

February 22, 2001

Mr. John Marcarelli, Borough Manager
Borough of Lansdowne
12 Baltimore Avenue
Lansdowne, PA 19050

Re: Development of Yard Waste Compost Site

Dear John:

The purpose of this letter is to provide Lansdowne Borough with the findings and results of Alternative Resources Incorporated (ARI) analysis and assessment of candidate sites for the development of a yard waste composting facility.

Background

The Borough of Lansdowne currently collects leaf waste at curbside from its residents. Leaf collection takes place from mid-October to mid-December. Leaves picked up in the Borough are transported to Chester Township, the County's compost facility. The round trip to Chester is approximately 40 miles and takes approximately 2 hours per truck.

The Borough of Lansdowne desires to develop a yard waste compost facility within its corporate limits to reduce its cost of transport to the County facility, increase collection efficiency and provide its residents with compost generated at its facility. The Borough also plans to use the site for grass composting and wood chip production from tree trimmings and storm events in order to further reduce its waste stream.

Candidate Sites

The Borough has several parks that will be assessed to determine their potential for development as a yard waste compost facility.

Potential candidate sites are the following parks located within the Borough: Shringley Park, Hoffman Park, Interboro Park and Belmont Park. In addition to locations in the Borough, ARI will also access a registered compost site located in East Lansdowne Borough to determine if adequate capacity exists to accommodate the Borough of Lansdowne's needs for leaf and yard waste generated within its boundaries.

Size Requirement For Compost Site

Lansdowne Borough currently collects approximately 1,000 cubic yards of leaves per year (based on Borough recorded tonnages). The amount of material to be composted will increase substantially with the addition of grass clippings and tree waste.

Generation of yard waste varies depending on the type of community (i.e. urban, suburban or rural). The generation rate may range from 100 to 200 pounds per capita per year. A rate of 125 pounds per capita was assumed. This amount seemed conservative based on ARI's experience and available information. However, given the actual tonnages of leaves collected and the limited opportunity for further growth of population in the Borough this assumption is considered valid, if not conservative.

Based on a population of 11,700 persons at a generation rate of 125 pounds per capita per year, the Borough could receive approximately 3,000 cubic yards of material per year. This estimate assumes 500 pounds per cubic yard as the weight of the combined materials leaves, grass and tree waste.

The Municipal Waste Regulations (Section 271) limits the amount of material to be composted on one (1) acre to be no more than 3,000 cubic yards. Therefore, the Borough would require one (1) acre for the planned facility. ARI recommended that a site be greater than one (1) acre, if possible, to accommodate for easy access and maneuverability of equipment and landscaping, if required (visual barrier).

Site Assessments

Alternative Resources Inc. (ARI) has conducted assessments of the Boroughs candidate sites to determine their potential for development of a Yard Waste Composting Facility to serve the Borough of Lansdowne. The sites were evaluated based on criteria set forth in the PADEP "Guidelines for Yard Waste Composting Facilities".

Initially ARI conducted a desktop assessment of each candidate site followed by several field and a final evaluation of the following sites: Shrigley Park, Hoffman Park, Interboro Park and Belmont Park.

Shrigley Park

Description of property

Shrigley Park (woods) is an undeveloped parcel estimate at six (6) +/- acres in size. The site is primarily forested with steep side slopes and a number of wet areas. The only access to the site is via Scottdale Road; a small pull off area on the north side of Scottdale Road provides the only existing access. An unimproved woodland road extends from the parking area into the site at a very steep grade estimated at 25% or greater.

The access point to the site is at a bend in Scottdale Road, which makes it difficult, if not dangerous, to enter and particularly to exit the site due to a limited line of vision relative to oncoming traffic.

Recommendation

Based primarily on the sites topographic features (sever slopes) and the limited access to the site, it has not been given further consideration as a candidate for development of a compost facility.

Wet areas containing facultative and obligate wetland plant species observed during site inspections and drainage of the site to Darby Creek could present additional challenges to development of this site.

