



*"...meeting community needs...enhancing quality of life."*

## MEMO

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**TO:** Municipal Services Committee  
Utilities Committee

**FROM:** Paula Vandehey, Director of Public Works  
Nate Loper, Deputy Director - Operations

**DATE:** June 1, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Department of Public Works Proposed Operational Changes

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### BACKGROUND

The Public Works Department is recommending several operational changes to help meet DNR regulations, match customer expectations, address the loss of reliable contracted services, improve employee safety, and meet our operational goals. All of the changes outlined below work in conjunction with each other and line up well for implementation in 2022. It is important to understand that these recommendations cannot be successfully implemented individually, or in part, but instead need to be implemented as a package.

### PROPOSED SERVICE CHANGES

#### Leaf Collection

The Department of Public Works is proposing to modify our leaf collection and street sweeping practices to move the needle towards our phosphorus reduction goals. Our current practice of placing and collecting leaves in the street creates an environment where phosphorus rich leachate drains into our storm sewer system and ultimately into our waterways. Too much phosphorus can lead to increased growth of algae which can be harmful to both animals and humans. In addition, our current leaf collection process is not supported by the DNR and therefore, does not provide us credit on our stormwater permit for this program.

We have evaluated several options to reduce our phosphorus load by improving our leaf collection program. Some of the options discussed were requiring our customers to bag their leaves, utilizing vacuum equipment, or requiring property owners to dispose of their own leaves. After much research and internal discussion, we have determined the most efficient, sustainable and customer friendly method of collecting leaves would be using vacuum equipment. Leaves would be placed on the terrace by each residential property owner and collected from the terrace with a remote-controlled leaf vacuum tube. Additional benefits of this process change are as follows:

- Provides a very clean end product on the streets
- Eliminates safety concerns with piles of leaves on the street
- Equipment is expected to be less disruptive than existing equipment
- Equipment does not scrape the roadway surface

As far as equipment needs for this process, we would retrofit 6 of our old automated garbage trucks by adding a vacuum unit to each truck. In addition, we would purchase 2 roll off dumpsters and up to 6 trailer vacuum units. We are recommending phasing this new process over 5 years (2022-2026) to help spread out the financial impact to the Stormwater Utility. Below are the estimated costs to implement this new process:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Equipment Purchases</u>	<u>CEA Payments</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
2022	\$325,000	\$95,400	\$420,400
2023	\$365,000	\$60,240	\$425,240
2024	\$435,000	\$60,660	\$495,660
2025	\$450,000	\$62,856	\$512,856
2026	\$300,000	\$43,344	\$343,344

Brush Collection

The downside to using vacuum equipment is the units will only suck up leaves and dry, light plant material. We could continue providing a brush and yard waste collection service, but it will need to be collected separately, by hand, and will require either adding staff and equipment or modifying existing services to free up staff time and equipment.

Our proposal is to enhance our brush and yard waste collection program for our customers by offering this collection monthly from April through November. Each residential customer would have their bagged and/or bundled yard waste (no grass) collected once per month on a week opposite of their recycling collection, and twice in April. This change will provide our customers with an enhanced level of service since we currently only collect brush four weeks during the spring. It will also provide a more consistent workload for our collection crew. Based on the additional changes proposed below, this enhanced service would not increase our budget and would be done with existing staff, if all recommendations in this memo are approved.

Bulky Item Collection

In order to provide any type of a brush collection service without adding staff, we need to eliminate or modify an existing service. We researched several communities across the State and compared our services to theirs. It appears that we are the only community offering a regular, free bulky item collection. Therefore, we looked at finding a way to align our service level with other municipalities freeing up resources to perform brush collection and winter snow removal.

