



Submission of Civic Trust Auckland

Draft Auckland Waste Management and Minimisation Plan

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We wish to speak in support of our submission at a public hearing.

Civic Trust Auckland (CTA) is a non-profit public interest group, incorporated in 1968, with activities and interests throughout the greater Auckland region.

The aims of the Trust include:

- Protection of natural landforms
- Preservation of heritage, in all its aspects
- Encouragement of good planning, for the City and Region.

The Civic Trust considers that good planning encompasses effective and efficient waste management and minimisation across the region. We congratulate Auckland Council on its draft plan and its Zero Waste aspiration. We look forward to the speedy implementation of actions that will bring about increased reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery, as well as improvements in the treatment and disposal of waste.

Q1. *Auckland Council has a legislative obligation to ‘promote waste management and minimisation in its district’, under the Waste Minimisation Act 2008. The proposed short-medium term target aims for a 30 per cent reduction in the amount of domestic kerbside waste sent to landfill, per person, by 2018. Do you agree or disagree with this target and why?*

We agree with this as a minimum target and think that a higher reduction is desirable and possible.

Q2. *Currently around 45 per cent of Auckland households pay for kerbside refuse collections through disposer-pays and 55 per cent through rates. To ensure that householders only pay for the refuse they put out and encourage a reduction in waste, Auckland Council is suggesting standardising the way households pay for refuse by introducing disposer-pays for domestic refuse collections across the whole region. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal and why?*

(a) We agree with this proposal as a means to reduce waste and regard it as an incentive for each household to take responsibility for the amount of rubbish it produces. If waste disposal is paid for by rates, this incentive is unavailable.

(b) We are pleased to note that recycling will be paid for through private good funding.

Q3. *Auckland households use a mix of bags and wheelie bins for kerbside refuse collections. The receptacle type needs to be standardised to gain efficiencies. Do you agree or disagree with the council’s proposal for all households in the Auckland region (excluding the Hauraki Gulf Islands) to be provided with wheelie bins for kerbside refuse and why?*

(a) Council states its goal is “to create an integrated suite of waste services across the region in order to significantly reduce waste in the medium term, with the long term aspirational goal of Zero Waste” (Executive Summary, pg 5). CTA is of the view that waste can be significantly reduced *without* waste services being standardized. Parts of Auckland City already have waste systems that work well and there does not seem to be good reason to change them.

(b) We suggest that different options may suit different households. This draft plan provides a means of consultation on this matter, and the needs and wishes of different groups need to be considered. Efficiencies from the disposer’s point of view also need to be considered. For example, wheelie bins, especially when full, are difficult to manoeuvre for less able people or on sections that are not flat.

(c) Those who provide the collection services, including those who do the actual pick-up, also need to have their views considered, not only as regards efficiency but also hazards and other matters.

(d) We do not think it necessary for efficiency for all the bins in the Auckland region to be the same. It would seem sufficient that the collector knows which bin is which. With different sizes bins proposed, not all bins will be the same, in any case.

(e) We consider it wasteful for current bins to be recalled and remade for the purpose of what would seem to be unnecessary standardisation. Existing bins should be reused. Otherwise Council itself cannot be seen to “‘walk the talk’ by demonstrating good ‘waste wise’ practice” (page 10).

(f) We oppose giving households the choice of rubbish bins up to 240 litres, as this encourages the idea that large amounts of waste are acceptable as long as its disposal is paid for. However, we suggest that households that consider they need a large bin due to special circumstances, e.g. long-term disposal of adult-sized nappies, are able to apply for a large bin.

Q4. *Organic waste makes up approximately 50 per cent by weight (around 40 per cent food waste and 10 per cent green waste) of the contents of the average kerbside refuse bin or bag. The council proposes to provide a separate organic waste collection to divert this material from landfill to beneficial use (for example, to compost). The service would be rates-funded and, if refuse is disposer-pays, this would reduce what householders pay for refuse. Do you agree or disagree with the council's proposal to provide every household that needs one with a small bin for organic waste collection?*

(a) We support diverting more organic material from going to landfill. We are of the view that, as each household is different, each should be given the choice of whether it has a separate food waste bin plus separate green waste bin.