Hoffman Park

Description of property

Hoffman Park is an eight (8)+/- acre parcel bordered on the north by Scottsdale Road and on the south by Darby Creek. The park is developed for both active and passive recreation including parking lots, basketball courts, soccer and baseball fields, tennis courts, a playground for children, picnic tables and pavilion and restrooms. Areas of the park along the river are in the 100-year flood plain and were inundated during one of the site visits. Along the parks northern border on the north side of Scottsdale Road, it is densely populated e.g.: Gladstone Tower Apartments, multifamily and single family dwellings. A small portion of the western portion of the park is relatively undeveloped. This portion of the park narrows significantly and is in close proximity of the Darby Creek and Scottsdale Road.

Recommendation

Based on the extensive development of the park relatively small portion of the eight (8)+/- acre is available for development of a compost facility. The areas available are within the flood plain of Darby Creek and/or are not of sufficient size to accommodate a compost facility.

Interboro Park

Description of Property

Interboro Park is a three (3)+/- acre parcel. This park is also used for active and passive recreation. The park has basketball courts and a playground for children. The park is bordered on the north by Marshall Road, on the south by Drexel Avenue, on the east by Shadeland Avenue and it is surrounded by residences.

Recommendation

Insufficient acreage remains undeveloped for the establishment of a compost facility given the existing facilities and require setbacks from individual residents (300 ft.). Further limitation is the required buffer zone of 50 ft. from property lines.

Belmont Park

Description of Property

Belmont Park is approximately three (3) acres and is geared toward active recreation. The park provides a children's playground and basketball courts. The park is surrounded by private residences.

Recommendation

This site has insufficient remaining acreage for the development of a compost facility considering the required 300 ft. setback from private residences, 50 ft. buffer from property lines and current use; this site should receive no further consideration.

Conclusion (Borough Sites)

Unfortunately none of the candidate sites identified by the Borough met the criteria required for the development of a yard waste compost facility. ARI performed on site measurements considering various configurations considering space, limitations and/or regulatory restrictions, each site was eliminated.

ARI conducted site visitations to the remaining parks/open space areas within the Borough i.e.: Hays Park, Reservoir, Maryland Park and Pennock Woods. None of the additional sites were determined as viable candidates for the development of a yard waste compost facility based on DEP criteria or size limitations.

East Lansdowne Borough Site

Description of Property

East Lansdowne Borough has a permitted yard waste composting site. The site is along an abandon right of way. The site was reported to be 2+ acres. The site is located in a mixed use area which includes some residences, commercial and light industrial use.

Initial Assessment

Following a meeting with the Borough Manager of East Lansdowne, ARI was granted permission by the Borough of East Lansdowne to visit the site.

Based on the initial site visit, ARI determined that the site was a viable candidate. The use of the site was further discussed at a meeting between the Borough Managers of East Lansdowne and Lansdowne Borough. ARI participated in the meeting and discussed the benefits of a cooperative program. Lansdowne Borough would modify the permit, if required, and provide manpower and equipment to operate the facility. East Lansdowne would provide the facility site.

The meeting was extremely positive, however, subsequently the Borough Council of East Lansdowne was not receptive to the proposal.

Recommendation

ARI recommends that the Borough of Lansdowne further pursue the potential for a cooperative program with the Borough of East Lansdowne.

Contact With County

ARI contacted the recycling coordinator for the County to inquire if the County had any potential sites in close proximity to the Borough that could potentially be used by the Borough or in conjunction with other municipalities in

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the region. Although no County sites were noted as available for the requested use, the County recycling coordinator did offer the following suggestions for the Boroughs. The Borough could store leaves collected during the fall until December. The County compost facility would be open on Saturday during the month of December. The Borough could transport the stored leaves to the County site on Saturday.

Although ARI concurs that the County recommendation could expedite collections by not requiring the trucks to travel to County site during normal collections, it would require the handling of the leaves twice and add additional cost for overtime work.

Final Recommendation

ARI recommends that the Borough of Lansdowne contact East Lansdowne and encourage a meeting to continue to investigate the potential for cooperative use of the East Lansdowne site.

ARI believes that both Boroughs would benefit from a cooperative endeavor and would be pleased to attend a meeting with the Boroughs to discuss the mutual benefits that could be enjoyed as a result of a cooperative program.

Should you have any questions, please call me.

Very truly yours,

Patrick J. Calpin
Director, Mid-Atlantic Office

PJC/lam