

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE September 5, 2025

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Response To Memorandum Regarding Sanitation Director's Authority To Transition Alley Trash Pickup to Curbside and Request for Additional Information**

Thank you for your August 26, 2025, memorandum regarding the Sanitation Director's authority to transition certain residential garbage and recycling collection services from alley to curbside. I recognize and appreciate the passion and commitment you've expressed on behalf of your constituents, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide responses to your questions and further clarification to your concerns.

Residential garbage and recycling collection services from alley to curbside have been a long-term issue for Dallas going back at least twenty years. In April 2020, the City Council adopted the [Comprehensive Environmental and Climate Action Plan \(CECAP\)](#), which called for improving solid waste collection efficiency by assessing and modifying service frequency, trips, and route optimization on an annual basis. Current alley service presents challenges to meeting those goals because it requires more frequent trips, greater mileage, and higher labor resources. In 2022, the City Council adopted an updated [Local Solid Waste Management Plan \(LSWMP\)](#), which specifically recommended minimizing alley and combined routes where household configurations allow curbside service. Per Council Resolution 22-0965, adopted on June 22, 2022, the City Council formally recognized that the policy and program recommendations contained in the LSWMP may necessitate changes to rules, ordinances, and/or policies with ongoing collaboration with key stakeholders and other interested parties.

Since the 2022 City Council Resolution adopting the LSWMP, this matter has been presented and discussed with the City Council on multiple occasions in public meetings:

- **February 20, 2024** – Presentation to the City Council Quality of Life, Arts, and Culture Committee.
- **June 18, 2024** – Full City Council briefing introducing a citywide transition plan. Following that briefing, I directed staff to postpone implementation planning for 12 months to allow additional community engagement and refinement of the approach.
- **June 18, 2025** – Full [City Council briefing](#) presenting the updated approach, revised customer counts, and findings from the independent rate study.

During the 12-month postponement, the issue received extensive media coverage. Over the last year alone, the Sanitation Department engaged residents with over 300 touch points across the entire city through participation in neighborhood meetings with Councilmembers, tabling at libraries, recreation centers, community events, and City Hall On The Go ([See Appendix K of the June 18, 2025 Briefing](#)). Feedback from this engagement helped shape the revised approach, which narrows the transition to only the

most problematic alleys and retains service in areas where curbside placement would be challenging for residents.

Below is a brief response to the questions in your memorandum:

1. **“Staffing Needs: How many additional sanitation workers would be required to maintain alley trash pickup services for the affected 26,000 households, assuming current service levels and safety standards are upheld?”**

Response: An option to maintain alley service with improved safety and reduced impacts was analyzed but found to be infeasible. Scenario 1, discussed at the June 18, 2025 City Council briefing, would have required approximately 100 additional trucks and 300 additional staff.

2. **“Cost Estimates: What would be the estimated annual cost to the City for hiring these additional workers, including salaries, benefits, and any associated operational expenses?”**

Response: The January 2025 solid waste rate study analyzed multiple options. It confirmed that continuing alley service is significantly more costly, ranging from \$69.87 to \$80.81 per month, and requiring additional labor, smaller vehicles, and, if expanded, new fleet facilities currently **not** included in the City Manager's proposed FY 25-26 Budget. The findings of this study were presented to the City Council on June 18, 2025.

3. **“Insurance Requirements: What type of insurance coverage would be required for temporary or additional sanitation workers to perform alley trash pickup, and what would be the estimated cost of such coverage?”**

Response: Through our existing contract for temporary industrial labor, which provides staffing for rear-load truck collections, the vendor is required to carry workers' compensation and employers' liability coverage, business automobile liability coverage, and commercial general liability coverage. The cost of that coverage is determined by the vendor and their insurance carrier, and the City is not privy to that information. With respect to City employees performing alley trash collection, the City is self-insured for workers' compensation and liability losses.

4. **“Justification and Staffing Authority: What basis is there to allow sanitation staff to make this unilateral decision without public or council input?”**

Response: Under Dallas City Code Section 18-4, “Regulating the Collection of Solid Waste Materials From Residences and Duplexes,” the Director of Sanitation has authority to designate collection points (alley or curb). Alley collection is the exception to the citywide standard of curbside service. While collection point designation is an operational matter, the scale of this transition warranted City Council engagement. City Council has been briefed multiple times and has been provided opportunities to weigh in on **policy matters** such as tiered rates and codification of cart placement

rules. The **operational decisions** are within the authority of the Director of Sanitation as the responsible official for solid waste management in Dallas.

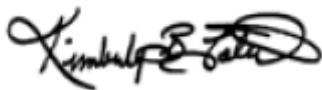
5. "Residents, including seniors and those with disabilities, have voiced practical and equity-related objections, citing the burden of moving heavy bins to the curb and potential aesthetic and safety issues with increased curbside collection."

Response: As a reminder, nearly two-thirds of single-family home residents in Dallas already place their carts at the curb each week for garbage and recycle pickup, including households with seniors and those with disabilities who may receive assistance. The Helping Hands program will remain available at no charge to support customers with mobility limitations, and the Pack-Out Service program provides similar valet cart service for all other customers for an additional fee. Smaller carts are also available for those that would prefer them. Please visit the [alley-to-curb transition website](#) for more information on these services. Regarding the aesthetic and safety concerns, curb placement is the norm in most areas of our city and other major cities, and our City Code specifies requirements for proper storage and set-out times.

In closing, we understand that not everyone welcomes this change. However, it is long overdue, and it would be a detriment to further push this issue down the road. We have a responsibility to protect our workforce, be good stewards of ratepayers' dollars for all Sanitation customers and provide a reliable service model that can be sustained for decades to come. The Sanitation Department remains committed to ensuring this transition is carried out thoughtfully and with care. Our focus now is on supporting impacted residents through [outreach, education, and assistance programs](#). We will continue to engage and listen to feedback throughout the transition period, and will keep the City Council updated.

If you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Alina Ciocan, Assistant City Manager, at alina.ciocan@dallas.gov or Clifton Gillespie, Director of Sanitation, at clifton.gillespie@dallas.gov.

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