

# **Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY**



***There is a solid waste management crisis in Saskatchewan.*** Saskatchewan has the highest number of landfills in the country by a significant margin while also alarmingly having the lowest diversion rates. This should not continue and therefore requires serious intervention to reverse the trend.

## Executive Summary:

In the summer of 2018, the Minister of Environment (the Minister) established a Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee (the Committee) and tasked the Committee with leading the development and implementation of a public consultation plan with a representative sample of relevant stakeholders. The Committee was asked to use these consultations to inform recommendations to the Minister regarding the draft Solid Waste Management Strategy (drafted by the Ministry of Environment in March 2018) and the reduction of red tape related to *The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations* (MRMR). Committee members included:

- **Richard Porter (Chair)** – Former RM Reeve, Former RM Councillor, Former SARM Director
- **Gordon Barnhart** – SUMA President, Town of Saltcoats Councillor, Former Lieutenant Governor
- **Dan Cugnet** – Saskatchewan-based Businessman and Entrepreneur, RM of Weyburn Councillor
- **Rennie Harper** – Mayor of Town of Nipawin & Boreal Area Regional Waste Authority Board Member
- **Randall Johnson** – Waste Disposal & Recycling Company Owner/Operator
- **Ray Orb** – SARM President, RM of Cupar Reeve

Public consultations held at six locations across the province were well attended. Simultaneously additional feedback was received through written submissions and an online survey focused specifically on reduction of red tape for MRMR. See Appendix C for detailed information regarding consultations and a summary of all feedback provided.

Attendees shared passionately and openly the serious concerns and challenges municipalities are facing as related to managing landfills and providing solid waste management in every community. It was evident a majority of municipalities carry a heavy burden when it comes to dealing with solid waste. Many, if not all, do not have the capacity or resources (financial & human) required to deliver the effective solid waste management required throughout the province. Municipalities expressed concerns of the substantial liabilities that exist with landfills which are beyond, or coming close to, the end of useful life as well as the massive capital overhead that comes with decommissioning. Addressing these liabilities and increasing future capacity through expansion and new construction comes with significant resource requirements. When asked if municipalities wanted to be in the landfill business, the majority replied, “No”. Only out of necessity are many municipalities building, operating and maintaining landfills. It appears that given a choice, most would rather focus limited time and resources on other community priorities.

There was strong acknowledgement by everyone consulted that diversion is the path forward to improving what has been deemed a dire situation. Attention is required to shift solid waste management from a negative impact to something much more positive. Landfills must become a less significant component of a solid waste management system with increased focus on diversion opportunities, which provides economic as well as environmental benefits to the Province of Saskatchewan.

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*An initial target could be to have the number of landfills total 10% of the number of municipalities in the province.*

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The following ten recommendations are provided with a positive view for striving to decrease the number of landfills in Saskatchewan while clearly shifting the focus to diversion. Simultaneously recommendations address other related issues that are barriers to effective solid waste management in Saskatchewan. The following recommendations form the focus for a more defined solid waste management strategy in Saskatchewan while also addressing red tape as it relates to MRMR.

1. *Modernization of regulations based on best practices learned from other jurisdictions.*
2. *Establishment and consistent enforcement of a new set of Saskatchewan standards and guidelines which are clear, reasonable and risk-based.*
3. *Review of roles, skills and capacity required for Environmental Protection Officers (EPOs) in Saskatchewan to ensure consistent enforcement and timely response for municipalities.*
4. *The roles of REGULATOR and ADVISOR are conflicting roles – the Ministry is strongly encouraged to focus on fulfilling the role of regulator while ensuring the advisory role is filled in an alternate way.*
5. *Creating options for advancing regional collaboration, thereby reducing the number of landfills while increasing sustainability and affordability over the long-term.*
6. *Increasing achievable diversion and recycling opportunities in Saskatchewan thereby reducing the number of landfills while simultaneously facilitating a transition to sustainable solid waste management facilities.*
7. *Review, analyze and realign limited Ministry resources to ensure greater priority on supporting solid waste management throughout Saskatchewan.*
8. *Creation of a framework to enable and encourage innovation in waste management practices, technologies and market development, thereby ensuring long-term sustainability.*
9. *Immediate development of a mandatory provincial public education campaign involving the Ministry, municipalities, SARM, SUMA and other stakeholder organizations.*
10. *Establishment of an independent and autonomous entity to provide solid waste management operations, management, advocacy and training for Saskatchewan municipalities.*