We are proposing to make a shift from a 12-month, free bulky item collection to a scheduled, paid collection 8 months each year (April through November). Eliminating the bulky item collection during the winter months not only frees up staff for snow and ice services, but also eliminates the most hazardous time of year for staff to provide this service. Each residential property could schedule a collection for up to 5 approved (see attached chart) bulky items at \$10 each, once per month on non-brush collection weeks. We would also propose to add a recycling dumpster at our Glendale Avenue yard site for City residents to utilize for disposing of items that are accepted in their blue cart but do not fit, in addition to the garbage dumpsters that are currently available.

Another reason for making a change to this service is there are several other options for residents to dispose of larger items. Options include paying a mattress or appliance company a small fee to take away an old item when getting a new one delivered, renting a dumpster when remodeling a home or moving out, placing items for sale or “free for the hauling” on social media sites, donating items to the Restore, or hauling items to our yard site or the County Solid Waste facility. If none of these options are favorable to a customer, they can call our office to schedule a bulky item collection with us. Non-compliant items will be removed for a fee, which is being proposed at \$250, to help encourage property



owners to keep their terrace and neighborhood clean and free of garbage. This fee will also help cover part of our costs for removing non-compliant items from the terrace.

	CURRENT	PROPOSED
<b>Revenues</b>		
Move Out Fee	\$ 3,750	\$ -
Appliance Tag Fee	\$ 18,000	\$ 12,000
Non-Compliant Fee	\$ -	\$ 2,500
Bulky Items Fee	\$ -	\$ 16,000
<b>TOTAL Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 21,750</b>	<b>\$ 30,500</b>
<b>Savings</b>		
Truck fuel (Dec-Mar)	\$ -	\$ 8,000
Tipping fees (Dec - Mar)	\$ -	\$ 13,000
<b>TOTAL Savings</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 21,000</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Increase 0.5 FTE to 0.67 FTE	0	\$ 8,800
<b>TOTAL Expenses</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 8,800</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 21,750</b>	<b>\$ 42,700</b>
<b>Overall Annual Savings</b>		<b>\$ 20,950</b>

This change would take effect April 1, 2022 when we start our new brush collection service. The increase in Sanitation FTE is necessary to provide both the 2 rounds of brush and 1 round of bulky item collection in April each year. Please see the comparison chart attachment for services provided by other municipalities and more details related to our recommendation.

#### Sidewalk Snow Removal Insourcing

Our current 5-year sidewalk snow removal contract expires in May 2022. For at least 20 years, we have had the same contractor(s) working for us with no other company submitting a bid for this service. When we went out for bids 4 years ago, our contractor was very forthcoming with us and gave us 5 years notice of their retirement and intent to no longer bid on this contract.

Over the past 4 years, we have been trying to figure out how we can generate interest from more bidders to ensure we have a sustainable, reliable snow removal plan in place for many years to come. After reviewing several options, we have determined fall of 2022 is the ideal time for Public Works to insource this work, after our current contract expires. The timing for this is perfect, if the changes above are approved, since we plan to utilize our brush/bulky item collection crew for some of this snow removal work from December through March.

The current contract utilizes two companies responsible for approximately 18 miles of sidewalk and 175 crosswalk, stairwell, and median locations. This is more work than our existing staff can take on internally, so we are proposing the following changes to our sidewalk snow removal program:

- Eliminate sidewalk contract, for a savings of approximately \$180,000 annually
- Purchase 1 large sidewalk tractor, 2 Tool Cat machines and 4 snow blowers, for \$304,000. Payback on these equipment purchases is 8 years.
- Downtown area will remain status quo. This work will continue to be contracted out and the service levels should remain the same.
- Convert our 2 utility locator positions from 0.67 FTE to 1.0 FTE each. They are currently laid off December through March and going full time will align well with our winter snow removal staffing needs and help with employee attraction and retention.

