



RDCO FOOD WASTE FAQ

Why is food waste collection being considered?

The Regional District of Central Okanagan has been exploring options for diverting organic waste from the landfill for a number of years. By introducing a food waste collection program, we could divert at least 7,500 tonnes of waste from the landfill per year while ensuring that the nutrients from discarded food are returned to the environment, benefiting our ecosystem.

The 2022 Food Waste Feasibility Study recommended that the RDCO further explore comingled collection of food and yard waste and engage with residents on the topic.

Last fall, the RDCO initiated Phase One of engagement to gauge community support for a food waste collection program in the Central Okanagan. The results were promising, with 73% of respondents expressing enthusiasm for such a program and 83% said they would likely participate in a food waste program if it was implemented.

Why is biweekly garbage being considered?

The most recent Waste Composition Study demonstrated that 41% of residential garbage is food waste and soiled paper, which could be diverted into a curbside organics program, another 6.8% of residential waste is yard waste, wood and other compostables. By taking food waste and soiled papers out of your garbage and diverting all other compostable material, you could cut your garbage by almost half, reducing the need for as frequent collection.

Why aren't we proposing a separate bin for just food waste?

According to the 2022 Food Waste Feasibility Study, adding food waste to existing yard waste carts is more cost-effective and environmentally sustainable than introducing separate bins.

What will be included as food waste?

This will depend on the final processing facility and what they accept. Many curbside food waste programs however do include a wide range of material including all food scraps such as cooked food, meats, bones, grains, fresh fruits and vegetable peelings, soiled papers such as paper towels and napkins, dirty pizza boxes, etc. It is likely that 'compostable' plastics will NOT be accepted in the program.

How much will it cost?

Current estimates range from \$66 to \$118 per year, per dwelling or \$5.50 - \$9.85 per month. Costs will depend on where the material is processed, how many transfer stations are required and how often garbage will be collected once food waste is introduced into yard waste carts.

Can I opt out? Or opt out because I already backyard compost?

The program's cost will be spread across all residents with curbside collection. Opting out won't be available.

The food waste collection program will collect all types of food waste, particularly those that are not suitable for backyard composting such as meats, bones, dairy, grains and soiled papers.

What about countertop food waste composters, why don't we just use those?

The countertop food waste composter was evaluated in our feasibility study as one option to manage food waste however comingled food waste with yard waste scored higher as the best option for managing food waste for those with curbside collection. We will continue to evaluate these units and determine if these are a good option for multifamily units.

Where is our yard waste currently composted?

Currently, over 15,000 tonnes of yard waste is collected annually at the curbside and composted at the Glenmore Landfill into GlenGrow, a nutrient-rich, organic certified soil enhancer used in local farms, vineyards, gardens and parks.

Where will the yard waste with food waste go? Will it be processed at the Glenmore Landfill?

The Glenmore Landfill composting operation is permitted for yard waste only, not food waste. Food waste will need to be processed at existing composting facilities permitted to process food waste.

Most existing food waste composting facilities are either outside the region or at a far enough distance that we would require a transfer station. A transfer station in the region would receive comingled food/yard waste from residential collection trucks and then transfer into long-haul trucks for transporting to composting facilities.

What is a transfer station?

Existing composting facilities are too far for curbside collection trucks to travel for dropping off material. A transfer station enables smaller loads to be combined into larger long-haul trucks for more efficient transportation of material to out of region processing facilities.

Where will the transfer station(s) be located?

Transfer station location(s) are yet to be determined. Phase Two engagement will help inform the criteria we will use to site transfer station location(s).

Will we be able to purchase finished compost?

This is yet to be determined and will depend on the final program design and where the processing occurs.

Is multifamily being considered?

Multifamily is not being considered at this time. Most multifamily waste management is currently handled through private waste haulers and will therefore require working with private haulers and multifamily buildings to come up with a solution for food waste. Multifamily will be a future consideration.

How can residents without yard waste carts participate?

We will work to identify residents who do not have yard waste carts but have curbside collection of garbage and recycling and determine a solution for these scenarios.

What about bears and wildlife?

Food waste is currently going to the curb in garbage carts and residents are asked to ensure garbage carts are secured inside garages and sheds until collection day. Bear conflicts can be managed by putting the organics cart in a garage or shed until morning of collection. Freezing food before placing in carts on collection day can also be a great option to reduce odour.

Will you be providing bear-resistant yard waste carts?

This is yet to be determined. The RDCO recently tested several bear resistant garbage carts and have yet to find a suitable cart that keeps bears out.

Education related to managing attractants and securing carts inside garages and sheds has been the focus to date and continues to be the most effective way to prevent bear and waste conflicts.

Does the bin/cart smell?

Odour can be managed by layering food waste with yard waste or wrapping food waste in newsprint. Food waste can also be frozen before placing into the cart before collection day. Washing out carts regularly also help to reduce odour. Weekly collection of organics will also assist with odours.

Will this affect small businesses collecting food waste?

Opportunities exist for small businesses to collaborate with the multifamily sector, which won't have access to food waste collection at this time.