

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM24.10	ACTION			Ward: All
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Exploring the Feasibility of Expanding Eligibility Criteria to Increase Food Bank Access to the Charities, Institutions and Religious Organizations (CIROs) Waste Collection Fee Waiver Program - by Councillor Jamaal Myers, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Jamaal Myers, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services to assess the feasibility of expanding the City's eligibility criteria for waste collection services under Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 841, Waste Collection, Commercial Properties, to include the collection of garbage, recycling and organics generated by the food bank program of non-residential properties and report back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee no later than the second quarter of 2025 with the feasibility assessment and any proposed by-law amendments to expand waste collection eligibility and fee waiver eligibility criteria to include food bank programs and a proposed Solid Waste Management Services program that would allow non-residential properties with food banks to apply for waste collection services and waste collection fee waivers.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services to report back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee no later than the second quarter of 2025 with the feasibility of expanding the fee waiver of tipping fees at the City's Transfer Stations under Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 841, Waste Collection, Commercial Properties, to include garbage, recycling, and organics generated by food bank program of non-residential properties as potential exempt tipping customers.

Summary

Food banks since the pandemic and throughout this cost-of-living crisis have seen record numbers of users accessing their services. Food Banks Canada reports in a 2024 report, HungerCount 2024, that 1 in 10 Toronto residents rely on food banks. Food banks thus play a vital role for numerous Toronto residents to feed themselves and their families.

Food banks, by the necessity and nature of their operation, generate significant amounts of waste. This is collected by City collection services at a cost to the food bank, diverting their scarce and limited operational budgets towards disposal service costs.

Currently, the City's Solid Waste Management Division offers an exemption for charitable organizations to have their solid waste fees waived through the Waste Diversion Rate Waiver program. However, organizations are only eligible for this program if they occupy building space that is less than 500 m2 ground floor area and less than 4 stories or at least 1/3 of the space is residential and less than 4 stories. This means that several food banks, which operate as charitable organizations, are ineligible to access the waiver.

Also, many food banks operate in industrial units because the relatively affordable rent is within what their limited operational budgets can accommodate, and because many need warehouse or storage space to collect and distribute food and other items. The current program disqualifies organizations operating in industrial zoned space.

This motion assesses the feasibility of expanding access for food banks to the Waste Diversion Rate Waiver program.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM24.10