

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-2
February 11, 2020
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Jorge Fors

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria
Assistant Public Works Director, Al Zamora
Senior Sustainability Analyst, Matt Anderson

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Agenda Item G-2

An update by staff on the Sustainability Management Plan.
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, G-2, update by staff on Sustainability Management Plan.
Commissioner Lago -- I mean, Vice Mayor Lago, I'm sorry.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mayor. No worries, no worries. I brought this up because as this Commission moves forward and we've been doing -- we've been making some great strides in regards to environmental stewardship and focusing and being the leaders in this community in regards to what we view as important in regards to sea level rise and sustainability. I've had the opportunity to sit down with certain people who have visited me and we've talked about our Sustainability Master Plan. And I think it's critical that we, you know, continue to visit that. You know, it's not -- on a quarterly basis or once a year, where we should have as a discussion, as the Commission, to ensure that we're on the same page with staff. We haven't had a discussion in regards to the Sustainability Master Plan in years that I'm aware of. I'm pretty sure it's potentially been years since that discussion. I know that we have goals in place. But what I would hate to see happen is, in 2025, whether this is the same Commission or it's not, that we move in a direction where we haven't re-solidified our endeavors and our goals of meeting those goals set forth of reducing our CO2 emissions. So, what I wanted Matt to do was I wanted to -- Matt to give a brief kind of synopsis of where we are, talk a little bit about additional resources, ensuring that we're heading in the right direction and also talk about what other cities are doing. Are we being aggressive enough in regards to our CO2 reduction expectations? Are we being too timid? So, just give us a quick update. Thank you.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: If I could Coral Gables TV pull up the presentation. For the record, Matt Anderson, Senior Sustainability Analyst with the City of Coral Gables. Thank you, Vice Mayor, for putting this on the agenda. And a brief update. So, our Sustainability Management Plan, we developed it in 2015. It's a 10-year plan, as the Vice Mayor alluded to, that ends in 2025. And basically, what we did is we looked at our City operations and through our consultant that we hired, RSNH, and our directors, we put together 23 projects in our...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Wait. Is there a cell phone going on somewhere?

Commissioner Mena: It's been quieted now.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Huh?

Commissioner Mena: It was quieted.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: So, our directors and our consultant, we put together 23 projects that basically looked at all of our operations and said where can we optimize and make our operations more efficient, not only from an environmental perspective, but also from a resource perspective. And the areas we focused on were energy, fleet, water, waste, land use and transportation, outreach and finance. So, as part of our plan, we set goals; reduce fuel, energy, water, and our greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent of our 2013 levels, which was at that time the best data we had available, by 2025. And not only -- as I alluded to, not only was it great from an environmental perspective, it showed economic value as well. It showed all the projects when we added them up, it showed a 24 percent return on our investment of over \$4 million, so it made economic sense as well. Within that plan also, as a lot of cities do around the country, we also have our greenhouse gas emissions inventory. One we did in 2013, which was our baseline, and one we recently did with our 2017 update, which I'll talk about. So, these are the 23 projects that we identified within the Sustainability Management Plan, anything from increasing our recycling to our vulnerability assessment to garage LED lighting, obviously, and improving building energy efficiency and the list goes on and on, our electric vehicles, our flow and flush fixtures in our facilities, training our employees to make sure that we're all -- you know, everyone's aware of all the sustainability we're doing, and also, them being able to bring us ideas as well within their own operations. And increasing trolley ridership -- so you can see the list goes on and on there. And I know you guys have seen these come up. So where are we at right now? With our electricity use, we're down about 10 percent from 2013. And that's pretty much the same square footage. The City owns and operates about 1.2 million square feet. And we've been looking at that and basically you guys have seen some of the actions we've been doing. At Public Works, we've converted our entire facility over to LED lighting, installed motion sensors. I know in many of your offices you

