

## **Appendix B**

### **Wayzata's Curbside SSOM Recycling Program: Additional Details**

#### **Historical Background**

In 2003, Hennepin County awarded an Innovative Waste Reduction and Recycling grant to the city of Wayzata to conduct a pilot project for a residential curbside collection program for SSOM. In addition, the Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board (SWMCB) also provided grant funding to the city to assist with the pilot project.

The pilot project's primary collaborators were: Wayzata resident neighborhood coordinators, Hennepin County and Randy's Sanitation. The pilot project was split into two phases and ran from April 2003 – June 2005.

County staff estimated that up to 40% of Wayzata's residential waste stream is paper that could be either recycled or composted. They also estimated that 25% of a typical household's waste is food scraps and non-recyclable paper.

The project was designed to evaluate how to:

1. Effectively educate residents to separate the organic portion of their trash; and
2. Economically collect the organics that have been separated.

After the first phase of the pilot project (ended in March 2004), preliminary results indicated an artificially high monthly costs. Thus, a final cost/benefit assessment of the City's initial pilot project (Phase I) would be premature. City staff were concerned that any proposed SSOM collection service fee base on the Phase I estimates would have resulted in the Wayzata City Council and/or residents not supporting an ongoing organics collection program. Thus, the City requested a one-year extension to:

- ◆ Increase resident awareness, participation and recycling and organic tonnages;
- ◆ Search for ongoing revenue sources; and
- ◆ Minimize costs for a residential organic collection.

Phase II started in April 2004 and ran through June 2005. The purpose of Phase II was to reduce the eventual organic collection costs. Part of the intent of Phase II was to help minimize any user fees added to residents' utility bills needed to finance the new SSOM collection service.

#### **Description of Program Operation Details**

During the pilot study, the organics material collected from residents included food scraps and non-recyclable paper. The following items **were** accepted for composting:

- ◆ All food scraps – including meat & bones
- ◆ Soiled & non-recyclable paper products, such as:
  - ▶ Napkins, paper towels, tissues
  - ▶ Paper plates, cups, food containers, pizza boxes
  - ▶ Paper milk and juice cartons
  - ▶ Paper bags and waxed paper
  - ▶ Waxed cardboard
  - ▶ Coffee filters and tea bags

- ◆ Other compostable items such as:
  - ▶ Paper vacuum bags
  - ▶ Dryer lint
  - ▶ House plants

The following items were **NOT accepted** for composting:

- ◆ All plastics (except biodegradable bags), including:
  - ▶ Utensils
  - ▶ Baggies, wrapping film, bags
  - ▶ Cups and containers
  - ▶ Foam trays, plates, bowls, packing material, etc.
  - ▶ Condiment packets, chip bags, candy wrappers
- ◆ Recyclable materials such as:
  - ▶ Bottles
  - ▶ Cans and scrap metal

To help residents understand which items were acceptable for composting, the City utilized several types of education outreach tools including:

- ◆ Paper free garbage stickers
- ◆ Cash prizes
- ◆ Organic newsletter
- ◆ Local newspaper articles
- ◆ Brochures
- ◆ Cart hangers
- ◆ Neighborhood events
- ◆ Lawn signs
- ◆ New uniforms for City personnel
- ◆ Cable programs
- ◆ Council meetings
- ◆ Distribution of compost at Public Works site
- ◆ Targeted mailing to non-participants
- ◆ Video showing organics full cycle
- ◆ Visits to Wayzata homes
- ◆ Anonymous survey completed by residents
- ◆ Meetings with groups or individuals of non-participants to discuss the new program, show the organics video and answer questions

In addition to these educational tools, several neighborhoods had a specified neighborhood coordinator. The neighborhood volunteers went door-to-door with information, staffed information booths and put out weekly yard signs to remind their neighbors about “organics” collection day. Wayzata found that many of the residents were supportive and appreciative of the organics pilot project.

During the pilot project, residents separately collected the acceptable organics materials from the rest of their garbage. Each resident was provided with a special, sealable food container to keep in their kitchen to collect food scraps on a daily basis. This food container was supposed to help with odor and storage. Residents were also provided with a specific organics cart to keep next to their regular municipal solid waste (MSW) cart. The City sold biodegradable plastic bags,

suitable for composting, for residents to place their organic waste prior to placing in the organics carts. The biodegradable “organics bags” came in three sizes and were available at local stores.

