# City of Blaine
# City Council Workshop

September 14, 2026 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

## AGENDA

**NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING**
In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

**3. New Business**

**3.1.** 2026-177 Concept Plan for EDA Parcels in 8800 Block of Central Ave (30 Minutes)
*Sponsors: Sheila Sellman, Community Development Director*

**3.2.** 2026-178 Residential Organics Service Proposal - Walters (45 Minutes)
*Sponsors: Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director*

**4. Other Business**

**5. Adjournment**

# City of Blaine
# Staff Report

File Number: 2026-177

| Agenda Date | Status |
|---|---|
| September 14, 2026 | |
| **In Control** | **File Type** |
| City Council | Workshop Item |

**New Business** - Elizabeth Showalter, Housing Program Coordinator

## Agenda Item # 3.1

Concept Plan for EDA Parcels in 8800 Block of Central Ave (30 Minutes)

## Background

The EDA acquired four properties between 8801 and 8825 Cental Avenue between the years 2001 and 2007. The properties were originally single family homes and were acquired for a total cost of $623,725. The goal of the acquisitions was to transition away from single family homes fronting on the Central Avenue service road and assemble properties that would facilitate a larger project. The EDA also owns one property north of the subject sites, with an office building in between, and a property further south, with several commercial buildings in between.

Staff was approached by Paradigm Central Housing to discuss potential development sites, with the intention for a project where the developer could implement the city's vision for a project. Staff identified a variety of publicly and privately owned sites in the city and the developer was interested in pursuing a project on the Central Avenue parcels. The dimensions of the parcels make many types of development challenging. The developer prepared several concepts for the site, and is ultimately proposing a 46 unit affordable housing apartment building which could include a 3,300 square foot commercial building. A site plan is attached to this report. Key elements of the design include:

- Thirty-three (33) foot setback from the adjacent residential homes to the east, allowed through the use of buffer yard flexibility, which reduces setbacks adjacent to residential properties in exchange for additional landscaping and fencing.
- Parking requirements are met for the 46-unit apartment building, but are not met with the mixed-use component. Restrictions could be placed on the commercial use to minimize parking demand and maximize the ability to share parking between the apartment and commercial use. If Council wants to pursue the mixed-use component, staff and developer can continue to refine the concept to maximize parking.
- Three stories of residential, over half buried underground parking.

- No elevations currently provided. If the council is interested in pursuing this concept, feedback on the preferred design of building is requested (flat roof vs pitched roof, materials, etc).

A specific price for the land purchase has not been determined, but the developer is aware that the land cost would be roughly market value. If the Council supports continued refinement of this proposal, the next step would include pro forma financial development, which would include a purchase price.

## Staff Recommendation

Provide feedback on the concept plans.

## Questions for Council

1. Does council support a 46 unit apartment building on the EDA owned properties at 8801-8825 Central Avenue?
2. Should a commercial component be included?

## Attachment List

1. Central Ave Site Plan

CENTRAL AVENUE
NEW WATER MAIN
CENTRAL AVENUE SERVICE ROAD (TWO WAY)
3,100 SF COMMERCIAL
AMENITY
20'-0" SIDEYARD
33'-4" REAR YARD
14 SURFACE PARKING STALLS
SLOPED DRIVE TO SUBLEVEL PARKING (1/2-STORY BELOW GRADE)
20'-0" PARKING SETBACK
PLAYGROUND
LOBBY / MAIL / AMENITY
AMENITY
utility
trash
OUTDOOR AMENITY
30'-0" FRONT YARD
20'-0" SIDEYARD
7'-0" SOLID FENCE
8' CONIFERS SPACED AT 12' AND 2.5" OVERSTORY TREES AT 20'
3 BR
1 BR
2 BR
2 BR
3 BR
1 BR
2 BR
2 BR
1 BR
1 BR
2 BR
3 BR
3 BR

# City of Blaine
# Staff Report

File Number: 2026-178

| Agenda Date | Status |
|---|---|
| September 14, 2026 | |
| **In Control** | **File Type** |
| City Council | Guest Speaker |

**New Business** - Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director, Kyle Howard, Utility Billing Supervisor

## Agenda Item # 3.2

Residential Organics Service Proposal - Walters (45 Minutes)

## Background

This workshop is a follow-up to the March 16 Council workshop, during which Walters Recycling and Refuse presented information regarding its planned automated organics sorting technology and how the system could be used to provide curbside organics collection.