have that as well. And we're continuing to move forward. In our garages, we've been converting over to LED lighting as well with the projects. And any new lighting that goes in in the City, we're ensuring is LED and using a lot less energy and less maintenance as well, which is key for our facilities staff. Something else we've been doing too through the revolving fund that you guys have is upgrading our HVACs. We've upgraded a number of the HVACs throughout the City, which is a huge energy consumer, especially during the summertime. So, we've been putting in high efficiency AC units on all of our facilities, which have been showing great returns. Also, too, making sure that we're ensuring -- we're buying -- and working with our IT Department, we're making sure that when we're buying equipment, it's Energy Star certified and making sure that it's energy efficient. And then also, just timing on our exterior lighting, and also what we're doing with the street lights on converting them to LED. So, we're down again about 10 percent from our 2013 levels. So, again, using our resources much more efficiently and reducing our energy consumption. Building water consumption. We've been doing amazing at this. We're down 34 percent since 2013, and that's basically just installing low-flow faucets and toilets within our facilities. So, just the impact you can have on that and really helping promote that within the community as well and having our residents look at doing the same thing because you could see huge savings within that. Irrigation. Irrigation tells a little bit of a different story. We are up 23 percent since 2013, but I'll tell you why. We've added a lot of green space within the City, which is obviously a great benefit to our city. When we add green space, we need to irrigate that green space. So, we've added over 20 irrigation accounts since 2013 onto that, so that's one of the reasons why we've seen our irrigation numbers increase. But I'll tell you -- and this has really come from staff and I give all credit to our directors and our staff that have really looked into this and really taken pride in what they're working on -- is we've had employees that have been working in our irrigation that basically said, hey, there's these technologies out there. And we approached Miami-Dade County and said, hey -- Water and Sewer and said can we install these smart meters? And the County came in and did that on all 220 of our irrigation accounts at no charge to the City. We estimated that was almost a half a million dollar benefit to the City that the County -- so just leveraging those partnerships we have with the County to be able to come in because they want to see water savings as much as we do, and being able to leverage those resources. And something

else we're also doing is really looking to utilize technology to our advantage. We just went through Procurement where we're going to be installing these soil sensors at the Youth Center in the field that basically measures soil -- moisture content in the soil. So, we're making sure that we're optimizing our water and irrigation to the best of our ability and being able to read that. So, really being on the cutting edge on this and really reducing our irrigation consumption, which when we -- now that we've had these installed and this just -- the 220 irrigation accounts just got finished up about a month ago. We're anticipating seeing huge savings in that coming up. So, overall our water consumption is up about seven and a half percent since 2013. Again, mainly because of the irrigation -- on the irrigation side. Fuel consumption. So, we're up about 10 and a half percent. Now, we've taken a lot of actions when it comes to our fuel consumption. You guys know about our electric vehicle fleet, and really, and what Steve and our Fleet Director's been doing on right-typing our fleet and making sure we're buying and utilizing vehicles that are appropriate and fuel efficient for the type of work that they're doing. But we actually recently met with Chief Hudak to discuss the fuel consumption because what we noticed is the largest fuel consumer is obviously our police department, and that's something that we want to work on. And we're actually looking into doing hybrid vehicles now that have just come out and seeing what -- where we can leverage that because, you know, we could look at electric vehicles but the technology really isn't there yet on the police vehicle side. Obviously, they need to be safe vehicles, but that's something that we're looking at now. And also, with the trolleys, we're looking at electric trolleys and working with our manufacturer on that as well.

Vice Mayor Lago: We had a discussion about that. I think it was probably about six months ago. I think it was at the budget hearing. And I think we've talked about it. That a few years away.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: That technology.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: We've been working...

Vice Mayor Lago: It's a shame because I think that that will be -- we would be...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah. So we've been working with...

Vice Mayor Lago: Perfect for it.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Hometown Trolley, who's been -- who manufacturers the trolleys for the City. And they are -- I believe it's -- they're still working on that technology and they're getting ready to set it to testing. And obviously, we want to make sure that technology is true and tested before we're able to...

Vice Mayor Lago: Hey, maybe we could be one of those...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: And that's what...

Vice Mayor Lago: Entities that would be -- we'd volunteer to test it in our city.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: And that's something that...

