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**MEMORANDUM
FROM THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS
NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD**

DATE: June 17, 2015
TO: Mayor and City Council Members
CC: Darin Atteberry, City Manager
FROM: John Bartholow on behalf of the Natural Resources Advisory Board
SUBJECT: Proposed Recycling Center

Council's June 23, 2015 Work Session Agenda includes a staff report regarding operating costs for the proposed Community Recycling Center. NRAB has supported the development of this important project for the last three years. Our members have actively participated on the Road to Zero Waste Task Force and recommended Council's adoption of the principles of Zero Waste, including the goals of 75% waste reduction by 2020 and 90% or more by 2025. Among those principles was NRAB's commitment to work closely with staff and consultants to foster opportunities for reuse, composting and recycling of commodities that are not currently possible or convenient for our residents, including small businesses. The Community Recycling Center is an important and logical next step to reach our adopted goals.

NRAB recognizes that the projected operating costs to provide these new services for our residents exceed the initial estimates. A primary factor in this increase is the fluctuating value of recyclables and re-useables in an ever-changing global market. The value of these materials is cyclical and we are currently at a low point in that cycle. However, recycled market trends over the last twenty-five years clearly demonstrate market highs and lows with variations dependent both on the demand/supply of these materials as well as the cost of regulations and extraction of alternative virgin materials. Contracts with potential Community Recycling Center partners (contractors) can be structured to permit the City to share in increased revenues derived from collected materials to take advantage of these market cycles. It is an interesting dichotomy that we readily accept increases in the out of pocket cost of landfill disposal of recyclable materials, but expect that recycling/reuse of such resources must "pay for themselves."

The long term importance of the Community Recycling Center is that it positions Fort Collins to provide its residents opportunities to recycle and reuse discarded materials that would otherwise go to an area landfill. As markets change and potential end uses of those materials increase (including certain waste to energy options) we will already have a source of those materials and our residents will be more accustomed to participating in their collection, just as we have seen happen at the Rivendell facility.

Fort Collins has significantly invested staff, volunteer time and resources to the development of this Community Recycling Center, including land acquisition, permits and contracting options. The benefit of these investments will be lost if we fail to take advantage of them at this time by

moving forward with the Community Recycling Center. This “lost opportunity cost” is an important consideration for the City.

The Community Recycling Center is a key next step on the Road to Zero Waste, reduces greenhouse gasses consistent with our recently revised Climate Action Plan and provides new services to our residents. The NRAB recommends support of the Community Recycling Center and the anticipated costs associated with its operations.