***It has often been said that with challenge comes opportunity.*** Collaboration will be imperative to creating a cultural shift towards sustainable solid waste management in Saskatchewan. By working collaboratively, liabilities can be turned into assets through leveraging Saskatchewan's entrepreneurial spirit. This will clearly require aligned priorities, consistent and clear communication, resources (both financial and human), and the willingness to work together to achieve better outcomes.

***The change must begin immediately.*** See Appendix B for a recommended implementation path with associated timelines for advancing these recommendations. Conversations must revert to action to focus on this urgent provincial issue and protection of our environment for future generations to come.



## RECOMMENDATION #1

*"The MRMR is very out of date, uses archaic terminology and doesn't make much sense. It does not provide much guidance for municipalities."*

### **Modernization of regulations based on best practices learned from other jurisdictions.**

#### **Rationale:**

Saskatchewan municipalities identified the need for a fair, predictable, effective and efficient regulatory environment in the Province in regard to solid waste management. *The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations* are more than 30 years-old. The regulations are out of date in addressing past and present solid waste management issues and the opportunities Saskatchewan is currently and will be facing into the future. The old regulations utilize archaic terminology and provide little direction in terms of expectations for effective solid waste management. This inadequacy of direction leads to lack of consistent practice and difficulty with clear interpretation.

During consultations, Saskatchewan municipalities consistently requested clear direction and expectations for good solid waste management throughout the province, while retaining some flexibility.

#### **Specific Considerations:**

Potential considerations and actions related to this recommendation include:

- Immediate action to put a hold on enforcement of existing regulations.
- Reviewing comparable jurisdictions that have more recently updated their solid waste management legislation and regulations for guidance. Example jurisdictions could include Alberta, Manitoba and Montana.
- Specifying that a thorough regulation review process will occur consistently every five (5) years to ensure remaining current with evolving solid waste management needs and practices.
- Establishing a formal appeals process with independent representation to address valid disagreements in decisions between the Ministry and municipalities.



## RECOMMENDATION #2

*“There is a lot of inconsistency in what people are told and what is enforced because we do not have clear SK standards and guidelines. The rules keep changing.”*

### **Establishment and consistent enforcement of a new set of Saskatchewan standards and guidelines which are clear, reasonable and risk-based.**

#### **Rationale:**

A primary concern presented repeatedly to the Committee during consultations with municipalities was the need for clear and consistent Saskatchewan standards and guidelines. Guidelines and standards are required to ensure consistency in designing, constructing, operating and decommissioning a landfill. Currently the Ministry sanctions “best practice” from any jurisdiction, often referring municipalities to Alberta or Manitoba’s standards and guidelines. Standards and requirements should be risk-based to focus limited resources on high-risk issues. Priorities should be where there is high environmental risk of existing landfill contents with possibility of leaching out of a containment area and contaminating surrounding soils and hydrology systems. Development and operating requirements should be based on level of risk assessed.

Without essential reference documents in place for Saskatchewan, there is inconsistency in terms of information provided and enforced. This leaves too much open to interpretation. Therefore, municipalities report that the rules often change during the process.

Municipalities repeatedly reiterated the need for clear, reasonable and easily understood Saskatchewan standards and guidelines. This will ensure that all parties (i.e. the Ministry, municipalities, third-party contractors) have the same clear understanding of expectations. This may be a way to remove the subjectiveness of the process from Ministry staff and municipalities, to minimize impacts of leadership and staff changes, and to create a consistent strategy and framework for good decision making.

#### **Specific Considerations:**

Potential considerations and actions related to this recommendation include:

- Reviewing comparable jurisdictions that use standards and guideline manuals for solid waste management to learn from and then customize for Saskatchewan.
- Developing tools, templates and blueprints for municipalities to more easily, efficiently and affordably design, construct, operate and maintain landfill facilities. Municipalities should not have to start from scratch everytime, nor should the Ministry.
- Including requirement for landfill operators to have training and certification.
- Considering requiring municipalities to have reserve funds for operational landfills to be prepared for future decommissioning costs.

