



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of April 25, 2009

DATE: March 7, 2009

SUBJECT: Adopt an annual \$66 fee on all business and multi-family properties located in Arlington County to pay for the costs of recycling compliance inspections.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt an amendment to Chapter 10, Section 36 of the County Code that creates an annual \$66 fee on all business and multi-family properties located in Arlington County to pay for the costs of recycling compliance inspections.

ISSUES: Should the County assess an annual fee of \$66 on all business and multi-family properties in Arlington County to pay for recycling compliance inspections performed by the Solid Waste Bureau?

SUMMARY: In response to citizen complaints that various County businesses and multi-family properties are failing to comply with County Code as it relates to mandated recycling, the Department of Environmental Services (DES) modified its recycling compliance inspection program to increase on-site inspections of business and multi-family locations. The proposed fee would maintain the current inspections program.

BACKGROUND: Chapter 10 of the County Code stipulates that Arlington businesses must recycle the two primary recyclable materials they generate in the greatest quantity. For properties such as office buildings or strip malls where individual businesses do not manage their own refuse removal, the two materials are based on the property's combined waste stream. In addition, multi-family properties must provide recycling services for cans, glass bottles and newspapers, at a minimum. Both commercial and multi-family properties must have a current recycling plan on file with the County, file an updated Recycling Plan form every three years and periodically disseminate educational materials to their staff and residents to keep them up to date on their respective programs.

The Solid Waste Bureau is responsible for compliance monitoring and enforcement of the recycling ordinance for Arlington businesses, condominiums and apartment complexes. There are between 500 and 600 multi-family properties in Arlington, and these properties constitute approximately 60,000 households units. There are also approximately 1,500 business properties responsible for their own refuse and recycling collection. Business and multi-family properties generate 70-75% of Arlington's total waste stream. Since commercial properties set up and promote their own recycling programs and procure their own trash and recycling services, the

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Michael Clem, DES Solid Waste

success of each property's program is very important to Arlington. Consequently this sector represents the greatest opportunity to help the County reduce waste and recycle more.

A survey of 212 business and 91 multi-family properties within Arlington conducted on behalf of the County by Ecodata Inc. found that although 95% of Arlington's multi-family properties reported that they had a compliant recycling program in place, there was only a 12.5% participation rate in apartments and condominiums. The survey data also showed that over 50% of the businesses surveyed recycle only one commodity and that only 22% of the businesses recycle more than one commodity. As a result, there are significant volumes of recoverable materials going into the waste stream from the commercial sector. One recommendation was that emphasis should focus on improving infrastructure to assure that complexes are recycling as many commodities as possible and on educational efforts to tenants in multi-family buildings.

The multi-family and business recycling staff, which includes a manager and two inspectors, is dedicated to education, outreach and enforcement for the multi-family and commercial recycling programs and improves enforcement and inspection capabilities for solid waste programs. Currently, inspectors provide business owners and building managers with education, support and guidance in developing customized, easy-to-deploy recycling programs. If the property is out of compliance, building managers are given directives on changes that need to be made for their program to comply with Arlington's requirements. Since the beginning of FY 2009, Solid Waste Bureau inspectors have personally visited 1,296 business and multi-families. On initial visits, 71% of County businesses and multi-family locations were meeting the minimum requirements of the Code.

Arlington County's business and multi-family properties have significantly expanded their efforts, achieving a recycling rate of 33 percent of eligible materials. This is up from 29 percent just three years ago and compares to the Commonwealth of Virginia's statewide goal of 25 percent.

DISCUSSION: Staff data shows that on-site visits dramatically improve the compliance rate of Arlington's businesses. At present, the two inspectors perform approximately 2,000 inspections per year. Without the annual \$66 fee on all business and multi-family properties to cover the cost of annual recycling inspections, the program would need to be reduced.

FISCAL IMPACT: The full cost of the inspections program is included in the FY 2010 budget. The \$66 annual fee for business and multi-family recycling compliance will generate \$125,400 and cover the costs of the inspections program.

Attachment A

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND, REENACT, AND RECODIFY CHAPTER 10 (GARBAGE REFUSE AND WEEDS) OF ARLINGTON COUNTY CODE RELATING TO A NEW BUSINESS AND MULTI-FAMILY RECYCLING FEE EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2009 BE IT ORDAINED that Chapter 10 of the Arlington County Code is amended, reenacted, and recodified as follows, effective July 1, 2009:

§ 10-36. Recycling System Inspection Fee

Each responsible party which is required to establish a separate system from refuse for the collection of recyclable material as described in Section 10-31B or Section 10-31C and required to submit an 'implementation plan' pursuant to Section 1-32B shall on a yearly basis pay a fee of sixty-six dollars (\$66) for each multi-family property or business location for which a plan has been submitted. Such fees shall be paid within thirty days of the date of the bill for payment.