

Subject: Important Update: Transition to Curbside Waste Management Service

Dear Residents of Country Village,

We would like to inform you of an important change in our community's waste management services – beginning **September 1, 2024**, we will be transitioning to **curbside trash service**.

This decision was made after thorough consideration and extended negotiations with our waste management provider, GFL Environmental, to ensure we continue to receive high-quality service while managing costs effectively.

Why This Change?

Currently, our waste management contract with GFL is set to expire on August 31, 2024. This contract was initially locked in at a very favorable rate, with only minor cost adjustments due to inflation over the years. As the contract expiration approached, GFL proposed a renewal that would have resulted in an approximately **60% increase** in costs to maintain the same backdoor service.

To address this significant cost increase while remaining within our budgeted expectations, GFL offered an alternative: switching to curbside service. This change allows us to largely maintain our current rates, with a **more manageable increase of 17%**, which fits within the budget we've set for 2024/2025. Importantly, this decision also aligns with our commitment to avoid increasing HOA dues during the ongoing Park Renovation Special Assessment period.

Ensuring Value for Our Community

During our discussions with GFL, it became evident that the rates we have enjoyed remain significantly lower than current market prices. When we originally contracted with VF Waste Management in 2020 (prior to their acquisition by GFL), they were aggressively pricing their services to gain market share. This has allowed us to benefit from lower rates, which have continued to remain below those offered by other waste management providers in our area.

Even when compared against the higher renewal rates, the **quotes from other providers came in 30-50% higher** than what GFL offers us.

Exploring Alternatives

We also explored the option of transitioning to the City of Houston (CoH) Solid Waste Management services. While this could potentially result in significant cost savings, it would also lead to a reduction in the frequency, consistency, and overall quality of service that we currently receive from GFL. This option remains open for consideration in future renewal cycles but would require careful planning and lead time to ensure a smooth transition.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Did we explore other options or get quotes from other providers like Texas Pride?

A: Yes, we obtained quotes from other providers, including Texas Pride. However, their rates were at least \$10 more per household per month for both backdoor and curbside service compared to our current provider's offer.

Q: Why didn't we negotiate further with the current vendor?

A: We found that our current rates have been below the market average. Previously, the service was owned by a private equity firm that operated at a loss to gain market share. Now, with increased disposal fees and other operational costs, GFL is making necessary adjustments to maintain profitability.

Q: Why not move to once-a-week trash pickup?

A: The companies we consulted do not offer once-a-week trash pickup, citing that it would be too much waste to handle in a single collection.

Q: What would City of Houston trash service entail?

A: CoH service includes once-a-week waste and recycling pickup using large grey containers that must be placed on the curb for automated collection. While it's currently included in our taxes, a study is underway to assess additional fees. Although some residents report positive experiences, a significant number of 311 complaints concern missed pickups.

What This Means for You:

Beginning **September 1, 2024**, trash service will no longer be automatically picked up from your backdoor or side of your house. Instead, similar to our current recycling procedures, you will need to place your trash bins at the curb for pickup and ensure they are removed within 24 hours of collection.

Service schedule remains the same:

- **Trash Pickup:** Curbside service twice per week (Monday and Thursday).
- **Recycling Pickup:** Once a week (Wednesday) at the curbside.
- **Bulk Pickup:** Once per week (Thursday) at the curb, limited to two items per home.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we make this transition. Our goal is to continue providing our community with high-quality services while maintaining financial responsibility. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the HOA Board.

Thank you for your attention to this important update.

Sincerely,
Country Village HOA Board of Directors