

SCS ENGINEERS

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City of Omaha
Public Works Department
Mr. Robert G. Stubbe, P.E.
Public Works Director
1819 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68183

Subject: Solid Waste Collections
Post Pilot Public Opinion Survey Results
City of Omaha, Nebraska

Mr. Stubbe:

SCS Engineers (SCS) appreciates the opportunity to provide this summary of results obtained from the post pilot public opinion survey conducted in the Spring of 2017. The scope of work and obtained results, summarized herein, were authorized February 3, 2017 as Amendment No. 3 to Council Resolution No. 799, which was approved June 7, 2016.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

SCS, along with our subcontractor (Wiese Research Associates (WRA)), developed a comprehensive public opinion survey for purposes of gauging the attitudes and opinions of residents who participated in the City's garbage and recycling cart pilot program. Survey questions were developed and refined through City comment and beta testing, and the final questions were "scripted" for use in the telephone survey effort. A copy of the final script is included as **Attachment A**.

Participants for the survey were randomly selected using both household landlines and cellular lines and an effort was made to achieve a sample which was proportionately representative of households on a geographic basis by zip code within the pilot program area. A total of 203 residents (of the roughly 2,500 households participating in the test) were interviewed by telephone following several months of service using the pilot collection protocols. The final obtained sample closely mirrored the actual household census for the test area with respondent gender evenly divided – 49% male and 51% female. All respondents were screened to verify that they were involved in and familiar with the pilot test. In the end, the research findings reflect, to a large degree, a representative view of the "voice of the customer", residents who have experienced the pilot collection systems for several months and who have firsthand experience with the carted collection system.

WRA was provided with sample from several sources. For all households in the area for which the City had telephone numbers provided, that list was made available. In addition, WRA acquired an address-based tele-match sample (landlines only) and finally residents were able to "opt-in" to the sample through various informational material provided and on the test website. In total, 1,045



households comprised the sample possible for telephone contact in this follow-up survey. Telephone surveys commenced March 25, 2017 and were completed by trained and experienced WRA interviewers from their central interviewing facilities. All surveys were completed by April 5, 2017 prior to the end of the pilot study and collection of the garbage and recycling carts by Waste Management.

SURVEY RESULTS

Data collection during the telephone surveys was performed with appropriate industry quality control (i.e. supervisor in progress monitoring, digital recordings) and tabulated data is included herewith as **Attachment B**. Given the likely skew of available telephone numbers toward landlines (vs. cell), and given the inherent difficulty in reaching younger residents vs. their older counterparts, it is not surprising that the obtained total sample was skewed older than census information would indicate, even while holding geographic representation accurately in the sample. Therefore, WRA applied statistical weighting to adjust the final sample total results to more appropriately reflect representative age distributions. Net of the above discussion, the total results obtained is considered representative of the entire pilot study area household base.

The following comments and observations provide an overview of the survey results and are intended to provide the reader with potential inferences that seemed to surface from a researcher's perspective. It is important to note that nothing here is meant to be construed as a final conclusion or recommendation and there are always more factors to consider than just the findings from a single research study when decision-making is taking place.

Comments and Observations

Overall satisfaction with the new system was quite positive. One-half of the respondents indicated "total" satisfaction and another roughly one-third indicated being "mostly" satisfied. Conversely, only 6% stated they were "not at all" satisfied and another 9% "only partly" satisfied.

If there was a final "bottom line vote" question in the survey, it would be:

Based on your experience with the pilot program, would you strongly favor the City moving to the new collection system, moderately favor, be neutral, moderately oppose or strongly oppose moving to the new system compared to the former system?

With seven out of ten (70%) replying "strongly favor" and another 12% "moderately favoring," it is clear that an overwhelming majority of those experiencing the new system prefer it to the current system.

