

Sanitation Services Transition Plan

*The City of Augusta, Kansas
113 E. 6th Avenue, PO Box 489
Augusta, KS*

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Sanitation Service Transition Plan

Project Name:	Automated Trash Collection and Curbside Recycling
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Plan Reviewers

Reviewer	Position	Signature
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1. Plan Overview

1.1 Plan Purpose

The purpose of this transition plan is to describe how a new automated trash service collection and curbside recycling system for the City of Augusta will be implemented. The plan will provide guidance and structure to city staff and elected officials to facilitate a complete transition from rollout to full operational status.

1.2 Plan Objectives

- ❖ Develop stakeholder profiles
- ❖ Outline roles and responsibilities of city staff
- ❖ Provide timeline for vehicle and equipment purchases
- ❖ Identify staffing and training needs for system operation and maintenance
- ❖ Develop communications strategy to inform customers of transition
- ❖ Ensure that customers are fully educated and capable of using the new system

1.3 Reference Documents

This plan was developed using information contained in the Sanitation Committee's Final Report to the Augusta City Council dated July 2, 2012.

1.4 Outstanding Issues

This section outlines known project planning issues or problems relevant to transition planning that are known as of this plan revision.

- ❖ Staff have not confirmed that a vendor is available to take single stream recyclables
- ❖ Lack of a customer communications strategy
- ❖ Conceptual structure of new system defined but many details yet to be decided
- ❖ Model system in El Dorado undergoing significant changes to recycling service

2. System Overview

2.1 Residential Trash Collection

2.1.1 General Description

The new trash collection system will rely on the use of automated side-loading trash trucks to pick up polycarts once per week. Automated side loaders utilize a hydraulic grasping arm to reach out and grab the poly carts, dump the contents into the hopper, and then return the cart to the same location. The grasping arms have a range of 6 to 12 feet for reaching into tight spaces or between parked cars, which reduces the amount of maneuvering required by the trash truck. Side loader grasping arms have a variety of control systems, but the most advanced use a joystick controlled by the trash truck driver. An automated trash collection system allows a single operator to collect the same trash route in the same amount or less time than a traditional three person manual collection crew.

2.1.2 Curbside Collection

The side loading feature of the automated trash trucks precludes the use of existing alleyways for the majority of residential collections, as they are too narrow and ridden with obstacles to manipulate the grasping arm effectively. This will necessitate that trash collection be moved curbside for the majority of residential customers.

2.1.3 Container Placement

Curbside collection will require that poly-carts be placed consistently in a location that can be accessed by the automated trash truck's grasping arm (i.e. proximate to the curb line away from any obstacles.) This location may be specifically designated by the City or residents may choose their placement week by week provided it meets guidelines established by the City. Customers with multiple containers must have sufficient distance separating the containers.

2.1.4 Container Features

Polycarts will have a capacity of either 65 or 95 gallons (yet to be determined by Council). The carts will have handles and rolling wheels to provide for easy maneuvering. Directional arrow stickers/print will be placed on the cart to indicate which direction the cart should face when placed at the curb for collection. A reference number may also be printed on the side to help identify lost or stolen carts. Carts will have a flat and stable base upon which to sit; wheels should not touch the ground when the cart is sitting flat on its base.

2.1.5 Multiple Containers

Residential customers that require additional capacity beyond the 65 or 96 gallon cart provided may lease one additional cart from the City on a monthly basis for half price.

2.1.6 Container Ownership, Maintenance, and Upkeep

Ownership of all carts provided to customers by the City will remain with the City. Carts shall remain at the address to which they have been assigned. Customers shall not take carts with them if they move to a different address. Regular maintenance, upkeep, and cleaning of carts is the responsibility of the customer.

2.1.6.1 Lost or Stolen Containers

Customers shall immediately report lost or stolen carts to the City of Augusta Utility Billing department (providing reference numbers if applicable). Utility Billing staff will coordinate with sanitation personnel to have a replacement cart delivered prior to the next scheduled pickup date. Customer will be responsible for paying a surcharge for the replacement cart (to be determined by the City Council). This surcharge may be credited back to the customer's utility account if the original cart is located and the replacement cart is returned to the City.

2.1.6.2 Damaged Containers

Customers shall immediately report damaged carts to the City of Augusta Utility Billing department (providing reference numbers if applicable). Utility Billing staff will coordinate with sanitation personnel to have a replacement cart delivered prior to the next scheduled pickup date. Customer will be responsible for paying a surcharge for the replacement cart unless the cart was damaged by sanitation personnel.

