

## **Minneapolis pushes to burn more trash**

**By Steve Brandt**

***Star Tribune***

**June 5, 2009**

Minneapolis planners have recommended that the city approve an increase in the amount of trash that can be fed daily to Hennepin County's downtown garbage burner. A planning staff recommendation to the Planning Commission urges that the city's zoning permit for the facility be amended to allow the increase sought by Hennepin County and Covanta Energy, which operates the plant for the county.

They want to increase the average daily consumption of trash from the current 1,000 tons to 1,212 tons. That recommendation will be considered by the commission at its meeting at 4:30 p.m. Monday at City Hall.

The request has attracted attention because the new Twins ballpark is rising next to the incinerator, and is due to open next spring close to the time that the larger amount of trash would begin to be burned. According to a planning staff report, an environmental review conducted for the stadium found emissions from the larger amount of trash were below federal levels of concern. The same study also found that neighborhood odors such as sewer smell and diesel exhaust were more noticeable than the odor of incinerator trash.

Opponents of the expansion said Thursday that they are organizing for the commission meeting. Alan Muller, who has been evaluating the request for opponents, said an expansion would inevitably increase human exposure to air pollutants. He questioned whether the state is adequately regulating the facility.

Some opponents have urged the county to compost more garbage as an alternative to burning it.

Steve Brandt • 612-673-4438