



City of Mounds View Staff Report

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council
From: James Ericson, City Administrator
Item Title/Subject: Discuss Options Associated with Pursuing Organized Collection

Introduction:

At the May 4, 2015, Work Session, the City Council expressed support to staff to begin researching the steps necessary to pursue a system of organized collection in the City of Mounds View. The detailed process for migrating from an open system to an organized system is addressed in Minnesota Statutes Section 115A.94, included for your reference at the end of this report.

Discussion:

The Minnesota Legislature adopted significant changes to the organized collection statute in 2013 that were designed to simplify the process for adopting organized collection. While there are essentially five steps for migrating to a system of organized collection, cities that consider such a system utilize a variety of different tools, procedures and actions to reach their final decision. Cities may also engage in significant research, opinion surveying, open houses and listening sessions to help determine whether there is sufficient support to move to a system of organized collection. In addition, because of the complexities associated with contract negotiations, terms and conditions, many cities have found it necessary to engage an attorney or consultant (or both) to assist with the process. Naturally, there are costs for the additional prep work and outside assistance which, depending upon the direction of the Council, may need to be factored into the 2016 Budget.

The formal steps for migrating to an organized collection system are as follows:

1. Notice to public and to licensed collectors
2. 60-day negotiation period with licensed collectors
3. Organized collection options committee
4. Public notice and public hearing
5. Implementation.

There are many sub-steps and actions required for each of the above steps (for a more detailed summary, refer to the attachment following this report). While the above five steps may seem fairly straightforward, the Council may want to gauge the level of community support for such an endeavor before formally initiating the process, and it will need to establish some priorities and talking points which would be referenced during the negotiation period. If, as a result of the negotiation period, a suitable agreement is not reached, the City would then create the organized collection options committee (OCOC) so there should be some thought as to the possible composition of such a group.

Here is a draft timeline of how the process could move forward, although the Council should plan to be as flexible as possible as we proceed:

- September 7, 2015: Council compiles a list of goals and priorities to support moving forward with a system of organized collection. Priorities may include things like sustainability, cost savings, roadway preservation, safety, reduction of environmental impacts, etc.
- October 5, 2015: Council prepares a list of issues it would like addressed in a contract for organized collection, such as, who does the billing, who owns the carts, will there be an opt-out provision, should yard waste be included, should bulky waste be included, electronic waste, etc.
- November 16, 2015: City Council approves resolution establishing the 60-day negotiating period.
- January 25, 2016: Council considers whether an agreement has been reached or not, may extend the negotiation period or create by resolution the organized collection options committee (OCOC).
- Feb – April, 2016: The Committee meets once or twice per month as needed in council chambers to determine whether a single hauler or consortium would be better suited for the City. If a single hauler is preferred, an RFP would be created and distributed. If a consortium approach is preferred, an agreement would be created.
- May 2, 2016: The Committee presents its report on its research, findings, and any recommendations to the City Council.
- May 23, 2016: City Council holds a public hearing on consortium or single hauler agreement.
- June 13, 2016: City Council approves contract for a term of not less than three years or not longer than seven years.
- April 1, 2017: New organized collection system begins. State law requires an implementation date of no sooner than six months after council authorization, however it would seem impractical to roll out new garbage service in the middle of winter, hence April 1st.

The draft timeline could be much different should the exclusive negotiation period yield a mutually agreeable contract, in which case a committee would not need to be established. Best case scenario, new service could begin by summer of 2016.

Public feedback:

The Council will need to advise staff on the extent and manner to which public feedback will be sought. Naturally each of the meetings identified above will serve as an opportunity for residents to provide input and feedback, but more proactive steps can be taken. A few possible ways to solicit input and feedback are listed as follows:

- Ask residents to fill out an online survey (e.g., Survey Monkey)
- Ask residents to mail in a feedback form
- Contract with a firm to conduct a statistically valid phone survey
- Hold an informal listening session or open house
- Schedule a public hearing before setting the 60-day period
- Send flyer in the utility bills, ask for feedback
- Ask residents to voluntarily report their garbage rates
- Ask residents how much service they would like
- Create a PSA that runs on the cable channel
- Create an email list for "project" updates and feedback
- Newsletter articles.

Budget Impacts:

The amount of staff time that would be needed to coordinate such a project as Organized Collection would be measured in hundreds of hours, if not thousands. While staff time alone will not generally add costs to the budget, devoting such a large block of time over the course of a year will invariably result in other projects being delayed or not being done at all. If the City Council would like to engage in proactive surveying of residents to assess opinions regarding organized collection, this could cost a few thousand dollars. Where the budget would be impacted most is if consultants are used to assist with the process. It is not uncommon to have the City Attorney present at all negotiation sessions and he might be involved in the preparation of the RFP and certainly in the drafting of the contract. Other cities have engaged in specialized consultants with an expertise in organized collection activities. Given the complexities of such a process, it would be prudent to budget as much as \$15,000 for legal services and consultant work.

Recommendation:

Review the information presented herein and provide feedback to staff regarding the proposed timeline, the extent to which proactive public feedback would be solicited and how, and then discuss the potential costs (staff time and budgetary) associated with undertaking the organized collection activity.

Respectfully submitted,

James Ericson

James Ericson
City Administrator

Steps to Migrate to an Organized Collection Solid Waste System

1. Notice to public and to licensed collectors

A city must first give notice to the public and to any licensed collectors that it is considering adopting organized collection. State law does not specify how notice should be provided. The League of MN Cities recommends providing both published notice and individual mailed notice to each licensed collector.

2. 60-day negotiation period with licensed collectors

After the city provides notice of its intent to consider adopting organized collection, it must provide a 60-day negotiation period that is exclusive between the city and any collectors licensed to operate in the city.

A city is not required to reach an agreement with the licensed collectors during this period. The purpose of the negotiation period is to allow the licensed collectors to develop a proposal in which they, as members of an organization of collectors, will collect solid waste from designated sections of the city.

The proposal must contain identified city priorities, including issues related to zone creation, traffic, safety, environmental performance, service provided, and price, and must reflect existing collectors maintaining their respective market share of business as determined by each hauler's average customer count during the six months before the beginning of the 60-day negotiation period. If an existing collector opts to be excluded from the proposal, the city may allocate its customers proportionally based on market share to the participating collectors who choose to negotiate.

If an organized collection agreement is established as a result of the 60-day negotiation period, it must be in effect for a period of three to seven years. Upon execution of an agreement between the participating licensed collectors and the city, the city shall establish organized collection through appropriate local controls. The city does not need to establish an organized collections options committee if it reaches an agreement with the licensed haulers during the 60-day negotiation period; however, the city must first provide public notice and a public hearing before officially deciding to implement organized collection. Organized collection may begin no sooner than six months after the effective date of the city's decision to implement organized collection.

3. Organized collection options committee

If a city does not reach an agreement with its licensed collectors during the 60-day negotiation period, it can form by resolution an "organized collection options committee" to study various methods of organized collection and to issue a report. The city council appoints the committee members. The committee is subject to the open meeting law and has several mandatory duties.

