



Synopsis

Community Engagement Report

City of Bloomington, Minnesota

Solid Waste Management Plan

Prepared for:
City of Bloomington

Prepared by:
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March 2014

Solid Waste Management Plan: Community Engagement Report



Synopsis

A *Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan)* is being developed to guide the City's approach to solid waste. The *Plan* will cover components of solid waste management, including recycling, waste reduction, yard waste collection, food waste/organics recovery, mixed solid waste collection/recovery and land disposal. The *Plan* is intended to give the City a clear vision of potential solid waste and recycling policies to meet the City's goals. Community engagement is a key component in developing a sustainable solid waste program. As such, the City has been seeking active involvement and input from the community throughout this project. The *Community Engagement Report* documents the details of the outreach methods used in the engagement process and the results that have been obtained so far. The report is a "living"

The *Community Engagement Report* supporting the *Solid Waste Management Plan* can be downloaded from the City's web page at: http://BloomingtonMN.gov/main_top/3_homecomm/trash/waste.htm?r=us.

document that will continue to be updated throughout the engagement process. A copy of the report can be found on the City's website. All public comments received through January 31, 2014 are also catalogued and addressed by the report. A synopsis of the results of the community engagement process is provided below.

Throughout the process, the City of Bloomington has been, and will continue to, solicit input and feedback from concerned parties and interest groups. Along with residents, business organizations, the Master Recyclers and Composters (MRC), the Bloomington Sustainability Coalition, the Park, Arts and Recreation Commission (PARC), and waste haulers have been engaged. A wide variety of outreach tools are being used to help ensure every resident has an opportunity to provide input. The City Council will adopt the resident-formed *Plan* only after adequate opportunity has been provided for public input, including:

- ◆ City Council meetings
- ◆ Open Houses
- ◆ Surveys
- ◆ Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission (PARC) meetings
- ◆ Meetings with interested groups and organizations
- ◆ Other community meetings
- ◆ *Solid Waste Management Plan* web page
- ◆ Phone calls, emails, and other electronic/social media

Additional comments will continue to be received until the public hearing on the draft Solid Waste Management Plan. A public hearing has been tentatively scheduled for April 21, 2014 to present the Plan.

The City values its residents' input. Bloomington staff will continue to collect resident's guidance and concerns.

For more information or to submit comments about the *Solid Waste Management Plan*, contact:

Jim Gates, Deputy Director of Public Works
952-563-8730

SolidWasteManagementPlan@BloomingtonMN.gov

Goals and Strategies

Resident feedback has been requested on the City's solid waste management goals and strategies throughout the project. Input received at the second Open House held on January 16, 2014 confirmed the comments provided through other engagement activities. The feedback received emphasized that reducing road wear impacts, lowering environmental impacts, improving recycling, composting and waste reduction are very important community goals. Residents also believe that enhancing public education and awareness and assuring that all residents have adequate recycling services are important goals. The Goals and Strategies are individual chapters in the *Plan*.

Environmental Protection

The community also strongly believes in environmental protection. Highly-engaged and committed volunteers like the resident group Master Recyclers and Composters, the Bloomington Sustainable Coalition, and the Parks, Art and Recreation Commission confirmed community support for sustainability issues such as improved solid waste management. Environmental protection was a common theme reflected in many of the community conversations, responses to surveys and in the comments on the draft goals and the draft outline of strategies.

Organized Collection

The City of Bloomington has used a national survey tool that allows the City to evaluate how well they are serving the residents of the community and identify issues that are important to them. The National Citizen SurveyTM of Bloomington residents clearly indicated a majority of survey participants are satisfied with the solid waste, recycling and yard services available within the City. A customized question in the 2013 National Citizen SurveyTM for Bloomington indicated that 63% felt that the potential action to "Organize garbage collection so that only one hauler serves each neighborhood" was somewhat important, very important, or essential to the respondents. The remaining 37% said that organized collection was not at all important.

Participants in the community engagement process have been overwhelmingly supportive of organized solid waste collection as a critical aspect of Bloomington's future solid waste management efforts. The respondents involved in the community engagement process expressed a desire for fewer trucks in their neighborhoods, less noise, fewer road impacts, more safety on neighborhood streets and cul-de-sacs., as well as more organized and coordinated waste education and service delivery.

A one-on-one meeting with the City's licensed trash haulers and their comments at the first Open House provided another perspective on the organized collection issue. Discussions with City Council at study sessions have indicated an interest in exploring how any change to organized collection could be fair and equitable to haulers.

Educational Opportunities

In meetings and in surveys, participants expressed the belief that increased education efforts are needed to achieve the proposed goals and draft strategies for improved solid waste management. The Master Recyclers and Composters, a volunteer group that advocates recycling and composting, have provided significant community education. Education gaps that need to be addressed include: better knowledge of what materials are and are not recyclable, outreach to residents of multi-unit housing to encourage them to recycle, waste reduction strategies for all residents, and “away-from-home” recycling opportunities (e.g. recycling at parks). Community members expressed the desire that additional City resources should be dedicated to solid waste related education activities.

Waste Reduction, Recycling and Organics

Nearly all community engagement participants expressed support for specific waste reduction, recycling and organics collection and composting actions. Citizens repeatedly confirmed these three activities should be strongly represented in the *Solid Waste Management Plan*.

Revision of Ordinances

The City has ordinances that: require recycling by businesses and residents; require trash haulers to provide specific services; and outline City responsibilities. Many participants stated the City needs to improve enforcement of its existing ordinances. They also indicated that more City staff resources should be allocated for trash and recycling education and enforcement activities.

Citywide Curbside Cleanup

The citywide Curbside Cleanup is a highly valued service. Almost without exception, residents and businesses expressed support for the Curbside Cleanup program. However, there is widespread recognition that the program is expensive and there may be more cost-effective ways to operate it.

City Staffing Resources

The City of Bloomington had a staff person with a portion of time dedicated to recycling and solid waste issues until 2009. The recycling coordinator was tasked with providing: education about recycling and waste reduction and preparation of County-required reports. Many participants stated they missed the services provided by City staff. Some participants simply recommended the City should staff this recycling coordinator position again.