

Garbage Recycling and Yard Trimmings

CityPlan

Riley Park/South Cambie **RPSC**

The Regional Plan

The desire to extend the life of existing landfills and the concerns about the environmental impacts of garbage have made solid waste management a priority at all levels of government. The Greater Vancouver Regional Solid Waste Management Plan was the result of a four year, three -stage public review process and it deals with solid waste from the residential, business and construction sectors. The plan is a blueprint of how governments, businesses and residents in the region will set about reducing, reusing and recycling. The plan sets specific goals to reduce waste for each level of government, with the Province and the region generally being responsible for the business and construction sectors, and the cities generally being responsible for the residential sector.

Progress of the Plan

Between 1990 and the end of 2000, the reduction in per capita garbage disposal for the region had reached an estimated 48.3% from all sources. In the future we plan to build on the success of the existing waste reduction programs.

City Initiatives -

Residential Garbage Reduction

In 2001, the City spent \$22 million on residential garbage collection, disposal and recycling.

Utility Fee

In January of 1998, the City implemented a utility fee system to fund specific garbage and recycling collection services through user fees rather than taxes. The intent of the utility fee was to provide a secure funding structure for garbage collection and recycling programs and to address some of the perceived inequities in the previous system that was funded through taxes.

Garbage Can Limit

As of January 1, 2002, garbage service is allocated based on the number of dwelling units at the property. For a typical single family dwelling the allocation is two cans per collection week. Additional garbage will be collected only if additional weekly service is purchased or a City sticker is placed on each extra bag. Stickers are \$1.50 each and can be obtained by mail, in person at City Hall, most community centres or at Safeway stores in Vancouver.

Commercial and Apartment Garbage Collection

The City does not provide garbage collection services to businesses or to residential complexes with more than four units. This work is done by private contractors.

Recycling

The City operates recycling collection programs for houses and apartments. Three types of recyclable material are collected:

- newspaper;
- mixed paper including cardboard;
- mixed containers (metal, glass and plastic).

Blue Box Program

Blue Box recycling program operates City-wide servicing about 85,000 single- family properties.

Participation in the blue box program is estimated to be close to 90 percent and, in 2001, the blue box program recovered about 21,500 metric tonnes of recyclable materials.

Apartment Recycling Program

In 1999, the City introduced a recycling collection program for all multi -family properties in the City. The program provides multi- family residents with a level of service similar to the Blue Box program. This program is important because almost half of Vancouver residents live in multi- family dwellings. In 2001, the program recovered about 7,100 metric tonnes (some of the multi-family recovery is reported in the Blue Box figure above).

Recycling Depots/Large Items

The City operates one main recycling depot at the Vancouver South Transfer Station on West Kent Avenue North and a second, smaller depot at the Vancouver Landfill site in Delta. These depots accept recyclable materials from residents and small businesses at no charge. Residents generally use the depots for large items, like fridges, and for certain materials that are not accepted by the collection programs. In 2001, about 5,900 tonnes of recyclables were collected at the City's depots.

Yard Trimmings Collection Programs

On February 1, 2000 the City began offering a yard trimmings collection service once every 2 weeks, to residents receiving standard garbage collection. Yard trimmings are set out on collection day in a clearly marked can, clear plastic bags, biodegradable paper bags or bundled with twine. The program collected 11,400 tonnes in 2001.

Large loads of yard trimmings should be taken to the yard trimmings drop-off area at the Vancouver South Transfer Station, 377 West Kent Ave. North.

Yard Trimmings Composting Facility

Vancouver's large yard trimmings composting facility is located at the Vancouver Landfill site in Delta. At this facility, yard trimmings are shredded, placed in rows and mixed for approximately one year until it has been converted into a high quality finished compost. This compost is used within the City's Engineering and Park Board operations, and is sold to landscapers and residents of the Lower Mainland. The compost facility processes yard trimmings that is dropped off at the Transfer Station and Vancouver Landfill by residents and businesses, and from the City's collection programs. Yard trimmings in passenger vehicles and station wagons can be dropped off at no charge. In 2001, the composting facility processed about 25,600 tonnes of yard trimmings from Vancouver, plus some additional material from other municipalities such as Delta.

Christmas Tree Programs

After Christmas each year, the City collects Christmas trees as part of the yard trimmings collection program and through drop-off at the Vancouver South Transfer Station and Vancouver Landfill. The City also sponsors the Lions Club's Christmas tree chipping events at three locations in the city. In January, 2002, the Lions Club's events chipped over 3,300 trees and collected over \$12,000 in food and cash donations.

Backyard Compost Bins

Since 1990, Vancouver has provided backyard composters to residents at the subsidized price of \$25. Composters are an excellent method of reducing waste, since they operate at the source and eliminate collection and processing costs. To the end of 2001, over 31,000 composters had been sold. This works out to about 37 percent of the single-family households in Vancouver having

purchased a city composter. This results in an estimated annual reduction in garbage of 7,500 tonnes.

Worm Compost Bins

Worm composting is a special type of composting that can be done indoors with worms. Since 1993, the City of Vancouver has provided worm bins to apartment residents at the subsidized price of \$25. Each purchaser is required to attend a one hour workshop, at the end of which they are provided with a blue box sized worm bin, bedding, 500 red wiggler worms and an instruction book. To the end of 2001, the City had sold about 2,800 worm bins.

Compost Demonstration Garden and Hotline

The Garden at 2150 Maple Street is funded by the City and provides a valuable education service that supports backyard and worm composting, and water-wise gardening. Visitors can see different types of compost bins in action and talk to the knowledgeable staff and volunteers. Visitors to the Garden include school and community groups, local and national media, and members of the general public curious about composting. Likewise, the GVRD funds the Compost Hotline at (604) 736- 2250 that provides a regional service answering callers with composting and gardening questions. Both the Garden and the Hotline are staffed by the non-profit group City Farmer.

Hazardous Waste

See Fact Sheet on Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Wastes.

For more information

Garbage and Recycling Hotline (604) 326-4600.

Billing enquires/garbage stickers (604) 873-7644