Vice Mayor Lago: I'd love to see that.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: That's something that Kevin and I have been aggressive on with Hometown Trolley saying we would love to be able to do that and be a pilot city to be able to test that and make sure...

Vice Mayor Lago: Don't...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: That it fits.

Vice Mayor Lago: Because don't forget, we're going to be applying now the TPO for the demonstration projects for Saturday and Sunday trolley service...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Which is a two-year demonstration project which is going to save the City tons of money...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: And obviously offer our downtown those means...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Of transportation.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: And part of some of the goals that we've set within the different projects -- you saw the increased trolley ridership -- part of that was weekend service and increasing our trolley ridership to over 2 million riders a year, which is obviously a goal of us to be able to have. Next slide. So, just to put it in perspective for where we are, greenhouse gas emissions, inventory wise. So, on our 2013 -- and really to focus in on this, our biggest consumer within our City operations is obviously our buildings and facilities. And you could see the transition from 2013 to 2017, and we're down about 9 percent, due to our decrease in electricity consumption. You can see our second biggest consumer is our vehicle fleet, which I already alluded to. And then also the efficiency we're seeing in our streetlights as well. Since we've started converting over our streetlights, you start seeing the reduction in energy consumption from that. And we're continuing to be aggressive and work toward that on converting all the streetlights to LED. From a community perspective. So, we're not only looking at our City operations. We

could do everything that we want to be able to do within the City, but we also want to work with our business community and our residents on reducing their energy consumption and help save them money as well. So, we've looked at our biggest consumer -- and we talked about this at the last Commission -- is really on the side of transportation. And that's something we've been trying to focus on and providing more alternative transportation options for people and really trying to reduce that. And that's not only a challenge within Coral Gables, but that's also a challenge along -- across the country where transportation is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions. And then you could see the impact that we're having, the reduction, even on the commercial energy side, we see our businesses that are investing in more energy efficient technology. A really common building practice now in a lot of the big projects we have going up in the City is that we're seeing a slight decrease in energy consumption. And we're going to continue to do this with different projects we have in play and working with the business and residential community. So, this graph just shows if we did nothing since 2013 where we'd be and kind of on the trend. So, obviously, we're down -- as you see on these slides -- we're down 6 percent greenhouse gas emissions wise from 2013 to 2017; and on community wide, we're down 8 percent, so we're about halfway to our goal, halfway through our plan. And we're going to continue to be more aggressive in that. And the goal isn't just to get to the 20 percent. We want to surpass that. So, we are on the downward trend as far as our greenhouse gas emissions inventory goes. So, budget wise, what have you guys allocated? So, really a lot of our funding comes through our optimized energy and water efficiency that we use to upgrade our facilities. We have about 388,000 in that account right now, which we're using -- and I'll talk about it in a minute what we're kind of allocating that for. And then we have our City-owned streetlight conversion. You see the budget that's in there now. The recycling containers in parks and right-of-way, which we're working toward now, and then also the water quality study. Kind of -- sustainability falls in so many different buckets that we kind of -- obviously, working with all of the City departments on reaching our goals. And then our additional funding mechanisms, obviously, our motor vehicle replacement program that you guys have funded that we use to fund our EV program in addition to all the vehicle replacements, and then our transportation and right-of-way projects that are incredibly important when we talk about traffic calming and so on and so forth. Some of the estimates we've received and we're

working with our electrical contractor that we have on the City contract and really looking at now that we've done Public Works, we want to move into the other facilities, including City Hall, our Youth Center, so you can see the cost that they gave us for that. And then, also, our Fire Station 3, which we want to convert completely over to LED. So, kind of that low-hanging fruit that has that really quick return on investment to be able to see big impacts on that. And then one thing we are waiting for...

Vice Mayor Lago: Also -- Matt, if I may interrupt.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Go ahead.

Vice Mayor Lago: Also, when we take off our Public Safety Building, when that goes offline and then we swap it over to our new...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: Public Safety Building, you're going to see a significant increase.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yes. And that's something that in that 10 percent reduction, I think we're going to see a big jump, a big decrease in that because the reality is we have not -- like we don't want to do major upgrades at the current Public Safety Building because it's obviously going to be coming offline and transitioning over to the LEED silver. That's going to be our crown jewel when it comes to green construction in the City. And we're going to see very, you know, energy efficient, water efficient...

