

St. Paul

Proposal for Residential Mixed Municipal Solid Waste/Yard Waste (MSW/Yard Waste), Bulky Items/Problem Materials, and Recyclables Collection Services

Form C: Proposer Qualifications Questionnaire

Please describe the qualifications or expertise of your company and/or team of companies in each of the following categories:

1. General Management

Aspen Waste Systems was founded in 1990 in the Twin Cities on the principles of quality and customer service. We continually strive to set ourselves apart based on these characteristics. Aspen is currently ranked among the top 20 waste haulers in the nation and is the largest independent waste hauler in each market we serve. Aspen is also a family-owned business, and the second largest veteran owned business in the state of Minnesota according to the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal.

We currently provide trash, recycling, and yard waste service for over 50,000 customer homes and over 16,000 commercial accounts in the Twin Cities, Rochester, St. Louis, MO, and Des Moines, IA, metro areas. In Minnesota, we have contracts to provide residential service to customers in St. Paul, Bloomington, Richfield, and St. Anthony. We also provide subscription service to residential customers in Apple Valley, Arden Hills, Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Burnsville, Crystal, Eagan, Edina, Falcon Heights, Golden Valley, Lauderdale, Maple Grove, New Hope, Plymouth, Roseville, and Rochester. Aspen is also the contracted hauler for a large portion of Hennepin County, providing county buildings reliable and consistent trash hauling services. Enclosed is an article published in Waste Today, which details the story of Aspen and our philosophy.

Aspen's executive management team consists of a Chief Executive Officer, President, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Operating Officer, all who operate out of Aspen's Minneapolis office located at 2951 Weeks Avenue SE, just adjacent to the City of St. Paul. We believe this proximity has and will continue to offer a heightened focus to our St. Paul residential services.

Aspen Waste also employs specific management teams at each location. In Minnesota, our Operations Manager oversees a Safety Manager and several driver supervisors who assist in supervising Aspen Waste drivers and managing day to day operations. We also have local administrative and accounting personnel in Minnesota dedicated to customer service, data entry, and billing procedures, as well as general counsel to assist with contract drafting and other consulting needs.

The nimble nature of our Company, combined with our dedication to customer service, and close executive oversight of operations puts us at an advantage in addressing potential challenges that come up in any city contract. We believe this has contributed to our success in our current services to the City of St. Paul residents, where we have consistently provided reliable trash, yard waste, and bulky collection pick up.

Management and Project Team:

Aspen Waste's President, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Operating Officer will have direct involvement in this project. Our Chief Operating Officer oversees the overall administrative and operations objectives. Subject to his oversight and direction, our Office Operations Manager, Stacey Sanders will address administrative and customer service related matters and our Operations Manager, Derek Holmen, will oversee drivers, routes, and actual collection processes. Bios of these employees are provided below.

Alexa Kircher Fang, President of Aspen Waste Systems: Alexa Kircher Fang is President of Aspen Waste Systems. Alexa joined Aspen Waste Systems in 2015, serving as Vice President until 2022, when she was named President. Prior to Aspen, Alexa worked as an associate in the New York office of Cleary Gottlieb, a leading international law firm with offices in 16 major financial centers around the world. At Cleary, Alexa's practice focused on complex commercial and securities litigation and regulatory investigations. Alexa received her Juris Doctor from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York City. Prior to law school, Alexa attended the Cleveland Institute of Music, one of the country's top music conservatories, and earned both Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees in Violin Performance.

Thor Nelson, Chief Financial Officer of Aspen Waste Systems: Thor Nelson is Chief Financial Officer of Aspen Waste Systems. He is responsible for all financial functions of the company, as well as all real estate matters. Thor joined the company in 2009 and previously served as Chief Operating Officer until 2022, overseeing Aspen's expansion in Iowa and the development of major satellite facilities in the Twin Cities and St. Louis metro areas. Prior to joining Aspen, Thor was an executive at Allina Health, a large integrated healthcare system based in Minneapolis. Thor has a master's degree from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota, and a bachelor's degree from St. Olaf College.