## RECOMMENDATION #3

*"We have had 10 different EPOs in 10 years. This makes it very difficult as we are always starting new relationships and each EPO has a different approach."*

### **Review of role, skills and capacity required for Environmental Protection Officers (EPOs) in Saskatchewan to ensure consistent enforcement and timely response for municipalities.**

#### **Rationale:**

Currently Environmental Protection Officers (EPOs) inconsistently enforce across the province. The current regulations allow for too much interpretation and, without Saskatchewan standards and guidelines in place to set clear and consistent expectations, there is too much opportunity for error.

Currently only four EPOs are available to service the entire province of Saskatchewan. This results in unacceptable turnaround times for municipalities to their inquiries and processing of applications. There appears to be significant "churn" or "turnover" in EPOs, making it challenging for relationship-building between the municipality and the EPO. It results in interpretations and expectations changing regularly for municipalities based on who they are dealing with at the time.

It is acknowledged that this is an important and demanding role which has perhaps contributed to the challenge to retain EPOs. It could be that more experience and training is required to be well equipped to consistently deliver this important role.

#### **Specific Considerations:**

Potential considerations and actions related to this recommendation include:

- Conducting a detailed review of the existing role description for an EPO to ensure it fully addresses the needs of Saskatchewan municipalities, the Ministry and the Province.
- Reviewing skills, competencies and experience qualifications to ensure they align with the requirements and complexities that come with this role.
- Defining service standards and expectations for EPOs in their dealings and communications with municipalities.
- Assessing the number of EPOs that are required in the province to accommodate the defined service standards.

## RECOMMENDATION #4

*"We haven't heard back from our EPO in a month. We need direction and more information so we don't risk being non-compliant."*

***The roles of REGULATOR and ADVISOR are conflicting roles – the Ministry is strongly encouraged to focus on fulfilling the role of regulator while ensuring the advisory role is filled in an alternative way.***

### **Rationale:**

In addition to compliance and enforcement provided by the Ministry, Saskatchewan municipalities noted repeatedly that a gap currently exists in accessing advice and support related to solid waste management. Because of the complexities and challenges that exist, and the limited guidance information provided, municipalities are requesting more advice, education and support in the pursuit of solid waste management.

There has been discussion about the possibility of the EPOs functioning in a dual role as a regulator and advisor. It appears that EPOs are currently not able to keep up with regulatory requirements. This observation is based on the poor turnaround times being experienced by all municipalities. It is suggested that the two roles could be viewed as conflicting. The question is asked, "how does one remain objective to regulate while also providing consistent advice?"

### **Specific Considerations:**

Potential considerations and actions related to this recommendation include:

- The Ministry must continue to focus on holding the role of regulator and increasing its service standards in dealing with municipalities.
- Increased advisory, education and support for municipalities needs to be addressed. Identify options for how this role and support could be provided.
- If an Advisory Committee were to be considered as a potential option, it is important to keep in mind that the Advisory Committee may be somewhat ineffective as it lacks authority.
- Refer to Recommendation #10 for a potential model for how the advisor role could be delivered.



## RECOMMENDATION #5

*“Regionalization doesn’t make sense for all municipalities. Collaborative partnerships are often a better solution.”*

**Creating options for advancing regional collaboration, thereby reducing the number of landfills while increasing sustainability and affordability over the long-term.**

### Rationale:

Based on consultations, there is general agreement that more collaboration is required to ensure a viable and sustainable approach to solid waste management in Saskatchewan. The status quo approach is deemed neither sustainable nor affordable.

Existing liabilities are a significant barrier to collaboration. There are concerns, however, in the regional approach including, but not limited to: financial costs, increased hauling increases costs and impacts on highways and grid roads, and decommissioning requirements. Municipalities do not want to be forced into a “one size fits all solution”.