First, the committee shall determine which methods of organized collection to examine, which must include: a system in which a single collector collects solid waste from all sections of the city; and a system in which multiple collectors, either singly or as members of an organization of collectors, collect solid waste from different sections of the city.

Second, the committee shall establish a list of criteria on which the organized collection methods selected for examination will be evaluated, which may include: costs to residential subscribers, miles driven by collection vehicles on city streets and alleys, initial and operating costs of implementing the organized collection system, providing incentives for waste reduction, impacts on solid waste collectors, and other physical, economic, fiscal, social, environmental, and aesthetic impacts.

Third, the committee shall collect information regarding the operation and efficacy of existing methods of organized collection in other cities and towns.

Fourth, the committee shall seek input from, at a minimum:

- the city council
- the city official responsible for solid waste issues
- persons currently licensed to operate solid waste collection and recycling services in the city
- city residents who currently pay for residential solid waste collection services.

Finally, the committee must issue a report on its research, findings, and any recommendations to the city council.

4. Public notice and public hearing

A city council shall consider the report and recommendations of the organized collection options committee. A city must provide public notice and hold at least one public hearing before deciding to implement organized collection.

5. Implementation

A city can begin organized collection no sooner than six months after the effective date of the city's decision to implement organized collection. A city may organize collection as a municipal service where city employees collect solid waste from a defined geographic service area or areas. In the alternative, cities may organize collection by using one or more private solid waste collectors or an organization of collectors. An agreement with private collectors may be made through an ordinance, franchise, license, negotiated or bid contract, or by other means.

MINNESOTA STATUTES

115A.94 ORGANIZED COLLECTION.

Subdivision 1. **Definition.**

"Organized collection" means a system for collecting solid waste in which a specified collector, or a member of an organization of collectors, is authorized to collect from a defined geographic service area or areas some or all of the solid waste that is released by generators for collection.

Subd. 2. **Local authority.**

A city or town may organize collection, after public notification and hearing as required in subdivisions 4a to 4d. A county may organize collection as provided in subdivision 5. A city or town that has organized collection as of May 1, 2013, is exempt from subdivisions 4a to 4d.

Subd. 3. **General provisions.**

(a) The local government unit may organize collection as a municipal service or by ordinance, franchise, license, negotiated or bid contract, or other means, using one or more collectors or an organization of collectors.

(b) The local government unit may not establish or administer organized collection in a manner that impairs the preservation and development of recycling and markets for recyclable materials. The local government unit shall exempt recyclable materials from organized collection upon a showing by the generator or collector that the materials are or will be separated from mixed municipal solid waste by the generator, separately collected, and delivered for reuse in their original form or for use in a manufacturing process.

(c) The local government unit shall invite and employ the assistance of interested persons, including persons licensed to operate solid waste collection services in the local government unit, in developing plans and proposals for organized collection and in establishing the organized collection system.

(d) Organized collection accomplished by contract or as a municipal service may include a requirement that all or any portion of the solid waste, except (1) recyclable materials and (2) materials that are processed at a resource recovery facility at the capacity in operation at the time that the requirement is imposed, be delivered to a waste facility identified by the local government unit. In a district or county where a resource recovery facility has been designated by ordinance under section [115A.86](#), organized collection must conform to the requirements of the designation ordinance.

Subd. 4.

[Repealed, [2013 c 45 s 7](#)]

Subd. 4a. **Committee establishment.**

(a) Before implementing an ordinance, franchise, license, contract, or other means of organizing collection, a city or town, by resolution of the governing body, must establish an

organized collection options committee to identify, examine, and evaluate various methods of organized collection. The governing body shall appoint the committee members.

(b) The organized collection options committee is subject to chapter 13D.

Subd. 4b. Committee duties.

The committee established under subdivision 4a shall:

(1) determine which methods of organized collection to examine, which must include:

(i) a system in which a single collector collects solid waste from all sections of a city or town; and

(ii) a system in which multiple collectors, either singly or as members of an organization of collectors, collect solid waste from different sections of a city or town;

(2) establish a list of criteria on which the organized collection methods selected for examination will be evaluated, which may include: costs to residential subscribers, miles driven by collection vehicles on city streets and alleys, initial and operating costs to the city of implementing the organized collection system, providing incentives for waste reduction, impacts on solid waste collectors, and other physical, economic, fiscal, social, environmental, and aesthetic impacts;

(3) collect information regarding the operation and efficacy of existing methods of organized collection in other cities and towns;

(4) seek input from, at a minimum:

(i) the governing body of the city or town;

(ii) the local official of the city or town responsible for solid waste issues;

(iii) persons currently licensed to operate solid waste collection and recycling services in the city or town; and

(iv) residents of the city or town who currently pay for residential solid waste collection services; and

(5) issue a report on the committee's research, findings, and any recommendations to the governing body of the city or town.

Subd. 4c. Governing body; implementation.

The governing body of the city or town shall consider the report and recommendations of the organized collection options committee. The governing body must provide public notice and hold at least one public hearing before deciding whether to implement organized collection. Organized collection may begin no sooner than six months after the effective date of the decision of the governing body of the city or town to implement organized collection.

Subd. 4d. Participating collectors proposal requirement.

Prior to establishing a committee under subdivision 4a to consider organizing residential solid waste collection, a city or town with more than one licensed collector must notify the public and all licensed collectors in the community. The city or town must provide a 60-day period in which meetings and negotiations shall occur exclusively between licensed collectors and the city or town to develop a proposal in which interested licensed collectors, as members of an organization of collectors, collect solid waste from designated sections of the city or town. The proposal shall include identified city or town priorities, including issues related to zone creation, traffic, safety, environmental performance, service provided, and price, and shall reflect existing haulers maintaining their respective market share of business as determined by each hauler's average customer count during the six months prior to the commencement of the 60-day negotiation period. If an existing hauler opts to be excluded from the proposal, the city may allocate their customers proportionally based on market share to the participating collectors who choose to negotiate. The initial organized collection agreement executed under this subdivision must be for a period of three to seven years. Upon execution of an agreement between the participating licensed collectors and city or town, the city or town shall establish organized collection through appropriate local controls and is not required to fulfill the requirements of subdivisions 4a, 4b, and 4c, except that the governing body must provide the public notification and hearing required under subdivision 4c.

Subd. 5. County organized collection.

(a) A county may by ordinance require cities and towns within the county to organize collection. Organized collection ordinances of counties may:

(1) require cities and towns to require the separation and separate collection of recyclable materials;

(2) specify the material to be separated; and

(3) require cities and towns to meet any performance standards for source separation that are contained in the county solid waste plan.

(b) A county may itself organize collection under subdivisions 4a to 4d in any city or town that does not comply with a county organized collection ordinance adopted under this subdivision, and the county may implement, as part of its organized collection, the source separation program and performance standards required by its organized collection ordinance.

Subd. 6. Organized collection not required or prevented.

(a) The authority granted in this section to organize solid waste collection is optional and is in addition to authority to govern solid waste collection granted by other law.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision 5, a city, town, or county is not:

(1) required to organize collection; or

(2) prevented from organizing collection of solid waste or recyclable material.

(c) Except as provided in subdivision 5, a city, town, or county may exercise any authority granted by any other law, including a home rule charter, to govern collection of solid waste.

