

City Commission/City of Great Falls staff

Re: Proposal to Increase fees for City of Great Falls sanitation services

January 21, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

I have been mulling the issue of "garbage service" in the City of Great Falls for a number of years. I have several issues with what I consider the antiquated "garbage collection" process that the City of Great Falls still uses. I have visited a number of cities, especially in the western U.S. and have some experience with sanitation services in those areas. I am also a recycler from the days when recycling wasn't cool. I developed a recycling program for the Town of Cascade in the early 80's, hauling the recycling bins/items in my vehicle to deposit them at a recycling center here in Great Falls. I also hate waste. So, it is with a huge concern that I see the City of Great Falls sanitation service operating in the fashion it does in 2020.

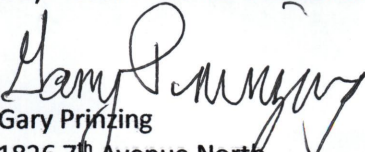
Some of you may take offense at some of my following comments. First, let me say that a nickname I have for Great Falls is the "Rip Van Winkle City". Except, while Rip Van Winkle slept 20 years, Great Falls has been sleeping for over 50 years. Why do I state that? Except for larger garbage trucks operated by one person, picking up larger garbage containers, the garbage collection process in Great Falls has changed very little since I was in high school in the mid 1960's. There are few recycling bins for the few items that could be recycled. These are mostly in the business districts of the City. Yes, there are a few recycling centers in the city that do take a few items for recycling. But, recycling is not easy in the City of Great Falls.

We all know that the consumer economy has changed. The brick and mortar stores are leaving. They are being replaced by consumer purchasing online, getting items of all size/shape/weight shipped directly to their home. Consequently, we have an abundance of boxes—many single use boxes—arriving at residences all over the city. Not only do we have boxes arriving at numerous homes, we also have Styrofoam containers/picking materials arriving with and in addition to the boxes. I am truly appalled at the "garbage" that goes into the various containers near my house. Much of what goes into the land fill could easily be recycled—if the City of Great Falls had an effective recycling program.

I am encouraging the City of Great Falls to move into the 21st century. Let's work on a concerted effort to develop a city-wide recycling program. There are many items that can be fairly easily recycled (and might actually provide some reimbursement to the City of Great Falls.)

Does recycling cost money? Yes—it does cost to recycle anything. Are the residents willing to pay more to recycle? Probably not without a concerted effort to help them understand why recycling is important. Will the majority of residents recycle? Probably not—people are lazy. People often will only do what they are required to do. So, one of the problems will be to implement a penalty for those who are not willing to recycle.

What can be recycled? That sometimes changes depending on the world demands. I suggest that Great Falls (& Montana) seek out recycling options on the local level to complete the task. What better approach to use our human resources in a productive way? Let's get the recycling ball rolling in a big way—even if we have to develop some recycling plants within the state!!

  
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