Vice Mayor Lago: We're going to see a significant...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Reduction in our cost for energy. I mean, the -- those HVAC systems are probably, I mean, hundreds of thousands of dollars in excess energy spent...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Because of how inefficient and old they are.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah. And those return on investments -- I know the City Manager can talk to that, the return on investment.

City Manager Iglesias: We will just -- we will be moving out this year, so it makes no sense to put money in...

Vice Mayor Lago: No, I agree.

City Manager Iglesias: In that building.

Vice Mayor Lago: I mean, I feel bad for the employees and the employees have stuck it through and they've made the commitment, but they're going to reap the benefits of it...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: In the new facility.

City Manager Iglesias: Yeah, at the end of this year...

Vice Mayor Lago: And I just hate to...

City Manager Iglesias: It'll be...

Vice Mayor Lago: We spent some money on it, refurbishing it a few years ago and I don't think it made much of a difference...

City Manager Iglesias: No.

Vice Mayor Lago: To be honest with you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead, Matt, yeah.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: And our -- right now, just to add on to your point, our Public Safety Building for electricity consumption is about 22 percent of our total citywide electricity use.

Vice Mayor Lago: That's going to be a big...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: So, yeah, so we're going to see significant savings on that. Next slide. Last two slides. I know there's a lot here, but it's basically just summarizing a lot of the stuff we have. I mean, green space, we put a high priority of that in the City. We have over 295 acres of parks. Our tree canopy, over 39,000 trees. And really something I really wanted to point out too, through our TreeKeeper software that we have, we measure those economic and environmental benefits of our tree canopy. And that's at a value of over \$3.2 million, whether it be from energy savings, water savings, CO2 sequestration, a bunch of things that we can measure into that. So, we are actively measuring that and being able to tell those benefits up close and personal. So, on the energy efficiency, obviously -- the PACE program that we were one of the original cities in South Florida in 2012 to sign onto -- that gives our residents an avenue to be able to finance, whether it be solar energy or any energy efficiency upgrades. I believe the Vice Mayor took advantage of that program.

Vice Mayor Lago: I took advantage of it. It worked well. I ended up paying it off early...

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Because I -- when I got my electric car, I mean the savings were so much that I kept continued to pay into a bank account. And then, after three and a half years of having it on my house, I ended up paying the solar. But I continue to serve on the PACE board, as its growing.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: I mean, incredibly. People are taking advantage of that financing strategy.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Yeah, and this number is a little outdated, but we've had over 200 projects done at a value of over \$7 million just in the City of Coral Gables. So, a lot of people taking advantage of that, which is a great thing to have. Obviously, waiving City permit fees. We talked about the green construction and what we're working on on that. And then really being at the forefront of electric vehicle adoption for governments I think has been -- really been key for us and sharing our best practices with other cities. We've had a lot of cities reaching out to us to see how we've been able to implement, what our payback has been, the savings on maintenance, what we've done in our Zoning Code. We've been sharing with a lot of cities, so really being at the forefront of that, obviously, and trans...

Vice Mayor Lago: If I could just add onto that -- I'm sorry to interrupt you.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Go ahead.

Vice Mayor Lago: Because this is something that you and I, when we go and speak, for example, at the League of Cities or in other entities that ask us to come and speak about sustainability and environmental stewardship, they're caught off guard by the efforts of the City and the residents

and the employees that have, you know, implemented this type of plan. Like they can't believe the fact that the City of Coral Gables has the largest fully electric car fleet of any city, not only in South Florida but throughout the state. So, we're receiving a lot of accolades for our commitment to the environment.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: Definitely. And that's in all due credit to you guys as a Commission and also our City departments that are taking the lead on that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead, Matt. Let's wrap it up.

