

CASE STUDY

REGION OF WATERLOO

Building the Business Case for Anaerobic Digestion with the Region of Waterloo



BACKGROUND

The Region of Waterloo created their Corporate Climate Change Action Plan to protect the future of its citizens and the place they call home. It's easy to say, "The Region of Waterloo will achieve net zero emissions for Region owned facilities by 2050," but the true challenge is turning words into actions.

Tracy Annett, the Region's Senior Engineer in the waste management division, is leading the Long Term Waste Management Strategy (LTWMS) review. The LTWMS will provide a 25-year framework for managing waste sustainably and affordably for the growing population. Many service enhancements and innovative technologies are being considered to help the region reduce emissions including anaerobic digestion (AD). Tracy had heard of the benefits of AD but was unfamiliar with what that would look like in practice.

CHALLENGE

Trying to learn about new technology, teach your team, and determine if it's the right fit is a huge undertaking. It could mean countless hours of wading through information online, attending conferences, or navigating through vendors whose goal is to sell a solution. Hoping to avoid that frustration and wasted effort, Tracy searched instead for someone who could provide education to empower her team to make their own decisions.

Tracy reached out to Azura Associates for a course that could quickly get her team up to speed on how AD works, and the considerations for using it as part of a municipal waste management strategy.

SOLUTION

Azura designed a workshop that was just technical enough for the team to understand the science but also be useful for building their business case. The workshop focused on strategic considerations, feasibility, and financial realism, so that Tracy's team felt prepared to lead the LTWMS with practical knowledge and confidence.

Over the course of an afternoon, Azura's David Ellis and Trisha Aldovino took the team through:

- A basic overview of AD, different options for **biogas utilization**, and **digestate management**,
- A roundtable discussion on important factors to consider before deciding on a **business model**,
- A step-by-step tutorial on the **financial math** behind the business case,
- **Case studies** that tell the full story, not just the success-story version,
- How **policy** may change in the future and how that can impact choices made today, and
- Key data points to collect when conducting a waste collection audit to **prepare for feasibility**.

Tracy's team was also given several resources to use as references after the session. This included sample calculations, project management and feasibility checklists, as well as a guide to permitting and regulations.

RESULTS

 **9.1/10**

This interactive workshop provided both an understanding of anaerobic digestion and practical resources to assess potential projects. Attendees gave an overall rating of 9.1 out of 10 and shared their thoughts on the session:

"Really appreciate how it was a blend of technical and non-technical material, very realistic in terms of the scale needed for project feasibility."

"Anybody could've told me anything about AD but now I have a better idea, and I can ask better questions."

If you're staring down a climate target and wondering where AD fits in, Azura's tailored workshops help public sector teams move from overwhelmed to informed—so you can ask the right questions, run the numbers, and take the next step with confidence.