



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: August 3, 2010

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: STREET SWEEPING SERVICES

DATE: JULY 22, 2010

FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT – MAINTENANCE SERVICES DIVISION

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RECOMMENDATION

Restore street sweeping to weekly service; including the re-hiring of two full time employees in the Public Services Department to operate the sweepers and two part time employees in the Police Department to provide enforcement of current parking restrictions associated with the program.

BACKGROUND

At the City Council Study Session of July 13, 2010, staff made a presentation on three street sweeping program alternatives, and included an evaluation of the cost effectiveness of the City's street sweeping operation. Staff explained the imminent change to a bi-weekly street sweeping schedule with the start of the new fiscal year on July 1, 2010, and outlined several potential issues associated with that program. The alternatives presented also included a weekly sweeping program, and a program provided by private contractors

Staff has re-evaluated its efficiency in terms of the current street sweeping program with the loss of three of the four street sweeper operators as a result of the early retirement program, and the subsequent vacant positions eliminated to achieve budget reduction targets. Due to these personnel reductions, it has become clear that it would no longer be possible to maintain weekly sweeping schedules. Staff members from other Maintenance Division operations were filling in when available in an effort to provide reduced sweeping services. With corresponding staffing reductions within the Police Department, there were similar challenges with consistently assigning Police personnel to the enforcement process associated with street sweeping.

A cost survey of surrounding cities and local street sweeping contractors was conducted. The results of this survey, based on a comparison with the City of Costa Mesa's operation at full staff and budget, confirmed that the per mile sweeping costs for surrounding cities were higher than the cost of similar services provided by in-house staff in the City of Costa Mesa, regardless of whether the service was provided by contractors or municipal employees and equipment. The study also showed that the City's street sweeping program is very cost effective and provides superior customer service. In conclusion, the results of the study supported the alternative which would re-establish a weekly sweeping program for all residential and commercial sweeping routes, utilizing existing City-owned equipment and staff.

ANALYSIS

Staff from the Public Services and the Police Departments have been meeting to discuss the current street sweeping operation; the pending implementation of a bi-weekly program; as well as the associated impacts on service levels provided to the community.

To effectively provide a quality service to the community, the street sweeping program has traditionally been staffed with four (4) street sweeper operators. In support of this program, the Police Department utilized the equivalent of two (2) part-time staff to monitor and enforce street sweeping parking restrictions within the posted routes. According to the past year's information, the total anticipated (collectable) revenue, **based on weekly schedule enforcement**, exceeds the amount of funds needed to fully fund salaries, equipment usage, and other associated costs for the suggested weekly street sweeping program.

The implementation of such program would provide a very valuable service to the community, and would reverse the lay-off of one Public Services staff member and two Police Department personnel. It would also insure compliance with the Federally mandated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements by reducing the amount of pollutants entering the City's storm drain system and ultimately the ocean or Newport Bay. Violations of NPDES requirements carry fines of up to \$10,000 per day. This program would also alleviate the need for the City to change the current signage on the sweeping routes from a weekly to bi-weekly parking restriction; at an extra cost of approximately \$70,000.

Based on the above information and the clear benefits to the community, it is proposed to re-establish the weekly street sweeping program with four full time operators. This would be achieved by hiring two additional employees in the Public Services Department (re-hiring one Public Services employee that was laid off and evaluating the possibility of re-hiring another laid off employee from another section). The Police Department would re-hire two part-time employees recently laid off. The annual revenue generated by parking enforcement of would exceed all associated salary and operational costs while providing this valuable service to residents.

A recently updated report on outside vendor "contract" street sweeping costs has been completed to provide the latest available information to the City Council. Staff requested information from neighboring cities and gathered informal bids from established "street sweeping contractors" to develop a 'snapshot' of current street sweeping costs.

Below is a summary of the private industry and neighboring municipality sweeping costs as compared to City of Costa Mesa's costs:

Agency/Contractor	Sweeping Cost (Curb Mile Per Week)	Disposal Cost Per Mile	Total Cost
City of Costa Mesa	\$11.21	\$1.38	\$12.59
Clean Sweep (contractor)	\$24.00	\$4.66	\$28.66
Nationwide (contractor)	\$23.00	\$4.88	\$27.88
Dickson (contractor)	\$26.00	\$6.00	\$32.00
City of Newport Beach by Contract	\$12.32	\$3.91	\$16.23
CR&R Disposal	\$13.50- \$18.00	\$ ----	\$ -----
City of Irvine by Contract	\$24.00	\$3.76	\$27.76
City of Huntington Beach by Contract	\$26.28	\$3.47	\$29.75
Average	\$21.07	\$4.00	\$24.98

It should be noted that these contract prices reflect pricing based on a “city wide” no-parking restriction for street sweeping and do not include the added cost for a contractor to coordinate sweeping schedules for the 291 alternate-side posted streets within Costa Mesa. It is likely that the alternate-side posting would increase costs significantly.