These positive reactions are reinforced by the fact that over three-fourths of all respondents rated the new service as either **much better (56%) or somewhat better (21%) for their household** than the current system. Only about one in every eight participants felt the test program was **somewhat (8%) or a lot (5%) worse**.

In ratings of satisfaction with various components of the program, there was generally satisfaction present. However, especially for a few components, **only partial or no satisfaction** was voiced often enough to raise at least some concerns. Those aspects that probably deserve most attention are

placement of both yard waste and trash in the same container, capacity being either less or more than needed, and issues about storing the two large containers.

As far as the size of the 96-gallon containers, only very few found them to be difficult to wheel around. However, as one might expect, no one size “fits all” when it comes to required volume. Some found the single trash and single recyclable containers to be insufficient for their needs while others found them to be more capacity than required. This is probably best reflected in the findings that while seven out of ten would prefer the 96-gallon container for trash to a smaller 65-gallon option, about one in four would prefer the smaller size. For recyclables, the preferences were 63% larger vs. 32% smaller. These results suggest that consideration be given to optional sizes if that can be accommodated effectively given sizeable groups preferring (and apparently needing) each size.

Specific to recycling, three-fourths of respondents preferred the 96-gallon cart collected every other week as opposed to the current 18-gallon bins collected weekly. Further, nearly 60% of respondents indicated that they recycled more than they did under the City’s existing system resulting in more diversion of these materials away from the landfill and reduced tipping fees paid by the City for disposal.

One of the real values inherent in the findings is the verbatim comments obtained to open ended questions. When only partial satisfaction (or less) existed for any component rated, follow up questioning probed for the particulars and the reasons “why.” A comprehensive list of the verbatim responses is included in **Attachment C**.

CONCLUSION

SCS appreciates the opportunity to provide this summary letter report of the post pilot public opinion survey. As noted previously, the summary provided above of potential “inferences” is not meant to be construed as final conclusions or recommendations as there are always more factors to consider than the findings from a single research study when decision-making is taking place. Rather, the highlights are provided to assist the City (and others) with future decision making with regard to the current public attitudes on City provided waste collection services under the pilot program.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Miller, CHMM
Vice President
SCS ENGINEERS



John F. Hartwell, Ph.D., P.E.
Senior Consultant
SCS ENGINEERS

MJM/JFH

Attachments: Telephone Survey Script
Respondent Results
Verbatim Responses

Attachment A
Telephone Survey Script

INTRODUCTION:

Hello, this is ____ with WRA Research, an independent research firm in Nebraska. We are conducting a follow-up study on behalf of the City of Omaha among those who have been participating in the garbage and recycling cart pilot program. Your opinions are important and will help the City decide how to handle collection services in the future as modernization alternatives are considered.

This call might be recorded for quality control purposes only.

(IF NECESSARY SAY:) The survey will take about 7 or 8 minutes depending on your answers.

**(INSERT STANDARD DISPOSITION CODES HERE)
XX (NOT AN OMAHA RESIDENT/DO NOT RECEIVE GARBAGE
COLLECTION FROM CITY OF OMAHA)**

**[NOTE: ITEMS IN BOLD PARENTHESIS ARE NOT READ TO
RESPONDENT, ONLY MARKED IF VOLUNTEERED BY THE
RESPONDENT]**

SQ1A. First to verify, has your household participated in the solid waste modernization pilot program involving the use of the 96-gallon wheeled carts?

(OPEN-ENDED)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No **(THANK & TERMINATE)**
- 3 **(DON'T KNOW) (THANK & TERMINATE)**

SQ1B. And are you involved in or familiar with your household's garbage and recycling collection or would someone else in your household be more familiar?

(OPEN-ENDED)

- 1 Yes, respondent familiar
- 2 No, someone else familiar **(ASK TO SPEAK WITH THEM AND SET
CALLBACK IF NOT AVAILABLE)**
- 3 **(DON'T KNOW) (THANK & TERMINATE)**

SQ1C. To make sure we have a representative sample, what is your zip code?