- Continue maintaining all 18 miles of sidewalks that are currently contracted out
- Reduce the crosswalk locations that the City has been clearing from 175 to approximately 60 by:
  - Continuing to maintain all foot bridges and stairwells
  - Continuing to maintain all median/island and railroad crossings
  - Focusing resources on critical crossing guard locations
    - Educating community that property owners are responsible to maintain the handicap access that abuts their property (current City Municipal Code Section 16-10)
  - Transferring bus shelter responsibility for snow removal back to Valley Transit

	CURRENT	PROPOSED
<b>Revenues</b>		
Snow removal special assessment	\$ 133,000	\$ 133,000
<b>TOTAL Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 133,000</b>	<b>\$ 133,000</b>
<b>Savings</b>		
Contracted services	\$ -	\$ 180,000
<b>TOTAL Savings</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 180,000</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Additional CEA	\$ -	\$ 55,000
Additional Equipment O&M		\$ 27,000
Increase 0.67 FTE to 1.0 FTE	\$ -	\$ 60,000
<b>TOTAL Expenses</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 142,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 133,000</b>	<b>\$ 171,000</b>
<b>Overall Annual Savings</b>		<b>\$ 38,000</b>

## SUMMARY

The above outlined plan will help the City of Appleton meet DNR regulations, match customer expectations, address the loss of reliable contracted services, improve employee safety, and meet our operational goals. As a package, the plan has the following customer impacts:

- Reduced phosphorus to our waterways
- Leaf collection from terrace separate from other yardwaste
- Curbside brush collection monthly from May through November and twice in April
- Elimination of free bulky item collection
- More equitable clearing of handicap access ramps across the City
- More reliable, cost-effective snow removal service

**All the budget impacts related to the proposed changes in this memo will be included in our 2022 budget requests. Upon final budget approval in November, we will implement a communication and educational strategy to inform our customers about the changes that will be starting in April, 2022. This communication will include social media, our City website and an updated Public Works Guide that will be released in late March, 2022.**

Attachments

## Municipal Collection Services Comparison Chart

Community	Trash Collector	Method	Curbside Overflow Bagged Trash Policy	Curbside Bulky Item Policy	Items Collected	Items Not Collected	Non-Compliance Collections	Bulky Waste Drop-off Center	Curbside Brush & Yard Waste Collection
Appleton - Current	City	Automated	Yes, \$4.00 disposal sticker must be affixed to each bag taken	Yes, collected bi-weekly on regular garbage day; opposite week of recycling. Fee for appliance collection. No construction or contractor debris.	Large items that don't fit in cart.	Pool tables, pianos, other very heavy items	\$75	Yes	Spring & Fall
Appleton - Proposed	City	Automated	Yes, \$4.00 disposal sticker must be affixed to each bag taken	Monthly, April through November. 5 items max per month. \$10 per item, paid and scheduled in advance.	Typical home furniture, recliner, couch, bed frames, doors (not patio), tables, TV stands, rugs, carpets (cut to 4 feet and bundled), small metal (4 foot or less), tires. Weigh less than 50 pounds.	Appliances, electronics mattresses, sofa sleepers, construction/remodeling/building materials, glass doors, bay windows, hot tubs, pools, trampolines, exercise equipment, basketball hoops, tractor tires.	\$250	Yes. Appliances, metal, garbage, tires and recycling accepted.	Monthly, April through November. No grass collected curbside.
DePere	City	Automated	Yes, extra bags taken outside the cart during traditional holiday weeks. Rest of year, \$2.00 overflow tag must be affixed to each bag taken.	Yes, 1 week in June and 1 week in September. Must schedule and pay fee for collection other 50 weeks of the year. Charges vary, minimum \$40 fee.	Furniture, carpet, doors, metal, windows, doors.	Construction materials and debris, freon appliances, bagged trash.	No	Yes	3 times per year: May, July, and October. No fee. Must schedule and pay fee for collection rest of the year. Charges vary, minimum \$40 fee.
Eau Claire	Contractor	Property owner required to contract individually with approved waste hauler	Per individual contract with waste hauler.	Must contact and pay private hauler	Must contact and pay private hauler	Must contact and pay private hauler	Must contact and pay private hauler	No	Yardwaste collected 1 week in May and 1 week in November. 10 bags free, then \$2.50/bag. No brush collected.
Fond du Lac	City	Automated	Bags outside cart are only collected as bulky items for a minimum \$40 fee.	Yes, \$40 minimum charge plus charges for appliances, tires, etc. Extra charges for non-scheduled items.	Appliances, furniture, bagged trash	Tires and freon require additional fee.	No	Yes	Fall only. Small amounts of plant material only. No grass, brush, fruits or vegetables collected.
Grand Chute	Contractor	Automated	No bags outside of cart will be collected.	4 collections per year provided by private hauler.	Furniture, carpet (4' sections), tables.	Appliances, construction materials, bagged trash.	No	No	Brush chipping 1 week in May and September. No grass or yard waste collected.
Green Bay	City	Automated	Yes, up to 4 extra bags taken outside the cart during 4 scheduled weeks per year.	Yes, 2 scheduled weeks per year, 2 CY max. Other 50 weeks of the year, \$80 minimum charge per trip up to \$240.	Furniture (indoor & outdoor), metal objects, etc.	Appliances, construction/remodel materials (including carpet), move out debris	\$240	Yes, 2 drop-off centers. No fee. No construction or contractor debris.	Spring & Fall. No grass collected.
LaCrosse	Contractor	Automated	Yes, must schedule. Fees apply.	Once per year in Spring. 5 items max. Other weeks must contact and pay private hauler.	Furniture, etc.	No appliances or construction materials.	No	No	Contract individually with private hauler; if want the service. Brush collected one week in the spring.
Menasha	City	Automated	Yes, \$1.00 overflow sticker must be affixed to each bag collected	Yes, each residential property gets 5 bulky item tags per year. Additional tags cost \$15 each. Freon appliance collection is \$15.	Large items or bags of trash with stickers.	NA	No	No	Brush collected monthly. Yardwaste collected in the Spring & Fall. Must use paper bags. Grass collected.



