



Legislation Text

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Compost Pilot Program

From August 2006 through fall 2007, a seasonal compost cart pilot was conducted in a 250-household neighborhood off Miller Road. The pilot was designed to test a range of composting parameters, including: the sole use of a city-provided 96-gallon cart for containing all yard debris and the acceptance of grass clippings, fruit, and vegetative food scraps. The pilot tested the use of the semi-automated compost carts for residents and collectors; restriction of yard waste collection to the carts only; expanding the range of organics collected; and observing the site management experience of handling the expanded vegetative food waste materials at the municipal compost center.

Surveys were distributed to participants at the end of the fall 2006 and spring 2007 collection seasons. The survey results are summarized as follows:

Fall 2006 Survey Summary (142 respondents/250 households)

- 88% liked the compost cart program; 7% did not like it; and 6% did not answer/were unsure/or marked not applicable.
- Asked if the compost cart program should be offered city-wide, the response was 82% yes; 7% no; 11% unsure.
- Asked if the resident currently leaves grass clippings on the lawn, 88% said yes; 9% said no; 3% no answer or not applicable.
- Asked if it was more convenient for the city to collect grass clippings under this pilot instead of practicing home grasscycling/composting, 30% said yes; 34% said no; 32% checked not applicable; 4% were unsure or no answer.
- In response to how frequently was the compost cart set at the curb for pickups in the fall, 42% said weekly; 38% every other week; 15% once/month; and 5% no answer.

Spring 2007 Survey Follow-up Summary (120 respondents of 250 households)

- The size of the compost cart for the spring season was adequate for 77%; too small for 17%; too big for 6% (90 responses)
- Asked if they thought other residents would be willing to pay ~\$50.00 for a compost cart? Respondents replied: yes 56%; no 31%; unsure 14% (of 70 total). Note: this question assumed a city-wide implementation of an identical program to the pilot, whereby the use of a compost cart would be mandated and that all yard debris would need to be stored inside the cart.

Comments from the two surveys indicated that the majority of the pilot area residents were enthusiastic with the convenience of the carts. Several noted that the size was cumbersome for smaller lots as well as for some older residents. Mandating the purchase and use of a compost cart

was not as widely supported as the optional use of carts.

The survey results helped shape staff recommendations for the city-wide compost cart program design in order to offer residents the flexibility of choice in using-or not using-a compost cart and allowing paper yard waste bags and bundled brush. In addition, the choice of using compost carts, paper bags, or bundled brush would produce similar safety objectives of eliminating the potential field staff injury risks from lifting overweight compost cans.

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