



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: January 24, 2022

SUBJECT: Work Session to Discuss Expansion of Residential Recyclables Collection

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

This is an informational work session and no motion is being recommended at this time.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) adopted by Deschutes County in 2019 calls for the expansion of residential collection of recyclables where practical. The Department of Solid Waste has been working with the franchised collectors, exploring the possibilities and timing of such an expansion of services. Two events have occurred since the adoption of the SWMP that have shaped the actions proposed in this report. First, the Sunriver Owners Association (SROA) has approached the Department requesting assistance in relocating and constructing a new recycling depot to serve Sunriver. Secondly, a fire this past spring in Deschutes River Woods has generated requests to add a yard debris collection service in rural subdivisions to assist in reducing the risk of wildfire.

To aid in the discussion, the following terms are defined:

Residential Collection: Collection of waste and/or recyclables at customer residences by their franchised collection company. This can be accomplished by:

- **Curbside collection:** Waste and recycling carts furnished by the franchise collector are placed at the curb for collection. The service is automated where a mechanical arm empties the cart into the collection truck, which eliminates the need for the driver to exit the vehicle or manually empty the cart. This is the most desirable collection approach as it is the most efficient collection method and helps reduce worker injuries, which are a substantial issue in the waste/recycling collection industry.

- Side yard collection: Waste and recyclables are placed in containers located at the residence, typically beside the house/garage or in an enclosure that hides the trash and recycling containers from view. This is much less efficient, requiring the collection driver to walk up to the containers to retrieve the waste and recyclables. Additionally, it exposes collection workers to a higher risk of workplace injuries. Often, in order to gain efficiencies, drivers take a larger, wheeled cart with them and manually empties material from 2-3 residences into their cart before returning to the truck to unload. This is common in developments like Sunriver where curbside collection is not allowed.

Mandatory Service: All residences in a local government's jurisdiction are required to take trash and recycling collection services. Fees are usually paid to the local government, sometimes through utility bills, which are then passed on to the collection company. The cities of Redmond and Sisters operate in this fashion.

Universal Service: All customers participating in franchised collection services have access to trash and recycling collection services as a single service package (waste collection and all available recycling collection). Services and rates are established by the local government and all required services are available to the resident for a single fee. Participation is optional and customers who sign up must pay the full fee, whether they elect to use all the services provided or not.

Subscription Service: All customers participating in the franchised collection service have access to a "menu" of available collection services where the customer can select and pay for only those services they desire. As an example, a resident may sign up for waste collection only, while their neighbor subscribes to both waste and recycling collection. Fees for subscription service tends to be higher than the universal service approach as the cost of trucks and labor is spread over a smaller number of customers and participation can be more dispersed than what is seen under the universal model.

RECYCLING HISTORY & BACKGROUND

The landmark Opportunity to Recycle Act passed by the Oregon legislature in the mid 1980's requires that all Oregon citizens have the opportunity to recycle. The law has provisions requiring curbside collection of recyclables in cities above a certain threshold population, including their Urban Growth Boundary. In unincorporated areas, the opportunity to recycle requirement is met by providing locations where citizens can drop recyclables at DEQ permitted disposal sites (landfills and transfer stations).

Soon after the law went into effect, citizens in unincorporated areas of Deschutes County began requesting more convenient options for recycling. These requests typically came from resort developments and larger subdivisions, which led to the establishment of recycling depots in those areas. The depots were a partnership between the community requesting the service and the Solid Waste Department, where the community provides a location for the depot and

the Department would provide containers and service. The number of depots has varied over the years; currently four depots are available to residents in Deschutes County:

- La Pine Depot, located in Wilderness Disposal's corporate yard in La Pine
- Sunriver Depot, located at the Sunriver public works yard
- Sisters Depot located in the city of Sisters
- Black Butte Ranch Depot, located at the Black Butte Ranch corporate yard

The responsibility for servicing these depots is borne by the franchised collector responsible for the service area where the depot is located. With the exception of the Black Butte Ranch Depot, the cost for servicing the depots is included in the base fee for all of the collector's customers. Additionally, the Department of Solid Waste provides some funding assistance to the franchised collectors to help offset depot operating costs. As the Black Butte Ranch Depot is restricted to use by Black Butte Ranch residents only and not available to the general public, that facility does not receive any financial assistance from the Department. The cost of servicing that depot is borne by Black Butte Ranch rather than the franchised collector's entire customer base.

