



**CITY OF BOULDER
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: December 6, 2011

AGENDA TITLE: Consideration of a motion to accept the summary of the October 11, 2011 City Council study session regarding the Update to the Zero Waste Master Plan.

PRESENTERS:

Jane S. Brautigam, City Manager
Paul J. Fetherston, Deputy City Manager
David Driskell, Executive Director, Dept. of Community Planning and Sustainability
Kara Mertz, Local Environmental Action Manager
Jamie Harkins, Business Sustainability Specialist

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Oct. 11, 2011 study session was to update City Council on the status of community waste reduction efforts and to provide a summary of the analyses and public outreach completed to date in preparation for the update of the Zero Waste Master Plan (ZWMP).

Additionally, the study session was an opportunity for council to provide feedback on its priorities for new or expanded zero waste services, facilities and potential regulation options to be considered in the ZWMP.

The study session summary is included as **Attachment A**.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Suggested Motion Language:

Staff recommends council consideration of this summary and action in the form of the following motion:

Motion to accept the Summary (Attachment A) of the October 11, 2011 Study Session on the Update to the Zero Waste Master Plan.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue with implementation of next steps in the ZWMP update process, including:

- Additional research and detailed cost/benefit analysis of potential city investment in relation to zero waste facilities and services.
- Research, analysis and stakeholder engagement to define potential parameters for a disposable bag reduction ordinance and potential take-out container regulation. In particular, staff will reach out to business owners and other potentially affected parties to understand their concerns and ideas.
- Working with the county and other partners to ensure regional and cross-sector strategies where appropriate, in particular with regard to construction and demolition waste processing and commercial composting.
- Regular updates to Council as new information becomes available, including results from the county's feasibility study of construction and demolition waste recycling (expected by the end of 2011).

The next phase of stakeholder engagement will begin in early 2012, including both issue-specific outreach and broader opportunities for public input. Staff anticipates returning to council with specific recommendations for the updated ZWMP in mid-2012.

ATTACHMENTS

A. October 11, 2011 Zero Waste Master Plan Study Session Summary

ATTACHMENT A

October 11, 2011 Zero Waste Master Plan Study Session Summary

PRESENT: City Council members: Susan Osborne, Mayor; Ken Wilson, Deputy Mayor; Suzy Ageton; Matt Appelbaum; KC Becker; Macon Cowles; Crystal Gray; George Karakehian; Lisa Morzel

Staff members and consultants: Jane Brautigam, City Manager; Paul Fetherston, Deputy City Manager; David Driskell, Executive Director of Community Planning and Sustainability; Kara Mertz, Local Environmental Action Manager; Jamie Harkins, Business Sustainability Specialist; Lisa Skumatz, Skumatz Economic Research Associates, Inc.

Additional Community Planning & Sustainability staff, Boulder County Commissioners' Sustainability Office staff, as well as representatives of partner organizations Eco-Cycle, Western Disposal and the Center for Resource Conservation were also present.

PURPOSE: To update City Council on the status of community waste reduction efforts and to provide a summary of the analyses and public outreach completed to date in relation to update of the Zero Waste Master Plan (ZWMP). Additionally, the study session was an opportunity for City Council to discuss its priorities for new or expanded zero waste services, facilities and potential regulation options to be included in the ZWMP.

OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION:

Kara Mertz introduced the item and gave the first half of the presentation summarizing the study session memo, including updated community progress towards the zero waste goal, questions for council, and an overview of the priority sectors (commercial and multifamily) and priority materials (organics, plastics, paper). She also presented the facility needs and potential regulatory options to address these sectors and materials. The study session memo presented two questions for City Council:

1. Does council have questions or comments on the draft programs and services proposed for inclusion in the updated ZWMP?
2. Does council have any questions or comments on the facility or regulatory options presented for consideration? Are there any options that do not warrant further consideration or analysis?

Jamie Harkins concluded the presentation by discussing the facility needs and potential regulatory options for addressing problem waste. The potential regulatory options included a disposable bag reduction ordinance and a food take-out container requirement.