2.1.7 Rollout Service

Disabled and elderly customers (72 yrs or older) who are unable to move their trash carts to the curb will receive free roll out service upon request and verification. Sanitation personnel will retrieve the carts from a designated location near the residential structure, empty the contents into the trash truck, and then return the carts to the designated location next to the residential structure.

2.1.8 Difficult to Serve Locations

Difficult to serve locations will be identified by sanitation personnel and alternative collection arrangements will be made.

2.2 Curbside Recycling Program

2.2.1 Service Description

Along with automated trash collection, the City will also implement a curbside recycling program for residential customers. Customers will be able to place commingled recyclables in bags provided by the City. Bags will be placed out at the curb on the designated collection day. The bags will be collected manually by a two person collection crew every other week using one

of the city's rear loading trash trucks. Once full, the recycling truck will haul the materials to a designated recycling facility or other approved vendor.

2.2.2 Recycling Bags

Recycling bags will be of a clear or translucent color that allows collection crews to view the contents. The City will initially provide each sanitation customer with a box of bags (containing quantities of either 25 or 50 bags) to be used for the curbside recycling program. From that point forward, customers will be responsible for purchasing additional bags from the City. Materials placed in bags not provided by the City will not be collected.

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2.3 Customer Information

The City sanitation department currently serves approximately 3,350 residential and 120 commercial (dumpster) trash customers. About 90 residential customers reside in multi-family dwellings that utilize dumpsters. The existing customer base for recycling is ill-defined as the current program utilizes community drop off sites rather than curbside collection. The transition to automated trash collection and curbside recycling will predominantly impact residential customers. Residential customers will experience rate increases and service level changes, a reduction in trash service but an expansion in recycling services. Commercial customers will experience rate increases but no significant modifications to existing service. Transition is anticipated to result in dramatic expansion of customer base for recycling.

2.4 Stakeholder Analysis Matrix

Stakeholder(s)	Primary Stake in the Transition Process	Potential Impact to Stakeholder Group	Potential Risks to the Transition Process
Residential Trash Customers	Customers/rate payers	Rate increases; confusion or frustration over service changes; less trash service, but more recycling service	Lack of Information about new system; resistance to change; lack of buy-in; concern for rate increases
Commercial Trash Customers (Dumpsters)	Customers/rate payers	Commercial service stays the same but rates will increase	Limited risk to transition but likely some backlash against rate increases
Sanitation Personnel	Will operate new trash collection and recycling system	Additional training; better working conditions; role changes; some job losses	Employee morale; reduction in productivity; poor communication
Administrative Personnel	Oversee transition and implementation; Provide support to sanitation staff and elected officials	Increased workload; customer relations (PR) challenges	Poor communication to sanitation personnel, elected officials, and/or customers
Mayor and City Council	Elected officials subject to public backlash; political responsiveness	Customer relations (PR) challenges; political implications (elections)	Loss of political will for service changes; financing (rate increases) not approved
Recycling Vendors	Will process recyclable materials	Financially benefit	May not find vendors to take our materials; may delay implementation of recycling program
Butler County	Owns and operates the landfill where trash is disposed	Financially impacted; less trash going to landfill reduces revenues	Landfill tipping fees may increase because of less usage

3. Transition Planning

3.1 Transition Schedule

This section provides a schedule of major transition milestones and their due dates.

Milestones	Due Date	Completed
Council Approves Sanitation Rate Increase	10/1/2012	10/1/2012
Develop RFP for Automated Trash Truck	1/7/2013	
Lease Purchase New Automated Trash Truck	2/18/2013	
Formalize Spring Cleanup Coupon Program	3/4/2013	
Purchase Polycarts for Pilot Program	7/1/2013	
Week Long Pilot Program	9/1/2013	
Lease Purchase Remaining Polycarts	10/1/2013	
Sanitation Ordinance Modification and Adoption	12/3/2013	
Delivery of Polycarts to Customers	1/1/2014	
Sell or Auction Old Trash Truck	3/1/2014	

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

This section outlines roles and responsibilities of key staff members in the transition process.

Name	Primary Role	Responsibilities
Josh Shaw	Project Manager	Maintain transition plan document; oversee implementation of transition plan
Bill Keefer	Financing Capital Purchases; Media Spokesperson	Plan for financing of capital purchases; communicate with elected officials and media about transition
Erica Jones	Customer Service/Billing	Prepare rate ordinances; utility billing; customer communications
Angela Casper	Personnel/Training	Assess personnel throughout transition process; assist with training and customer service development of staff
Cy Ricker	Service Implementation	Finalize spring cleanup program; assist with training and personnel assessment; collection routing
Anthony Craft	Service Implementation	Equipment/vehicle testing; coordinate pilot program (training); collection routing
Shirley Kirkpatrick	Service Implementation	Administrative and support services for sanitation department

3.3 Risks to Transition

The sections outlines potential risks to the transition process and provides action steps for addressing these risks.