Subd. 7. Anticompetitive conduct.

(a) A political subdivision that organizes collection under this section is authorized to engage in anticompetitive conduct to the extent necessary to plan and implement its chosen organized collection system and is immune from liability under state laws relating to antitrust, restraint of trade, unfair trade practices, and other regulation of trade or commerce.

(b) An organization of solid waste collectors, an individual collector, and their officers, members, employees, and agents who cooperate with a political subdivision that organizes collection under this section are authorized to engage in anticompetitive conduct to the extent necessary to plan and implement the organized collection system, provided that the political subdivision actively supervises the participation of each entity. An organization, entity, or person covered by this paragraph is immune from liability under state law relating to antitrust, restraint of trade, unfair trade practices, and other regulation of trade or commerce.



Community Engagement Report

City of Bloomington, Minnesota

Solid Waste Management Plan

Prepared for:
City of Bloomington

Prepared by:
Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC

March 2014

Community Engagement Report
Solid Waste Management Plan

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Solid Waste Management Plan: Community Engagement Report



Synopsis

A *Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan)* is being developed to guide the City's approach to solid waste. The *Plan* will cover components of solid waste management, including recycling, waste reduction, yard waste collection, food waste/organics recovery, mixed solid waste collection/recovery and land disposal. The *Plan* is intended to give the City a clear vision of potential solid waste and recycling policies to meet the City's goals. Community engagement is a key component in developing a sustainable solid waste program. As such, the City has been seeking active involvement and input from the community throughout this project. The *Community Engagement Report* documents the details of the outreach methods used in the engagement process and the results that have been obtained so far. The report is a “living”

The *Community Engagement Report* supporting the *Solid Waste Management Plan* can be downloaded from the City's web page at:
http://BloomingtonMN.gov/main_top/3_homecomm/trash/waste.htm?r=us.

document that will continue to be updated throughout the engagement process. A copy of the report can be found on the City's website. All public comments received through January 31, 2014 are also catalogued and addressed by the report. A synopsis of the results of the community engagement process is provided below.

Throughout the process, the City of Bloomington has been, and will continue to, solicit input and feedback from concerned parties and interest groups. Along with residents, business organizations, the Master Recyclers and Composters (MRC), the Bloomington Sustainable Coalition, the Park, Arts and Recreation Commission (PARC), and waste haulers have been engaged. A wide variety of outreach tools are being used to help ensure every resident has an opportunity to provide input. The City Council will adopt the resident-formed *Plan* only after adequate opportunity has been provided for public input, including:

- ◆ City Council meetings
- ◆ Open Houses
- ◆ Surveys
- ◆ Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission (PARC) meetings
- ◆ Meetings with interested groups and organizations
- ◆ Other community meetings
- ◆ *Solid Waste Management Plan* web page
- ◆ Phone calls, emails, and other electronic/social media

Additional comments will continue to be received until the public hearing on the draft Solid Waste Management Plan. A public hearing has been tentatively scheduled for April 21, 2014 to present the Plan.

The City values its residents' input. Bloomington staff will continue to collect resident's guidance and concerns.

For more information or to submit comments about the *Solid Waste Management Plan*, contact:

Jim Gates, Deputy Director of Public Works
952-563-8730

SolidWasteManagementPlan@BloomingtonMN.gov

Goals and Strategies

Resident feedback has been requested on the City's solid waste management goals and strategies throughout the project. Input received at the second Open House held on January 16, 2014 confirmed the comments provided through other engagement activities. The feedback received emphasized that the most important goals include: reducing road wear impacts; lowering environmental impacts; and improving recycling, composting and waste reduction. Residents also believe that enhancing public education and awareness and assuring that all residents have adequate recycling services are important goals. The Goals and Strategies are individual chapters in the *Plan*.

Environmental Protection

The community also strongly believes in environmental protection. Highly-engaged and committed volunteers like the resident group Master Recyclers and Composters, the Bloomington Sustainable Coalition, and the Parks, Art and Recreation Commission confirmed community support for sustainability issues such as improved solid waste management. Environmental protection was a common theme reflected in many of the community conversations, responses to surveys and in the comments on the draft goals and the draft outline of strategies.

Organized Collection

The City of Bloomington has used a national survey tool that allows the City to evaluate how well they are serving the residents of the community and identify issues that are important to them. The National Citizen Survey™ of Bloomington residents clearly indicated a majority of survey participants are satisfied with the solid waste, recycling and yard services available within the City. A customized question in the 2013 National Citizen Survey™ for Bloomington indicated that 63% felt that the potential action to "Organize garbage collection so that only one hauler serves each neighborhood" was somewhat important, very important, or essential to the respondents. The remaining 37% said that organized collection was not at all important.

Participants in the community engagement process have been overwhelmingly supportive of organized solid waste collection as a critical aspect of Bloomington's future solid waste management efforts. The respondents involved in the community engagement process expressed a desire for fewer trucks in their neighborhoods, less noise, fewer road impacts, more safety on neighborhood streets and cul-de-sacs., as well as more organized and coordinated waste education and service delivery.

A one-on-one meeting with the City's licensed trash haulers and their comments at the first Open House provided another perspective on the organized collection issue. Discussions with City Council at study sessions have indicated an interest in exploring how any change to organized collection could be fair and equitable to haulers.

Educational Opportunities

In meetings and in surveys, participants expressed the belief that increased education efforts are needed to achieve the proposed goals and draft strategies for improved solid waste management. The Master Recyclers and Composters, a volunteer group that advocates recycling and composting, have provided significant community education. Education gaps that need to be addressed include: better knowledge of what materials are and are not recyclable, outreach to residents of multi-unit housing to encourage them to recycle, waste reduction strategies for all residents, and “away-from-home” recycling opportunities (e.g. recycling at parks). Community members expressed the desire that additional City resources should be dedicated to solid waste related education activities.

Waste Reduction, Recycling and Organics

Nearly all community engagement participants expressed support for specific waste reduction, recycling and organics collection and composting actions. Citizens repeatedly confirmed these three activities should be strongly represented in the *Solid Waste Management Plan*.

Revisions of Ordinances

The City has ordinances that: require recycling by businesses and residents; require trash haulers to provide specific services; and outline City responsibilities. Many participants stated the City needs to improve enforcement of its existing ordinances. They also indicated that more City staff resources should be allocated for trash and recycling education and enforcement activities.

Citywide Curbside Cleanup

The citywide Curbside Cleanup is a highly valued service. Almost without exception, residents and businesses expressed support for the Curbside Cleanup program. However, there is widespread recognition that the program is expensive and there may be more cost-effective ways to operate it.

City Staffing Resources

The City of Bloomington had a staff person with a portion of time dedicated to recycling and solid waste issues until 2009. The recycling coordinator was tasked with providing: education about recycling and waste reduction and preparation of County-required reports. Many participants stated they missed the services provided by City staff. Some participants simply recommended the City should staff this recycling coordinator position again.

1 Introduction

Bloomington residents, businesses and other organizations have been active in sustainability, recycling, composting and other solid waste issues and expect opportunities to continue to partner with the City in each aspect of the solid waste planning and implementation. There are many individuals, organizations and private companies that are keenly interested in the development of the *Solid Waste Management Plan* (“*Plan*”).

