



Introduction

In response to PlanCOS and its policies and strategies around promoting sustainable efforts and initiatives in the public and private sector, as well as considering zero-waste standards, policies and practices for City projects the City/ County Food Policy Board recommends the following changes to waste procurement standards for the city in order to support composting as a sustainability, planning and economic benefit to the city.

Recommendations

The Food Policy Advisory Board recommendation are as follows;

- That any city/county procurements for waste removal should give preference to the contractor to provide the city with composting services as a supplemental waste removal option.
- Encourage the use of compost disposal at all City and County buildings, with the support of the chosen waste disposal contractor to remove and compost the appropriate waste.
- Through choosing a contractor to provide composting services the City is modeling sustainability behaviors which in turn, may encourage citizens or other local businesses to engage in more sustainability efforts including composting. These recommendations are in response to the Plan COS policies and strategies to promote sustainability and encourage economic diversity efforts (Plan COS, chapter 4, chapter 7).

Key Benefits

Composting provides a positive many benefits to the City of Colorado Springs, El Paso County and the larger community.

Economic benefit to the community

- In comparison to traditional landfills and burning waste disposal sites, compost facilities employ an average of twice as many full time employees. Thus support of businesses who use composting can create jobs and greater economic opportunities for the community.

Using landfill space more efficiently

- More than 50% of what the average household puts in the trash is organic material. Composting and repurposing this material will assist the city in being better prepared for the growth in household and commercial waste that will come with future population growth.

Commodity Creation

- Compost is a commodity purchased by landscapers and private citizens who wish to improve soil health in their landscapes. In comparison to traditional fill soil compost contains greater microorganisms and nutrient amounts which are vital to soil health. Using compost in city, private or commercial landscaping benefits soil by improving its health and structure. Improved soil in our city benefits all citizens and our landscape by increasing drought resistance, reducing soil erosion, preventing storm runoff and reducing the need for expensive supplemental water, fertilizers and pesticides.

Lead by Example

- Through engaging in composting, and encouraging commercial composting, the City and County places itself as a model of large scale sustainability efforts. This can encourage other large local businesses to follow the City and County's example and initiate their own sustainability efforts.

Conclusion

In order to realize these benefits the Food Policy Advisory Group recommends that city procurements for waste removal should give preference to contractors who can provide composting to the city and the board recommends the use of compost disposal at all City and County buildings.