Risk 1: Loss of Political Will. Staff may lose Council's support for the new programs if the transition process does not go smoothly or citizens complain about the new service.

- **Action:** Education and communication are essential to maintaining political will. Staff must have frequent and consistent communications with the Council regarding the transition process to provide the information that citizens are requesting. The transition planning document must be maintained and adhered to and tasks must be accomplished on schedule.

Risk 2: Vendors for recycling materials cannot be identified. Since the City has no way to process or store recyclable materials, especially in the greater quantities generated by a curbside recycling program, implementation of curbside recycling may be delayed until vendors have been identified.

- **Action:** Pursue agreements with known recycling facilities, such as the City of El Dorado or Waste Connections to accept recyclable materials collected by the City. Identify a primary vendor as well as backup vendors. Formalize written agreements.

Risk 3: Landfill tipping fees increase. Butler County may consider increasing landfill tipping fees if the City diverts too much material from the landfill as a result of the curbside recycling program.

- **Action:** No action required, unless fee increase is significant. New service fee along with cost savings should be sufficient to cover the additional landfill fees.

Risk 4: Lack of Information/Communication. Lack of information/communications with internal and external stakeholders will create public relations problems that prevent a smooth, successful transition.

- **Action:** Draft and adopt a communications plan outlining roles and responsibilities of various stakeholder groups. Provide frequent and relevant updates to affected parties using as many communications media as required.

Risk 5: Employee Morale/Productivity Suffers. Confronted with major changes in the way they do their jobs, employees may suffer from morale problems that cause a decline in their overall productivity.

- **Action:** HR and Sanitation supervisors will observe sanitation personnel throughout the transition process and be on the lookout for morale/productivity issues. Supervisors will meet regularly with employees and explain implementation steps (communication of changes before they are implemented is essential). Employees will be provided opportunities throughout the transition to give feedback; supervisors will find ways to include employees in decisions about equipment and vehicles. Supervisors will coordinate training opportunities on the new automated trucks through vehicle demonstrations and a pilot program to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to operate the new system effectively.

Risk 6: Lack of Customer Buy-In. Some customers will complain about the new automated trash collection and curbside recycling system that the City has chosen to implement.

- **Action:** Administrative personnel will focus on developing a strong customer service infrastructure to prepare employees throughout the organization to better address customer complaints. Employees will receive customer service training. Key messages and fact sheets will be developed that employees can use to communicate with customers the reasons why the new system is being implemented. Public education will be provided throughout the transition process.

3.4 Decision Points

The section outlines key decision points on aspects of the new service that still need to be made.

Decision Point	Recommendation	Decision	Date
Container Size: 65 or 95 gallon	65 gallon		
Designate container location, or provide guidelines	Guidelines		
Print directional arrows on carts	Yes		
Print serial numbers on carts	Yes		
Print City name/logo on carts	Yes		
Limit on additional # of containers	1		
Fee for replacement carts	Cost of Cart		
Delivery fee for replacement carts	\$10.00		
Free rollout service available to elderly (72 +)	Yes		
Verification of disability for rollout service	Yes		
Citizens still required to bag trash	Yes		
Curbside recycling launches same time as automated trash service	Yes		
Provide 25 or 50 recycling bags to customers	50 bags		
Bags provided annually or one-time	Annually		

4. Communications Plan

4.1 Assumptions

- ❖ Successful transition to automated trash collection depends largely on accurate, relevant, and frequent communications with stakeholders.
- ❖ Impact of new service will be felt in different ways, so communications must be flexible and tailored to the needs of different stakeholder groups.
- ❖ Internal communications between different city departments and city staff is just as critical to successful implementation as communications with external customers.
- ❖ Passive forms of communication alone are not sufficient to get the word out about program changes.