The results of the information as shown in the above table, indicates that due to several factors, including: lower disposal costs (lower tipping fees and lower cost of self-hauling sweeper debris), higher operational efficiencies, low cost of City equipment maintenance, and no profit margin added on (compared to contracted services), the City of Costa Mesa's sweeping operation is the most cost effective program of those surveyed.

It should also be noted that the City costs presented in the above table, do not include cost figures for “emergency call-outs”, “accident or spill clean up”, and other services in support of other City operations and requests for special services. Although these costs are already included in the City of Costa Mesa's current per mile sweeping costs, they would be an additional charge to the City if provided by a “contractor” in addition to figures shown above.

As a result of these findings, it has been determined that weekly street sweeping is very cost effective, and therefore it is recommended that the Council consider re-implementation of the weekly sweeping program for the following reasons:

1. Enforcement:

- Bi-weekly sweeping would yield an estimated annual loss of approximately \$300,000 in parking ticket revenue, as compared to weekly sweeping enforcement.
- Scheduling Police Department personnel for parking enforcement is problematic when parking is only restricted on a bi-weekly basis. With current elimination of part time staff, this task would likely become a duty for patrol officers.

2. Coordination of the residential refuse pick-up schedule with the Costa Mesa Sanitary District:
 - Bi weekly sweeping results in litter left on the street following the servicing of the refuse bins. Weekly street sweeping scheduled for the day following refuse collection captures the majority of the nuisance litter generated without interference from the bins. The litter left after trash is collected during non-sweeping weeks of a bi-weekly program is unsightly and may end up in the storm drain system.
3. Related issues created by the debris build-up resulting from bi-weekly sweeping:
 - Debris in the gutters obstructs water flow and results in ponding water. Stagnant standing water left in gutters may, over time, create conditions conducive to the breeding of mosquitoes and may lead to unsanitary health conditions.
 - During the recent rainy season, leaves and debris blocked storm drain entrances leading to localized flooding.
 - With gutters cleaned bi-weekly, more debris will be accumulated in the 1,105 City maintained catch basins, increasing the time and cost involved with the annual debris removal from the catch basins.
 - Bi-weekly sweeping is not as effective as weekly sweeping in removing very small particle size debris from the streets before it goes into the storm drains. This kind of debris, such as metal particles, brake shoe dust, fluid residues and other hazardous waste products left by passing vehicles may be harmful to aquatic ecosystems and is typically captured in the cleaning of the street, keeping it out of the 64 miles of City owned underground storm drain pipelines.
 - Weekly street sweeping has been determined to be one of the most proactive Best Management Practices (BMP) used to control and improve downstream water quality. It is also an integral part of the City's operating plan to meet the requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act and the County of Orange Drainage Management plan.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

1. Direct staff to contract the street sweeping program to outside vendors. This alternative will however result in higher costs to the City, and will not provide the level of service currently provide by the City staff.
2. Maintain existing staffing levels and reduce street sweeping to bi-weekly in residential areas. This alternative will result in less cleaning city wide, an increase in the City's liability with regards to NPDES requirements, and potentially may cost the City significant fines.

FISCAL REVIEW:

In order to provide a weekly street sweeping program two additional sweeper operators are needed at an estimated annual cost of \$88,000 each or \$176,000 total. Also, in order to provide parking enforcement for a weekly street sweeping program additional Police Department part time staff are needed at an estimated annual cost of \$30,000. Other minimal costs associated with providing a weekly street program, such as fuel and equipment maintenance, will only increase slightly. Therefore the additional cost of

providing a weekly street sweeping program with parking enforcement is approximately \$206,000.

The City has historically collected approximately \$642,000 annually from parking citations related to street sweeping. This amount of revenue reflected a weekly street sweeping program. Reducing the street sweeping program to bi-weekly will likely reduce revenue from street sweeping parking citations in half, to approximately \$321,000.

When comparing the additional cost of \$206,000 and therefore avoiding the possible reduction in revenue of \$321,000, it appears the City could still net about \$115,000 by providing a weekly street sweeping program.

LEGAL REVIEW:

A legal review is not required for this item.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve a weekly street sweeping and parking enforcement program for all residential and commercial street routes, utilizing existing City owned street sweepers and City staff.

Street Sweeping is still the most visible and cost effective means of removing debris from the streets and gutters before it may reach the storm drain system. Street sweeping is one of the most visible operations in the Public Services Department and serves every resident and business in the City of Costa Mesa. The program would be self-funded through ticket revenue and provides employment for those involved.

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