

Waste Management Suggestions

Consultation Montréal, objectif zéro déchet

Coalition -Amis de l'environnement/Friends of the Environment

We thank the Agglomeration for this important consultation on waste management, as together we aim for Zero-Waste. We do need to know the truth about what is happening to our recycling materials: glass, paper, plastic, metal, Styrofoam.

As we go forward in this process, we are beginning to see that a great number of people, of all ages and social situations, are eagerly looking for ways that they might become involved in being part of the solution to making this a more sustainable planet, for themselves and for future generations.

It appears that a significant portion of our recycling materials end up in the trash. If these rumours are true, we must fix this. We need to clarify what the problems are if we are to improve the quality, so that we can actually properly recycle our materials. We absolutely need to rethink our current processes.

Priority to the 3 Rs:

In order to reduce waste, we need to keep in mind the R's:

Reduce (Rethink, Refuse)

Reuse (including Refurbish, Repurpose, Repair)

Recycle

First and foremost, we need to reduce our waste at source. To do this, we need **legislation at all levels: federal, provincial and municipal.** We encourage Montreal to lobby our provincial and federal governments, as well as work through the **UMQ** (Union des municipalités du Québec) and the **FCM** (Federation of Canadian Municipalities), who are strong partners to enact change at the provincial and federal levels, in order to **ban plastic bags and plastic water bottles; reduce packaging of fruits and vegetables and eliminate single use plastic, including clam-shell packaging.** Ideally we should be weaning ourselves off plastic as much as possible. In order to do so, **manufacturers should be replacing their plastic containers with glass. If the glass containers come in standard sizes and shapes, then they can be returned to any manufacturer as needed.**

The federal government can also be supporting research into **compostable materials** (ie. Potato, Hemp, fish skin, etc) **that function like plastic.** These can help to replace our current plastic materials.

We would like to see **Montreal legislate that restaurants and grocery stores replace plastic and Styrofoam with compostable or reusable containers. To achieve true zero waste — if it cannot be reused, repaired or recycled, we should not produce it.**

We would like to see a system in which **Montreal promotes and gives financial support** to businesses (grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, etc), so that they can transition to offer **refill stations** (ex: Vert Essentiel in Vaudreuil www.vertessentiel.ca) for bulk foods, hygiene and cleaning products, and other items. There should also be a financial incentive for customers to refill their containers rather than buy new containers. In addition, grocery stores should sell reusable produce or grocery bags, and **not** offer any plastic bags for produce and meat, or at the cash. Customers should bring their own reusable bags and containers.

We are pleased at the recent news that Quebec will be initiating return deposits on wine bottles and plastic drink bottles, but we would like to see this expanded. **All glass and plastic bottles and jars should have a deposit** and be returned to specific depots or Ecocentres. There is no reason that glass cannot be sterilized and reused, which requires less energy than recycling it. We need to wean ourselves off plastic. In order to do so, **manufacturers need to be replacing their plastic containers with glass.**

Our recycling system needs to be more effective. Materials need to be separated into paper, plastic, metal and glass categories. We have been relying on residents to correctly place items in their recycling bins, but unfortunately items that cannot be recycled and items that are dirty are often put in blue bins. If plastic or glass bottles and jars are taken to depots, then recycling at the curb would probably involve only paper, cardboard and metal. Residents and students need to be educated on the correct procedure.

We would like to see steps taken towards replacing as much plastic as possible with glass and compostable materials. **The plastic we do use should be 100% recyclable (otherwise it should not exist). Compostable cardboard, aluminum or glass can replace plastic and Styrofoam. We need to find solutions, so that we can completely eliminate single-use plastic. Montreal can be proactive and innovative.**

In addition, we need to find a solution to **cat litter and dog excrement**. Litter/excrement needs to be in “**compostable**” bags (ex: earthrated.com), which break down to raw elements (C,H,O, N) if **composted in industrial facilities where the temperature is high enough to kill bacteria, viruses**. We need to research the options available. In the meantime, do we put these compostable plastic bags into garbage? Ideally these items should have their own **interior composting facility** where the compostable bags do break down and do not blow away with the wind outside.

