



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™
General Services Department

REPORT TO MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Solid Waste Advisory Committee
DATE: August 7th 2018
SUBJECT: Bagged Fall Leaf Collection Proposal

Recommendation

Accept this report and post for a public hearing this report and resolution concerning a recommendation to change fall leaf collection from a bulk program to a bagged program.

Background

Casella and the General Services Department (GSD) held a number of meetings to explore a transition from the current Bulk Fall Leaf Collection to a new Bagged Fall Leaf Collection. While the current bulk leaf collection program is convenient to some residents that are able to derive full benefit from it, other residents may not be able to receive the same benefit due to its start during the last week in October, or potential early termination due to winter weather. Both of these common occurrences give rise to the question of the program's equity of service to all residents. Others may miss the opportunity to put leaves to the curb before the single collection provided by the current program. This latter point speaks to the unpredictable level of service the current practice provides to all.

Currently, GSD provides Bulk Fall Leaf Collection services by deploying three crews, each assigned a leaf vacuum, who collect and load dump-trucks to transport leaves residents rake to the curb to several locations for composting throughout the City. The goal of the program is to pass each city street once before the onset of winter weather and winter maintenance activities necessitate terminating the program. In order to reasonably assure that all streets are serviced, it is necessary to start the program the last week of October and work continuously for six weeks. Work is performed on Veteran's Day but crews do not perform work on the Thanksgiving weekend holidays.

Despite this effort, the early onset of winter the past two years has caused the Department to terminate the program early and not complete servicing all City streets before the transition to winter maintenance activities. In fact, five of the past six years the program has been terminated in the fall prior to completion due to the onset of winter. Criticisms of the current program occur when snow falls early in the year and crews must shift to winter operations from leaf collection efforts and are unable to

reach each residence once. Another significant criticism is crews will service an area too early in the season when leaves have yet to fall. Additionally, the Department cannot advise residents when crews may arrive on a specific street due to variable weather and leaf volumes located at the curb. This particular point provides a high level of uncertainty and anxiety with residents. Since GSD has deployed its citizen request tracker system, GSD has received over 400 inquiries specific to the performance of the program from residents throughout the City as shown on the attached map. Most of these inquiries are rooted in either the inequitable or unpredictable characteristics inherent in the current program. Residents also remark that the volume of leaves left at the curb for a period of time prior to collection can interfere with street traffic and plug catch basins when it rains causing street flooding.

Discussion

The proposed bagged leaf program includes the following;

Collection

- Residents may place leaves in brown paper “yard waste” bags or in labeled, rigid plastic containers. GSD will develop a large-size, fluorescent graphic to be distributed and affixed to barrels residents use to contain leaves.
- The bagged program will run the last 3 weeks in November and the first week in December. No collection would be performed on Thanksgiving.
- To address variable volumes of leaves expected to be seen on the current trash routes, all residents will be asked to have their leaves placed curbside Monday AM for that week’s collection providing Casella crews the flexibility to proceed through collection of yard waste separate from the trash and recycling routes, maximizing efficiency and avoiding possibilities of falling behind in collection.
- Similar to bulk leaf collection, no branches will be accepted; only leaves.
- Casella provides 2 trucks and 2 crews for a 4-week program,
- This combination provides for collection capacity of approximately 530 tons of leaves (7 tons per truck, 2 loads per truck per day, 2 trucks per day, and 19 service days).
- GSD estimates that we are collecting approximately 750 tons of leaves in the Bulk Fall Collection, when accounting for precipitation. It is GSD and Casella’s opinion that a transition to a bagged collection program will result in a decrease in the number of tons collected.
- The base collection program described above is estimated to cost the City \$50,000.

The largest risk transitioning to a bagged leaf collection program is underestimating the volume of leaves that crews encounter on routes during the first year. To provide measures to mitigate that risk, Casella and GSD identified the following options:

1. GSD rents a 25-yard rear-load garbage truck that would be deployed and staffed by GSD personnel if the volumes are beyond the capabilities of the 2 Casella crews. Approximate rental vehicle cost is \$10,400. The labor and overhead costs to run the truck is approximately \$6,000 for 4 weeks. This is a driver and one person picking up.
2. GSD reserves the option of hiring Casella for an unadvertised 5th week of collection, if it has become clear that the volume is beyond the capacity of the crews and GSD provided support. This must be identified in weeks 2-3 in consultation with GSD/Casella. The cost of this measure is \$12,500.

- Casella provides additional truck to be deployed in week 3 and 4 of the program. This option would need to be identified upon undertaking of the program. The cost of this measure would be \$12,500.