Senior Sustainability Analyst Anderson: And then, just the last thing I really want to touch on with regards to sustainability is really the green business certification program, which you've seen us bring businesses before you guys that have really been leaders in our community. We're getting ready to certify UM; that'll be coming up. We certified the entire UM campus and all the impressive work they're doing. And last, but certainly not least, is resiliency. And that's something we always talk about with sustainability and everything we're working on and make sure that we as a city are not only ready for future impacts that we may see from whether it be sea level rise or climate change, but also the next hurricane and the next storm and making sure we're resilient for that. And you guys know a lot of the things we're working on here with regards to our legal paper that our Attorney's Office are worked on. That has been an incredible resource not only for us as a city, but other cities. We've shared that with a number of cities around the country, not just in South Florida. Our vulnerability assessment. And basically, the last thing I wanted to touch on was our sea level rise mitigation fund. And really, forward thinking that you guys have had as a Commission in saying, look, we need to start setting aside money now for future impacts that we're going to see. We were the first in South Florida to do that, and we have other cities now that are following kind of in our footsteps to be able to set aside money now in addition to the money that we're already allocating to do storm water improvements and sanitary sewer improvements. So, I think -- you know, the Vice Mayor, you asked what resources do we need to continue doing that? I would ask continue funding and making a priority these projects that you guys see that we're

doing for energy efficiency, water efficiency, our sea level rise mitigation fund. And when we go into the legislative sessions, continue making sustainability a topic when it comes to our legislative priorities.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Matt. Thank you very much. Great presentation.

Vice Mayor Lago: Great presentation.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Maria Cruz, you wanted to speak again.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, Matt. I appreciate it. Good presentation.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Matt. Very good presentation. Maria, be brief, please.

Vice Mayor Lago: Make sure you tell the rest of your team, by the way, before I forget, that they do a great job always.

Maria Cruz: We keep talking about -- no, I lost it. I still see paper getting wet because we don't have covered containers for recyclables. I still see cardboard on the side of the street. I've been told by many people that, you know, once the paper gets wet, it cannot be recyclable. So, are we recycling or are we not recycling? If we really mean what we say, we need to find a way to protect the newspaper and the cardboard from getting wet, and we don't have any way to do it except putting it out right before they pick it up and not everybody can do that. And the cardboard on the street is -- I mean, this morning Miller had cardboard all over the place. So, you all need to decide on that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Maria.

Vice Mayor Lago: Ed...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Vice Mayor Lago: Can we get -- can we address that point because...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, but let's...

Vice Mayor Lago: But I think this is important, Mayor, because again...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, go ahead. Let's...

Vice Mayor Lago: This is a piece of legislation that this Commission passed that I sponsored that I think is important. And the whole purpose of it is not only to be sustainable but also to reduce the amount of waste that's going into the landfill, which is costing the City hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars. So, it's a dual purpose here. And I want to be very clear that if -- again, it goes back to what I mentioned about 25 miles an hour. If it's not working, we remove it. I don't want to have City staff wasting resources on legislation that doesn't work.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Understood, Vice Mayor. In the interest of brevity, I'll just introduce Al Zamora, who is our expert...

Vice Mayor Lago: You could take as much time as you want. It's 11:30. We're doing the people's work here. So...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: As much time as you need. There's no hurry.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Al.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Al Zamora, Assistant Director, Public Works. To address one of the problems, in the procurement process right now, we do have a containers coming out. It's out for bid. It's going to be a 22-gallon container with a top on it. It's going to be a bin. It's not going to be a cart. I strongly feel that if we go to carts, we're going to increase what we don't want to increase, which is our -- the bad stuff that's going in there. So...

Vice Mayor Lago: Contamination

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Contamination.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: As far as the cardboard, we start fining March 1st. If people are still not breaking down the cardboard and still putting it in their pit, they're going to be fined.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I want to make a mention here, okay, and I know that this is a very touchy subject about fining.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Sure.

Vice Mayor Lago: About fining, okay. What we do as a City -- and it's something that I think even Commissioner Fors voted against at one point when he had just gotten on the Commission. We get these pass-throughs from the County.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Correct.

Vice Mayor Lago: These increases. And I think he voted against and I -- actually, I wish I would have voted against it too.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Okay.

