

MIC REPORT 2023-03

Report To: Municipal Innovation Council (MIC)
Report From: Becky Smith, Director, Centre for Municipal Innovation
Meeting Date: February 1, 2023
Subject: FoodCycler™ – Household Organic Waste Diversion

Recommendation:

That the MIC approve the implementation of an organic waste pilot program in partnership with Food Cycle Science, and further;

That the MIC approve the purchase of 420 Food Cycler units with \$26,000 from the carryover from the 2022 MIC Budget in addition to \$30,000 in external funding.

Background:

Food Cycle Science is a Canadian based company out of Ottawa. The company is actively working with municipalities across Canada to develop and support initiatives to divert food waste from landfills.

In July 2022, the MIC passed a motion prioritizing waste management. The County of Bruce is in the process of updating their Waste Management Master Plan that includes exploring the possibility/feasibility of a curbside organics program. The data gathered through this pilot program will also provide valuable insight into the development of the Masterplan.

On December 20, 2022, the MIC hosted a virtual Information session for MIC members and their staff with Food Cycler Science. Given the interest across the members, the Director has worked with FoodCycler™ since then to draft a proposal to introduce the MIC Member municipalities to this new compost alternative with the goal of having 420 homes in the MIC Member municipalities utilizing the FoodCycler™ by the end of 2023.

Provincial Policy Landscape

The Province of Ontario has identified keeping food and organic waste out of the disposal stream as a high priority for the province. Diversion of organic waste from landfills is an important component in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector and achieving the goal of a zero-waste future. Methane gas, produced during the decomposition of organic materials in an anaerobic environment such as in landfilling, is 25 times more damaging to the environment than carbon dioxide.

The Province of Ontario Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement (published April 30, 2018) included policy requirements for smaller municipalities including:

Section 3.3: Municipalities shall develop and implement their own promotion and education programs aimed at preventing food waste. The focus of the education program should primarily be on reaching consumers directly through information that will assist consumers in preventing and reducing food waste.

Section 4.6: Where collection of food and organic waste is not provided, municipalities shall provide for the resource recovery of food and organic waste through means such as home composting, community composting and local event days.

The Opportunity

Discussions with Food Cycle Science have indicated that based on previous pilot projects in other Canadian municipalities, the MIC pilot project has the opportunity to divert approximately 125-150 Metric Tonnes of organic waste from the various landfills per year with 420 units.

Food Cycle Science offers a 12-week pilot project where participants can purchase a Foodcycler unit at a discounted rate in exchange for data from the pilot program. Residents who purchase a unit will be required to track weekly usage of the FoodCycler™ during each week for 12 weeks. Sample tracking sheets are included in the Resident Guide that will be provided to each buyer. At the end of the 12 weeks, residents must report their usage and answer a few survey questions.

This opportunity with Foodcycler provides the MIC member municipalities with several benefits:

- Opportunity to trial a food waste diversion solution at a cost well below market prices utilizing federal funding intended for food waste reduction in our country
- Reduced residential waste generation thus increasing diversion rates
- Reduced costs associated with waste management (collection, transfer, disposal, and landfill operations)
- The reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation and decomposition of food waste in landfills
- Extend the life of landfill sites across the municipalities
- Opportunity to support Canadian innovation and clean tech
- Opportunity to provide residents with an innovative solution that reduces waste and fights climate change, at an affordable price
- Obtaining data that could be used to develop a future organic waste diversion program

Financial Implications

With money left over from the 2022 MIC budget, the Director is proposing to use \$26,000 from the 2022 carryover and seek an additional \$30,000 through the Environment at NII or Bruce Power Environment and Sustainability Fund. This funding will provide a total of 420 units, or 60 units for each lower tier municipality.

If Municipalities are interested in topping up the number of units available to their residents this information will need to be confirmed with the MIC Director by Thursday February 9th.

**** Economies of Scale:** It should be noted that member municipalities will save approximately \$7,000 each by working together and leveraging external funding.

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