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SAFER STREETS, BETTER SERVICE: NYC Department of Sanitation Takes Steps to Implement Commercial Waste Zones, Moving Toward Industry Reform

The New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) today announced several important steps forward in the implementation of the City's groundbreaking Commercial Waste Zones program. Commercial Waste Zones will create a safe and efficient system to collect waste from NYC businesses and provide high-quality, low-cost service while advancing the City's zero waste goals.

A 2019 environmental review found that Commercial Waste Zones will nearly double commercial recycling and organics diversion rates while decreasing truck traffic and associated emissions by 50 percent. The program is authorized by Local Law 199, which Mayor de Blasio signed in November 2019.

DSNY released the second and final part of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for private carting companies interested in participating in the program. The RFP is the latest step toward implementation of this landmark program. Through the RFP process, DSNY will select up to three carters to provide service to customers within each of 20 zones, as well as up to five carters to provide containerized collection service citywide. This will bring clarity and stability to an industry that impacts nearly every street in the city, while keeping the competition necessary for low prices.

DSNY also published three final rules in the [City Record](#) related to safety, customer service and operations, and third-party waste audits. These rules, which were subject to public hearing and comment, set minimum requirements for carters operating under the Commercial Waste Zones program.

The RFP, rules, and related documents can be downloaded at nyc.gov/commercialwaste.

“New Yorkers have a right to safe and clean streets, and the implementation of Commercial Waste Zones will help us deliver on that right. Commercial Waste Zones mean fewer trucks on our streets, safer and more efficient trash collection, and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The rules and RFP released today are going to have a positive impact in nearly every neighborhood in the five boroughs,” said **Edward Grayson, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation**.

“The Commercial Waste Zones program will reduce truck miles traveled in New York City, making the streets safer and the air cleaner for everyone living, working and visiting the City,” said **Noah D. Genel, Commissioner and Chair of the Business Integrity Commission.**

“Improving traffic safety in the commercial waste hauling industry is an important goal of BIC’s, as demonstrated by the industry-wide safety rules BIC enacted this past August.”

“Today we are taking a big step towards the implementation of the Commercial Waste Zones program and the transformative effects that it will have on the industry and our city at large. I am confident that the DSNY’s RFP process will be fair, stringent, and ensure that the most qualified bidders will service our city, all while retaining the competition that is necessary for low prices. As the sponsor of the bill authorizing the Commercial Waste Zones program, I look forward to continuing to support its ongoing implementation,” said **Council Member Antonio Reynoso, Chair of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste.**

The Department released Part 1 of the Commercial Waste Zones RFP last November. A total of 50 private carters submitted responsive proposals to Part 1, which requested information from potential program awardees about their qualifications to provide commercial waste collections services, including licensing status with the Business Integrity Commission, financial statements and compliance history. These respondents are eligible to respond to Part 2 of the RFP.

Part 2 of the RFP requests more robust information about potential program awardees, including plans to achieve the programmatic goals of Commercial Waste Zones, such as plans for safety, customer service, sustainable waste management, infrastructure investment, and zero waste. Part 2 of the RFP also includes a template agreement that will serve as the basis for final agreements with Commercial Waste Zones haulers. Responses to Part 2 of the RFP are due on March 17, 2022.

The Commercial Waste Zones program is the result of more than six years of intensive analysis, stakeholder engagement, and planning at the Department of Sanitation. DSNY plans to follow the RFP process with a multi-year customer transition process that includes extensive outreach and education for businesses.

DSNY, BIC and the City Council also jointly announced the members of the Commercial Waste Safety Taskforce. The Taskforce will advise the agencies on improvements to safety and training practices in the private carting industry to improve the safety of the public and private carting employees. The Taskforce is appointed jointly by the Administration and the City Council, and members include:

- David Biderman, Executive Director and CEO, Solid Waste Association of North America
- Elena Conte, Senior Fellow, Pratt Center for Community Development and Adjunct Professor at CUNY School of Professional Studies, Murphy Institute
- Susan Eppes, President, EST Solutions, a health and safety consulting firm
- Erwin Figueroa, former Director of Organizing, Transportation Alternatives

- Bernadette Kelly, Recording Secretary, Teamsters Local 210 and Trustee, Teamsters Joint Council 16
- Julia Kite-Laidlaw, Director of Strategic Initiatives, NYC Department of Transportation

The Taskforce will hold its first meeting in December 2021.

About the New York City Department of Sanitation

The Department of Sanitation (DSNY) keeps New York City healthy, safe and clean by collecting, recycling and disposing of waste, cleaning streets and vacant lots, and clearing snow and ice. The Department operates 59 district garages and manages a fleet of more than 2,000 rear-loading collection trucks, 450 mechanical brooms and 705 salt/sand spreaders. The Department clears litter, snow and ice from approximately 6,500 miles of City streets and removes debris from vacant lots as well as abandoned vehicles from City streets.