



DPW SOLID WASTE SERVICES AUDIT

PRESENTATION TO CITY UTILITIES COMMITTEE

APRIL 25, 2023

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OBJECTIVE

- Is Public Works implementing efficient and cost-effective strategies for solid waste service delivery?

DPW'S OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE SERVICES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COLLECTING AND DISPOSING SOLID WASTE

- Solid Waste Services has 2 divisions: Curbside and Special Operations
- Curbside collections are funded by an enterprise fund
- Some “common good” sanitary services under Special Operations are funded by city's general fund



CITY COMMISSIONED A STUDY TO BALANCE ITS SOLID WASTE RATE STRUCTURE

- Two lawsuits alleged the city's assessment of solid waste fees for multi-family and commercial properties was an illegal tax
- City settled the lawsuits and contracted with SCS Engineers Management Services to complete a solid waste rate study, completed in late 2021
- New rates went into effect July 1, 2022

FINDINGS OVERVIEW

- Staffing shortages contributed to increased costs
- Majority of vehicles and equipment are past life cycle
- Department could improve resource planning by refining data management

DEPARTMENT UNABLE TO MEET STAFFING GOALS

- Solid Waste Services is staffed at less than its 90% target
- Management procured almost \$12 million in emergency contracts for extra help staff, yard trimmings collections, bulk waste collections, and cleanup of illegal dumpsites

	FY21Q1 (11/20)	FY21Q2 (2/21)	FY21Q3 (5/21)	FY21Q4 (9/21)	FY22Q2 (2/22)	FY22Q3 (5/22)	FY22Q4 (8/22)
Allocated	457	457	457	462	507	507	437
Filled	377	379	382	377	383	383	358
Vacant	80	78	75	85	124	124	79
% Filled	82%	83%	84%	82%	76%	76%	82%

Note: The quarterly report for FY22Q1 was unavailable on City Council's website.

Source: Developed by auditors based on quarterly reports presented to the City Utilities Committee

DEPARTMENT SPENT ABOUT 75% OF ITS EXTRA HELP CONTRACTS TO SUPPLEMENT CREWS

Contractor	Contract Services	Contract Amount	Paid Invoices	Percent of Contract Paid
Center for Employment Opportunities, Inc. (CEO)	Extra help staffing	\$250,000.00	\$118,793.75	48%
Environmental Differences, LLC		\$250,000.00	\$241,291.83	96.5%
First Step Staffing, Inc.		\$250,000.00	\$135,703.61	54%
Georgia Works, Inc.		\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	100%
		Total	\$1,000,000.00	\$745,789.19

Source: Table developed by audit team based on Public Works contracts and Oracle data as of December 20, 2022

DEPARTMENTAL CULTURE AFFECTS ATTENDANCE AND MORALE, WHICH AFFECT PRODUCTIVITY

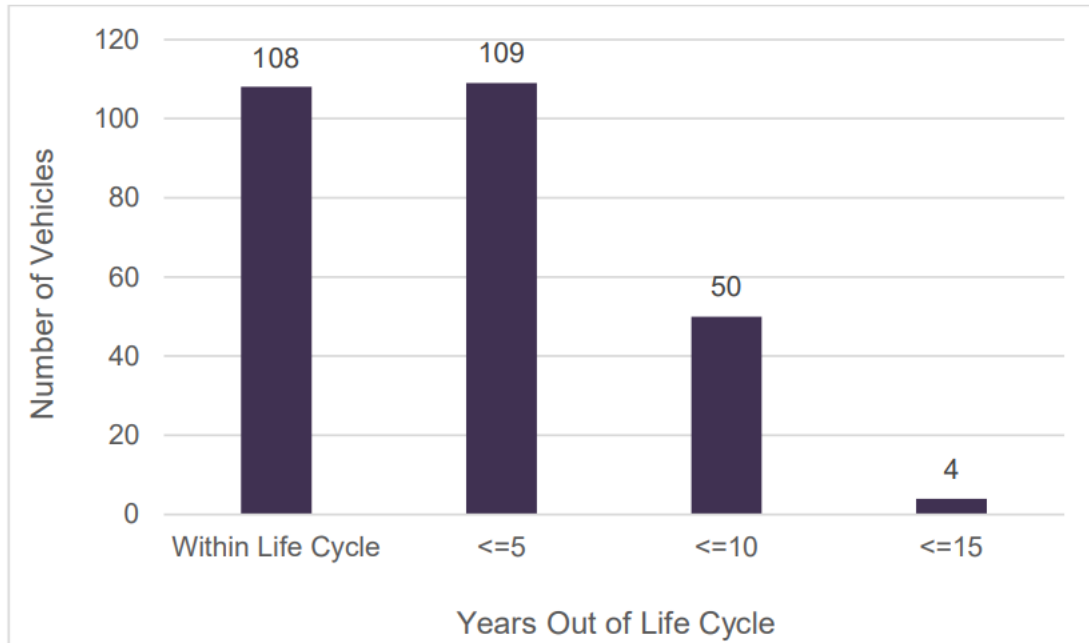
- 23% of collections staff are absent on an average day
- On average, the number of staff present can cover each day's routes at current service levels
- Staff reported feelings of low morale due to pay, work demands, quality and age of vehicles and equipment, and facility conditions

Absence Reason	% of Employees
Attended Work	77%
Absent from Work	23%
Sick Leave	7%
Worker's Comp/Injury on Duty	5%
Vacation Leave	5%
Leave Without Pay	4%
Admin Leave	1%
Limited Duty	1%
FMLA	1%

Source: Prepared by audit team from attendance logs, February 2022 to September 2022