## Municipal Collection Services Comparison Chart

City	Automated	No program	Yes, no charge during even numbered months. Residents must contact City to request collection. Dumpster rental or \$105 minimum charge for other months.	Furniture, carpeting, doors, windows.	Appliances, bagged trash.	Dumpster rentals	Yes, \$25 punch card good for 5 items per year.	Brush collected monthly, June through November. Yard waste collected spring and fall. No grass collected. Must be bagged or banded.
Neenah	Automated	No program	Yes, no charge during even numbered months. Residents must contact City to request collection. Dumpster rental or \$105 minimum charge for other months.	Furniture, carpeting, doors, windows.	Appliances, bagged trash.	Dumpster rentals	Yes, \$25 punch card good for 5 items per year.	Brush collected monthly, June through November. Yard waste collected spring and fall. No grass collected. Must be bagged or banded.
Oshkosh	Automated	Yes, \$10 overflow sticker must be affixed to each bag collected.	Yes, with scheduled pick-up. \$13 metal items; \$15 large items; \$23 appliances; no electronics. Items without paid sticker will be tagged. Items still not removed will be collected for \$240 fee.	Furniture, appliances, metal, carpeting	NA	\$240 each. Do less than 10 enforcements per year. College City with lots of rentals.	No	Monthly, April through December. 3" diameter brush or smaller. No grass collected.
Racine	Semi-automated; rear-loader	3 extra bags each week	5 bulky items per collection with a sticker on each.	Items too large to fit in cart.	Construction materials, toilets, cabinets, sinks, counters, windows, doors. No appliances, metal, electronics or tires.	No	Yes	Spring and Fall only. May bring to City yard waste facility year-round.

**Sec. 16-9. Obstructing passage.**

(a) No unauthorized person shall stand, sit, lie, remain or otherwise occupy any street, sidewalk or other public way open for pedestrian or vehicular travel in such a manner as to annoy or molest any pedestrian thereon, or so as to obstruct or unreasonably interfere with the free passage of pedestrians, motor vehicles or other modes of travel. No person shall stand or remain at or near the entrance to any public or private building in such a manner as to annoy persons entering or leaving or passing such entrance. No person shall stand, sit, lie, remain or otherwise occupy any motor vehicle without permission of the owner.

