

1311 Prairie Ave.
Lawrence KS 66044

11 June 2012

re: Commission agenda item #3 - curbside recycling RFP

Robert Schumm, Mayor
Lawrence City Hall
6 East 6th St.
Lawrence KS 66044

Mayor Schumm:

Thank you for moving forward with recommendations by the Sustainability Advisory Board and the Solid Waste Task Force to consider instituting a City-wide, residential, curb-side recycling service. I would like to submit several comments regarding the Requests For Proposals (RFP) for the collection and processing of recyclables.

I strongly recommend that the Commission give preference to privatizing the materials processing component only, and not to privatize the collection component. The Lawrence Solid Waste Division is already well positioned to fulfill the collection activities, and currently operate in a highly professional and efficient manner. In case after case, when existing public services are privatized, the negative consequences include increased costs to the end users (reflecting private profit margins not present in public City services), a deterioration of the services, and service providers who are unresponsive to requests and complaints.

Conversely, it is highly appropriate that the materials processing component be privately run. This is an area that the City is not engaged in nor readily prepared to undertake. But there are several private companies with concrete plans to establish state of the art Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) - Honey Creek Disposal, Hamm Waste Services, and Waste Management to name a few. Please see the presentations to the Solid Waste Task Force by these companies - http://www.lawrenceks.org/swtf/files/swtf_minutes_2011sep12.pdf .

And finally I advise the City to reject any proposal from any contractor who has engaged in willful neglect or illegal practices, or who has received a Notice of Violation from the City, or who has demonstrated a consistent track record of blighting the property of their neighbors or the City. The City has an obligation to uphold these considerations as much, if not more so, than the simple low-bid dollar amount.

Sincerely,

Michael Almon