The Province should consider providing incentives to ensure regional collaboration. “Regional” should not be narrowly defined as an equity partner in an authority. There must be affordable options for municipalities through collaborative partnerships, including just being a customer. In addition, partnerships could include urban and rural municipalities, First Nations and the private sector. However, the current misalignment between provincial and federal solid waste management strategies and associated funding is a barrier to partnerships between municipalities and First Nations.

### Specific Considerations:

Potential considerations and actions related to this recommendation include:

- Determining how to reduce barriers for municipalities in becoming part of a regional collaboration. For example, municipalities are concerned about liability exposure related to decommissioning closed landfills.
- Providing frameworks, guidelines and tools to support regional authorities in getting established and managed.
- There needs to be increased advocacy and collaboration between the provincial and federal governments in terms of solid waste management strategy and associated funding.
- The Federal Government funding framework for First Nations solid waste management needs to be realigned to allow for funding to support off-reserve facilities that First Nations may be contributing to or accessing.
  - The Province must emphasize the current funding system does not support municipalities and First Nations that want to collaborate. First Nations need to be able to contribute capital funding to off-reserve facilities.
  - Refer to Recommendation #7 for further expansion on this priority.

## RECOMMENDATION #6

*"The increase in waste disposal has been extreme. We need to do more recycling and divert waste from the landfills. We can't just keep digging more holes."*

**Increase achievable diversion and recycling opportunities in Saskatchewan, thereby reducing the number of landfills while simultaneously facilitating transition to sustainable solid waste management facilities.**

### Rationale:

Saskatchewan has one of, if not the highest, rates of waste generation among the provinces combined with among the lowest diversion rates. There is strong acknowledgement that diversion is a critical component of solid waste management. It is agreed that more needs to be done to keep waste out of landfills through reducing, reusing and recycling. This recommendation focuses on increasing diversion to facilitate a shift to long-term solid waste management facilities capable of value-added propositions.

Saskatchewan's geographic and demographic challenges result in increased hauling costs, low volumes and small markets. These factors make it a real challenge for diversion and recycling programs in Saskatchewan to be accessible and affordable. However, this cannot stop us from advancing forward on important diversion and recycling efforts. There is a strong opportunity to target initiatives that are achievable and will have the most impact to extending the life of landfills in the province.

There has been little emphasis to date on the organics side of diversion which could have the biggest impact in diverting waste from going to the landfill. This is an easier opportunity that is currently being missed.

### Specific Considerations:

Potential considerations and actions related to this recommendation include:

- Baseline metrics and data for waste composition and diversion in Saskatchewan need to be created so decisions can be informed and data driven.
- Organics can be 40-50% of the waste composition in the bin today. Composting is a significant opportunity that needs to be explored as it can have a significant impact to landfill sustainability. Regulations and guidelines need to be put in place to support advancement of this programming.
- Saskatchewan currently has strong stewardship programs but we are behind other provinces. Opportunities need to be explored to grow the Extended Producer Responsibility model in an efficient way by leveraging the organizations that already exist.
- Regulations and programs must be put in place for dealing with hazardous waste.

## RECOMMENDATION #7

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*"This is going to take a lot of investment to get better at solid waste management in Saskatchewan. Resources need to be spent on the things that matter."*

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**Review, analyze and realign limited Ministry resources to ensure greater priority on supporting solid waste management throughout Saskatchewan.**

### Rationale:

The costs of designing, building, operating, maintaining and decommissioning landfills continue to rise and is unaffordable for municipalities that have numerous demands for limited resources. Diversion and recycling programs are also very expensive.

Solid waste management is a significant issue in Saskatchewan, but there is much opportunity to improve and potentially lead in innovative practices and programs to realize better outcomes for us all. While acknowledging that they need to be a partner in this, municipalities and recycling stakeholders do not have the resources to do this on their own.

The provincial and federal governments must align priorities and resources towards addressing the significant challenges being faced by communities in managing waste, including composting / organics and recycling.

### Specific Considerations:

Potential considerations and actions related to this recommendation include:

- The Ministry should conduct an internal budget review to determine how resources can be aligned to support improvements in solid waste management moving forward in the province, including to advance these recommendations.
- Government of Saskatchewan should work with the Government of Canada to leverage increased federal funding for solid waste management initiatives through infrastructure and First Nations funding programs (as previously mentioned in Recommendation #5).

