

From: ["van Dyk, Donny"](#)
To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 12/8/2025 4:57:47 PM
Subject: ENG - Council Memo - A Drain on Resources and Resources Down the Drain Pulling the plug on In-Sink Garbage Disposal - RTS# 18098
Attachments: ENG - Council Memo - RTS 18098 - A Drain on Resources and Resources Down the Drain Pulling the plug on In-Sink Garbage Disposal.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- Council directed staff on July 9, 2025 to report back with draft bylaw amendments for a potential ban on residential in-sink food grinders in new construction.
- Residential food waste collection programs have been successfully implemented for both single- and multi-family homes, providing well-established alternatives to food waste grinders. These programs are based on existing provisions of the Solid Waste By-law and the Sewer and Watercourse By-law which ban the disposal of solid waste – including food waste – via the sewer system, in alignment with Metro Vancouver regulations.
- A ban on in-sink food grinders is not recommended at this time due to limited benefits and potential impacts, as outlined below:
 - Implementing a ban would create regulatory inconsistencies in the region, which the development industry has requested be avoided unless supported by a strong business rationale.
 - Banning in-sink food grinders would reduce wastewater loadings by approximately 0.17% per year, offering minimal environmental and treatment process benefits.
 - Estimated operational savings from a ban are modest, reaching about \$40,000 per year after 10 years, and with negligible potable water savings (equivalent to 3-4 single-family homes annually).
- Engineering Services recommends prioritizing higher-impact initiatives identified in the Healthy Waters Plan and maintaining focus on existing green bin collection programs, which are supported by a comprehensive communications approach that emphasizes environmental benefits and waste diversion cost savings.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon at 604-873-7336 or lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca.

Thanks,
Donny

Donny van Dyk (he/him)

City Manager

City of Vancouver

MEMORANDUM

December 8, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Corrie Okell, General Manager, Development, Buildings & Licensing
Saul Schwebs, Chief Building Official

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: A Drain on Resources and Resources Down the Drain: Pulling the plug on In-Sink Garbage Disposal

RTS #: 18098

This memorandum provides an update to Council on staff's response to the directions from the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities on [July 9, 2025](#), regarding a proposed prohibition of in-sink food grinders in new construction.

Update

Engineering Services does not recommend proceeding with an in-sink residential food grinder ban at this time. The existing Sewer and Watercourse By-law (Sec. 3.1.(4)c) already prohibits the disposal of 'solid waste' via the sewer system. Additionally, Metro Vancouver's 2015 ban on disposing food scraps as garbage, echoed in the City's Solid Waste By-law (Sec 6.7), has supported the successful implementation of residential food waste collection programs in both single- and multi-family homes, providing well-established alternatives to food waste grinders. The importance of these programs is communicated through amplified Metro Vancouver messaging and reinforced through information on the City's website and collection schedules, highlighting their role in delivering environmental benefits and reducing waste diversion costs.

Food scrap collection programs divert residential food scraps to composting facilities, supporting environmental objectives without additional regulation. While a ban in new construction would yield very modest operational savings, it would create inconsistencies across jurisdictions and add regulatory differences that the development industry has been asking us to avoid without a strong business rationale. Maintaining regional alignment on requirements helps streamline approvals and supports housing delivery while still advancing environmental goals through established green waste collection and composting programs.

Cost/Benefits

The disposal of food scraps using in-sink food grinders increases biological oxygen demand (BOD) and total suspended solids (TSS) concentrations in wastewater and impacts the environment through stronger Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) pollutant concentrations. Metro Vancouver estimated that a residential food grinder ban in the Vancouver Sewerage Area (VSA) could reduce BOD and TSS loadings to the Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant by approximately 0.17% per year and would offer very modest operational cost savings to the VSA of approximately \$40,000 per year. This includes savings both at the wastewater treatment plant and in sewer operations. Benefits to CSOs are also anticipated to be small as the loading reductions from a food grinder ban would be minor.

While in-sink food grinders do require potable water for their use, the quantity and cost of potable water saved through an in-sink food grinder ban is estimated to be negligible, with savings equaling the annual water consumption of between 3 and 4 single-family homes by the 10th year of a ban.

Food Grinder Manufacturers

Whirlpool, a major food grinder manufacturer, cites published research supporting food grinder use, including increased biogas production at wastewater treatment plants, and greater overall waste diversion when used in combination with food scrap collection programs in multifamily buildings. Whirlpool also highlights support for in-sink food grinder use by the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (UK).

Future Direction & Regional Coordination

Engineering Services recommends continued focus on the current food waste collection programs and prioritizing higher-impact initiatives identified in the Healthy Waters Plan to improve sewer and drainage management, reduce pollution, and address climate change impacts on Vancouver's system. While a residential in-sink food grinder ban is not recommended at this time, Council may wish to revisit the idea in the future – either as part of a regional coordinated policy or if it becomes a higher priority within a broader strategy such as the Healthy Waters Plan.



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