



C I T Y O F  
**RENO**  
Memorandum

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**DATE:** July 9, 2026

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Jackie Bryant, City Manager

**FROM:** Suzanne Groneman, Environmental Services Manager  
Cynthia Esparza, Director

**DEPT:** Community Engagement & Services

**SUBJECT:** Year 1 Update - Waste Management 2025 Review

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**Periodic Review vs Audit**

In accordance with the City of Reno's disposal, residential service, and commercial service franchise agreements with Waste Management (WM), staff initiated a comprehensive periodic review in July 2025 of WM's operation and services. The review is a standard part of our agreement and presents an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness, affordability, and sustainability of the solid waste and recycling services provided to our community.

Under the franchise agreements, the City can also initiate a formal audit through a third party at its discretion and cost. The number of audits cannot exceed two (2) during the base term, and one (1) during any extension term. The base term ends in November 2029. The formal audit is expected to commence in the next 30 days.

The following table explains the status of the periodic review and is not associated with the forthcoming formal audit.

## Periodic Review Status

| Waste Management Review Process Objective                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| Ensure the services provided under this agreement are cost-effective, reliable, and reflective of community values. |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Focus Area                                                                                                          | Analysis Description                                                                                                                                                             | Status                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Fees, Rates, and Services</b>                                                                                    | Evaluate current fee structure and level of service to ensure they align with community expectations, industry standards, and cost efficiency.                                   | <p>Current Status: Ongoing.</p> <p>Overview: Staff reviewed the franchise agreements, ordinances, service levels compared to other jurisdictions, rates, and fees. Initial findings show that services are similar to those in Washoe County and Sparks, but rates were set slightly lower than in Washoe County. In parallel with the review, staff is launching a pilot program to better understand the opportunities to expand animal-resistant cart offerings and potentially reduce costs.</p>                                       |
| <b>Benchmarking with Other Jurisdictions</b>                                                                        | Rates and services comparison offered in similar cities to identify potential improvements or innovations in service delivery.                                                   | <p>Current Status: Ongoing.</p> <p>Overview: The City of Sparks approved a re-negotiated contract with Waste Management on January 26, 2026. This renegotiation brought the City of Sparks' contract in line with Reno services, particularly in the commercial sector, and added services that Reno will explore further. Those include monetary support for staff and a low-income program. Residential rates for the 96/96 service level are similar to Storey County and Sparks, and lower than Washoe County and Incline Village.</p> |
| <b>Reno Direct Calls &amp; Customer Service</b>                                                                     | Data from Reno Direct will be reviewed to identify trends in customer service issues, such as missed pickups or service disruptions, and evaluate how issues have been resolved. | <p>Current Status: Ongoing.</p> <p>Overview: High-level Reno Direct Data is included in the Quarterly Report Memo to the City Council. An in-depth analysis will be performed during the final 6 months of the review.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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| <b>Recycling Performance</b>                    | Review of recycling rates to help determine whether current programs are effective and what changes might be necessary to increase diversion from landfill. | <p>Current Status: Complete</p> <p>Overview: Recycling rates are reported annually, and the City and Waste Management are discussing programmatic enhancements. Over the last three years, recycling diversion rates in Reno have decreased. In 2023, total waste diverted in the City of Reno was 19,326.34 tons, in 2024 it decreased to 17,414.57 tons, and in 2025 it decreased further to 13,996.30 tons.</p>                                                                                                    |
| <b>Missed Pickups and Resolution Rates</b>      | An assessment of service reliability and the responsiveness of Waste Management to customer concerns.                                                       | Current Status: Not started.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Composting Survey Results</b>                | Analysis of a recent composting survey that closed to better understand community interest and the feasibility of expanding composting services.            | <p>Current Status: Complete.</p> <p>Overview: Survey responses show strong community support for composting services in the Community. Over 91% of respondents expressed interest in using compost, and more than 73% said they would consider paying for a pickup service for green and food waste, depending on the cost. The findings also point to a need for broader education. Total composted food waste tracked by the City since May 01, 2026, is 19,380lbs, with a contamination rate of less than 10%.</p> |
| <b>Review of Other Jurisdictions' Contracts</b> | Review of partner agencies to inform any potential changes or improvements to our own agreement.                                                            | <p>Current Status: Complete.</p> <p>Overview: A meeting was held on April 16, 2026, with Sparks, Reno, and Washoe County to discuss strategic alignment and necessary local amendments or refinements. Identified areas of opportunity were in composting and household hazardous waste program offerings. Staff is tracking food waste composting efforts in the commercial</p>                                                                                                                                      |

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|                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                   | sector, in partnership with Waste Management and Full Circle Compost.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>ESG<br/>(Environmental,<br/>Social, and<br/>Governance)<br/>Reporting</b> | Evaluate Waste Management's ESG data to understand their operational sustainability and alignment with Reno's environmental goals.                                | <p>Current Status: Complete.</p> <p>Overview: Waste Management ESG goals include reducing absolute Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions 42% by 2031 (science-based target), target beneficial use of 65% of captured landfill gas by 2026, increase recovery of materials by 60% to 25M tons per year by 2030, including an interim milestone of a 25% increase by 2025, and to produce Renewable Natural Gas from some landfills fuels to fuel a portion of their fleet.</p>                                                   |
| <b>Operational<br/>Interviews</b>                                            | Conduct interviews with Waste Management's operations personnel to assess field-level challenges and identify opportunities for improvement.                      | <p>Current Status: In progress</p> <p>Overview: Waste Management is assisting staff with organizing these interview opportunities.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Transfer Station<br/>Utilization</b>                                      | A focused review to understand the current underutilization of the allowance at the transfer station and explore ways to improve efficiency and community access. | <p>Current Status: In progress</p> <p>Overview: Initial findings indicate underutilization of the transfer station allowance. Staff is working with departments and Waste Management to resolve this.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Complaint<br/>Resolution<br/>Performance</b>                              | Review process and timeliness of complaint resolution to ensure responsiveness, accountability, and practices are meeting community needs.                        | <p>Current Status: Complete</p> <p>Overview: In 2025, Waste Management collected 6,269 customer satisfaction surveys. Each survey offers customers the chance to rank their service satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest level of satisfaction. In 2025, 83% of surveys were ranked with high service satisfaction (levels 8-10), 11% of surveys were ranked with neutral/medium levels of satisfaction (4-7), and only 6% of surveys were ranked with the lowest levels of satisfaction (1-3).</p> |

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| <p><b>Local Community Survey</b></p> | <p>A survey to gauge public satisfaction with existing services and inform recommendations for the future. Similar survey to previous review process.</p> | <p>Current Status: Not started.</p> <p>Will be conducted in the last 6 months of the review period.</p> |
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