

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE NO. 19-1433 FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING SOLID WASTE CHARGES AND USER FEES FOR FY 2019-20.

Date: March 14, 2019

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Summary

The Property & Environmental Services Finance Manager proposes the new solid waste rates as part of the budget process. The changes are needed to keep current with costs and tonnage flows.

Main points of this legislation.

- Metro's tip fee for garbage will remain at \$97.45 in FY 2019-20, which provides consistent and predictable fees for the region.
- Transaction fees will remain unchanged at \$10 for staffed loads (fees paid by self-haulers) and \$2 for automated loads.
- The minimum load size will remain 360 pounds with a minimum \$28 per load charge.
- Tip fee increases are proposed for residential organic waste accepted at Metro regional transfer stations. This increase stems from increases in Metro's per-ton contract cost and lower tonnage forecast, creating more of a fixed cost burden on the ton. The rate model also suggests an increase of \$13.76 per ton for commercial organics, however, staff is proposing to keep the rate flat to support Metro's recovery work in this area. The impact of this rate buy-down is projected to be \$228,161 in FY 2019-20. This rate decision will be reviewed annually for appropriateness.
- Tip fees for clean wood and yard debris have increased, \$7.39 and \$6.38 per ton due to increases in Metro's per-ton contract costs.

Adoption of Ordinance No. 19-1433 would authorize the following charges at Metro regional transfer stations, effective July 1, 2019.

Table 1. Proposed Solid Waste Charges at Metro Regional Transfer Stations
Rates Effective July 1, 2019

Rates	Current	Proposed	Change
Fees per transaction			
Users of staffed scales	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$ - 0 -
Users of automated scales	2.00	2.00	- 0 -
Fees per ton (Tip Fees)			
Mixed solid waste ("refuse")	\$ 97.45	\$ 97.45	\$ - 0 -
Clean wood	57.84	65.23	7.39
Yard Debris	49.62	56.00	6.38
Residential organics	67.08	77.99	10.91
Commercial organics	66.23	66.23	- 0 -

Background Part 1. Overview of Metro's Solid Waste Rates

Metro maintains two classes of solid waste rates. One class, the Regional System Fee, is charged on all disposal. The second class is a suite of charges for services at Metro regional transfer stations only.

1. **Regional System Fee** is a universal charge on the disposal of garbage. It is levied at all landfills, the Marion County waste to energy facility, and the Metro stations. There are two levels of system fee: one for mixed solid waste, and a reduced rate for environmental cleanup materials. The proposed rates are \$18.58 and \$2.50 per ton, respectively. System fees raise about \$26.7 million per year and pay for Metro's regional solid waste programs and services: household hazardous waste, latex paint recovery, St. Johns Landfill management, facility regulation, illegal dumpsite cleanup, and resource conservation and recycling.
2. **Charges for services at the Metro stations** cover the costs of Metro's transfer station operations, transport, processing and disposal. Each customer pays a two-part fee: a fixed charge for the transaction costs and a variable charge ("tip fee") for each ton in the load.
 - **"Transaction Charges"** are the fixed fees for each load of waste accepted. There are two levels of transaction fee: one for users of the staffed scales (mainly self-haulers), and another for users of the automated scales (mainly commercial haulers). Together they raise about \$3.2 million dollars per year and pay for the cost of operating the scalehouses and related functions.
 - **"Tip Fees"** are different for each waste stream – garbage, residential organics, commercial organics, and wood/yard debris – and reflect the costs that are specific to each stream. The current and proposed rates are shown in Table 1.

Every tip fee is made up of a **Tonnage Charge** and various pass-throughs (Table 2). The tonnage charge pays for the costs of doing the work. In this region, the Regional System Fee, Metro excise tax, and DEQ fees are charged on all disposal. Together, Metro's tonnage charges raise about \$35.9 million per year, and pay for the costs of station operations, recovery, transport, processing, disposal, capital and management.

Of the add-on components, the Regional System Fee will increase, while the excise tax is set to decrease. The Regional System Fee is increasing by 77 cents, the excise tax is decreasing 84 cents and DEQ fees are expected to increase by 7 cents in April 2019. These changes kept the Metro tip fee \$97.45 per ton.

