

IDEAS FOR NEXT PHASE OF CITY GARBAGE PROGRAM

Committee and Public Comments received as of 3/09/2022

OPT OUT/CART SHARING

Committee Member Comments in favor of Opt-Out options

- Garbage Reduction should be over-riding Goal
- Allow multiunit to share carts (no minimum mandated number of carts, or at least one cart per address)
 - Decreasing the number of carts at a property enhances the neighborhood
- Allow neighbors in single family homes to share carts
- Cart-sharing should be applied for, with a fee to pay for enforcement
- Allow zero wasters to opt out via an application
 - Use Maplewood example of application with fee, and requirement for “regular” service if illegal or neighbor-dump
 - If zero-wasters opt out they pay an additional annual Recycling Service Fee
- Allow dumpsters (not carts) at multiunit properties or on a block if the block organizes
- Allow Townhouse/Homeowner Associations to opt in or opt out
- If there is overflow at cart-sharing property, City can require more carts as instructed by DSI
 - Alternate: If there is an overflowing trash issue and it is brought in front of Council they owner would lose ability to choose cart number/size
- Over 1/3 of residents voted for opt-out

Committee Member Comments Not in favor of Opt-Out options

- It costs money to check to make sure properties are still cleaned up
- Everyone has some waste
- Opt-out and cart share allows privileged residents to get a discount and creates inequality. New system which requires all to have carts is more equitable. Opt-out and cart share risks privileged will have knowledge and resources to use the system and will be subsidized
- 62% of City voted for no opt-out

Committee Member Comments Associated with Opt-Out

- If no Opt-Out then allow Service Holds for extended time.
- Both Opt-Out and Cart Sharing are needed in new contract.
- Opt-Out should be required to show what alternative disposal will be
- Monthly and/or quarterly pickup should be offered

Public Comments Associated with Opt-Out

- Totally against mandatory sign-up; has trash pick-up every two weeks and never fills the bin
- Need to address issues with owners of duplexes that do not rent the second unit or who are changing the house from a duplex to a single-family home
- Consider on-demand collection service

- I used to have on-demand service from Highland and used pick-up every 3-4 months with a normal cart which cost \$80 – 90 per year. Now small cart EOW, which I put out once every two months costs over \$200 per year
- I think the City looks way more cluttered since coordinated hauling came out with all the surplus recycle and trash carts sitting around in the alleys and along streets. I'd support allowing smaller multi-family properties the option of replacing 3, 30 gallon carts with 1, 90 gallon cart

BILLING/CUSTOMER SERVICE

Committee Member Comments

- Billing to be handled by City
- Don't see a need for City to be involved in billing
- Discount for yearly payment of bill
 - Alternate: Options for monthly/quarterly/yearly billing, with discount for
 - yearly "pre-paid bill
- Automatic bill pay option
- Adequate amount of time to pay bills is needed. Example: Hauler Invoice date was 1/6/2022, bill arrived 1/20/2022, payment due to hauler 1/26/2022. This is not an adequate amount of time to pay the bill without penalty
- If bills are sent to customers late – need process to avoid "late payment fee
- United customer service and billing function
- City to handle all customer service questions and issues
- Only local contacts for billing/customer service issues
- Customer Service is an issue of high concern because residents have no choice of provider and there is currently no accountability from providers
- Multi-language assistance should be easily available
 - (Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Oromo, Koran, English)
- Walk-up service for seniors and anyone who requests it
- Hauler Customer Service doesn't track with City information, for instance, Christmas/Holiday tree collection should not require separate call to hauler if City says separate call not needed and dates of tree pickup City provided were not met by the hauler.

Public Comments

- Bulky item pick-up and yard wastes collection are difficult to schedule, and to actually have them picked up, and customer service is very poor
- Customer service is an issue of high concern for many residents since we have no choice of provider and there is no accountability from providers
- Make it easier for residents by having a way for all trash/recycle service requests to go online thru a City website portal
- Having to call a call center in Phoenix or wherever, navigate a robo phone menu and then be on hold for 15 minutes to get a question answered is annoying
- The last couple of months our trash has been untouched. My husband then spends the entire next day trying to reach someone. Our neighbors have the same problem
- The spot we have placed our cart has been the same for the past 30 years and suddenly this winter (with snow) it is not OK
- Why are trucks leaving containers in the middle of the alley

- For the second year in a row we have had to call in to the company to pick up our Christmas tree even though the Saint Paul collection page clearly states we don't need to call the hauler. The hauler was mystified that they should pick it up without me calling ahead to create a "ticket"
- This is the second year Christmas trees have not been picked up as promised between January 2 and 15. Numerous trees have been sitting in my alley for a couple weeks. There is no space for trees to be piled up in our alley. It would be helpful to be given an accurate estimate of when they will actually pick up trees
- <National Hauler> does not give an adequate time to pay bills and then they aggressively impose late fees. I received my bill on January 19, the invoice date was January 6 and the due date was January 26. It is an unfair double standard and pretty unreasonable and dare I say, possibly being done in bad faith

