



Water and Waste Department • Service des eaux et des déchets

**Waste and Diversion Advisory Committee (WDAC)
Meeting #2 Notes**

Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2015, 5:00 – 7:15 pm

Location: St. Boniface Library, 100-131 Provencher Blvd, 2nd Floor

Attendees:

William Dowie	Green Action Centre
Tanya Suderman	Spence Neighbourhood Association
Greg Cherwonick	Manitoba Housing and Community Development
Vinh Huynh	Winnipeg School Division
Jim Ferguson	Green Manitoba
Lindsay Mierau	City of Winnipeg
Brandy Bobier	Citizen Representative
Melissa Dupuis	Citizen Representative
Lindsay Storie	Citizen Representative
Dwayne Capon	Citizen Representative
Randy Park	City of Winnipeg
Tiffany Skomro	City of Winnipeg
Justin Lee	City of Winnipeg
Darcy Strandberg	City of Winnipeg
Michelle Kuly Holland	Facilitator, First Person Strategies
Christina Blouw	Notetaker, InterGroup Consultants

Regrets:

Mario Lopes	Professional Property Managers Association
Sue Hayduk	Red River College
Talatu Shokpeka	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba
Richard Sawchuk	Citizen Representative

Agenda:

1. Session opening and welcome
2. Update, ideas and learning from committee members
 - a. *Share new updates or experiences to help enrich the learning, discussion and recommendations of the committee*
3. Overview, Q&A on new Organics (composting) Diversion Study
4. Goals, objectives for Organics Study
 - a. *The City is studying options for an organics diversion system. The system would involve collecting and processing organic materials, and producing compost. Come prepared to*

share your experiences and perspectives on composting, what you would like a new system to do for you as a user, and for the broader community.

5. Key themes raised at April meeting (themes are summarized in meeting 1 notes)
 - a. *What are your ideas on how we can “dig deeper” into key themes as a Committee? How can we structure or prioritize our time together to learn from each other’s experience and formulate meaningful recommendations on these topics?*
6. Session closing, next steps

Summary:

The second meeting of the Waste Diversion Advisory Committee (WDAC) was held on Tuesday June 16, 2015. The purpose of this second meeting was:

- To share new updates, ideas or experiences from committee members to enrich the recommendations of the committee;
- To review and discuss the new Organics Diversion Study, including sharing perspectives on composting and how the new system could be tailored to benefit individual users, as well as the broader community; and
- To “dig deeper” into key themes raised at the previous April meeting.

The meeting began with a round-robin type discussion in which committee members were invited to share any updates, ideas or recent learnings. The results of these discussions are recorded in Appendix A.

Following this open discussion, a presentation was made on the Organic (composting) Diversion Study, which included an open question period for participants to gain a good appreciation of the study’s current status and future plans. The results of these discussions are recorded in Appendix B.

As the discussions were running longer than scheduled, the committee decided as a group to focus on agenda item #4 for the remainder of the meeting. Agenda item #5 will be addressed through an online survey to rank priorities and options for the themes raised at the April meeting.

The goals and objectives of the study were discussed through individual brainstorming sessions followed by small group discussions to gather input and perspectives. These breakout sessions focused on:

1. What are the stumbling blocks that may have discouraged you or others from diverting organics?
2. What has worked well for organics diversion?
3. What is important for new system users?
4. What is important for the broader community?
5. What are the critical factors and/or barriers to success?

The results of these discussions are recorded in Appendix C.

Key themes:

Several themes emerged from the small group discussions.

- **Education and Communication:** There is an overarching concern that composting education – whether backyard composting or a city service – must be effectively communicated. Education topics include:
 - o Composting technique;
 - o Instruction on acceptable items to compost;
 - o Cycle of composting;
 - o Saving yard browns to use in winter; and
 - o Where the end product is going or being used.

Communicating the task, rationale and criteria for deeming the program successful will increase public participation in the program. Several committee members noted that public perception of and buy-in to the program are crucial to the success of the program.

