

Meeting Agendas/Info

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:

REVISED

01-482

ITEM _____

AGENDA:

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

SEPTEMBER 24, 2001

SYNOPSIS -

SUBJECT:

AUTOMATED SOLID
WASTE
COLLECTION
SURVEY AND
OTHER SOLID
WASTE ISSUES

Based on a survey of 3,886 households in the City of Des Moines, we are asking for Council approval to expand the Automated Solid Waste Collection Program by adding two more automated collection routes per day by April 2002, at an estimated cost of \$715,000, including the purchase of three additional automated trucks and necessary automation containers.

TYPE:

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

FISCAL IMPACT -

The automated collection trucks cost approximately \$130,000 each and three will be required to expand the program for a total of \$390,000. The carts cost approximately \$40 each, and 8,064 will be needed at a cost of \$322,560. 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 disability injury annually per employee. Expansion of the automated collection program will result in personnel savings by attrition and reduced worker's compensation claims due to injuries. Funding for the expansion of the program is available within the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund via a lease purchase arrangement.

SUBMITTED BY:

WILLIAM STOWE
PUBLIC WORKS
DIRECTOR

RECOMMENDATION -

Authorize the Public Works Director to purchase the necessary carts and automated collection vehicles required at a combined cost of approximately \$715,000 to expand the automated collection program to two additional routes per day.

BACKGROUND -

On April 1, 2001, automated solid waste collection began for approximately 3,886 households in Des Moines. At the time of implementation, residents were informed that they would be surveyed concerning their views on automation. Although participants have been sharing their views on the program, the majority of which are positive, an official survey was sent out in late August to better evaluate the program. The results of the survey are now available in the attached automated Solid Waste Collection Survey Results Report. Based on the results of the survey, staff is recommending expansion of the program.

On March 26, 2001, by Roll Call No. 01-911, the City Council received and filed a report from the Public Works Director regarding implementation of an initial automated solid waste collection program. Approximately 3,886 households, or 6 percent of the approximate 61,000 households in Des Moines, have been receiving automated collection service since April 2001. Following four months of operation, residents receiving the service were surveyed regarding the program. Of the 3,886 households surveyed, 1,788 (or 46 percent) returned the self-addressed, postage-paid response card. The results of the survey are shown in the attached Automated Solid Waste Collection Survey Results Report.

AUTOMATED SOLID WASTE COLLECTION SURVEY RESULTS

Of those who responded to the survey, 85 percent rated the program a four or better on a five point rating scale. The majority (or 74 percent) do not want their solid waste fees based on the amount of trash they throw away. With regard to recycling, 88 percent of the respondents reported that they do recycle; however, many did not know what automated recycling (single stream, i.e., newspaper placed in a designated container for collection using an automated truck) means. The overriding concerns with automated collection were the carts (some need more, some need smaller ones) and use of the carts in the wintertime. Staff is currently developing information to address customer needs and overall recommendations for the program.

APPLIANCE COLLECTION

Effective August 1, 2001, the Metro Waste Authority began charging \$10 for the disposal of appliances. New federal regulations now mandate the de-manufacturing of appliances prior to disposal. As a result, the Public Works Department is evaluating the need for a per-unit charge for appliances collected at the curb. All surrounding suburbs are charging for appliance pick up, and staff has concluded

that some of the appliances which originate in the suburbs are being brought to the City of Des Moines for free pick up. Consequently, during the upcoming budget process, a specific recommendation on charging for appliance pick up will be forthcoming.

BULK WASTE COLLECTION

The bulk waste collection program is also under review. Currently, bulky items such as sofas, large chairs, mattresses, etc. are collected without additional cost. Since the quantity of bulky items is increasing due in part to charges being levied for such items in the suburbs, staff will be reviewing the need to charge a collection fee for such items during the upcoming budget process.

LEAF AND YARD DEBRIS - DIRECT DISPOSAL

The automated collection survey included many comments about the current Metro Waste Authority compost fees. Since moving toward this regional approach on April 1, 2001, City staff has received many customer concerns about yard bag and sticker rates.

Following discussions between the City Public Works staff and Metro Waste Authority, we are pleased to report that an agreement has been reached with the Metro Waste Authority to allow for the bulk disposal of leaf and yard debris at the Authority's Metro Compost Center on Harriett Street this fall. Specifically, residents may bring yard waste directly to the compost facility for \$25 per pickup load (\$20 per pickup load if it is covered appropriately to avoid blowing). Residents desiring to haul their yard waste directly to the Metro Compost Center at East 15th and Harriett Streets, may do so on four Saturdays this fall: October 13, October 20, October 27, November 3, and November 10, between the hours of 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Attachment
