

Meeting Agendas/Info

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

01-133

SYNOPSIS -

AGENDA:

MARCH 26, 2001

SUBJECT:

REFUSE
AUTOMATION PILOT

TYPE:

**RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE**

SUBMITTED BY

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PUBLIC WORKS
DIRECTOR

The Public Works Department has proceeded with purchase of equipment to begin the implementation and evaluation of automated solid waste collection services. This equipment includes one specially constructed vehicle operable by one person and 4,500 wheeled carts. Approximately 4,250 households will participate in the first phase of the operation. Each household will receive a wheeled cart to use for the storage and collection of household solid wastes. Residents are instructed to place the cart at a curbside location on their regularly scheduled collection day. The specially constructed vehicle will provide service by emptying the cart with a fully automated lifting mechanism.

Initially, one route on each collection day will be set up for the automated service. This totals 4,250 households, or about 7 percent of the approximate 61,000 households that receive collection services from the City.

Within four to six months of initiation of this service, each participating household will be surveyed concerning their views of this pilot. Participants will be asked to relay their likes and dislikes. Citizen feedback will be utilized to make adjustments in the provision of this service and is to be considered for any future expansion of the service.

FISCAL IMPACT -

The automated collection truck will cost approximately \$110,000 and require use of a specially designed wheeled cart. The carts cost approximately \$40 each and represent a significant capitol investment. Existing manually loaded trucks cost \$85,000 each. The automated truck can service a route 20 percent larger than those designed for manual collection. The automated truck is designed to be operated by one individual, while manual operations require a two-person crew. Additionally, the physical efforts of refuse collection make this the most dangerous occupation within the City,

averaging over one disabling injury annually per employee. The Public Works Department plans to evaluate potential long-term savings that may be realized through an automated collection system.

RECOMMENDATION -

Begin implementation of automated solid waste collection services on a trial basis to 4,250 residences. Request feedback from participating residents and evaluate future program expansion on the basis of customer satisfaction and economic benefit.

BACKGROUND -

Within the approved Fiscal Year (FY) 2000-2001 solid waste collection Operating Budget, the Public Works Department allocated funding for the evaluation of automated solid waste collection services. Equipment has been purchased that includes a specialized collection truck and approximately 4,500 collection carts. Approximately 250 extra collection carts have been purchased to replace those damaged from refuse collection. One collection route on each of the City's five collection days has been identified. Residents on each route will receive notification by mail in advance of the start of the service. Collection carts will be delivered to each participating household by City personnel. Residents will receive complete instructions on how to use the carts. Implementation is scheduled to begin in April, with full implementation of the pilot routes completed by mid-May. Following the pilot project, staff will survey participating households, review the business justification for automation, and report findings to Council.