

City has some new ideas for recycling

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The ball is starting to roll with the City of Gillette's plans to revamp its recycling and yard waste programs.

Improvements to the popular programs have been tossed for a couple of years, especially after the city discovered that most of the yard waste bins were contaminated with other garbage and it all was being thrown into the landfill.

The city wants to overhaul the programs so that yard waste can be recycled into compost and kept out of the landfill, which may lead to increased participation in the program.

Here's a look at some of the possible changes the City Council may consider in the coming months:

- **Blue bag registration:** Registering all blue bag participants would bring more organization to the eight-year-old recycling program. It would give the city a more accurate idea of who's using it. People who now use the blue bag program would be asked to register along with new users. The free starter kit, which includes instructions and a list of what can be recycled, would be offered to everyone. They can be picked up now at City West and City Hall.

- **Recycling tubs:** Residents could use city recycling tubs to either leave them at the curb like blue bags or take them to any one of the four drop-off trailers citywide. If taken to a trailer, residents would be asked to sort their own recyclables. If left curbside, the contents would be sorted by crews at another site. The 11/2-by-11/2 foot tubs would be offered free as part of the starter kit, said city spokesman Joe Lunne.

Today, only about 14 percent of Gillette's waste is recycled, said Mark Swan, Campbell County environmental services manager. The city wants that number to soar.

"We certainly want a boost in the recycling program," Lunne said.

- **New recycling contract:** The city has nullified the eight-year-old contract it had with Waste Connections to pick up blue bags. City Administrator Mike Muirhead said the city must have information such as the number of bags it collected.

The council will vote Feb. 1 to approve a new five-month trial contract with Sander Sanitation. If the contract is approved, the company could take over the curbside pickup in February. The new contract will save the city about \$2,300 a month, Lunne said. If it's authorized by the council, the city will pay the company \$7,678.80 a month to pick up residents' recycling.

City officials are expected to unveil several more possible solutions for Gillette's yard waste program and the recycling program. The City Council will decide where to go from there after it hears the suggestions at its workshop at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 1 in the third-floor conference room of City Hall.