

E-Correspondence Regarding Garbage Franchise - 12/03/07

Dear Neighbors on City Council:

Thank you for the care with which you are evaluating proposals for trash and recycling pick-up. The proposed cost increases are stunning, but Kate Black's staff memo outlining the reasons for same was helpful.

I'd like to weigh in on the side of curbside as the default service, for reasons of cost efficiency and convenience in our neighborhoods. Curbside minimizes the time that collection vehicles are tying up traffic on our narrow streets and reduces the level of stop-start noise and fumes. As a parent of school-age children, I am frequently concerned by the disruption of visibility and normal traffic flow as cars attempt to bypass collection trucks during morning commute time, a time when many of our kids are walking to school.

If it's available, I would not oppose the option of residents' subscribing to yard pick-up if they wish to for convenience or security. We won't know until we try it, but I suspect that residents' choice will bear out that lower-cost curbside is the real majority preference, so it makes sense to buy down the cost of that option by making it the contractual default. That way, those who are willing to pay for yard pick-up will bear closer to the real cost, rather than having their cost partially subsidized by those who opt for curbside if yard is the default. Perhaps there is an equitable way to assist those who are disabled.

I'm not clear on the reasons, but there seems to be variation under the current contract on how collections are managed. In some neighborhoods, I observe both recycling and trash put to the curb; in some (mine) only recycling, in some neither. Curbside in closed containers seems a small disruption to the aesthetics of a street, on one morning a week, especially when balanced against the more efficient pass-through of collection trucks. Curbside has long been a fixture of the urban street, even in communities like ours. We might hang on to yard-pick up for one more cycle, but I'd put money down that the option will not even be available next go-round. Why pay significantly more to push back the inevitable by a couple of years?

As for moving wheeled containers back and forth, I sense a business opportunity for some energetic youth in our community.....

If, as has been asserted, curbside pick up is the option that will allow us to divert more of our garbage into recycling channels, I'm afraid this becomes a very, very clear-cut decision. I cannot imagine any reasonable argument against a fairly low-effort method of increasing our recycling as a community. To miss this opportunity seems irresponsible at best. There are so many things that we can't do much about in reducing our waste-flow. Let's take this one happily!

I would like to encourage a vote for curbside pick up for recycling, for cost, and for increased safety and convenience in our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration,

Leesy Taggart

Dear Ann Swift-

I am e-mailing you to cast my vote to continue the backyard pickup service. Additionally, it would be useful to have green waste picked up as part of the service.

Thank you for your consideration

Steve Zirkelbach

November 23, 2007

Via e-mail – Hard copy to follow

Dear Council Members:

On December 3, 2007 you have the opportunity to make a difference in the city of Piedmont. Not only will you be selecting a company to haul our waste, but also you will be making decisions regarding greenwaste, food scraps, pick-up location, etc. You will be setting goals and requirements that could last as long as 10 years.

I believe that backyard pick-up should be the default for that goes along with your and my support of our city's beautification. Just drive down Mandana Boulevard on a Thursday and see if you don't agree that all of the carts make the street look trashy.

In order to meet our diversion requirements we should have mandatory and weekly greenwaste hauling that includes food scraps. Adding the food scraps will reduce our citizen's daily usage of water and therefore help reduce the diminishing of our water supply.

Knowing that the monthly rate (32 gallon) is going to increase from \$35.43 to anywhere between \$43.74 and \$71.50, I ask you to look forward and put advancements into place now so that others may follow your example. Have food scrap recycling, weekly greenwaste, and get wide and narrow neck jars into recycling as well as plastic bags and styrofoam. In fact add as much to our recycling as possible.

I ask you to make the hard decisions and to leave a legacy and good ethic of recycling and greenwaste for our city.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Fran Wolfe

Kate Black and members of the City Council:

Right now our community is faced with the choice of maintaining “backyard” garbage service or improving our recycling capability by increasing the volume of materials recycled (larger bins). Obviously, we would all like to have both, but if that is not possible, we, the undersigned, believe that it is Piedmont’s obligation to choose the environment over convenience and aesthetics.

Given the effects of Global Warming and the existence of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch heap of debris floating in the Pacific that’s twice the size of Texas ,” we all need to take steps to reduce our impact on the planet. Piedmont is a pleasant town whose suburban/sylvan beauty will not be marred by the once weekly appearance of garbage and recycling receptacles on our streets; certainly not enough that we should ignore our obligation to our children to preserve the environment.

