



Environmental Policy Commission

August 28, 2013

Honorable Mayor William Euille and Members of City Council  
City of Alexandria  
Suite 2300, City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

**RE: Expansion of recycling programs in FY 2014 using Contingent Reserve funding**

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council:

The Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) applauds City staff for its work over the past few years in guiding Alexandria to a municipal solid waste recycling rate of 48.4%, as certified last year by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Recycling saves the City money, reduces consumption of energy and raw materials, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. While City Council and staff should be proud of the steady progress made in this area, EPC strongly supports continued efforts by the City to aggressively promote recycling and achieve even higher recycling rates. In some U.S. cities, households receive composting and recycling collection more frequently than trash collection. Alexandria has substantial room for improvement in raising recycling rates and reducing waste disposal.

City Council approved \$210,000 in contingent funding for two proposed recycling promotion programs as part of the FY 2014 budget. One of the programs, entitled "Recycling on the Go," involves placing fifty dedicated recycling containers along King Street and the waterfront, as well as on City athletic fields. These high use areas are the ideal location for placing recycling containers both because of the significant opportunity to recycle and to market Alexandria's commitment to sustainability and its "Eco-City" brand. Even under current economic practices and assumptions which do nothing to account for environmental costs associated with greenhouse gas emissions, staff projects that the recycling bins will pay for themselves within four years, and save the City hundreds of thousands of dollars over their expected lifespan. While EPC believes that fifty containers are an important start, it strongly encourages the City to quickly increase the number of such recycling containers, given both the environmental benefits and cost savings that they will bring.

The second set of programs, entitled "Eco-City Recycling Program Expansion," includes several components. These include starting food waste recovery at the Market Square, Four-

Mile Run, and Ben Brenman Park farmer's markets; initiating an "Earth-Saver Challenge" in which up to 100 Alexandria families will try to reduce their household refuse to 32 gallons or less per week; installation of trash and recycling compaction units at T.C. Williams High School to increase recycling capacity and reduce truck traffic for hauling waste and recyclables from six trips per week down to one; and establishing a new recycling drop-off center in northeast Alexandria.

EPC is particularly excited by the prospect of establishing composting options for City residents. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), food waste comprises roughly one-fifth of municipal solid waste material sent to landfills and incinerators, more than any other single material. EPA estimates that as of 2011, only four percent of food waste was diverted from landfills and incinerators for composting. Composting thus presents a significant opportunity for the City to take its recycling efforts to the next level and demonstrate regional leadership in sustainability.

We ask Council to release the contingent funds allocated for these programs in the FY 2014 budget as soon as possible. These initiatives will help Alexandria continue to increase recycling rates and reduce waste disposal rates, and if contingent funding is approved quickly enough, they can be launched on America Recycles Day, scheduled for November 15, 2013.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Scott Barstow  
Chair, Environmental Policy Commission

CC Office of Environmental Quality  
Division of Solid Waste & Recycling



**EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES OFFICE**  
**Planning, Design and Construction**

4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304; Tel. 703.461.4168

**DATE:** August 2, 2013

**TO:** Gary Hensley, Recycling Specialist, City of Alexandria

**FROM:** William E. Finn, Director, Educational Facilities Department, ACPS

**CC:** Lucy Willis, Assistant Director, Operations and Maintenance, Educational Facilities  
Larry Trice, Building Use Coordinator, TC Williams

**SUBJECT:** Trash and Recycling Compactors for TC Williams

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Mr Hensley,

Since the first year that T.C. Williams High School opened, ACPS has discussed with the City the need and importance of installing trash and recycling compactors. Because of the large number of students/staff being served especially considering the breakfast and lunch meals and the numerous evening and weekend activities, the school generates a large amount of trash and recycling.

The existing dumpsters being using are neither adequate nor efficient for handling the volume of trash generated at the school on a normal basis. The trash dumpsters are always filled by the end of the day, so with the almost continuous weekend events, the trash ends up on the ground since the dumpsters are full awaiting the Monday morning pick up. Attached is a picture showing the dumpsters on a typical Saturday. In addition, the compactors will be more cost effective by consolidating the trash into a smaller volume improving the City's ability for proper disposal.

We are very supportive of the new compactors being installed this year at TC Williams! ACPS concurs with your site plan and will install the required power connections on the exterior wall when you confirm the timing for the installation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W.E. Finn", with a stylized flourish at the end.

William E. Finn, PE  
Director, Educational Facilities  
Alexandria City Public Schools

Encl: Picture of Trash Dumpsters