COSTS – PRICING – SERVICES – SERVICE HOLDS – CASH FLOW

Committee Comments

- Charge by weight (If little trash is in the cart give discount, since bill extra when lid is six inches open)
- Charge by volume so small carts do not subsidize large carts
 - Example: 96 gallon \$50
 - 45 gallon \$25
 - 32 gallon \$18
- Small cart every-other-week should be half the cost of small cart every-week
- There is a minimum cost to garbage <service> that should be paid regardless of how much is thrown out
- Provide more information for new residents about cart sizes
- Abolish charge when cart lid is open six inches unless grossly overstuffed
- If carts are empty, monthly fee should be reduced (Converse of overstuffed Carts or carts with lid open)
- Allow small cart every-other-week to call for temporary weekly or extra service for a fee
- Single family home extra cart should cost same as multiunit additional carts (e.g., each property has service fee plus fee for number of carts at property)
Explore 5+ unit service
- Give discount for one/year bill/payment
- Give discount if bulky program is not used
- Decrease overall costs for all
- Encourage waste reduction
- City should handle Customer Service/billing
- Require haulers to have Customer Service/Operations office within the City
- Remove need to give haulers reason for service hold and/or put service hold in place of opt-out when household creates small trash amounts
- Allow service holds even if dwelling is occupied (alternate for very small generators) +
- Service holds and opt-outs should remain separate. Service hold should not be used in place of opt-out
- There should be a written plan to hold or stop garbage temporarily that outlines:
 - What qualifies
 - How much is saved
 - When service is stopped and started

- The Administrative fees that the City charges on the property taxes are too high
- Break out the City Garbage Annual Service Fee into categories
(Cart bond replacement costs \$___; City Administration costs \$___;
Cash flow stabilization costs \$___)
- City budget:
 - \$___ - City Revenue (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021)
 - Where is the money spent?
 - Is the City in the red, in the black, break even for these funds?
- More programs/outreach for bulky program
- Allow apartment buildings to use bulky program, if have City service with dumpsters (instead of carts)

Public Comments

- I used to have on-demand pick-up which was needed every 3 – 4 months with a normal cart that cost \$ 80 - \$90 per year. Now I have an Every-other-week small cart I put out every two months and it costs over \$200
- My alternate week pickup is only a \$3 difference per quarter. The difference should be much more
- The current price differences between cart sizes doesn't seem well balanced. I could easily use a bi-weekly cart by recycling a little more and cutting back on disposables but for a mere \$3.50 more a month I can get weekly service instead and still have room in the cart to spare some weeks
- I can set out an extra bag of trash for \$3 but can not set out any surplus recyclables. If I have extra recyclable stuff its easier to toss it vs. driving way over to the Como drop-off site
- A small base fee per quarter, say \$25 makes sense for everyone then have different levels of service which are optional in case people want to share carts
- Why is our cost total for having trash/recycle/yard waste so expensive compared to surrounding cities (Minneapolis, Richfield, SLP, Maplewood)
- My small every-other-week cart costs too much
- Thanks to this mandatory program we are getting less service at about a 35% higher price due to competition being eliminated

BULKY ITEMS

Committee Comments

- If Bulky Service is part of cart service pricing, give end-of-year rebate if not used
- Offer 1 bulky item pickup per address and let owners buy in for additional pick-ups (similar to yard wastes by-the-bag)
- Opt-in to bulky item service (no pick-ups as part of cart service)
- Increase number of bulky item pickups for all as part of cart service pricing
- If it is an incentive, there should not be a limitation on the number of bulky items
- There is a concern that bulky item pickups will not stop illegal dumping
- Allow one day per year pickup across Saint Paul as opt-in option
Concern was expressed for folks that can't store bulky items for a whole year
- Don't make it a seasonal pick up
- Need to define who is authorized to schedule pickup (owner, renter/tenant)
- Need an easier way to schedule a bulky item pickup
Better communication that program exists

Bulky Items, continued

One number to call

Language Line

Consistent rules on how many hours/days to call ahead (48 hrs, 1 week?)

Tried to use it. The hauler kept asking what size the bulky was and then said it was too big

Tried to use it and was too difficult to contact the hauler to schedule the pickup

- Illegal dumping data summary is requested (2018 – 2021)

Public Comments

- Would like either fewer or no bulky pick-up or pay-as-you-go. I am entitled to 12 bulkies and have used it once
- It would be nice to get a small credit back for unused bulkies or be able to carry over 1 or 2 to the next year
- This program is an utter disaster. As far as stopping illegal dumping simply drive down Pleasant Avenue by the yard waste site and look at all the trash and electronics dumped along the street
- I am irritated that I have to pay for the picking up of bulk items when I've never tossed a bulk item once in the 20+ years I've lived here

YARD WASTES/ORGANICS

Committee Comments

- Keep as separate option, a la carte
 - Not everyone uses it, many back-yard compost or use Ramsey Co. drop-off
- Have ability to pay per bag instead of full season (have both annual and a la carte options)
- Include yard waste in cost of full-service (not separate)
- Encourage more composting in yard or leaving clippings on the lawn
- Yard waste collection, either annual or a la carte, should be easier to arrange. Now difficult to contact hauler and/or arrange for pickup

