

August 31, 2016

Mayor Brian Bowman  
City of Winnipeg  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor – Council Building  
510 Main Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3B 1B9

Dear Mayor Bowman:

**RE: WINNIPEG SOLID WASTE COLLECTION**

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We are writing to you today to bring attention to your office our concerns and advice with respect to the city's Request for Proposal (RFP No. 302-2016) for Winnipeg's solid waste contract, which expires this year.

CUPE Local 500 has long advocated for a strong, high-quality municipal workforce that delivers services that meet the needs and standards Winnipeggers expect from their city.

As the union that represents the City of Winnipeg's municipal workforce, we have maintained that public services are an investment, rather than simply a cost. Under previous administrations we have seen this investment shift away from our city's workforce, and into the hands of private contractors.

The city's solid waste contracts are a prime example of this concerning shift.

Since the city contracted out solid waste collection, Winnipeggers have experienced a notable decrease in service when it comes to reliable and quality garbage and recycling pickup. While no fault of the workers who struggle every day to do their jobs as best they can, the private contractors have failed to deliver time and again.

In May 2016 the CBC reported that Winnipeg's contracted-out services have been "*littered with complaints about thousands of homes being missed, equipment breakdowns that led to delays in service, bins being damaged, trash spilling onto streets and crews seen mixing trash and recycling in the same trucks*".

Additionally, the current contractor has been responsible for dozens of workplace health and safety violations, resulting in numerous stop work orders, fines, and over 118 workplace injuries. An APTN Investigates report in October 2015 found that Emterra's operations are heavily dependent on the use of sub-contractors who hire predominantly Aboriginal day labourers and exploits them with low pay, unsafe working conditions, and no job security.

This type of exploitation is unacceptable in Winnipeg.

Replacing one contractor with another is not a sustainable long-term solution to Winnipeg's garbage woes. City Council must take leadership in bringing this important service back in-house, as a responsibility of the City of Winnipeg: staffed and maintained by City of Winnipeg employees, and accountable directly to the taxpayer.

The City of Winnipeg's Request for Proposal for Integrated Solid Waste Collection indicates quite clearly in article B25.2.1 that: *the City will have no obligation to award a Contract where: (c) the prices are materially in excess of the City's cost to perform the Work, or a significant portion thereof, with its own forces.*

Other jurisdictions are finding that contracting out waste collection services did not achieve savings, nor do they offer better quality service to the taxpayer.

The City of Ottawa found "*impressive operational savings*" by bringing solid waste collection in-house. In fact, a press release issued on August 18, 2014 by the Mayor of Ottawa indicated that by working with the union, the re-municipalization of solid waste services achieved \$677, 530 in savings.

In a September 9, 2015 Staff Report, the City of Toronto found that contracting out portions of it's municipal garbage collection services would result in no savings, and would in fact cost more.

Before awarding a new contract for Winnipeg's municipal solid waste collection, the city must perform its due diligence not only to fulfill the requirement set out in article B25.2.1, but also in the interest of accountability to the taxpayer.

To date CUPE Local 500 has not been approached to discuss the city's internal costing, if this costing exists at all.

While CUPE cannot "bid" on city services, CUPE Local 500 is available to meet with you to discuss how we can work together with Council and City Administration to develop costing for a strong, long-term, cost efficient solid waste service under full ownership and control of the City of Winnipeg and its citizens.

This past January you declared 2016 to be the year of reconciliation for Winnipeg. We cannot imagine a more fitting way to show our city's gratitude than to offer secure, safe, fairly compensated employment opportunities with the City of Winnipeg to those who have laboured under such terrible working conditions for our collective benefit. We would be proud to work with you to make such an undertaking possible. Mr. Mayor, this would be a true act of reconciliation that we could all be proud of.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to speaking with you further on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gord Delbridge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gord" being more prominent than the last name "Delbridge".

GORD DELBRIDGE  
President, CUPE Local 500

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cope 342

cc: Central Council  
Doug McNeil, CAO, City of Winnipeg  
City Council