



April 2007 Newsletter

Alderman Diane Colley-Urquhart

Curbside Recycling

Kermit the Frog said, "It's not easy being green," which is especially true when you are planning to charge Calgarians \$21 per month for mandatory residential curbside recycling.

The proposed program would mark the biggest single tax hit in Calgary's history; an approximate 19% increase on the average home's property taxes. This increase will have the greatest impact on those in our city who can least afford it, single parents, seniors, young families, and Calgarians on a fixed income.

The 80/20 by 2020 strategy was adopted during the last business plan (2006-2008). This strategy aims to change the focus from "waste management" to "resource recovery", and to make sure that 80% of waste produced by Calgarians is diverted away from landfill sites by 2020.

Not all Calgarians would benefit from the proposed program; to start it would be just the 300,000 single family homes in the city. To create this service, they would pay the equivalent of \$252 per year, but condo and apartment dwellers would be exempt, at least for now.

The proposed program is the "Cadillac" of any curbside recycling program in North America. The current approach to a new curbside recycling program needs to be reinvented so that it is less costly and fairer for Calgarians.

The worry is that this is a new service that has the potential of becoming a money-gobbling "empire" at city hall.

City Administration has not done all of their homework. Other major cities across Canada have been able to provide curbside recycling service for far less. In Vancouver the cost is only \$20 per year for curbside recycling. Presently, there are several private companies that provide this service to Calgarians for a fee ranging from \$10 to \$15 per month.

Hundreds of you have emailed or called to let me know how you feel about mandatory curbside recycling.

Alderman Ric Mclver and I have brought forward a Notice of Motion to the March 12, 2007 meeting of Council asking that City Administration be directed to draft one or more plebiscite questions that can be brought forward to Calgarians during the 2007 Municipal Election this October concerning this issue.

Calgarians are very concerned about the environment, and already make use of the recycling facilities that the City provides. For a list of all the recycling depots go to www.calgary.ca/waste.

Your feedback is very important to me. Please visit my website www.aldermandiane.ca where I have posted the following two questions.

- Do you support mandatory recycling?

- Do you support mandatory recycling being placed as a plebiscite question during the 2007 Municipal Election?

Snow and Ice Control

The population of Calgary has now exceeded 1 million residents and the present road network of over 5,000 kilometres has increased by 300 kilometres per year on average since 2003.

The winter operations budget of \$18 million has not grown at the same pace as the road network.

This winter we have seen an unseasonable amount of snowfall and cold weather. Given present snow and ice control policies in place, accidents increased and the safety of Calgarians was impacted.

One of the limiting factors faced by the City of Calgary is a shortage of labour to operate the sanding trucks and equipment. The staff call out system the city has relied upon is becoming increasingly less effective, especially with an aging workforce.

In 2003, I brought before Council a Notice of Motion regarding the snow and ice control policies in our city, which was defeated. At the February 26, 2007 meeting of Council a Notice of Motion was passed directing City Administration to have a report back to Council by the mid-April meeting of Council.

As always, you can contact my office regarding this or any other civic matter at 268-1624, by email at dcolley@calgary.ca, or through my new reconstructed website, www.aldermandiane.ca. Alternatively, you can contact '311.'