



City of Norman

March 1, 2011 Special Election Sanitation Rate Increase

Sanitation Division

- **Collects and recycles over 9,000 tons of yard waste per year, keeping materials out of the landfill and providing free mulch to Norman residents**
- **Provides service to more than 37,000 customers over a 200 square mile area**
- **Receives no sales tax dollars**
- **Collects and disposes of 90,000 tons of garbage each year**

Charter Amendments

- **Allows approximately \$642,000 of park land fees to be used for park improvements at neighborhood parks or community parks**
- **Improving parks is a high priority goal of the Parks Master Plan**
- **Improving parks is consistent with the 2009 Citizens' Survey**
- **Aligns candidate qualifications with state law**
- **Updates the Charter to reflect the current name of Norman Regional Health System**
- **Clarifies administration**
- **Clarifies that the City does not insure NRHS' financial obligations**

On Tuesday, March 1st, the citizens of Norman will be asked to vote on an increase in the sanitation rate. The proposed sanitation rate increase is for \$2.50 per month or about 58 cents per week. The last rate increase for the Sanitation Division was in July, 2004.

The primary factors driving the sanitation rate increase are increases in diesel fuel, landfill fees, trucks, health insurance, labor, equipment and repairs. The Sanitation Division continually searches for ways to be more efficient and economical. Since the 2004 rate increase, the total number of sanitation customers has increased by over 14% making the number of customers served by each sanitation employee the highest it has ever been. In addition, while adding customers, last years' fuel consumption was lower than the total fuel consumption two years ago which is one example of the Sanitation Division's efforts to diligently work toward increasing productivity and efficiency.



Sanitation Division employees picking up yard waste.

The Sanitation Division is an important component of keeping Norman a beautiful and vibrant city. The division services over 37,000 customers that cover the almost 200 square miles of Norman and collects and disposes over 90,000 tons of trash each year. Over 9,000 tons of yard waste is recycled per year into mulch for Norman residents and the recycling drop off centers collect over 2,100 tons of materials that are kept out of the landfill.

Charter Amendments

A city Charter is a unique document that acts like a constitution for the city adopting it. It can only be amended by a majority vote of the city's voters.

On Tuesday, March 1st, the citizens of Norman will be asked to vote on proposed Charter amendments. One will modify the way in which park land fees may be spent. Since 1976, the City Charter has required all residential development to provide either land for a neighborhood park or a fee-in-lieu of land which is to be used to buy park land in that area.



Neighborhood parks could be expanded and improved with Charter Amendment passage.

There are a number of areas where fees have been collected that do not have suitable land available to purchase. Currently, the City Charter limits the use of park land funds and accrued interest that were collected between 1976 and 1994 to the purchase of land only. This Charter amendment will expand the use of these funds to allow capital improvements to existing parks near the developments that generated the funds.

The other Charter amendments clean up existing language in the Charter. One amendment reduces voter registration requirements for Mayoral and Council candidates from one year to six months in order to mirror state law. The other amendment updates the Charter to reflect the current name of Norman Regional Health System and deletes language which implies the City administers the NRHS or appropriates funds to NRHS.

2011 SANITATION RATE INCREASE AND CHARTER AMENDMENT ELECTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When is the election? Tuesday, March 1, 2011. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

