

The City of Ann Arbor has plans in place to outsource the city's compost facility. This decision was made without public hearings or input from Ann Arbor residents. . Why would the city want to hire someone else to run the compost center? The facility has a dedicated staff with an excellent record of producing top quality compost and mulch. But the city claims the center is a "financial burden" due to rising expenses and low revenues and wants to get rid of that burden. by outsourcing the facility to We Care Organics, A close look will show that those high expenses and low revenues are a result of the city mismanaging the facility by making bad financial and marketing decisions.

City council or city staff has not addressed questions from concerned residents about these decisions. After hearing about the many questions and concerns about outsourcing, We Care's VP Nicholson said, "The key to that site is a project manager. If you do something like this you should hold public meetings. You have to get the public on board."

City Council must put a hold on the decision to outsource the facility. Hold public hearings and create a task force to come up with a plan to keep the compost facility. Responsible oversight with on site management and creative marketing will enable the compost facility to pay for itself.

In 2009 the facility ran at a loss of \$568,000. (One of the expenses is \$ 228.000 for "fleet maintenance") 2010 projected loss: \$681.000

2009 compost expenses: \$ 893.000 2009 revenues: for compost and mulch \$ 94.000

2010 compost expenses \$ 928,000 2010 projected revenues \$110.000

One reason the facility is running at a loss is the absurdly low prices of mulch and compost set by the city \$10- \$12 cu.yd mulch \$2.75- \$ 7 cu.yd compost (the more you buy, the lower the price)

If the prices were doubled, the 2009 revenue would be \$188.000, if tripled it would be \$282,000. That would be more in line with the price the Recycle Center charges.

The Recycle Center gets compost and mulch from the city and resells it at \$15 cu yd for mulch and \$18 for compost. Why does the city allow the Recycle Center to set its own prices while practically giving away compost and mulch at the compost center? What does Recycle pay to buy the compost?

What a great deal for out of city and local landscapers! They bought so many truckloads of compost that the facility actually ran out of compost for residents. You or your group or club or organization may have had this unpleasant and completely unnecessary experience.

To save money, the city has eliminated the fall leaf pick-up and Xmas tree pick-up. In my OWS neighborhood, 50% or more front lawns and setbacks. are covered with leaves. How much money is the city really saving? There will be fewer leaves to go to the compost center. The city

trucks are still going to have to pick up any leaves in the streets during street cleaning.

The City wants to award the contract to We Care Organics, an enormous New York company that uses sewage sludge in their compost and “earth blends”.

We Care’s website states: “our compost and earth blends are comprised of nutrient-rich wastewater “biosolids “ (sewage sludge) and yard trimmings

Sewage sludge is the residue left after the wastewater treatment process. The city and We Care have promised that they will "NEVER" use sludge, Then why is the city so eager to give the contract to We Care Organics? Spurt Industries, a Michigan company that uses only yard waste in its compost, submitted a lower proposal. You may get the answer by reading the Ann Arbor Solid Waste Plan of 2002, which is the city plan to introduce sewage sludge into the facility’s compost. The city’s Fleet and Services manager Matt Kuhlnek said the decision to choose We Care “wasn’t as much on the financial side of things but rather that the city felt more comfortable going with the larger, more established company.”

SlugeNew’s editor Laura Orlando says: ” Think of We Care as a hazardous laundering operation,”

Websites with good information about this hazardous waste: Sludge News and Source Watch