

Report on the Delivery of Commercial Waste to Converted Marine Transfer Stations

Issued Pursuant to the 2006 Comprehensive New York City Solid Waste Management Plan

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I. Introduction

New York City's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP), adopted by the New York City Council and approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in 2006, outlines the Department's long-term plan to achieve a more sustainable and equitable system for recycling and disposing waste. Recognizing that the systems for managing residential waste and commercial waste are interdependent, the SWMP lays out an ambitious strategy of utilizing a network of sites, both public and private, across the City to support both systems. Another critical component of the SWMP is the continuing growth of a robust and diverse recycling program for residential, institutional, and commercial generators in New York City.

The 2006 SWMP includes projected waste quantities and identification of the facilities that would manage the transfer of residential and commercial waste, including designated recyclables, putrescible waste, construction and demolition debris, and fill material such as dirt, concrete, brick and rock. The adopted SWMP emphasizes three broad categories of goals: (1) transitioning from a system reliant on trucks to export waste from local waste transfer stations to one that takes advantage of barge and rail transport, reducing local waste truck traffic; (2) the improvement of conditions around transfer stations upon which both public and private carters currently rely; and (3) ensuring that waste is redistributed to facilities outside of the communities that are historically overburdened with transfer stations. In addition, the SWMP set ambitious goals for recycling within the City that will reduce the exportation of waste.

The current SWMP is in effect through 2025, at which time a new plan will be evaluated, undergo a public review process, and become implemented. Under the SWMP, the Department of Sanitation provides biennial updates to the State DEC, with the next update report due May 1, 2019 covering the period from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018. This Report is being submitted pursuant to Section 4.3.1.4 of the SWMP.

II. Completion of Marine Transfer Station Infrastructure

The SWMP provides for the conversion of four Department marine transfer stations (MTSs) where Department-managed waste would be delivered for containerization and export out of the City. Construction of the converted MTSs has been completed and each began accepting waste delivered by the Department as follows:

North Shore MTS (Queens Community Districts 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

- Began 90-day ramp up operation in March 2015; and
- Full operation began at the end of October 2015.

Hamilton Avenue MTS (Brooklyn Community Districts 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 18)

- Began operating in September 2017, accepting half of the DSNY-managed waste from its watershed; and
- Full operation began in September 2018.

Southwest Brooklyn MTS (Brooklyn Community Districts 11, 12, 13, 15)

- Began 90-day ramp up operation in October 2018; and
- Full operation began at the end of December 2018.

East 91st Street MTS (Manhattan Community Districts 5, 6, 8 and 11)

- Began 90-day ramp up operation on March 25, 2019; and
- Full operation is expected to begin at the end of June 2019.

With the converted MTS infrastructure system now in place, there will be approximately 55 million vehicle miles traveled saved from the City's roads and regional highways annually. By eliminating the City's reliance on a network of land-based transfer stations and long-haul trucking to export residential waste, the SWMP allows us to achieve greater equity in communities across the City.

III. Delivery of Commercial Waste to Converted MTSs

The SWMP contemplates that the four converted MTSs could accept a portion of commercial waste between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., which are the hours when Department collections are very limited and when commercial carters typically collect. Commercial waste trucks deliveries would be limited pursuant to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the SWMP to specific numbers in each hour of the delivery period to avoid exceeding noise levels during the quiet nighttime hours.

To date, the Department has not accepted any commercial waste at the four converted MTSs. During this period, the Department has focused on fine-tuning operations at these facilities, training staff on the safe and efficient operation of equipment, and completing the construction of the remaining converted MTSs.

Since adoption of the SWMP nearly 13 years ago the City has evolved and become more complex, and new challenges for the trade waste industry have arisen. Today collection routes are too long, disorganized and inefficient. There are many crashes involving private carting hauling trucks that have resulted in serious injuries and deaths to pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and the drivers and laborers working on such trucks. Now more than ever, a workable structure for this industry is necessary that addresses safety, environmental and infrastructure concerns.

IV. Commercial Waste Reform in New York City

It is estimated that commercial establishments in the City generate approximately 3 million tons of refuse and recyclables every year. Today's commercial waste collection system achieves its basic goal of collecting and handling the City's commercial waste, but the competitive market has resulted in inefficiencies, with overlapping carting routes and resulting externalities that must be borne by the public, including extra truck traffic, an increased risk to pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, air and noise pollution, road wear, and increased use of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change.

In 2016, the Department, in collaboration with the New York City Business Integrity Commission, set out to evaluate the City's commercial waste collection system. Following a robust and lengthy stakeholder engagement process, the Administration proposes a wholesale reform of the commercial waste industry to improve commercial waste carting by implementing a Commercial Waste Zone (CWZ) program across the five boroughs of the City. The framework for the CWZ program consists of 20 non-exclusive geographic zones with 3 to 5 private carters authorized to operate within each zone. The CWZ program will involve an implementation plan and contract-award process to establish such zoned commercial waste system, for a total of up to 68 zone contracts. The CWZ program will regulate the collection of commercial refuse, designated recyclables, and source-separated organic waste.

Private carters will competitively bid for the right to service businesses in each zone. Carters that win zone contracts would be obligated to meet certain contractual requirements aligned with the City's program goals and objectives. The CWZ program will standardize the carting contract process by requiring written service agreements between carters and customers and by making the pricing structure more transparent.

The CWZ program will be implemented through the enactment of a new local law to be developed through mutual efforts of this Administration and the New York City Council. The new local law would include provisions for the program, including the Request for Proposal (RFP) requirements and contract-award procedures. The RFP would provide details on the program goals, methods for implementation, and requirements that carters would respond to in order to apply for contracts with the City to collect waste within specific zones. The CWZ program would encourage carters to comply with existing recycling and source separation regulations so they could compete for business within the CWZ program.

Specifically, as part of the solicitation process, the CWZ program would require carters to develop zero waste plans and identify innovative practices to support waste reduction, reuse, and recycling and provide for additional oversight and reporting requirements to ensure that these practices are being followed. The CWZ program would also require carters to develop waste management plans, identifying the transfer stations, disposal facilities and recycling processing facilities they plan to use. Such plans may propose the use of Department-operated MTSs. Once contract agreements with the City are executed, business customer transition will begin with completion anticipated around the end of 2023.

Implementing a CWZ program will preserve customer choice, keep prices competitive and the quality of service high while substantially reducing truck traffic associated with commercial waste collection.

V. Conclusion

Reducing the impact that the City's waste has on our communities and the environment is a critical part of the Department's mission to keep New York City healthy, safe, and clean. A large part of meeting this objective includes the initiation of commercial waste collection reform.

Consistent with the SWMP, the Department has completed constructing and opening up all four converted MTSs as of this calendar year. The Department is now addressing commercial waste reform of the City's trade waste hauling industry, which has existed and remains unchanged for nearly 65 years, in order to improve the quality of life for New Yorkers. With the implementation of commercial waste zones in New York City, the Department plans to continue to evaluate how commercial waste could be accepted at these facilities, consistent with the 2006 SWMP and associated FEIS. The Department is committed to working with the City Council on our mutual, ambitious plans to address commercial waste management in New York City and advancing the implementation plan for this new, bold strategy.