David Pfuhl, Chief Operating Officer of Aspen Waste Systems: Dave is Chief Operating Officer at Aspen Waste Systems. He is responsible for all operating divisions of the company. David joined Aspen as the Director of Sales in 2017 and served in that role until 2022. David was attracted to Aspen – and vice versa – because of a mutual commitment to providing superior customer service. David is a life-long resident of the Twin Cities who first learned the value of customer service on his Star Tribune paper route when he was 10 years old. After earning a business degree at Anoka Ramsey Community College, he honed his customer-first attitude and performance during thirty years in sales and management in the luxury automotive industry. In those positions, he enjoyed the highest level of manufacturer certification and customer satisfaction ratings. He is committed to sustaining that standard of performance and customer care at Aspen both personally and as a contributor to Aspen's leadership team.

Derek Holmen, Operations Manager of Aspen Waste Systems: Derek Holmen is the Operations Manager for Aspen Waste Systems of Minnesota, Aspen's largest operating division, and a member of Aspen's Executive Committee. In these roles, he is responsible for the operations at Aspen's three facilities, in the Twin Cities metro area and one facility in Rochester, MN, and for ensuring company-wide compliance with Aspen's operations and safety policies and procedures. Derek joined Aspen in 2019 with prior management experience in the waste industry, and several years of experience working in finance at IBM. Derek has a bachelor's degree from Winona State University and is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Stacey Sanders, Office Operations Manager of Aspen Waste Systems: Stacey Sanders is the Office Operations Manager for Aspen Waste Systems of Minnesota, Aspen's largest operating division, and a member of Aspen's Executive Committee. In these roles, she is responsible for all customer service and office administrative functions in Minnesota and for ensuring company-wide compliance with Aspen's customer service policies and procedures. Stacey's entire 26-year career has been within the waste industry, and she has progressively expanded her responsibilities since joining Aspen in 2011. A native of the Twin Cities and waste industry veteran, Stacey is recognized by both her customers and colleagues for her work ethic, positive attitude, and high standards of performance.

2. Financial Stability and Strength

Aspen started with one truck in 1990 in the Twin Cities, and we now run 236 trucks in three metro areas. Our revenues and profits have grown steadily year after year. We have strong cash flow and are not reliant on financing to buy our equipment and trucks. We have already purchased the equipment necessary for this contract. We have never laid off a driver and are committed to continuous hiring of quality employees, even when we are fully staffed, as we are now. Aspen invests in quality - quality people, trucks, equipment, and buildings, and we have the financial strength to do so. Aspen has audited statements, performed by Clifton Larson Allen. We can provide these, as well as credit references upon request.

Aspen has never defaulted on any loan and has no litigation history regarding any company, partner, subcontractor or subsidiary involved or impacting this venture.

3. Residential Municipal Collection Experience for the Service(s) Proposed

Aspen has worked hard to establish professional, long lasting and successful relationships with municipalities, including, but not limited to the Minnesota cities of Bloomington, Richfield, St. Anthony Village, and St. Paul where Aspen provides contracted residential trash and yard waste service, among other services. The City of Bloomington operates on a similar division of services as St. Paul is currently proposing, where the City takes on customer service and billing. Aspen and Bloomington have worked well together in these efforts, and we feel that the process goes smoothly for all parties involved.

St. Paul is the first city Aspen ever serviced, over 30 years ago, and we have been providing trash services there ever since. We are a current hauler to St. Paul's residents under the existing residential contract, providing trash, yard waste, and bulky collection services. In addition, Aspen provides residential services through municipal contracts in other cities in MN, and in Iowa and Illinois. In all of its municipal contracts, Aspen has fulfilled all of its commitments, has never been assessed a liquidated damage fee, and has consistently provided reliable, efficient, and friendly services.

4. Description of Approach to Service Provision

Aspen will continue to provide St. Paul residents with consistent, efficient, reliable and friendly collection services. We believe that our success in that effort is rooted in our commitment to customer service, for all of our customers, large or small. Our phones are answered by a local, real person who responds to questions and solves problems, and our drivers and supervisors are trained to place a heightened focus on customer service throughout the entire service experience: at the pick location, on

the roadway, and during communications with customers. Our ability to continue to provide superior service even while facing serious operational challenges was demonstrated during the pandemic when, despite staff shortages and other operational challenges, we've never reduced our services. never missed a route, consistently answered our phones timely and competently, and continued to provide reliable trash and yard waste services. We understand and are confident that we can meet the operational requirements of this contract despite any operational challenges we may face.

