



AGENDA DOCUMENTATION

Item 11.4

Meeting Date: January 7, 2025

TO: DURANGO CITY COUNCIL FROM: MARTY POOL
SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT ORGANIC WASTE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH, PILOT
PROGRAMS, AND SUBSEQUENT FORMATION OF A CITIZEN
FOCUS GROUP**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that City Council, by motion:

Adopt a resolution directing the City Manager to research organic waste management ordinances in other communities, conduct pilot organic waste management programs as case studies for Durango, and subsequently form an organic waste management citizen focus group.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

In 2021 the City of Durango issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a public-private partnership to expand access to compost collections throughout Durango. The RFP stated that the City intended to explore the possibility of expanding to community-wide mandatory composting participation “within three years” (i.e., by the end of 2024).

Table to Farm Compost was awarded the public-private partnership contract and has been expanding curbside food-waste compost collection services and leaf collection services throughout Durango for the past three years. In the winter of 2022-2023 the City of Durango and Table to Farm Compost utilized grant funding from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to perform a market study on the curbside composting program.

The Sustainability Manager provided operational updates on the public-private partnership and the market study at the City Council Regular Meeting on March 7, 2023 and the City Council Study Session on May 2, 2023. No formal action was taken by Council following these presentations. At the City Council Study Session on December 3, 2024, the Sustainability Manger gave a presentation to the City Council on the current status of organic waste management in Durango. The presentation highlighted the need to explore options for a community-wide organic waste management ordinance in order for Durango to divert organic waste from the landfill at comparable levels to that of single stream recycling.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

Organizational Stewardship – 1.3 Environmental Sustainability

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

None

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal impact will vary depending on the scope and nature of pilot programs. Pilot programs are estimated to cost in the range of \$25,000 to \$75,000 collectively. Funding for the programs can be provided by bag fee revenues, which by state law must be utilized on recycling or composting efforts.

POTENTIAL ADVERSE IMPACTS:

None at this time

NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE:

1. City staff will conduct informational interviews and research ordinances adopted throughout other Colorado communities.
2. Throughout 2025, City staff will pilot additional composting programs in Durango in order to provide case studies to a future focus group. Programs may include a managed compost drop-off site, low-income rebates for compost service (similar to existing utility bill rebate programs), programs to support composting in commercial food service businesses, and pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) programs.
3. As soon as adequate information and data can be gathered from the research and pilot programs, staff will provide an operational report to Council and form an organic waste management citizen focus group. It is estimated that these will occur in Q3 or Q4 of 2025.

RESOLUTION R-2025-0004

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO CONDUCT ORGANIC WASTE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH, CONDUCT PILOT PROGRAMS, AND FORM A CITIZEN FOCUS GROUP

WHEREAS, the City of Durango’s 2024 Strategic Plan, 2022 Sustainability Plan, and 2017 Comprehensive Plan recognize our community’s commitment to utilizing resources in a sustainable manner; and

WHEREAS, A 2014 waste audit revealed that approximately 20% of residential and 26% of commercial waste in Durango is food waste, with a further 27% of residential waste made up of other organic material, including yard waste; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 the City of Durango issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a public-private partnership to expand access to compost collections throughout Durango, and the RFP stated the City intended to explore the possibility of expanding to community-wide mandatory composting participation by the end of 2024; and

WHEREAS, the public-private partnership and associated market study have provided insights into existing trends, preferences, perceptions, and behaviors related to organic waste management and composting from Durango’s residents and businesses, but additional opportunities for pilot program case studies remain to be explored; and

WHEREAS, Durango has the opportunity to research and determine the most effective option for an organic waste management ordinance based on the success of Durango’s recycling ordinances and examples from other Colorado communities which have enacted various organic waste management strategies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Durango, in the regular meeting assembled on January 7, 2025, adopt a resolution directing the City Manager to research organic waste management ordinances in other communities, conduct pilot organic waste management programs as case studies for Durango, and subsequently form an organic waste management citizen focus group.

Approved and adopted this 7th day of January 2025.

CITY OF DURANGO, COLORADO

By: _____
Mayor

ATTEST:

By: _____
City Clerk