

Solid Waste Management

LOB #353:

COUNTY AGENCY ROUTE

Purpose

- The County Agency Route (CAR) program provides refuse and recycling collection services to properties owned and operated by the County.
- CAR provides weekly refuse and recycling collection services for approximately 220 County agency locations as well as community partners George Mason University (GMU) and Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) – Annandale Campus.
- CAR also provides County departments and community partners with specially scheduled collections for bulk and oversized items as well as collection service for special events held on County properties.
- GMU and NVCC selected the Fairfax County SWMP-CAR to provide its refuse and recycling collections service in the highly competitive Northern Virginia refuse collection market.

Description

The CAR program consists of 6/6.0 FTE positions that operate refuse and recycling collection routes weekly to the County properties served. The CAR program does not collect refuse or recycling at properties that are leased by the County and the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) are not included in the program. Refuse and recycling are mainly collected in two different types of containers collected by a truck specifically designed to move and transport the container, either dumpsters using a front-end truck or a compactor using a roll-off truck.

- **Dumpsters and Front-End Trucks** - Most properties receive collection service using dumpsters and a front-end truck to collect the waste. Staff travels to each location weekly to collect the material using the front-end truck. After emptying the container into the truck, the material is either transported to either of the County's two solid waste disposal facilities or to a recyclables processing facility.
- **Compactors and Roll-Off Trucks** - At larger properties, either refuse or recyclables are collected in a compactor. A compactor is a waste collection device that is typically sized at 20 cubic yards or larger with a motorized compactor blade that can compact the load to allow more waste to be placed into the compactor. Collection is accomplished using a roll-off truck that has a bed that can be raised to deliver or remove a compactor. Full containers are pulled onto the truck and transported to either of the solid waste disposal facilities or to a recyclables processing facility.
- **Interior Containers** – In addition to providing exterior containers for waste and recyclables collection, CAR customers are also provided with containers to be used in the interiors of buildings for the collection of recyclables. Examples of those containers include the white cardboard boxes for the collection of paper, the small blue containers with white swinging handles for the collection of recyclables in individual work spaces, and the bottle and can containers located throughout County properties. The SWMP is unaware of any privately-owned waste collection that provides containers for the collection of recyclables inside of the building.
- **Additional Services** – Container maintenance, including new signs, container painting, top replacement and welding of broken joints, is included in the cubic yard fee. Additional on-call service is also available to address refuse/recycling needs at properties under control of the County.

The CAR equipment is also used to empty containers at the eight County recycling drop-off centers and for emergency response and community cleanups.

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The CAR program is performed with 6/6.0 FTE positions.

The CAR program is financed by revenue derived from billings to County agencies based on the cubic yard capacity of the containers assigned to individual agencies. The cost per cubic yard is based on fiscal year operating requirements.

Benefits

The benefits of the CAR program includes:

- The SWMP has provided quality, on-time service to County agencies for about three decades.
- For FY 2016, the rate is \$4.62 per cubic yard. Arlington County recently (2011) completed a survey on the costs of commercial collection which ranged from \$1.13 per cubic yard to \$12.98 per cubic yard with an average rate of \$5.47. The rate charged by the County is less than the average rate for the same service provided by the private sector.
- Improved service at lower costs. The current rate is 12 percent below the average market rate for similar service as documented in a study performed by Arlington County in 2011 (average rate for commercial service from private sector - \$5.47/cubic yard as compared to \$4.84/cubic yard FY 2015 costs for CAR service).
- Provided service to County community partners GMU and NVCC as the service level and price were acceptable to both organizations which also met additional refuse and recycling requirements.
- Flexibility to address special requests for immediate response to emergency situations such as storm cleanup as well as community cleanups.
- Consistent, predictable service and costs, since staff are familiar with facilities and waste characteristics of the County.
- Provided background checks to staff to access sensitive and secure County facilities.
- Respond to requests for additional service as needed to accommodate the customer.
- Monitor services and make recommendations on collection needs and opportunities to recycle more materials, resulting in reduced costs.
- Coordinate with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue and Police Department during emergency events to provide assistance such as roadway clearing and winter weather events.

Mandates

The weekly collection of refuse and recycling is mandated under Chapter 109.1, the Fairfax County solid waste management ordinance. Authority for solid waste collection is provided under the authority of the Code of Virginia as provided below:

§ 15.2-843. Department of public utilities.