- **Shift in mindset and daily routines:** There was recognition that a shift in mindset and change in behavior will be required to make this program a success. It was mentioned that incorporating a new process into daily life will require modification of daily habits.
- **Reduce cost and effort to user:** There was a strong desire to ensure the program is as user-friendly as possible. Participants noted that the greater the variety of items accepted in the collection program, the more likely people will participate in it. However, there was also recognition that a program must strike the right balance between a user-friendly system that maximizes organics diversion and the variety of items accepted, and the system’s price tag for users.
- **Successful waste diversion strategies:** There was recognition of several successful current services facilitated by the City, local organizations and schools. Participants noted the importance of supporting these “early adopters” as part of the strategy.
- **Overcome fears and misinformation:** Several committee members noted fears and misinformation as a barrier to participation. Perceived or actual barriers included odour, vermin, and the unappealing aesthetics of an extra bin and/or the biology of the composting process. Committee members suggested solutions to these noted barriers including frequent pickup schedule, bin use rotation, and providing a seal or latch on containers to contain odour and keep the contents hidden.

Ideas that will be carried over and discussed at the next meeting include:

- How does organics collection impact garbage collection - Two bins? Three bins? Existing bin on rotation? Pick-up cycle?
- How does backyard and community composting impact the organics strategy?
- Should the WDAC’s role in public engagement extend beyond organics?
- An overview of current education and promotion practices for waste and diversion for an upcoming committee meeting is flagged for future discussion.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS:

1. **FACILITATOR:** Send out an online survey requesting feedback on ranking priorities of themes raised at the April meeting (Agenda item #5).

Appendix A – Updates, Ideas and Learning Results:

- Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce has announced an Environment Leadership Council composed of 20 to 30 people. Their first meeting will be held June 26.
- The Spence Community clean up had approximately 75 to 100 people attend. This indicates that people care about their neighbourhood. The organization still struggles to make it easy for people to contribute to the aesthetics of the neighbourhood.
- Pleasantly surprised by the amount of existing city programs. There should be greater education, promotion and “bragging” about work already underway.
- Thrilled about the existing yard waste diversion pick up. There is a large volume of waste diverted from the landfill and this program seems to be successful. The frequency of pickup is very good. Further interest in organic waste pick up and multifamily programs.
- Have seen a very positive and excited response from daycare and school connections to potential of organic waste pick up. Program would promote existing composting programs and competitions in schools. There is enthusiasm for organics pick up.
- Bike week has grown over the last few years and participants have discovered the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) emergency bike support program. Waste diversion, and organics in particular, could benefit from this type of communication strategy so people know about opportunities. Combine these efforts into a strategy for environmental stewardship. Environment Week in the first week of June has lost some momentum. IDEA – Hold a Week of Waste Diversion, focusing on education, and a Waste Reduction Week held in October.
- Support for the Wrench spring bike pick up from the landfill and reclamation project.
- Council has approved a Corporate Waste Reduction Strategy. It sets targets in line with community plan and includes benchmarks for waste diversion, a full consultant report with an implementation plan, a cross department working group for funding projects, and waste auditing. This strategy will work to achieve greater diversion from city landfill operations.
- There is a need to strengthen collaboration with community-based groups working on waste diversion. Community organizations care and are looking for ways to divert waste, including yard waste, weeds, branches and leaves.
- A coordinated and collaborative effort is needed between the City and the Province for larger projects and greenzone efforts. The Provincial government is happy to work with community and school groups, neighbourhoods and Biz zones.
- Awareness of environmental stewardship programs must be better.

- There is Provincial funding available for piloting multifamily organics collection and schools composting programs.
- There is significant interest in the potential for a field trip to city composting facilities.

Appendix B – Questions/Responses on the Organics Diversion Study Presentation

- Question – What is the role of the WDAC vs. the “stakeholder engagement” listed in the organics study process diagram?
 - For example, active transportation stakeholder engagement regarding the Osborne overpass. Want to avoid similar missed opportunities and inefficient forward progress.
 - There will be a lot of messages bombarding City at once, is this a good idea?
 - Response – The outlined schedule is broad and the public engagement process will be dynamic, adapting to the needs of the public. There will be the potential for a sub-group to dive in deeper to feed into the process and then report back to a larger committee.
- Question – How are multifamily structures designated? E.g. an apartment block with 6 units compared to one with 30 units?
 - Response – The City deems structures with 8 units and up as a multifamily structure.
- Question – Noticed the recent utility bill household levy increase, will this be the same strategy for organics?
 - Response – The Waste Diversion fee is a financing tool the City uses. Considerations for funding an organics program will have to be made as the Waste Diversion Fee currently generates funds to offset existing programs.
- Question – Can we review and use best practices of organics collection currently used by other cities?
 - Response – Yes, we’re not here to reinvent the wheel. The session in September will review the organics collection processes in other cities in more detail. The City has requested a consultant to review best practices.
- Question – The four to five-year roll out plan seems excessive; we don’t need to reinvent the wheel. We should look to other cities and use their systems for implementation. Brandon has a program which could be adopted.
 - Response –For an effective strategy we can pick and choose what other cities have implemented. A pilot project will help gain social acceptance where potential issues (e.g. gross-out factor and another bin) can be alleviated via engagement. This creates a process by which support for a program is gained before approaching council for approval. In addition, the construction season is limited in Winnipeg and will extend the project timing if a composting facility needs to be built.
 - Comment – History in the industry indicates that no two cities provide the exactly the same programs. Other cities of similar scale took approximately 10 years to implement. When you take into consideration all the details and due diligence, it

