



BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN PARK

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Dear Franklin Park Borough Residents:

Borough Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, May 17, 2010 regarding the feasibility of switching from the current manual refuse collection system to automated collection. The meeting will start at 7:30 PM and will be held at the Franklin Park Volunteer Fire Company Hall, 2360 Rochester Road, Sewickley, PA 15143. The Borough will make an in-depth presentation regarding how an automated collection system works and will identify its advantages and disadvantages. After the presentation, Council will solicit public comments regarding the proposed service.

Information regarding the proposed service will be available on the borough website www.franklinparkborough.us starting on Tuesday, May 11th. The same information will be available at the Municipal Building. The service being considered is modeled after the systems that have been implemented in Cranberry, Pine and Marshall Townships. Residents can obtain more information about automated refuse collection by visiting each community's website, or by searching the Internet for "Single Stream Recycling Videos" and "Automated Refuse Collection Videos".

Residents may provide comments to Council and Mayor by the following means:

1. Attending the May 17, 2010 meeting and providing your comments directly to Borough Council and Mayor;
2. Via the U.S. Mail addressed to: Automated Collection, Franklin Park Borough, 2344 West Ingomar Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237;
3. Via email: email@franklinparkborough.us, subject "Automated Collection"; and/or
4. Calling the Borough Office at 412-364-4115 and providing your comments verbally to the administrative staff.

Based on the volume of emails and inquiries received it may not be possible to respond to each and every one; however, your comments will be considered by Council and Mayor. We look forward to receiving your input regarding this proposed service.

Sincerely,

Ambrose Rocca
Borough Manager

Proposed Automated Refuse Service Overview

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection awarded Franklin Park a \$500,000 grant to implement an automated refuse collection service. The purpose of the grant is to increase recycling in the Borough by redirecting recyclable materials and yard waste that currently end up in landfills into the recycling stream. The driving force behind the automated pay as you throw system is that residents pay only for the non-recyclable trash they dispose of. Therefore, residents will utilize the recycling and yard waste containers as much as possible, given that there is no cost associated with their utilization. As recyclables and yard waste are diverted from the waste stream, the life of our landfills is extended. Additionally, because recycling increases, the negative impact on our environment is reduced.

In an automated collection system, the truck driver collects the garbage/recyclables/yard waste by utilizing a mechanical arm controlled by a joy-stick inside the vehicle. The mechanical arm lifts the container and dumps it into the top of the collection vehicle. Automated collection systems require three containers, one each for: garbage, recycling and yard waste. Yard waste containers have a 95 gallon capacity and are optional; residents are not required to take one. The recycling and garbage containers come in three sizes: 35, 65 and 95 gallons. (As a frame of reference, residential containers purchased at most retail outlets vary in sizes from 32 to 65 gallons.)

The Borough would utilize the grant funds to purchase a recycling and yard waste container for each home. The Borough will explore financing options to pay for the garbage container, required at each home. Residents will be able to choose the size of container that best meets their garbage and recycling needs.

A major difference between manual and automated collection is in the way garbage/recyclable/yard waste is disposed of by the homeowner. All materials must be placed inside the appropriate container. At the curb, containers must be spaced so that the mechanical arm can grab them, typically two feet apart. Residents are able to dispose of excess garbage by purchasing and placing a sticker on the bag or item that is being thrown away. Overflow bags or items with stickers attached will be taken away by the hauler.

Residents would pay a fee based solely on the garbage container size they select. The fee homeowners would pay for automated collection is determined by the contractor's bid amount, which has not yet been established. The recycling and yard waste container size selected does not affect the monthly fee. Stickers for excess garbage are available at a predetermined cost. Typical prices are as follows:

- Sticker for a 32 gallon bag: 60 cents
- A couch, TV, mattress or like item: \$4
- Washer, stove or refrigerator (refrigerant removed): \$10
- A large volume pick-up: \$15

Stickers could be purchased from the hauler or at the municipal building.

The Borough will consider using the automated system only if it is cost competitive with that paid for manual collection.

The current collection schedule is not anticipated to change, although recyclables would be picked up weekly.

Questions and Answers about the Proposed Automated Refuse Collection

1. Why switch to an automated collection system?

Throughout history, automation has reduced the cost of goods and services and increased our standard of living. The number of communities across the U.S. (and throughout the World) that are switching from manual to automated garbage collection is increasing. Automated vehicles can collect more homes, at less cost with fewer injuries to the garbage collectors. Additionally, the automated system encourages a greater level of recycling. See Attachment "A" for additional information regarding automated service.