Council comments and questions relative to each topic are included below, as well as additional comments not related to specific questions asked.

Programs and Services:

- How are various priorities and services weighted?
- Staff should ensure there is coordination with commercial waste reduction assistance between Eco-Cycle, PACE, etc.
- Interest in changing residential collection schedule to weekly compost and bi-weekly trash.
- Would like to see comparison of where any new funding can be best used.
- Question regarding multifamily (MFU) access to compost collection – service can be added if requested by property owner.
- More analysis is needed on potential programs and services vis-à-vis cost benefit.
- There is huge opportunity remaining with commercial and MFU – upcoming efforts should focus on those sectors.
- Engage business community in design of services and regulatory options.
- [Food waste disposals] Interest in knowing more about how they fit into the whole picture.
- [Food waste disposals] Concern over diverting food waste away from compost collection – Western Disposal’s compost site needs more food scraps.
- [Food waste disposals] Concern over increased water use with food waste disposals (issue has been raised at Water Advisory Board).
- [Food waste disposals] Concern that wastewater treatment costs will rise with more food waste in wastewater system.

Facility Development Needs:

- [Resource Recovery Park] What is the cost benefit analysis of an expanded facility? Provide analysis in addition to just numbers – are there other ways to recover additional materials?
- [Resource Recovery Park] Priorities in updated ZWMP will affect Phase II development of 6400 Arapahoe.
- [Resource Recovery Park] Interest in pursuing Phase II development.
- [Compost Capacity] Why is there an end-use problem with the finished compost product? The city should buy the compost in bulk and use it in all parks.
- [C&D] Questions regarding Boulder County commitment to develop a C&D facility. Council is interested in an update and firm timeline for project.
- [C&D] Not interested in pursuing this type of facility.
- Is there a role for new waste-to-energy technology for extremely hard-to-recycle items?
- Facility needs should be ranked according to cost and what is achieved to the investment.

Commercial Recycling Requirement:

- Not at the point yet to require commercial recycling.
- Is there a unique approach to more commercial diversion that doesn’t require regulation?
- Perhaps the reason for low commercial diversion is that there is no regulatory requirement.

Disposable Bag Reduction Ordinance:

- Unanimous interest in pursuing a bag reduction ordinance.
- Interest in exploring a fee on plastic and paper bags; as well as a ban on plastic with a fee on paper bags.
- With bag fees, concern about additional time needed for check-out process.
- How are bag fee programs really working out at stores in other cities?
- Interest in Boulder Chamber's idea of a bag loan program.
- Continue to refine estimates on bag tonnage.
- What is the greenhouse gas impact of bags?
- We don't know what is happening to the bags in the landfill – they do not break down.
- Concern with a bag fee being used to raise money for a specific non-profit.
- Cost analyses should be performed and the public should be asked if they want to spend the revenue in a certain way.
- Do not include too many exemptions that will make the ordinance complicated.
- Ask large bag distributors to participate in the process and assist in the ordinance development (model after SmartRegs process).
- A bag fee should help fund the programs that will get us closer to our goal.
- Concern about how a bag fee program would affect low income population.
- Be thoughtful about implications – for example, an increase in double-bagging with paper instead of using plastic.
- Reasonable to discuss use of bag fee for Phase II development at 6400 Arapahoe, however all options should be explored.
- Produce bags should not be included.

Take-Out Container Ordinance:

- Unanimous interest in pursuing a take-out container requirement.
- Interested in an overarching polystyrene ban.
- What would an ordinance look like in our community?
- Polystyrene packaging is a problem, but that must be addressed at a state or federal level.
- Also work to address the disposal of compostable containers.
- Conduct a cost comparison of containers and ensure that vendors know where to purchase non-polystyrene containers.
- Questions regarding pre-packaged food on polystyrene – this is not usually included in ordinances.

General ZWMP Update:

- How can we balance city priorities? For example, if our goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, should we invest in energy efficiency or waste reduction?