Residents set out their organics cart with their MSW cart. Both materials were collected on a weekly basis.

The city of Wayzata has one contracted waste hauler, Randy's Sanitation, which handles all of the city's MSW and recycling. City officials said the proactive cooperation of Randy's Sanitation made starting the organics collection pilot project easier to implement. After Randy's Sanitation collected the SSOM, the material was taken to the Hennepin County Recycling Center and Transfer Station in Brooklyn Park. The SSOM loads were tipped and inspected to ensure that non biodegradable contaminants were below threshold levels. After the material was inspected, it was transported by Hennepin County to the NRG SSOM composting facility in Empire Township in Dakota County.

The organics that Wayzata residents placed out on the curb was turned into compost at NRG. A portion of the final compost product was returned to the city of Wayzata and used in neighborhood community gardens. The city of Wayzata also used an estimated 50 cubic yards of the compost in its municipal public works operations.

### **Results of the Pilot Program**

During the pilot program, 70% of the households (1,200 total households) in the City participated at least once and a total of 189 tons of organic material were collected and composted. In any given month, about 50 percent of Wayzata residents set out SSOM for composting.

The SSOM collected from Wayzata's curbside program was very clean. All material sent to NRG during the pilot project was able to be composted. The amount of material collected weekly was typically between 1.5 to 2 tons. The average SSOM tons abated from the MSW during the pilot project was approximately 8 tons per month.

Since the two-year SSOM collection pilot program began, there has been a 12 percent decrease in the City's trash (1,056 tons in 2002 to 926 tons in 2004) and a 23 percent increase in the City's overall recycling. One theory is that City residents became more thoughtful about separating their waste, including traditional recyclables.

When the pilot project ended in 2005, the city of Wayzata added organics collection to the City's residential curbside collection program. Wayzata was the first city in the Twin Cities metro area to offer curbside collection of organics to all its residents.

### **Ongoing Program**

Wayzata has continued the organics collection program even though the research grant funding from the County is no longer available. The City increased MSW and recycling fees to cover the additional costs associated with the new SSOM collection program (i.e., adding curbside collection, transportation and composting of the organics).

The City has been working on new ideas such as every-other-week MSW collection to cut residents' bills. Based on the cost-benefit analysis prepared for the organics collection pilot project, the City Council approved raising garbage rates to continue organics collection.

To continue providing organic collection to Wayzata's residents, the per household recycling charge needed to be increased \$2.65 to \$6.25 per month. After restructuring the fees charged by Randy's Sanitation for garbage and organics collection, the net increase on monthly utility bills ranged from \$1.55 per month for households with the lowest level of service (base) up to \$3.00 per month for households with the highest level of service (90 gallon). This new rate schedule went into effect in July 2005. This increase in the monthly recycling fee paid for:

- ◆ Weekly recycling and SSOM collection;
- ◆ Seasonal grass, leaves and brush drop-off sites;
- ◆ Spring clean-up; and
- ◆ Fall leaf and Christmas tree pick-up

Individual households can now offset the increased fees by reducing their level of MSW service. Once the organics and recyclables (glass, paper, plastic, etc.) are recycled, there isn't much left for disposal in the MSW cart (e.g., non-recyclable plastics such as polystyrene, miscellaneous junk, etc.).

### **Economics**

Due to the decrease in waste that goes into the MSW cart, every-other-week MSW service became a viable option. By offering every-other-week pickup for MSW, residents were able to save money or at least break even, despite the 2005 fee increase. Organics (food waste/non-recyclable paper) and recyclables (plastic, metal, newspaper, junk mail, etc.) were still picked up every week. If residents were able to recycle enough to cut their MSW production further, they were also able to save money by using a cheaper, smaller MSW cart.

The monthly bottom line economic impact on Wayzata households included one of three scenarios:

- ◆ Save money by lowering the level of MSW service (e.g., lower from a 90 gallon cart to a 60 gallon cart);
- ◆ Break-even by lowering their frequency of MSW service to every-other-week MSW collection; or
- ◆ Pay up to \$1.55 to \$3.00 more per month depending on their current level of MSW service.

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Source: This summary is derived from information posted on the city of Wayzata's website: <http://www.wayzata.org>.