

FCSG Statement on the Fort Collins Road to Zero Waste Plan

The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) has reviewed the City's Road to Zero Waste Plan (hereafter the Plan) released in November 2013. The plan sets an aggressive goal of a 100% waste diversion rate from landfills ("Zero Waste") by 2030, with interim goals of 75% waste diversion by 2020 and 90% waste diversion by 2025. The Plan proposes a number of measures for achieving these goals that we support, including:

1. The development of a commercial composting facility to process all organic material types, including food scraps;
2. The development of a construction and demolition materials recycling plant to process a variety of materials from building and demolition projects;
3. The development of a reuse warehouse to collect and distribute a variety of reusable materials to Ft. Collins residents and businesses;
4. An expansion of the "Pay-as-you-throw" ordinance to require waste haulers to collect a wide range of reusable, recyclable, and compostable materials from single family and multi-family dwellings, as well as commercial establishments within three years; and
5. The adoption of fees on products and packaging sold in Fort Collins that are hard to reuse, recycle or compost, such as plastic bags and expanded polystyrene take-out and drink containers.

We were pleased to see the recommendation in section 6 of the Plan (Composting Organic Materials) that the City encourage large generators of compostable materials, such as restaurants and schools, to develop small-scale composters on their own sites or nearby sites for multiple generators to share. The resulting compost could be used in local food production. We believe that the City should continue to support small-scale composting initiatives even after the commercial composting facility is built in order to minimize the distance traveled (and the accompanying carbon dioxide emissions) by food waste, compost, and food.

We remain very critical of transporting food scraps to the Drake Wastewater Reclamation Facility for digestion to produce methane, which is discussed in section 9 of the Plan (Waste to Clean Energy). This is currently being done on a pilot basis with food scraps from Colorado State University's cafeterias. The problem with this approach is that the remaining solids are not separated from other wastewater treatment plant solids, and the resulting toxic sludge cannot be used as a soil amendment for food production. In section 6 of the Plan, however, the City is encouraged to "explore the possibility of digesting discarded food scraps separately from wastewater solids at [the] wastewater treatment plant." The FCSG sees this separation as essential if food scraps are to be used for methane production at the wastewater treatment plant, so that the resulting solids *can* be used in food production.

City Council unanimously adopted the Zero Waste Plan goals at its meeting on December 17th. We applaud this decision, and urge the City to begin implementing the plan with the qualifications outlined above in 2014.