



West 7th/Fort Road Federation

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Sent via email: contact-council@ci.stpaul.mn.us

July 16, 2026

Saint Paul City Council
15 W. Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Re: Letter of Support for Chapter 86.13 – Council Approval of Mixed Municipal Solid Waste Contracts

Dear Councilmembers,

On behalf of the West 7th/Fort Road Federation, I am writing in support of the proposed ordinance requiring City Council approval of negotiated and competitively bid Mixed Municipal Solid Waste contracts before they take effect (ORD 26-36). The board met on Monday, July 13, 2026 and unanimously voted to support this proposal.

The proposed ordinance recognizes that solid waste collection is an essential public service with significant financial, operational, and neighborhood impacts. It also affirms that contracts governing these services are matters of public policy that warrant transparency, accountability, and review by the City's elected legislative body.

Our organization became deeply engaged during the siting of the FCC Environmental Services garbage truck depot. Throughout that process, residents, businesses, and our organization expressed concerns not only about the proposed location, but also about how decisions were being made. One of the central disagreements was the City's characterization of the private FCC facility as a "public works" facility. We argued that if the facility truly served the same function as a City Public Works facility, then its location and associated contract deserved the same level of public review and legislative oversight. If a private company or facility is deemed to be performing a core public service, it should not bypass those same opportunities for public accountability.

The contract with FCC Environmental Services, executed in 2025, was approved administratively by the Mayor's office without City Council approval. While this may have complied with existing procedures, the experience demonstrated why those procedures should change. Contracts of this magnitude establish long-term operational commitments, affect neighborhoods across Saint Paul, and influence how essential public services are delivered. This requires more than an administrative decision.

Requiring City Council approval provides important public benefits:

- It ensures that decisions involving major municipal services are made by elected representatives accountable to residents across the city.
- It creates a transparent public process where contracts can be discussed openly before they are finalized.
- It allows neighborhood concerns, operational impacts, and policy implications to be considered before long-term commitments are made.
- It strengthens public confidence that significant contracts receive independent review rather than executive approval alone.
- It reinforces appropriate checks and balances by recognizing that contracts governing essential city services are policy decisions deserving legislative oversight.

This ordinance is about improving future governance. When contracts involve core municipal services, substantial public expenditures, and long-term obligations, they should receive the same level of public scrutiny and democratic accountability that residents expect for other significant city decisions.

The proposed ordinance strikes that balance by preserving the City's procurement process while ensuring that the final decision rests with the elected body responsible for establishing public policy and representing the people of Saint Paul.

For these reasons, the West 7th/Fort Road Federation respectfully urges adoption of Chapter 86.13. We thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this matter. Please contact me with any questions.

In partnership,

Julia McColley
Executive Director

CC: Rebecca Noecker, Council President