

**Meeting Date:** 3/25/2014

**Report Type:** Staff/Discussion

**Report ID:** 2014-00106

**Title:** Recycling and Solid Waste Division Residential Collection Program Update

**Location:** Citywide

**Recommendation:** Receive and file.

**Contact:** Steve Harriman, Integrated Waste General Manager, (916) 808-4949,  
Department of General Services

**Presenter:** Steve Harriman, Integrated Waste General Manager, (916) 808-4949,  
Department of General Services

**Department:** General Services

**Division:** Residential Collection

**Dept ID:** 13001721

**Attachments:**

1-Description/Analysis

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**City Attorney Review**

Approved as to Form  
Sheri Chapman  
3/19/2014 10:59:03 AM

**City Treasurer Review**

Reviewed for Impact on Cash and Debt  
Russell Fehr  
3/14/2014 1:14:07 PM

**Approvals/Acknowledgements**

Department Director or Designee: Reina Schwartz - 3/19/2014 9:06:57 AM

## Description/Analysis

**Issue Detail:** On July 1, 2013, the Recycling and Solid Waste Division (“Division”) implemented several changes to the City’s residential solid waste collection and recycling programs, summarized below:

### Yard Waste Collection

City voters approved Measure T on November 6, 2012, allowing the City to implement year-round, weekly containerized yard waste collection for most residential solid waste customers. The City Council also approved a citywide loose-in-the-street yard waste collection program during November, December and January.

As part of the July 1, 2013 implementation of the new programs, the Division delivered approximately 12,000 yard waste containers to customers who previously subscribed to loose-in-the-street collection, reducing the monthly utility bill for these customers by \$3.36, from \$13.71 to \$10.35 per month.

For the period from July 2013 through January 2014, the total tonnage of yard waste collected in containers increased by nearly ten percent compared to the same period one year ago. In addition, during the November 2013 through January 2014 leaf season, the total tonnage of yard waste collected loose in the street decreased by nearly thirty percent compared to same period one year ago. These results are likely attributed to increased usage of yard waste containers and overall tonnage reductions due to drought conditions. The tonnage results are consistent with staff expectations and demonstrate that the program is working as designed.

### Household Junk Pickup Program and Dump Coupons

On July 1, 2013, the Household Junk Pickup Program (formerly the Appointment Based Neighborhood Cleanup Program) returned after several years and the free Dump Coupon was introduced for the first time. The table below shows the number of appointments and dump coupons requested through December 2013:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Number of Customers</b>
Household Junk Pickup Appointments (July 1, 2013 – October 30, 2013)	5,929
Dump Coupons (July 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013)	1,707

As presented to the City Council on November 26, 2013, effective February 1, 2014 residential solid waste customers may schedule two appointments per year in the Household Junk Pickup Program. The primary objectives of this change are to reduce illegal dumping, maximize the productivity of City collection crews, and

improve the level of customer service. The combination of the Household Junk Pickup Program and Dump Coupons offers residential customers three opportunities per year to dispose of junk and large debris at no additional charge.

### Bi-weekly Curbside Recycling

In 2002, the City introduced the single stream residential curbside recycling program on a bi-weekly collection schedule, consistent with all other jurisdictions within Sacramento County. In an attempt to increase participation and recycling tonnage, the program shifted to weekly collection in January of 2007. Despite doubling the collection frequency to weekly, the average annual recycling tonnage increased by less than 10 percent between 2007 and 2013.

Due to the nominal tonnage increase with the switch to weekly collection, and in an effort to reduce operational expenses, the curbside recycling program shifted back to bi-weekly collection on July 1, 2013. The table below provides a comparison of the period from July 1, 2012 through January 30, 2013 (weekly collection) with the period from July 1, 2013 through January 30, 2014 (biweekly collection). The data show a sixteen percent decrease in recycling tonnage compared to the same period one year ago with the weekly collection schedule.

