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**Summary  
GreenPrint Committee**

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**Date: Tuesday, August 18, 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: Johnson, Robb**

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*Agenda: Solid Waste Management Plan 2*

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**1. Denver's Solid Waste Management Plan (Session #2): Citizen Survey Results, Financial Viability, and Planning for a More Sustainable Future**

Summary of Discussion

Scott Collins and Scott Morrissey, GreenPrint Denver, discussed ecological issues related to waste management and the City's GreenPrint goals making the following points:

- The City's GreenPrint goal regarding solid waste management is a 30% diversion from the base year of 2004; this is modest compared to some cities' goals (San Francisco's goal is 70%) and Denver is unlikely to reach its goal by 2011 without major changes in waste management practices.
- The waste hierarchy pyramid provides guidance to individual behavior for reducing, reusing, recycling and composting before throwing waste in the landfill which is the least preferred option.
- Denver has been successful in increasing the number of citizens who participate in the voluntary recycling program: three out of five Denver households participate.
- The pilot composting program demonstrates how the City can deal with the large proportion of organic material (60%) currently comprising the waste stream; the program is popular with many citizens clamoring for its expansion.
- The Solid Waste Management Plan is an opportunity to tackle the problem of Denver's low waste diversion rate, while improving the breadth of services, and improving cost efficiency of solid waste services.
- Denver also has a green purchasing program designed to help agencies use the most ecological products; in addition, the neighborhood outreach program educates citizens on green practices that will save them money and be good for the environment.

Danamarie Schmitt and Bob Kochevar, Public Works, discussed the developing 20-year master plan and provided answers to questions posed by Committee members at the last meeting. The following points were made:

- One hundred sixty five thousand (165,000) Denver households are served by Waste Management and 94,000 are not served. Source 2008 City Assessor's data.
- The City received 1.2 million in revenues from the recycling program last year; this year revenue projections are \$950,000. The City receives a baseline of \$33 per ton plus part of any uptick in the world market, but the latter is currently depressed.
- About half of all the households (239,235) in Denver are rental units (113,630) which creates challenges for planning ongoing education about recycling and waste diversion. Source: Census data 2000.
- In 2004, the City landfilled 265,000 tons of waste, compared to 220,000 in 2008; however this is due both to increased recycling and the downturn in the economy.
- Public Works staff is not prepared to estimate the total cost of a Citywide composting program until the current pilot is concluded; In addition to the costs of trucks, carts, and personnel, the cost of transporting materials outside the City is substantial.

Councilmember comments:

*Councilman Linkhart:* We need to be looking at shorter term solutions than the 20 year master plan like reducing waste, pay as you throw, and eliminating dumpsters.

*Councilwoman Johnson:* The City could meet its 30% diversion goal with a citywide composting program. Response: This is likely true, and cost estimates will be included in the master plan.

*Councilwoman Robb:* The Councilwoman pointed out that the City will lose tipping fees as tonnage is reduced at the landfill and it is hard to imagine that increases in revenues from expanded recycling will balance that loss. Her conclusion is that expanding environmentally sensitive waste services in the City is not feasible without imposing a fee. She also suggested exploring large item drop off centers around the City.

*Councilman Nevitt:* Although the City is not proposing to move into the commercial market, some policy development is needed to encourage more recycling. Pay as you throw and other programs would need to be set up so as not to increase illegal dumping which is a concern to many residents. The Councilman encouraged department staff to include sustainable revenue options for enhanced services in the master plan such as pay as you go and composting.

*Councilman Linkhart:* The data indicates that about 36% of residential units do not receive City solid waste services but pay for private service either directly or indirectly. He also suggested that Public Works consider creative options besides meetings, such as focus groups, piggybacking onto other meetings, or surveying a sample of Denver residents to elicit citizen input.