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CONTACT: Press Office / 646-885-5020

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NYC Sanitation Announces Two Initiatives to Better Manage Waste in NYC

Proposed Rules and Pilot Project to Help Create “Clean Curbs” and Move Waste Off of Sidewalks

The NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) today announced two new initiatives to better manage the tons of waste created by city residents and businesses. New York City is denser than any other American city and lacks alleyways common in other locations. Because of this, New Yorkers for more than a century have placed their waste out for collection on the City sidewalks. These initiatives seek to promote alternative strategies for setting out and managing waste for collection, opening up sidewalks for other uses.

First, DSNY published a [proposed rule](#) in the City Record today that would require all new apartment buildings with 300 or more units to utilize containerized collection for their waste and submit a waste management plan to be approved by the Department of Sanitation. Many residential building developers do not adequately plan for the volumes of waste their future residents will generate. This results in large piles of bags left curbside on narrow sidewalks and accessible to critters looking for a meal. Containerization requires waste to be kept in large containers, which are collected by specialized Sanitation trucks, not put in bags on the sidewalk awaiting collection by hand. Covered buildings that do not comply with this requirement will not be eligible to Sanitation collection services. The rule will also cover any commercial-to-residential conversion with more than 300 units.

“City pedestrians navigate around piles of trash and recycling that take up significant sidewalk space,” **said Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia**. “It is time to make smarter, more efficient choices when it comes to the way New Yorkers set out refuse and recycling for collection in the public right of way. Today’s announcement is the first step in that direction.”

The proposed rule also requires residential buildings with 150 or more units to submit a waste management plan that outlines:

- Storage plans for trash, recyclables and organics that ensure 150 percent of generated waste can be stored inside the building between regularly scheduled collections,
- Estimates of waste generation,

- Plans for proper recycling separation and proper setout, and
- Details regarding containerization if relevant or required

The Department will hold a [public hearing](#) on these proposed rules on April 16, 2020.

In another effort to make garbage and recycling set-outs cleaner and more efficient, the Department of Sanitation and the Department of Transportation (DOT) are collaborating in the “**Clean Curbs**” **pilot program** for commercial waste. Through the pilot program, private entities, such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) can apply for the opportunity to have sealed, on-street containers for their trash and recycling storage, which will reduce their need to set out bags of recyclables and garbage for collection on City sidewalks.

The Clean Curbs pilot program was developed after reviewing responses to DSNY’s and DOT’s Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) on containerized waste, including designs from Center for Zero Waste Design and from Marvel Architects with Recycle Track Systems, in partnership with Sam Schwartz Engineering and HR&A Advisors. The RFEI, released last year, sought creative solutions that would reduce the volume of refuse and recycling set-outs on city sidewalks, increase waste diversion, reduce truck traffic and greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste collection and improve the cleanliness of city streets and sidewalks.

“DOT is excited to work with DSNY on the new Clean Curbs pilot program,” said **New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “Allowing eligible BIDs to experiment with installing sealed, on-street garbage and recycling containers will help make New York’s bustling sidewalks cleaner, more accessible, and more enjoyable for residents and tourists alike.”

"We welcome the Clean Curbs program which will make it much easier to pilot shared waste storage in the parking lane, one of the strategies within the Zero Waste Design Guidelines," said **Clare Mifflin, Founder of the Center for Zero Waste Design**. “We hope that this will be the beginning of a multi-stakeholder initiative to redesign our city for circular material flows at every scale - from takeout containers to curbs to buildings to district scale infrastructure.”

“New York’s density, our lack of back alleys and the demands on our streetscape creates unique challenges. But we are looking to turn these challenges into an opportunity to make New York a global leader in waste reduction and material recovery,” said **Guido Hartray of Marvel Architects**.



Containerization helps keep our City clean, reduces problems associated with pests and rodents, and allows for more efficient collections. While final designs of the Clean Curbs containers will be based on an applicant’s location and specific waste management needs, the entity will be required to sign a maintenance agreement

with DSNY to ensure the area is kept clean and de-iced for snow. The containers must meet strict requirements and specifications, such as being fully enclosed, rodent proof, and be compatible with carter operations and commercial regulations.

Applications for the Clean Curbs pilot program will be accepted beginning this spring and must be approved by the DSNY and DOT.

About the New York City Department of Sanitation

The Department of Sanitation (DSNY) keeps New York City healthy, safe and clean by collecting, recycling and disposing of waste, cleaning streets and vacant lots, and clearing snow and ice. The Department operates 59 district garages and manages a fleet of more than 2,000 rear-loading collection trucks, 450 mechanical brooms and 705 salt spreaders. The Department clears litter, snow and ice from approximately 6,500 miles of City streets and removes debris from vacant lots as well as abandoned vehicles from City streets.