

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON DIRECTING THE ADMINISTRATION TO NEGOTIATE A CONTRACT MODIFICATION WITH SANITARY SERVICE COMPANY, INC. TO MANAGE SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING DISPOSAL COSTS, IMPLEMENT THE CITY'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN AND COMPLY WITH HOUSE BILL 1799

WHEREAS, climate change is an existential threat to human civilization; and

WHEREAS, delay in taking definitive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will result in greater threats posed by climate change to current and future generations and greater cost to protect and maintain communities against the impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham is responsible for promoting the public health and safety of its residents including access to clean air, clean water, and a livable environment; and **WHEREAS**, in 2007 the Bellingham City Council passed Resolution 2007-10 adopting greenhouse gas reduction targets and a Climate Action Plan to achieve those targets; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham's original 2007 Climate Action Plan was updated in 2018 and adopted as policy by the Bellingham City Council under Resolution 2018-06; and

WHEREAS, the Bellingham Mayor joined the Race to Zero global campaign committing the City of Bellingham to work even faster on our climate initiatives to reach carbon pollution reduction targets of 59% by 2030 and a 100% by 2050 against a baseline in the year 2000; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State legislature found that landfills are a significant source of emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas and reducing landfill material will reduce methane emissions; and

WHEREAS, food waste in landfills is a significant source of methane emissions; and

WHEREAS, the addition of mandatory food and yard waste collection to the City's solid waste collection contract ("Collection Contract") with Sanitary Services Company ("SSC") proposed in this Resolution will enable the City of Bellingham to help achieve the goal such of pollution reduction by reducing methane emissions; and

WHEREAS, in addition to honoring the City's climate change goals and objectives and complying with Washington State law, the City is committed to making utilities as affordable as possible to its residents; and

WHEREAS, the City Council is aware that the mandatory addition of food and yard waste collection through the FoodPlus! charge will be an additional cost to Bellingham residents; and

WHEREAS, many residents may be able to reduce the frequency of garbage collection if they utilize FoodPlus! and thus reduce their overall solid waste bill; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, Northwest Recycling, Inc. ceased operations at its facilities located on W. Holly Street which resulted in SSC working with a new processor located at Slater Road

and increased the hauling distance of recyclables collected from residential customers in Bellingham which results in greater labor costs, increased fuel use and increased emissions; and

WHEREAS, the current three-bin recycling program utilized by SSC is not economically efficient due to high labor costs resulting from the current employment market, the high cost of on the job labor injuries from manual lifting of bins and frequent exit and entrance to recycling vehicles, and the increasing cost of insurance to staff and operate the current collection system; and

WHEREAS, the Collection Contract requires SSC to use its good faith efforts to locate a market for reuse for all recyclable materials required to be collected, to obtain the highest price for the sale of materials or where there is no market for sale, the cheapest cost of disposal of the materials; and

WHEREAS, changes in the international and domestic markets for recyclable materials resulting from the 2016 China policy known as “Operational National Sword” have result in a reversal of recycling costs to SSC from a net revenue to a net cost to SSC for bring recyclables to the reuse market; and

WHEREAS, maintaining the three-bin system would continue to result in increasing operation costs resulting in increased rates to customers, which would negatively economically impact Bellingham residents, particularly low-income residents; and

WHEREAS, the labor and transportation costs of a single bin system are significantly lower than those of a three-bin system, and

WHEREAS, several communities, including Seattle and Portland, utilizing a single bin for recycling have found increased landfill diversion due to the ease of a single stream system; and

WHEREAS, a change to a single bin collection system would allow for compaction of materials during collection thereby increasing the tonnage hauled in a single trip and thus reducing the number of trips, fuel and carbon emissions to the recycling processor regardless of location; and

WHEREAS, the vehicles used by SSC are reaching the end of their useful life and need to be replaced; and

WHEREAS, the Collection Contract requires SSC to purchase collection and hauling vehicles for recycling that use alternative fuels, such as compressed natural gas; and

WHEREAS, the type of vehicle used for the collection of recyclables from the three-bin system are not readily available in alternative fuel engine but are available in conventional compacting trucks such as those use for solid waste hauling; and

WHEREAS, the City supported SSC’s pilot program for single bin recycling; and

WHEREAS, the single bin recycling pilot is complete and results were shared with City Council in September 2022; and

WHEREAS, the pilot results showed that the SSC customers participating in the pilot enjoyed the larger single bin tote for the ease of recycling, the wheels on the tote, the every-other-week collection, and the fact that recyclables did not get blown by the wind onto the streets and alleyways creating hazards and negative aesthetics; and

WHEREAS, SSC reports that the cost of transportation of recyclables is roughly three times greater than the cost of transporting solid waste; and

WHEREAS, the quarterly reporting from SSC since January of 2021 indicates that the cost of processing recyclables exceeds the cost of disposing of solid waste; and

WHEREAS, the third quarter 2022 report from SSC indicates that the cost of recycling utilizing the current three-bin system is \$190/ton, whereas the cost of disposal is \$122/ton including taxes; and

WHEREAS, the Collection Contract requires SSC to consult with the City when the cost of recycling collection, including transportation exceeds the cost of disposal rates; and

WHEREAS, SSC is recommending a change in service to a single bin recycling system and required organics collections as a minimum standard of service for all residential customers within the City of Bellingham in order to control operating costs, reduce carbon emissions and increase diversion rates; and

WHEREAS, SSC has proven an excellent provider for solid waste and collection services due to their exemplary record of customer service, reliable compliance with the contract and ability to control costs for residents.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM:

Section 1. Findings. The City Council makes the following findings and declares as follows:

- A. Human caused climate change is real. Absent significant and swift reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, climate change poses immediate significant threats to the environment, economy, health and safety of the people of Bellingham.
- B. It is a fundamental purpose of every local, state and national government throughout the world—including the City of Bellingham—to take bold action within their jurisdictions to reduce carbon pollution and to prepare for and adapt to the harmful effects of climate change.
- C. It is in the best interest of the residents of the City that its residential solid waste collection and recycling is managed in a way that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and thus helps to curb climate change while balancing cost to residents.

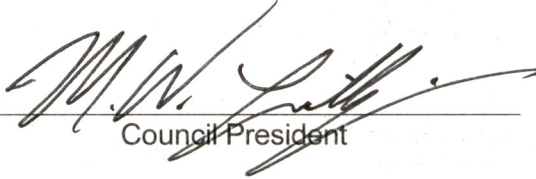
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM THAT:

SECTION 1. The City Council hereby directs the Mayor to enter into negotiations with SSC to modify the residential collection contract to include FoodPlus! collection for all residential customers.

SECTION 2. The City council hereby directs the Mayor to enter into negotiations with SSC

to modify the contract regarding the frequency of collection for all services and optional sizes of Waste, Recycling and Compost containers.

PASSED by the Council this 27th day of February, 2023.



Council President

APPROVED by me this 15th day of March, 2023



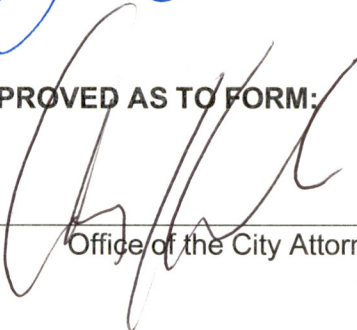
Mayor

ATTEST:



Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Office of the City Attorney