The City of Bloomington is committed to quality local decision making and community building, and therefore practices community engagement. Community engagement asks for the active involvement of residents and businesses at the earliest stages in a project, rather than merely participating in a public hearing just before a final decision is made. Engagement asks residents, in a variety of forms and venues, for advice and input on a topic the City is studying, before the problem solving is complete.

Research has shown that effective resident engagement can foster a sense of community, engender trust, enhance creative problem solving, build consensus and increase support for community projects. This is especially important for municipal decisions that will affect the entire community and which will have long-standing effects. Residents often have information that officials want in order to design a sound program.

The City of Bloomington is soliciting input and feedback from all concerned parties and interest groups through a wide variety of outreach tools. The City Council is scheduled to consider adoption of this *Plan* only after hearing from the Bloomington public and providing ample opportunities for comment and input.

The City has assigned the development of the *Plan* to a Bloomington Project Management (Team PMT) including staff from the Department of Public Works (PW) and Community Development/Environmental Health. Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC (Consultant) was hired to assist in the community engagement process and to draft the *Plan*.

As part of the PMT, the Consultant is charged with first listening and gathering information from affected parties, including City Council and City staff, and then drafting the *Plan* document for public review and comment.

This *Community Engagement Report (Report)* documents the recent methods and results used by the City to engage interested parties. All public comments received to-date through January 31, 2014 are catalogued and addressed by this *Report*.

Additional comments will continue to be received up through the public hearing on the draft *Plan*. The public hearing is tentatively scheduled for April 21, 2014 pending City Council authorization.

The following community engagement tools were used to provide convenient opportunities for comment:

- ◆ City Council meetings
- ◆ Open Houses
- ◆ Surveys
- ◆ Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission (PARC) meetings
- ◆ Other community meetings
- ◆ *Solid Waste Management Plan* web page
- ◆ Phone calls, emails, and other electronic/social media

2 City Council

The Bloomington City Council has been discussing solid waste management for a number of years. A chapter in the *Plan* is dedicated to a more complete summary of the history of these City Council deliberations and decisions over the years leading up to the present-date system of services and programs.

In 1989 the City Council determined that trash collection for Bloomington residents should be improved to divide the City into five (5) residential hauling districts. Each district has solid waste collection only on a specified day as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2-1
Residential Solid Waste Hauling Districts in Bloomington



In 1995 the Council considered further improvements, to more fully organize trash and recycling collection. There were several contentious public hearings, and the Council decided not to pursue the matter at that time. Individual neighborhoods and homeowner organizations, however, pursued limited organization of trash collection services on their own, believing they had the support of the City.

In 2010, the issue of organized trash collection was revisited. The Council decided to delay action until the Hennepin County Master Plan was completed. After completion of the County Plan, in 2012, a group of residents asked the Council to again consider implementation of a system of organized solid waste collection.

The City Council held a discussion about solid waste management at its Study Session meeting on September 24, 2012. City staff presented a summary of background information about organized collection including: recent results from other studies completed for the State of Minnesota; and the recent experience of Maplewood, Minnesota in changing to organized trash collection.

The City Council set the tone for the development of the *Solid Waste Management Plan* at their meeting on May 20, 2013. In their discussions, they commented on the feedback they had received from residents and businesses on this issue. Topics discussed at this City Council meeting included:

- ◆ The increasing amount of blowing litter from garbage trucks in the City
- ◆ The effect of heavy garbage trucks on pavement
- ◆ The potential to reduce pollution and otherwise help the environment
- ◆ Opportunities for residents to save money under organized collection systems

At the May 20, 2013 Council Meeting, the Council received additional background information from City staff about the amendment to Minnesota Statutes relating to organized collection (M.S. 115A.94). The City Council decided to contract with an expert consultant for assistance with development of a comprehensive solid waste plan, to be followed in the summer of 2014 with Council discussion of a preferred approach to solid waste management. The Council, understanding the high potential for controversy, directed that there should be extensive community engagement in the development of the *Solid Waste Management Plan*.

City Council meetings since then on this *Plan* have included:

- ◆ September 9, 2013 to accept the proposal from Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC and award the contract to Foth for consulting services.
- ◆ November 4, 2013 to receive an introduction to the process, schedule and content outline of the City's first comprehensive *Solid Waste Management Plan*.
- ◆ December 19, 2013 orientation for new City Council members about the process and schedule for the new *Plan*.

There have been several City Manager Informational packets sent to City Council to keep them updated on the progress of the *Plan*.

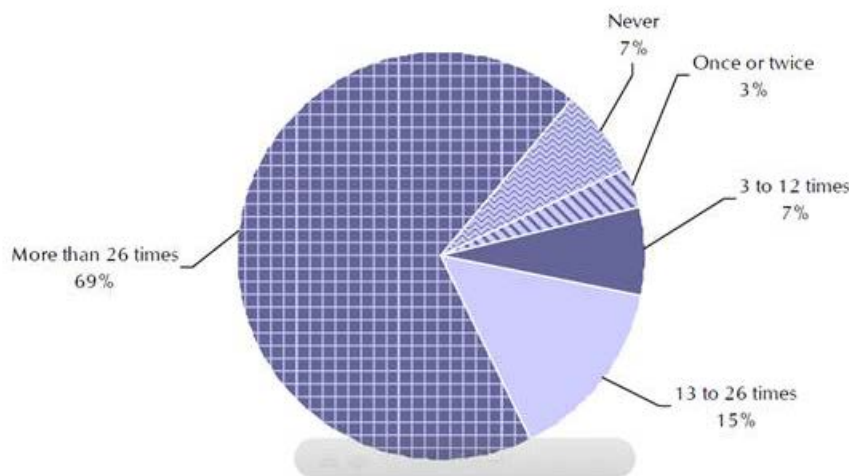
3 National Citizen Survey

The City of Bloomington participates in the National Citizen Survey^{TM1}, coordinated by the International City Managers Association and partially funded by the State of Minnesota. Through the National Citizen SurveyTM, Bloomington annually surveys its citizens about their satisfaction with City services. Resident opinions about trash and recycling services are included in the survey as part of the Survey's measures of environmental sustainability in a community.

Highlights from the most recent 2013 National Citizen Survey™ include:

- ◆ The majority of Bloomington citizens believe their residential garbage (89%), recycling (88%) and yard waste collection services (85%) are good to excellent. For comparison, 96% of residents believe that fire services are good to excellent, 89% believe that their drinking water is good to excellent and 76% believe that street cleaning is good to excellent.
- ◆ Bloomington residents rate these services higher on average compared to other cities as benchmarked by the National Citizen Survey™. The Survey allows Bloomington to compare itself to cities nationally and to cities that Bloomington selects as being similar cities. Yard waste collection, recycling collection and garbage collection was “much above” the national cities. Yard waste and recycling collections were rated “much above” the similar cities and garbage collection was “above” the similar cities.
- ◆ Bloomington residents report that they participate in recycling at a much higher frequency than the national cities and the similar cities. 95% of Bloomington residents reported that they had recycled used paper, cans or bottles from their homes at least once in 2013, consistent with 93% in 2012.
- ◆ As shown in Figure 3-1 below, participation in recycling is one of the more frequent resident activities reported by Bloomington residents. 69% of the residents reported that they had recycled more than 26 times in 2013; the next highest activity reported was participating in religious or spiritual activities at 18% and visiting a neighborhood or City park at 16%.

