

[REVISED 11/9/10](#)



**Request for City Council Committee Action  
From the Department of Public Works**

**Date:** November 9, 2010  
**To:** Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee  
**Subject:** **City Comments on Draft Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan 2010-2030**

**Recommendation:**  
Approve recommended comments and authorize city staff to submit comments to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

**Previous Directives:**  
None

**Prepared by:** Susan Young, Director, Solid Waste and Recycling Services  
Heidi Hamilton, Deputy Director, Public Works

**Approved by:**

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Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

**Presenters:** Susan Young, Director, Solid Waste and Recycling Services

**Financial Impact**  
None

**Background/Supporting Information**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has issued a Draft Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Plan ("Plan"). The MPCA is taking comments and suggestions regarding this draft plan until November 15, 2010. This plan will be the guiding document for solid waste management in the Metropolitan Area for the next twenty years. Upon adoption of the final plan, metropolitan counties will be required to update their solid wastes management plans consistent with this plan. Hennepin County's plan will set expectations for management of solid waste and recycling by cities that manage solid waste. The MPCA must submit a progress report to the Legislature every two years that includes a report on whether counties have achieved the objectives set out for them in the plan, and make recommendations about changes needed to meet the objectives of the plan. The plan is currently available for viewing at the following website, under the date of September 13, 2010:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/about-mpca/mpca-news/public-notice/public-notice.html>

The Plan has several key themes:

- **Accountability:** Many entities, public and private, have responsibility for implementing this plan; current authorities granted to state and counties may not be sufficient to achieve the plan; changes in authority may be sought by the MPCA.
- **Waste as a Resource:** Rethinking materials so that items thought of now as waste are instead managed as resources.
- **Solid Waste Management Hierarchy:** Reiterates the hierarchy of preferred wastes management identified in the Waste Management Act:
  1. Waste reduction and reuse;
  2. Waste recycling;
  3. Composting of yard waste & food waste;
  4. Resource recovery through mixed municipal solid waste composting or incineration;
  5. Land disposal which produces no measurable methane gas or which involves retrieval of methane gas as a fuel for the production of energy to be used on-site or for sale; and
  6. Land disposal which produces measurable methane and which does not involve the retrieval of methane gas as a fuel for the production of energy to be used on-site or for sale.
- **Generator Responsibility:** Ensure generators are held responsible for the waste they produce.
- **Government as a Leader:** Establishes that government should be a leader toward a new vision for solid waste management.
- **Product Stewardship;** Requires manufacturers to share in the financial and physical responsibility for collecting and recycling products at the end of their useful lives.
- **Private Sector Initiative;** Depends upon the private sector to play a significant role in implementing the plan.
- **Greenhouse Gas Reduction:** Rethinking waste as a resource has the potential to affect many other sectors of the economy, and correspondingly, the greenhouses gases generated by those sectors.

The overarching message of the Plan is that, “fundamental change in the form of accountability and effective tools is necessary among the stakeholders responsible for solid waste management in the TCMP (Twin Cities Metropolitan Area) if the region is to continue to move beyond current trends and meet the needs to the Waste Management Act.”

Public Works recommends that the following comments on the plan be submitted on behalf of the City:

Goal 1: Protect and conserve.

The City strongly supports Goal One and believes that it should be refined to ensure that the total global environmental impact of the TCMA’s waste management system is considered when developing policy. For example, the availability of local vs. overseas recycling commodities markets has significant effect on the environmental impact of recycling; and the number of trucks that must be routed to collect separate waste streams affects the total environmental benefit of waste collection.

Goal 1: Protect and Conserve

Policies 1 – 4, which support the achievement of Goal 1, are focused primarily on natural resource conservation and environmental protection. The City wholeheartedly supports these policies and suggests that a policy be added to explicitly focus on public health as well, which is the fundamental reason for waste management. The City suggests that the following policy be added to support Goal 1: Ensure that public health is protected

across all social and economic spectrums through the cost effective management of solid wastes.

