

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council, Finance Committee
From: SACEE
Date: January 12, 2015
Subject: Pay-As-You-Throw

Summary

SACEE recommends that City Council approve a pay-as-you-throw waste management system. In light of City Council's stated goal of accomplishing 50% waste reduction by 2035, SACEE recommends the bag based model over the cart based model. However, if City Council does not approve the bag based model, SACEE recommends implementing the cart based model rather than making no change to Asheville's waste management system.

Analysis

SACEE formed a Waste Reduction Taskforce to consider various models of waste management to determine whether a change in Asheville's waste management could assist in meeting City Council's goal of reducing waste in the City. Based on staff's research, two models were targeted as potentially viable waste collection alternatives: the cart based model and the bag based model.

The Cart Based Model

The cart based model would allow customers to select a 32, 64, or 96 gallon garbage cart. The monthly cost to customers would be based on the size of the cart selected, with the smaller bin being the least expensive and the largest bin being the most expensive. The City would be required to make a significant initial investment to purchase 32 and 64 gallon carts, but the new carts would not require a change to the existing collection vehicles and the operational costs to implement the cart based model would not be significant. A 15% waste reduction is projected with the implementation of the cart based model.

The Bag Based Model

The bag based model would require customers to purchase 15 or 30 gallon garbage bags at local retailers. The bags would be easily identifiable as City of Asheville waste collection bags and would cost significantly more than garbage bags that are currently available for purchase. The bag based model would not require the City to make a significant purchase of materials or supplies to rollout the system, but the operational costs would be higher, primarily because of

enforcement. Enforcement is a necessary component with the bag based model to ensure that customers are using the appropriate garbage bags. A 30% waste reduction is projected with the implementation of the bag based model.

Comparison

The primary benefit of the cart based model is that it will be simple to communicate to customers because it is not a significant departure from the current method of waste collection. In addition, the cart based model requires minimal staff support and predictable revenue. The primary drawback to the cart based model is that it will have less of an impact on waste reduction in Asheville.

The primary benefit of the bag based model is that it will have the greater overall impact on waste reduction. The bag based system is also projected to result in a greater financial benefit to the City. The primary drawback to the bag based model is that it will likely be a more difficult transition because it is a more significant departure from the current method of waste collection, and as a result, the bag based model will require more staff support for implementation and for enforcement.

Although the bag based system will be a more difficult transition, SACEE unanimously voted to recommend the bag based system to City Council because of the more significant impact the bag based system is projected to have on waste reduction. However, SACEE also unanimously voted to recommend that City Council approve a change to the current waste collection system. Accordingly, if the bag based model lacks adequate support, SACEE would recommend that City Council approve the cart based model.