Given the concern of some members of the community regarding convenience and aesthetics, we hope the City would re-engage the service providers to see if we can have both backyard service and more recycling at a reasonable rate. If that is not possible, we would prefer a contract that would allow Piedmonters to “opt in” for a fee to backyard garbage service and to deliver that “opt-in backyard service” free of charge to the elderly and/or disabled. If that is not possible, we would like the City to investigate possible means of mitigating the inconvenience of curbside service on the elderly and/or disabled.

Please do not place the values of aesthetics and convenience over the health of the planet and our children’s future. Please choose curbside service over backyard service, if necessary, to maximize our recycling capability.

Thank you,

Drew Bendon

The following have also permitted me to sign their names to this letter:

Carol Anderson

Ryan and Nicki Gilbert

Bob Houser

Timothy Rood

Michelle Farmer

Sue Lin

Reuben Rivera

Dan Harvitt

Kelly Corrigan

Edward Lichty

Christine Carter

Mike McLaughlin

Kim Rhody

Bob Burnett

Jamie Pehanick

Len Gilbert

We would like to add our opinion regarding the new trash/recycling contract.

We strongly favor an expanded recycling service that provides for the actual recycling of more kinds of containers. I was dismayed to find out that certain containers that are recyclable are currently being added to the trash (from our recycling bins) because the current provider does not recycle them.

We also favor the option of backyard service, particularly for yard waste and garbage, for an additional cost. For me this is not an aesthetic issue, but a functional one; our house is 45 steps above the street.

I like seeing the recycling bins on the curb because it reminds me that our community is doing its part to recycle! But while I now can easily take my recycling to the curb, taking garbage and especially yard waste would be more difficult. That would also certainly be the case for my older neighbors --and possibly ourselves in years to come.

Thanks for your consideration.

Lisa Joyce and Tom Wetherbee

Dear Council Members:

I am writing to express my views about the upcoming decision regarding a waste pickup contract for Piedmont. I would like to urge the Council to give first priority to a contract that will permit the maximum amount of waste to be recycled. Any contract that excludes such high volume items as paper milk cartons, juice containers, etc., is a very poor idea. Backyard pickup is a nice convenience, but if the price is to limit the volume of recycling to a 32 gallon can, or restrict the items that can be recycled, the trade-off is certainly not worth it. I like to think our City is particularly enlightened when it comes to environmental issues, and waste disposal is one of the most important. I hope we'll do the right thing, even if it is not the most convenient. At a minimum, if backyard pickup is viewed as a necessary option, it should be just that – an option that each resident can choose (and pay for).

By the way, I would strongly favor a subsidy to lower income elderly and disabled residents that allowed them to have backyard pickup, even if we do not have that option for other residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eric R. Havian

I think we should continue backyard service, although I personally cannot use it anymore. I have recently elected to bring down my two green waste bins and one regular garbage bin to the curb, along with the recycling which has always been brought there, since my slate steps cannot hold up to the garbage guys. As my children live away from home and my husband often travels for work, I have discovered that it is not always easy to carry these bins from the back of the house down the stairs to the front--and the distance is not that great. While for some people it is no big deal to switch to curbside, I think there are others with hilly terrains and other configurations who might find it difficult--particularly if they are older, have no younger people around to help, and don't have space at curb level to store their bins.

Laura Steinman

November 29, 2007

Council Members & City Staff

Re: Proposed New Waste Disposal Agreement

Based on what I have seen on the proposed new waste disposal contract I have two concerns related to the allocation of costs when setting the proposed fees.

In general, I believe the fees for each service should reflect, as nearly as practical, the actual costs to be incurred by the waste disposal firm. To the extent this is not done, because of some other allocation method, some residents will be subsidizing others, compromising the "fairness" of the fees.

1) I am in favor of curbside pickup because I believe it should significantly reduce the overall costs of the service. This does not, however, appear to be the case with the Republic proposal. The differential between curbside and backyard amounts to only about \$1.25 per week. This does not seem to be a reasonable recognition of the actual incremental costs required to make multiple trips to the backyard to pick up the various classes of waste. Are the costs being allocated so that there is only a "modest" reduction in the fees for curbside - as suggested in earlier proposals? If the curbside fee is set to subsidize the backyard fee, we are not seeing the true potential savings.

2) With no specific charge for recycled and green waste there is the potential for a significant subsidizing of the actual costs for this service by small yard owners in favor of large yard owners. (I am assuming there is a stronger correlation between the size of a yard and the amount of green waste produced than there is between the amount of trash and the amount of green waste produced.) I recognize that there is a desire to have as much of the green waste as possible picked up by the city and the incentive of "free" would, no doubt, prove effective in achieving that goal. But are there alternatives which would not result in a large subsidy by small yard owners in favor of large yard owners? If the city can mandate that construction and other large waste boxes must be provided by the chosen waste firm, why not mandate that all green waste must be picked up by the same firm. Perhaps a combination of the mandate and some discounted fee structure could achieve the green waste goal while maintaining a "fairer" fee structure.

