

## Yard Waste

### Issue:

State law allows yard waste disposal in landfills that recover methane and utilize it for energy production. Increased quantities of yard waste disposal would decrease the life of the City's MSW landfill. Three percent of what is currently received for disposed at the City's MSW landfill is yard waste; five percent of what is current diverted from the City's landfill is yard waste.

### Major Options:

- 1) Maintain Status Quo (Seasonal Ban)
- 2) Allow Yard Waste Disposal at City's MSW Landfill Year Round
- 3) Ban Yard Waste Disposal at City's MSW Landfill Year Round

### Implementation issues/considerations:

- 2) Allow Yard Waste Disposal at City's MSW Landfill Year Round
  - a. Need to expand landfill gas collections system to areas receiving yard waste sooner that might normally be done.
- 3) Ban Yard Waste Disposal at City's MSW Landfill Year Round
  - a. May increase waste exports
  - b. Need to increase quantities of compost marketed.

### Other Considerations:

- 1) Clarify the difference in NDEQ definition of "Yard Waste" and LMC definition of "Lawn Waste".
- 2) Source reduction efforts should discourage collection of yard waste for off-site management.

## **Yard Waste (Excerpts from Technical Paper)**

- current curbside collection of yard waste is voluntary, subscription based through private haulers and essentially places the direct financial burden on the generator to pay for management of yard waste transported off-site. Current practice relies on public (City) ownership, operation and financing of commercial composting operations, wood grinding, and the North 48th Street drop-off site as part of its integrated solid waste management services.
- Nebraska statutes ban yard waste from landfills from April 1 until December 1st of each year, but provide certain exceptions that would allow the City to accept it in their landfill on a year round basis.
- Currently the City's Bluff Road Landfill does not have NDEQ approval to accept yard waste on a year-round basis. The City would be eligible to apply for such approval when the landfill gas power generation facilities, currently under design/construction by Lincoln Electric System, are complete in 2013.
- The Lincoln Municipal Code (LMC) Section 8.32.010 defines "lawn waste" as "grass cuttings or clippings and leaves."
- The planning process also provides the opportunity to review the definition of "lawn waste" (LMC Section 8.32.010) and whether it should be expanded to include other organic material (e.g., garden and flower bed waste).
- Seasonal yard waste bans have created the need for separate collection and management systems for those individuals that choose to collect and "bag" their yard waste for off-site management.
- In response to Nebraska's seasonal ban, the City constructed a large scale (13 acre) commercial composting facility adjacent to the Bluff Road Landfill, and provided separate material receiving and handling facilities at the City's N. 48th Street Transfer Station.
- Another key decision will be the level of City's continued involvement in managing this banned waste type.
- While LMC requires waste haulers operating within the three mile corporate limits of the City to have a license to collect, haul and convey garbage, there is an exemption to the permitting requirements for firms collecting hauling and conveying lawn waste.
- The NDEQ's 2008 Nebraska Waste Characterization Study included a waste sort and characterization at the Bluff Road Landfill. This study estimated that approximately three percent, by weight, of the material disposed of at the Bluff Road Landfill was yard waste
- A key decision as it relates to the Solid Waste Plan 2040 is whether or not the City will exclude yard waste from the Bluff Road Landfill, and if so by what means and to what extent. Currently yard waste is only banned from the landfill from April 1st until December 1st.
- Basic program options include:
  1. Allow year round disposal in the Bluff Road Landfill.

# Solid Waste Plan 2040

2. Continue current seasonal bans, coupled with existing or enhanced City composting facility.
  3. Ban all yard waste from the landfill year round.
- From an overall program perspective, if the City's goal is to emphasize source reduction and minimize landfill disposal the following options might be considered:
    - Ban all yard waste from the landfill year round.
    - Support programs to leave it on the lawn and reuse it on the site where it is generated.
    - Re-evaluate City policy of providing collection and management alternatives for yard waste at remote locations.