SUNRIVER RECYCLING

Sunriver and the surrounding area are served by a recycling depot located in the SROA Public Works yard. It is very popular, and is woefully inadequate to handle the volumes of materials coming in. This fact and SROA's desire to repurpose the space where the depot is located for other public works needs resulted in SROA approaching the Department requesting assistance in relocating/rebuilding their depot. Initial discussions with the director of the SROA, the Department, and Cascade Disposal, who services Sunriver, resulted in a plan that would have SROA use their reserve capital fund to construct the new depot. Cascade Disposal would, over time, reimburse SROA for the construction costs. While the depot service arrangements are between Sunriver and Cascade Disposal, the Solid Waste Department is the regulator of the franchise collection system in unincorporated areas of the County. As such, the Department is involved to assure that requirements of Cascade Disposal are in line with franchise ordinance and compliant with service agreements.

The use of SROA reserve funds for depot improvements required a vote of the membership. SROA formed a task force to explore the proposal and other options for recycling in Sunriver. A very thorough survey was conducted which showed strong support for a new depot, but there was also considerable interest in side yard collection of recyclables. While residential collection is the most efficient way to collect recyclables, it poses some challenges in Sunriver where curbside collection is prohibited, and many, if not most residences would have to modify/expand their enclosures to use the added recycling collection service. The results of the survey led to a proposal by Cascade Disposal, with the approval of the Solid Waste Department, to contribute up to \$600,000 over 5 years for construction of a new depot. Additionally, Cascade Disposal would offer a side yard recycling option on a subscription basis. The Department felt that, while side yard service was desirable, the cost of service on a subscription

basis as well as the cost of enclosure modifications would result in low participation. With that, it was strongly felt that a new depot was the preferred option as well as the best solution for Sunriver.

The use of SROA reserve funds requires a 60% majority of the vote to pass. While more than 50% of voters approved the use of reserve funds to construct a new depot, the vote fell short of the 60% requirement. There is no indication as to if/when SROA may wish to revisit the issue. It appears that homeowners would like to see residential collection of recyclables put in place and then judge the effect that would have on the use of the existing depot. If the intent is to minimize the use of the depot, which may allow for a smaller, less costly facility or even eliminate the need for a depot as some residents favor, implementing side yard service on a universal basis rather than a subscription approach as originally proposed will be much more effective in providing the desired result as it will result in higher participation rates and possibly reduce the need for the depot option.

WILDFIRE CONCERNS & YARD DEBRIS COLLECTION

The fire in Deschutes River Woods last spring and other regional fire disasters has raised awareness of wildfire risks in subdivisions and developments with high density vegetation and limited access and egress options. Many have suggested that residential collection of yard debris should be implemented to help reduce wildfire fuels.

Bend and Redmond have instituted curbside collection of yard debris on a subscription basis. This approach has been very successful with participation levels that rival outcomes expected from a universal approach. One significant reason for this success is the fact that with the implementation of curbside collection of yard debris, the fire departments in Bend and Redmond banned all back yard burning. This is a significant factor in the participation rate seen for their yard debris subscription service. The rural fire protection districts have indicated that a burning ban would not be considered in their jurisdictions or portions thereof. Similar to the rationale for implementing subscription service in Sunriver, if our goal is to minimize wildfire fuels in subdivisions and reduce the risk of a catastrophic wildfire, Deschutes County should use the universal approach to yard debris collection in unincorporated areas of the County.

RURAL & DISTANT RURAL FRANCHISE SERVICE AREAS

In addition to the depot system used to collect recyclables in unincorporated areas, limited curbside collection of recyclables has been implemented in certain higher density subdivisions/areas in unincorporated Deschutes County. Areas where residential recyclable collection services are available have been designated as the Rural Collection Zone. Areas that are more sparsely populated and have no curbside recyclables collection are designated as the Distant Rural Collection Zone. The attached map shows the extent of these service areas for the franchised collectors.

Since residential recycling services in unincorporated areas of the County are not required under the Opportunity to Recycle Act, the County has some latitude in how services are

approached and implemented in both the Rural and Distant Rural Zones. For example, when recyclable collection was implemented in the Rural Zone, glass collection was not included due to the expense and market value at the time.

As services are expanded, the boundaries of these zones may change, or be eliminated. Ideally, every collection customer would have the full suite of services available through universal service which would include weekly trash collection, every other week recyclable collection (both comingle and glass), and yard debris collection in the alternate week. This is a very ambitious expansion, and we do not expect to accomplish it in a single phase. It is likely that some areas will never have the full suite of services and implementation in some areas may need to wait until population densities make collection more efficient and affordable.

APPROACH TO SERVICE EXPANSION

The Solid Waste Department is working with each of the franchise collectors to come up with service expansions that meet that needs of both residents and the collection companies. Each franchise is unique in size, customer base, commercial versus residential make up, customer density, and homeowner restrictions. The Department will be approaching the BOCC on a franchise-by-franchise basis to implement the changes.

