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March 21, 2016

His Worship, Mayor Brian Bowman and Council
Winnipeg City Hall

Dear Mayor Bowman and Council:

RE: Proposed resolution for organic waste collection

On February 23, 2016, Green Action Centre sent you a letter urging you to reject the motion put forward by Councillors Eadie and Wyatt on the organic collection program. Although we agreed with some of the recommendations they put forward, we were gravely concerned with section B) of the motion, which states "immediately suspend the implementation plan for curbside SSO (kitchen waste) collection, and cancel any and all plans to conduct public consultations on a curbside SSO program." Since then we have communicated with a number of councillors and their assistants on this matter; we would like to thank all of those who took time to discuss this important issue with us.

Further to this, we have prepared the attached document, which includes our proposed resolution to amend the current motion put forth by Councillors Eadie and Wyatt as well as an appendix which suggests alternatives on collection and financing options.

We will be presenting our position at the Council meeting on Wednesday, March 23rd. Should you be interested in discussing our submission prior to the meeting, we would be pleased to meet with you.

We hope you will find our proposed resolution and supporting material informative and it of value in your decision making.

Best regards,



Tracy Hucul,
Executive Director

Just Do It

Green Action Centre urges city council to consider putting forward the following notice of motion.

WHEREAS residents of Winnipeg indicated—through the *OurWinnipeg™* public consultation process—that they want their municipal government to be a leader in sustainability;[1]

AND WHEREAS the Comprehensive Integrated Waste Management Plan (CIWMP)—adopted by city council in 2011—recommends switching from waste disposal to waste diversion;[2]

AND WHEREAS on Oct 19th 2011, the Council approved that "the program costs be funded through a combination of property tax support and a user fee collected on the water bill, with property taxes supporting the diversion programs and the user fee funding the balance of garbage collection costs;"[3]

AND WHEREAS organics and recyclables constitute roughly 80% of residential waste, so that effective diversion programs greatly reduce the volume of garbage left for collection, allowing for cost savings and reduced greenhouse gas emissions from less frequent garbage collection;[4]

AND WHEREAS, when the CIWMP was developed, only 17% of Winnipeg's residential waste was diverted from the landfill, one of the lowest diversion rates among Canadian cities;[5]

AND WHEREAS organic waste collection benefits backyard composters too by accepting meat, bones, dairy and pet waste, which can't be composted in a backyard bin, and facilitates year round composting;

AND WHEREAS landfilled organic waste decomposes anaerobically to produce methane gas, which has a warming potential greater than 25 times that of carbon dioxide (C02),[6] making Brady Landfill the second largest point source of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in Manitoba;[7]

AND WHEREAS Canada has signed on to the legally-binding Paris Agreement to keep the rise in global temperatures well below 2^0 C compared to pre-industrial times;[8]

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba proposes a ban on landfilling organic waste by 2020;[9]

AND WHEREAS the most recent City of Winnipeg phone survey conducted in 2015 indicated that 80% of Winnipeggers support a residential organic waste collection program;[10]

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[1] "A Sustainable Winnipeg: An OurWinnipeg™ direction strategy," p. 6. Available at http://www.winnipeg.ca/interhom/CityHall/OurWinnipeg/pdf/ASustainableWinnipeg.pdf

[2] "Comprehensive Integrated Waste Management Plan," 2011. From the Executive Summary, p. E.2. Available at http://www.winnipeg.ca/finance/findata/matmgt/documents//2012/153-2012//153-2012_Appendix_E-Comprehensive_Integrated_Waste_Management_Plan.pdf

[3] October 19, 2011 Council Minutes. http://clkapps.winnipeg.ca/dmis/ViewDoc.asp?DocId=11373&SectionId=&InitUrl=

[4] "Getting to 50% and Beyond: Waste diversion success stories from Canadian municipalities," p. 2. Published in 2009 by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. https://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/GMF/Getting_to_50_percent_en.pdf

[5] http://garbage.speakupwinnipeg.com/

[6] "Overview of Greenhouse Gases: Methane emissions," posted on United States Environmental Protection Agency website. Available at https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/gases/ch4.html

