

Cleveland Heights Refuse & Recycling Task Force

Final Report Presentation
Municipal Services Committee
February 10, 2020

Existing Solid Waste Collection

▶ Refuse

- ▶ Placed curbside in loose bags
- ▶ Weekly collection > City transfer station > Rumpke landfill Shiloh, OH
- ▶ Landfill fee: \$15.32/ton

▶ Recycling

- ▶ Placed curbside in blue/clear bags
- ▶ Weekly collection > City transfer station > Kimble MRF, Twinsburg, OH
- ▶ Current income \$0.50/ton, projected future fee of \$40-\$80/ton

▶ Bulk

- ▶ Placed curbside, no restrictions
- ▶ Weekly collection > City transfer station > Rumpke landfill
- ▶ Landfill fee: \$15.32/ton

▶ Leaves

- ▶ Seasonal loose leaf collection
- ▶ April-December yard waste in kraft bags and bundled branches

Options evaluated by Task Force

Option 1 –

Keep current system

Option 2 –

Adopt automated system, operated by the City

Option 3 –

Adopt automated system, operated by private company

Option 1 – Keep current system

▶ Advantages

- ▶ No changes made, staffing levels and responsibilities remain the same

▶ Disadvantages

- ▶ Inefficient system
- ▶ High rates of worker injuries due to repetitive motion and weights of bags
- ▶ Loose bags on tree lawns are environmental and aesthetic hazards
- ▶ Recyclables are currently placed in clear or blue plastic bags. All Materials Recovery Facilities are requiring recyclables to be delivered loose

Option 1 - Keep current system

Vehicles have exceeded estimated useful life of 10 years and require replacement

MRFs no longer accepting recyclables in plastic bags – will require city to collect recyclables in small curbside bins

Collection Vehicles

- ▶ 6 – Non-Automated Front Load Trucks – Est. Total Cost - \$1,872,720

Small Curbside Collection Bins

- ▶ 48,825 Bins (3 per H/H + 5% extra-5 Yr. Life) – Est. Total Cost - \$976,500

Transfer Station Vehicles

- ▶ 3 - Replacement Semi Tractors – Est. Total Cost - \$399,000
- ▶ 2 – Replacement Semi Trailers – Est. Total Cost - \$134,000

Transfer Station Improvements

- ▶ Deck Rehabilitation and Structural Steel Repairs - \$210,000 R/R Angle Lintel, Flashing, and End Dams - \$50,000
Brick Replacement - \$8,000
Repoint Masonry - \$35,000
- ▶ New Compactor - \$250,000 (this is not needed, but expected in the next few years)

Total Cost \$3,935,220

Annual Cost = Total Cost of Capital Outlay/Est. Useful Life of Asset = \$461,022

Option 1 – Keep Current System

Sources of funding and revenue

- ▶ The City of Cleveland Heights charges residents a monthly fee included in the residential sewerage bill of \$11.50 (and \$3.00 for Homestead exemption) per residential unit. The city receives approximately \$2.1 Million dollars in fee revenue annually.
- ▶ There are low interest loans available to Municipal agencies through the Ohio Water Development Authority. There is not an annual or bi-annual application period, and loans can be applied for at any time throughout the year.
- ▶ It is estimated that by increasing the fee charged to residents by approximately less than \$3.00 per month, the city could generate enough additional revenue to pay debt service on estimated capital costs.

Option 2 - Adopt automated system, operated “in-house” (Recommended)

Refuse – residents place trash in provided wheeled refuse cart.

Recycling – residents place LOOSE recyclables in provided wheeled recycling cart.

Advantages

- Wheeled carts easy to maneuver
- Cleaner neighborhoods
- Increased efficiency for the city (stop time reduced 30-50%)
- Increased worker safety (decreased manual lifting, repetitive motion)
- Compliance with recycling rules at MRF (loose, not bagged recyclables)

Disadvantages and Challenges

- Resident concern regarding storing carts and maneuvering them
- Resident concern regarding capacity of carts for larger families
- Concern regarding unsightliness of carts left out long past their collection time
- Higher up-front costs for automated vehicles
- Up-front cost for purchase of refuse and recycling carts
- Will require coordinated educational campaign for residents

Option 2 - Adopt automated system, operated “in-house” (Recommended)

Collection Vehicles

- ▶ 6 – Automated Collection Trucks - Est. Total Cost - \$2,112,720
- ▶ 2 – Retro-fit two existing Trucks for back-up units – Est. Total Cost - \$80,000

Refuse & Recycling Carts

- ▶ 15,500 – 95 Gallon Carts - \$852,000
- ▶ 15,500 – 65 Gallon Carts - \$775,000

Transfer Station Vehicles

- ▶ 3 - Replacement Semi Tractors – Est. Total Cost - \$399,000
- ▶ 2 – Replacement Semi Trailers – Est. Total Cost - \$134,000

Transfer Station Improvements

- ▶ Deck Rehabilitation and Structural Steel Repairs - \$210,000 R/R Angle Lintel, Flashing, and End Dams - \$50,000 Brick Replacement - \$8,000 Repoint Masonry - \$35,000
- ▶ New Compactor - \$250,000 (this is not needed, but expected in the next few years)

Total Cost \$4,906,220

Annual Cost = Total Cost of Capital Outlay/Est. Useful Life of Asset = \$460,472

Option 2 - Adopt automated system, operated “in-house” (Recommended)

- ▶ Sources of Funding and Revenue
- ▶ The current primary sources of funding for the Refuse and Recycling division are funds from the city’s General Fund which are primarily provided for by income tax. Annual operating costs appear to be offset by revenues generated from the Landfill fee (See Attachment B).
- ▶ There are some financial resources available through the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District working in conjunction with the Recycling Partnership which provides a subsidy towards the purchase of collection carts. There are also low interest loans available to Municipal agencies through the Ohio Water Development Authority. There is not an annual or bi-annual application period, and loans can be applied for at any time throughout the year.
- ▶ It is estimated that by increasing the fee charged to residents by approximately less than \$3.00 per month, the city could generate enough additional revenue to pay debt service on estimated capital costs.

