



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: February 3, 2023
Submitted by: General Manager of Engineering and Operations
Subject: Rain Barrel and Composter Program Completion

Purpose

Provide information to Council about the completion and wrap up of currently operating composter and rain barrel programs.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT the report dated February 3, 2023 from the General Manager of Engineering and Operations regarding Rain Barrel and Composter Program Completion be received for information.

Background

In 1998, the City began a composting and rain collection program in partnership with a local greenhouse. The program was designed to:

- Reduce green and yard waste in the landfill (Composter program)
- Reduce use of treated water (Rain Barrel program)

These programs were designed to operate as a public private partnership. The City subsidized the cost of composters and rain barrels and a local business stocked and sold them. After 3 years of partnership, the local business stepped away from the program. When it was determined that there was no other local private partner, the program was brought in-house to the City. Staff took over the sale, purchasing, and stocking of composters and rain barrels out of the Works Yard with payments completed at City Hall. When these programs were begun, other local municipalities were also starting similar programs. Now, as both items have become readily available at local and online retailers, other local municipalities have begun to close down their rain barrel and composter subsidy programs, including Vancouver which ended both programs in 2021. Table 1 shows the number of composters and rain barrels sold each year since 2019 in Port Moody.

Table 1: Recent Rain Barrel and Composter Sales

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
# of Rain Barrels sold	14	3	14	17
# of Composters sold	8	4	6	8

Discussion

In its early years, the composter and rain barrel programs provided significant benefit in subsidizing the costs of products that were harder to source locally to support the City's environmental goals. Reviewing the programs again after almost 25 years of successful operation, staff have found that the cost and benefits of the program have waned now that the types of land uses in Port Moody are shifting, other overlapping programs are in place, and the subject products are widely available through a variety of retailers.

Composters

The purpose of the Composter program was to reduce the amount of green waste going to the landfill. When the Composter program was begun in 1998, Port Moody did not run its own solid waste collection, and Metro Vancouver had not yet introduced its green bin program. Solid waste collection was brought in-house in 2009 and the Green bin program introduced in Metro Vancouver in 2012.

Waste diversion remains a goal of the city. The Green Bin is now the preferred waste diversion program for the following reasons:

- 1) The Green Bin program is open to all residents, regardless of space or interest in composting,
- 2) The Green Bin program provides the city meaningful information about the amount of waste being diverted.
- 3) Improperly maintained composters pose an increased risk of attracting bears.

Waste diversion is still an important program goal, but the green bin program is broad reaching in diverting waste, is open to all residents, provides the city meaningful information about the amount of waste being diverted, and is part of a core service. There has also been an increased understanding of the risk that improperly used composters can attract bears.

Rain Barrels

The purpose of the Rain Barrel program was to reduce the consumption of treated municipal water and are generally applicable to single family homes. Since the program's introduction, the City has continued to grow but with a significant proportion of multi family residences.

Water use reduction remains a goal of the city including the following initiatives:

- 1) Metro Vancouver manages the regional Drinking Water Conservation Plan including seasonal watering restrictions.
- 2) The City supports water conservation outreach programs in city schools through annual programs.
- 3) The City is exploring expansion of our water metering program.

Program Administration

There is a significant amount of staff time involved in administering the Rain Barrel and Composter programs relative to the amount of products sold in recent years. In particular, the City actively manages stock of the items and provides vehicle loading and technical assistance to customers.

Storage of these items has also posed a challenge. With the Works Yard facing storage capacity challenges, composters and rain barrels have had to be moved to an offsite storage location. The new location requires the transportation of items to and from the works yard requiring additional staff time. Furthermore, the available storage space is not weatherproof, leading to damaged items, and a need to clean the product before pick up which represents a financial loss to the city.

Port Moody now has alternative programs that offer greater environmental benefits, to more residents, with lower administration costs. Further, both products are now readily available to the public at local and online retailers. Therefore, staff will wrap up these programs and will sell off the remaining composter and rain barrels on hand.

Financial Implications

Savings of approximately \$1500 per year. The transition away from this program will also help free up staff time in Operations, Environment, and Finance.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

None

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

Provide local services and access to amenities for residents of all ages and abilities. New programs are more accessible to the diverse needs of residents.

Ensure a sustainable and resilient municipal economy and diversify the City's revenue sources. New programs are more fiscally responsible and achieve greater results. Winding up programs that are outdated allows staff to focus on core responsibilities.

Attachment(s)

None

Report Author

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Rain Barrel and Composter Program Completion.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Apr 3, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Jeff Moi, General Manager of Engineering and Operations - Mar 13, 2023 - 6:40 PM

Stephanie Lam, City Clerk and Manager of Legislative Services - Mar 15, 2023 - 4:43 PM

Lindsay Todd, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Mar 15, 2023 - 5:16 PM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Mar 16, 2023 - 8:59 AM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Apr 3, 2023 - 3:29 PM