

**STAFF REPORT**

**DATE:** January 11, 2018

**TO:** Utility Rate Advisory Commission

**FROM:** Richard Tsai, Environmental Resources Manager  
Jennifer Gilbert, Conservation Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** Solid Waste Collection Program Community Survey

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**Recommendation**

1. Develop and recommend questions for a survey to be released to the community on Solid Waste Rate topics, specifically related to the Loose In the Street (LITS) service within the Organics Collection program.

**Fiscal Impact**

There are no fiscal impact results for this report; necessary staff time is already budgeted.

**Council Goal(s)**

- **Pursue Environmental Sustainability:** Specifically within Objective 3, to Conserve Resources in an Environmentally Responsible Manner; Task F: Explore, quantify and prioritize ways to improve the long-term environmental impacts and costs of our waste system and align them with the City's conservation goals.

**Background and Analysis**

The City has retained R3 Consulting (R3) to conduct a solid waste rate study to review the current rate structure of the City's solid waste services, provide an updated rate structure to recover service costs, and to review alternative service delivery options to assist the city in meeting financial and environmental goals. The request for proposals, reviewed by URAC in February 2017, is included for reference as Attachment 1. Included in this review is a specific review of the city's LITS pickup of yard materials. Since the introduction of the organics program in 2016, consistent customer feedback has been provided to staff on the LITS yard material pickup service. A working draft of R3's Solid Waste Collection Service Options, which focused exclusively on the LITS service, was presented to the Utility Rate Advisory Commission (URAC) at their December 14, 2017 meeting. Feedback received at the meeting from the Commissioners included questions regarding overall Organics Collection program comments from the public, comments staff have received regarding the LITS pickup specifically, as well as the possibility of creating a survey to obtain feedback on the program. Data from Davis Waste Removal (DWR) presented at the December meeting shows that LITS participation during peak leaf drop season (mid-October through mid-December) is under 20%. The URAC has suggested staff conduct a citywide survey to compare with DWR's findings. A draft survey is included in Attachment 2 for URAC review.

The last time the community received a survey on the Organics program was in early 2015, when City staff ran a survey to gauge customer feelings and solicit feedback on the proposed Organics Collection Program. Of the 341 people who took the survey, 58% indicated that the level of collection service in the proposed program would meet their needs and 73% indicated that they would still use the on-street yard material pile collection service. Attachment 3 includes the full results and feedback received from this survey.

At the request of the URAC, staff has compiled a list of comments received on the Organics Collection Program from the beginning of the program in 2016, through to today (see Attachment 4). These comments are copied word-for-word (names have been removed to protect customer privacy) from emails received by staff. Included are some Facebook and Nextdoor commentary (although it is not an exhaustive collection from those sources as staff cannot monitor all discussions), and a few letters to the editor published in The Davis Enterprise. In-person and over-the-phone feedback records are inconsistent and are therefore not included.

Staff plans to bring City Council a staff report regarding the solid waste rate study and LITS in early April. Following Council decisions on service levels, staff will return to URAC with a draft proposition 218 notice at a subsequent meeting.

#### **Attachments**

1. Request for Proposals - Solid Waste Rate Study
2. January 2018 Organics Survey
3. 2015 Davis Together Engage Organics Survey
4. Customer feedback received on Organics Collection Program