

From the Mayor...

March 4, 2016

In early May, we will initiate a new, automated curbside waste collection program throughout the entire city.

Over the past 4 weeks, I have traveled a large portion of the city trash routes with our dedicated sanitation workers. I have gained a great appreciation of the concerns associated with the current manual process of garbage pickup and the adjustments that will occur with the new automated system.

Why are we moving out of the alleys?

The current rear load trash packers, which the city has used for many years, often have a difficult time navigating narrow alleys delineated by utility poles, non-conforming structures, and low hanging utility lines. The alleys are narrow and the asphalt is thin. The pickup process often requires backing-up and making sharp turns that are difficult and slow. The new side load truck is even larger and heavier and will simply not fit down some of our alleys.

The thin asphalt surface in the alleys does not hold up well under the weight of large trucks. Frequent resurfacing of the alleys takes away from the resources we need to maintain over 200 lane miles of city roads and streets.

Our current city recycling contractor is giving us a significant cost savings to move out of the alleys. They have realized from the many communities they service that efficiencies are improved and cost savings are realized when moving out of the alleys and picking up at the curbside.

Is safety a concern?

Yes! The current traditional rear load trash truck has a driver and two refuse workers riding on the back. They are constantly in motion, jumping on and off and working behind and on both sides of trucks that have very poor sightlines. As the driver starts and stops from one curbside location to the next, he must rely on mirrors and a camera to avoid collision with refuse workers. He is also watching for impatient motorists passing the trash vehicle on both sides, posing a dangerous threat for our city workers. Poor weather aggravates this even more. In addition, a 2000-psi very large, exposed compactor mechanism is in almost constant use and can be a significant safety concern.

The new automated truck requires only one employee. The automated arm is operated from the driver's seat inside the truck. This eliminates the safety exposure of the two mobile refuse workers who are not required on the automated truck. It also eliminates the passing motorist hazard and the exposed compactor.

How will the totes clean up our city?

Right now, many households have multiple trashcans without lids that are easily knocked over. Some don't even use trashcans; they just throw out bags of trash for our refuse workers to pick up. With the new automated pickup arm, only trash inside of the tote can be loaded. No loose trash bags can be picked up.

Each household will have one tote (96 or 64 gallon). The large 96-gallon tote will hold three times the trash of a single can. Everything must be bagged and within the tote to be picked up. The totes have attached lids and are very difficult to tip over.

I have observed multiple garbage cans per household that are full of recyclables. Residents can eliminate a large portion of their garbage volume by recycling. We will only provide an extra tote to households that have large garbage volume if they are actively recycling.

Thanks! More trash talk next month.