GSD recommends pursuing options 1 & 2 the first year of the program. It is our expectation to shed one or both of these options in subsequent years.

Composting

The best outlet for yard waste composting for this program is Dirt Doctors in Pembroke. We anticipate delivering 80 loads of leaves at a cost of \$200/load for a total cost of \$16,000. By engaging a third party disposal site, the City is freed of the responsibility to manage the materials.

As a backup, should volumes exceed GSD estimates, GSD has informed Gelinas Excavation that the Fort Eddy Road location would be the disposal destination. Gelinas would then need to manage the materials.

To address any errant household waste that is placed in the leaf bags, GSD recommends budgeting \$3,000 for disposal of waste placed in the bags if contamination becomes an actual issue.

Financial Considerations

To implement the bagged leaf collection program, the net additional cost to the approved FY 2019 budget is \$70,252 as outlined below.

Collection Costs

Base Collection Price	\$50,000
GSD Backup Price	\$10,400
Optional 5 th Week	\$12,500

Composting Costs

Tip Fee	\$16,000
<u>Contamination Costs</u>	<u>\$3,000</u>
Total Costs FY2019	\$91,900

Savings

Fuel	\$2,432
Overtime	\$4,616
<u>Parts</u>	<u>\$14,600</u>
Total Savings FY2019	\$21,648

Net Program Costs FY2019 \$70,252

In subsequent years, this yearly appropriation could drop to \$47,352 should it become apparent that additional rental truck and 'fifth' week of collection are not needed eliminating the need for these contingencies in the transition year.

The City also realizes savings in future years by eliminating four leaf vacuums from the approved Capital Improvement Plan included in the FY 2019 budget. The Capital Improvement plans calls for the replacement these vacuums in FY2022. The present value of this equipment is \$108,000.

Recovered Opportunity Costs

Perhaps most importantly, by using an outside vendor to collect fall leaves in a bagged program, the Department is able to redirect the labor it presently commits to bulk fall leaf collection to other

functions of a higher value to local neighborhoods.. By doing so, we believe that the additional expenditure on the program yields a significantly higher return on all dollars spent. Presently, the Solid Waste Fund commits approximately \$171,000 dollars in expenditures towards the current fall leaf collection program.

Highways and Utilities crews anticipate performing the following road work activities and winter operations prep work by not having to use its labor collecting leaves:

- Continue road repairs:
 - Patching potholes
 - Grinding and grading bad sections of road and repaving them.
 - Putting down shoulder gravel to keep the edges from breaking off.
 - Do open drainage work before neighborhood paving projects.
 - Drainage and culvert repairs.
 - Taking care of catch basins and drain pipes before CIP paving work.
 - Replacing structures that are in poor condition.
 - Neighborhood sidewalk repairs.
 - Overlays.
 - Remove and repair bad sections.
 - Clearing brush.
 - In sidewalks that are on sidewalk plowing routes
 - At truck turnarounds and dead-ends to maintain clearance.
 - Roadside mowing of brush to keep the roads open.
- Winter Operations preparation:
 - Install snow fence
 - Install and test sanders before first storm
 - Send sidewalk tractors on their routes before it snows and clear brush and obstructions.
 - Assign routes to operators and do a test runs to look for new obstructions or changes that may have occurred.

In addition, further savings would be realized by Equipment Services by allowing regular hourly work to be performed on different City vehicles, improving maintenance of the City-wide fleet.

In conclusion, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee recommends making the proposed change to the Fall Leaf Collection program in an effort to increase predictability and satisfaction with fall leaf collection efforts. It is also the intent of the effort to address equity issues involved with the timing of collections.

The Financial Policy Advisory Committee at their meeting on July 16, 2018 found the proposal fiscally prudent.

Alternatives

The current bulk fall leaf collection program may be augmented in the following ways should Council see fit to assure residents the opportunity their leaves could be collected through a concurrent bagged leaf collection service. The General Services Department could run the normal Bulk Fall Leaf Collection Program in its traditional fashion with the understood limitations and supplement that program with one of these two options(no contingency plan costs would be carried.);

1. A 2-Week Bagged Fall Leaf Collection Program during the last week in November and the first week in December.

Cost = \$25,000

2. A 3-Week Bagged Fall Leaf Collection Program during the last two weeks in November and the first week in December.

Cost \$37,500

The City would not gain the benefit of recovering the opportunity costs of improved local roadway maintenance activities should an alternative to the recommended bagged leaf collection program be selected.

Fall Leaf Collection Requests 2013 - Present