(b) No kiosk, bulletin board or other decorative object shall be placed upon the street right-of-way except upon benches or other seating facilities provided for such purposes by the City.

(c) Sandwich board/temporary signs may be placed in the street right-of-way in conformance with the City of Appleton Sandwich Board/Temporary Sign Policy. (Code 1965, §5.07(1)(d), Ord 164-07, §1, 12-25-07)  
**Cross reference(s)** – Citation for violation of certain ordinances, §1-17; schedule of deposits for citation, §1-18

**Sec. 16-10. Snow and ice removal.**

(a) Every person shall, no later than thirty-six (36) hours following cessation of a snowfall, remove all snow and/or ice from the entire width of the sidewalk along the entire perimeter of the premises owned or occupied by him, including any handicap access ramps along the perimeter of the premises; provided that, immediately after the accumulation of ice on such sidewalk, it shall be treated with sand, salt or other substance to prevent it from being slippery. The ice shall continue to be so treated in such a manner as to prevent the ice from being dangerous until it can be removed and shall then be promptly removed. If the owner or occupant of such premises shall fail to remove and keep removed, such snow and ice or to sprinkle a sidewalk as required, the work shall be done under the direction of the Common Council and the expenses thereof made a special tax upon the lot along the entire perimeter of where such work was done.

(b) No person shall remove or cause to be removed any snow or ice from his premises, residence, parking lot, parking area, business property or other area onto any public right-of-way or property. Snow removed from public sidewalks shall not be stored in any manner which will obstruct or limit vehicular or pedestrian vision, movement or access. Snow accumulations on sidewalks and handicap ramps resulting from street snow plowing operations shall be removed by the owner of the abutting premises in accordance with the provisions of this section.

In those instances where insufficient space exists between the sidewalk and street for the storage of all snow removed, it shall be stored on the abutting premises.  
 (Ord 25-17, §1, 3-21-17)

(c) The deposit of any snow or ice upon any sidewalk alley or street of the city contrary to the provisions of this section is a nuisance, and in addition to the penalty provided for violation of this chapter, the City may summarily remove any snow or ice so deposited and cause the cost of the removal to be charged to the owner of the property from which the snow or ice has been removed. (Code 1965, §5.10; Ord 155-10, §1, 10-26-10; Ord 98-13, §1, 11-26-13)

**Cross reference(s)** – Citation for violation of certain ordinances, §1-17; schedule of deposits for citation, §1-18.

**Sec. 16-11. Compliance with City plans and specifications.**

All streets and alleys shall be graded, graveled, paved or improved, all sidewalks shall be constructed or rebuilt, and all underground utilities in public streets, alleys and public grounds, all bridges, and all other public works of any kind whatever shall be built, constructed, erected or completed according to the plans and specifications kept on file in the office of the Director of Public Works. Such work shall be done in a manner and of the materials the specifications prescribe. Said work shall be completed in accordance with the requirements set forth in the City's *Temporary Traffic Control Manual for Street Construction and Maintenance Operations in the City of Appleton*, latest edition.  
 (Code 1965, §5.06; Ord 143-05, §1, 12-13-05)

**Sec. 16-12. Work in public right-of-way – permit.**

(a) **Administrative authority.** Permits shall be issued by the Engineering Division of the Department of Public Works.

(b) **Fee; commencement of work without permit.**

- (1) An established permit fee in the amount which is on file in the Department of Public Works shall be paid for each permit issued under this section. If work is commenced before a permit is obtained and the permit request is denied, the Director of Public Works shall order the work ceased or the condition removed until a permit is obtained, for which the applicant shall pay a fee of four (4) times the established fee.
- (2) If a permit is denied, the Director of Public Works or the Common Council may cause any offending conditions to be removed or