

Whitney Khan

Hello,

I'm a lifetime Minneapolis resident, having grown up on the south side in the 80s and now living on the north side. Yesterday my 6 year old son exclaimed as we drove down our street, "Mommy! There sure is a lot of garbage everywhere!"

We have 2 recycling bins and 1 garbage can. I am most surely in the minority in that I likely hit the 75% target regularly.

I hope the metro area can make progress on this issue. I have 3 comments:

1. I tried the city compost program for about 6 months with great hopes but had to stop. The quality of compostable bags is such that they couldn't last a full week, so the food waste (all the worst parts of my garbage) spilled out in the bin and rotted day after day throughout the spring and summer months. It created a massive fly problem of such proportions that a fly poison bag would fill up in 5 minutes. And then another and another. We had bags posted on the driveway and multiple locations in the yard. We still had flies everywhere and our entire property stank of garbage. I am a home cook and cook mostly scratch and even with large amounts of food scraps, we still barely filled 20% of the bin in a week, if that. Bins too large, bags don't last, pickups not frequent enough. Logistics aside, I'm a giant fan of the concept, especially the idea that the compost gets returned directly to community gardens. It's probably the most directly beneficial government program in the city!
2. Recycling, particularly plastics. I've lost trust in the system after having seen ads and articles that say recycling has created bigger ocean pollution problems than it solved due to the fact that China was taking less and less of our recycling waste and more was entering oceans or ending up in landfills anyway. Better to just put it there to begin with.
3. Plastic recycling is also still too complicated. The numbering system ensures failure and I got a citation recently after apparently putting the wrong plastic in my bin, and threatened with complete removal of my recycling bins. And I'm someone who actually tries.
4. Bonus ideas: why not send residents packs of some reusable food storage products or paper replacements? I recently bought 4 reusable non plastic ziploc bags and, combined with a set of glass Tupperware has almost entirely replaced my previously heavy reliance on disposable plastics for food storage. Switching even partially to cloth dish and cleaning towels has cut down on paper towel usage. Paid for themselves within a year. Start a campaign to gather donated goods. A campaign to use up leftovers in creative ways before grocery shopping again. More community gardens and community outreach programs to teach people to eat whole foods. And going out on a limb: Some law suits against the food and consumer goods industries that have made people more addicted to packaged goods and lower quality products that break way more easily than they should.

Thank you