Option 3 – Privatize & Utilize Automated Collection System

Advantages

- Price is all-inclusive (turn-key). Contracted hauler provides refuse & recycling carts, and educational roll-out.
- City would no longer own or maintain a fleet of collection vehicles.
- Transfer station would close and not need to be maintained

Disadvantages and/or Challenges

- ▶ Less control over the quality of service provided to residents.
- ▶ Weekly bulk collection, special pick-ups, etc. Some services that the city provides would come with a premium (i.e. weekly bulk collection, special pick-ups, etc.)
- ▶ Transfer station would close and possibly be difficult or impossible to re-open in the future
- ▶ Reduction in workforce and ultimately lay-offs of Refuse & Recycling staff. Some staff and equipment would still need to be maintained to handle litter collection, and the emptying of litter cans.
- ▶ Service to apartment units would most likely no longer be offered

Option 3 – Privatize & Utilize Automated Collection System

- ▶ No formal bids were solicited from potential private haulers
- ▶ The Refuse & Recycling task force reviewed contracts and practices of other municipalities within Cuyahoga County based on information provided by the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District. A comparative cost analysis of three recently awarded private hauler contracts was analyzed based on Cleveland Heights residential units and the recently awarded contract rates.
- ▶ No significant difference between public and private costs (Option 2 and 3)
- ▶ The sources of funding for the Refuse and Recycling Division would be the same funds that would be used for a private hauler. These funds for privatization would come from the city's General Fund which are primarily provided for by income tax. Annual operating costs appear to be offset by revenues generated from the Landfill fee.

Additional recommendations & considerations - Recycling

- ▶ Evaluate e-waste
- ▶ Blue bags will no longer be an option – recyclables must be loose
- ▶ Cost of the carts may be partially or fully subsidized by public and/or private grants
- ▶ Use of carts has been shown to increase the amount of recyclables collected and has the potential to reduce contamination of the recycling stream
- ▶ Carts might not be suitable for apartment dwellers; manual pickup may be necessary at apartments, or an alternate system may need to be devised.
- ▶ Recycling collection for commercial businesses should be reviewed to determine if this adds any financial or other burden to the Refuse & Recycling division.

Additional recommendations & considerations – Bulk Waste

- ▶ Set a limit to the number of bulk items that will be picked up as part of weekly trash day pickup,
- ▶ Limit the number of garbage bags that will be picked up without prior notification.
- ▶ All bulk trash in excess of this limit require the resident or property owner to notify the city in advance to schedule pickup and pay any appropriate fees.
- ▶ City should establish reasonable fees to cover the costs for large bulk pickups; fines for violators
- ▶ Provide a complete list of acceptable bulk items (large and small)
- ▶ City should eliminate bulk, solid waste, and recycling pick- up from all commercial businesses and properties, and all residential rental properties with 5 or more units.
- ▶ Educate residents of alternatives to sending bulk items to the landfill as part of a general outreach and information program
- ▶ City implement ordinance(s) and fees governing rental properties' use of bulk pickup service.
- ▶ Residential construction and renovation permits should require a dumpster or dumpster

Additional recommendations & considerations - Yard Waste

- ▶ Improve public messaging about proper yard waste disposal/contamination
- ▶ Seek commercial recyclers who will pay for compostable organic waste, and encourage residents to learn how to compost at home
- ▶ The city should review the practices for processing yard waste to maximize its value in the market
- ▶ Consider operating a local composting site, perhaps in partnership with a private-sector organic recycler.

Additional recommendations & considerations - Apartments

- ▶ Provide refuse and recycling service to buildings with less than or equal to 4 units. The charge for this service would be the same per unit as for residential homes.
- ▶ Buildings with greater than 4 units be required to contract with their own refuse and recycling hauler. The apartment owner must show proof of being under contract.
- ▶ The city could provide contact information for potential haulers, and/or maintain a list of approved or preferred vendors.

Additional considerations -

- ▶ Discontinue free recycling collection for commercial buildings, charge appropriate fees
- ▶ Thorough review of all relevant guidelines, policies, fees, and fines. Update them with ordinances as necessary.

Additional considerations – Policy Enforcement & Compliance

- ▶ Recycling carts with labels
- ▶ Initial spot-checks of recycling carts, “two thumbs-up” compliance
- ▶ Periodic audits to reduce contamination
- ▶ Incentivize with fee discounts, other recognition

Additional considerations – Education & Outreach

- ▶ Comprehensive education and communication campaign announcing changes
- ▶ Utilize resources of Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District
- ▶ Emphasize “Recycle Right,” reduce wish-cycling and contamination
- ▶ Utilize social media, Focus magazine, City website
- ▶ Consider creating educational outreach position

Conclusion

Task force recommends Option 2

City of Cleveland Heights could be a leader in waste reduction, recycling and general sustainability

Passionate residents who want to do the right thing

Thank you

Committed City employees and officials
Task Force members