



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 4, 2013

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Request to Authorize the Release of Contingent Reserve Funds for Recycling Programs to be Implemented by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services.

ISSUE: City Council consideration of a request to authorize the release of contingent reserve funding in the amount of \$210,000 for recycling initiatives (funded by the Residential Refuse Fee) to be implemented by the Dept. of Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES).

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Authorize the release of \$210,000 from the FY 2014 contingent reserves (funded by the Residential Refuse Fee) to fund the recycling programs that had been preliminarily approved in the FY14 Budget process.

BACKGROUND: On January 1, 2013, as a result of an agreement between Covanta Energy and the City of Alexandria and Arlington County, the disposal cost of residential refuse decreased by half for both jurisdictions. This decrease created surplus revenue in the accounts dedicated to the management of the City's refuse. During the FY 2014 budget cycle, Council used this surplus to approve new programs in T&ES for the management of brush, grass and yard debris. Council also requested that staff propose an expanded recycling initiative. These programs are expected to contribute significantly to the City's 2020 Eco-City Alexandria goals and the City's long-term strategic plan outcomes. After considering a menu of recycling program options during its budget retreat, Council approved \$210,000 in contingent reserves (funded by the Residential Refuse Fee) during the Add/Delete process.

DISCUSSION: Since Council's preliminary approval of recycling funding in the Add/Delete process during

the FY 2014 budget process, staff has reviewed the menu of proposed new recycling programs with various stakeholders. After considering that input, staff proposes the following programs for implementation using contingent reserve funding:

1. **Recycling On the Go:** Install and provide regular service to outdoor recycling receptacles for heavily-used athletic fields and high pedestrian traffic areas in Old Town.
2. **Pilot Food Composting Program:** Visitors to Farmer's Markets will have the opportunity to purchase countertop food waste collection tubs and to drop-off collected food waste at a market collection station. The material would become compost. This program is similar in nature to a new program in Boston, MA and will enable staff to conduct ongoing assessment of innovative ways to continue increasing recycling in Alexandria.
3. **Earth Saver Challenge-Waste Minimization:** After working with schools and civic associations, staff will recruit 100 families to reduce the amount of refuse to one (1) 32-gallon container or less per week. Program will pilot the use of smaller refuse containers and allow staff to evaluate how smaller receptacles coupled with residential composting can become part of the City's waste reduction goals.
4. **Green Building Upgrade at T.C. Williams High School:** Two compactors, one for garbage and one for recycling, will replace eight (8) containers in the loading-dock area.

The original proposal considered by Council in the FY2014 budget process included a possible recycling drop-off center in north-east Alexandria in order to serve small businesses and residents in the Potomac Yard and Arlandria areas. This proposal is not part of the current proposal since the site for this drop-off is being considered in conjunction with the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities' large-parks planning process. Staff expects to bring it forward in the future, possibly as soon as FY15 . Funding originally proposed for the drop-off would instead be programmed for Recycling on the Go, which is scalable.

FISCAL IMPACT: The amount of \$210,000 would be directed from the fees charged to the City's refuse and recycling customers. Customers currently pay an annual fee of \$328 to receive City refuse services. No increase in this fee would be necessary since the fee was set by Council with this contingency in mind.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Letter of support from Environmental Policy Commission

Attachment 2: PowerPoint Presentation

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