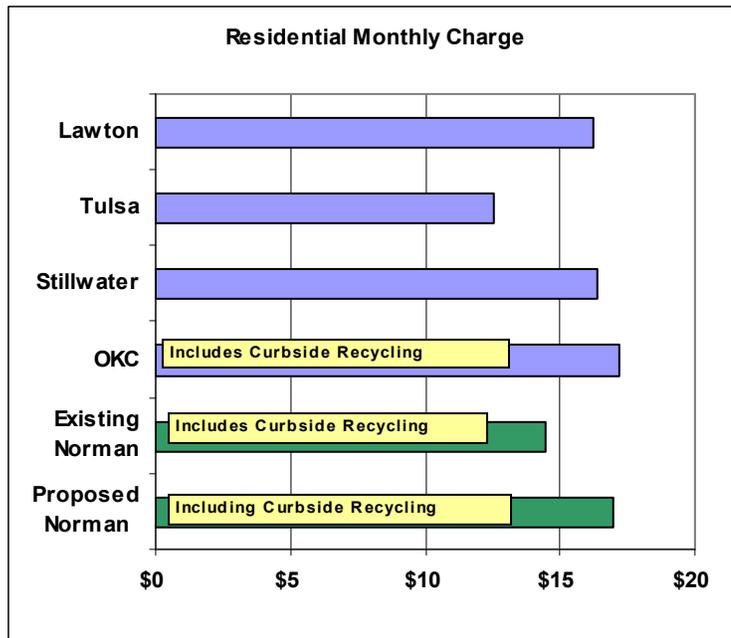
What are the early voting dates? If you are a registered voter in Norman, you can vote at the Cleveland County Election Board from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Friday, February 25th and Monday, February 28th prior to the election. The Cleveland County Election Board is located at 641 E. Robinson St., Suite 200. Absentee ballot applications can be obtained by contacting the Cleveland County Election Board by phone at (405) 366-0209 during business hours or downloading the form from their website at www.clevelandcountyelectionboard.com.

Do residents vote for both the rate increase and the Charter amendments with one vote? No. The customers will get to vote on the sanitation rate increase separately from the Charter amendments. Norman's Charter requires a vote of the public to be able to change utility rates.

Does the Sanitation Division receive local tax dollars to support its operations? No. Money from local taxes or the City's general fund do not benefit any of the City's utility enterprise funds. This Division provides services to their customers for a fee that makes them self supporting.

When was the last time the rates changed for the Sanitation Division? The Sanitation Division's last solid waste rate change was approved in 2004. In 2008, residents voted to introduce a new curbside recycling program for urban customers at an additional charge of \$3 per month.

How do Norman's sanitation rates compare with other cities? Norman's sanitation rate, *including the proposed increase*, is compared to other cities in the chart below.



The table shown above illustrates Norman's sanitation rate, *adjusted to include the proposed monthly rate increase*, is less than Oklahoma City's rate and Norman remains one of the few cities that offers curbside recycling. Additionally, the proposed rate would be comparable to both Lawton and Stillwater, neither of which provide curbside recycling. Customers in parts of Tulsa and Oklahoma City are served by private contractors.

Why do we need a rate increase? In the Sanitation Division, the last rate increase was over six years ago. Since that time, many of the normal operating costs have increased. There have been large increases in fuel and landfill fees, and the price of replacement trucks has increased approximately 50%.

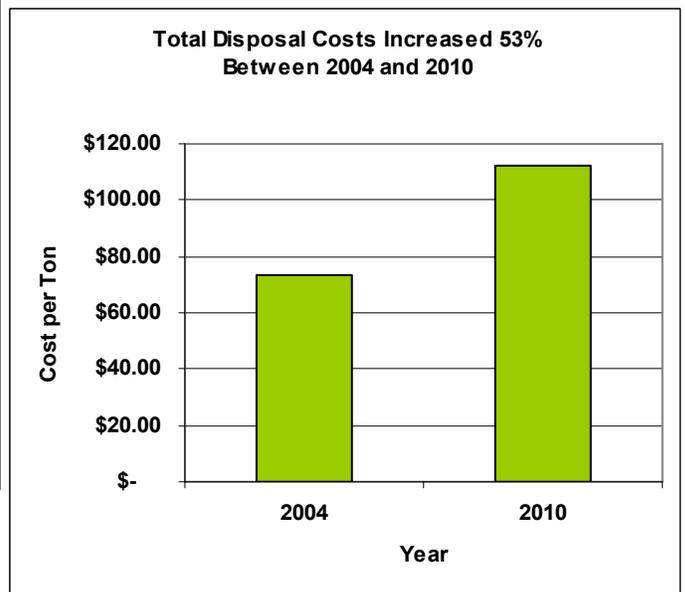
Are commercial customers receiving an increase also? Yes. Commercial customers will also have a rate increase similar to the residential customer.