Cascade Disposal is likely to be the first franchise requesting a rate be established for new services. Much of their collection area is already in the Rural Collection Zone and those customers currently receive residential collection of comingled recyclables as a universal service with their trash collection. It is anticipated that their proposal will include:

- For their service area excluding Sunriver:
 - Expand the Rural Zone to include all areas except Sunriver. There is a Distant Rural Service Zone in Cascade Disposal's service area that currently has no curbside recycling service. Cascade Disposal will add biweekly comingle and glass collection and alternating week yard debris collection, including containers for the added service.
 - Add glass and yard debris collection in the Rural Zone as an expansion of the current universal service for trash and comingle recyclables. Comingle and glass would be collected biweekly and yard debris would be collected on the alternate week. Cascade Disposal would furnish containers for both glass and yard debris collection.
- For their Sunriver service area:
 - Add weekly side yard comingle and glass recyclables collection as a universal service (rather than every other week collection as is provided elsewhere in the County). As is the current arrangement for waste collection, residents will provide their own container for comingle recyclables, which should help minimize the need for enclosure modification. Cascade Disposal would furnish glass collection bins.

- The current structure and service for the Depot would continue as is and any changes to the service or facility would be addressed in the future.

It is anticipated that the proposed changes to service will result in the following rate changes for Cascade Disposal's Sunriver, Rural Zone and Distant Rural Zone customers:

- For customers with no residential recycling services currently available, the fee increase is expected to be about \$14 per month. This provides for the addition of weekly collection of recyclables (both comingle and glass) in Sunriver and, for Cascade Disposal's Distant Rural Zone, every other week collection of comingle and glass with collection of yard debris on the alternate week.
 - Current Rate \$35.00/month
 - New Rate \$49.00/month
- For Cascade Disposal's Rural Zone customers, who already have residential collection of comingled recyclables, the fee increase is expected to be about \$10 per month. This adds glass to every other week comingle collection, and alternate week collection of yard debris.
 - Current Rate \$17.75/month
 - New Rate \$27.75/month

Republic Services owns and operates 3 different collection companies/franchises, and their service areas are referred to as North County (Redmond region unincorporated areas and Sisters region unincorporated areas) and South County (areas south of Sunriver). It is anticipated that a proposal from Republic Services will include:

- Addition of biweekly glass and yard debris collection in the Rural Zone as a universal service (comingle recycling is currently offered as a biweekly universal service)
- A proposed timeline and criteria for incorporating portions of their North County Distant Rural Zones into the Rural Zone service areas
- A proposed timeline for adding residential collection of recyclables in the South County. The South County area has no residential collection of recyclables at this time and the entire franchise area is designated as a Distant Rural Collection Zone. This includes the City of La Pine as well the unincorporated areas of the south county. Adding residential recycling will be a substantial undertaking for this franchise with its small customer base, dispersed nature of development and limited commercial customers.

It is anticipated that the costs for the addition of glass and yard debris service in the Rural Zone will likely be in the range of \$12 to \$14 per month as a universal service.

UNIVERSAL SERVICE VESUS SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

It should be noted that the universal approach to adding services is the standard industry approach and is the service structure the County has used when expanding recycling services into the Rural Collection Zone. Once an acceptable level of service has been decided, that

service is required to be provided by all franchised collection companies in the appropriate collection zone. The subscription approach is not recognized by the State as a qualifying recycling program for complying with the Opportunity to Recycle Act as it is felt that this approach provides a disincentive to participation.

The cities of Bend and Redmond broke with this tradition when implementing curbside collection of yard debris, implementing it on a subscription basis where customers only pay for the added service if they choose to use it. This worked well for in Bend and Redmond primarily because the local fire departments in the cities banned all back yard burning in conjunction with the new service.

Since the County is in compliance with the law in unincorporated areas by providing for the collection of recyclables at disposal sites, we have no compliance issues if a subscription approach is desirable. It should be noted that a subscription approach in Sunriver has been considered. When it was believed that a new depot would be the primary recycling option for Sunriver, subscription residential collection was discussed and continues to be advocated for by some residents.

Staff is recommending the universal approach based on the following desired outcomes:

Sunriver: The voters failed to approve use of Sunriver Homeowner's Association reserve funds to construct a new depot. We interpret that to indicate a desire to implement residential recycling collection to hopefully reduce the use and/or need of a new recycling depot. We believe that the universal approach will provide the best results in that regard.

Yard Debris Collection in the Rural Collection Zone: Wildfire is a significant concern in rural subdivisions in the County such as Deschutes River Woods. Without the prospect of a backyard burn ban to help drive participation with a subscription program, the universal approach will be best suited for bolstering yard debris collection and reducing wildfire fuels in the Rural Collection Zone.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE BOARD

Staff recommends the following schedule for considering the information provided in today's Work Session:

Monday, January 31: Hold a Public Hearing to get formal comment/input from citizens. Coupled with this, the Department will also receive written comments from citizens during the open written record period.

Monday, February 14: Close the written record period.