Figure 3-1
Frequency of Recycling in the Last 12 Months



Source: Bloomington's National Citizen Survey™, 2012

- ◆ The City added a “custom” question to the National Citizen Survey™ related to the City’s strategic plan focused on sustainable practices. Two (2) of the 14 sustainable practices were on solid waste management: recycling and organized collection. Table 3-1 below shows the results excerpts relating to these two solid waste practices.

- ▶ About 95% of the respondents stated that it is “Essential”, “Very important” or “Somewhat important” to increase recycling. Only about 5% said that increasing recycling is “Not at all important”.
- ▶ 67% stated that it was “Essential”, “Very Important”, or “Somewhat important to “organize garbage collection so that only one hauler serves each neighborhood”

“Increase recycling” was the most important action considering the subtotal number of respondents (70%) that stated it is “Essential” (29%) plus “Very important” (41%). The next most important action was to replace lights and equipment to reduce energy consumption in City buildings at 64%. “Organize garbage collection” was tied for tenth place among the fourteen (14) optional practices using the same subtotal (37%) method of adding respondents that stated it was “Essential (16%) plus “Very important” (21%).

This National Citizen Survey™ can be used as another means of gauging public opinions of Bloomington’s residents on these relative to other service issues.

Table 3-1
Bloomington’s National Citizen Survey (2013):
Response to Custom Question #2 on Recycling and Organized Garbage
Collection

Custom Question 2					
The City has a strategic plan focused on implementing sustainable practices. Please indicate how important, if at all, it is for the City to carry out each of the following potential actions	Essential	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important	Total
◆ Increase recycling	29%	41%	26%	5%	100%
◆ Organize garbage collection so that only one hauler serves each neighborhood	16%	21%	26%	37%	100%

Source: Bloomington’s National Citizen Survey™, 2013

4 Meetings with Community Organizations

4.1 Trash Haulers

All licensed haulers were invited to a meeting with the Consultant held November 12, 2013 to discuss various solid waste management issues in Bloomington.

The haulers were asked what things are going well with trash services in Bloomington. Their responses included:

- ◆ The haulers like the ability to haul commercial and/or residential wastes, and the zoned days for residential trash and recycling collection.

- ◆ Residents have freedom of choice and receive great service because of competition. Homeowners' associations (or neighborhood blocks) can select a hauler, or stay open to choice by each household.
- ◆ The City should maintain the freedom of choice, but if the City does change the trash collection system, it should keep the present haulers that are in the system.
- ◆ Several (3) cart sizes are available and everyone can have a cart.

When asked what things are not going well with the trash system, the haulers noted that:

- ◆ They have difficulty in collecting bad debt and managing changing bill responsibility when residents change haulers or use different names to avoid paying the trash bill.
- ◆ Residents lack an understanding of holidays (e.g., major vs. minor holidays for the trash collection calendar) and the City's trash zones. Better information from the City to residents is needed.
- ◆ Residents do not understand the real cost of services, possibly because there are so many different rates for the same service in the City.
- ◆ It is difficult for haulers to enforce various City ordinances (e.g., requirements to recycle, service areas, etc.)

The haulers were asked what is going well with recycling in Bloomington, and they responded that:

- ◆ Single-stream recycling has been very successful and Bloomington residents have higher participation in recycling because:
 - ▶ Residents are well educated.
 - ▶ Bloomington's older population has a strong recycling ethic.
 - ▶ Most residents take the time to recycle and ask about what can / can't be recycled.
- ◆ Contamination in the recycling carts is relatively low.
- ◆ Some haulers provide several sizes of recycling carts.

When the haulers were asked how recycling could be improved, they responded that:

- ◆ Residents don't understand the cost of recycling; there is a perception that recycling is a gold mine.
- ◆ Residents don't always know their recycling day.
- ◆ Formerly, haulers were asked to provide a list of residential customers who are "non-recyclers". Haulers believe "telling" on customers goes against their desires to provide very good customer service.
- ◆ Haulers are asked to report the percentage of customers that "participate" in recycling for Bloomington's ReTRAC reports to Hennepin County, but they do not have a common understanding of the City's definition of "participation rates". The City or County should define the methods and terms for these numbers.

The haulers were asked to discuss their perceptions of yard waste service in Bloomington, and if they believe residents are ready to have separate food waste/organics collection citywide. They had several comments, including:

- ◆ There is good momentum right now for adding food waste/organics collection services. The City should be sure to intensively examine all options (including dealing with emerald ash borer quarantine regulations on tree or brush waste).
- ◆ Effective food waste/organics collection can reduce solid waste tonnage, but for efficiency, the City should look at collection of food waste/organics mixed with yard waste. Randy's stated they offer "co-collection" of organics within the trash cart as part of Randy's new "Blue BagTM," program.²
- ◆ Collection and composting of organics is **not** free, and the emerald ash borer (EAB) quarantine restrictions are a significant added cost.
- ◆ There are no composting facilities in Bloomington to deliver yard wastes and/or food waste/organics. The transfer stations for yard wastes and/or food waste/organics are in Minneapolis or Brooklyn Park, requiring extra cost for travel. The County and/or City should consider developing transfer capacity in Bloomington.
- ◆ Up to 95% of Bloomington residents subscribe to yard waste collection service which is a much higher subscription rate than other cities.
- ◆ Some residents do not use the compostable bags required by State law. Haulers believe some stores that sell plastic bags give residents the impression they do not need to purchase the more expensive, certified "compostable" bags (e.g., paper yard waste bags) and that non-certified, "biodegradable" plastic bags or traditional plastic bags are acceptable.
- ◆ Citizens want a brush drop-off site in Bloomington for brush, limbs and stumps.

Bulky wastes are large items such as chairs, sofas, mattresses and bed springs, appliances and white goods, lawn mowers and snow blowers. Bloomington provides the annual Citywide Curbside Cleanup service in part to help its residents manage bulky wastes. Only one of the haulers contracts with the City for this program, but all the haulers are familiar with bulky waste management alternatives used in other cities.

When the haulers were asked to comment on bulky wastes issues, they noted that:

- ◆ It is very important to find a way to continue bulky waste service in Bloomington. The City could continue its once a year program or could require each hauler to provide bulky waste collection service on a regular basis, year-round.
- ◆ Some residents have a lot of bulky wastes. Some have very little. There are also demographic differences between the "east side" versus the "west side" of the City that affect the type of bulky wastes disposed.

The challenge of the cost of the annual Curbside Cleanup program and lack of multiple bidders was discussed. Haulers noted that:

- ◆ Weekend collections are limited by Minnesota Department of Transportation rules that set a maximum number of hours any one driver can work each week.