[7] "Manitoba to standardize cap-and-trade system to create level playing field" by Bartley Kives, posted on the Winnipeg Free Press website Dec. 7, 2015. Available at http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/Manitoba-Ontario-and-Quebec-to-standardize-cap-and-trade-system-360865261.html

[8] "5 key points in Paris agreement on climate change," posted by Haydn Watters on CBC News December 12, 2015. Available at http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/paris-agreement-key-climate-points-1.3362500

[9] "Recycling and Waste Diversion: A discussion paper," part of Tomorrow Now: Manitoba's Green Plan, p. 10; available at http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/envprograms/recycling/pdf/mb_recycling_strategy_2014.pdf

[10] "No collection an option: Mayes," by Bartley Kives, posted on Winnipeg Free Press website February 6, 2016. Available at http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/no-collection-an-option-mayes-367904731.html

AND WHEREAS a Change.org petition, urging the Mayor and Council to take action on climate change by implementing an organic waste collection service, has 525 signatures of support as of March 16, 2016;[11]

AND WHEREAS Winnipeg's Public Service is in the midst of a planning and public engagement exercise to identify options for residential organic waste collection and processing;

AND WHEREAS public engagement is a core commitment of Mayor Bowman, but the public so far has only second-hand knowledge of the proposed costs and options considered for organic waste collection;

AND WHEREAS differential user fees for waste services, otherwise known as Pay As You Throw (PAYT), are perceived as fairer than flat-fee approaches and can reinforce responsible waste reduction and diversion in support of our collective environmental goals;

AND WHEREAS organics diversion funded by property taxes would be more equitable for low-income households than the proposed flat fee;

AND WHEREAS residential waste collection contracts are up for renewal in 2017 and Request for Proposals for new contracts will need to identify the collection and diversion systems that will be in place following renewal.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Public Service be directed to:

A. Continue planning for city-wide source separated organics collection in anticipation of a collection contract renewal in 2017;

B. Continue Phase II of the public consultation process to address concerns identified in public discussions to date, providing information on financing alternatives for residential organics that incent household waste reduction, and that do not place a disproportionate financial burden on lower-income households;

C. Subsequent to the adoption of a residential organics diversion plan, initiate a review of remaining waste streams that could be diverted and develop a strategy for further enhancing waste diversion performance for the Capital Region which includes support for backyard and community composting.

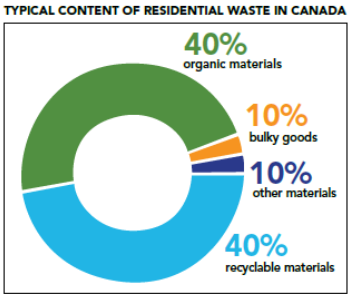
[11] https://www.change.org/p/winnipeg-city-council-winnipeg-needs-organics-pickup-now

Appendix A: Supplemental Information

Defining the context

Green Action Centre believes that deliberations amongst Councillors and the public on organics management should be suitably framed, as our "whereas" clauses seek to do. In particular the consultation should provide the following background:

- Organic waste management is not primarily an exercise in providing personal services to citizens that we may or may not want but an individual and collective responsibility to manage our waste in an environmentally sound fashion in keeping with the City's self-adopted development plan and in harmony with provincial, national, and international commitments.
- In addition, public acceptance and equity require that multiple criteria be considered such as environmental effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, fairness (e.g. user-pay and polluter-pay principles) and affordability for lower-income households.
- Informed deliberation and comment also require knowledge of the waste streams we are trying to manage responsibly, such as the proportions conveyed in the graphic at right and the fact that 74% of organics disposal at Brady comes from the residential sector because commercial waste goes primarily to private landfills.
- We also require knowledge of alternative technologies and best practices (including waste reduction education and promotion, financing, collection, processing and marketing) used in other jurisdictions, their effectiveness at achieving environmental and social objectives and their costs.



FCM, Getting to 50% and Beyond (2009)

Organic material is the highest proportion of waste material landfilled (30% - 40%).