Goal 2, Integrate the Parts (page 8):

The City believes that “integration of the parts” is critical to the cost effective and complete management of all parts of the waste stream. Support for the establishment of cost effective source separated organics and yard wastes management through co-collection and [co-composting](#), a critical component of achieving this goal, should be included as a specific policy to support Goal 2. Additionally, the Plan should articulate as a policy that cost-effectiveness is an essential consideration for implementation of the of Plan goals [as is consideration of the net environmental benefit of organics collection \(including consideration of the environmental impact of transportation needed for collection\)](#).

Policy 6: Implement Regional Waste Management Goals (page 8)

The use of reliable data is critical to the implementation of Policy 6, and to insure that the intent of the plan is carried out through specific actions. Historically, it has been difficult to collect accurate waste data so reconciling this policy with practicality will be a challenge. Enforcement of the plan’s numerical goals must be equitable, meaning that implementation should not result in penalizing cities with accurate data if the veracity of data from other cities cannot be confirmed,

Policy 7: Hold Parties Responsible for Results (page 8)

While accountability is a key component to implementation of the Plan, accountability must be aligned with the influence and control available to the party being held accountable.

Goal 4: Share Responsibility (page 8)

Generator responsibility is an important concept. Goal 4 recommends allocating costs of waste management equitably and using pricing to achieve the goals of the plan. While price can be a motivator to many behaviors, most behavior modification is best achieved when the action and the cost are closely aligned. If, for example, a higher price for garbage disposal is only seen on the quarterly garbage bill, the actions of purchasing will not be associated with that bill. That bill will only be associated with the size of the garbage container, which can easily be reduced by illegal dumping of “excess” wastes instead of making purchasing and consumption behavior changes. Care must be taken that implementation of the plan does not produce unintended consequences that add to garbage and litter. A policy should be included that supports applying waste system costs at the point of purchase, and that such a policy should not be implemented unless implemented statewide.

Part Three: Solid Waste Abatement Objectives, A Ceiling on Landfilling (page 13)

The City fully supports enforcement of Minn. Stat. 473.848 (processing requirements). However, adequate processing capacity must be made available before enforcement action is taken.

While the City supports the intent of Minn. Stat. 115A.471 (Public Entities law) in promoting efficient waste management, it is important that it does not discourage organized collection. Organized collection provides the most efficient and environmentally responsible method of waste collection, Strengthened enforcement of Minn. Stat. 115A.471 should be pursued in concert with an increase in organized collection if the TCMA is to have the most efficient and environmentally responsible wastes management system.

Part Three: Solid Waste Abatement Objectives, Non-MSW Management (Page 14)

The City welcomes a focus on non-MSW materials in the Plan. As an older city, construction and demolition activities are integral to the rejuvenation of our homes and neighborhoods. However, it is important that if recycling of these wastes is required, prior guaranty of cost-effective and reliable markets is achieved. For instance, if it is the intention that used shingles are mandated to be recycled, markets for the tonnage of shingles generated in the metro area should be secured prior to implementation of the mandate.

Table 3. Potential Strategies and Implementation Guide (pages 16-19)

The City is very concerned about ensuring the cost-effectiveness of Plan implementation strategies. Additional revenues that will be required to implement this Plan should be transparent to the ratepayer. For example, hauler collected fees should be attributed to the government body requiring the revenue on the utility bill.

Part Four: Implementing the Plan (page 23)

The Plan advocates for a new regional governance study and approach. The City strongly supports a regional approach to integrated waste management objectives. As the largest city in the metropolitan area, with a fully integrated and organized collection system, the City of Minneapolis is an important part of the metropolitan waste management system. The City of Minneapolis should be represented in any regional governance model. The City also believes that Counties should be required to include cities as integral partners in the development of their Solid Wastes Management Plans.