What has the Sanitation Division done to keep costs down? In the Sanitation Division, while we cannot control the cost of fuel, we have made great progress in reducing our use of fuel, educating employees on driving practices, reviewing routes, 'right sizing' vehicles for the job, and most recently purchasing two Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) sanitation trucks, some of the first in the state. The CNG trucks get better gas mileage, are quieter and reduce pollution. In addition, the number of employees per customer has decreased which shows increased productivity.

Does the City have a program for customers who may not be able to pay their sanitation bill? Yes, the Sanitation Division offers utility rates at 75% of the normal rate for customers who qualify as low income households. Customers can call our Customer Service Representatives at 366-5320 to see if they qualify based on the federal guidelines.

For more information, please contact: The City of Norman Action Center by phone at 366-5396, by emailing the Action.Center@normanok.gov or Utilities Customer Service Representatives by phone at 366-5320. The City's website www.normanok.gov.

The chart below illustrates the total disposal costs per ton and the increase in these costs since 2004.



Sanitation Services Provided to Citizens

Many sanitation services are provided to customers of the City of Norman Sanitation Division. The yard waste and compost facility recycles over 9,000 tons of yard waste per year and produces mulch which is a valuable product for your yard and garden. This mulch is available to Norman residents free of charge. The Sanitation Division also participates in the annual Hazardous Household Waste Event.

This past August, a sanitation rate increase was not approved. The previous proposal was for a larger monthly increase that would occur over three years. The new request is for a lower rate and a single, one-time increase.

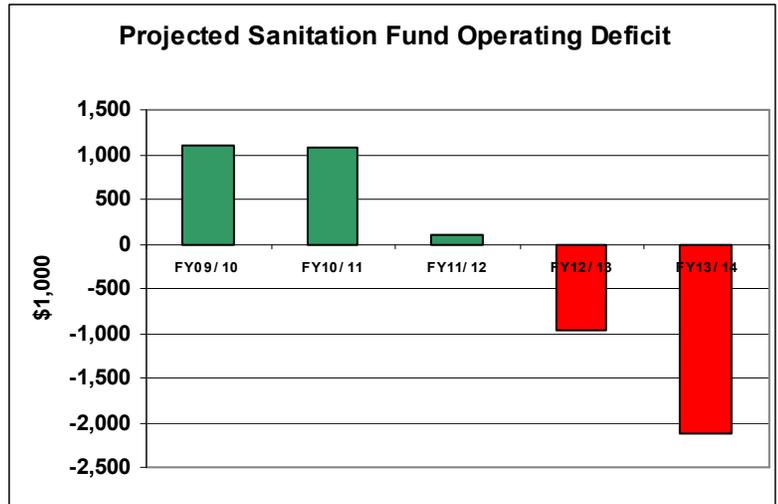
The City listened to the citizens and instituted a number of suggestions such as reducing yard waste collections during the winter. Also, to stay within our budget, Spring Cleanup for 2011 and the purchase of two trucks were cancelled. Should this second proposal for an increase fail, the Division deficit for fiscal year 2012-2013 would be approximately \$1,000,000 as is shown in the chart below. To avoid this, non-essential services such as drop off recycling centers and yard waste composting would likely be eliminated.



Above is a windrow turner aerating compost at the City of Norman Yard Waste and Compost Facility.



One of the Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Sanitation Trucks used by the City is shown above. Such vehicles reduce pollution by 60% to 80% and noise by 50% to 90%.



Charter Amendment Will Allow Park Land Fees To Improve Existing Neighborhood Parks

The park land fee Charter amendment is being proposed as a way to free up funds and accrued interest that were collected for the purpose of buying park land. Currently, park land fees collected prior to 1994 may only be used to purchase land. The proposed Charter amendment will allow park land fees that were collected prior to 1994 to be used to purchase park land or to make capital improvements such as walking trails or playgrounds to park land in the nearest neighborhood or community park. This will be consistent with a Charter amendment that was approved in 1994 allowing this same use of park land fees that were collected after that time.