In the final analysis, I would prefer a lower fee with some unfair elements (Republic) to a higher "fairer" fee (Waste Management).

Phillip Cardon

On my inquiry when Republic first began to serve Piedmont, they said they were investigating auto-pay, where the customer authorizes his/her bank to pay the periodic bill from the vendor without any action by the customer after the initial authorization. That's how PG&E, EBMUD, etc. do it. Saves customer and vendor handling, return envelope, postage, etc. Customer still gets copy of the bill, but need take no further action. It's more efficient for the customer than on-line payment, although I acknowledge that some folks are resistant to authorize auto-pay. I love it and use it for all kinds of periodic billings like insurance, credit cards, etc.

You might inquire about status of this with Republic in final negotiations.

Best to you. Paul Faberman

Dear Kate,

I talked to you this morning and just want to state what our views are regarding this service and what we are using at the present time.

We put out a 20 gallon waste container that is about half full. Have bi-monthly pick up of green waste and three bins of recyclables. We intend to continue to put everything out on the curb on

the evening before the scheduled pick up or as often happens early in the morning of the same day pick up is scheduled.

Everything else is composted in the bin provided by Alameda County at a reduced fee.

I don't understand how there can be such a discrepancy between the fees charged by the different companies and why California Waste Solutions fee is so much higher.

Thank you for your attention to the phone call this morning as you were most helpful in explaining the alternatives.

Very sincerely yours,

Elizabeth Anne and John Doyle

Kate Black,

Thanks for your email of 11/20/07.

Does the 20 Gallon Weekly Service mean that each garbage, recyclables and green waste container holds 20 gallons and that for the 32 Gallon Weekly Service each container holds 32 gallons?

And if we elect curbside service and we are away and do not put out our containers we will simply be skipped? (This would be fine with us.)

Ray Schmidt

Hi Kate. Thank you for sending me this information. It is greatly appreciated. I hope that we do not go to front yard pick up of garbage. It really would change this city to see garbage cans left at the curb.

We have been very happy with our service with Republic Waste. They have been courteous and very clean when picking up our garbage and recycling. I hope that they will remain as our waste company. I feel that they provide a service that is cost effective.

I am also concerned that if we ask our community to take their garbage to the curb many elderly people will have a harder time bringing the cans back and forth.

Thank you for taking this into consideration. I hope the service remain the same. The people who work at Republic Waste have made every effort to make sure that we were satisfied with their service.

Take care.

Lori Taylor

Dear City Council Members,

As you make your decision about our City's new waste pick-up contract, we urge you to keep environmental impact considerations uppermost in your mind. We note (from reading your website) that in 2006 Piedmont committed to becoming a member of Local Governments for Sustainability and participating in the Alameda County Climate Protection Project. You are about to make an important decision about our community's solid waste disposal policy, making this a key time to put this commitment into practice. Other local cities have more extensive recycling options than we do. Now is the time to catch up with (or overtake) them. The new

food waste component is long past due. On the issue of curbside vs. backyard collection, we urge you to come up with a policy that will make it the norm for the majority of households to bring their waste containers to the curb. This not only is a cost cutting measure, but will also help cut down on the emissions from waste collection trucks idling in the street as employees collect containers from back yards. The option for backyard collection should remain open for seniors, people with disabilities and those who live on particularly hilly terrain (and there should be a means for subsidizing this service for those who can't afford this cost). Perhaps also there could be a means for temporary backyard pickup while residents are on vacation (just as we get our newspaper deliveries put on hold). But the argument that waste containers on the curb will detract from Piedmont's beauty holds no ground for us. When we see the recycling containers out on the street each week, we see that as true beauty: a community that cares enough about the beauty (and future) of our *entire* planet to take the steps needed to cut down on the amount of solid waste we are sending to the landfill and to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Sincerely,
Margaret Ovenden and Don Ashburn

To: Ms. Kate Black

Re: Garbage Contract

- > Renew Republic Service's contract. They've been accommodating and, now, competitive.
- > Maintain Republic's current back yard pick-up service.

(P.S. Anyone "voting" for increasing our indebtedness beyond the \$50MM bond for schools must be automatically disqualified for voting for the less expensive curbside garbage pick-up.)

Kenneth Richardson

RECEIVED

NOV 30 2007

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