## RECOMMENDATION #8

*"Innovation is important to help us reduce the overall amount of waste that we have to deal with. It needs to be encouraged and supported."*

### **Creation of a framework to enable and encourage innovation in waste management practices, technologies and market development, thereby ensuring long-term sustainability.**

#### **Rationale:**

To support long-term sustainability of Saskatchewan's landfills and to improve outcomes through affordable diversion and recycling programs, stakeholders identified the need to look at innovative practices and solutions for solid waste management. To overcome the barriers of geography and volumes to affordable recycling programs, the Province must develop local markets and solutions which will also create economic development opportunities.

The Province may not need to start from scratch – there are many innovative practices and solutions that have been successful elsewhere that can be adapted to work here. In addition, this innovation should be driven by industry and enabled by government to get into implementation and application more quickly. There are good examples of this already happening in Saskatchewan.

#### **Specific Considerations:**

Potential considerations and actions related to this recommendation include:

- There is significant interest in the incineration project being piloted in southwest Saskatchewan as a potential solution for reducing waste going to the landfill. This is a strong example of what can be achieved when municipalities band together to collaborate on innovative solutions. This pilot project must continue to be supported and advanced by the Ministry to conclude whether this is a viable solution for Saskatchewan.
- Ensuring the Ministry does not create impediments to innovation. (*What exceptions can be made for innovation projects? What incentives can be created?*)
- Establishing an innovation fund to encourage new practices and technologies to be tested and applied by municipalities in managing waste in the province.
- Investigating innovative partnership models and structures that can support increased regional collaboration.

## RECOMMENDATION #9

*“Education is the key! This is where the bulk of attention needs to go. It needs to be done at all levels – local and provincial.”*

**Immediate development of a mandatory provincial public education campaign involving the Ministry, municipalities, SARM, SUMA and other stakeholder organizations.**

### Rationale:

Education and awareness was a strong recurring theme throughout the consultation discussions. All stakeholders in the province recognize that this is essential to realize improved solid waste management in Saskatchewan.

Education and awareness must occur at all levels to realize improved outcomes – with the public, councils, administration, industry, etc. In addition, it needs to be done for all ages. However, this takes resources to make this happen and it is a challenge for municipalities to juggle with their many priorities. While education from the grassroots is important, it needs to happen more at a provincial level to ensure consistent messaging on an important issue that affects us all.

In order to see significant improvements in solid waste management in Saskatchewan, everyone needs to ultimately understand the long-term impacts of their everyday decisions so they can make more informed and better choices moving forward.

### Specific Considerations:

Potential considerations and actions related to this recommendation include:

- Determining the roles of each identified stakeholder in supporting coordinated and consistent ongoing public education campaigns.
- Implementing a public education campaign, led by the Ministry, to ensure consistent messaging across the province. The campaign should be customized to different audiences to ensure messaging resonates with what matters to them.
- It is important that the campaign helps people understand the expensive costs of solid waste management and the impacts of poor choices.
- Developing a toolkit in collaboration with SARM and SUMA for municipalities to conduct complementary education and awareness efforts in their communities.
- Ensuring schools have the resources they need to provide education on solid waste management with their students and implement recycling programs in their schools.



## RECOMMENDATION #10

*"We have too many bodies responsible for managing waste. This is bigger than regional authorities. Do we need a provincial structure?"*

### ***Establishment of an independent and autonomous entity to provide solid waste management operations, management, advocacy and training for Saskatchewan municipalities.***

#### **Rationale:**

As mentioned previously in Recommendation #4, municipalities are looking for clear and consistent advice, education and support in their solid waste management pursuits. In alignment with this need, many municipalities expressed in consultations that they are in the landfill business out of necessity. Given choices, municipalities report they would rather have someone else look after this service allowing municipalities to focus on other community issues.

There is a concern about the balance of accountability as it relates to solid waste management between municipalities and the Ministry. While the Ministry should continue to be the regulator, there is a desire to increase accountability for the Ministry in ensuring a fair, predictable and effective regulatory environment. While the earlier recommendations will go a long way to making improvements, this one is a longer term, structural change that could enable more significant outcomes in consistency, efficiencies, accountability and transparency.

