trader's Cove Transfer Station operating hours in April, adding an additional North Westside Transfer Station attendant in June through August, and support community Fire Smarting efforts. It would also provide direction to staff to investigate the acquisition or use of land and prepare to expand the Transfer Station sites in the future.

Operating reserves for this service are shared and funded by all Electoral Area Residents receiving Waste Collection Services, including those on curbside collection. Should the EASC defer consideration of rate changes, additional operating expenses (approximately \$30,000/yr) could be funded from the operating reserve. The use of the operating reserve, if limiting funding to \$30,000/yr for two years, is low risk. Extending use of the operating reserve beyond this may compromise business continuity and result in sharp increases to user fees in 2029 when renewing service contracts.

Should the use of operating reserves to fund additional expenses not be supported, staff would prepare and bring forward a bylaw amendment to fund the endorsed service improvements.

Recommendation(s):

- **Option A - Operating Reserve Funded** (Staff Recommendation)

THAT the Electoral Area Services Committee endorse Option A, as outlined within the Report from the Associate Director of Engineering Services dated September 4, 2025

AND THAT the Electoral Area Services Committee endorse the use of operating reserves in 2026 and 2027 to fund Option A within the 2026-2030 Financial Plan, as outlined within the report from the Associate Director of Engineering dated September 4, 2025.

OR

- **Option A - Change User Fees**

THAT the Electoral Area Services Committee endorse Option A, as outlined within the Report from the Associate Director of Engineering Services dated September 4, 2025

AND THAT the Electoral Area Services Committee endorse a service rate change to fund the Waste Collection Service within the West Electoral Area and East Electoral Area, and request that staff prepare a bylaw amendment for Board consideration.

Respectfully submitted by: Travis Kendel, Associated Director of Engineering Services

Report Approved by: Danielle Noble-Brandt, Director of Development & Engineering Services

Approved for Agenda: Sally Ginter, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment(s): 1. Transfer Station Improvements Presentation