If approved, this Charter amendment will allow the expenditure of approximately \$642,000 of fees and interest earnings to be used for improvements at 21 different neighborhood park sites or four community park sites throughout Norman. Improving existing neighborhood parks was determined to be a very high priority in the community during the preparation of the comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in November of 2009. It was also determined to be a high priority in the 2009 Community Survey. If this amendment is approved, City Staff will conduct neighborhood public input meetings to determine the priorities of park improvements to be made with these funds.

Improving existing neighborhood parks is a very high priority in the community.





City of Norman

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**MARCH 1ST
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AND
CHARTER AMENDMENTS**

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2011 SANITATION RATE INCREASE BALLOT LANGUAGE

PROPOSITION I

SHALL ORDINANCE NO. O-1011-37 OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AMENDING SECTION 21-111 OF CHAPTER 21 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, BY INCREASING THE RATES FOR ALL RESIDENTIAL USERS OF THE SANITATION SERVICE AN ADDITIONAL TWO DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS (\$2.50) PER MONTH WHILE MAINTAINING A TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT (25%) REDUCTION FOR LOW INCOME RESIDENTIAL USERS EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2011 AND INCREASING ALL RATES FOR COMMERCIAL USERS OF THE SANITATION SERVICE BY SEVENTEEN POINT TWO PERCENT (17.2%) EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2011, BE APPROVED?

2011 CHARTER AMENDMENTS BALLOT LANGUAGE

PROPOSITION I

SHALL SECTION 2 OF ARTICLE II OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF NORMAN RELATING TO THE TERM OF OFFICE OF CITY COUNCILMEMBERS AND THE MAYOR BE AMENDED TO REDUCE VOTER REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MAYORAL AND COUNCIL CANDIDATES FROM ONE YEAR TO SIX MONTHS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE LAW, AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN ORDINANCE NO. O-1011-31, BE APPROVED?

PROPOSITION II

SHALL SECTION 2 OF ARTICLE VIII OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF NORMAN RELATING TO THE USE OF PARK LAND FEES BE AMENDED TO ALLOW THE USE OF SAID FEES IN THE NEAREST COMMUNITY AND/OR NEIGHBORHOOD PARK IN THE ABSENCE OF SUITABLE PARK LAND SITES IN THE SUBDIVISION THAT GENERATED THE FEES, AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN ORDINANCE NO O-1011-31, BE APPROVED?

PROPOSITION III

SHALL THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS OF ARTICLE IX OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF NORMAN RELATING TO THE HOSPITAL BE AMENDED: SECTIONS 1, 2, 4 AND 5 TO REFLECT THE CURRENT HOSPITAL ENTITY NAME OF NORMAN REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM AND THE CURRENT NAME OF THE BOARD OF HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT AS THE BOARD OF NORMAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL AUTHORITY; SECTION 2 TO ELIMINATE FROM THE CHARTER A PROCESS FOR REMOVAL OF THE HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR AND TO CLARIFY THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE; SECTION 3, TO DELETE THE DUTIES OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FROM THE CHARTER THAT ARE NOW SPECIFIED BY CONTRACT BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATOR AND THE BOARD; AND SECTION 5 TO PROVIDE THE CITY COUNCIL WITH ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY WHEN REQUESTING FINANCIAL REPORTS FROM THE HOSPITAL, TO PERMIT THE CITY COUNCIL TO RECEIVE THE HOSPITAL'S YEARLY BUDGET AFTER ITS ADOPTION, TO DELETE LANGUAGE THAT IMPLIES APPROPRIATION OF CITY FUNDS TOWARD HOSPITAL OPERATIONS; AND TO RENUMBER SECTIONS 4 AND 5; ALL OF WHICH AMENDMENTS ARE MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN ORDINANCE NO. O-1011-31, BE APPROVED?