- The task, then, is one of problem-solving – what are the best, fairest, most convenient and cost-effective strategies for advancing our climate and waste reduction commitments and responsibilities. Let's talk about how, not whether, to do it.

Alternative Collection and Financing Options

- Green Action Centre supported the adoption of the 2011 Garbage and Recycling Management Plan[12] but noted at the time the need for improvements including introduction of a Pay As You Throw (PAYT) component. We continue to support the adoption of this best practice from other jurisdictions as a fairer alternative to a flat fee and an important incentive for diversion.
- The unsuitability of smaller carts to our climate has been cited as a reason not to implement PAYT by means of different cart sizes. We note, however, that other winter cities like Toronto[13] and Minneapolis[14] use this means to implement PAYT.
- Nonetheless, PAYT can be implemented by a variety of means other than different cart sizes, including
    - tags for excess loads;

[12] http://greenactioncentre.ca/living-green-living-well/city-waste-plan/
[13] http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Solid%20Waste%20Management%20Services/2016%20budget%20bin%20rate%20chart.pdf
[14] http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste/garbage/solid-waste_garbage-carts

- bar codes or Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chips with on-truck readers and data loggers that record when a bin of a particular type belonging to a particular household is emptied;
- bar codes or RFID chips plus a weigh scale on the truck pickup arm to log frequency, weight, bin type and ownership of material picked up; or
- stickers on carts indicating frequency of pickup service eligibility.

- In Dresden, with PAYT using RFID transponders measuring frequency and volume of pickup, annual garbage collection per capita was reduced from 305 kg in 1994 to 143 kg in 2008 despite increasing incomes and consumption. Charges per bin and per unit of collected waste have remained constant since 2003 and are among the lowest in Germany.[15] Note, for comparison, that in 2013 Manitobans produced 840 kg of waste per person.[16]
- Once a method of measuring collection amounts is determined, billing should ideally reinforce a preferred waste reduction hierarchy, say by charging double or triple for a bin of garbage and a lesser amount for a bin of recycling or organics collected. Such a system would reward diversion from garbage and encourage reuse and home composting over discarding recyclables and organics.
- Cities that divert most of the waste stream to recycling and organics, like Toronto, are able to reduce the frequency of garbage pickup to every other week. In fact Toronto has half the collection truck passes of Winnipeg. Their trucks have two separate compartments, one for organic materials which are collected weekly and the other for recyclable materials or garbage (residual waste) which are collected on alternating weeks.[17] Can Winnipeg achieve similar collection efficiencies?
- We also note that the City has abandoned a recommendation that Council adopted in 2011, namely

  "20. That the program costs be funded through a combination of property tax support and a user fee collected on the water bill, with property taxes supporting the diversion programs and the user fee funding the balance of garbage collection costs."

  "The philosophy is that all sectors of the City benefit from increased diversion, through the savings of landfill capacity and the avoided impacts to the environment" (CIWMP, 165).

  By returning to its earlier resolution and philosophy, Winnipeg can reduce the sticker shock of organics collection on water and waste bills in a manner that recognizes our collective responsibility for sound organics management and redirect the debate to how much garbage service citizens are willing to pay for when excellent diversion systems are in place.
- We note further that the federal Liberals have committed to increased infrastructure funds to strengthen cities with an emphasis on green infrastructure.[18] Both the NDP and PC provincial parties have committed to large infrastructure investments as well, so the bulk of the capital costs for a composting facility could come from federal and provincial sources.

[15] J. Reichenbach, Applications of Pay-As-You-Throw in Germany – Saxony and the City of Dresden as Good Practice Examples, Presentation at VIII Jornada de Prevenció de Residus Municipals, Reus (Spain), Nov 2010. http://www.arc.cat/jornades/jornadaprevencio2010/pon_4.pdf

[16] "Recycling and Waste Diversion: A discussion paper," part of Tomorrow Now: Manitoba's Green Plan, p. 6; available at http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/envprograms/recycling/pdf/mb_recycling_strategy_2014.pdf

[17] http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=f587dd5e4cf12410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgnextchannel=ceed433112b02410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD

[18] https://www.liberal.ca/trudeau-commits-to-historic-investment-in-green-infrastructure/