- ◆ The older “rear-load packers” are best suited for handling bulky wastes and other waste from the Citywide Curbside Cleanup program. The number of rear-load packers in service is decreasing because of the industry-wide trend to side-loading, automated trucks. The style of trucks (e.g., automated side loaders versus rear loaders) is a real issue because haulers now have fewer rear load trucks.
- ◆ A large number of trucks (estimated at 30 to 35 trucks, plus appliances recycling subcontractors) are needed on any given Saturday to service the number of stops and waste collected during the City’s Curbside Cleanup program. This requires a very large fleet, preventing smaller haulers from bidding. The City could consider dividing up the districts or finding other means to encourage smaller haulers to bid such as forming a consortium.

4.2 Master Recyclers and Composters

The Master Recyclers and Composters (MRC) group was invited to meet with the Consultant and City staff November 12, 2013 to discuss trash, recycling and composting issues. The MRC group is very active in the community providing education and expertise in recycling, composting and sustainability. They also approached the Council to request that organized recyclables collection be implemented in a letter submitted in August 2012.

The group was asked what is going well with recycling. They responded:

- ◆ All haulers offer curbside recycling service. The single-stream method, with carts with every-other-week collection, is now universal in Bloomington.
- ◆ Weekly recyclables collection (instead of every-other-week) is helpful to encourage participation. But not all haulers offer weekly collection.
- ◆ MRC members have observed a high rate of recycling by residents. They believe the City is doing a good job providing information this year, praising the City “*Briefing*” newsletter, including the “Earth Action Heroes” feature.
- ◆ The MRC presence at the Bloomington Farmer’s Market helps reach out and provide education. MRC passes out education materials. This includes a magnet with the standard recyclables collected similar to the City’s “*Recycling Guide*” and Hennepin County brochures about batteries, light bulbs, and prescription drugs.
- ◆ MRC considers the Citywide Curbside Cleanup to be a positive event.

To improve recycling, MRC members stated that:

- ◆ Residents should have bigger recycling bins and smaller trash bins.
- ◆ Not enough people use the County’s household hazardous waste and problem materials drop-off facility in Bloomington. More education is needed from the City and County to promote its use. Hennepin County should loosen the rules so that small contractors can use the County’s facility.
- ◆ Recycling and disposal of different types of light bulbs are an issue, including incandescent, fluorescent, and light-emitting diode (LED) lights.

- ◆ Multi-unit properties need improved recycling services and more education. There is a significant lack of convenience for recycling in high-rises. Compare the convenience of the trash chute next to the elevators to the inconvenience of carrying recyclables down to the ground floor. Townhouse recycling is also difficult with some occupants taking recyclables to the complex entrance instead of their driveway.

Yard waste collection was discussed by the MRC group. The MRC group had the following suggestions:

- ◆ The end of November would be better end date for collection as leaves may still be on trees past October.
- ◆ Haulers do a good job of collecting yard waste and enforcing the State ban on traditional plastic bags by not picking up the bags. Bloomington also does a good job of enforcement follow-up. The City sends educational brochures with enforcement orders. The biggest problem to ending the use of plastic bags is retailers still sell black plastic “biodegradable” bags not meeting the standards for certified “compostable” bags.

The MRC group represents some of the City’s most knowledgeable residents about food waste composting and organics collection issues. They were asked for their input about residential food waste/organics collection. They noted that:

- ◆ Food waste/organics collection should be city-wide. All residents should automatically get a food waste/organics cart. Food waste/organics collection service should be “opt out” and perhaps mandatory. Food waste/organics should **not** be an “opt-in” or voluntary system where residents must proactively subscribe and pay more to get a food waste/organics cart and collection service.
- ◆ Haulers should be required to provide food waste/organics collection as part of their service.
- ◆ The current large trash carts should be repurposed into food waste/organics containers and residents should be given new, smaller trash containers.
- ◆ One hauler is getting new customers in Bloomington with their *Blue BagTM* organics collection. They charge \$50 for the first year of food waste/organics service and provide a year’s supply of compostable *Blue Bags*. The same hauler charges \$100 the next year and still provides an annual supply of *Blue Bags*.
- ◆ It is hard for new users to figure out where to make space for a separate food waste/organics container such as a kitchen bucket. Also, the instructions are new about what to put in each of three carts (recycling, food waste/organics and trash). Education and encouragement are essential to developing a successful food waste/organics recovery program.
- ◆ The price for food waste/organics collection is too high within the current open hauling system. If food waste/organics were added, each hauler may have a different option which is just not cost-effective.

In January 2014, the MRC group distributed a draft position paper in response to the City's call for comments on the draft goals and strategies for the *Plan*. The position paper recommends the City establish goals to:

- ◆ Increase recycling and decrease trash disposal by setting new numeric recycling goals for the city that exceed existing rates by a minimum of 25% within 5 years
- ◆ Implement organized collection for trash, recycling and food waste/organics
- ◆ Improve recycling at parks and public events
- ◆ Improve duration and promotion of recycling through increased City staff and collaboration with Hennepin County
- ◆ Improve recycling by businesses
- ◆ Continue the Citywide Curbside Cleanup program, but with improved opportunities to promote reuse and recycling

4.3 Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission

The Consultant attended the City's monthly meeting of the Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission (PARC) on November 13, 2013. A PARC Commissioner recommended the City establish overall numeric goals such as:

- ◆ Within 5 years, parks and public events should have sufficient recycling to realize at least a 75% reduction of materials going into the waste stream.
- ◆ Within 20 years there should be zero waste within parks.

It was noted that the City's Maintenance Division staff have begun to evaluate opportunities for additional recycling opportunities in parks. City staff has identified the need for uniform public-space recycling containers throughout Bloomington. Education of the public will be needed to achieve the goals.

Trash containers in the parks and on trails are currently serviced under a City contract with a single hauler. PARC Commissioners and staff expressed that:

- ◆ Recycling and food waste/organics composting collection services should be added into the City's parks waste collection contract. Where appropriate, additional recycling containers should be added. These new recycling containers should be readily accessible by parks users and have instructions that are easy for the public to understand.
- ◆ Recycling containers should be added at all different types of parks including, but not limited to, ball diamonds, neighborhood parks, school playgrounds, and park shelters.
- ◆ Frequent waste audits should be required by the City's solid waste contractor. These audits should be a primary means to continue to measure the effectiveness and growth of recycling at City parks.

Individuals and community organizations are able to rent City park and recreation facilities. The PARC Commission noted there are opportunities to amend the applications for facility rental to require applicants to implement recycling and food waste/organics collections. These

requirements could be modeled after similar requirements other communities have. Facility applicants and licensed concessionaires could be required to meet new recycling standards as a condition of the City's approval.

The PARC Commission noted the City could offer a sliding scale of credits back on the fees charged for events depending on how "green" they are. Another suggestion was to provide this type of incentive program first and then move to more stringent requirements for groups and events.

4.4 Business Organizations

A customized business survey was prepared for the commercial establishments. The online survey was launched at the same time as the residential survey. The survey forms are in Appendix A.

There were three responses to the business online survey. All three reported recycling at their business. Respondents receive information about recycling from their garbage hauler. They reported that they would recycle more materials if their property manager required them to recycle. Other recycling improvements mentioned included:

- ◆ The opportunity to recycle more items such as cardboard
- ◆ More convenient recycling opportunities at their business (for example, dedicated recycling containers in the "back of the store")
- ◆ Better recycling containers for their customers to use (sometimes referred to as "front of the store").

