

Solid Waste Public Opinion Survey

A PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY WAS conducted to gauge the public's satisfaction of the current collection contract. The survey was conducted by Wiese Research Associates and the results analyzed by SCS Engineers.



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The survey was conducted by phone with live operators over several weeks beginning the end of October, 2016. The survey was sampled to give a high degree of confidence that the results would represent the whole city.

The survey measured the general knowledge of the current solid waste services offered. This included services that go “beyond the curb” such as the recycling drop-off sites, bulky item drop-off and the UnderTheSink facility. General collection knowledge was strong, but “beyond the curb” services were known by less than 50 percent of those surveyed.

Residents were generally satisfied with the collection service provided. There was no widespread dissatisfaction with the service. The dissatisfaction was relatively nominal and not focused on any particular performance factor.

Garbage

Approximately half of those surveyed said that a single 32-gallon trash can meets their typical weekly garbage collection needs. Adding a second container meets the needs of more than 80 percent. A third container satisfies a full 90 percent of the survey sample. From this, one could conclude that nine out of ten households would be satisfied with 90 to 100 gallons of available disposal volume per week.

Recycling

Three-fourths of those surveyed were satisfied with the 18-gallon recycling bin for recycling collection. Of those not satisfied, the responses were that the bins were too small, need a lid, or needed to be more durable. A single bin, collected weekly, was satisfactory for two-thirds of the respondents. Two bins, collected weekly, met the needs of nine out of ten households.

Yardwaste

Over 90 percent of those surveyed indicated that they set out yardwaste at least occasionally. Slightly more

than half reported that they have set out more than six containers of yardwaste at some time in the previous year. When questioned if there should be a limit on the amount of yardwaste collected each week, more than 50 percent stated they were in favor of a limit.

Questions were asked that measured the public's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the practice of co-collecting yardwaste and garbage. Two-thirds stated they support the separate collection of yardwaste. Even after an explanation of landfill gas collection, energy production, and vehicle emissions reduction, nearly two-thirds supported separate collection. The survey was conducted during a time when yardwaste was being co-collected with garbage.

Future Contract Options

To gauge the public's acceptance of possible future contract options, a variety of options were described then followed by questions. Most prominent were questions about City provided 96-gallon carts, and a truck that is able to empty the cart using a mechanical arm controlled by the driver.

Over 90 percent of those surveyed stated that a 96-gallon cart would be enough for their weekly garbage disposal needs. When asked how extra waste should be handled, the preference was homeowner provided bags or trash cans. This preference was by a two to one margin over a second 96-gallon cart.

While a single cart was enough for garbage collection, when considering co-collection of yardwaste and garbage, nearly one-half responded that one cart would not be enough space. When asked to consider a second 96-gallon cart, one-third still had concerns that this would not fulfill their need. Storage of a second cart was a concern for nearly 40 percent of those surveyed.

For recycling, 92 percent of those surveyed stated that a 96-gallon cart collected every-other-week would be enough for their needs. More importantly is that 25 percent indicated they would likely recycle more than they currently do if recycling bins are replaced with a cart.

The complete report including the raw data is available at

<http://future.wasteline.org>

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