2. How does an automated collection system work?

In an automated collection system, the truck driver collects the garbage, recyclables, and yard waste by utilizing a mechanical arm controlled by a joy-stick inside the vehicle. The mechanical arm lifts the container and dumps it into the top of the collection vehicle. Automated collection systems require three containers, one each for: garbage, recycling and yard waste. Yard waste containers have a 95 gallon capacity and are optional; residents are not required to take one. The recycling and garbage containers come in three sizes: 35, 65 and 95 gallons. (As a frame of reference, residential containers purchased at most retail outlets vary in size from 32 to 65 gallons.) Residents choose the container sizes that best meets their needs.

3. What is the basic difference between manual and automated collection?

The basic difference between manual and automated collection is in the way garbage/recyclables/yard waste are disposed of by the homeowner. While the manual collection system allows residents to place their garbage at the curb in bags or in a container of their choice, with the automated collection system, all materials must be placed inside a special container which can be picked up by the garbage truck's mechanical arm. At the curb, containers must be spaced so that the mechanical arm can grab them, typically two feet apart.

Recycling is easier with the automated collection system. Residents will be able to place all recyclable materials in the recycling container, without any need to separate them. In addition to the glass, plastic, aluminum and newspaper recycling that is currently done in the Borough, with the automated collection system, **residents will also be able to recycle the following items: corrugated & pressed cardboard, phone books, catalogues, office paper, junk mail & envelopes, brown paper bags, paper (all colors), paperboard items, cereal boxes, tissue & shoe boxes, paperbound books, coupons, receipts, cardboard egg cartons and plastic bags (bundled).**

4. If the Borough switches to automated collection, how will I dispose of any material that does not fit into the container?

Residents are able to dispose of excess garbage by purchasing and placing a sticker on the bag or item that is being thrown away. Overflow bags or items with stickers attached will be taken away by the hauler. Stickers can be purchased from either the Borough or hauler.

If a resident finds that their current container isn't large enough, the borough/hauler will deliver a larger one to the resident's home. Residents can exchange containers once per year at no cost. Container swaps beyond once per year will cost \$10.

5. How do residents pay for automated service?

Residents would receive a quarterly bill just like they currently do. The fee will be based solely on the garbage container size they select. The amount homeowners would pay for automated collection is determined by the contractor's bid, which has not yet been established. The container size selected for recycling and yard waste does not affect the monthly fee. Stickers for excess garbage are available at a predetermined cost. Typical prices are as follows:

- Sticker for a 32 gallon bag: 60 cents
- A couch, TV, mattress or like item: \$4
- Washer, stove or refrigerator (refrigerant removed): \$10
- A large volume pick-up such as a move-out: \$15

6. Will my collection day change?

The borough does not expect any significant change in the collection schedule. However, some customer's collection day may need to change to accommodate the higher collection rate of automated equipment.

7. Will residents be able to subscribe to backyard service?

Backyard service will be available for an additional fee, just as it is now.

8. Who must subscribe to the service?

Single family and duplex homes must subscribe to municipal waste collection service. The service is not available to apartment complexes and commercial establishments. These entities must make their own arrangements for garbage & recycling service.

9. Will the Borough continue collecting leaf bags?

Leaf bag collection will not change. Spring and fall pick-up will continue. Residents will also have the option of placing leaves inside the yard waste container and having them collected weekly. Residents can avoid the cost of brown paper bags by placing the leaves inside the yard waste container.

10. Will the Borough continue its brush chipping program?

The Borough's current program will not change. Brush will be chipped twice per year, in the spring and fall.

11. Will the Borough continue its Christmas tree collection?

The Borough will continue to collect the trees as they currently do.

12. What will happen to my old garbage containers?

Residents may use the containers for storage, sell or give them away. The borough will also collect (at each home) and recycle them.

13. When it snows, where do I put my containers at the curb?

You may place the containers at the curb on top of snow, similar to your current containers. The mechanical lift has a wide range and can lift the containers from those areas. Local communities adjacent to Franklin Park have gone through many winters without problems. Communities in the northern U.S. and Canada have used this system without difficulty.