Table 2. Components of Proposed Metro Tip Fees by Waste Stream

Rates Effective July 1, 2019

Rate Component	Mixed Solid Waste	Organic Waste			
		Yard Debris	Clean Wood	Residential Organics	Commercial Organics
Tonnage Charge	\$64.41	\$55.00	\$64.23	\$76.99	65.23
<i>Covers costs of transfer, transport, recovery, disposal.</i>					
Pass-Throughs					
<i>Government fees and taxes levied at disposal sites.</i>					
Regional System Fee	\$18.58	_*_	_*_	_*_	_*_
Metro excise tax	11.57	_*_	_*_	_*_	_*_
DEQ fees	1.89	_*_	_*_	_*_	_*_
Enhancement Fee	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Total = Tip Fee	\$97.45	\$56.00	\$65.23	\$77.99	\$66.23

* It is the policy of Metro and DEQ to support material recovery and recycling by levying solid waste surcharges and taxes on the waste that is ultimately disposed. For this reason, the Regional System Fee, Metro excise tax, and DEQ fees are not included in the tip fees for organic wastes.

Background Part 2. Understanding the Proposed FY 2019-20 Rates

Metro's solid waste rates are set to recover Metro's solid waste costs. When tonnage growth keeps pace with cost increases, in general per-ton costs will remain relatively constant. When tonnage increase faster than costs, per-ton costs decrease. Slow tonnage growth or declines can put upward pressure on per-ton costs.

1. **Trash.** Costs for handling trash have increased. Inflation, higher contract and facility costs, and increased oversight of facilities are contributing factors. Mixed solid waste tonnage growth has kept pace with cost increases, allowing Metro to hold the garbage tip fee constant this year, while recovering the costs of doing business.
2. **Recoverable waste.** Recoverable waste tonnage—clean wood, yard debris, residential organics—not only did not keep pace with inflation and other cost increases, but actually declined from the year before. This drove up per-ton costs of handling yard debris, wood, and residential yard debris, and, hence, proposed rates for acceptance of these waste types are significantly higher than the previous year. Increases are \$7.39 for clean wood, \$6.38 for yard debris and \$10.91 for residential organics.
3. **Commercial food scraps.** Commercial food scraps tonnage is projected to increase. This may be due to growing local jurisdiction and business interest in the nascent program, and Metro's adoption in 2018 of policies to drive better capture of this material. Like the other waste streams, the costs for handling commercial food scraps increased, but Metro is able to continue subsidizing the per-ton rate for commercial food scraps by keeping that rate at \$65.23, to incentivize better participation regionally in food scraps separation.
4. **Regional programs.** The cost of regional waste reduction, household hazardous waste, and other programs with regional benefit are recovered via the Regional System Fee, which is collected on all waste delivered for disposal, at public and private facilities, not just on waste delivered to Metro's transfer stations. Regional program costs have increased faster than regional tonnage, resulting in a 4.3% (77 cents) increase in the Regional System Fee.
5. **The excise tax.** The tax rate is set automatically by a formula in the Code each year, and is never a formal part of the rate ordinance. However, it is related to the rate actions because it is part of the tip fee (Table 2). For FY 2019-20, the excise tax rate will decrease 84 cents to \$11.57 per ton.

Information/Analysis

1. **Known Opposition.** There is one industry business in opposition of the mixed solid waste blended rate. Staff continues to feel that this is the correct approach and incentivizes the recovery initiatives of the region. Although there will be no increase or decrease to the mixed solid waste rate, the majority of ratepayers at Metro stations will experience an increase in Metro's fee for residential organic waste, clean wood and yard debris.
2. **Legal Antecedents.** The process for setting Metro's solid waste rates are set forth in Metro Code Chapter 5.02. Ordinance 14-1323 removed the specific Metro solid waste rates from Metro Code Chapter 5.02 and requires adoption of the rates via a separate ordinance and rate schedule. Metro reviews solid waste rates annually. The proposed FY 2019-20 rates comply with the restriction set forth in Chapter III, Section 15 of the Metro Charter limiting user charges to the amount needed to recover the costs of providing goods and services.

The excise tax rate is established automatically by a passive mechanism set forth in Metro Code sections 7.01.020 and 7.01.022 and does not require council action to take effect.

3. **Anticipated Effects:** If adopted, this ordinance would keep the tip fee for mixed solid waste at Metro transfer stations at \$97.45. It would also increase the tip fees for clean wood, yard debris and residential organic wastes as set forth in Table 1.
4. **Budget Impacts.** The rates established by this ordinance are designed to raise \$71 million in enterprise revenue during FY 2019-20. This revenue would cover the cash requirements of the proposed FY 2019-20 solid waste budget.

RECOMMENDATION

The Chief Operating Officer recommends adoption of Ordinance No. 19-1433.