

# RECYCLING PROGRAM UPDATE BACKGROUND

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Saint Paul City Council

February 8, 2017

# New Program for 2017

- New collection and processing contracts as a result of RFP process
- Eureka Recycling selected as contractor for recycling collection and processing
- Contract began January 16, 2017
- New collection method
  - Carts
  - Alley pick-up, where available
  - New materials
- Major transition for the city involving over 84,000 households

# The Good News

- The transition went well for the vast majority of our residents
- As of February 6, 1291.46 tons of recyclable material has been processed.
- This is a 19% increase in materials collected city-wide over the same period last year. It is about a 24% increase for the single-family and small apartment building program.
- Phone calls indicate participation from new recyclers and more diverse households (i.e. non-English speakers)

# Transition Challenges

- We know the transition has not gone well for everyone
- Despite a lot of preparation, when dealing with a transition of this size, issues arise during implementation
- We are working hard to address the issues involved, so that we can get people recycling as soon as possible.
- Problems tend to fall into 5 key areas

# Challenge Areas

- Data Issues
- Pick-up location change issues
- High Volume of Material in early weeks of program
- Resident Education/Communication
- Human Error

# Data Issues

- Because of the new collection system, some data has not existed previously, and needed to be created specifically for the program
  - i.e. the city previously had no GIS centerline data for city alleys
- Data received from some sources was not complete or up to date
  - Single household at a property listed as a duplex
  - Town house and multi-unit properties listed under a single address or not on the list
- Necessary to coordinate information between data sets
  - Cart location information with routing data
- Lots of work went into data coordination in preparation for the transition, but we don't know what we don't know, until issues are reported or discovered in the field

# Data Issues

- **Result in:**

- Missed cart deliveries
- Missed collections for certain homes, whole blocks or alleys

- **What we are doing to correct:**

- As locations are discovered, we are adding them to routing software
  - Entails conversation with resident, reviewing maps and delivery data, and potentially a site visit
  - Affects how the overall route functions
- Extended delivery contract work to address volume of additional cart deliveries
- Have clarified process for missed pick-ups to be addressed next day

# Data Issues

- **What to expect:**

- Problems should be greatly diminished as data is updated and missing information is added
- It does take some time to correct this information, so corrections may take a week or longer
- Some routing will change as the result of additional data
- We anticipate that we will continue to have reports related to missing data as program continues



# Pick-up Location Change Issues

- Some addresses have special/unique circumstances that don't match up with original plan for collection
  - i.e. House does not really have alley or street access
- Work was done prior to the transition, but in some cases don't know about issue until reported to us or found in the field
- Each address needs to be evaluated to determine the best collection location for resident and routing

# Pick-Up Location Change Issues

- **Result in:**

- Carts delivered to wrong location (alley vs. curb)
- Missed collection points

- **What we are doing to correct:**

- Developed criteria to expedite the location decisions for some properties
- Accelerated process for reviewing and approval of new collection locations
- Extended contract for additional cart deliveries

# Pick-up Location Change Issues

- **What to Expect:**

- Missed pick-ups related to these addresses should be diminished as pick-up locations are confirmed
- Carts should be delivered to known location changes in the next week
- Some routing will change as addresses are changed in the system
- There will continue to be occasional location change requests as the program continues

# High Volume of Material

- Because carts were delivered prior to the start of collection; many people were hanging on to their materials for the first collection day
- Resulted in a very high volume of material to be collected in first week of program
- This is both good news and bad news
  - People were eager to participate
  - Large volume meant excess materials outside of carts

# High Volume of Material

- **Results in:**

- slower collection times – inability to finish entire route on assigned day
- cascade effect - more material to collect the next day and next week
- more material than fits in cart, difficulty using automated system

- **What we are doing to correct:**

- For week 2 and week 3, added additional staff on trucks to aid with positioning carts and picking up material outside of cart
- Continuing to pick up extra materials from multiple missed addresses

# High Volume of Material

- **What to Expect:**
  - Should be closer to “normal” volume this week
  - Eureka will be picking up from properly placed carts
  - Education tags will be left to help residents understand materials should be in carts
  - No pick up of extra materials outside the cart for most pick ups
  - Limited pick up of additional materials from multiple-missed locations

# Resident Education

- Educational materials were mailed to residents before cart delivery, attached to the carts, mailed after cart delivery and posted through social media
- Despite all of those efforts, it is still difficult to get the word to 84,000 households and have all understand new pick up protocol
- More work needs to be done to help residents understand difference between our program and regular trash service
  - i.e. cart needs to be wheeled to alley/curb line, space between cart and other objects

# Resident Education

- **Results in:**

- Residents not placing carts in correct location for pick up
- Residents placing carts on wrong day
- As a result, missed pick-ups and slower collection times

- **What we are doing to correct:**

- Advertising in Pioneer Press and other local papers with correct placement info
- City-wide mailing this week with instructions for correct placement
- City-wide annual recycling guide mailed with-in 2 weeks with instructions; guide mailed to all folks in apartments shortly after.
- Increased social media with instructions
- Increased use of educational tags on carts to provide instruction



# Resident Education

- **What to expect:**
  - Resident education will be on-going for the program
  - Collection locations issues and access issues (winter) will continue to arise, but on a smaller scale
  - As with previous program, we will continue to have some missed pick-ups
  - We have missed pick-up protocol in place
  - Residents may see educational tag left on cart offering instructions

# Human Error

- As with any new, large program change, there is a learning curve
- Drivers are learning new process and new routes
  - Changes to routes add additional challenge
- Drivers are learning what carts are “actual” set outs
- Drivers are becoming more proficient with equipment in real-time conditions

# Human Error

- **Results in:**

- Missed pick-ups
- Improperly placed set downs

- **What we are doing to correct:**

- Eureka is working with drivers to identify proper set outs
- Eureka is working with drivers to correct improperly placed set downs
- We have updated missed pick-up protocol

- **What to expect:**

- As drivers learn routes and equipment the number of missed pick-ups and improper set downs should decline.

# Moving Forward

- This is a major systems change for 84,000 households, so it is not surprising that there will be some bumps in the road during the transition
- Overall, recycling is being collected and service is improving every week
- We think this new program will be a better system for our residents into the future
- We continue to hear that the community is excited about the changes and understands the glitches at the start of a new system like this.