



Agenda Item:

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COUNCIL COMMUNICATION City Manager's Office

GENERAL INFORMATION

Agenda Date: 02/28/05
05-074

Communication No.:

Agenda Item Type: Resolution
No.:

Roll Call

Submitted by: William G. Stowe, Public Works

SUBJECT—

Recycling Collection Study

SYNOPSIS—

On October 25, 2004, by Roll Call No. 04-2274, the City Council received a status report on the City's Solid Waste Management Program. One of the new initiatives listed in the report—a recyclables collection study—will explore ways to increase volume and participation, including automated “paper only” collection using wheeled containers. A drop-off location for other recyclables as part of the collection study has been arranged, and a “hold harmless” agreement is required for use of the site at Lincoln Heights Lutheran Church. Staff recommends approval.

FISCAL IMPACT—

Metro Waste Authority (MWA) applied for and received a matching funds grant from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Solid Waste Alternatives Program to cover much of the costs of the pilot recycling programs. MWA is partnering with the City of Des Moines, and both are contributing in-kind matches through labor and equipment. Funding for the City's share is currently available in the Solid Waste Enterprise account.

RECOMMENDATION—

Approval

BACKGROUND—

Beginning in 1994, recyclables were collected weekly with Curb It!®—Metro Waste Authority's metro area curbside recycling program. In 1999, under pressure to reduce program costs, the City of Des Moines moved to bi-weekly collection to reduce program costs. Presently, the City of Des Moines collects approximately 6,500 tons of recyclables from 46 percent of the City's estimated 65,600 households.

In January 2004, the Public Works Department formed a solid waste leadership committee to discuss solid waste and recycling issues. The citizens and employees participating in the committee made four recommendations with respect to increasing the volumes of recyclables:

- Collect mixed paper only (old newsprint, old corrugated cardboard, and mixed)
- Provide a unique container for collecting mixed paper
- Consider automated collection which provides a larger container with lid and wheels
- Provide more education about curbside recycling

In cooperation with the City, the MWA applied for and received a matching funds grant from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to perform a recycling study. The goals of the study are to design a system best suited to the needs of residents, and thereby, increase the volumes of recyclables collected (particularly mixed paper), and increase set-out and participation rates, as measured by number of households and weight put at curbside. There will be three test areas of approximately 350-400 households each. The pilot project will run for 12 months.

The study has the potential to show that a greater portion of the residential paper waste stream—currently, a high value commodity—can be recovered. The revenues obtained, along with the cost reductions associated with automated collection and avoided landfill fees, may move curbside recycling toward sustainability. The study will also determine if different variables are able to affect the quantity of containers recovered from residents, either through curbside collection or at a drop-off location. Simplicity and ease of use may increase participation and sustain residents' commitment to recycling.

Please see the attachment for additional information.