



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember David Cohen

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: February 23, 2021

Approved

Date: 02/23/2021

SUBJECT: Residential Recycling and Garbage Rates.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Accept the recommendation from the Memorandum dated February 19, 2021 from Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones, and Councilmembers Mahan and Jimenez.
2. In researching potential mitigation strategies for reducing the projected rate increases Staff should consider the following:
 - a. Maintain our environmental responsibility and standards while balancing the need for economic recovery.
 - b. Implement short-term fees for ad hoc services such as eliminating unlimited large item pick-up so that the residents that use the service are not being subsidized by all residents.
 - c. Apply an equity lens to the rate increase schedule and explore opportunities to create an increase based upon household income rather than a one size fits all increase that will impact low income households proportionally harder.
 - d. Take advantage of Federal COVID relief money to avoid passing costs on to our residents during this time of economic challenges.

BACKGROUND

As we enter the recovery phase of the pandemic, we will face many competing challenges. Our underserved communities must be prioritized as we address the economic impacts of the past year. However, we would be remiss if we did not consider the larger context of the climate crisis we face when taking short term actions. There must be no sacrifice to our goal of diverting garbage from landfill. We should continue to maximize recycling rates and composting. We simply cannot weaken our environmental standards at this moment in time.

It is likely that this is a cost shift from big businesses to residents as people are working from home. Businesses are spending less for garbage collection while people working at home are paying for garbage collection that their employers used to pay. Therefore, we should use federal COVID relief money to cover as much of the increased cost since this spike is tied directly to the

pandemic. This assumes that Congress and the Biden Administration will come to an agreement that includes relief to local governments.

While it is great that residents are using large item pickup more than ever, some residents are using more than two pickups per year. It is reasonable to limit each household to two pickups of 3 items each in order to limit the escalation in monthly fees.

Finally, as people go back to work, volume may decrease again. Should we charge people for the current spike or allow for a longer term settling back to steady state levels?