

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 22, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 115: T&ES ADDITIONAL SOLID WASTE
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

The following information is provided in response to questions raised by members of City Council in email messages and at the April 14, 2008 budget public hearing.

What can we do (and what would it cost) to make it easier for citizens to dispose of fluorescent bulbs? What would it cost to offer more convenient hours at the hazardous household waste collection center? (Councilman Krupicka)

Previously, the hazardous waste collection site was open on Monday's between 10 AM and 6 PM. In April of 2006, a survey was conducted to determine what hours were more suitable to citizens needs. Many citizens expressed the desire to have more accessible hours in the morning because they could drop off materials during their morning commute. The survey also indicated that the site experienced reduced collection activity between the time periods of 2 PM and 6 PM. As a result of this input, the collection time was changed. (Monday 7:30 AM-3:30 PM)

Currently, fluorescent bulbs can only be accepted on Monday from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM. In order to accommodate citizens and provide better accessibility to dispose of fluorescent bulbs, the hours of the hazardous waste collection site can be expanded.

In order to expand the hours of service, Council could extend Monday operations to 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, add service on one or two Saturdays each month from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM, or a combination of extended Monday hours and added Saturday service at the following costs:

- Monday extended hours (7:00 AM – 6:00 PM) \$18,500 annually
- One Saturday per month (7:30 AM – 3:30 PM) 14,400 annually
- Two Saturdays per month (7:30 AM – 3:30 PM) 28,800 annually

Why aren't leaf collection and spring clean-up expenditures included in the residential refuse collection fee? (Testimony from the budget public hearing)

The following is from FY 2008 Budget Memo #78 regarding the residential refuse collection fee in the context of last year's budget process:

“Parkfairfax has opted to contract with a private collection company for refuse and recycling collection rather than receive City service. The homeowners in the community do not pay the residential refuse collection fee and do not receive weekly refuse or recycling collection or curbside spring clean-up collection. City services that are provided to Parkfairfax through General Fund tax revenues include vacuum leaf collection on all public streets and one-time annual white goods pick-up from a designated drop-off and collection point in the neighborhood. Parkfairfax also contracts with a private company for leaf collection.

The household residential refuse collection fee includes the cost of residential refuse collection, including spring-clean up, and residential curbside recycling for the households that receive the service. Bag and vacuum leaf collection is only provided to households served by residential refuse collection. The cost of leaf collection is not included in the household fee. The household refuse collection fee is \$281 in the FY 2009 proposed budget, an increase of \$17 from FY 2008. Adding leaf collection to the household residential refuse collection fee would increase the fee by another \$20 to \$301 (which would bring the total rate increase to 14%). This additional \$20 would generate \$345,460 in additional revenues. In such case, the City would determine an equitable rate to charge Parkfairfax homeowners association for the leaf collection service it currently receives free-of-charge on public streets.

The downside to including leaf collection costs in the solid waste rate is that the level of leaf collection services varies widely among homeowners. For an example, a small townhouse in Old Town may have a small lot with few trees (and few leaves), but a single family detached house on a large lot in Beverly Hills may have a large amount of trees (and many leaves). Therefore, charging the same “leaf rate” to all homeowners can be perceived as inequitable.