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## 2022 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

### Toronto Water and Solid Waste Management Services – Community Gardens and Urban Farms

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#### Issue/Background:

At the November 3, 2021, 2022 Rate Supported Budget Launch the following motion (BU34.1: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.BU34.1>) was approved by Budget Committee:

- The General Manager, Toronto Water and the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services provide a briefing note to the November 19, 2021 Budget Committee on the water and compost supports provided to:
  - i. Toronto's community gardens; and
  - ii. Toronto's Urban Farms, operated as non-profits, including but not limited to the Malvern Urban Farm.

#### Toronto Water

- Toronto Water does not fund or manage programs to support community gardens or urban farming. Gardening and farming are not part of the provisions of the services Toronto Water delivers, these are typically handled by private entities or other City of Toronto divisions.
- Rate increases and the revenue generated from water consumption are directed to address Toronto Water's state-of-good-repair backlog, maintain existing infrastructure and fund new infrastructure to improve service levels for extreme storm events.

#### Solid Waste Management Services

- Solid Waste Management Services is a utility funded program that recovers program costs from a combination of service rates and fees, industry stewardship funding, the sale of recyclables, and other recoveries.
- Solid Waste Management Services does not fund or manage programs related to the supply of compost to community gardens or urban farms.
- Solid Waste Management Services currently provides compost by Councillor Office request. The full cost recovery charge is presently \$380/truck (approximately 10-12 tonnes of compost per truck) with funding through the Councillor's Office budget. On average, there

are about 60 – 80 requests each year. The Division is able to manage this average annual volume of requests however it does introduce operational strain.

## **Key Points:**

### **Toronto Water**

- Municipal drinking water systems are strictly regulated by the Province of Ontario's Safe Drinking Water Act. Drinking water operations and management require a critical level of oversight in comparison to plumbing/irrigation systems.
- Plumbing/irrigation systems, as defined under the building code, are separate from the infrastructure Toronto Water is responsible for maintaining.
- The Water Supply By-law (Municipal Code, Chapter 851) defines the roles and responsibilities of both the property owner(s) and Toronto Water including enforcement mechanisms for failure to fulfill the requirements of the By-law.
- The Water Supply by-law includes the provisions for the installation of a water service connection:
  - By-law 851-4 (B) "Application for connection: All persons who require water to be supplied to a property or a change or alteration to the existing water service connection in relation to a property shall submit an application on the prescribed City form to the General Manager and shall pay to the City:
    - (a) At the time of making the application, all applicable fees, charges, deposits and costs, including the cost of a new water meter if one is required.
    - (b) Those applicable fees, charges and costs shall be included in the water account bill(s) or invoice(s) for the property."
- Water Supply By-law: [Chapter 851 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

### **Solid Waste Management Services**

- Solid Waste Management Services is a rate-based program where single-family residents pay fees for services they receive based on the size of their garbage bin, and residents in multi-residential buildings with City waste collection pay based on the amount of garbage their buildings produce.
- In addition to residential garbage collection, Solid Waste Management Services fees pay for unlimited collection and processing of recycling, yard waste, organics, oversized and metal items, household hazardous waste and electronics.
- Solid Waste Management Services fees also fund city-wide litter collection, Community Environment Days, street and parks bin collection, drop-off-depots, ongoing care of closed landfills and more.
- Solid Waste Management Services collects Green Bin organics from rate-payers and processes the material using anaerobic digesters. The digester solids produced through this

process are sent to contractors to create compost. The City purchases some compost to distribute at events such as Community Environment Days.

- Supplying compost to community gardens or urban farms through a new program would introduce additional costs that are not currently funded within the Solid Waste Management Services budget. Additional funding would be required in order to support full cost recovery and mitigate financial impacts on rate payers. Furthermore, providing compost to community gardens or urban farms more broadly than current practice cannot be supported with current staffing levels and equipment.

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