(b) However, in the first instance, we support community education in order to reduce the food waste from each household. It is unacceptable that one-third of all bought fruit and vegetables are thrown away.

(c) We would also like Council to address the issue of food waste from places that sell food, such as restaurants, cafes and supermarkets. Some of this should be made available for human and / or animal consumption.

Q5. *Different types (and frequencies) of inorganic collection services are currently provided across Auckland. The council proposes to provide a rates-funded inorganic collection every one or two years. Do you agree or disagree with the council's proposal?*

(a) We disagree as we would like to see the inorganic collection replaced by the facility of a resource recovery network. The inorganic collections provide an opportunity for people to dispose of excessive amounts of material without taking any responsibility. Many of these items can be repaired, reused or recycled and thus continue to have a life, or, at the least, have components extracted and sorted so that parts can be reused or recycled.

(b) Some of these items present a hazard, especially to young children, when left on the street, aside from causing neighbourhoods to be unsightly for a week or more during the time of the collection.

(c) There should be a service available for pick-up of items from individual households (for a small fee) and neighbours should be encouraged to assist each other to take materials to the resource recovery centre, e.g. by an informal roster where one person per month takes a carload from the street to the centre.

Q6. *The council proposes advocating to Central Government to introduce mandatory product stewardship schemes for packaging (such as cans and bottles for drinks) to increase recycling rates and transfer costs away from ratepayers and onto producers and consumers. It also proposes encouraging development of product stewardship schemes for products such as electronic waste, tyres and batteries. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal and why?*

(a) We strongly agree with this proposal because it will encourage producers and consumers to be more environmentally responsible.

(b) Container deposit legislation would transfer costs to producers and consumers and at the same time enable groups such as schools to raise funds by collecting recyclable items (as they have in the past), as well as individuals who do not have adequate means of supporting themselves.

(c) We note that people living in London can take their household batteries to any of the London libraries and put them in a battery recycling collection box. This would seem to be a good interim way of dealing with used batteries in Auckland until resource recovery centres are in place. Libraries could, at the same time, be part of the community programme (as per Q7).

Q7. *The council proposes to implement a comprehensive communications, community engagement and community development programme to help householders adapt to changes in waste and recycling services and to help businesses and the wider community reduce waste to landfill. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal and why?*

(a) We strongly agree with this proposal, and, as a community organisation concerned about sustainability, including protecting the environment and education amongst our aims, we see that community engagement is paramount in terms of educating Aucklanders about changes in services and how they can play their part.

(b) One area in which people need more education is on how to separate out their rubbish. One place to provide this information could be at bin locations, such as those in multi-unit dwellings (whether the waste is collected by a private contractor or not), for example, whether or not it is necessary to remove labels from tins and jars and whether tetra paks go in the cardboard bin or the plastics bin.

(c) The main focus of education should be on reduction and reuse, being the top two facets of the pyramid in the waste hierarchy. We need to learn to regard waste as a resource, not something to be thrown away.

(d) Education should include awareness of the Visy recycling site is open to the public to visit.

(e) We need to be made aware of the importance of choosing products carefully in terms of what our needs are, what value the product is offering and what its expected lifetime is.

(f) "Support and undertaking further research into how best to incentivise and encourage business waste reduction" is included in the plan but we would like to see more detail about this in the planned actions.

Q8. *Please provide any other feedback on the draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan.*

- (a)
 - (i) CTA strongly supports a resource recovery network throughout the Auckland region. We note that Waitakere City had a good model for this and that the Waitemata Local Board included a resource recovery centre in their local board plan.
 - (ii) Such centres can provide local jobs and keep more "waste" within communities instead of transporting it over what can be long distances.

- (iii) Smaller centres can collect materials which are then delivered to larger centres, so that places are accessible for all the community.
- (iv) Construction and demolition materials form a huge part of the city's collective waste, therefore we support the inclusion of drop-off of such waste in the proposed resource recovery network.
- (v) There could be facility for some "specialist" resource recovery centres, such as the Early Childhood Resource Centre that used to operate in Mt Wellington, providing materials for arts and crafts for preschools.