The survey offered to provide information to obtain a grant from Hennepin County to improve business recycling, but none of the respondents requested more information about the County grant program.

City staff met with the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, Public Affairs Committee to introduce the *Plan* and request business input. The Chamber of Commerce put an announcement about the City's *Plan* and opportunities for comment in their electronic newsletter.

5 Bloomington Community Outreach Tools

5.1 City Webpage Dedicated to the Plan

The City has a robust, online presence for overall community information and resident outreach. The City uses its website, Facebook, Twitter, "E-Subscribe" web service to create customized interest group e-mail lists for notices of selected announcements (via "e-blasts"), and other social media to inform residents and seek advice from them.

A new Bloomington *Solid Waste Management Plan* web page was established at the beginning of the project in October 2013. See Figure 5-1 for a screen shot excerpt of the current *Plan* web page and click on http://bloomingtonmn.gov/main_top/3_homecomm/trash/waste.htm?r=us to see the *Plan* web page live.

Figure 5-1
Bloomington Web Page Dedicated Updates About to the
Solid Waste Management Plan



Source: City of Bloomington web site, WWW.BloomingtonMN.gov, January 31, 2014

Bloomington education materials and the web page are major components of the community outreach effort for the *Solid Waste Management Plan*. Periodic updates of the draft *Plan* documents, such as the draft goals and outline of strategies, are posted on the web page. Once the full draft *Plan* is produced, it will also be posted on this web page for download, review and comment.

One feature of the *Plan* web page that was posted as part of the initial launch was the “Frequently Asked Questions” about the *Plan*.³ The FAQs have been well received by the public.

5.2 Emails and Social Media

A list of interested residents signed up to receive email announcements about updates to the *Plan*. Anyone who signs up for the City’s “E-Subscribe” under the specific topic “Solid Waste Management Plan” can be automatically informed of *Plan*-related news.⁴ Subscribers to this “E-Subscribe” service received notices about *Plan*-related: Open House meetings, opportunities to provide input and the opening of the online survey. The most recent e-mail announcement about the *Plan* was that the preliminary results of the second Open House on January 16 were now available on the City’s *Plan* web page.

Similar announcements about *Plan* news and updates were also posted via the City’s Facebook and Twitter accounts.

A special e-mail address (SolidWasteManagementPlan@BloomingtonMN.gov), monitored daily by City staff, is available for comments, questions and dialog through-out the project. Interested parties are also encouraged to contact directly the City's project manager for this *Plan*, Jim Gates, Deputy Director of Public Works.

5.3 City "*Briefing*" Newsletter

The City has an award-winning newsletter, the Bloomington "*Briefing*", that is a primary source of news, information and outreach for all matters relating to city government and services. An article was featured in the December 2013 "*Briefing*" about the *Plan* and to help promote attendance at the first Open House held on December 4.

6 Surveys

An online survey (Survey Monkey) tool was used to solicit, gather and analyze input from interested residents and businesses about the Bloomington *Plan*. The resident survey was available on the *Plan* web page via hyperlinks to the survey forms. The Bloomington *Plan* web page prominently promoted responses to the surveys from December 10, 2013 through January 10, 2014. The web page banner read, "We Want Your Input." The online survey was also promoted through other outreach methods, including: emails; the City "*Briefing*" newsletter; City Facebook and Twitter posts; and word of mouth. Some of the community organizations such as the Master Recyclers and Composters group also pushed responses to the survey.

The same survey forms were also handed out to participants attending the first Open House held on December 4, 2013. These were coded in the same manner as the online survey responses.

Appendix B-1 contains the quantified results in response to the multiple choice questions. Both the online and the hard copy responses were compiled to present composite results from both survey formats.

Appendix B-2 contains the text responses to the open-ended questions. These were typed by the Consultant as near to their original, verbatim content as possible.

The results compare well to the National Citizens Survey™ discussed above. The National Citizens Survey™ reported that about 93% of residents recycle. The slight difference may be due to the fact that the National Citizens Survey is taken from a random sample of all Bloomington residents while the *Plan* survey is a self-selected sample of individuals interested in recycling and other solid waste topics.

7 Open Houses

7.1 The First Open House on December 4

The first Open House was held for residents and businesses on December 4, 2013 at the Bloomington Civic Plaza 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Approximately forty (40) residents attended the meeting including two (2) persons that identified themselves as haulers (who were also Bloomington residents). Tables were arranged for informal discussion centered on several pre-selected topics: trash, recycling, the Citywide Curbside Cleanup, and miscellaneous solid waste

management issues. A member of Project Management Team was at each table to facilitate the discussions among residents and take notes.

Significant themes conveyed by residents included:

- ◆ There are too many haulers on each street. This problem is perceived as: inefficient, wasteful, noisy, polluting, unsafe, and damaging to the streets. There were a very high percentage of participants that were in favor of the City pursuing organized solid waste collection. A smaller number of participants expressed concern that organized collection would: increase the fees for trash service, decrease service levels, and/or reduce residents' choice in selecting their own hauler.
- ◆ Participants recommended the City improve recycling. Ideas suggested included:
 - ▶ More items to be accepted for recycling
 - ▶ More frequent information about recycling
 - ▶ Larger recycling containers
 - ▶ More frequent recycling pick-ups
 - ▶ Better opportunities and education for recycling in multi-unit buildings
- ◆ Several residents mentioned how the City should have a dedicated staff position for solid waste and recycling again.
- ◆ There should be improvements in businesses recycling, including a requirement that businesses that sell recyclable goods should have drop-off bins available for their customers to recycle those same items (for example: cans, bottles, and plastic bags).
- ◆ All businesses should be required to recycle and more education should be given to businesses about recycling.
- ◆ More food waste/organics collection opportunities should be started for residents.
- ◆ Several residents talked about the new service that one hauler has begun providing for food waste/organics collection. They expressed their hope of expanding the service citywide.
- ◆ Participants also recommended more information about back yard composting.
- ◆ The Curbside Cleanup program is very popular. It was mentioned how more frequent collection of bulky waste would be more convenient and might reduce illegal dumping.
- ◆ The two haulers present mentioned only one company now bids on the City's Curbside Cleanup contract. As an alternative, the City could require all licensed haulers in the City to provide regular bulky waste collection service.
- ◆ Another suggestion from the haulers was to stretch out the schedule for the Curbside Cleanup program and increase the number of days beyond the current five (5) Saturdays only. This type of change might encourage smaller haulers to bid on the service.

7.2 The Second Open House on January 16

The second Open House was held in Civic Plaza from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 16, 2014. The Open House was advertised on the City web site and by e-mail messages to residents that had subscribed to be notified about the Plan.

Table 7-1 lists the goals most favored by participants at the second Open House.

