

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE May 26, 2023

TO The Honorable Mayor & Members of the Dallas City Council

SUBJECT **Take-a-Peek Curbside Recycling Audit Program**

The City of Dallas collects more than 50,000 tons of recyclable material each year from ~240,000 single family residential customers. Based on the most recent recycling processing audit conducted in April, 26.33% of recycling collected by City crews is contaminated by items that do not belong in the blue recycling roll cart. Common contaminants include plastic bags and shrink wrap, Styrofoam, food waste, tangles like rope and stringed lights, yard waste, and garbage. When placed into the blue recycling roll cart, these items reduce the value of recyclables and can damage recycling processing equipment.

To help focus recycling education where it is most needed, the Office of Environmental Quality & Sustainability (OEQS) works with the Department of Sanitation (Sanitation) to conduct Take-a-Peek curbside recycling audits. Pre-audit notifications are mailed to residents and then three rounds of container audits are conducted in areas identified by Sanitation as having high recycling contamination. During the curbside audits, OEQS provides point-in-time “report tags” at each reviewed household and engages directly with customers who may be present when the audits are held. On the third and final round of reviews, recycling roll carts that have been labeled as contaminated during that audit are removed by Sanitation. OEQS then mails post-audit notifications to customers whose recycling roll carts were removed due to contamination. The mailing includes instructions on how to access the training that is required to have their recycling roll cart returned.

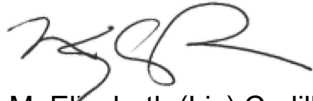
OEQS is making the following Take-a-Peek process efficiency and public awareness improvements.

Process Efficiency: OEQS has a new data collection app under development that will provide for electronic data collection and more efficient analysis to determine which containers should be marked for removal based on previous audit results. The app will also decrease communication time between OEQS and Sanitation for container service and roll cart retrievals. This summer, OEQS will deploy the new app and retrain City staff involved with the program to enhance customer service.

Public Awareness Improvements: OEQS is modifying program materials to include staff contact information and is developing a plan to raise public awareness about the role and effectiveness of Take-a-Peek through the City’s website and NextDoor social media. The department will also incorporate Take-a-Peek into its current recycling education campaign. The education campaign informs the public of proper recycling techniques and acceptable recycling materials using advertising, educational outreach, direct mail, and other marketing activities.

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If you need more information about the Take-a-Peek curbside recycling audit program, please contact OEQS--Zero Waste division manager, Danielle McClelland at DallasRecycles@Dallas.gov.



M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira
Assistant City Manager

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Tammy Palomino, Interim City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
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