



# MEMO

**To:** Mayor and Ames City Council Members

**From:** Steven L. Schainker, City Manager

**Date:** October 12, 2021

**Subject:** Request To Consider Switching To An Organized Waste Collection Service

On September 14, 2021, the City Council referred an email from Susie Petra requesting that the City Council consider altering how waste collection services are provided in our community. She points out in her email that currently nine different private companies provide waste collection services within our city in what is described as an open collection system. **(In an open system, the individual customers choose their own hauler.)** Susie cites a report from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency which shows that “there is substantial savings to be had for cities, lower costs for consumers, a reduction in road wear and repair, and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions” if we would switch to an organized collection system. **(In an organized collection system, waste hauling services are coordinated by public entity through a competitive bidding process.)**

As you know, the City staff is committed to continuous improvement and, therefore, would support providing the City Council with an internal study to determine the pros and cons of switching to an organized collection system. This study would involve: 1) determining what legal authority exists in the state that would allow this new collection system, 2) analyzing how other cities who rely on an organized collection system from private haulers have succeeded, and 3) meeting with the current haulers to obtain

their insight into the impact that regulating this service would have on our residents.

It should be emphasized that the same staff members that would work on this type of study are currently engaged with a consultant to recommend the next generation of our waste-to-energy system. **Therefore, should the City Council desire for us to pursue the possibility of switching to an organized waste collection system, I would urge your support that this additional assignment not begin until we have completed the waste-to-energy system study. Currently, it is anticipated that the study will be completed by the end of 2021. Assuming there will be a significant amount of community dialog regarding the findings of the study and the need to prioritization of implementation recommendations, it is likely that the staff would not be available to initiate this study any earlier than in the third quarter of FY 2021/22.**