does take that long. The four to five-year roll out plan is probably a fairly quick time frame.

- Question – What kind of mandate is there from City Council for the organics program?
 - Response – Council approved support for an organics pilot program as part of the Garbage and Recycling Master Plan in 2011. Council then approved a budget for developing an organics diversion strategy.

- Question – What kind of changes have other cities had to make to implement these programs?
 - Response – The primary struggle has been to be seen as a good composting program. Negative portrayal of composting programs in the media recently highlights this struggle.

Appendix C – Goals and Objectives of the Study: Committee Values, Interests and perspectives

1. What are the stumbling blocks that may have discouraged you or others from diverting organics?

- Learning how to compost properly was difficult, including cycle of composting and saving yard browns to use in winter; information was not readily available
- Shift in mindset
- Incorporating process into daily life and changing behaviours
- Odour – perceived or actual
- Importance and advantages of proper education including ‘What is organics/what can be composted?’
- Planning ahead
- Amount of work that composting involves
- Overcome fears by regular pickup and/or ownership of composting duties by one person to limit confusion
- Misinformation
- Vermin

2. What has worked well for organics diversion?

- City of Winnipeg – Bi-weekly paper bag collection is an excellent program
- Green Action Centre’s Master Composter Program
- Million dollar composting fund
- Local projects at schools
- Backyard composting program – cheaper/reduces costs for people to participate
- Central bin indoors
- People are more likely to participate in programs that are inclusive, with less restrictions (e.g., the organics diversion program in Victoria accepts Kleenex, paper towel, fruits and vegetables and egg shells)
- Peer pressure to use system

3. What is important for new system users?

- Frequency of organic curbside pick up – weekly

- Seal or latch on bin/container would deter vermin and isolates people from the biology of composting enhanced by exposure to hot sun. This seal would be important for aesthetics.
- Education for various stakeholder groups. Winnipeg is on track and more information can help motivate people to move program forward. Communication to the public must include the outline of task (what are we doing), rationale, and criteria for success
- Best material/equipment to sort organic materials at little or no cost to the user
- How to maximize organics diversion
- Ensure retailers stock bin liners for compost bins (if liners are required for system)
- Space saving ideas to avoid whole row of bins in back yard and potential issues with storage, including aesthetics
- To know where the end product is going

4. What is important for the broader community?

- Produce quality compost
- Not making a mess in back lanes/front streets
- Net zero greenhouse gases
- Least expensive way to make program possible
- Broad social acceptance – ownership by community, city wide
- Inclusion of community groups that are already composting; Early adopters (school programs) should be supported
- Multiple entry points for various schools to enter into the composting program regardless of where they are in the scope of composting process
- Making the program as easy as possible for the processor
- Focusing on reducing waste at the outset and then work on waste diversion
- Willingness as society to participate in this program

5. What are the critical factors and/or barriers to success?

Factors for success:

- Straightforward program
- Cost and facility setting issues
- Communication
- Three Ms – Message (key people/decision makers as the messenger), Meeting place (where info is shared), and Medium (timing, tone, pacing, and multifaceted)
- Education to reduce public apathy
- Engage the public and get social buy-in, this may include public social pressure
- Instruction on what items can be composted
- Program must be low cost/affordable to participants; possibly change other waste management strategies in order to provide service; cost maybe related to property taxes to create alternate fee structure
- Hook to engage public must be clear as program cannot be promoted by the use of cost per ton

Barriers to success:

- People's habits and resistance to change
- Winnipeg winters – it's cold, so no smell, but organics freeze and pile up
- Difficult to measure success
- Cost and facility siting issues
- Communication
- Public perception of program