

PoCo kitchen scraps plan keeps costs down

Garbage rates plateau



BY KELLY SINOSKI, VANCOUVER SUN FEBRUARY 28, 2011



Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore demonstrates how the green food scraps program works at his Port Coquitlam home on Friday, February 18, 2011.

Photograph by: Les Bazso, PNG

Port Coquitlam will hold the line on garbage rates again this year after residents dramatically reduced the amount of trash they sent to the dump, saving the city \$165,000.

The city has kept rates at 2009 levels thanks in part to its kitchen scraps program, coupled with bi-weekly garbage pickup, which began in January last year.

The two measures have helped the city reduce its garbage loads by 26 per cent in the past year. About half of the savings in 2010 came from reduced labour, equipment and fuel costs, while \$82,000 was a result of the averted landfill disposal fees.

Mayor Greg Moore credited residents for “working together to save money and at the same time provide a positive environmental impact.”

Port Coquitlam was the first Metro Vancouver municipality to offer curbside pickup of food scraps and food-soiled papers — a move that is now being adopted by other

municipalities.

Metro Vancouver expects to ban all organics from the trash by the end of 2012 as more cities get on board with the program.

The aim is to reduce the amount of the region's garbage heading to the dump by 70 per cent by 2015 and 80 per cent by 2020. That means everything from apple cores to chicken bones, bread crusts, eggshells, coffee grounds, tea bags, paper towels and pizza boxes must be in the green bin instead of the garbage can.

To get there, Metro Vancouver must compost 265,000 tonnes of organics each year.

Metro residents dump about 3.4 million tonnes of garbage annually.

In Port Coquitlam, residents are now diverting 62 per cent of their household waste into recycling and green carts — up from 50 per cent in 2009. The new alternating week pickup schedule has also saved 9,600 litres of diesel fuel, which would have produced about 98 metric tonnes of greenhouse gases.

Coun. Sherry Carroll, who chairs the city's environmental enhancement committee, said if the materials weren't being diverted, the city would have to pay to get rid of them.

"I'm seeing the results in my own neighbourhood. I'm seeing fewer black garbage bins on the street because everything is going into the blue and green bins."

Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminster, Port Moody, Richmond and Vancouver have all followed Port Coquitlam's lead, with other municipalities involved in pilot projects.

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