Aspen submits this response to the City's RFP for Residential Mixed Municipal Solid Waste/Yard Waste (MSW/Yard Waste), Bulky Items/Problem Materials, and Recyclables Collection Services. As is specifically permitted through the RFP, Aspen is bidding on MSW/Yard Waste Collection only and submits the bid to service 20,000 residential units within the city of St. Paul for 5 years. Aspen has an intimate understanding of the current RFP as it aligns closely, aside from the redistribution of billing, customer service and cart management, with the current contract Aspen has with the City of St. Paul. Aspen is also accustomed to working hand in hand with cities who do the customer service and billing, as we do in the City of Bloomington.

Aspen has provided collection services since 1990, and St. Paul was the first residential city we ever serviced. We hope to have the opportunity to continue doing so for many years into the future. We are prepared, and believe we are in an excellent position, to provide continued, reliable, excellent customer service to the City's residents.

Aspen Waste is prepared to perform the City's requirement to service St. Paul residents on its selected days. We will work with the City to establish mutually acceptable routing plans. We will provide the City single family through fourplex buildings with weekly garbage and yard waste (the latter from April 1 through November 30) collection, and make every effort to pick up every residential unit's MSW and Yard Waste set out pursuant to proper methods. We will also provide walk up service for those customers with limitations per the Contract, as well as fee-based walkup services upon request to those residents without physical limitations. Aspen Waste will provide Holiday Tree collection during the first two weeks of January at no extra cost to customers on the same day as refuse collection. Aspen will use only City-provided educational materials and tags as directed by the City. Aspen understands and will follow one-day delayed collections due to major holidays occurring within the week. Disposal will be done at the City designated facilities.

Collection will start after an agreed upon time, ideally 6:00 am or later, on the prescribed collection day. Aspen will notify the City pursuant to the contract if any late collection is anticipated, as well as when it will be collected. Aspen haulers will make every effort to avoid damaging property and carts when servicing properties and will be responsible for repairs when caused by Aspen employees. Aspen will notify the City of any material leaks or spills and clean up all leaks and spills promptly pursuant to the contract terms. Aspen will also submit the required daily information to the City consistently and reliably. Aspen will maintain a respectful and transparent relationship with the City at all times.

Aspen's employees will provide quality, professional customer service and timely services as agreed upon pursuant to the contract for services. Aspen will provide necessary training to its employees including supervisors to ensure proper compliance with contract terms and efficient and high-level services to St. Paul residents. Aspen will also assign specific supervisors to act as a liaison between the City and Aspen to ensure consistent and efficient responsiveness to the City.

Please visit our website for more information on our executive management team, as well as our services: www.aspenwaste.com. We look forward to an opportunity to carry on these efforts and continue our relationship with the City of St. Paul and its residents.

5. Staff and Equipment Resources to be Dedicated to the Agreement

The management team to directly oversee this contract operates out of our Minneapolis office, located at 2951 Weeks Avenue SE, just adjacent to St. Paul. Aspen Waste's President, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Operating Officer will have direct involvement in this project. Our Chief Operating Officer oversees the overall administrative and operations objectives. Subject to his oversight and direction, our Office Operations Manager, Stacey Sanders will address administrative and customer service related matters and our Operations Manager, Derek Holmen, will oversee drivers, routes, and actual collection processes. Our management structure, location, and company size allow our teams to make quick decisions, pivot as necessary, and remain flexible regarding varying customer needs in Minnesota.

Aspen Waste plans to provide residential services using a combination of rear load trucks and automated side loaders. As indicated on the Exhibit F Truck list, all these trucks will be three or less years old at the time of the contract start. Routes will be developed to maximize efficiency and satisfy contract requirements in cooperation with the City. Aspen Wastes vehicles are DOT compliant, standard model trucks, and are used to service multiple residential cities throughout the Twin Cities. We will work with the City further regarding any concerns.

