

THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF BURNABY

ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND ALDERMEN

Madam/Gentlemen:

REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council approve in principle the GVRD establishing and operating a composting demonstration site next to the Still Creek Avenue recycling depot.
2. THAT the Municipal Solicitor prepare the terms and conditions for the operation of the composting demonstration site for the approval of Council.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On 1990 January 31 Tolvo Alias, Director of Recycling, GVRD wrote to the Environment and Waste Management Committee to indicate the District's interest in establishing a composting demonstration site and to pursue the possibility of locating such a site in Burnaby. At the last meeting of the Environment and Waste Management Committee, staff were asked to meet with GVRD to discuss the proposal in detail.

Staff from the Planning and Building Inspection Department and the Engineering Department met with GVRD staff and a representative of City Farmer to discuss the proposed composting demonstration site. This report describes their proposal and site requirements.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Composting is a natural process of decay that breaks down vegetable matter such as yard and kitchen waste into rich organic material that can be used as a soil conditioner. Because composting is a natural process, composting facilities can be easily set-up in back yards of single family residences.

Composting of yard and kitchen wastes from single family residences has been identified as an important means of diverting material from the waste stream and recycling it as a soil conditioner. Throughout the year, garbage collected from single family residences averages 30 percent compostable materials. In spring and fall, residential waste can contain up to 80 percent compostable materials.

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The GVRD intends to develop regional composting sites as part of its long-term regional recycling action plan. An immediate priority is to encourage homeowners to compost their yard and kitchen wastes. To achieve this, several composting demonstration sites where interested individuals can come and learn about various composting techniques are needed. The GVRD has approached Burnaby about establishing a composting demonstration site in the Municipality.

3.0 COMPOSTING DEMONSTRATION SITE

The composting demonstration site will consist of a small garden and examples of up to 12 different composting techniques. The techniques will range from build-it-yourself composting boxes constructed of wood and hardware cloth to a variety of commercially available composting containers. Residents will be encouraged to visit the site to learn about composting and then use these techniques to set-up composting in their backyards. The site will not be a composting facility where residents can drop-off yard and kitchen wastes.

The GVRD will be responsible for preparing the site, operating the facility, and maintaining it in a clean, safe manner. The site will require a small building for office, telephone, and library/resource centre; security fencing; parking; and suitable land for a small garden that will be used as part of the demonstration. The GVRD has indicated that a site of about 7,200 sq. ft. would meet their requirements. They have also indicated that they will landscape the facility to make it as attractive as possible. The District plans to contract City Farmer, a non-profit organization dedicated to urban agriculture, to staff the facility.

4.0 SUITABLE SITE

The GVRD is of the opinion that a site on municipal property next to the Still Creek Avenue recycling depot would meet all of the requirements for a composting demonstration site. The site would be delineated with respect to the existing recycling facility and function as an adjunct to it. Staff would identify any necessary improvements to the site. In addition, the site would be convenient for the many residents who visit the depot with their recyclables. We anticipate that many individuals would visit the composting demonstration site after depositing their recyclables. The establishment of a composting demonstration site is consistent with Burnaby's commitment to recycling and waste reduction.

5.0 LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Municipal Legal Department has indicated that the terms and conditions for operating the composting demonstration site could be covered in a letter to the GVRD from the Municipal Solicitor. The letter would confirm the location and use of the site, site modifications to be made by the GVRD, staffing, hours of operation, liability and notice for termination of site use.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed composting demonstration site is the first of several intended for the GVRD. It will build on the success of Burnaby's recycling programs to date by providing information on another way in which citizens can participate in recycling and waste reduction.

The Environment and Waste Management Committee indicated that they would like the Municipality to be closely associated with the composting demonstration project. The Committee asked staff to pursue ways in which the GVRD/City Farmer could share space with Municipal staff at the Still Creek recycling facility. This could involve sharing office space, telephone, etc. Subject to Council approval, staff will meet with GVRD/City Farmer personnel and Municipal engineering staff to discuss specific space requirements for the composting demonstration project and to identify ways in which office space could be shared.

Respectfully submitted

Alderman J.M. Sawicki
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