The department of public utilities, if and when established, shall be under the supervision of a director of public utilities. Such department shall be in charge of construction, operation, maintenance and administration of all public works coming under the general category of public utilities, owned, operated and controlled by any such county or district or any sanitary district of such county. Such department shall be responsible for the administration of the affairs of the sanitary districts, including but not limited to water systems, sewer systems, sewage disposal systems, garbage and any other sanitary district functions not assigned or administered by other departments or agencies.

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Trends and Challenges

Trends

- Increased demand for recycling services and education; and,
- Pricing downturns in commodities recycling markets have necessitated a heightened effort to protect the quality of paper and cardboard so that it can be sold at a profit to provide a funding source for SWMP operations.

Challenges

- Increased security concerns relating to disposal/recycling of sensitive documents and materials.
- Staffing challenges are addressed by utilization of workers from the residential collection program when needed.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
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FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$670,250	\$692,586	\$690,112
Operating Expenses	1,102,332	1,050,532	878,959
Total Expenditures	\$1,772,582	\$1,743,118	\$1,569,071
Total Revenue	\$1,695,930	\$1,790,685	\$483,160
POSITIONS			
<i>Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)</i>			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	6 / 6	6 / 6	6 / 6
Total Positions	6 / 6	6 / 6	6 / 6

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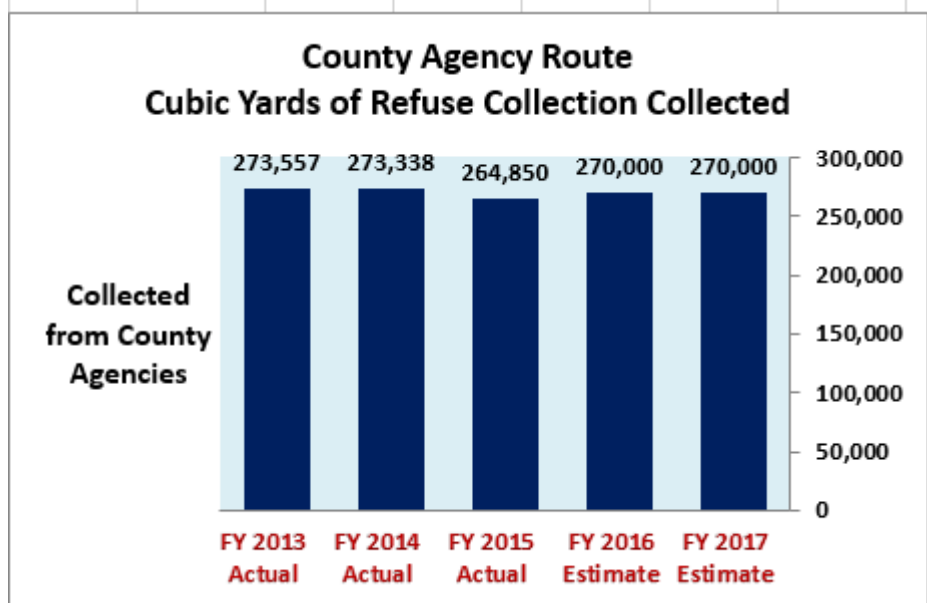
Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Cubic yards of refuse collected from County agencies	273,557	273,338	264,850	270,000	270,000
Cost of program per Cubic Yard *	\$4.58	\$4.68	\$4.84	\$4.99	\$5.09

* Improved tracking and accounting of program expenses during FY 2015 contributed to the slight increase. FY 2016 will be the first full year using more accurate costing.

County Agency Route - Cubic Yards of Refuse Collection Collected:

Refuse and recyclables collection service at County properties is expected to experience very moderate growth as the program primarily serves a relatively finite customer base composed of County Government agencies, George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College – Annandale. Fairfax County initiatives to reduce paper usage have contributed to a stabilization of square yards of solid waste and recyclables collected by the program. FY 2015 reflects a slight decline in volume. The SWMP makes provisions and plans for collection to coincide with building occupancy.



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County Agency Route - Cost per program per Cubic Yard

The cost for County agency collection routes has remained relatively steady for the past several years. The program also is highly competitive in its costs. FY 2016 will see the continuation of a pilot program to maximize the collection of high quality paper and cardboard from County agencies and selling it to recycling facilities. The revenue generated from these sales will be utilized to maintain the CAR program as the low-cost provider of trash and recycling collection services for the County.

