



**CITY OF BOULDER  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

**MEETING DATE: April 5, 2011**

**AGENDA TITLE:** Consideration of a motion to accept the summary of the February 8, 2011 City Council study session regarding the Update to the Master Plan for Waste Reduction.

**PRESENTERS:**

Jane S. Brautigam, City Manager  
Paul Fetherston, Deputy City Manager  
David Driskell, Executive Director, Community Planning and Sustainability  
Kara Mertz, Local Environmental Action Manager  
Jamie Harkins, Business Sustainability Specialist  
Elizabeth Vasatka, Business Sustainability Coordinator  
Kristen Hartel, Education & Outreach Coordinator  
Kelle Boumansour, Contracts and Data Manager

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of the February 8<sup>th</sup> study session was to update City Council on the status of community waste reduction efforts and to get council feedback on several questions in order to define the framework for the five-year update to the Master Plan for Waste Reduction (MPWR).

Feedback was requested on:

- Waste reduction priorities in addition to diversion from landfill;
- Potential additional goals and metrics that should be used to measure progress towards zero waste;
- Possible regulatory approaches to achieve zero waste goals that cannot be met with incentives or assistance;
- Development of a decision support system with Eco-Cycle and its use in the MPWR update process.

This memo includes additional information related to several topics discussed at the study session. 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 February 8, 2011 Study Session on the Update to the Master Plan for Waste Reduction.*

## **FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION**

Additional information related to several topics discussed at the study session:

1. Waste-to-Energy: Staff was asked to investigate additional waste reduction strategies, including appropriate waste-to-energy technologies. Staff will evaluate the feasibility of this type of technology as it relates to the non-recyclable and non-compostable portions of the waste stream. To date, staff has spoken with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) regarding waste-to-energy research NREL is currently conducting with the University of Colorado. Staff will be following up with NREL as its project progresses to investigate the possibility of using Boulder as a case study for the research. In addition, staff will include a carryover request in the first adjustment to base for council consideration in May to appropriate \$50,000 of 2010 Trash Tax fund balance for estimated expenses of studying waste-to-energy and its potential applicability in Boulder. More information regarding this carryover request will be provided at the time of the adjustment to base.
2. Update on 2011 Commercial Waste Reduction Programs: In 2010, the City of Boulder contracted with Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) business sustainability staff to provide zero waste technical assistance, tools and audits to Boulder businesses. The 2011 BCPH contract will expand this assistance to more businesses, specifically restaurants, and provide additional resources such as industry-specific signage and guidelines. Staff is also investigating other initiatives including city provision of regional or industry-specific business zero waste advisors so smaller businesses in Boulder have a “go-to person” with whom they can develop a relationship for ongoing zero waste technical assistance. In 2011, LEAD staff is also beginning discussions with ReSource and Eco-Cycle to identify priorities for operating contracts for these organizations’ operations at 6400 Arapahoe Avenue.
3. Marshall Landfill Costs: Council asked a question regarding the costs to the City of Boulder for remedial measures at the Marshall Landfill. The city’s share of the costs for clean up of contaminated groundwater and a treatment facility with a monitoring system was approximately \$1,740,000 per the negotiated 1988 consent decree. This liability was fully satisfied in 1993; however, the city is responsible for additional annual expenses of \$250,000 for the subsequent twenty years, which will end in 2013 totaling approximately \$6,740,000.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Based on guidance provided at the study session, staff will continue with the MPWR update process, including consideration of additional goals and metrics; and analysis of needed education, services, facilities and incentives. Staff will continue stakeholder engagement, outreach to the general public and discussions with the waste reduction task force.

City Council will review staff recommendations for the MPWR update in advance of its consideration of the annexation for 6400 Arapahoe Road. Diversion and cost estimates for various zero waste recommendations will help council determine whether or not to commit additional public funds for Phase II development at that site.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. February 8, 2011 Master Plan for Waste Reduction Study Session Summary

## ATTACHMENT A

### February 8, 2011 Master Plan for Waste Reduction Study Session Summary

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

**NOT PRESENT:** Susan Osborne, Mayor; KC Becker

**Staff members and consultants:** Jane Brautigam, City Manager; Paul Fetherston, Deputy City Manager; David Driskell, Executive Director of Community Planning & Sustainability; Kara Mertz, Local Environmental Action Manager; Elizabeth Vasatka, Business Sustainability Coordinator; Jamie Harkins, Business Sustainability Specialist; Sarah Van Pelt, Special Projects Coordinator; Kelle Boumansour, Contract & Data Manager; Kristen Hartel, Education & Outreach Coordinator

**PURPOSE:** To provide City Council with information on current waste reduction progress and request feedback for the five-year update to the Master Plan for Waste Reduction (MPWR) on:

- Waste reduction priorities in addition to diversion from landfill;
- Potential additional goals and metrics that should be used to measure progress towards zero waste;
- Possible regulatory approaches to achieving waste reduction goals that cannot be met with incentives or assistance;
- Development of a decision support system with Eco-Cycle and its use in the MPWR update process.

### OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION:

Kara Mertz introduced the item and gave a presentation summarizing the study session memo, including current progress towards the existing zero waste goal and questions for council.

The study session memo presented three questions for City Council:

1. Should waste diversion (percent of material diverted from landfills) continue to be the primary goal against which zero waste progress is measured?
  - a. Does council have feedback on other potential priorities and related metrics that might be considered in the plan update process?
2. Does council want staff to investigate possible regulatory approaches to achieve zero waste goals where they have not or cannot be met with incentives or assistance?
  - a. If so, what factors should be taken into account when considering regulatory options?
  - b. Are there any regulatory approaches that should not be considered?

3. Does council concur with the staff recommendation to work with Eco-Cycle to develop a web-based decision support system and consider how this tool might be used in the Plan update process [as it models the impacts of various zero waste investment strategies]?

New information presented included that the nonprofits involved with 6400 Arapahoe are helping to fund engineering drawings for Phase II development so both phases can be reviewed through the site review application submittal. In addition, the third question regarding Eco-Cycle's decision support system was not discussed due to new information that the tool will not be ready in time to inform the plan update process but may be relevant in future efforts.

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

#### **Priorities, Goals and Metrics:**

- Concern that measuring diversion is not a full reflection of progress made.
- Diversion has not greatly increased from 2005 to 2009 – is it a good outcome if diversion stays constant but waste goes down? Focus should be on defining the goal so that the city can track multiple metrics that help show how successful the community is at achieving zero waste.
- Council priorities are: toxicity, increasing reuse and compost collection.
- Methane-producing waste and toxics should be a priority.
- Consider accounting for construction waste separately.
- Define the problem with construction waste and if the materials are inert in the landfill, is it a concern?
- Is it possible to use participation as a metric? How many people, and in what ways, are they participating in the programs?

#### **Regulatory Approaches and Other Strategies:**

- Part of the reason single-stream recycling was implemented was focused on apartments and small businesses lacking the space to separate recyclable materials on-site – why hasn't single-stream worked better for businesses and multifamily?
- Investigate opportunities and incentives for businesses and multifamily housing to decrease volume of trash service and increase recycling and compost service.
- Interest in regulation to eliminate Styrofoam from the waste stream.
- Consider completely different approaches to deal with the waste stream, such as waste-to-energy. This process is popular in Europe and addresses multiple problems at once.
- Need more education on proper recycling and compost collection guidelines, especially in the multifamily sector.
- Examine incentives instead of regulation to get businesses and restaurants to recycle and collect compostable materials.
- It appears there may be a lot of low-hanging fruit in the restaurant sector.

- Interest in an ordinance to require all take-out food containers in restaurants to be compostable or recyclable.
- Consider out-of-the-box ideas in addition to determining what is already working for the above points.
- Is there a way to improve information and possible regulations or financial incentives around electronics disposal and recycling?
- Consider expanding compost collection guidelines (i.e. including animal products, etc.) to increase participation. Compost collection needs to be as easy as possible.
- Consider requiring hazardous materials to be identified with stickers by retailers at the point-of-sale that also explain how to safely dispose of them.
- Consider energy from composting and local “take back” or product stewardship measures to reduce waste.
- Is it possible to implement a commercial hauling requirement to provide recycling and compost collection similar to residential?
- Consider a construction waste diversion requirement for commercial buildings.
- Can the experience at the Hazardous Materials Management facility be improved? Is there any way to make it more convenient?

#### **Information City Council Would Like to See:**

- Cost savings from reduced wastewater treatment due to curbside compost collection. Can this be quantified?
- Expanded financial analysis of current waste reduction facilities, including costs to residents. While some items are worth the cost even if expensive (i.e. hazardous waste facility), what facilities, with an incremental additional investment, would be most effective in helping us attain our goals?
- What is still in the trash?

#### **MPWR Update Process:**

- The Master Plan’s investment strategy should consider including a priority to invest in nonprofit organizations.
- Be innovative – brainstorm new markets, trends, what nonprofits and the private sector can bring to the table that’s new and innovative.
- Be aware of what is working already, particularly for diverting waste from the commercial sector, including multifamily housing.