

From: "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>

To: "[Direct to Mayor and Council - DL](#)"

Date: 12/8/2024 8:01:54 PM

Subject: ENG - Memo - Collections Update

Attachments: ENG - Memo - Collections Update.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached Memo from Lon LaClaire regarding **Collections Update**. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- **Truck Fleet Upgrade:** The City is replacing aging automated collection trucks with new units arriving by 2026 to improve service reliability and efficiency.
- **Service Streamlining:** Starting Spring 2025, garbage collection will consolidate to every-other-week for all customers, enhancing operational efficiency and reducing resource use.
- **Green Bin Collection:** The permanent switch to bi-weekly green bin collection in January and February starts in 2024, improving weather response and reducing costs.
- **Service Level Improvements:** Significant improvements since 2022, with fewer missed collection calls and decreased service alerts, though a recent safety incident has temporarily impacted these metrics.
- **Future Plans:** A consultant will review the City Sanitation's service model in 2025 to further improve efficiency, reliability, safety, and effectiveness.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



ENGINEERING SERVICES
Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng.
City Engineer/General Manager

MEMORANDUM

December 2, 2024

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Update on City Residential Waste Collection Services

RTS #: N/A

This memo provides Council with an update on the City's residential waste collection services, including upcoming changes to further improve service levels and reliability, cost effectiveness and efficiency, as well as an update on service levels.

Equipment and Staffing

- **Truck Replacement:** The City is continuing to replace its aging automated collection truck fleet. Five new units are expected to be in service by early 2025, with the remaining 24 units on order and expected to arrive in 2026. Since 2022, five additional new units have been added to the fleet, bringing the total to 34 units, along with three leased units to assist in the short term.
- **Utility Coordination:** Staff are working with utility companies to address conflicts between the new, slightly taller trucks and low-hanging (out of compliance) communication lines in some laneways. Approximately a third of the City has had these lines raised so far and all lanes are anticipated to be cleared in 2025.
- **Driver Staffing:** Hiring and retention of drivers remain a challenge. To ensure sufficient staffing levels, hiring and training are being conducted on an ongoing basis.

Service Streamlining and Consolidation

- **Initial Consolidation:** Sanitation has reviewed its various collection services and is consolidating them to enhance core service delivery and efficiency. Starting in 2023, they began the required notification period for change in service for garbage and organics collections at approximately 55 REFM-managed sites. This change will turn the servicing back to REFM and allows Sanitation to better consolidate resources and focus on essential garbage and collections tasks and REFM to also have a consistent service delivery model across their locations.
- **Further Streamlining:** In Spring 2025, further streamlining will occur, consolidating garbage collection to every-other-week for all customers. Currently, 88,000 customers receive garbage service every-other-week, while 1,500 buildings receive weekly garbage collection. The weekly service is resource-intensive and inefficient, requiring special service maps and a separate collection calendar. Consolidating to every-other-week collection will increase operational efficiency and free up staff and equipment for core services.

Staff will support larger buildings transitioning to private hauling services noted above. This change is expected to increase waste diversion from weekly garbage customers, similar to the 40% reduction in garbage seen when single-family homes switched to every-other-week collection in 2013.

Other Upcoming Changes

- **Green Bin Collection:** Over the last three years, green bin collections were shifted from weekly to bi-weekly for January and February to address staffing and fleet challenges, support weather response, and reduce overtime. This change has been well-received by the public, improves weather response, reduces fuel costs, and allows for annual staff safety training. Therefore, the switch to bi-weekly green bin collection in January and February will be made permanent starting in 2024.
- **Christmas Tree Collection:** This extra service for Vancouver residents has historically been scheduled to occur on two weekends in January but is often delayed by snow. In 2025, collection will span three weeks (January 11-31) to reduce staff overtime and better align with resident expectations. A review of the program will be completed after the 2024/2025 season for any contemplated changes.
- **Vancollect Text Messaging:** The Vancollect App provides waste collection reminders and service alerts. Due to a 340% increase in text messaging costs since 2021, the City will end text message reminders for 23,000 customers, advising them to switch to app notifications, emails, or phone calls.
- **2025 Planned Work:** A consultant will be retained to review the City Sanitation's service model to further improve efficiency, reliability, safety, and effectiveness.

Service Levels

Service levels have shown significant improvement since 2022, with notable metrics up until June 2024. However, a serious safety incident in June involving a hydraulic hose failure on one of the aging automated trucks has impacted these improvements.

Pre-Incident Metrics (up to June 2024):

- **Missed Collection Calls:** In the first half of 2024, there were 19% fewer missed collection calls compared to the same period in 2023, and 43% fewer calls compared to the same period in 2022. This indicates more reliable and efficient waste collection services.
- **Service Alerts:** Service alerts, which are issued when collection is not anticipated to be completed by 3 pm, decreased by 53% compared to the same period in 2023. This reduction suggests improved timeliness and fewer disruptions in service.
- **Automated Trucks in Use:** The number of automated trucks in use has been steadily increasing since 2022. In Q2 2024, an average of 25.9 trucks were on the road each day, a 20% increase compared to Q2 2023. This increase reflects better fleet availability and operational capacity.

Following the safety incident and investigation including third party experts, there has been a heightened focus on equipment to better understand issues and risks with the current fleet. While this is crucial for ensuring safety, it has reduced equipment availability, at times impacting the ability to provide crews with the necessary equipment to complete their work each day.

Post-Incident Metrics (after June 2024):

- **Missed Collection Calls:** There was an 8% increase compared to the same period in 2023.
- **Service Alerts:** In Q3 2024, 49 service alerts were issued, representing a 227% increase over both the prior quarter (Q2 2024) and the same period in 2023. This significant rise indicates more frequent disruptions and delays in waste collection services.
- **Automated Trucks in Use:** The average number of automated trucks on the road each day decreased to 23.4 in Q3 2024, a 10% drop from the prior quarter and the same level as Q3 2023. Following the completion of a hose replacement campaign Q4 2024, we anticipate seeing these numbers rebound.

The City is actively addressing these challenges to restore and further improve service levels. Continuous monitoring and adjustments are being made to ensure that waste collection services remain reliable and efficient while prioritizing safety.

If you have any questions on the above, please contact myself or Jonathan McDermott, Director, Solid Waste Management.



Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering Services

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