

To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: Council  
From: Matthew Goudy, CAO  
Date: June 24, 2019

**Reference: 11/154/2019-178**

## RE: Recycling

[REDACTED] thank you for your letter, your frustration is certainly justified. The collection of recyclable material, curb side, was a convenient way for residents to divert material from the landfill.

The City does not process the recyclable material directly, it contracts this to third party providers who sort the material and find buyers for it on the wholesale market. Unfortunately, we have learned recently that only a fraction of the materials is actually being purchased, the rest is landfilled by the recycler. With less buyers, our collections contractor raised their prices by 66% while only accepting #2 plastics, paper products, cans and bottle deposit containers – products that are still viable on the wholesale market. Faced with the increase in cost and a lesser service, Council elected to discontinue the curb side collections portion of its recycling program for the time being.

You referenced several examples of single use items and plastic packaging in your letter which currently end up the landfill. Statistics Canada data reveals that Albertans produce the most waste (on a per capita basis) in Canada, with an annual rate of disposal to landfill just under 1,000 kilograms (kg) per person compared to the Canadian average of approximately 700 kg per person. The challenge we face in Alberta is that, unlike eight other provinces, there is no Provincial regulation to reduce the manufacturing of non-recyclable plastics in the first place.

You mentioned taxing single use items to make them more expensive to produce and buy. An effective way to do this would be through the implementation of a recycling policy known as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) at the provincial level. Eight Canadian provinces utilize EPR as a policy instrument to reduce waste, and to date there has been no indication of movement toward EPR by the Alberta Government in the near future. The City of Lacombe recently joined many other municipalities in Alberta advocating for the Province to implement an EPR policy. More on this can be found [here](#) (page 143).

Municipalities large and small across the Country have recycling programs to varying degrees of sophistication and yet according to the Government of Canada less than 10% of plastics in Canada are recycled. Beyond the City of Lacombe and Alberta, the ineffectiveness of the current recycling system in Canada is a national issue. No doubt you are aware of the Federal Government's recent announcement that single use plastics will be banned in Canada by as early as 2021. The City is awaiting further details from the Government on that front.

In the interim, residents still have a recycling option in the community with the Wolf Creek Recycle Depot on 5214 Wolf Creek Drive. New signage is coming soon which will help everyone use the site effectively and we are exploring other ways to improve the site. We invite your ideas on how we can to make it easier for residents to use the recycle depot. In the coming weeks the City will also be emphasizing existing but underutilized waste diversion programs such as home composting.



Ensuring the long term sustainability of the City's solid waste system is a high priority of Council. A review of the City's solid waste system, planned to start in 2020, has been advanced to 2019 and public consultation will form a key part of the review process. Feedback from citizens who are committed to a more sustainable City, such as yourself, is invaluable in the development of a long term plan for managing the City's solid waste in a sustainable, fiscally responsible manner for years to come. Expect more information about the review to be posted to the City's social media channels later this summer.

Thank you for your letter, this conversation is not over and we look forward to continuing it with the citizens of Lacombe through the solid waste review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Goudy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Goudy, P.Eng  
Chief Administrative Officer