

POINT LOMA OB MONTHLY

Local trash customers suggest changes as San Diego studies new fee

Potentially adding collection of bulky items and household hazardous waste finds support at a community meeting in Point Loma



Community members talk with San Diego city staff about potential changes that could come with a new trash collection fee for single-family homes. (Tyler Faurot)



By **TYLER FAUROT**

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Given the chance to weigh in on the city of San Diego's waste and recycling collection services and a potential new fee for single-family homes, many participants at a public meeting in Point Loma leaned toward additional options such as collection of bulky items and household hazardous waste.

In meetings bearing a striking resemblance to San Diego's community workshops about the possible replacement of the [Ocean Beach Pier](#), the city Environmental Services Department has been presenting a series of public meetings about trash collection.

One such meeting for City Council District 2, which includes Point Loma and Ocean Beach, drew about 40 people Aug. 26 at the Point Loma/Hervey Library.

The idea of the nine public meetings citywide (one for each council district) is to find out "what San Diegans want — what they like about their trash, what enhancements, if any, might they prioritize," said Jeremy Bauer, assistant director of environmental services. "We're looking at what that would cost to provide those services, and then that will allow us to present options to the City Council should they decide to create a fee to cover the cost of services."

Proposition 218, a statewide initiative passed in 1996, prohibits local governments from charging more for services than they cost.

The council is expected to adopt a new monthly charge for trash collection next year. It probably would take effect in summer 2026.

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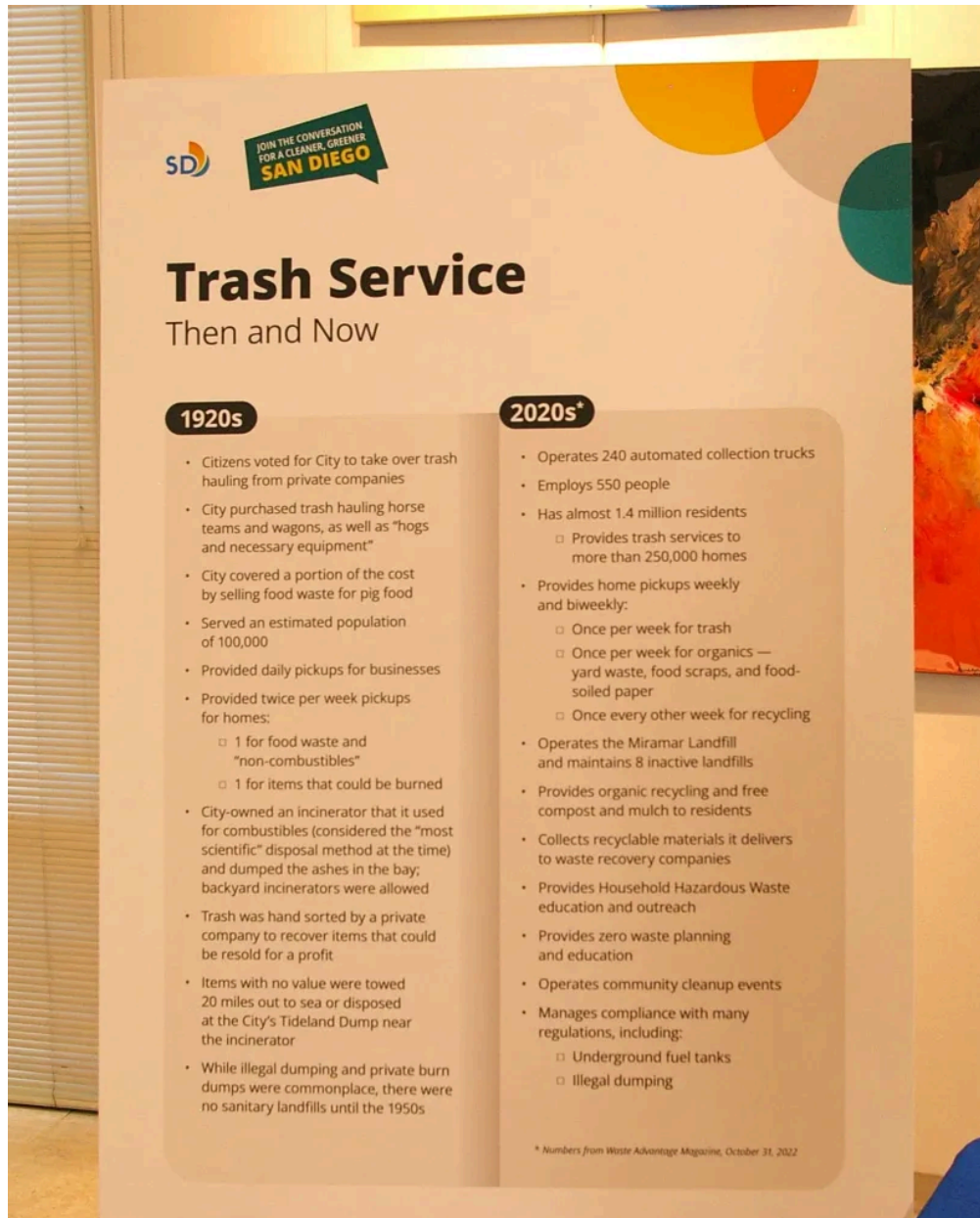
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Until city voters passed the ballot initiative Measure B in 2022, San Diego was prohibited from charging a fee for trash collection at single-family homes under the century-old People's Ordinance.



A display describes the history of San Diego trash service over the past century. (Tyler Faurot)

Franklin Coopersmith, deputy director of the Environmental Services Department, said adding a new funding mechanism for trash collection —

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“Over the years, our services have expanded,” Coopersmith said. “In the ‘90s we added recycling, and this past year and a half we added green containers [for food and other organic waste]. That never had a dedicated revenue source to go with it. So we get these regulations that say ‘Hey, you need to implement this or expand this,’ and money for that usually comes [from the general fund].”

Coopersmith said property tax revenue ends up in the city’s general fund, where Environmental Services then has to vie for funds alongside other departments. By implementing a dedicated revenue source for trash collection, the general fund could be put to better use for services such as parks and fire stations, he said.

Jon Schmid, chief executive of marketing firm Cook + Schmid, which also has been working with the city on its outreach on the OB Pier redevelopment, said the model of the public events for that and the trash collection encourages a broader dialogue.

“A lot of the time with town-hall-style meetings that have public comment, usually one person dominates that time, and often not everyone gets a chance to ask a question,” Schmid said.



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City staff said the preferences expressed for bulky-item and hazardous-waste collection resembled those of participants in other meetings.

“There are so many one-on-one conversations taking place in this room, and it’s really giving us an opportunity to engage directly with so many people,” Bauer said. “I see a lot of people who seem thankful to be able to share their input, even if they don’t support a fee.”

While the breakdown of a new fee has not been determined, it could depend on the kinds of service and amount of waste at each property.

“It’s likely going to be [based on] the number of containers, size of containers and type of containers,” Coopersmith said.

The city’s independent budget analyst said in fall 2022 that a rough estimate of monthly bills for single-family homes would fall between \$23 and \$29 if all of the 285,000 affected households were charged equally.

But bills almost certainly would be higher because of inflation and because the IBA’s analysis didn’t account for increased service levels or the need to create a new billing system.

City staff members said they expect to report their findings from the nine community meetings around November and gather further input as they develop the potential fees. Bauer said his team would present to the City Council “no sooner than” June 2025 and that the rollout of new services could start as early as the following month.

An online questionnaire for residents unable to attend a public event is available at cleangreensd.org.

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