

February 11, 2016

Environmental Services Advisory Committee (ESAC) 2015 Annual Report (January 1-December 31, 2015)

Since 2005, the Environmental Services Advisory Committee (ESAC) has advised the Mayor and Council on the programs and services provided by the Environmental Services Department (ES). The committee was first established by the Mayor and Council in 2001 as the Solid Waste Advisory Committee. ESAC has thirteen voting members that represent residents or businesses within Tucson. Six members are nominated by the City Manager, one member is appointed by the Mayor and each member of the Council (Attachment 1). The full committee met 11 times in 2015.

ESAC has three established subcommittees that review specific areas of the Environmental Services Department. These subcommittees are Finance, Environmental/Engineering, and Waste Diversion, Education, and Collections. In these subcommittees, members receive updates from staff and make recommendations to the full committee.

ESAC is responsible for providing an annual report to the Mayor and Council on the operations of Environmental Services. The Annual Report also includes a summary of ESAC's activities for the calendar year 2015 in the following areas:

- Financial Planning, including review of ES operating and capital budgets and revenue sources
- Waste Diversion efforts including zero waste
- Environmental Engineering activities

Financial Planning

The ESAC Finance Subcommittee met on six occasions in 2015. The committee's responsibility is to "review periodic expenditure reports and the formulation of the annual budget as it is prepared and submitted to the Mayor and Council."

The subcommittee reviewed the quarterly expenditure reports and the preliminary close out for FY 2015. The subcommittee also reviewed the FY 2016 Operating Budget consisting of both expenditures and revenues, reviewed the working capital of the ES Fund, and the FY 2016-2020 Capital Improvement Program.

The full ESAC committee submitted a Letter of Recommendation to the Mayor and Council supporting a 5% increase in commercial rates effective FY 2016. The rate increase was approved at the June 9, 2015 Mayor and Council Regular Meeting.

Cost of Service Model and Rates and Fees

The Finance Subcommittee also reviewed the Cost of Service Model in preparation for recommending rate increases. This model is used by ES staff to make recommendations on rates. The subcommittee reviewed the proposed changes to Chapter 15 of the Tucson City Code and made recommendations to full ESAC regarding rates and the updates to Chapter 15.

Waste Diversion, Collections, and Education

Waste Diversion is now a major focus of the Environmental Services Department. Even as the responsibilities of ESAC have grown, waste diversion and efficient management of the daily environmental needs of Tucson residents and businesses, including collection of solid and recyclable waste, have been priorities for ESAC and the Waste Diversion, Collections, and Education Subcommittee. The Waste Diversion, Collections and Education Subcommittee met eight times in 2015. It has paid attention to all three topics in its name.

The subcommittee receives regular reports on issues with collections, from tire prices, the truck fleet's increasing conversion to CNG, to providing screens behind the cabs of the CNG trucks to prevent trash fires that burn out the truck's wiring. The CNG filling station being built by the City will be fully operational in 2016. All these efforts are to reduce the costs of collection.

Plan Tucson has a goal to strive for zero waste. The subcommittee along with the full ESAC has discussed what this means in practical terms. Waste diversion is described as the best and highest use and management of materials that are no longer being used, and zero waste is described as the prevention of waste production. Prevention of waste production takes a change in the culture of manufacturing and consumer habits. It is a very long-term goal. In the meantime, the Food Scrap Collection and Compost Service Programs, of which ES is a partner, received a Common Ground Award from the Metropolitan Pima Alliance. TreeCyle continues keeping discarded Christmas Trees out of the landfill.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection has been restructured to contain costs. Originally jointly funded by Pima County and the City of Tucson, it is now funded through ES Residential Collection Fees. The paint collection has been turned over to Beacon Foundation who mixes the paint and sells it through Gerson's Used Building Supply. There has been a substantial drop in

the sale price of scrap metal and car batteries, and used oil has no market value at this time. There are twelve First Saturday and five second Saturday events for collection of household hazardous waste, but this is projected to be cut back in an effort to reduce costs.

The recycling materials going to ReCommunity Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) had a 20% plus level of contamination. Through auditing blue barrels in a neighborhood, leaving educational materials where there is contamination, and then reauditing the barrels, the contamination level dropped 7%. Contamination is an ongoing concern. The contract with ReCommunity MRF was renegotiated because they were losing about one million dollars a year due to a severe drop in the price of materials they capture and sell. ES will lose about \$500,000 dollars from the new pricing structure, but the MRF will continue, and if more recyclables are collected, that loss could decline.

A wide range of outreach activities was programmed throughout the year including, “Know Where to Throw”, Earth Day, Family Fun Festival, a poster contest, and the ES Director Andrew H. Quigley talking to neighborhood associations. ES also conducted a survey of 600 customers that resulted in Brush and Bulky and Recycling services being rated as excellent. Survey results also indicated that the Household Hazardous Waste program needed more promotion. A curbside HHW collection for a fee was also implemented. A Waste Diversion Online Customer Service survey did not provide much useful information. An effort has been made to survey businesses regarding recycling. Recycling Education continues at the elementary school level.

Future topics for discussion include more work on how to implement a zero waste culture at large civic events like the 4th Avenue Street Fair and the Tucson Meet Yourself and reducing contamination while pushing to increase collection of recyclables is an ongoing challenge.

Environmental/Engineering

The Environmental/Engineering Subcommittee met four times in 2015. The subcommittee’s responsibility is to “review matters related to capital construction and engineering projects in the Environmental Services Department.”

The subcommittee reviewed the ES Engineering Capital Improvement Program for fiscal years 2015 and 2016. This included acquiring the right of way for the Silverbell Pump and Treat System from Pima County, transitioning to the new Los Reales entrance facilities, the acquisition of properties to create a buffer zone at the new entrance of Los Reales, and completing the conceptual design for the 10th Avenue Maintenance Facility.

Staff provided updates on each of these projects at every meeting. Additionally, updates on the progress of the CNG facility were given, as well as beautification improvements to the Prudence and Cottonwood Landfills with use of desert landscaping and recycled items. Information was also provided on a feasibility study for a redevelopment option on property belonging to Rio Nuevo on the Westside. The subcommittee chair and another member of the subcommittee participated with the Tucson Pima Arts Council to help select an artist to create public artwork for the Los Reales Landfill.

It is a great privilege to serve our community and the Environmental Services Advisory Committee members thank the Mayor and Council for this opportunity. This committee feels the department is dedicated to meeting the needs of Tucson residents and the community at large. Through astute management and a deep understanding of the environmental issues affecting our community, the Environmental Services Department has greatly contributed to the wellbeing of our city both now and in the future.