



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: COE17-017 **Version:** 1 **Name:**
Type: Committee on the Environment
File created: 3/1/2017 **In control:** Committee on the Environment
On agenda: 3/6/2017 **Final action:**
Title: Receive a report, hold a discussion and give staff direction on improving multifamily recycling participation.
Sponsors:
Indexes:
Code sections:
Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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Agenda Information Sheet

DEPARTMENT: Solid Waste
CM/ ACM: John Fortune
Date: March 6, 2017

SUBJECT

Receive a report, hold a discussion and give staff direction on improving multifamily recycling participation.

BACKGROUND

The apartment rental market in Denton is growing at a rapid rate. Current statistics show a total of 471 multi-family complexes in Denton, and new complexes are continually being built. Despite this tremendous growth, Denton's apartment and multi-family complexes are consistently among the lowest in the city for recycling participation rates. For fiscal year 2016, commercial multi-family recycling amounted to just 7.2 % of the City's recycling accounts.

SW&R Department staff are recommending a two-fold approach to encourage recycling participation among apartment and multi-family residences: 1) increase marketing of recycling services to these properties; and 2) adopt new policies specifically targeted to encourage *elective* participation in multi-family residential recycling.

DISCUSSION

The Denton Development Code (DDC) and the Site Plan Criteria Manual for Municipal Solid Waste and Recyclables require that new and major remodel projects have enclosures for both trash and recycling dumpsters (DDC Chapter 35.13.13.7). Current customers are exempted from the enclosure requirement if construction was approved by the Development Review Committee (DRC) prior to 2006. Aside from these specifications regarding enclosures, there is currently no language in the DDC, Site Plan Criteria Manual, or the Denton Code of Ordinances that requires recycling participation for Denton's commercial solid waste customers.

Communities throughout Texas have implemented mandatory recycling for multi-family residential complexes, including Austin, San Antonio, and San Marcos. However, none of these cities have achieved 100% participation in recycling services from multi-family residences. Instead, they have seen increasing challenges in enforcement, as well as increased trash material in recycling containers (a.k.a. “contamination”) stemming from multi-family properties.

Given these issues observed in other communities that have implemented mandatory multi-family recycling, the SW&R staff seeks to add recycling services for new and existing commercial customers on a voluntary basis, with a goal of 58 new participants between December 2016 and December 2017. Further, SW&R seeks to reach 40% participation in recycling among commercial multi-family customers.

Date	Participating Complexes	Participation % Rate	Participation Goal (%)
Dec., 2015	117	25	
Dec., 2016	130	28	
Mar., 2017	153	32	
Dec., 2017	188		40

SW&R staff have identified the following barriers to increasing Denton’s commercial multi-family recycling rates through voluntary participation:

- Lack of physical space for additional containers or carts, especially at small complexes. In some cases, the addition of recycling dumpsters on properties may take up parking spaces which will place the property out of compliance with Planning’s minimum parking spaces;
- Potential for additional containers in streets or rights-of-way; if a trash container is currently in the street or right-of-way, a new recycling container would be placed there, as well;
- New dumpsters cannot be visible from the street, or must have enclosures, per the post-2006 enclosure requirement outlined in the DDC and Site Criteria Manual;
- Perception among some commercial property owners that recycling drop-off centers are sufficient for their residents’ recycling needs;
- Competition from private sector recycling providers, complicating the City’s efforts to market recycling services to commercial customers;

The following are proposed solutions to address barriers to multi-family recycling participation, and reach the recommended goals outlined above:

- Promote voluntary addition of recycling services to new and existing multi-family customers through increased outreach and education;
- Close recycling drop-off sites outside of the main Landfill at ECO-W.E.R.C.S. drop-off center to reduce litter, illegal dumping, and contamination, and increase centralized residential recycling;
- Exempt enclosures for recycling dumpsters, for properties built after 2006;
- Incentivize recycling service by offering the first month at no cost (with a requirement to sign up for at

least one year).

RECOMMENDATION

SW&R staff seek the Committee's direction and recommendations on how staff should proceed in expanding recycling services to the multifamily residential properties residents.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (Council, Boards, Commissions)

None.

Respectfully submitted,
A. Vance Kemler
General Manager, Solid Waste Services