

Summit Hill Association

District 16 Planning Council

860 Saint Clair Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105

Telephone 651-222-1222

www.summithillassociation.org

info@summithillassociation.org

July 25, 2017

Councilmember Rebecca Noecker
Saint Paul City Council
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
Suite 310B
St. Paul, MN 55102

Sent by Email

RE: Coordinated Collection

Dear Councilmember Noecker;

In the week extension of the Coordinated Collection comment period, we reached out to residents in the Summit Hill neighborhood to the degree we could, also taking into account comments that were made from Summit Hill residents to the City Council.

Even with the short comment period, it is apparent to us that there are too many neighbors who have substantive issues and concerns with the Coordinated Collection proposal in its current form for the Summit Hill Association to endorse it. These include:

- **Higher Costs.** Even without the City annual administrative fee, many residents report that they will be paying more than they currently do under the arrangements they have with private haulers. And, they question the ability of the City to hold down costs in the future.
 - The fact that an administrative fee is being charged which brings no added value when most residents have valued and productive relationships with their individual hauler adds to unhappiness with the cost of this proposal.
 - On top of the projected increases in property taxes and street maintenance fees in 2018, added costs for Coordinated Collection—which many do not find value in to begin with (see below)—are seen as unnecessary and onerous.
- **Lack of Flexibility.** Many residents have negotiated trash collection plans that better fit their needs, such as less frequent pick-ups, smaller containers, sharing containers with neighbors, etc. This has resulted in lower costs and greater satisfaction with the service provided by their individual hauler, and the sense that the City's proposal is at odds with their needs and preferences.
- **Fear of Poor Service.** This stems from a constellation of related concerns, including:
 - The disastrous roll-out of the recycling cart program, which is still being felt in the Summit Hill neighborhood as demonstrated by the many phone calls the Summit Hill Association office still receives weekly.
 - General lack of trust in the City's ability to administer a program of this complexity and magnitude.

Summit Hill Association

District 16 Planning Council

860 Saint Clair Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105

Telephone 651-222-1222

www.summithillassociation.org

info@summithillassociation.org

- Having no leverage with individual haulers due to lack of a direct relationship; currently, if residents receive poor service, they can address their concerns directly with their hauler and, if needed, switch haulers.
- **Too Many Unanswered Questions.** These center around issues as diverse as how billing would work, what recourse individual residents would have if they receive poor customer service, how the number of trash containers is calculated for multi-family residences, how collection will work for residences without alley access, etc.

Of note is that in much of the Summit Hill neighborhood, this plan will not substantially reduce alley or street traffic due to the number of commercial haulers and 5+ unit residential buildings which are exempt from this program.

We endorse some of the goals of Coordinated Collection. However, we feel that there is too much uncertainty about the overall value it brings to Summit Hill residents, as well as how it would be rolled out in a way that would avoid the many pitfalls of the recycling cart program, for this to proceed at the current time. We also question—as we did a week ago—the process and the timeline.

We have some suggestions:

- Conduct a **pilot program** in a couple of neighborhoods to demonstrate the value and learn more about how this program would effectively address the stated goals of the program, overall, as well as the concerns of the residents who have spoken up so far.
- Create an **incentive program** for neighbors to address the issues around multiple haulers in a given area by coordinating collection in micro-areas—as many have done already.
- Create **focused programs in areas where illegal dumping and/or trash burning** is an issue.

Thank you for your consideration in listening to and addressing the concerns of residents in the Summit Hill neighborhood.

Yours truly,



Andrew Rorvig
President, Summit Hill Association District 16 Planning Council

cc: Monica Haas, Executive Director
St. Paul City Council