

Multi-family Food Scraps Diversion Working Group –Backgrounder and Agenda

Meeting Wednesday, July 22nd, 2015

Background:

Currently the waste diversion rate for multi-family residential is one of the lowest among all sectors in the region, 28% for 2013. Many issues have been identified as barriers to starting or improving recycling programs in general and food scraps specifically, things such as:

- The lack of sufficient space for storage of recyclables including organics in buildings
- Lack of sufficient space to sort and store recyclables inside the unit
- Difficult access to central recycling amenities for occupants and haulers
- Frequent turnover of residents from various cultural backgrounds
- Lack of motivation to participate
- Lack of information on how to do it
- Problems with odours and pests

With the implementation of the organics disposal ban, multi-family households are in a transition phase to successfully accommodate organics recycling. There have been multiple studies recently within and outside of the Metro Vancouver region that have begun to address the barriers above, but there is a timely need to continue to improve practices and solutions in this sector. There is also a significant amount of capacity and expertise in this sector that has evolved over the past several years.

Metro Vancouver convenes a group of municipal waste reduction coordinators once every two months, to share information on municipal waste reduction and recycling programs around the region. The issue of Multi-family food scraps recycling, is discussed when needed but is not a standing agenda item. In preparation for the organics ban in 2015, Metro Vancouver staff held three special workshops on the issue, one in May 2013, the second in September 2014, and the third workshop on October 1st. The purpose of the workshops was to bring the municipal coordinators together to share information on best practices and potential shortfalls as they prepare to introduce and expand their organics recycling programs to multi-family residences.

The purpose of the first meeting was to:

- Share best practices in multi-family food scraps recycling,
- Identify promising areas to jointly develop optimum approaches to meet regional targets while respecting local circumstances, harmonizing approaches where possible, and
- Identify possible projects to address outstanding issues.

The workshop concluded with discussion of regional collaboration opportunities on various issues and challenges, and participants volunteering to be on informal ‘task forces’ to work on these areas. Metro Vancouver offered meeting space, web space, and printing and artwork resources to the group in support of the collaboration. Unfortunately none of these ideas came to fruition.

The second workshop was focused on food scraps diversion programs’ implementation challenges and the third workshop on bylaws and enforcement approaches that support food scraps programs and recycling space and access issues in existing and new building. In general there was a desire to

share information on strategies, engagement, and messaging but there was no commitment to form a working group to continue the discussions.

Hence the idea of this working group was identified through the Research Collaborative with the purpose of addressing the challenges and opportunities outlined above.

Working Group Draft Terms of Reference:

Purpose: to advance the understanding of best practices and solutions to achieving higher diversion rates in multi-family households, with a focus on food scraps. It is hoped that through the work of this group a review and synthesis of current best practices will be undertaken, and the group will identify and help advance research on implementable best practices.

Types of participants may include the following:

- Municipal staff
- Researchers and students
- Industry representatives

Role of the working group participants:

- Attend periodic meetings to review the latest findings, discuss key issues, and help identify/advance potential projects.
- Participate in, or support, specific projects which may include any of the following where appropriate:
 - o Facilitating project sites
 - o Staff in-kind support
 - o Financial support
 - o Research services

Term: one year, to be reviewed for potential renewal.

Workshop Objectives:

- Confirm goals and objectives of the working group
- Identify the key issues that could potentially be addressed through further investigation – ie., research, pilot projects
- If possible, identify specific project ideas to address those issues, and explore the potential scope and players who could be involved, so that projects can begin to be advanced.

Agenda:

- 1- Welcome and introductions (5 min)
- 2- Review of agenda, workshop objectives, and background (10 min)
- 3- Review working group draft Terms of Reference (10 min)
- 4- Roundtable discussion (60 min)
 - Successes and challenges with MF food scraps program

- Motivation to join the group and things you hope to achieve
- One or two issues you wish to explore further to improve MF food scraps diversion

5- Discuss & prioritize potential project ideas and players for further exploration. (20 min)

6- Working group organization (meetings, correspondence, sharing of information, etc) (15 min)

7- Summary of next steps and action items (5 minutes)