

**Information Item**

**Date:** April 12, 2021

**To:** Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

**From:** Johnnie Taylor, Director of Operations  
Helen Peplowski, Office of Sustainability Director

**Subject:**  
Information on the upcoming Recycling RFP process

**Strategic Focus Area:** Healthy Environment

**Strategic Objective:** Develop Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Strategies

**Strategic Plan Action Item:** Review options and estimated costs for transition or curbside residential recycling program.

**Key Work Item:** No



The Office of Sustainability staff presents the following information related to the City’s current curbside recycling program with Waste Management and expectations of the next recycling contract.

The current contract began in 2012 and is set to end March 30, 2022. In this contract, Waste Management services 74,200 single-family homes, 638 multi-family residents, 2,919 space restricted residents (bins), 900 small businesses, 3 county drop-off centers and the school system.

With the next contract, staff expects to see changes that will impact the cost of curbside recycling. One such change is the increase in price per household. As of April 1, the city pays \$1.65 per household. However, after reviewing contracts from other cities, staff expects this number to increase by at least \$1.00, leading to an increase of at least \$897,000 in the first year. The Consumer Price Index adjustment will increase that cost each year of the contract. The average of the past five years has been an increase of about 1.5% annually.

Another possible increase in recycling costs could come from additional fees that the city is not currently paying. One such fee is for excessive contamination rates, based on a threshold agreed upon between the contractor and the city. For reference, 12.5% of the FY 19-20 contract payment went towards contamination. Another possible fee that could be proposed is a fee for backyard collections.

Another potential change may be in how glass is collected. Glass as a material has a blended value of (-\$25.31) as of February 2021. Because of this negative value, municipalities and contractors have come up with other solutions. Recently, Greensboro decided to take glass out of the curbside program and instead established community drop-off locations for glass. It is important to note that if glass is taken out of the curbside program, any glass that ends up in curbside bins is then considered contamination.

Finally, staff would like to ensure the education and outreach efforts around recycling are emphasized. With some potentially big changes to the recycling stream and fees, it will be important to keep the public informed around these changes so contamination rates remain lower. The contractor will also be asked to run two educational campaigns annually and to participate in the annual Earth Day Fair.