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FOR A CLEANER, GREENER  
**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 currently collects residential solid waste (trash, recycling and organics) primarily from single-family homes and some multi-family residential complexes. Private hauler companies provide trash and recycling services to larger apartment and condo complexes, as well as single-family homes on private streets. Residents of these properties pay for the services either directly to the companies 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 in business districts. ESD currently serves approximately 285,000 residential property customers and generally collects from single-family homes and multi-family residential complexes located on public streets. With the passing of Measure B, the San Diego Municipal Code has been amended to clarify that the City will provide waste and recycling collection services to single-family homes or multi-family residences with four or fewer

residences on a single lot, but not multi-family residences with five or more residences on the lot. The City is unable to provide service to mixed-use properties nor to properties located on private streets or in gated communities.

#### What services are not provided by the City?

The City does not provide solid waste or recycling collection to large multi-family complexes nor from most industrial, commercial, mixed-use or other non-residential properties.

The City does not collect household hazardous waste (HHW) such as paint, batteries, lead and motor oil from individual residences. However, 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 from its residential customers at this time. The City collects recycling every other week.

A citywide, systematic bulky item pick-up program is not currently in place, though the City holds occasional community clean-up events to accept these items. 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.

## How does the City pay for collection services now?

Most of the cost 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 is able to cover some of its costs to provide residential recycling collection with the Recycling Enterprise Fund. This fund receives revenue primarily from an imposed AB 939 fee assessed on every ton of waste collected by private refuse hauling companies operating in the city. Historically, the fund has also received revenue from the sale of recyclable materials.



## Measure B

### What is Measure B?

Measure B, passed by voters in 2022, amended the People's Ordinance. The amendment clarified that the residential customers who receive waste and recycling collection services from City forces include single-family residences and multi-family residences with up to four residences on a single lot. The amendments also removed a prohibition in the municipal code that had prevented the City from charging a fee for the residential waste and recycling collection services it provided. 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 and implemented, the residential waste and recycling collection services provided by City employees could be funded by fees paid by homeowners who receive the service. The fees would provide revenue to a new Solid Waste Management Fund, which in turn would cover costs supporting these services. Any fee paid would be dedicated to the cost to provide these services, and a fee could not exceed the cost of the service.

Trash and recycling collection for multi-family residences with five or more residences on a single lot, residences on private streets or in gated communities, mixed-use properties, and most non-residential properties would continue to receive their waste and recycling collection services from a private hauler and would continue to pay that private hauler for collection services through their homeowner association fees, rents or other payments.



## What will the recovered revenue from the General Fund be used for?

The General Fund 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, homeless services, flood relief or other targeted services in areas of identified need) freed up by the establishment of a fee to recover the cost of waste and recycling collection 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. The Environmental Services Department will provide this information to the San Diego City Council, which will decide the services to be offered and associated fees.

The process will 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 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. If approved, the City will begin rollout in the summer of 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 single-family residences and multi-family residences with four or fewer residences on a single lot, 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 delivering 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 hauler and are paying through their homeowner association fees, rents or other payments. Residents that pay private haulers will not pay new fees from this process.

### 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 providing more frequent recyclable materials collection, replacement of refuse and recycling containers at no additional cost, and other services based on public input.



### **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.

### **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 single-family residences and multi-family residences with four or fewer residences on a single lot. These properties may not opt out of collections services. For potential additional services that may be incorporated in the future, such as bulky item pickup, the City is examining potential implementation approaches.

### **How will the adoption of a new charge 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.

The effort will help the City to design waste and recycling collection operations that align with the needs and priorities of the City. For example, enhancements could include more frequent recycling pickup, bulky item pickup, and container repair and replacement with delivery.

The General Fund 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, homeless strategies, flood relief or other targeted services in areas of identified need) freed up by the establishment of a fee to recover the cost of waste and recycling collection 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.

### **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](https://www.sandiego.gov/clean-green).

## **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](https://www.sandiego.gov/clean-green).

For additional questions or comments, please contact us at [Trash@SanDiego.gov](mailto:Trash@SanDiego.gov).