This independent organization or authority could be funded by membership fees, user fees, accessing grant and funding opportunities with all levels of government, and developing value-added revenue streams and market opportunities. Establishment of this organization will require initial seed funding but will lead to significant increased efficiencies as well in handling waste across the province. This organization will increase the outcomes and value of funds and resources expended currently by municipalities and the Province.

#### **Specific Considerations:**

Potential considerations and actions related to this recommendation include:

- Determining key stakeholders that should potentially be involved.
- Immediately establish an independent Interim Board to work alongside the Ministry to advance the earlier recommendations identified.
- Establishing an independent entity with the expertise and experience to remove barriers and provide solid waste operations and management, diversion opportunities, advocacy and training supports for municipalities. Definition and planning is required to determine organizational and funding model options for this type of organization.
- This organization could be leveraged by any municipality looking for support, but not a requirement for those that are able to manage on their own and want to maintain control of their operations.

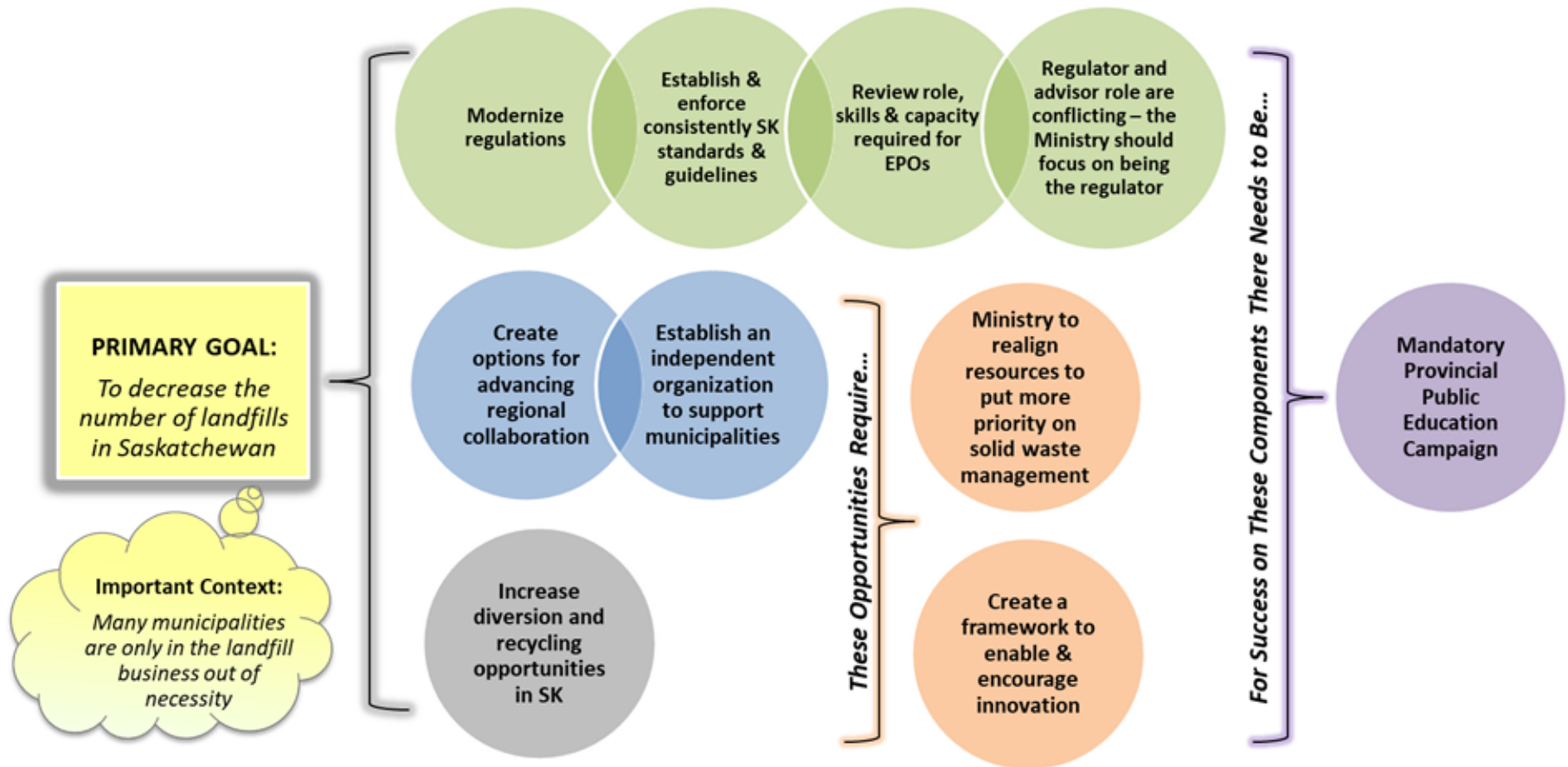
## **Appendices:**

***Appendix A – Recommendations Summary Visual***

***Appendix B – Implementation Roadmap***

***Appendix C – Summary of Consultations***

## Appendix A: Recommendations Summary Visual



## Appendix B: Implementation Roadmap

Recommendation	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Involved