Vice Mayor Lago: That was a smart move and it was the right thing to do. There's going to come a point where the County's just going to continue to raise and raise and raise and it's going to get more aggressive because...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: And we're talking about the tipping fees for...

Vice Mayor Lago: No, no, I...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Our solid waste.

Vice Mayor Lago: I agree 110 percent.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Okay.

Vice Mayor Lago: But it's going to continue to go up because solid waste fees are going up and up and up and up and up. They're not going to stop going up. And re -- and actually, as a matter of fact, recycling is heading in the opposite direction.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Recycling is heading in the opposite direction.

Vice Mayor Lago: For certain recyclables. So, I don't want to fight anybody, but at the end of the day, we need to be very careful because if we're paying for all these -- for all this cardboard that can be recycled and all it takes is just some simple discipline and -- you know, we need to start educating people to make sure that they understand that this is a -- if you want to see your tipping

fees go up in the future, then let's not cooperate and let's just keep throwing cardboard into the pits. Or we could take that additional moment and put it next to your recycling bin and our great employees will take it away and we'll recycle it.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Correct.

Vice Mayor Lago: And we'll slow down the process of increasing the tipping fees. We don't want to increase the tipping fees.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Of course not, but I mean, as you know, solid waste, there's...

Vice Mayor Lago: Something's got to give, something's got to give.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: There's two major components; your labor and your disposal.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: That's 80 percent of your costs and what I do, so...

Vice Mayor Lago: But I mean, you do agree with me on the fact that something's got to give.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Of course.

Vice Mayor Lago: Either we find...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Something's got to give.

Vice Mayor Lago: Either we find a way to reduce the amount of garbage that's going to the plant or to the -- excuse me, the...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Right now, it's going to Covanta...

Vice Mayor Lago: To the Covanta...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Waste to energy plant.

Vice Mayor Lago: To where it gets vaporized, excuse me.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Correct.

Vice Mayor Lago: Or we, as a City, can implement a little bit more discipline and we can ensure the fact that we divert it from the waste stream...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Correct.

Vice Mayor Lago: And we can try to manage that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Imposing discipline on our city means imposing further restrictions on our residents. Some of our residents are older and it would be, I think, difficult and extremely unpopular and unenforceable to impose certain requirements on people who are in their 70s, 80s and 90s. We also have to keep that in mind. We don't have a perfect city. We have city -- a city with residents, with elderly residents, and we have to keep that in mind.

Vice Mayor Lago: If I may...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Very much in mind.

Vice Mayor Lago: If I may respond.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, you will respond, but...

Vice Mayor Lago: In regards...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Be careful with that.

Vice Mayor Lago: In regards -- and I agree with you. And I think when you say be careful about that, I think staff is being incredibly careful.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: We are.

Vice Mayor Lago: There's a process where if someone is unable to recycle the cardboard...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Break down the cardboard.

Vice Mayor Lago: Break down the cardboard. They have to fill out a simple form.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Sure.

Vice Mayor Lago: And we, as the City, take care of it for them.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Of course, we do.

Vice Mayor Lago: We're understanding; we're very flexible. That's what makes the City so special. We're being thoughtful when it comes to people who are disabled, who are elderly, and I understand that completely. That's the last thing we, as a Commission, want to do.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: And right now, just to voice your concern that we have -- or at least 15 residents have gone through the process. What we do is, on their container bin, we mark it so our guys know that if it's unflattened, they'll take it anyway. We've taken those precautions.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: I think we need to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: I think -- two things. We need to -- and I'm sure you've done some of this, but whatever we can do to educate people on why this is happening, so whatever educational material we have out there -- I've seen -- I remember seeing some of the...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: We...

Commissioner Mena: Flyers you had...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: We've been at it...

Commissioner Mena: Early on.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: We've been at it for a year.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: We have all sorts of videos. We have all sorts of...

Commissioner Mena: Door hangers.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Door hangers, advertising. I've got Mike Kattou, which is my inspector, out there handing out flyers. And this is something that we've done for the prior year to get ready for the March 1st deadline...

Vice Mayor Lago: And by the way...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: If you will.

