



To: Mayor and City Council
From: Brian Phillips, Assistant City Manager
Date: June 11, 2024
Subject: Solid Waste Collection & Disposal Strategy

At the May 28, 2024 meeting, City staff presented a comprehensive report outlining various issues related to solid waste collection and disposal for the city. In this report, staff offered the following recommendations regarding the next steps in pursuing a new strategy to address these issues.

City staff suggests in the report that the most advisable strategy for the City Council to pursue would be:

- **Collection** - Partnering with Metro Waste Authority (MWA) to implement an organized collection system meeting the City Council's requirements, including curbside collection of refuse (MSW), recyclables, and yard waste in a manner that reduces truck traffic on City streets,
- **Consolidation** - Converting the Resource Recovery operation into a transfer station model where refuse and recyclable materials can be deposited, consolidated, and loaded for transportation to processing/disposal sites, and
- **Disposal** - Transitioning from the Central Iowa Solid Waste Management Association planning area (Boone County Landfill) to the Metro Waste Authority planning area as the final disposition location for disposal of municipal solid waste.

A concept outlining how these roles could potentially work is shown below:

	Collection	Consolidation	Disposal
Responsible Entity:	Metro Waste Authority	City of Ames	Metro Waste Authority
Components:	Organized Curbside Collection of Recycling and MSW Hauler Contract Management	Transfer Station Customer Service Marketing/Community Outreach Story County Community Relationships Waste Reduction/Landfill Diversion/Climate Goal Initiatives and Events	Hauling and Disposal to Landfill Hauling and Disposal to Recycling Facility Hauling and Disposal of Yard Waste

In staff's view, this overall strategy provides several advantages. It allows the City to rely on MWA's expertise to convert to organized collection. MWA has implemented this approach in many other communities and can provide valuable insight regarding working with haulers, designing the system, and undertaking a transition from the current open collection model. This approach also allows MWA to handle the disposal of the collected waste and recyclables, which it has ample expertise and resources to manage.

Critically, this approach keeps the community-focused component (Consolidation) with the City of Ames. This includes the interaction with drive-up customers and resources to ensure materials are disposed of in the most appropriate manner, the relationships with partnering communities in Story County to manage the administration of a waste disposal system, and the management of local waste reduction and diversion programming such as Stash the Trash, Rummage RAMPage, and EcoSmart. The City already excels in administering these customer-focused aspects of managing waste in the area. Therefore, it would be a natural fit for the City to retain the management of these functions, while partnering with MWA to manage the Collection and Disposal aspects of solid waste management.

Finally, this approach allows the City to separate energy production from waste management. Doing so allows the electric utility to pursue energy options that provide continued reliability, competitive costs, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

While the Council was not asked to provide direction regarding the staff recommendations at the May 28 meeting, staff is now seeking direction at this meeting as to whether to proceed with the proposed approach.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Staff Report on Solid Waste Collection & Disposal.pdf](#)

[Letter from Aspen Waste Systems to Ames City Council 6-7-24.pdf](#)