

EX20.23.1



Date: November 30, 2016

To: Executive Committee

Re: [EX20.23 - 2017 Rate Supported Budgets - Solid Waste Management Services and Solid Waste Rates](#)

The Toronto Environmental Alliance represents the voices of tens of thousands of Toronto residents and businesses that care about social and environmental justice. We are writing today to urge you to invest in the Long Term Waste Strategy and organics diversion in the 2017 Rate Supported budget for Solid Waste.

This year, we can celebrate Council's passing of a new Long Term Waste Strategy and that is why the 2017 budget is especially important. With overwhelming public support for a zero waste goal, and unanimous Council support in July, this Strategy can set Toronto on the path for long and short term waste reduction, reuse and recycling.

The Strategy requires short term and ongoing investment in staff to step up the education and enforcement to help Torontonians get the recycling and organics out of the garbage. The Strategy also requires planning for key long-term capital investment to manage organics and recycling as the City grows, and as our diversion rates go up.

A strong budget with the right investment is essential to send a message to Toronto that when Council passes important strategies, it will follow through on them.

The best place to focus: Organics First.

Organics and food waste are the largest category of waste, and the easiest to deal with. But, even with a great Green Bin program, more than 180,000 tonnes of organics that are still ending up in the garbage - 40% of what the City collects from residents and sends to landfill is waste that belongs in the Green Bin. The Long Term Waste Strategy is looking at how we can get the organics out of the garbage. The Strategy sets a plan to reduce wasted food, but also to use targeted education and enforcement to ensure everyone in Toronto is composting food waste.

Toronto's two existing organics processing facilities will be able to process 130,000 tonnes per year of green bin waste right here in Toronto. But, that's not enough capacity to handle the green bin waste that is currently collected. What can't be processed here is sent, at higher cost, to companies outside Toronto.

As the City grows, and as residents, small businesses and City buildings get better at diverting their organic waste, the City will need to invest in more organics processing infrastructure to manage it all.

The good news is that by investing in processing organics, Toronto will not only extend the life of the landfill, but create a source of energy and revenue.

Green energy from Green Bins

Solid Waste is working on a biogas capture and conversion system for the City's two organics facilities to create a Natural Gas substitute. This Renewable Natural Gas can replace diesel in the City's fleet, or it can be sold into the Natural Gas grid.

The capital payback on this is expected to be less than three years, and it will be generating revenue for the City. A new [Briefing Note from SWMS](#) estimates the using this RNG for fuel in City vehicles, or selling it to the grid, can provide up to \$110 Million over 20 years from the two existing facilities. Capturing biogas from additional facilities and from landfills will create even more.

Stalling new organics processing infrastructure is a wasted opportunity. Instead of trucking our compostable waste to landfill, or sending thousands of tonnes to private composters, we should keep our organics in Toronto and digest it here.

Toronto needs a Council that is willing to make a small waste fee increase to pay for these crucial, and revenue-generating investments in the future. The average bill will go up by only \$20 per year. A waste fee increase will fund capital investments, and if invested in organics processing capacity, the payback will be quick - addressing the largest category of waste, reducing trucking and greenhouse gas emissions, and creating renewable energy right here in Toronto.

Recommendation:

- Follow the staff recommendation for a modest blended 3.9% waste fee increase to support essential capital investments.
- Prioritize additional organics processing capacity as key capital investments to ensure high rates of waste diversion, extend the life of Toronto's landfill, create renewable energy and revenue.

I would be happy to provide further information and discuss these opportunities with you further – please don't hesitate to contact me at Emily@torontoenvironment.org or 416 596 0660

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily J. Alfred'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Emily' being the most prominent part.

Emily J. Alfred
Waste Campaigner
Toronto Environmental Alliance