

Organic Waste

Currently, Winnipeg's garbage collection costs are funded by property taxes. A Financial Plan and Utility Rate Model Report was completed for the City of Winnipeg's Solid Waste Services in 2020. It specified that current reliance on constrained property tax and grant funding to support Winnipeg's solid waste services is not sustainable, and current

fees charged to Winnipeg residents are not sufficient in covering the end-to-end cost of providing the service. Today, Winnipeg has the lowest property taxes of comparable cities and the lowest annual increases by far. This does not allow for growth in waste diversion services provided to residents.

Brady Road Resource Management Facility's landfill is the second highest point source polluter of GHGs in Manitoba. Winnipeg is one of the last Canadian cities without a residential green bin program for organic waste collection.

The Alternative Municipal Budget proposes:

Instead of supporting waste collection, property taxes should be used to support community-based programming that provides environmental and social benefits and is open to all residents.

The financial plan and utility rate model report recommended several funding models, including a Residential Utility User Fee to replace the current mix of property taxes and waste diversion fee funding, or a Pay As You Throw (PAYT) model, in which customers pay higher fees per volume of garbage.

Green Action Centre proposed financing and collection alternatives that incentivize waste reduction and do not place a disproportionate financial burden on lower-income households. It put forth 11 recommendations that fit with the AMB's sustainable budgeting principles, including framing organics diversion as responsible waste management (like sewage treatment) to avoid negative environmental effects and resources loss, rather than treating it as an optional personal service. It also recommended that we introduce PAYT utility fees, with much lower fees for recycling and composting pickup to incentivize waste reduction, diversion, and home composting. Importantly, it also recommended that the city explore additional bill mitigation alternatives for lower-income households.

A report from Solid Waste Services to Winnipeg's Standing Policy Committee on Water and Waste identified additional costs (operating plus financing for capital) as \$27 – \$63 million as the capital cost of a compost facility, which would be reduced to \$9 – \$21 million if shared equally with the Provincial and Federal governments. An additional cost of \$18 million is identified for the implementation of the program.

Besides new capital expenditure, expenditure for the facility's operating costs is identified by the report as \$5.4 million annually, with annual operating costs of collection from single family homes identified as \$5 million. Capital contributions from provincial and/or federal governments and a more efficient collection system, e.g. by collecting recyclables and garbage every other week along with weekly collection of organic waste and using two-compartment collection trucks, as Toronto does, would reduce this cost.

Organic materials comprise up to 50 per cent of all household waste, but only an estimated 30 per cent of Winnipeg households compost their organic waste. Without an organics collection program, Winnipeg will never reach its 50 per cent waste diversion goal as set out in its Council approved Comprehensive Integrated Waste Management Strategy.

Questions for your candidate:

- Would you support a residential green bin program for organic waste collection in Winnipeg?
- Would you support a Pay as You Throw utility fee that charged less for organic and recycle pick-up and that also took low-income homeowners into account?
- Would you support changing the garbage pick-up cycle to every two weeks while having the organic pick-up every week?

There are alternatives. Budgets are about choices.
See the Alternative Municipal Budget at policyalternatives.ca