Since that presentation, Walters has provided the city with a proposed service model, pricing, and contract terms for offering the program to Blaine residents. Walters representatives will present the proposal to Council and answer questions regarding the proposed program.

The purpose of this workshop is to review the cost, resident rate impact, proposed contract structure, and technical considerations should the City Council desire to continue exploring early implementation of this service with Walters.

### Policy Context

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan 2022–2042 establishes regional objectives to expand organics recovery and reduce reliance on landfilling.

Anoka County subsequently incorporated these objectives into its 2024–2044 Solid Waste Management Plan and adopted Solid Waste Ordinance #2026-1 on July 28, 2026. The ordinance requires municipalities with populations greater than 5,000, including Blaine, to make residential curbside organics collection available by December 31, 2030. Municipalities must incorporate the requirement into their trash or recycling contracts, ordinances, hauler licenses, or municipal codes. The ordinance also requires organics, recycling, and mixed municipal solid waste to be collected on the same day of the week.

The County requirements establish the service Blaine must ultimately make available but do not prescribe a specific vendor or collection technology. This allows the city to evaluate alternative service models, costs, implementation schedules, and contractual structures before the 2030 deadline.

Anoka County's Solid Waste Management Plan also identifies technical assistance and potential SCORE and grant funding to assist municipalities with implementation. Staff will continue coordinating with the County as the City evaluates future organics options.

**Current Blaine Organics Program**

The city began offering residential organics recycling at the City Hall drop-off site in January 2022. Approximately 700 residents have registered for the program. The City Hall site currently uses eight 96-gallon carts, serviced twice per week, and collects an average of approximately 18 tons of organics annually. This location sees steady weekly usage, filling the carts twice a week.

Anoka County also operates an organics drop-off location at the Johnsville Library.

One of the most frequent questions staff receives regarding the City's organics program is whether curbside collection is available. The current drop-off program provides an established organics option, while resident inquiries indicate interest in curbside service.

**Walters Service Proposal**

Following the March workshop, Walters provided staff with a proposal to make its automated organics program available to residential customers in Blaine.

Under the proposed program, participating residents would place organics in designated durable bags within their existing refuse carts. The material would be collected with regular refuse and separated using the automated sorting system previously presented to Council.

Walters has proposed:

- A charge of $22.50 per residential account per quarter ($7.50 per month)
- The charge would apply to all residential accounts regardless of participation
- A 10-year contractual commitment for the program
- Program would be subject to a yearly inflation adjustment
- As more users participate, costs would increase

Walters representatives will provide Council with additional information regarding the proposal, pricing, contract structure, implementation, and anticipated program participation.

Staff has asked Walters to speak directly to their assumptions about participation, the value proposition for residents, and the basis for requiring a 10-year commitment. Staff's role at the workshop will be limited to presenting the rate and procurement impacts objectively and responding to Council questions regarding the City's existing system and regulatory obligations.

**Estimated Residential Rate Impact**

The proposed $22.50 quarterly charge would represent an additional $90 per residential account annually.

For comparison to 2026 rates, applying the proposed charge to the City's current residential refuse rates would have the following impact:

| Cart Size | Current Quarterly Rate (Trash & Recycling) | Current Rate + Organics | % Increase |
|---|---|---|---|
| 38 gallon | $62.01 | $84.51 | 36.3% |
| 68 gallon | $70.50 | $93.00 | 31.9% |
| 96 gallon | $82.17 | $104.67 | 27.4% |

Based on approximately 23,562 residential accounts, the proposed charge would represent approximately $2.12 million annually in additional residential solid waste charges.

The figures above illustrate the impact of Walters' proposed charge at current city rates. They do not represent final future refuse rates or account for potential future rate adjustments or available grant funding.

Unlike the City's current drop-off program, which is opt-in, voluntary, and funded through SCORE Grant funding, the state statute requires an all-pay model: all residential accounts would be charged regardless of whether they participate in the curbside organics program.

**Contract and Future Contract Considerations**

Walters' proposal includes a 10-year agreement. The City's current organized refuse and recycling agreement expires in June 2029.

Entering into a long-term organics agreement before the existing hauling contract expires could affect the City's flexibility when competitively procuring its next refuse and recycling agreement. In particular, a separate organics agreement could limit the city's ability to competitively evaluate organics alongside refuse and recycling services, consider alternative technologies or collection models, or bundle services in the next RFP process. RFP process would require any hauler the city chooses to exclusively use Walters Transfer Station for the remainder of the 10-year contract.