Vice Mayor Lago: Just -- and I want to put this out there. Other cities are incorporating this and also considering it because it's -- again, the cost is going up.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: It is.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah. The second point I was going to make, the -- you referenced that we're proceeding with bids on a certain type of recycling container.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Correct. It will have lids. The problem that I haven't been able to find is a lid that's attached to the actual bin. So, that might create...

City Manager Iglesias: Well, I think -- let me just say because we have issues concerning that because we have to keep our recycling rate contaminant -- the contamination rate to under 10 percent; if not, it won't be recycling. So, the minute that we go to large containers, such as other

cities, their recycling contamination goes up to 40, 50 percent. At that point, it costs us money, and it's not truly recyclable.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: So, the reason that we're going to go with larger containers still open is so...

Commissioner Mena: Wait, so is it still open or not? I'm confused...

City Manager Iglesias: It's going to be still open. It's going to be still open.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Still open bin. Right now, currently, we have a 14-gallon bin with no top. We're going to a 22-gallon bin with a top.

City Manager Iglesias: But that...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: The cart, a little...

Commissioner Mena: I'm sorry. I might be losing my mind, but I think I'm hearing two things.

City Manager Iglesias: Well, we are...

Commissioner Mena: You're saying it is going to have a top, and you're saying it's not going to have...

City Manager Iglesias: We -- it's going to be something where it can remain open, okay, because we can't -- we cannot close it. We're working this out. And I -- and -- okay. But what I want to make sure is that whatever -- what we work out is not something that's going to cause our

contamination rate to go above 10 percent. If not, we're resolving nothing. So, we're trying to find something closed, but the ideal container is still something that we're actually working on. We have to maintain it under 10 percent.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: If...

Commissioner Mena: I...

City Manager Iglesias: We don't, it doesn't work.

Commissioner Mena: I mean, I just -- look, I appreciate there's a lot of factors at play. I mean, it's been, God, has it been...

Vice Mayor Lago: Years.

Commissioner Mena: A year and a half?

Vice Mayor Lago: It's already in the budget. It's been in the budget for years.

Commissioner Mena: No, no, but I'm saying -- I'm talking about it's been about a year, probably a year and a half since we had a meeting across the street, (INAUDIBLE), with actual different types of containers. And here we are, and we still don't have an answer. And so, I recognize that it's because there's no perfect answer, but at some point, we're going to have to...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: I did get a chance...

Commissioner Mena: Make a decision about it.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: To see that presentation.

Commissioner Mena: That was before you were here.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: That was prior. The issue is now that the cart that was presented is now an issue because of the contamination. So, we're trying to find...

Commissioner Mena: There were eight different options that day maybe. I don't -- you remember this, Ed? There was a variety. I don't remember how many there were, but there was more than one.

Vice Mayor Lago: As a matter of fact, I'm testing one of those. I've been testing one of those at my house for a year.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Commissioner Mena: But let's get to the bottom of that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Anything else?

Commissioner Mena: And I think the expectation -- I mean, I don't -- my expectation was that it was going to be some sort of covered container because otherwise, I'm not really sure what the effectiveness of the change is going to be. I mean, unless I'm missing something.

Commissioner Keon: I think the issue is whether the container is -- the top is part of the bin or if the top is like separate from the bin and you can put them on. So, I think that's what that -- that's what the issue is. If it's part of the bin, so it always remains closed, people tend to throw more

stuff in them. So, I think what they're trying to find is that bin that is -- that has a top that is not part of the bin, that can be placed on it when it's put outside to protect it from the elements.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: So, I'm not an expert, like Mr. Zamora, but I can tell you that one of the concerns is that the problem is ambitious recycling. If you have a very large container, you're going to want to recycle everything in your house.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Yeah.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: And that's what really increases the contamination rate. And so, whether it's covered or not, you have to be mindful that if you have a large container that's covered, you're going to have that ambitious recycling and contamination's going to go up. But if you have a container that is the right size with a cover, we are looking at the possibility that contamination will stay within the acceptable levels.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much, Ed. And thank you, sir.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, gentlemen.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.