

SENT VIA EMAIL

January 19, 2021

Mayor Collins and City Commissioners
City County Building, Room 323
316 N. Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59623

Dear Mayor Collins and City Commissioners:

The Helena Citizen Conservation Board (CCB) has been exploring measures to reduce Helena's waste footprint as one important component of combating climate change and advancing the goals set forth in the City of Helena's 2009 Climate Action Plan.

To this end, the CCB is recommending the City build upon the principles outlined in Helena's 2019 Growth Policy by: 1) adopting the attached proposed Resolution for Waste Reduction, and 2) appropriating \$60,000 in the City's Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) sustainability budget to contract for the development of a Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction in Helena.

Specifically, the proposed Resolution for Waste Reduction is intended to set the long-term aspirational goals for reducing Helena's waste stream (from the current approximate 20% diversion from the landfill to 35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040), while the Strategic Plan would be the blueprint for how to achieve the waste reduction goals adopted in the Resolution.

We envision that some of the elements of a strategic plan might include:

- reduce "upstream" waste (e.g., review purchasing policies; target specific types of waste, such as food, packaging);
- reuse materials (e.g., construction & demolition) and collaborate with third parties, such as thrift stores and the ReStore, to divert specific materials from the landfill;
- increase recycling (e.g., study universal curbside recycling options; install recycling containers adjacent to public garbage cans; segregate "green waste" picked up by Helena's bulk waste collection service);
- compost food waste (e.g., explore role of City government and alternative uses for composted material); and
- conduct outreach and public education (e.g., dispel myths and misunderstandings; provide clear, uniform information and signage; engage other institutions, such as public schools, private sector, colleges, business community).

We understand that the Public Works Department may include funding for a waste audit in its FY22 budget and the CCB supports that as well. While the City has thorough data regarding landfill waste disposal tonnage and recycling rates, we do not have data about the composition of materials currently being landfilled. A waste audit will both inform the Strategic Plan and advance the City's waste reduction goals by providing critical baseline information about the waste stream to help set future outreach, education, and diversion strategies.

The CCB anticipates working with City staff to develop the Request for Proposal, collaborate with the consultant, and engage with the public in both developing and implementing the Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction and in conducting the waste audit. The CCB has been meeting with the City's Public Works Department staff and appreciates the willingness of staff to engage in these discussions.

The CCB thanks you for considering this request, and the Board looks forward to discussing this in more detail with you soon. A Fact Sheet containing additional background information on waste reduction is attached for reference.

Sincerely,



Diana Hammer, Chair
Citizen Conservation Board

Encl. (Proposed Resolution and Waste Reduction Fact Sheet)

Cc: Rachel Harlow-Schalk, Helena City Manager
Patrick Judge, Helena Sustainability Coordinator
Ryan Leland, Public Works Director