#1 – Modernization of Regulations	Complete In 2019					Lead: Ministry Advise: Steering Board
#2 – Establishment of New SK Standards & Guidelines	Complete In 2019					Lead: Ministry Advise: Steering Board
#3 – Review of Role, Skills & Capacity Required for EPOs	.....→	Role Redefined & Capacity Added by Mid 2020				Lead: Ministry Advise: Steering Board
#4 – Ministry focus on Regulator Role & Fill Advisory Role in Another Way		.....→	Complete by 2021			Lead: Ministry Advise: Steering Board
#5 – Creating Options for Advancing Regional Collaboration			.....→			Lead: Ministry Advise: Steering Board, SARM, SUMA Participate: Municipalities, FN, Private Sector
#6 – Increasing Achievable Diversion & Recycling Opportunities	Rollout HHW Program	Release Composting & Recycling Regs	.....→			Lead: Ministry Advise: Steering Board Participate: Municipalities, FN, Private Sector, Recycling & Stewardship Organizations
#7 – Review, Analyze & Realign Ministry Resources	Seek Federal Infrastructure \$	.....→				Lead: Ministry Participate: Federal Government
#8 – Creation of a Framework for Innovation	Continue Incineration Pilot	Establish Innovation Framework	Rollout Innovation Funding	.....→		Lead: Ministry Advise: Steering Board
#9 – Immediate Development of a Mandatory Provincial Public Education Campaign	.....→	Implement Campaign	.....→			Lead: Ministry Advise: Steering Board Participate: Municipalities, FN, Private Sector, Recycling & Stewardship Organizations
#10 – Establishment of an Independent & Autonomous Entity	Establish Interim Board	Launch Pilot Organization	.....→			Lead: Steering Board Advise: SUMA, SARM, Municipalities, Ministry, Private Sector