6. Customer Service Standards and Training

Because of the importance we place on customer service at all levels of our organization, standards for our employees are high and training is thorough. We expect our employees to provide timely, accurate, responsive, and quality service to our customers. While we do have a minimum training period for our employees, many of them exceed that minimum; we ensure that they do not serve customers until they have the tools they need to successfully deliver the same level of customer service that our customers have come to expect.

On a driver's first day, as part of their initial classroom training, we go over our "Driver Requirements" book. The book starts with the following: "All of the employees at Aspen have worked very hard for more than twenty years to distinguish ourselves when it comes to customer service. As an Aspen driver, you make the most important and personal impression on our customers." It then reviews the customer service expectations, including but not limited to, how to conduct themselves with the public and customers and the expectations at the job site, including to "clean/pick up all trash at each customer site and leave the area better than it was when you arrived", and "place the container back where you found" it. During their "on the road" training, we have a training packet that the driver trainer goes through with the driver, and each training day, the driver is trained and rated on the "Aspen Way" categories, which include the same customer service expectations. We are very focused on tracking misses and customer complaints, and any issues are timely investigated and appropriately addressed with employees.

For our customer service representatives, we do not expect them to take calls until they are adequately trained on the Aspen way. We ensure that before a customer service representative speaks to a customer they undergo extensive training to provide the level of customer service we expect. Aspen's main focus is to always provide superior service to all customers large or small so a big part of our training is teaching our employees these service expectations. Our training is tailored to the new employee, based on their prior experience and is led by Stacey Sanders, our Office Operations Manager who has over 26 years of experience in the industry. Supervisors listen to calls regularly, and any customer service issues or complaints are timely investigated and appropriately addressed with employees.

We have also provided references below who can speak to our customer service approach, and can provide more upon request.

a. Transition Plan and Data Integration

Aspen already services over 10,000 residential households within the City of St. Paul under the current residential collection contract. Aspen Waste will work closely with the City to ensure a seamless transition under the new agreement and with expanded residential households to collect from. We have the employees and trucks available at this time to service the additional households and are prepared to work with the City on a quick time table to set up efficient routing within the current established routing days as soon as we know the stops we will be servicing, and well in advance of the contract start date. Aspen plans to use the second option for data integration delineated in the RFP. As there is no integration needed for this method, we have the ability to do the data transfer immediately and will not need any time to implement. Stacey Sanders, Aspen's Office Operations Manager will coordinate this data integration effort.

b. Sustainability Practices

Aspen is committed to providing the best possible service to customers, which includes helping them reach their sustainability goals. We assist customers by providing educational materials, giving presentations, and providing data requested. Aspen is unique in that every commercial truck is equipped with a scale, and this allows us to provide meaningful data to our commercial customers to assist in their waste diversion efforts. Many customers choose to work with us because of this, and we assist them by providing regular waste diversion reports, which they use to track their progress. We are also solely focused on collection, as we don't own any landfills or transfer stations, and are committed to optimize flexibility for customers by hauling their preferred waste streams to environmentally friendly destinations as requested.

Aspen is also committed to reducing emissions by using state of the art trucks that meet the highest and most current emission standards. Aspen purchases only new trucks and has an industry leading average age of fleet. For the City of St. Paul contract, Aspen will be using industry leading trucks that are less than three years old. Aspen is also focused on improving fuel efficiency with route optimization and automation. We are continuously working on route efficiency and made the decision to automate our residential fleet two years ago, which has allowed us to further improve the efficiency

of our routes. Our main operations office is also adjacent to St. Paul, making us one of the most efficient companies to service the City of St. Paul.

c. Labor Management Practices

Aspen provides competitive wages and benefits as well as maintains long-term retention of drivers. We have many drivers who have worked their entire career at Aspen, and we are known in the industry as a Company that industry veterans want to work for. Many of our employees have been with us over 20 years and approximately 1/3 of our employees have been with the company for over 5 years. We have never laid off a driver and are committed to continuous hiring even when we are fully staffed, as we are now.