Public Comments

- Organized yard waste pick up is needed
- I like the annual yard waste service option, very convenient as I have a lot and also never have time to go to the compost sites when they are open
- Compost pick-up desired
- I assume there will be compost pick-up at some point or a place to drop it off within 6 blocks. Adding compost containers only adds to alley build up of plastic
- We've been consistent users of the Ramsey County organics recycling program and are confused about the plans to accept organics with trash. The thin biodegradable bags we use for drop-off won't hold up if mixed with regular trash in a trash truck
- I like the idea of collecting organic waste to be recycled in special bags with the trash vs. getting yet ANOTHER cart
- It would be great if compost and yard waste could be picked up from separate containers on trash day and brought to the Ramsey County sites, saving on emissions for the many cars and trucks of individuals going there now

GREEN OPTIONS

- Electric Garbage Trucks
- Track and reduce vehicle miles travelled, including from hauler's garage to the service area
- Encourage less garbage by giving small container users a way better deal, Not have small container users subsidize the big container users
- City promote Reduce/Reuse/Recycle, NOT "Throw away more."
- Give incentives to reduce total waste
- Track total waste across City so we can accurately gauge waste reduction plans/goals
- Give \$\$ incentives to recycle
- City programs to encourage reuse (e.g., FreeCycle)
- Include 4+ unit properties in next contract to reduce the number of trucks in neighborhoods
- Re-use/recycle mattresses like Second Chance Recycling does
- When durable compostable bag program begins in 2023 compost will be taxed
 - Be transparent to community about this
 - Increase trash cart size to throw in compost bags, instead of taking them to a drop-off means more \$ to haulers

Public Comments

- If the City really cares about the environment the need to incentivize was reduction
- I have a small recycling cart and it only goes out every 4 – 6 weeks because I reduce my waste
- All garbage carts should be MANDATED to be made of 100% post-consumer waste plastic
- Would like to find out if smaller containers can be offered (smaller than 35 gallon)
- Are schools giving tours of recycling plants to educate children
- Thank you for addressing concerns, aiming for better system and cleaner earth
- Households that produce low waste are subsidizing everyone else. Since county and state goals demand reduced waste in the next decade, costs should be allocated based USE (eg those generating it). Those who do not should be REWARDED

PROGRAMS OTHER CITIES HAVE WHICH THE COMMITTEE FAVORS

Committee Comments

- Yard waste by the bag instead of whole year commitment
- Stickers from City for yard waste by the bag or extra bags of trash
- Move garbage collection to City department vs. a trash business
- Single hauler/Municipal service citywide
- All services for one price (single, inclusive, price for Yard waste, bulky, etc.)
- Citywide bulky pickup days/weeks especially around colleges
- One-time collection at curb of all items (Bloomington)
- Prices closer to Maplewood (lower)
- One day per year "curbside" pickup service across Saint Paul (similar to Bloomington)
- Have same contract as Maplewood and other cities and include bulky items

Programs other Cities have which the Committee Favors, continued

Public Comments

- Even Minneapolis gives you choices with significant <cost> differences between size and frequency of collection
- I'd like to see free pickup of all large items instead of just two or three a year (like Minneapolis)
- Adopt a program similar to Maplewood, with one-time form with fee to opt-out

NEXT CONTRACT MECHANICS

Committee Comments

- Use Request For Proposals (RFP)
 - Let haulers compete
 - Include municipal collection option
 - Small hauls were able to sell their routes for good price – they had time to adjust or get out
- Winning <proposal> should have office/presence in Saint Paul for local help with pickups and questions
- Contract with a local hauler who cares that customers are happy (or not) with service
- Negotiate with existing Consortium
- What can haulers offer as a discount?
 - More teeth to Customer Service
- Open Meetings
- Transparency to negotiations and/or contract details
- Contract End date
 - Less than 5 years
 - Less than 3 years
- Need transparency of changing County fees and impact to prices

Public Comments

- Would doing a Citywide contract or bidding districts of the City directly with individual haulers vs. the current hauler pool agreement get lower prices for residents
- It would be nice to have the option to choose a local hauler vs. being stuck with a national conglomerate
- Please consider replacing <national hauler> with a local hauler in the future. I miss calling an actual Minnesotan who cares that I am happy with their service
- Very happy with current service
- Big fan of the new coordinated garbage program
- We like having one truck per week in our alley
- We like the option of having bi-weekly pick-up
- I am so glad the City is doing organized trash and I appreciate <the Committee's> work on this project
- Could next contract give residents a more reasonable time to send in the payments (comment was related to late billing by hauler)
- I am bewildered by the ridiculous rules requiring every household to have a cart, not allowing sharing, filling our alleys with new carts when the old ones worked just fine and not allowing plans that fit the situations

HAULER BUCKET LIST

- Make the City the hauler
 - Fewer complaints, City workers get benefits
 - Could be very expensive
 - Over time the City should look at being the hauler (generate revenue?)
- Local Customer Service
- More teeth in contract to hold haulers accountable for service
- We previously had <national hauler> and fired them for poor service
- We wish the truck didn't have to make 2 passes down the alley
- We wish the company was more local