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SAN DIEGO

Frequently Asked Questions

Trash and Recycling Services, Measure B and the Cost-of-Service Study

Current Solid Waste Collection Services

How is solid waste currently collected?

The City collects residential solid waste (trash, recycling and organics) from eligible single-family homes and multi-family residential complexes with up to four residences on a lot. Private franchise haulers provide trash and recycling services to properties not eligible for City-provided service, including single-family homes on private streets, and commercial, industrial and mixed-use properties. Residents serviced by haulers pay for the services either directly to the hauler or as part of HOA fees, rent or other charges.

What properties are currently eligible for City-provided solid waste collection services?

The City of San Diego's Environmental Services Department (ESD) provides residential trash, recycling and organic waste recycling collection, and collection and maintenance of street litter containers, and, in business districts, collection and maintenance of street litter containers. With the passing of Measure B, the San Diego Municipal Code clarified that residential solid waste collected by the City includes trash, recycling, and organic waste from residences with up to four units on a single lot that meets the

City's eligibility requirements. The City remains unable to provide service to mixed-use properties or properties located on private streets or in gated communities.

What services are not provided by the City?

The City does not collect household hazardous waste (HHW) such as paint, batteries, lead and motor oil from individual residences. The City does help residents dispose of their hazardous waste by operating an HHW Transfer Facility at the Miramar Landfill and by hosting one-day collection events.

The City does not provide weekly recycling collection to its residential customers at this time. The City collects recycling every other week.

A citywide, systemic bulky item pickup program is not currently in place. While the City holds occasional community cleanup events where the City accepts certain bulky items for disposal or recycling, residents must currently haul these bulky items to designated locations.

Additionally, residents may bring their bulky items to the Miramar Landfill for a fee. The City also operates a Mattress collection site near the Miramar Landfill, to which residents may bring their mattresses and box springs for free. The City does not pick up mattresses at individual residences, however.

How does the City pay for collection services now?

Most of the cost for the City to provide residential waste and recycling collection by the Environmental Services Department (ESD) is covered by the City's General Fund. Each year, ESD requests funding to cover its operational needs through the City's annual budgeting process. Additionally, the Department can cover some of its costs to provide residential recycling collection through the Recycling Enterprise Fund. This fund receives revenue primarily from an imposed AB 939 fee assessed on every ton of waste collected in the City by franchise haulers. The fund can only be used to pay for recycling activities.

Do my property taxes already cover the cost of residential waste and recycling collection?

Sources of the General Fund include sales tax, transient occupancy tax, franchise fees, property tax, and several others, as summarized in the City's Fiscal Year 2025 Adopted Budget. Property owners pay property tax to the County, and less the 20 percent of those property taxes are apportioned back to cities. Most are apportioned to schools. See [County of San Diego website](#)¹ for more information. The sum of property taxes that are apportioned back to the City of San Diego makes up less than 40 percent of the General Fund. For the portion of the General Fund attributable to property tax, it's important to note that these property taxes are paid not only by owners of residential properties that receive City trash and recycling collection service, but also by owners of residential properties who pay private franchise haulers for trash and recycling collection service.

Measure B

What is Measure B?

Measure B, passed by voters in 2022, amended the People's Ordinance. While almost every other jurisdiction in the state charges a fee for solid waste collection and recycling or disposal services, the City had a provision that did not allow the City to charge. This resulted in some residents having to pay for the services from a private hauler while other residents received the services from the City at no charge.

The amendments removed the prohibition in the municipal code that prevented the City from charging

¹ <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/auditor/pdf/apportionment101.pdf>

a fee for the residential waste and recycling collection services it provided and clarified which properties were eligible for City-provided service. In response to the amendments, the City is engaging in a public process to evaluate trash and recycling collection services provided by the City of San Diego to its residential customers, potential areas for service enhancements, costs of services, and fee options to allow the City to recover the costs of providing residential waste and recycling collection services to its customers.

How would trash collection be funded under the new system?

If a new fee is approved by City Council, the City-provided residential waste and recycling collection services would be funded by fees paid by property owners who receive the service. The fees would provide revenue to a new Solid Waste Management Fund, which in turn would be used to fund the cost of providing these services.

Any fee collected would be used to fund the services provided, and a fee would not exceed the cost of the service. Trash and recycling collection for ineligible properties would continue to be provided by a franchise hauler and would not be affected by this process.

If the City Council approves a fee next year, how would it be charged? Why?

If the City Council approves a fee for property owners who receive their trash and recycling services from the City, ESD would ask for a vote to approve tax roll billing. This means the fees would be collected with the property taxes paid by each home that receives its trash service from the City.

Most property owners already pay other fees with their property tax bills, so they would not have to set up a new payment arrangement or learn a new system. Data from property tax billing is already set up to work with City systems like Get-it-Done and its GIS data. This approach has lower staffing needs and costs less to operate than monthly billing. Public comments also support this choice.

If the General Fund is no longer used to fund solid waste management services, what additional services could be funded?

If the General Fund is no longer used to fund solid waste collection services for a subsection of City residents, it may have additional capacity to support

capital needs (e.g., new fire stations, libraries or parks) and/or new or higher levels of public services (e.g., public safety related, increased library or park hours/programs, homelessness services, flood relief or other targeted services in areas of identified need) because it will no longer be burdened with paying for solid waste management services.