Reduction of Greenhouse Gases:

In order to reduce Greenhouse gases, we recommend **reducing the frequency of garbage, recycling and compost pickup** to every two weeks, or even once a month. In addition, we recommend putting **a cost on garbage** that increases with the quantity and/or frequency. The items that tend to cause problems with garbage (meat, bones, odours) can now be put in most brown/green bins for compost pickup, thus reducing amount and frequency of garbage pickup. Many people freeze these scraps until time for compost pickup, and as such can reduce frequency. This is similar to how Beaconsfield handles garbage:

Beaconsfield: For all waste collection services, residents are charged a fixed fee at the start of the year, and a variable fee based on the number pick-ups of the garbage bin over the year. The fixed fee includes 12 garbage bin pick-ups for the year, and residents are charged a variable fee for the number of additional pickups beyond the 12 included in the fixed fee. Both the fixed fee and the variable fee vary based on the size of bin chosen by the resident. The bin provided to each resident is equipped with a RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tag that enables the system to determine where, when, and how many times the bin is picked-up for a given address. Because the fee is based on the number of pickups, not the weight collected, this flexible system encourages residents to only put their garbage bin at the curb when it is full.

At the core of the Beaconsfield approach, is a system that allows each resident to decide their needs, based on their individual habits. It encourages them to better sort and reduce what and how much they put in their garbage bin. Individually, these efforts determine bin size and frequency, but collectively the community is much more aware of the ability to have a positive environmental benefit, while controlling costs.

The following links provide more details to explain the rationale for Beaconsfield's waste reduction strategy, and tools used to inform the residents:

Incentive tariff:

www.beaconsfield.ca/fr/tarification-incitative-1

Guide :

www.beaconsfield.ca/images/stories/environmental-fields/guide_informatif_web_fra.pdf

Media coverage:

<https://unpointcinq.ca/techno/beaconsfield-poubelles-intelligentes/>

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Circular Economy:

There are **six Ecocenters on the Island of Montreal, but none on the West Island**. We need to **create two more for the West Island** - one perhaps in the Pointe Claire or Dollard-des-Ormeaux area, and one on the tip of the island (perhaps in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue on the back parking lot of the Ste-Anne Hospital?).

We need to offer, or continue to offer, municipal drop-offs (ex. Libraries, Public Works, Ecocenters) for cork, Styrofoam, used pens, batteries, printer cartridges, cell phones, old glasses, hygiene and dental products, etc.

We envision **Ecocenters to be multi-functional**: Residents are able to drop-off **usable furniture**, and other unwanted, but **reusable household items** for free pick-up by those who can use the items. Attached to the Ecocenter, would be a **repair shop** where items can be repaired and put back into use, thereby providing employment. The Ecocenters are also a **depot for glass and plastic bottles and jars**, as well as a necessary **permanent drop-off for electronic**

equipment, tires, mattresses and toxic materials, medicines, etc. Terra Cycle (www.terracycle.com) is a company that collects many diverse items that normally would go to landfill. Their containers could also be included in the Ecocenter.

Mobilization:

Education is a necessary part of all these changes: **media campaigns (television, radio, social media), municipal displays, literature, website, grocery stores, local schools, and public access to recycling and composting centres for visits.** We suggest creating **informative videos** that are specific to the Montreal recycling process and aimed at the general public, as well as for school use. **CEGEP and University students in Environmental Studies could be hired** to go into schools, community centres and apartment buildings to educate the population.

Positive reinforcement is a very useful tool. We suggest that Montreal provide incentives/rewards/recognition for Montreal boroughs and agglomeration municipalities that are reaching and/or surpassing the zero waste targets. Montreal could also provide incentives/rewards/recognition for businesses and schools who are outstanding in their efforts to reach zero waste targets. Achieving true zero waste is not an easy task, and the more highly motivated we are as a society, the more likely we are to reach this necessary goal.

We thank the Agglomeration for this Consultation opportunity.

The **Coalition - Amis de l'environnement** has put much thought into these ideas, and feel that they are all attainable goals. It is crucial that we all act.

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