4.2 Communications Tools

The City will utilize a number of communications tools to keep stakeholders informed during the transition process:

- ❖ **Augustagov.org** will be used as the primary portal for information regarding the sanitation service transition process (i.e. transition plan, committee proposals, presentations, FAQs, etc). All other communication efforts shall reference the website for further information.
- ❖ **City Utility Bills** shall include a short message about the service transition and reference the City's website for more details.
- ❖ **Channel 7** shall contain a slide with information regarding the service transition and reference the City's website for more details.
- ❖ **City Council Meetings** provide elected officials opportunities to communicate with the public regarding transition activities. It may be advisable to consider making a sanitation services update a standard agenda item (similar to water restrictions update) to be discussed at each meeting while the transition is in progress.
- ❖ **Press Releases** will be created and provided to traditional media sources (i.e. the Augusta Daily Gazette) and on the City's website as aspects of the transition plan are rolled out and completed.

- ❖ **Fact Sheets** will be provided to all city personnel responsible for handling customer inquiries regarding the transition process, billing, etc.
- ❖ **Instruction Sheets** will be created detailing proper placement of carts, pickup days, and other general instructions and then provided to customers when their new trash containers have been delivered. Instruction videos should also be created and posted on the City's website (possibly on a City YouTube Channel).
- ❖ **Surveys** should be considered when appropriate to determine citizen perceptions of the new collection system. It would be appropriate to survey participants in the pilot program to evaluate their experience.
- ❖ **Product Demonstrations** should be used to demonstrate the capabilities of the new trash containers, particularly to citizens with concerns about mobility issues (i.e. elderly and disabled). It would be appropriate to coordinate one of these demonstrations through the senior center.
- ❖ **Chamber of Commerce/DAI** will be utilized to enhance communications with businesses and commercial entities throughout the City. The City will provide educational materials to these entities that can then be distributed through their newsletters, websites, or by other means.
- ❖ **Girl Scouts or Other Community Service Organizations** may have an interest in helping to educate citizens on the benefits of recycling and the City's new curbside recycling program. These relationships should be explored.
- ❖ **Social Media** is one way that the City currently communicates with citizens about City events and happenings. Expanding the City's social media profile to include additional services such as facebook and YouTube may enhance the educational effort. Several Council members already have strong followings that can be leveraged to assist with citizen outreach.

4.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Group	Communication Responsibilities
Mayor, City Council, and Sanitation Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stay aware of news stories that could trigger the need for information from the City - Inform the City Manager of any contact by the media - Be aware of City’s key messages regarding transition - Utilize individual public contact opportunities to reinforce the City’s key messages - Direct citizens to available sources of information about the transition - Review and comment on City communications and outreach efforts
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate communications for consistent, timely, and accurate messages - Stay aware of news stories that could trigger the need for information from the City - Identify and develop methods of communication with stakeholders - Identify staff members who are authorized to speak with the media - Develop key messages regarding transition - Communicate ordinance or fee changes adopted by the Council to Utility Billing Staff - Develop timelines for transition events and share timelines with Supervisors - Develop fact sheets/process sheets for Utility Billing Staff to share with customers
Public Works and/or Sanitation Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep sanitation employees informed of transition events and timelines using weekly update meetings - Regularly assess sanitation department employees’ morale and productivity during transition and communicate any substantive changes with City Administration - Communicate training opportunities to sanitation department employees - Check with Utility Billing staff for changes to special service requests; communicate changes with sanitation staff - Communicate damaged carts needing replacement to Utility Billing staff
Utility Billing Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First customer point of contact for trash service billing questions - Educate new customers on trash collections process - Answer process questions regarding trash collection (e.g. placing carts in proper locations, removing empty carts, replacing lost or stolen carts, etc.) - Maintain records of special service requests (i.e. additional carts, roll-out service for elderly, etc.) and communicate to Public Works and Sanitation Supervisors - Record reports of lost, stolen, or damaged carts and bill appropriately
Sanitation Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immediately report damaged carts to Sanitation Supervisor - Direct citizens to alternative sources of information when asked (i.e. City website)

5. Task List

Task	Responsible Party	Due Date	Accomplished
Approve Refuse Rate Increases	City Council	10/1/12	10/1/12
Review transition plan and authorize staff to proceed	City Council	11/5/12	
Determine durability tests for trash carts	Anthony Craft	11/12/12	
Follow up with Waste Connections with remaining recycling questions	Anthony Craft/ Cy Ricker	11/12/12	
Create website portal and start posting information about Sanitation Transition	Josh Shaw	11/31/12	
Get two cart samples from multiple vendors (one 65 gallon and one 95 gallon)	Anthony Craft	12/10/12	
Complete product testing on sample carts	Anthony Craft	1/1/13	
Finalize Spring Cleanup Coupon Program with Butler County (written agreement?)	Cy Ricker	1/1/13	