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Tons Collected</b>	<b>% Change from Prior Year</b>
7/1/12 thru 1/30/13 (weekly collection)	20,914	
7/1/13 thru 1/30/14 (biweekly collection)	17,570	-16%

The decrease in tonnage is consistent with the yearly reduction of recyclables collected since the peak year of 2008. This decline is likely due to reduced consumer spending as a result of the recession. In the last year, residential garbage tonnage is down approximately 1 percent, so reduced recycling is likely not the result of recyclables being placed in garbage cans.

The switch to bi-weekly recycling on July 1, 2013 provided significant cost savings, which allowed the Division to implement the Citywide containerized yard waste collection program, the Household Junk Pickup Program, the Dump Coupon Program, and the Seasonal Leaf Season Program with no customer rate increase through July 1, 2015.

Some customers that currently generate higher volumes of recyclables have expressed a desire to return to a weekly collection schedule. City Council members have asked for options to address those customer complaints. The following two options have been identified for the curbside recycling program:

- The first option is to return to a weekly collection schedule and increase the current recycling rate for all residential solid waste customers by \$1.50 per month. In order to return to a weekly collection schedule, the Division will need to add seven recycling routes, purchase nine new collection vehicles

(seven route trucks and two spares), and increase staffing by 9.00 FTE (seven route drivers, one backup route driver and one fleet mechanic). The switch to weekly collection will require approximately twelve months from the date of approval of increased monthly rates to allow for procurement of collection vehicles, system routing, outreach and education, and staff recruitment, hiring and training.

- The second option is to continue with the current bi-weekly collection program, but allow customers that require a higher level of service to request a second recycling can for \$1.76 per month. Currently, less than one percent of residential solid waste customers have a second recycling can. This saves money and does not place an additional financial burden on customers who do not need the added service.

To address concerns about inadequate space for can storage, staff proposes the following customer outreach strategies:

- Implement an educational campaign highlighting container size options for all residential customers and bin service options for triplexes and fourplexes; and
- Identify triplex and fourplex properties for potential transition from cans to bins for garbage and/or recycle service and notify the property owner with bin service options.

**Policy Considerations:** The current residential solid waste program achieves the following goals and objectives identified in the 2011 Department of Utilities Operational Efficiency and Cost Savings Audit:

- Stabilize residential customer rates for a minimum of three years;
- Reduce carbon emissions, fuel consumption, pavement impacts, and mileage driven on City streets by solid waste collection vehicles;
- Provide uniform, convenient, and easily understandable programs;
- Comply with waste diversion mandates and all applicable health and safety requirements; and
- Provide sufficient yard waste collection services for all City neighborhoods throughout the year.

**Economic Impacts:** None

**Environmental Considerations:**

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):** No environmental review is necessary because the recommendation in this report involves general policy and procedure making and is not considered to be a project in accordance with Section 15378(b)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines.

**Sustainability:** The existing residential solid waste programs are consistent with the Sustainability Master Plan goal to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and lower the City's carbon footprint by utilizing fewer collection vehicles. A return to weekly recycling collection will increase the number of refuse trucks on the road,

thereby increasing greenhouse gas emissions, fuel consumption, and wear and tear on City streets.

**Commission/Committee Action:** None

**Rationale for Recommendation:** At the request of City Council, staff is providing a status update on the residential solid waste program changes that went into effect on July 1, 2013. As previously presented to the City Council, the next rate increase for residential solid waste services is scheduled for July 1, 2015. The collection frequency for the curbside recycling program will affect the magnitude of the July 1, 2015 rate increase. Staff recommends the current bi-weekly recycling schedule given the nominal tonnage increase with the weekly recycling program from 2007 through 2013.

**Financial Considerations:** The Recycling and Solid Waste Division last increased residential customer rates on July 1, 2010. The next proposed rate increase is scheduled for July 1, 2015, and will include rate increases for garbage, recycling, and yard waste programs in order to align revenue and expenses as required by State law. The monthly rate for the curbside recycling program will require an increase regardless if the program remains bi-weekly or is switched to weekly. The estimated additional annual cost to return to weekly recycling collection in FY 2015/16 is approximately \$2.2 million, which represents approximately \$1.50 per month per residential solid waste account.

**Local Business Enterprise (LBE):** No goods or services are being purchased as a result of this report.