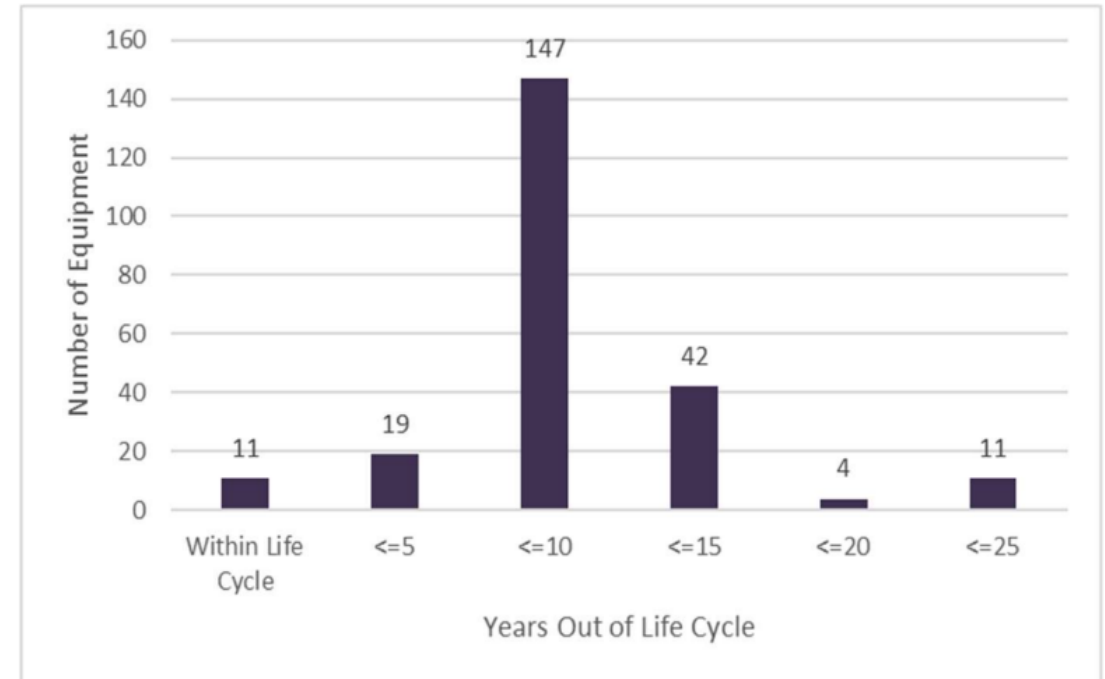
MAJORITY OF VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT ARE PAST LIFE CYCLE

Exhibit 8: About 20% of Solid Waste Vehicles are More Than 6 Years Past Life Cycle



Source: Developed by auditor based on analysis of vehicle inventory as of October 2022

Exhibit 9: Only 5% of Solid Waste Equipment is Within Life Cycle



Source: Developed by auditor based on analysis of vehicle inventory as of October 2022

DEPARTMENT COULD IMPROVE RESOURCE PLANNING BY REFINING DATA MANAGEMENT

- Staff does not have a centralized data system
 - Staff indicated file storage is limited to paper copies at different facilities and digital data are manually entered by supervisors and chief staff
 - Leadership reported frustration with paper filing and manual entry system
- Reasons for overtime use are not consistently tracked
 - Overtime is used to assist crews that have not completed routes, cover heavier seasonal yard trimmings collection workloads, clean up waste set out off-schedule, and complete work not completed during scheduled shifts due to lack of staff or available vehicles
 - Some solid waste services divisions overran their overtime budgets in FY21 and FY22

STAFF DOES NOT HAVE AN EFFECTIVE MECHANISM FOR TRACKING AND REPORTING RESIDENT NON-COMPLIANCE

- City code describes several restrictions and fees regarding non-compliant waste for curbside collections
- Department staff said residents are not charged for per-bag fees for excess bags or service fees for additional bins
- Crews no longer report residences with non-compliant waste



COLLECTIONS ROUTES APPEAR TO BE BASED ON MILEAGE, NOT OPTIMIZED FOR TONNAGE COLLECTED

- 100 curbside collection routes, developed in 2018
- Number of stop ranges from 418 to 1,299, with an average of 1,002 stops per route
- Average completion time and tonnage collected varies
- Some crews had to drop off collected waste at processing plants mid-route in order to complete routes, indicating routes may not be balanced

Exhibit 11: Collection Routes are Imbalanced by Tonnage

Route	Number of Stops	Average Completion Time	Average Tonnage
G5R4	418	4h 58m	7.1
G2F2	1,002	5h 9m	12.6
G3R2	1,299	4h 30m	9.5

Source: Prepared by audit team from daily tonnage reports

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a comprehensive solid waste staffing strategy including recruitment and retention of city staff, extra help staffing, and the use of contractors.
2. Consider using more automated collection vehicles to reduce the number of collectors needed to deliver services.
3. Invest in its facilities to improve work conditions.
4. Develop incentives to improve staff morale.
5. Follow through on its vehicle replacement plan to ensure enough vehicles are available during scheduled shift time.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT.)

6. Develop a plan to ensure that equipment is replaced when it reaches the end of its life cycle.
7. Identify critical data and develop a centralized database to store that data and generate reports to inform decision-making.
8. Consistently track the reasons for overtime use to ensure that necessary overtime is properly budgeted.
9. Develop a non-compliance enforcement plan for residents and staff.
10. Conduct route optimization planning to ensure that routes are balanced among crews' daily workloads.

QUESTIONS?

Full Report:

<http://www.atlaudit.org/solid-waste-services---april-2023.html>