

Yard Waste Service Enhancement

*Sustainable Reinvestment to Protect Staff
and the Environment*

Field Operations
April 13, 2023



Yard Waste & Leaf Collection

Current programs are challenging for staff, frustrating for residents, and harmful to the environment

- Weekly household yard waste service does not limit bags or quantity of yard waste materials
 - FY 2021-22: 10,500 tons of yard waste materials, costing \$300/ton to manage, garbage costs \$75/ton
- Loose Leaf vacuum collection is inefficient
- Plastic bags compromise compost quality, damage equipment, and negatively affect the environment



Loose Leaf Program Overview

- Seasonal service provided from Nov-Jan
 - \$1.5M for 3 months of service
- Uses 39 FT employees & Temp workers
- Utilizes 38 vehicles—most only used during leaf season
- Resident compliance for leaves
 - Leaves collect in the streets and not on the curb
- Unpredictable timetables due to weather and worker availability leading to resident complaints

Safe and Sustainable Workforce

Waste & Recycling Collection is the 7th deadliest job in the US

- Employee safety is top concern
- Rear loader operations are manual requiring workers to pick up bags, cans, and yard debris including loose sticks and limbs
 - Worker's comp claims for rear loaders over the past 5 years cost **\$2,101,083** for 68 injured workers
- Difficulty attracting and retaining temp workers
 - Temps needed during loose leaf season
 - Temps needed to cut and remove plastic yard waste bags at the compost facility year round



Environmental Sustainability

Plastic Bags are not “Green”

Plastic bags do not decompose

- Become litter in streams & natural areas
- Pose a threat to wildlife

Every plastic bag must be opened using temporary labor and extra machinery

- Costs appx \$350,000 per year in labor, equipment, and fuel costs

Plastic bag usage does not align with the recently approved Strategic Energy Plan adopted by Council in December 2021



What are Peer Cities Doing?

Greensboro is falling behind peer cities in innovative ways to address waste

Greensboro is the **only** major city in NC still collecting plastic bags

Cities using carts & paper bags or leaf burritos: Raleigh, Durham, Charlotte

Municipality	Population	Yard Waste Method of Collection	Collection Frequency	Bag Limits
Greensboro	299,035	Customer Containers & Plastic Bags	Weekly	Unofficial 10 item limit
Raleigh	474,069	Carts & Paper Bags	Bi-weekly	YES-10 bags
Charlotte	885,708	Carts & Leaf Burrito	Weekly	NO
Kannapolis	48,630	Paper Bags only	Weekly	NO
Kernersville	24,660	City Carts	Weekly	YES
*Winston-Salem	247,945	City Carts	Weekly	YES
*Durham	278,993	City Carts & Paper Bags	Weekly	YES-10 bags
Fayetteville	211,657	City Carts Only	Weekly	YES
^High Point	112,791	City Carts & Plastic Bags	Bi-Weekly	YES

*Charge Extra Fee for Yard Waste Services.

^Proposing to ban plastic bags.

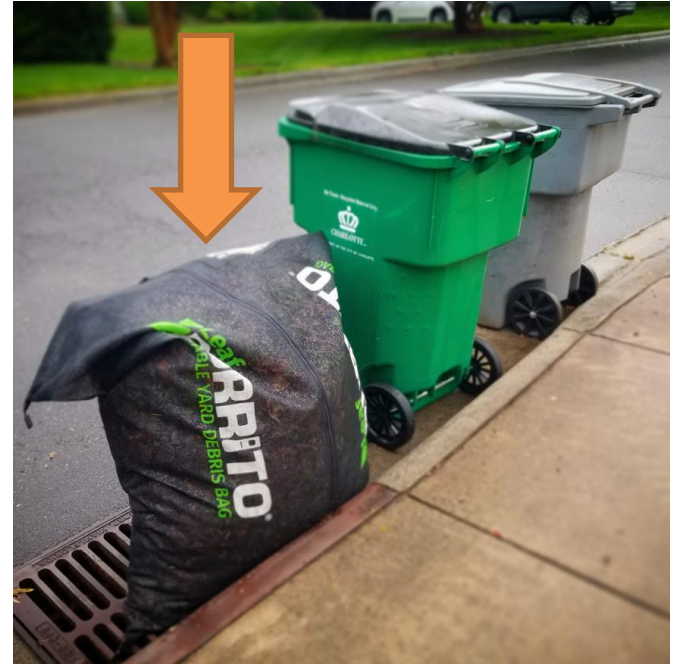
Yard Waste Proposal



- Provide residents one 96 gallon yard waste container
 - Option to purchase a 2nd yard waste container
- Option to purchase a Leaf Burrito (next slide)
- Stop Loose Leaf vacuum collection
- Use only compostable/biodegradable paper bags for additional waste (**NO** plastic bags)
- Limit compostable bags to 10 per week
 - 10 bags are in addition to 96 gallon cart
 - **Propose 20 bag limit during Leaf Season** (November-January)

Leaf Burritos

- Optional re-usable method to contain leaves
- Replaces single-use plastic, paper bags and tarps
- Purchased by residents at local retailers
 - No Cost to the City
- Easy for residents to manage leaves
- Safer for staff to lift
- Used by Charlotte & Concord



For Your Consideration:

OPTIONS:

- A. Eliminate loose leaf vacuum collection program
- B. Change code to prohibit plastic bags
- C. Accept leaf burrito (code change)
- D. 96-gallon containers for YW
- E. Implement all options

Cumulative Expenses Over 15 Years



*Proposal Includes elimination of loose leaf collection vacuum service and plastic bags, allowing leaf burritos, and adding yard waste containers. Includes 5% annual inflation and debt service.

Sustainable Reinvestment

More efficient and safe collection of leaves and yard waste

- Weekly collection of bagged/containerized yard waste
- Automated container trucks reduce injuries to staff
- Paper bags can be composted

City staff can continue to address other issues during leaf season

- Litter, illegal dumping, landscape & pavement maintenance

New blue containers help eliminate recycling confusion

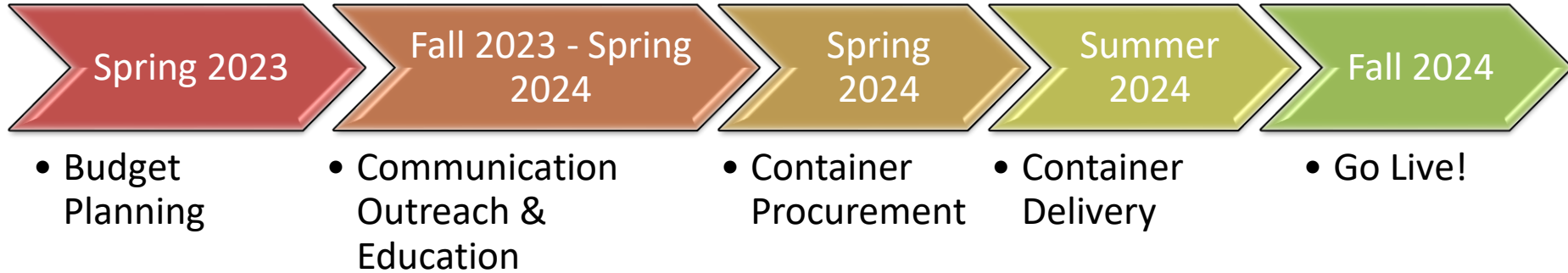
- Brown=Yard waste, Blue=Recycling

Environmental Considerations

- Reduced fuel usage and carbon footprint
- Elimination of plastic bags



Possible Planning Timeline For Containers



Questions?

