



# City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

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STREET MAINTENANCE  
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING  
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING  
REFUSE/ RECYCLING  
CENTRAL STORES

TO: Eric D. Campbell, City Manager  
FROM: Thomas Hartman, PE, Assistant Director of Public Works  
DATE: May 22, 2018  
RE: Solid Waste Management and Collection Program Update

**Summary:** Presentation from the Public Works Department to update Council on the Solid Waste Management and Collection Program.

## **Background:**

### **Current Operations:**

On February 23, 2018 the Public Works Department (PW) was notified that Van Der Linde Recycling was closing their operations and would no longer accept the "Single Stream" waste generated by the City, due to the loss of a market for the recyclable material. Single Stream collection of Solid Waste, including recyclable material was collected as comingled waste and shipped to Van Der Linde recycling in Troy Va. At this facility the recyclable and reusable material was removed. The recyclable material was then shipped to other processors for use, primarily to the overseas markets, particularly China. Following that notification, PW stopped taking material to the Van Der Linde facility and began to dispose of the collected Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) at the Rockingham County landfill. Public Works has not restarted curbside collection of comingled recyclable material, due to the challenges of sorting the comingled material, removal of the trash that is often mixed in the recycling bins, and the cost of disposal of the comingled recyclables. In addition to diverting the MSW to the landfill, PW opened a Solid Waste Convenience Center at 2055 Beery Road. The center was established to allow citizens to sort their recyclable material at the center. Once sorted Public Works facilitates the transfer of the recyclable material to local vendors for processing. The center is currently open Monday – Friday from 8am to 4pm, and Saturday 8am to 12pm. It has been in operation for 7 weeks and has seen a weekly average of 20 citizens per day, and an average of 75 citizens on Saturdays. In addition to recyclables the center will also accept bulk materials, and yard debris.

### **Recyclable Markets:**

Prior to January 1, 2018 the primary consumer of all US, and worldwide, recyclables was China. However, due to deteriorating quality of the recyclable materials being sold to China, China enacted a ban on 31 types of recyclable material. This ban has thrown the world market for recycling into a spin and has drastically reduced the options available to the City for affordable disposal of its collected recycling. The first main issue was the closure of the Van Der Linde facility, which heavily relied on the Chinese market. The second issue is that other facilities that will accept recyclable materials have very stringent policies for the quality of the materials they will accept. One such facility in Fishersville will

accept comingled recyclable material; however, they charge a tipping fee of \$100/ton to dispose of this material. In comparison it costs the City \$52/ton to dispose of MSW at the Rockingham County landfill. Regional and local markets for some sorted clean plastics, cardboard, paper, and aluminum remain available at this time, as long as the quality of the accepted material is not contaminated.

#### Local Markets:

Due to the challenges mentioned above other localities in our region are exploring various ways to cope with the increasing costs of recycling. Broadway for example has elected to discontinue their recycling program effective July 1 of this year. Bridgewater has not yet decided, but is exploring the option of also discontinuing their recycling operations. Other localities in the State are reviewing their current recycling programs due to the cost and lack of markets. Rockingham County only provides recycling at their convenience centers.

Attached is a list of City's and their solid waste collection websites for your reference.

#### Solid Waste Fees:

Currently the fees charged by the City for the solid waste program are in line with other similar sized communities, however, the level of service provided by the City exceeds those of other communities. The main area of difference is in the bulk and yard debris programs. Currently, solid waste fees are divided into a \$10/month Solid Waste Collection Fee, and a \$15/month Solid Waste Management Fee. These fees provide revenue for the four (4) main components of the solid waste program, 1) collection services, 2) management services, 3) closed landfill compliance, and 4) debt service.

#### **Solid Waste Collection Fee**

- *Collection Services:* In FY19 the collection revenue is forecast to be approximately \$1.2 million, and the expenditures are budgeted to be approximately \$1.2 million. This is based on current operations where MSW, bulk, and yard debris are collected curb side, and recyclables are accepted at the convenience center.

#### **Solid Waste Management Fee**

- *Management Services:* Summary of services: Administration cost for development and management of Solid Waste Management plan, DEQ compliance and reporting, transportation cost for shipping solid waste and recyclables to disposal sites, tipping fee costs, operations of the Solid Waste Convenience Center, and bulk and yard debris collection. See the attached Solid Waste Management fee summary for more detail.
- *Closed Landfill Compliance:* Funds for this activity are collected as part of the solid waste management fee. Expenditures associated with activity include quarterly air monitoring to ensure air quality standards are being met as methane is released from the landfill, quarterly site inspections to ensure the integrity of the area is maintained, and meets permit requirements; and bi-annual groundwater monitoring to ensure that groundwater is within

drinking water standards. These funds are used assist the City in implementing the corrective action plan, which include yearly reporting updates on the status of the area of concern, corrective actions taken in the past year, and schedule for further implementation of the corrective action plan.

- *Debt Service:* Currently the revenue collected by the solid waste management fee is used to service the debt incurred for the Solid Waste management program, primarily with the past Resource Recovery Facility equipment replacement and required DEQ air quality compliance upgrades. Approximately 7 years remain on this debt until it is retired.

In summary Public Works does not propose a reduction in the solid waste collection or management fees due to the uncertainty of many issues facing the solid waste management program.

Next Steps:

Public Works will continue to operate the convenience center and collect MSW, bulk, and yard debris at the curb side. In the coming months Public Works plans to meet with members of the Environmental Performance Standards Advisory Committee (EPSAC) to discuss the future vision of solid waste management in the City. Those discussions will be focused around the EPSAC's goals of sustainable practices and is planned to be an inclusive look at all of the solid waste management program. Public Works is currently reviewing the bulk and yard debris collection program. If these materials can be handled differently some of the collected material can be counted toward our recycling rate. Bulk collection is a service that the City currently provides that when compared to similar localities, our program provides a higher level of service. Public Works is currently investigating options to revise this program to limit the size of regularly collected bulk, and require that heavier bulk items be scheduled for special collection. This would be similar to the current scheduled bulk program, but size limits would be changed. Public Works hopes to have a draft of this plan by mid-summer.

Outreach and engagement with the citizens concerning our current operations, recycling center updates, bulk and yard debris collection, and other solid waste items will continue to be very important. Public Works staff plans to continue this outreach with support of various City departments and community groups.

The City can continue to meet our state requirement of 25% recycling with this current operation. The cost can be contained if the citizens continue to bring their recyclables, yards debris, and bulk items to the convenience center and assist by sorting the material.

Finally, Public Works will continue to monitor all recycling markets to determine the most cost-effective way to manage accepted recyclable material. As changes continue, Public Works will make program adjustments to ensure we are able to provide the best service to our citizens.

**Key Issues:** Recycling markets both worldwide and locally.

**Environmental Impact:** Various impacts on many related solid waste areas.

## **The City With The Planned Future**

**Fiscal Impact:** There are no proposed changes to the FY18 or FY19 budgets at this time.

**Prior Actions:** None.

**Alternatives:** None.

**Community Engagement:** Press releases concerning changes in operations.

**Recommendation:** Continuing collection program as is, and work to determine the best program changes as we move forward.

**Attachments:** Solid Waste Management Fee Summary and Municipality Reference sheet.

**Review:**

*The initiating Department Director will place in Legistar, in sequence of transmittal, the names of each department that must initial their review in order for this item to be placed on the City Council agenda. The completion of review only addresses the readiness of the issue for Council consideration. This does not address the recommendation for approval or denial of the issue.*

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