(READ IF NEEDED TO CLARIFY)

- 1 68022
- 2 68102
- 3 68104
- 4 68105
- 5 68106
- 6 68107
- 7 68108
- 8 68110
- 9 68111
- 10 68112
- 11 68114
- 12 68116
- 13 68117
- 14 68118
- 15 68122
- 16 68124
- 17 68127
- 18 68130
- 19 68131
- 20 68132
- 21 68134
- 22 68135
- 23 68137
- 24 68144
- 25 68147
- 26 68152
- 27 68154
- 28 68157
- 29 68164
- 30 Other **(THANK & TERMINATE)**
- 31 **(REFUSED) (THANK & TERMINATE)**

SQ1D. In which of the following categories does your age fall?
(READ RESPONSES)

- 1 18-24
- 2 25-34
- 3 35-44
- 4 45-54
- 5 55-64
- 6 65-74
- 7 75 or older
- 8 (REFUSED)

SQ1E. Gender (RECORD ONLY – DO NOT ASK)
(OPEN-ENDED)

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

1. After having participated in this pilot program, overall how satisfied are you with the new cart system and how it worked for you?
(READ RESPONSES)

- 1 Totally satisfied
- 2 Mostly satisfied
- 3 Only partly satisfied
- 4 Not at all satisfied
- 5 (NOT SURE/CAN'T SAY)
- 6 (REFUSED)

1A. [ASK Q1A IF 3 OR 4 REPLY IN Q1]

In what way specifically were you less than satisfied with the new cart system?

(OPEN ENDED AND PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

How else?

(OPEN ENDED AND PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

2. Compared to the system the City has been using, would you say this new cart system – for you and your household – is:
(READ RESPONSES)

- 1 Much better
- 2 Somewhat better
- 3 About the same – no difference
- 4 Somewhat worse
- 5 Or, A lot worse than the former system
- 6 (NOT SURE/CAN'T SAY)
- 7 (REFUSED)

2A. [ASK Q2A IF 4 OR 5 REPLY IN Q2]

In what way specifically do you feel the new cart system is worse?

(OPEN ENDED AND PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

How else?

(OPEN ENDED AND PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

3. For each of the following aspects of the new carted collection system, please tell me if you are TOTALLY SATISFIED, MOSTLY SATISFIED, ONLY PARTLY SATISFIED, or NOT AT ALL SATISFIED.
(ROTATE A-G) (REPEAT SCALE AS NEEDED)

- A The ease of wheeling the carts around and out to the curb.
- B The size of the container for garbage being sufficient for your weekly needs
- C The size of the container for recyclables for your needs every two weeks
- D Putting both trash and yard waste in the same 96-gallon container
- E Your ability to conveniently store the two 96-gallon containers
- F Having enough information to know what waste is to be put in which container
- G The ability of the containers with lids to eliminate or minimize debris in your yard or street

- 1 Totally satisfied
- 2 Mostly satisfied
- 3 Only partly satisfied
- 4 Not at all satisfied
- 5 (NOT SURE/CAN'T SAY)
- 6 (REFUSED)

4 A-G. [FOR EACH ASPECT RATED 3 OR 4 IN Q3, ASK]

In what way specifically were you less than satisfied with
(INSERT A-G AS APPLICABLE)?

(OPEN ENDED AND PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

4H. [ASK Q4H ONLY IF Q3B = 3 OR 4 REPLY]

Did you request an additional container during the pilot program?

(OPEN-ENDED)

1 Yes **(ASK Q 4I)**

2 No **(SKIP TO Q 4J)**

4I Was it sufficient?

1 Yes **(SKIP TO Q5)**

2 No **(SKIP TO Q5)**

4J Would providing you one additional 96-gallon container be sufficient to meet your weekly needs?

