


Date: October 1, 2012

To: **Mayor and Members of City Council**

From: **Milton Dohoney, Jr., City Manager** 

RE: Proposed Changes to the City's Solid Waste Collection Function

Pursuant to policy direction received to reduce worker injuries in the Solid Waste Collection area, the Administration has convened an interdepartmental committee to review and propose changes to Cincinnati Municipal Code Chapter 729 "Waste Disposal". This effort is intended to accomplish five objectives: 1) Improving worker safety; 2) Enabling the use of new technologies; 3) Creating clear and consistent rules; 4) Modernizing the language; and 5) Decreasing Solid Waste Collection program costs.

1. Improving Safety - In an average year, Cincinnati suffers more than 40 injuries to trash collectors, and spends close to \$1 million on those injuries. Common injuries include sprains and strains from lifting, and punctures and chemical exposures from dangerous items in the trash. Many of these injuries could be prevented by the use of cart tippers, which allow the trash collectors to mechanically lift and empty containers. To use cart tippers consistently, residents must use containers that are compatible with the tippers. Additional injuries could be prevented by establishing clear guidelines for what can go in the trash, and how to package dangerous items.

2. Enabling New Technologies – The City's current trash trucks are loaded from the rear, requiring either a two person crew (one driving, and the other placing the trash in the hopper) or a one person crew with the driver making hundreds of trips per day from the cab to the hopper, resulting in significant inefficiencies. More and more Cities are converting to side-loader trucks such as those currently used in Cincinnati for recycling collections. With the hopper located immediately adjacent to the driver's seat, a side-loader truck can be efficiently operated by a one person crew. The side-loader trucks are designed for semi-automated and fully automated collections, with the truck lifting and emptying containers that are designed to be compatible with the truck. It is not possible for the equipment to collect non-standard trash cans or other miscellaneous items. The revised ordinance will require residents to set out their trash in a manner that is compatible with semi-automated collection equipment.

3. Clear and Consistent Rules – Currently, the City has no clear rules identifying which structures are entitled to City trash collection. The City offers service to all occupied residential structures containing one to four units, but some larger residential structures receive City service while other similar structures must contract with a private hauler. Likewise, some businesses receive City service while other similar businesses must contract with a private hauler. The proposed ordinance will clearly delineate who is and is not eligible for City trash collection.

4. Modernizing Language - This revision will eliminate archaic words from the waste ordinance, such as "offal" and "noisome." This revision will also remove obsolete requirements, including how to handle residential coal ash, the times of day for pumping out privy vaults, and the separation of combustible and noncombustible wastes. This revision will also remove provisions that duplicate requirements in other

chapters of the City Ordinance, including requirements for the removal of abandoned automobiles, and provision for cleaning up abandoned property from vacant lots.

5. Decreasing Costs – The proposed ordinance will decrease costs by: reducing worker injuries; enabling the use of one person crews; reducing the number of structures receiving City service; and encouraging the diversion of material from trash to recycling. There are increased costs involved in implementing the changes enabled by this ordinance, including the cost of acquiring and distributing trash carts, and the cost of converting to side loader equipment over time. The City’s net savings have not yet been determined, and will depend on the specifics of how program changes are implemented.

The work of the Committee will continue over the next couple months to refine the proposed changes to the Cincinnati Municipal Code, to explore the purchase of trash carts, and to finalize a cost benefit analysis. The Administration will be bringing forward for City Council’s consideration the proposed changes to the Cincinnati Municipal Code along with a financing plan as part of the City Manager’s Recommended Budget in November.

This memorandum is provided for informational purposes only. No action by City Council is required at this time.

cc: Michael Robinson, Public Services Director
Larry Falkin, Office of Environmental Quality Director
Lea D. Eriksen, Budget & Evaluation