(b) CTA supports amending the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 so that industry has the same waste minimisation obligations as local authorities, *as well as* Council gaining more influence over the waste stream. We believe that Council should have more than the current 17% control over waste management.

(c) Page 10 of the plan proposes "Developing waste and recycling services for multi-unit dwellings" but there is no further detail about this. 35,000-plus Auckland CBD residents live in multi-unit dwellings and they currently need not take any responsibility for the amount and type of rubbish they put into the communal bins. We note that space requirements for bins needs to be taken into consideration, particularly with regard to new builds, and regulations should be considered for inclusion in the Unitary Plan.

(d) There is similarly no real mention in the plan of waste and recycling services for office blocks.

(e) The issue of commercial waste in general does not seem to have adequate emphasis in the plan. For example, there should be a requirement of every contract that full disclosure on waste volumes, waste operation costs and progress towards reduction targets be disclosed to the public.

(f) CTA strongly supports expanding the range of recyclables that are collected.

(g) Recycling should be carried out according to internationally accepted standards of best practice:

- separation at source
- producing high quality products that can be sold at their highest value
- employing local staff to process materials before they are transported
- processing and packaging the materials to their highest density.

(h) The way urban trees are disposed of needs to be addressed in terms of ecology, energy and use of wood.

(i) There should be a "bring in bring-out" policy regarding rubbish in all parks, with recycling bins at key points if necessary.

(j) Auckland Council should support community initiatives that are working towards reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery, rather than leaving this to volunteers. Council could actively work towards partnerships with community groups.

(k) Some schools have given long-term support for recycling and it seems that more schools could be encouraged to do the same. Benefits of schools being recycling centres include:

- (i) the natural flow-on as regards education around recycling for children - and their families

- (ii) the space usually available on school grounds that can accommodate bins
- (iii) families being able to drop off their recyclables when they deliver or collect their children from school.

(l) CTA trusts that resource consents considered for fast tracking if they demonstrate good waste minimisation practice (pg 10) would be scrutinised in the normal manner as regards all other aspects of the resource consent application.

(m) Regarding plastic bags, we support minimisation leading to prohibition of these items, to be replaced with biodegradable bags. In the first instance, consumers should be charged for the purchase of plastic bags, to encourage them to reuse bags and / or bring their own non-plastic bags with them to the supermarket or other place of purchase. Supermarkets, especially new ones (such as the Countdown and New World Metros) should be supported to have a policy of charging shoppers for plastic bags and encouraging shoppers to bring their own bags.

(n) Council should advocate to central government for legislation which requires that all take-away food products carry within their branded packaging a bar code specific to that supplier or manufacturer so that when recovered as litter the cost of collection is charged to the supplier or manufacturer.

(o) Similarly, Council should advocate to central government for legislation which requires that all tobacco products carry within their branded packaging and products micro-dots so that when recovered as litter the cost of collection is charged to the supplier or manufacturer.

(p) Spot fines for littering of any product by the consumer (as per the Litter Act) should be publicised and enforced and regularly highlighted in the media and / or Council publications.

(q) The "Sell on behalf of" concept needs to be kept simple and able to accommodate people who do not use computers.

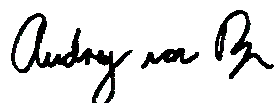
(r) The social marketing campaign proposed in the plan could include libraries and garages where a pamphlet is offered to a customer and / or posters are visible at point of sale / issue.

(s) Even if Council is not in direct control of waste management services, it can surely make a huge difference in the area of education of all waste producers and in legislation that affects these services. Due to these factors, we do not accept the statement that there is "limited Council influence" (Executive Summary, pg 5).

(t) Civic Trust Auckland encourages Auckland Council to continue to research best practice in other countries and to trial such processes as would seem to work well in the Auckland environment.

Date of submission: 31 January 2012

Signature:



Secretary, Civic Trust Auckland