

Follow Up Questions from the September 26, 2022 Work Session

Residential Organics Program

1. **Council asked why an additional fee is necessary (given that no operational changes are required on the back-end for Republic) and what the fee would cover:**
 - The additional fee would be approximately .60-.75 cents/customer.
 - In other cities, implementation of the residential organics program has seen an increase in the amount of “set-outs” (placing the bin curbside for pick-up) of the yard debris bin on a regular basis. Typically, yard debris bin set-outs trend with the season (ex: summer/fall have a higher set-out rate than winter/spring). As customers include food materials, bins are set-out for pick-up more often.
 - Additional set-outs of bins increases the time on the route, impacting drivers’ hours and thus labor costs. The fee would account for increased labor costs.

2. **Council asked if multifamily housing is included in the residential organics program, and if not, if these customers be charged if they can’t participate:**
 - Multifamily housing (MFH) units are not included in the residential organics program. This is because MFH waste enclosures only include dumpsters for garbage and recycling, not yard debris disposal. Therefore, MFH residents would not have access to a yard debris dumpster to dispose of any food waste collected in the home.
 - MFH customers would not be charged for a service they do not (or cannot) use. MFH units are not billed individually. Republic Services bills the property management company (considered a commercial customer), which passes on any cost in rent.
 - The fee for residential organics would be applied to all single-family housing. This would include residential homes up to a fourplex, where Republic is able to individually bill the customer.

3. **Council asked about countertop composting containers and if these would be provided to customers:**
 - Countertop containers can be offered to the community and can be branded with the City logo or unbranded. Distribution of containers would take staff time and coordination.
 - The cost of the containers would be amortized over the customer-base eligible for the program:
 - 500 branded = \$19.89 each (\$9,945.00)
 - 1,000 branded = \$17.61 each (\$17,610.00)

4. **Council asked about the advantages of including organics to be composted, rather than in the garbage where it can be used to heat homes via methane:**
 - Composting is a beneficial re-use program. Compost facilities in Oregon re-sell the compost produced to both home gardeners and commercial farmers. This compost is very good for restoring the soil and reducing the need for pesticides.
 - Regionally, the area (through the Metro mandate) has prioritized the collection organics from businesses, in an effort to divert food waste from the solid waste streams. Food is the single largest portion of this stream. As food decomposes in landfills, it creates methane, a powerful contributor to climate change. While methane can be used to heat homes, methane reduction is more valuable to climate change efforts.
 - More background information:
 - [Research Study - Composting Environmental Benefits](#)
 - [Infographic – Composting and Climate Change](#)

5. **Council asked about reporting metrics for this program:**
 - Republic could report weights of organics materials. They could also provide ride-a-longs for Council and staff when the program rolls out to see it firsthand.

6. Council asked about education materials:

- Washington County provides much of the education materials. Those materials are currently being updated and will be sent out to partners in the near future.
- Republic Services resources:
 - [Organic Waste Information](#)
 - See page 46 of the [Sustainability Report](#)

Recycle + Program

1. Council asked if multifamily housing customers would be included in the program:

- At this time, the Recycle+ Program would only be available to single-family residential customers.
- Logistically, the program is currently set up as an individually billed curbside service utilizing a small individual dropbox. Multifamily housing is typically billed to the property management, which then distributes the charge to residents. Republic Services does not bill MFH units individually.
- If customers do not have a “curb” and are not billed individually, both the program structure and coordination required to operate the program looks very different. This issue is currently be discussed at the County-level, with the goal to offer Recycle + to all households – single and multifamily - in the future.