

DATE ISSUED: June 4, 2004 REPORT NO. 04-122

ATTENTION: Natural Resources and Culture Committee
Agenda of June 9, 2004

SUBJECT: Update on Commercial Refuse Collection Hours of Operation Pilot Program

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR CITY COUNCIL.

This report is to provide the Natural Resources and Culture (NR&C) Committee with a six month update on the pilot program authorizing adjusted hours of commercial refuse collection in downtown San Diego.

BACKGROUND

On April 9, 2003, the NR&C Committee considered a proposal made by the San Diego County Disposal Association (SDCDA) to extend the permitted hours for commercial refuse collection in downtown San Diego. The SDCDA proposed amending the Municipal Code to allow earlier commercial refuse collection in downtown mixed use areas, including the Gaslamp District. A proposal was made to adjust the collection start time from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 a.m. for selected commercial zones and 6:30 a.m. for mixed use areas containing a high concentration of residents. The SDCDA also proposed that measures be implemented by commercial refuse collection companies to mitigate noise impacts on residential units due to the earlier collection activity.

The NR&C Committee approved the City Manager's recommendation to convene a task force of stakeholders and directed City staff to evaluate the issues related to commercial refuse collection in the downtown area and return in 90 days with recommended solutions.

A Refuse Collection Task Force was formed on April 24, 2003. The Task Force included residents, waste haulers, Business Improvement Districts, food and beverage businesses and City staff. The Task Force met on a regular basis until June 27, 2003, identifying issues and formulating recommendations to improve commercial refuse collection services in the downtown area and mitigate associated impacts on downtown residents.

The Task Force recommended extending the hours of commercial refuse collection for a one year period. Mitigation measures to reduce noise impacts were included as a requirement for the haulers operating within the pilot program area. The Task Force also recommended providing education regarding the changes in refuse collection services, implementing a single point-of-contact to file complaints and to address design standards for refuse containers. The City Council approved the Task Force's recommendations on September 2, 2003, and a Waste Management Regulation implementing the pilot program took effect on October 15, 2003. The Task Force was also directed to meet on a quarterly basis to reevaluate issues based on feedback, schedule follow up reports to the NR&C Committee in six months and at one year, revisit the pilot program by evaluating its effectiveness and make a recommendation on continuing, modifying or ending the extended hours of commercial refuse collection.

DISCUSSION

Refuse Collection Task Force Recommendation

On March 11, 2004, the Task Force met regarding the pilot program. All Task Force members were invited to provide comments and feedback on the program. The Task Force members in attendance unanimously agreed that the pilot program had been successful in minimizing traffic congestion and providing adequate time for haulers to service all customers in a safe and efficient manner without negatively impacting the quality of life of those that live or work in the downtown area. Also, it was reported that there had been no complaints received by the Environmental Services Department (ESD) pertaining to early refuse collection.

Code Enforcement

The ESD has one Solid Waste Code Enforcement Officer (Enforcement Officer) that is assigned to code enforcement issues relating to the pilot program. The Enforcement Officer performed random patrols within the pilot program area to enforce the rules and guidelines established per the Waste Management Regulation. Since the inception of this pilot program in October 2003 through March 2004, the Enforcement Officer has performed a total of 47 patrols. This effort translates into approximately 30 labor hours per month for random patrols of the pilot program area during early morning hours, at an estimated cost of \$5,000 dollars for personnel and non-personnel expenses.

Taking a proactive approach to monitoring the haulers' performance during this pilot program period, a total of eleven (11) violations were reported. All of the violations were for operating within the pilot program boundaries before the designated collection start

times. Two of the franchised haulers received \$100 fines for multiple violations, with violations tapering off as drivers employed by the franchised haulers became more familiar with the collection start times in their route areas.

CONCLUSION

This pilot program has been in place for over six months. Currently, there is no indication that extended hours for earlier refuse collection by private haulers operating within the designated pilot areas have had an adverse impact on the quality of life. The current consensus of all parties impacted by extended hours of refuse collection in downtown San Diego is that this program has been a definite step in the right direction in an attempt to resolve a complex issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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Approved: Richard Mendes
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