

Recycling fervour outpaces facilities, public hearing told

'We're victims of our own success'

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People have a strong desire to recycle their garbage, so local officials should boost collection efforts - and soon - a public hearing was told last night.

"Look, there are ecocentres (municipal recycling depots) that have to close in the middle of the day just to empty their containers because they're overflowing," said Nicole Bastien, director of the Acadie Ecocentre in Ahuntsic.

"We're victims of our own success," Bastien told the last of three public hearings at Montreal city hall last night on the island council's master plan to control and dispose of refuse.

The council should create three new ecocentres within three years, ahead of its schedule of eight new centres in 16 years, she said. There are now six.

"We know people want to recycle, because we find night-time donations next to the entrance when we open in the morning."

Josée Duplessis, a Plateau Mont Royal borough councillor, said her borough's green plan is moving fast.

It plans to cut garbage collection from twice weekly to once a week by next year to encourage recycling, and is setting up depots for such waste as cellphones and computers.

The Plateau will also ask to review the recycling plans of new businesses, Duplessis said.

"We're still waiting for the bigger recycling bins we've been promised," she told the council's environment committee.

Although generally in favour of the plan's 49 proposals on recycling, many at the hearing said Montreal can do better.

"Why just a 60 per cent goal" of recycled materials? asked Al Hayek, of the Green Coalition, referring to the plan's stated target of collecting 60 per cent of recyclables and 40 per cent of organic matter by 2012.

"Why doesn't that second (tin) can make into the recycling?"

Landfills are not being used effectively, he added, and public officials should review how waste is treated before it is put there.

Pierre Legault, of the Renaissance clothing, furniture and appliance recycling network, said municipal officials have not used the existing resources of thrift stores and community groups who are eager to help.

Dorval Mayor Edgar Rouleau, a member of the committee, agreed. "You don't have to convince people. Just give people more drop-off points."

The committee plans to study the submissions and make its recommendations on the master plan by the fall.

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