

FCSG Statement on Proposed Community Recycling Ordinance

Statement updated on September 7, 2016

The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) has reviewed the Agenda Item Summary for the Community Recycling Ordinance (CRO) to be considered by City Council on first reading on September 6th. The Agenda Item Summary is available here:

http://citydocs.fcgov.com/?cmd=show_related&vid=72&dt=SUMMARY+AGENDA&rid... We are generally pleased with the changes made since the work session held on June 28th of this year to introduce the proposed CRO, with the reservations noted below:

1. While restaurant and single family home organics collection and composting are not included in the CRO, staff will return to council to discuss these items in one year to present various options for addressing this matter, including a region-wide facility and increased anaerobic digestion capacity at the Drake Water Reclamation Facility. Successfully addressing restaurant and food scrap composting would contribute a significant fraction - 17.8% - of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions needed to meet the 2020 Climate Action Plan (CAP) goal. Holding a work session in one year on organics composting should allow sufficient time to put new programs in place by 2020, if both council and staff have the requisite sense of urgency.

a. We repeat a concern we've expressed previously that if additional organic material is digested at the Drake Water Reclamation Facility, it should be kept separate from the general sewage stream. Otherwise, the new stream of organic material would be contaminated with industrial and other wastes. In our view, the resulting biosolids would not be appropriate for agricultural use. For an overview of the risks, click here: <https://bioscienceresource.org/sewage-sludge-biosolids-land-application-...>

2. Full implementation of multi-family and commercial recycling will take place by 2020. This component of the CRO will contribute 5.1% of the GHG emissions reductions needed to meet the 2020 CAP goal. Council will need to choose between several "phase-in" schedules, ranging from 25% of remaining customers receiving this service per year to simply meeting the 100% goal by 2020. Reducing GHG emissions rapidly results in a smaller negative impact on climate than reducing emissions slowly to reach the same ultimate goal. Therefore, we urge council to select the most ambitious phase-in schedule: providing recycling services to 25% of remaining business and multi-family housing customers per year between 2017 and 2020.

3. The successful single-family "Pay-As-You-Throw" ordinance has been left in place, except that the proposed CRO would add a small "service surcharge" of \$3 - \$4 per month to address variable fuel and recyclable material costs. This surcharge is not expected to have any impact on either waste diversion or

GHG emissions. We support this change to allow trash haulers to recoup their fuel and recyclable material costs.

In summary, the FCSG supports approval of the proposed CRO, with a 25% annual recycling service phase-in rate for business and multi-family housing customers who do not currently receive this service. And we look forward to continuing the conversation about organics composting by restaurants and single family residences next year.

September 7th update: On Tuesday, September 6th, Council unanimously approved the CRO, with a recycling phase-in schedule calling for 40% of remaining business/multi-family customers who do NOT currently recycle to recycle by 2018, and for 100% of those customers to recycle by 2020.