At the same time, MPCA and Anoka County's December 31, 2030 deadline provides the city with time to evaluate available options. The expiration of the city's existing hauling agreement in 2029 also creates an opportunity to incorporate organics requirements directly into the city's next competitive procurement.

For cost context, Walters provided a review of a recycling-and-environmental (R&E) style organics contract structure that indicated a per-household cost of approximately $2.59 to $12.16 per month,

compared to the $7.50 per month proposed by Walters. Council may wish to consider this comparison, along with differences in service model and collection technology, in evaluating cost reasonableness.

Uncertainty remains about future participation levels, available processing technologies and capacity, program costs, grant funding, and how the regional organics market will develop as municipalities work toward the 2030 requirement.

## Staff Recommendation

## Questions for Council

No direction is requested as at this time. Should Council desire early implementation of this service, additional workshop time will be made available in the fall/winter to discuss Walters' proposal or alternative procurement methods for this service. This proposed timeline will allow Council to be made aware of proposed 2027 city utility rates in advance of making any financial commitments related to organic collection.

## Attachment List

1. Walters Proposal 5.20.26

# City of Blaine

## Organics Recycling Program Evaluation Report

### Executive Summary

This report provides City staff with a comprehensive overview of a proposed curbside organics (food scraps) recycling program, including program structure, rationale, and comparative context. The goal is to support staff evaluation and development of a recommendation to City Council.

The proposed program is designed to meet upcoming regulatory requirements while minimizing disruption to the current system and improving resident participation and diversion outcomes.

### Background & Regulatory Context

Minnesota requires cities over 5,000 residents to provide curbside organics collection by January 1, 2030. (MN Statute 115A.551)

State statute also requires all residents to pay for organics service regardless of participation, making program design critical to achieving meaningful results.

### Program Structure and Key Terms

Recommended Start Date: January 1, 2027 or July 1, 2027

Agreement Term: 10 years to support infrastructure investment and pricing stability

Program Structure: Separate but integrated with existing trash and recycling services - organics program and MSW disposal are a stand alone agreement

Operational Impact: No changes to routes, or carts - only processing changes

Cost: $7.50 flat rate per household per month - includes the specifically designed bags, distribution of the bags, sortation,  organics processing, and reporting

### Why This Program Makes Sense

This program addresses common challenges associated with traditional cart-based organics systems, does not require additional trucks on city roads for collection, and is designed to increase participation by simplifying the resident experience.

## Comparable Organics Programs – Cost & Structure Overview

| City | Monthly Cost | Collection Approach | Cart Requirement | Bag Requirement | Key Observations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St. Louis Park | $7.15 (2027 est. rate) | Separate organics truck(s) and route(s) | Yes (City-owned) | Not specified | Cost tied to participation; added infrastructure required |
| Fridley | $12.16 (rate in 2026 for optional add on service) | Separate organics truck(s) and route(s) | Yes | Yes - provided | Higher cost reflects full-service program |
| Maple Grove | $6.08 (2027 est. rate assuming 40% participation) | Separate organics truck(s) and route(s) | Yes | Resident purchase | Costs increase with participation |
| Brooklyn Park | $2.90–$3.40 (2026 rate) | Separate organics truck(s) and route(s) | Yes | Resident purchase | Participation below 10% after 2 years |
| **Proposed Program for City of Blaine** | **$7.50 flat rate** | **Integrated, bag-based (sorted post-collection) No additional trucks or routes** | **NO** | **YES** | **Designed for higher participation (Up to 40%)** |

**Program design and ease of participation are as important as cost in achieving meaningful diversion outcomes. Simpler systems tend to produce higher participation, while more complex systems often struggle to drive consistent resident engagement**

## What Happens If the City Does Not Act

Delayed decisions may result in compressed timelines and reactive implementation.

Limited processing capacity may reduce future flexibility.

Higher-cost systems may be required later.

Lower participation and diversion outcomes may occur.

Reduced opportunity to shape a program tailored to the community.

## Conclusion

The proposed program offers a practical and scalable path to meet regulatory requirements while minimizing disruption and improving participation.

Proactive evaluation allows the City to maintain control, optimize costs, and achieve meaningful long-term results.

Please contact me with any additional questions.

Jeff Newsom

President/CEO

Walters Recycling and Refuse