

Added service, fees on horizon for city dump

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Sunday, August 16, 2009 2:06 AM MDT

Drastic changes to the way the city charges for and collects trash could come under a plan being proposed to the city council.

The plan would take effect between April and July of 2011.

The city is taking a carrot-and-a-stick approach to encouraging recycling and discouraging waste, starting with a ban on grass and leaves in trash cans.

"The rationale is that organic stuff like that makes up 20 to 25 percent of the waste stream and it can be reused as compost so it's a good idea to get it out of the main stream of garbage," said Ward 1 Councilman Keith Goodenough.

Cindie Langston, solid waste manager at the Casper Landfill, said grass mixed with trash accounts for between 14 and 20 percent of the waste deposited into the landfill. All that grass can be composted for free, but people often mix it in their trash cans.

"It's a space consuming item and we have ... a process and a system in place already to [compost] that so it's a win-win for everybody," she said.

Curbside grass and leaf removal would be available for about \$4.50 a month, she said, though residents would be required to purchase a \$120, 90-gallon green container. Payments for the container could be stretched out over two years, bringing the price of leaf and grass disposal to about \$9.50 each month.

Residents would still be able to bring their green waste to the landfill for free, though, and Langston said the free one-time leaf pick-up in the fall wouldn't be affected by the proposed changes.

Goodenough said he was leery of making it illegal to put grass in a Dumpster, favoring a gradual approach first. He said the city could've scattered Dumpsters for organic waste across the community much like they've installed nine recycling depots to encourage recycling.

"I'm in favor of things that don't punish people -- more of a carrot approach for the most part," he said.

Trash collection could change, too.

Right now, Casper residents get two extra trash pick-ups each month. Instead of being used for random trash, one of the pick-ups would be for cardboard products and one of the pick-ups would be for branches.

"Cardboard and paper actually takes up between 30 and 35 percent of the landfill so we want to encourage people not to put cardboard in trash containers," she said.

The city maintains nine recycling depots scattered across Casper where people can drop off recyclables for free, which Langston said should eliminate the need for extra trash pick-ups.

People could still use their bale-fill slips once a month to dump trash, she said, but would be required to purchase another trash container for pick-up at the cost of \$14.12 per month if they need more trash pick-ups.

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