Through a joint decision process, the Mayor creates the budget, and the City Council passes it. Together they determine how to deploy General Fund monies.

Cost-of-Service Study

What is the Cost-of-Service Study?

The Cost-of-Service Study will determine the costs to collect and manage residential waste and recycling and, through public outreach and engagement, will determine what, if any, enhanced services residents prioritize and are most likely to use.

ESD will provide the information gathered during the Cost-of-Service Study to the San Diego City Council, which will decide whether to implement a fee. The process is designed to be transparent, accessible, inclusive and representative of the community.

How long will the Cost-of-Service Study take?

The study began in March 2024 and is anticipated that it will be completed by December 2024. The findings will be presented to the City Council in January or February of 2025, followed by a public review and a final public hearing no sooner than June 2025. No new fee can be established before this process is complete. If approved, the City will begin rollout of the fee in summer 2025, including establishing a timeline for implementing any new service enhancements.

How much will the City charge for waste management services?

The Cost-of-Service Study, informed by public outreach and engagement, will determine the cost to collect and manage residential waste and recycling from eligible properties, including any service enhancements, and will include fee options for City Council. City Council will determine whether to establish a fee and what the fee will be. Fees cannot exceed the cost of the services.

If a fee is implemented, who would it impact?

The potential new fees would apply to eligible single-family homes and residential complexes

of four or fewer units that are eligible to receive solid waste collection services from the City of San Diego (e.g., residential properties, located on public roads, etc.). Most multi-family residences citywide are already receiving solid waste collection (trash, recycling and green waste) services from a private franchise hauler and are paying through their homeowner association fees, rents or other payments. This process will not affect ineligible properties that receive service from private haulers.

If fees are implemented, how will solid waste collection services change?

The Cost-of-Service Study reviews potential services and related fees. If cost-recovery fees are implemented, they could allow the City to provide enhanced services to eligible properties, such as picking up recycling more frequently, replacing bins, or other ideas from residents.

Is there a chance the City could reduce services for everyone or remove a service that some people do not use?

The Cost-of-Service Study will look at the whole range of solid waste collection services (e.g., expanding options for reduced container sizes) and balance which ones best serve the community with the estimated costs and fees.

Has the City been able to identify potentially impacted properties?

Yes. The City has reviewed County and City data and compiled a list of single-family residential properties and multi-family residential properties with up to four residences on a single lot as well as the owners of those properties, as listed in County deed records.

Will owners of properties who would be impacted by potential new fees have the opportunity to protest before a final City Council vote on the fees?

Yes. The ESD will send a paper mailer to residential property owners who would be subject to the potential new fee, consistent with requirements specified in the California State Constitution, as amended by [Proposition 218 in 1996 \(see Article VIII C and D\)](#).² ESD will participate in a public hearing with City Council not less than 45 days after sending the mailers and will count and consider all written

² https://www.lao.ca.gov/1996/120196_prop_218/understanding_prop218_1296.html

responses received. If written protests against the proposed fee or charge are received from a majority of owners of the identified properties, the new fee will not be imposed.

Is there a chance the City could reduce services for everyone or remove a service that some people do not use?

The Cost-of-Service Study will look at a whole range of solid waste collection services and will provide residential property owners the opportunity to provide input. Certain collection services are required by law, however, including collection of refuse, recyclables, and organic waste, and cannot be removed from the services provided to eligible residential property owners.

Are there any discounts or assistance programs available for homeowners who may qualify for financial assistance programs?

The City of San Diego is studying the impacts that a potential fee may have on residents across the city and evaluating financial assistance to homeowners who may qualify for such programs as well as potential revenue sources to fund them.

Is there an option to opt out of certain services?

The City of San Diego provides waste and recycling collection services to eligible properties. The services currently provided by the City are required by law and cannot be opted out of. For potential additional services that may be incorporated in the future, such as bulky item pickup, the City is examining potential implementation approaches.

Are there situations in which a single family or multi-family property would not meet City requirements for collection by City forces?

Yes. The City publishes eligibility criteria on its website. Please visit the **Request for New Service FAQ³** on the Get It Done website. Please note that the regulations are currently being updated and are subject to change.

How will the adoption of a new fee for solid waste management services benefit San Diegans?

The robust outreach and engagement accompanying the Cost-of-Service Study is providing a historic opportunity for City residents to share their insights and perspectives on the services provided by the Environmental Services Department. The study is collecting input from residents on what enhanced solid waste collection services they would be most likely to use, and which ones would protect the environment, benefit communities and help the City reach its Climate Action Plan goals.

How can I participate in the Cost-of-Service Study?

In the Summer and Fall of 2024, the City is convening a series of public open houses, sharing questionnaires, delivering community group presentations and holding focus group discussions. There will be both in-person and virtual meetings offered, and appropriate translation services will be provided, as needed. For more information, please visit CleanGreenSD.org.

Contact Us

Who can I contact regarding questions or concerns for this project?

Residents are encouraged to share their insights and perspectives through multiple available channels, including virtual and in-person public open houses, questionnaires, focus groups, social media, community presentations, local pop-up events and more.

Want to know more?



Stay up to date about potential service enhancements and fees in the future! Visit CleanGreenSD.org.

For additional questions or comments, please contact us at Trash@SanDiego.gov.

³ <https://sdgov.my.site.com/ViewArticle?URLName=Request-for-New-Service>