

# Elke Zimmermann

Hello,

I have a number of solutions that I'd like to propose to help the MPCA meet its waste reduction goals:

1. Make waste management more affordable by sourcing and centralizing services on the city level. Example: In Maple Grove, we have at least five different garbage haulers servicing our area. If the city negotiated the best rates with just one hauler, it would save on emissions, prevent road damage and extend savings to residents who may then be incentivized to recycle and compost. Yard waste and organic composting costs are prohibitive.

2. Encourage residents to offer large items for free (curbside) for a limited time. Example: The city of Maple Grove frowns upon the practice of residents offering items for free on the curb. While it's understandable that this practice may be unseemly, many items could be placed for free on curbsides for a limited time and advertised on the "free" section of Craigs List, instead of ending on the landfill. Using transitioning services like Alight comes with prohibitive pick-up costs that many are not willing to pay.

3. Set up recycling containers for specific items such as clothing around multi-family housing units. Example: This practice is common in countries like Germany where the cost of sorting waste is reduced by introducing these types of large containers in neighborhoods.

4. Educating residents - not enough is being done to educate/incentivize residents to recycle/reuse/compost. Guidelines for what can be recycled are confusing. Example: In Maple Grove, the Goodwill store will reuse donated plastic bags. Best Buy will accept used batteries. Residents only find out about this if they happen to see a sign in the store. A concerted awareness campaign by MN Cities (through their newsletters), the MPCA (I never heard of your agency until I read about you in the news), businesses (through email marketing lists), and garbage haulers(through billing statements and on their trucks) should raise awareness constantly. Recycling guidelines by garbage haulers are confusing. Example: for plastics, Republic Services first used the PETE system, then migrated to a list of vague description of items to be accepted, leading to "wish cycling." On composting, the City of Maple Grove makes it nearly impossible to compost. Example: the city ordinance stated that composting has to occur 20 ft away from any flammable structure. Lots are not big enough to meet this requirement. Nobody wants to trudge far through knee deep snow to compost. Organic composting costs through haulers are prohibitive. Yard waste costs have risen 200% in the past couple of years leading to illegal dumping and use of regular garbage containers to dispose of organic waste.

Summary: Reuse/Recycle/Compost have become costly inconveniences and Minnesota residents have not been motivated or educated on cost-effective methods to combat the landfill problems outlined by the MPCAs plan.