

Maple Ridge This Month

JANUARY 2015

SPOTLIGHT ON: Garbage, Recycling and Composting

Time for a Little 'Trash Talk' in Maple Ridge

There's a lot of discussion about garbage in Maple Ridge right now as the Metro Vancouver Organics Disposal Ban starts to roll out in 2015. Here's some basic information to help you understand what this will mean for you.

First, and foremost, citizens need to understand that this ban is directed at the haulers of garbage. While it will have an impact on home owners, the inspections and fines will be levied to the haulers of garbage, not individual homeowners.

Here are the fast facts. The Organics Disposal Ban started on January 1, 2015; however, there will be no financial penalties levied against haulers for the first six months of the program. There are a number of local haulers who are already offering organics pickup to their customers and the expectation is that all private garbage companies will eventually offer this service; otherwise they will be subject to fines as the full program rolls out.

Currently the Metro Vancouver region as a whole is in the education phase of the program as many strata properties and commercial food vendors (restaurants and grocery stores) are still exploring the ways that they can separate organics to comply with the ban.

In Maple Ridge our community has been a leader in promoting recycling, long before other communities jumped on the bandwagon, and our system is still one of the best on the continent. For more than 40 years, the Ridge Meadows Recycling Society (RMRS) has expanded their program resulting in a diversion of over half of the waste that used to go in the dump. The organics disposal ban will have no impact on your recycling pickup whatsoever. One thing our partners at the RMRS have asked us to do is remind you that cardboard, while it does compost, should not be put in 'organic waste' but instead recycled.

The final part of the discussion relates to composting and food digesters. There are a number of citizens who already use composters or food digesters to handle their organics. The folks at the RMRS have some expertise in this area, as it is something that they have been promoting for most of the four decades they have served the community. Depending on your circumstances, this may offer an alternative for you.

Before we talk about how this will impact you, as a homeowner, here's some important background information. First, the cost that your hauler will be charged for dumping organics is less than the cost for the rest of the garbage. Haulers will be paying \$66 a tonne (1000 kilograms) for organics versus \$113 for other garbage. If you look at all of the solid waste that you generate in your household, you should be able to recycle about 60%. The remaining 40% is almost half organics. To put it another way, if you fully embrace the separation of organics, the remaining volume of 'garbage' left to dispose of will be cut by half.

So, let's get to the thing that you are really thinking about - how does this impact me?

If you currently use the waste transfer station to drop your garbage off you will find that there is a place to drop your organics separately from the rest of the 'garbage'. The minimum fee for dropping organics is \$6 compared with the \$10 minimum for garbage. We should note that the 'organic' plastic bags that are being marketed by some companies may not be compliant with the organics ban. Please talk to the folks at the transfer station to get the best advice on how to collect your organics.

Contact us at enquiries@mapleridge.ca

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Homeowners, strata buildings and businesses will need to negotiate with their commercial haulers for their organic and garbage pickups. Here are some things to consider. You will have two items to collect at your home - organics and garbage. Your hauler will be paying less money to dump your organics, so there should not be an exceptional increase in the costs associated with pickup other than the costs of a new receptacle for the organics.

Some folks are a bit concerned about the potential impact of organics relating to smells and attracting vermin. You currently place these organics in your garbage, and have a pickup, so there should be no difference in the impact on your lives based on proper handling and pickup. Each homeowner, strata and business is in control of their own pickup, you can tailor your pickups to your circumstances. You may find that you want once a week organic pickup and twice a month garbage pickup. As you fully separate recyclables, organics and trash, you should see where your ideal mix is and adjust your service accordingly.

One important piece of advice that applies to any service that you are sourcing - shop around. Some prices include the cost of containers; some ask that you buy the containers at the outset. This is something that is frequently not thought about when sourcing prices for garbage disposal.

The City of Maple Ridge has added new information on the 'Garbage, Recycling and Composting' page that can be accessed under the 'Accessing Services' tab on the homepage at mapleridge.ca. The new information is under the heading 'Organics Disposal Ban.'



INFORMED: January 2015

Council Meeting Schedule

Mayor and Council encourage everyone to attend these important public meetings. It's your chance to see how public policy is debated and enacted.

Tuesday, January 13

6:00 pm, Council Meeting - Council Chambers

Monday, January 19

10:00 am, Workshop - Blaney Room

1:00 pm, Committee of the Whole - Council Chambers

Tuesday, January 20

6:00 pm, Public Hearing - Council Chambers

Tuesday, January 27

6:00 pm, Council Meeting - Council Chambers

Agendas & Minutes

Agendas for these meetings are posted online the Friday before the meeting date. Go to mapleridge.ca, click the link under Your Council on the home page.

Council This Week

Subscribe to the 'Council This Week' eNewsletter that provides a summary of issues discussed at Council Workshop meetings. Go to mapleridge.ca, click the link to 'Notify Me' and sign up today.

Council Meeting Videos

If you are unable to attend a Council Meeting, Public Hearing or Committee of the Whole meeting you can now watch these meetings on your computer 24/7. The entire unedited meetings are posted two to three days after the meeting. The video is indexed to the agenda package so that you can watch them in their entirety or click through by agenda item. Go to mapleridge.ca and click on the video link at the centre of the home page. In addition, Council meetings are now broadcast on the internet via live streaming using the same technology used for our live budget Q&A sessions. For more information about the live stream go to the 'Council Meetings' page at mapleridge.ca.



ENGAGED:

Your 2014 - 2018 Council

Meet Your Newly-Elected Council Online!

In early December, just before the inaugural Council meeting, we took photos of your newly elected Mayor and Council. This included the official portraits that hang in the lobby of Council Chambers and the official portrait of our Mayor that hangs along with the photos of all past mayors.

Those images are now on display at City Hall and online using the "Your Council" link on the home page mapleridge.ca.

The 'Your Council' link also has the 2015 meeting schedules available as a downloadable PDF document as a list or in calendar format so you can plan to attend or watch Council Meetings online via the live streaming service. There is a link to the agendas and reports that Council is provided as they carry out their duties.

We hope you'll take the time to explore this section of the City of Maple Ridge website. There's a ton of great information and you can even sign up for alerts using the 'Notify me' link on the homepage so you get email or text alerts when new content is available in the sections you choose. Our website, mapleridge.ca, is your 'virtual' City Hall!



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