14. How will garbage be collected on private lanes, with multiple homes on them?

Private lanes will be collected much like they are today. A driver in a smaller vehicle will collect the refuse, recyclables and yard waste at each home, manually. Residents will not be able to place refuse at the end of the lanes as they currently do, in some instances.

15. How will garbage be collected on private drives?

Residents on private drives will be required to bring their containers to the street or road on which they live.

16. How do I store such large containers?

The footprint (the floor space occupied by the containers) for the automated containers is not much more than that of regular household cans. The footprint for the 35 gallon container is identical to most current garbage cans. The 65 and 95 gallon containers require a slightly larger area. These two sizes do take up more vertical space.

17. Can the containers be stored outside?

Yes, these containers can be stored outside. The Borough has no prohibition against outside storage. Some developments do have restrictions against outside storage and residents should abide by those covenants.

18. How will the Borough finance the replacement of automated containers when they wear out?

The Borough currently receives an annual grant of about \$10,000 for the current recycling volume. This amount is expected to double if the automated recycling system is implemented. The Borough will set the entire amount received (approximately \$20,000 per year) in a container depreciation account, so that this money can be used, in part, to purchase the containers when needed. Also, it is possible that a fee in the amount of \$1.25 per month will be added to each customer's bill to pay for the remaining balance. At the end of the 10 year period the account would have \$150 for each home to replace the containers.

19. Will automated collection containers eliminate animals from getting into the garbage or other spillage problems?

The containers will not totally eliminate spillage problems but will significantly reduce them. Automated containers with lids will generally discourage animals from getting into your garbage. Experience in other communities indicates that trash spillages are greatly reduced, resulting in cleaner yards, streets and waterways.

20. What happens to the containers if I move?

The containers are the property of Franklin Park Borough and are assigned to your address. Leave the container at the residence for the next owner.

21. Does the Borough provide exemptions from refuse service?

Yes, but under very limited circumstances. Any resident who owns a business and pays for refuse service at his or her place of business can apply for an exemption. In such cases proof of ownership, refuse and recycling service must be submitted to the Borough. The resident must then dispose of his/her garbage and recyclables at their place of business.

22. Will the Borough retain its "Snowbird Clause"?

Any resident who resides in another State/location during the winter months can apply for a three month exemption from refuse service.

Attachment "A"

Advantages of Automated Collection & Increased Recycling

- 1. Lower Labor cost:** The truck mounted mechanical lift costs approximately \$6,000 per year to purchase and operate. With the mechanical lift, the laborer's position on the garbage truck can be eliminated. It costs approximately \$40,000 annually to finance a laborer's position, producing a savings of \$34,000 per year.
- 2. Efficiency:** Automated refuse collection vehicles can pick up 20 to 25% more homes.
- 3. Landfill Avoidance Cost:** The most expensive way to dispose of refuse is to place it in landfills. Currently tipping fees are \$40 per ton. There is a cost savings to haulers for materials that are taken to a recycling facility. Unlike 30 years ago, when start-up recycling centers depended on volunteer help and grants from non-profits and governments, facilities today are profitable and workers are compensated. Today recycling helps churches and nonprofits to earn money to support their mission. Recycling pays.
- 4. Eliminates Hazardous Occupation:** The worker's compensation cost for an individual collecting garbage is one of the highest rates to insure. These high rates reflect the inherent hazards of the occupation, they include back injuries, sprains, muscular strains, injuries from being crushed, and (Borough's current hauler) had a worker killed several years ago collecting refuse.
- 5. Going Green:** Recycling helps to protect the environment. It reduces mankind's footprint on the earth. In the beginning, recycling started with basic materials: glass bottles, metal cans & plastics. Newsprint was added and became profitable after some time. Today, many cities are recycling food waste by converting it into compost and selling it for agricultural use. The industry is working on creating recycling centers that in the future will be able to process every bit of refuse/garbage collected, including most items that are placed in landfills today. Under the proposed system less trash will spill onto borough streets. Furthermore, birds and other animals will not be able to tear into garbage bags that are placed inside containers with closed lids. Substantially less trash and debris will end up in our storm sewers and waterways.
- 6. Government Incentives:** Much like government grants that helped to kick-start recycling centers 20-30 years ago, today state governments are providing incentives to expand community recycling programs by providing "seed" money. Franklin Park has received such a grant. These

grants require communities to institute single stream collection programs, by converting from manual to automated collection. Once these programs reach critical mass (at an industry wide level), it will no longer be necessary for state governments to provide these incentives.