

Deleting Curbside Organics Collection

February 9, 2020

Dear chair and members of the Civic Works Committee,

As we have committed to more than necessary in our application for a landfill expansion, I am asking that you direct staff to change the terms of reference as a means of reducing our budgetary pressures.

Delaying a mandatory green bin program until 2025 will both save and delay the investment of many millions of dollars. This is justifiable because the program itself is very cost inefficient in achieving the following desired metrics.

Extending the life of the landfill site

A green bin program running at \$5 million per year for 25 years will increase the life of the landfill site by two years. The same could be accomplished by upsizing it slightly for an extra \$2 million (\$80k/yr). We are investing 62.5 times more than necessary to achieve this metric.

Diverting Greenhouse Gasses

The green bin program will divert approximately 25,000 tonnes of greenhouse gasses per year at the cost of \$5,000,000. This works out to \$200 per tonne, which is ten times that of programs typically used to offset carbon emissions. A half-million-dollar investment in carbon offsets (perhaps for our own more efficient projects) would have the same impact on the environment.

A strategy of enlarging the landfill and investing in carbon offsets would accomplish these same goals at the cost of only \$580k per year, which would produce a \$4,420,000 annual savings.

We can still have a green bin program in operation. Previously, I have described how a self-funding paid green bin service can be provided for \$150 per year if only 15% of residents register. This would also save us wasting millions of dollars on the purchase of bins for residents who are not expected to participate. This program would not hit the tax levy and still meet our 2025 requirement of having a source separation program. As the uptake increases, the cost will go down, making it even more attractive for those who wish to help the environment in this way.

In light of the preceding arguments, I am requesting that you support the following motion:

That staff prepare a new terms of reference which reflects the removal of the mandatory curbside organics collection for the years 2020-2024.

Sincerely,

Michael van Holst
Councillor, Ward 1