

July 10, 2025

Re: 2025 IE 23.3 - Collection Options for District 2 and District Comparative Analysis

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee members and Councillors

The Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) is an environmental non-profit that has been advocating for zero waste policies and programs for over thirty five years. Waste collection is an important environmental service that helps the City meet climate and circular economy goals. It's critical to keeping our city clean, to reducing environmental impact of waste, litter, to conserve resources and combat climate change, and also to stimulate a local green circular economy.

Over many years, TEA has raised concerns about the impact of contracting out an important city service like waste and recycling collection. **We urge council to move ahead with Option 1 outlined in the staff report: bring curbside waste collection services in district 2 back in house. Based on the evaluation and comparison information, this will cost less, but most importantly, this will lead to more reliable and adaptable service, and be better for the environment.**

Full public control of waste services means stronger City oversight and the ability to ensure the City's goals can be met, including environmental and waste diversion goals, good green job creation, better standards for workers, and the flexibility to adapt and improve service to meet changing needs.

### **Green jobs and a circular economy**

Waste collection is hard work, and it may not be glamorous, but it's a good green job. Collecting curbside waste is the crucial step in getting the carefully sorted waste from hundreds of thousands of households, businesses and institutions across our city and getting it to the right place.

Creating more well-paid and good green collection jobs will not only help reduce waste, but it will support the shift to a circular economy, a key part of meeting our long term goals of building a more climate resilient local economy.

### **Oversight for crucial environmental service**

In past reports, TEA has detailed a number of instances where private waste contractors have been caught not providing the service they were contracted to do in Toronto and elsewhere. For example, dumping Toronto green bin waste in a private landfill instead of composting it<sup>1</sup>, and a private worker caught adding snow to the recycling, suspected as a tactic to increase the weight of waste, as the contract was paid by the tonne.<sup>2</sup>

Every private contractor with the City must be monitored to ensure that the service is delivered as expected, and this requires administrative staff time for monitoring and enforcement. For waste collection services this is about service standards, but also about important environmental issues such as reporting spills of garbage, monitoring contamination, and ensuring staff reject incorrectly sorted waste.

Providing waste collection services in-house affords direct oversight within the City workforce and reduces the need for monitoring and enforcement of private contracts.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.thestar.com/news/investigations/city-dumps-green-bin-operator/article\\_814a77cd-5003-51e2-a1aa-dbca2bbad783.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/investigations/city-dumps-green-bin-operator/article_814a77cd-5003-51e2-a1aa-dbca2bbad783.html)

<sup>2</sup> <https://globalnews.ca/news/2567500/garbage-man-fired-after-shovelling-snow-onto-truck-in-milton-ont/>

### **Greater flexibility and ability to adapt**

The staff report before you shows how costs can go up for contractors, and that can go far above the included contingency amount, when services have to be rerouted, or when storms or floods require additional pick ups.

One of the greatest benefits of in-house services is providing the flexibility and adaptability to provide high quality services, and to respond to changes and events, without the drastic cost escalations of private contracts.

Making any changes to contracted services can require complex contract review, renegotiation, and additional cost. This can lead to delays to adding new waste services. In 2014, the District 1 contract with GFL was not renewed, in part because the contract language hampered new diversion programs. As the head of the SWMS explained at the time: "...the City has implemented several new waste diversion programs....These changes are challenging to manage under the existing terms of the current contract."<sup>3</sup>

Currently, the City is working on long term waste plan to increase diversion, reduce waste, and meet Circular Economy and TransformTO climate goals. Achieving high diversion will require new services, adjustments and ongoing improvement to existing services, and collection of additional waste streams at the curb or depots, such as textiles. In-house collection will provide the the flexibility and available workforce to pilot and launch new programs and services quickly to meet these goals.

### **Conclusion**

Waste collection is an important environmental service in our city. Having full public control will enable better oversight, and flexibility to adapt to new services needed to meet Toronto's climate goals.

Another [staff report](#) on this same agenda outlines that bringing waste services in-house is better for the City in terms of service quality, flexibility to adapt to new services and ability to align with the City's TransformTO climate plan.

*"Managing the litter vacuum operation service in-house would allow the City to have greater oversight over the service, improve response times, and be better able to integrate this service with SWMS service standards and long-term goals. It also facilitates better communication across teams, increased agility in decision-making, and more direct accountability for performance." - [2025.IE23.1 Review, Analysis and Service Delivery Model Recommendations for City-Wide Mechanical Litter Removal Operations](#)*

**We urge you to follow the outlined staff option 1 and bring district 2 waste collection back in house to support long term waste diversion goals.**

Sincerely,



Emily Alfred  
Waste Campaigner, Toronto Environmental Alliance

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/ia/bgrd/backgroundfile-69055.pdf>