



**Summary
GreenPrint Committee
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Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2009 11:00 am Location: Council Conference Room 391

Committee Members Present: Nevitt, Chair; Linkhart, Vice-Chair; Lehmann

Committee Members Absent: Brown

Other Council Present: Garcia, Hancock, Madison, Robb

Agenda: 1. Solid Waste Management Plan

1. Denver's Solid Waste Management Plan: Citizen Survey Results, Financial Viability, and Planning for a More Sustainable Future

Summary of Discussion

Bob Kochevar, Deputy Manager of Operations, Public Works; Danamarie Schmitt, Operations Manager, Solid Waste Management and Dick Sprague and Britton Marchese, HDR Engineering, Inc presented information about process and results for developing the City's 20-year Solid Waste Management Plan. The following points were made:

- Services currently provided by Denver's Solid Waste Program with a \$24 million budget are: 1. Household Refuse Collection; 2. Large Item Pick-Up ten times per year; 3. Recyclables Collection; and 4. Graffiti Abatement.
- Most of the budget is devoted to trash collection (\$15 million) with \$3.4 million spent on large item and overflow trash collection.
- The City has been working on developing its Solid Waste Management Plan and has completed the following activities: Hired consultant (HDR Engineering); Conducted a 10-city survey of comparable cities; Completed a Waste Composition Study; and sought public input at a series of public meetings and an on-line survey.
- The comparison of other cities revealed the following differences between Denver and other jurisdictions:
 - Denver's services perceived as "free"
 - Denver collects unlimited overflow trash
 - The City provides frequent large Item pickup
 - The City uses dumpsters in residential areas
 - The City does not charge actual users a direct fee for services
 - Recycling is voluntary and there is no landfill ban on recyclables

- The City offers no drop-off site
- The Waste Composition Study revealed that the waste stream is nearly 60% organics and that the City is capturing only 40% of available recyclable materials in its voluntary recycling program; in addition, dumpsters are responsible for more volume and for more organic materials than other methods of collection.
- Results of the 1200 citizen surveys received revealed substantial support for more sustainable approaches to waste management: 88% of residents endorsed recycling and 62% supported “pay-as-you-throw”(environmentally sensitive systems where rates are based on useage, akin to utility charges). Other citizen survey findings included:
 - 84% of respondents indicated recycling should be mandatory for all multi-family units with 7 or more units
 - 77% of respondents indicated that recyclables collection should be the top priority (after trash collection)
 - 73% said it is very important for Denver to reduce its impact to the environment
 - 72% felt recycling should be mandatory in Denver
 - 71% said that personally reducing the impact to the environment is very important
 - 63% indicated that in these tough economic times, paying more for services would be more acceptable to them
 - 58% felt that increasing recycling/decreasing landfilling is their top priority
 - 58% preferred the current payment method (through taxes, not fees)

The timeline for adoption of the Solid Waste Master Plan is June of 2010 and a short list of improvement options will be available by December, 2009. Councilman Hancock asked about providing trash service through revenue contracts to commercial locations, like the recent contract for services at Denver Public Schools. Ms. Schmitt said that capacity has some infrastructure limits, but could be done. Mr. Sprague indicated that the public sector is usually quite competitive with the private haulers.

Councilman Nevitt requested more information regarding how many households in Denver are rental units. He noted that all taxpayers pay for trash pickup, but not all taxpayers get the service, which raises equity issues. Councilwoman Lehmann suggested that composted materials could be used in City parks as mulch. Councilwoman Robb questioned whether fewer large item pick-up days would result in things being left longer in alleys and around neighborhoods. She asked about requiring private haulers to do large item pick up. She also asked about starting a fee-based program in advance of the completion of the master plan and whether the plan could be completed earlier. Councilwoman Robb clarified that instituting a fee for a service would not require a vote under TABOR. She felt that to start voting on such matters would be a bad precedent.

Staff was directed to bring back information about types of households, the cost of getting rid of dumpsters, estimates for a citywide composting program, and the savings that could be achieved in reducing the number of large item pick up days, to a follow-up GreenPrint Committee meeting on the solid waste program on August 18.

Shelley Smith, August 13, 2009, Council Legislative Services
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