Monday, February 28: Board deliberations and approval of a Board Order(s) to establish new rates and services for Cascade Disposal's Sunriver, Rural Zone and Distant *Rural* Zone service areas.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

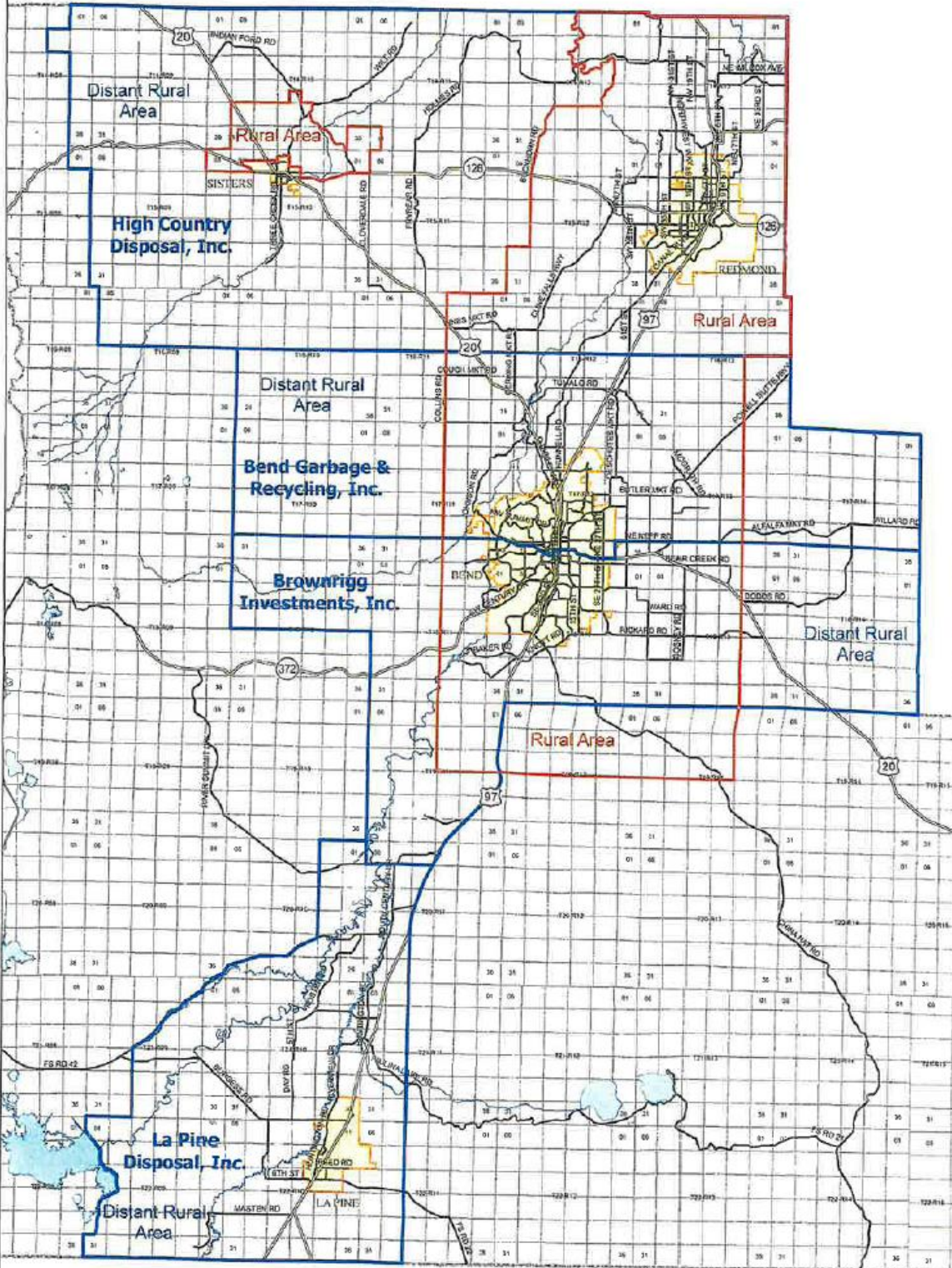
None.

ATTENDANCE:

Chad Centola, Director of Solid Waste

Timm Schimke, Senior Advisor

Rural & Distant Rural Franchise Service Zones



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- Legend**
- Rural / Distant Rural Boundaries
 - Franchise Boundaries
 - State Highway
 - Main Roads
 - City Limits
 - County Boundary
 - Stream
 - River
 - Lake
 - Section Lines



The information on this map was derived from digital databases on Deschutes County's GIS. Care was taken in the creation of this map, but it is provided "as is". Deschutes County cannot accept any responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional accuracy in the digital data or the underlying records. There are no warranties, express or implied, including the warranty of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, accompanying this product. However, notification of any errors will be appreciated.

Deschutes County Road Department

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PIArecu's_Products/Solid Waste/Franchise Areas