Table 7-1
Draft Goals: Open House Participant Rankings
(Total number of blue dot labels as placed during the second Open House)

◆ Reduce road wear impacts	36
◆ Lower environmental impacts	34
◆ Improve recycling, composting, and waste reduction	31
◆ Enhance public education and awareness	18
◆ Assure all residents have adequate recycling services	11
◆ Improve hauler reporting systems	8
◆ Increase use of resource recovery facilities	8
◆ Allocate adequate staff resources	8
◆ Improve value of services	6
◆ Improve safety	6
◆ Promote local economic development	5
◆ Enhance coordination among government agencies	1

Figure 7-2 shows one example of the two large sheets displaying the results of Open House participants' dot label rankings on the draft Goals.

Figure 7-2
Draft Outline of Strategies: Example Large Sheet of Open House Results
(First of two large sheets of green dot labels on the draft outline of Strategies)



Table 7-2 lists the strategies most favored by attendees. The selection of favored goals was independent of selection of favored strategies.

Table 7-2
Draft Improvement Strategies: Open House Participant Rankings
(Total number of green dot labels as placed during the second Open House)

◆ Trash Collection Systems	46
◆ Citywide Curbside Cleanup	24
◆ Recycling	23
◆ Yard Waste Composting	17
◆ Recycling and Waste Reduction at Events and “Away from Home” Activities	16
◆ Food Waste/Organics Recovery	15
◆ City Parks and City Buildings	8
◆ Environmental Education Outreach	6
◆ Household Hazardous Waste	6
◆ Electronic Waste	5
◆ Resource Recovery (for Mixed Solid Waste)	3
◆ Source Reduction and Reuse	2
◆ Bulky Waste	1
◆ Landfilling	1
◆ Other Problem Materials	0

8 Summary of Findings

8.1 Goals and Strategies

The Consultant and City staff used the community engagement tools to develop the initial draft goals for the *Plan* and the draft outline of strategies. These draft goals and draft outline of strategies were publicized on the *Plan* web page on January 10, 2014 prior to the second Open House held on January 16, 2014. These initial draft goals and outline of strategies were the basis of discussion and comments at the second Open House. The input at the second Open House confirmed the comments heard throughout the earlier engagement activities that reducing road wear impacts, lowering environmental impacts and improving recycling, composting and waste reduction are very important community goals. Open House comments confirmed residents attending the Open House also believe enhancing public education and awareness and assuring all residents have adequate recycling services are important goals.

Open House participants’ comments and rankings via the dot label exercise indicated clear priorities within the outline of strategies. Their verbal comments and dot rankings directly supported the similar priorities for the goals. Most residents that have been engaged in the *Plan* community engagement process to date have strongly and consistently favored changes to the solid waste collection systems as the top priority for the City.

At the second Open House, strong support was also expressed by participants for improvements to recycling services and the Citywide Curbside Collection program. Other issues consistently supported throughout the engagement process include: yard waste composting; food waste/organics composting; and “Away from Home” recycling opportunities such as at parks,

schools and businesses. The relatively low dot ranking priority for the other issues (resource recovery, source reduction and reuse, bulky waste management, landfilling, and managing other problem materials) is more a reflection of the intensity placed on the highly favored strategies related to solid waste collection services and not so much a comment the other issues lack support. All of the strategies in the outline are important elements of the overall *Solid Waste Management Plan*, but Open House participants may consider these other lower priority issues as something the City should deal with in the longer-term.

8.2 Environmental Protection

The community strongly believes in environmental protection. The Bloomington Comprehensive Plan (2008) clearly indicates the City's history of support for sustainable practices including protection of natural resources and open spaces. The highly engaged and committed volunteers within resident groups such as the Master Recyclers and Composters and the PARC Commission are another indication of community support for sustainability issues such as improved solid waste management. These values were clearly emphasized by participants in the community engagement activities to-date. Environmental protection was a common theme reflected in many of the conversations, responses to surveys and in the comments on the draft goals and outline of strategies.

8.3 Organized Collection

The participants in the community engagement process to-date were overwhelmingly supportive of organized solid waste collection as a critical aspect of Bloomington's future solid waste management efforts. Over and over, participants expressed a desire for fewer trucks in their neighborhoods, less noise, fewer road impacts, more safety and more organized and coordinated waste education and service delivery. There were very few comments supporting continuation of the current open system of trash and recycling collections.

The meeting with the City's licensed trash haulers and their comments at the first Open House provided important balance as another perspective on the organized collection issue. Each hauling company may have a different opinion about how the City should proceed on this issue, but in general the haulers expressed support for the existing open hauling system. Also, City Council members have expressed an interest in exploring how any change to organized collection could be fair and equitable to existing haulers. Finally, the National Citizen Survey of Bloomington residents clearly indicated a strong majority of respondents are satisfied with solid waste, recycling and yard services provided within the City.

8.4 Educational Opportunities

In meetings and in surveys, respondents expressed the belief that increased education efforts are needed to achieve the proposed goals and draft strategies for improved solid waste management. Specific target audience's recommendations include: school classes, park and athletic field users, multiple unit housing residents, businesses and other residents. Volunteer efforts, however, such as the Master Recyclers and Composters group, have provided some community education. There was significant support for enhanced City-produced recycling and composting-specific articles in the *Briefing*, in addition to the broad environmental articles that are a staple of the publication.

8.5 Waste Reduction, Recycling and Organics

Nearly all community engagement participants have expressed support for specific waste reduction, recycling and organics collection and composting actions in the *Plan*. Residents repeatedly stated these three activities should be strongly represented in the *Plan*. Many good ideas for recommended tactics were suggested to improve waste reduction, recycling and organics collection systems, including “Away from Home Recycling.”

8.6 Revision of Ordinances

Participants stated there is a need for enforcement of the City’s existing ordinances. The City has ordinances that: require recycling by businesses and residents; require trash haulers to provide specific services; and outline City responsibilities.

Many participants in the engagement process were unaware of the specific ordinance requirements. One reason expressed is that some residents and businesses have observed violations of the ordinance requirements, but had not observed the enforcement activities that were made by the City. Examples presented by participants included the lack of recycling by businesses, the lack of recycling at multiple unit properties, trash hauler collection on the “wrong” days in the collection zones, and illegal dumping violations. Participants stated that they are hoping more City staff resources will be allocated to compliance enforcement activities.

8.7 Citywide Curbside Cleanup

The Citywide Curbside Cleanup is a highly valued service. Almost without exception, residents and businesses expressed support for the Curbside Cleanup program. However, there is widespread recognition the program is expensive and there may be more cost-effective ways to operate it. There is also recognition that a once a year effort does not support the year-round needs for large item, bulky waste or construction and demolition disposal, or for brush and limb disposal. Bridging, a non-profit, was suggested as an outlet for usable but unwanted furniture. There were suggestions that such bulky item collection services could be part of an organized collection system in the City, resulting in integrated solid waste management strategies. There were also specific tactics recommended to reduce scavenging at the Curbside Cleanup and to make the competitive procurement process more attractive to other haulers.

8.8 City Staffing Resources

Bloomington had a staff person until 2009 with a portion of time dedicated to recycling and solid waste issues. This City staff member was tasked with providing: education about recycling and waste reduction and preparation of recycling reports required by the County. Many participants recommended that adequate City staff be allocated to such solid waste management activities. Some of these participants simply recommended that the City should fill a recycling education position.