



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

First Reading for the City Council Meeting of September 21, 2021
Second Reading for the City Council Meeting of October 12, 2021

DATE: September 2, 2021
TO: Peter Zanoni, City Manager
FROM: David S. Lehfeldt, Director of Solid Waste Operations
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Ordinance – Solid Waste Services Recycling Program

CAPTION:

Ordinance amending Chapter 21 of the Corpus Christi Code by adding compliance provisions pertaining to recyclables, use of recycling carts, and establishing a special collection fee for servicing contaminated carts.

SUMMARY:

The amendments to Chapter 21 provide the framework for the Recycle Contamination Lowering Education and inspection (Recycle CLEAN) Program, designed to reduce recycling contamination.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

The contamination found in our recycling carts has been increasing for several years and presently comprises 40% of the materials processed under the City's Recycling Processing Services Agreement. The City spends over \$500,000 annually to process and remove materials that are not recyclable in our program. It's believed that while most residents are doing a great job recycling, many residents are placing well over 40% contamination, or trash, in their recycling carts.

Recycling programs vary on what their Material Recycling Facility (MRF) machines are equipped to process. Not every item with the recycle triangle (♻) is recyclable in every program; however, the presence of a recycling triangle has led many customers to mistakenly assume that products with the symbol are approved for our program. We frequently find contamination in the recycling carts consisting of items such as garbage, plastic bags, toys, appliances, clothing, diapers, hoses, electrical cords, yard waste, electronics, and Styrofoam.

To find a solution to the growing contamination problem, staff has studied recycling inspection programs implemented by other cities and relied on the findings reported by the Applied Research Foundation of the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA).

When recycling carts are found to be contaminated through the City's Recycle CLEAN program, the following enforcement actions are supported through this amendment.

- first and second violations
 - o notifying customers of recycling contamination
 - o providing customers the option of removing contamination and placing the recycling cart out for collection the next recycling day, or
 - o allowing the customers to schedule a special waste collection for \$25 collection fee
- a third violation will result in the materials collected for a \$25 special collection fee
- a fourth violation will result in removal of the recycling cart, with written notification of the action

Customers may elect to not participate in the recycling program at any time. After 6 months, customers may apply to have the recycling cart returned.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternatives include a multitude of recycling education, inspection, and enforcement programs with varying degrees of effectiveness as experienced by other cities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This policy will lead to a reduction of \$100,000 in the costs associated with processing and removing contaminated recyclables in FY 2022.

Funding Detail:

Fund: n/a

Organization/Activity: n/a

Mission Element: n/a

Project # **(CIP Only)**: n/a

Account: n/a

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends amending the Ordinance as presented.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Ordinance amendments to Chapter 21 of Corpus Christi City Code.