## Appendix C: Summary of Consultations

### Engagement Process:

- In August 2018, the Advisory Committee sent invitations to a sample of municipalities and solid waste management stakeholders to attend consultations sessions regarding the Solid Waste Management Strategy.
- The Advisory Committee completed six public consultation sessions in the fall of 2018 in dispersed locations across the province as follows:
  1. **Yorkton – September 7:** Included representatives from City of Yorkton, Town of Churchbridge, City of Melville, Association of Regional Waste Management Authorities of Saskatchewan, Parkland Regional Waste Management Authority and Town of Wynyard.
  2. **Assiniboia – September 12:** Included representatives from Town of Coronach, Gap Disposal, Town of Willow Bunch, City of Weyburn, Town of Assiniboia and Town of Rockglen.
  3. **Swift Current – September 12:** Included representatives from Town of Maple Creek, Village of Fox Valley, RM of Swift Current, RM of Arlington and City of Swift Current.
  4. **Nipawin – September 19:** Included representatives from Town of Hudson Bay, RM of Torch River, Boreal Area Regional Waste Authority, RM of Moose Range, Town of Nipawin, Town of Carrot River, MTN Disposal Ltd., RM of Nipawin and RM of Hudson Bay.
  5. **Davidson – September 27:** Included representatives from City of Regina, Town of Davidson, Loraas Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council and Recycle Saskatchewan.
  6. **North Battleford – October 4:** Included representatives from Highway 55 Waste Management Corporation, Town of Rosthern, 16 to 43 Waste Management, Local Waste Services, SARRC, Product Care, SARCAN Recycling, City of North Battleford and EPRA Saskatchewan.
- Sessions ranged from 7 to 13 individuals present which enabled a comfortable sharing environment where participants were open and frank in sharing their perspectives. In total there were 65 attendees, representing 42 municipalities and organizations, over the six consultation sessions.
- A phone interview was also conducted with City of Saskatoon (as they could not attend a session) and written submissions were received from Boreal Area Regional Waste Authority, District of Lakeland, RM of Montrose, RM of Moose Jaw, RM of Rosthern, SARM, SUMA, and Val Marie (resident).
- An online red tape survey was distributed to municipalities related to *The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations*. 95 surveys were filled out, with 61 of those only being partially completed due to technical issues.



- Additional stakeholder interviews were also completed with private sector innovation projects, consulting engineers, an oil company, First Nations, Department of Indigenous Services Canada and several Ministry of Environment staff.

## **High-level Summary of What We Heard:**

### **SASKATCHEWAN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES:**

- There is a lot of inconsistency in terms of what people are told and is enforced because we do not have clear SK standards and guidelines.
- We need SK standards and guidelines for designing, constructing, operating and decommissioning a landfill rather than using Alberta's or Manitoba's.
- We need standards and guidelines that are clear, reasonable, easy to understand and easily accessible.
- We all need to be on the same page in terms of what the expectations are.

### **REGULATIONS:**

- We do not have a fair and predictable regulatory environment, and it is not effective or efficient.
- MRMR is very out of date and does not provide much guidance for municipalities.
- Municipalities want clearer direction on what to do and what is expected, while maintaining some flexibility.
- Regulations need to be updated to include important issues and opportunities like handling hazardous waste, composting, etc.

### **MINISTRY ADVISORY & ENFORCEMENT:**

- Environment Protection Officers (EPOs) do not enforce consistently across province as current regulations allow for too much interpretation.
- EPOs change regularly which makes it challenging for relationship building and understanding between the municipality and the EPO.
- There are not enough EPOs to service the province and this is resulting in poor turnaround times for inquiries and processing applications.
- We want more advice, education and support from EPOs, not just enforcement.
- Transparency and communication is important.

### **REGIONAL COLLABORATION:**

- General agreement that the status quo is not sustainable and unaffordable – we need to work together for a more viable and sustainable approach.
- However, regional should not just be defined as an equity partner in an authority – there needs to be affordable options for municipalities through collaborative partnerships (i.e. customer).

- It cannot be a “one size fits all” solution.
- This can also include partnerships with First Nations and the private sector.
- There needs to be more guidance and support to help advance these collaborations to a successful outcome.
- There are concerns about financial costs, increased hauling costs, impacts to roads, decommissioning requirements, etc.
- SARM and SUMA need to work together more closely to help their members collaborate better.

#### **DIVERSION & RECYCLING:**

- Strong acknowledgement that diversion is a critical component of solid waste management.
- More needs to be done to keep waste out of the landfills – reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Composting is an important part of this picture, since ~50% of materials in waste bin are organics.
- Need a Household Hazardous Waste program in SK asap!
- Extended Producer Responsibility is an important model to continue to grow in SK.
- Hauling costs, low volumes and small markets make having recycling programs in SK a challenge to be accessible and affordable.
- Need to develop more local markets and solutions which also creates economic development opportunities.

#### **EDUCATION & AWARENESS:**

- Education and awareness is essential for improved solid waste management in SK.
- Education needs to be done at many levels – public/ratepayers (all ages), councils and administration, industry, etc.
- Campaigns should be done provincially for consistent messaging and then provide municipalities the tools and resources to educate in their communities.
- Everyone needs to understand the long-term impacts of their current decisions so they can make better choices to support improved outcomes.