(OPEN-ENDED)

1 Yes

2 No

3 **(NOT SURE)**

5. Between the 96-gallon recyclable wheeled cart collected every TWO WEEKS and the previously used 18-gallon green bin collected WEEKLY, which would be your preference?

(OPEN ENDED)

1 96 gallon wheeled cart every 2 weeks

2 18 gallon green bin(s) weekly

3 Neither preferred – no difference

4 **(CAN'T SAY / DON'T KNOW)**

5 **(REFUSED)**

6. While you have been using the 96-gallon wheeled cart for recyclables, would you say you have actually placed out A LOT MORE RECYCLABLES FOR COLLECTION THAN YOU DID BEFORE, SOMEWHAT MORE, ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT, SOMEWHAT LESS, or A LOT LESS than when using the 18-gallon tubs?

(REPEAT RESPONSES AS NEEDED)

1 A lot more recyclables than before

2 Somewhat more

3 About the same amount

4 Somewhat less

5 Or, a lot less recyclables than before

6 **(CAN'T SAY/DON'T KNOW)**

7 **(REFUSED)**

7. Based on your experience with the pilot program, what would you say are the best things about the new system – what you most liked about it?

(OPEN ENDED AND PROBE FOR SPECIFICS) What else?

8. And turning that around, what didn't you like about the new cart system – what would you like to see changed or improved?

(OPEN ENDED AND PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

What else?

(OPEN ENDED AND PROBE FOR SPECIFICS)

8A. For your household's needs, which would be your preference for TRASH AND YARD WASTE collected each week?

(READ RESPONSES)

1 The 96 gallon cart used in the pilot program, or

2 A wheeled cart about 2/3 the size – 65 gallons

3 **(CAN'T SAY / DON'T KNOW)**

8B. For your household's needs, which would be your preference for RECYCLABLES collected every two weeks?

(READ RESPONSES)

1 The 96 gallon cart used in the pilot program, or

2 A wheeled cart about 2/3 the size – 65 gallons

3 **(CAN'T SAY / DON'T KNOW)**

9. Based on your experience with the pilot program, would you STRONGLY FAVOR THE CITY MOVING TO THE NEW COLLECTION SYSTEM, MODERATELY FAVOR, BE NEUTRAL, MODERATELY OPPOSE, or STRONGLY OPPOSE MOVING TO THE NEW SYSTEM compared to the former system?

(REPEAT RESPONSES AS NEEDED)

- 1 Strongly favor moving to the new system
- 2 Moderately favor
- 3 Neutral – no difference
- 4 Moderately oppose
- 5 Or, strongly oppose moving to the new system
- 6 **(CAN'T SAY/DON'T KNOW)**
- 7 **(REFUSED)**

Now a few final questions for classification purposes only.

10. How long have you lived at your current address?

(READ RESPONSES)

- 1 Less than one year
- 2 One to three years
- 3 Four to five years
- 4 Six to 10 years
- 5 10 to 20 years
- 6 More than 20 years
- 7 **(REFUSED)**

11. Have you ever lived in another city where garbage collection services were different than they are in Omaha?

(OPEN-ENDED)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 **(DON'T KNOW)**

12. Would your total household income, before taxes, for all persons in your household be under or over \$50,000 for one year?

(OPEN-ENDED)

(IF UNDER, ASK:) Under or over \$25,000

(IF OVER, ASK:) Under or over \$75,000

(IF STILL OVER, ASK:) Under or over \$100,000

- 1 Under \$25,000
- 2 \$25,000 to \$49,999
- 3 \$50,000 to \$74,999
- 4 \$75,000 to \$100,000
- 5 Over \$100,000
- 6 **(REFUSED)**

That concludes the interview. I just need to verify that I reached you at **(INSERT PHONE NUMBER)**

(IF NOT CORRECT, RECORD NUMBER:)

In case my supervisor wants to verify I completed this survey, can I please have your first name?

(RECORD NAME)

Thanks so much for your time and opinions – have a great evening/day