



Chamber supports small business at City Hall – Argues on behalf of small curbside recyclers

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Chamber Vice-President Geoff Pradella told Alderman on the Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Environment that the city's curbside recycling bidding and contract process was seriously flawed, and shuts out the private sector and small businesses.

The City's Waste and Recycling Department drew up the request for proposal and was awarded the contract. The current scheme, commencing in 2009 and delivered solely by the public sector, will likely force five private sector companies out of business.

"Private sector involvement, and public-private sector competition, are key to ensuring costs stay under control over the long term," said Pradella during the Feb 27 meeting. "No other Canadian city of comparable size has 100 per cent public sector delivery of its recycling program.

"There are a number of better approaches to resolve this problem in favour of fairness, transparency, and cost-competitiveness", said Pradella. He cited the Kelleher Environmental Report of 2006, which indicates over the past decade, cities are increasingly contracting out to the private sector, or dividing their cities into zones, and using their own forces for some zones and the private sector for others.

"This approach allows for clear cost and efficiency of delivery comparisons between the public and private sectors, leading to a better deal for taxpayers" said Pradella.

The Chamber recommended the City:

- Redo the RFP, drafted and administered entirely by an independent consultant.
- Do as other cities have done - and divide the city into a number of reasonably sized zones; perhaps even considering the establishment of zones that can only be bid on by the private sector.
- Allow customers who are already receiving a recycling service from a private recycler to opt out of the city plan, and continue to use their recycler of choice.
- Work with the private sector participants to establish a pilot project for multi-residential townhouses and buildings, which currently aren't included in the citywide plan - as per the Vancouver model.

"This is really about ensuring the private sector has an ability to compete through a fair bidding process," said Pradella. "And it's about competition to drive down costs for the consumer."