

RECYCLING PROGRAM UPDATE BACKGROUND

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.