All of Aspen's Minnesota employees (except its Rochester employees) specifically live and work in St. Paul or the surrounding area. Aspen seeks local employees and employees from diverse and underserved communities. We do so by posting positions on local platforms such as Minnesota Works and Hand Shake. The latter platform is utilized by local colleges, including, Dunwoody College, University of Minnesota, Hennepin Technical College, Minnesota State University -- Mankato, and Augsburg University for purposes of providing students job opportunities. We also seek out other schools and sources for additional hiring opportunities. Specifically, Aspen has reached out to, worked with, or advertised jobs with schools providing commercial driving programs including Dakota County Technical College, Interstate Truck Driving School, and Saint Paul Public Schools. Additionally, Aspen has sought relationships with diverse communities to identify additional hiring opportunities, such as CLUES (Spanish for: Latino Communities United Service), Karen Organization of Minnesota, and Hmong American Partnership.

Aspen incorporates a robust worker safety training program into its employee onboarding processes as well as throughout the employee tenure at the company. We do so by thoroughly training on OSHA requirements and company safety practices, both before and during a driver's time behind the wheel for the company. Aspen employs a robust driver trainer program for new drivers, trains its driver and driver trainers in Smith Systems defensive driving, offer a driver safety bonus program, conducts regular driver observations and fleet walks to ensure compliance, employs a fleet safety program and MVR monitoring policy, and engages in monthly safety committee meetings. Aspen also conducts monthly driver safety trainings which focus on both OSHA programs and safe driving techniques and has a dedicated safety manager who oversees these efforts.

d. Environmental and Community Benefits

Aspen's dedication to hiring from local, including underserved communities, community donations and involvement, and location within the local community, combined with its commitment to customer service ensures a meaningful benefit to the City of St. Paul by its continued services. Specifically, Aspen is locally owned and operated, and we believe in investing in the communities in which we live and operate. Our employees live in St. Paul and the surrounding areas, and many are St. Paul residents, including our President. As above noted in section c, Aspen is committed to hiring locally, and from underserved communities. Aspen managers have also served on local non-profit boards, including MacPhail Center for the Arts, Children's' Theatre and Emma Norton Services, a St Paul organization providing transformational housing and growth services for women and families. Aspen has contributed

to these and many other local organizations throughout the years. Aspen has also provided complimentary community clean ups over the years, including complimentary cleans ups to local communities impacted by post George Floyd events. Aspen's dedication and presence in the local community combined with its commitment to customer service provides a unique benefit to the City and its residents. Aspen's investment in state of the art trucks with the most current emissions standards and commitment to assisting customers in meeting environmental goals is discussed further under the sustainability section, and will further provide environmental benefits to the City of St. Paul.

7. References

1. City of Richfield (Residential Services)
 - a. Contact:
 - i. Rachel Lindholm
 - ii. (p) 612-861-9188
 - iii. (email) rlindholm@richfieldmn.gov
 - b. Services: Weekly Trash (or biweekly), Weekly Yard Waste (during season), Biweekly Recycling, and Weekly Organics for subscribers plus customer service and billing.
 - c. Residential Households per day: 440
 - d. Estimated Multifamily Households per day: 20
2. City of Bloomington (Residential Services)
 - a. Contact:
 - i. Laura Horner
 - ii. (p) 952-563-4659
 - iii. (Email) lhorner@bloomingtonmn.gov
 - b. Services: Weekly Trash, Weekly Yard Waste (during season), Biweekly Recycling, and Weekly Organics for subscribers. City provides customer service and billing.
 - c. Residential Households per day: 2,007
 - d. Estimated Multifamily Households per day: 100
3. St. Anthony Village:
 - a. Contact:
 - i. Nicole Miller
 - ii. (p) 612-782-3313
 - iii. (Email) Nicole.miller@savmn.com
 - b. Services: Weekly Trash (or biweekly), Weekly Yard Waste (during season), Biweekly Recycling, plus customer service and billing.
 - c. Residential Households per day: 388
 - d. Estimated Multifamily Households per day: 15
4. Hennepin County (Commercial Services)
 - a. Contact:
 - i. Joey Prusak

- ii. (p) 612-348-3984
- iii. (email) Joey.Prusak@hennepin.us

b. Services

- i. Trash, recycling, organics as needed
- ii. Approximately 10-20 commercial properties per day

Signature of person duly authorized to sign submittal on behalf of Proposer:

Alison Fung 15 Authorized Signature
Alexia Fung Print Name
12/29/23 Date

