

# MARSHALLTOWN

— I O W A —

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**TO:** Mayor Greer and City Council  
**FROM:** Heather Thomas, PE – Public Works Director  
**DATE:** September 25, 2023  
**RE:** Discussion – Chapter 50 Garbage and Refuse

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**Strategic Plan:**

- Strategy 1: Expand and improve development in the community.
- Strategy 2: Enhance Marshalltown’s public image.
- Strategy 3: Continually improve and sustain the City’s infrastructure, organization, and services.
- Strategy 4: Partner with citizens, for-profit, non-profit, and others to improve quality of life.

**Plan Objective:**

Review city policies, procedures, plans, ordinances, programs, and services for updates and efficiencies

**Recommendation:**

No staff recommendation. Information provided for council discussion and direction.

**Budget Impact:**

n/a

**Description/Background:**

It was brought to the city’s attention that trash pick-up in Marshalltown was being done in conflict with our current ordinance, Chapter 50 – Garbage and Refuse. The reported discrepancy was related to one of our licensed trash haulers, Moler Sanitation, investing and utilizing an automated truck, which requires a hauler provided Toter (trash container) be placed curbside for pick-up and that communication was provided to their clients. Our ordinance requires residential garbage containers to be placed within 5-ft of the front of the residence. A discussion item was placed on the August 24, 2023 city council meeting to get direction from Council.

Mayor and Council provided the following direction to city staff:

1. A councilor member mentioned the city does not want to penalize a licensed garbage hauler who invests in automated equipment.
2. A councilor member mentioned the city does not want to put other licensed garbage haulers at a disadvantage by not allowing them to place curbside.
3. A councilor member mentioned the city does not want to allow everybody to put their garbage at the curb because we have 4-5 haulers in town and this would result in everyday driving by everybody’s trash.
4. A councilor member mentioned in favor of allowing garbage curbside when automated trucks were used. Automated pick-up is common in other communities. Eventually, other haulers may

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upgrade their equipment. They mentioned allowing containers be placed the evening before (8 PM).

5. A councilor member mentioned that we talk about cleaning up our community and allowing all kinds of garbage cans, any day at the curb does not look good.
6. The mayor mentioned that this issue came up 10 years ago to discuss consolidating number of haulers to one or a few with each having a different quadrant of town and it was very unpopular then even though garbage trucks are hard on our streets.
7. Council would like feedback from licensed garbage haulers.

Marshalltown currently has four licensed garbage haulers: Area Sanitation, LeGrand Sanitation, Moler Sanitation, and Stone Sanitation.

There were comments made at the Council meeting that currently only Moler were picking garbage up at the curb. Based on observations around town (some pictures below), other garbage haulers also have garbage containers that are being picked up and not in compliance with the location requirements of our current code. It was also noted that in one case, the same trash cans were at the curb for three weeks.



City staff reached out to all licensed carriers, received input from one over phone/email and met with the other three. A few points that were mentioned from the Haulers included:

1. A toter is a term used to describe the containers (currently for Moler either 65 or 95 gallons) that can be picked up by an automated truck.
2. Moler still provides the option for “assisted collection” for those that can not take their garbage to the curb.
3. Those that didn’t have an automated truck felt if you allow curbside pickup for one, you need to for all.
4. Staffing is a struggle for multiple garbage haulers. Some Non-automated trucks are operated with a three-person crew whereas one company is a one-man pick-up crew.
5. For situations where a garbage company has to physically dump a can, you don’t want any containers bigger than 55 gallons; however, our ordinance stating 30-gallon max could be increased.
6. They pick up recycling the same day, but it might be in a different trip on that day.
7. The time they require their customers to have garbage out by can range between 5 AM – 7:30 AM.

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8. Pick-up days for each are:
  - a. Molar – 5 days/week
  - b. Stone – 5 days/week
  - c. LeGrand – Mostly Friday, a few on Wednesday
  - d. Area – Tuesday thru Friday
9. Haulers don't believe it should be on them to enforce our ordinance.

City staff has attempted to take comments from Council, Mayor, and Garbage Haulers to find some middle ground. Attached is a possible language amendment that would provide some middle ground. It is not unanimous amongst garbage haulers; however, nothing in the proposed changes would require any licensed hauler to do anything different than they do today but provides options for some changes if certain requirements are met.

One possible option that the city mentioned to gauge willingness from Haulers was to assign the town into four or five quadrants with each having a designated pick-up day per week. This would address the seeing trash at the curb all days of the week and also make it easier to identify on a single trip if someone left their container at the curb too long. This was not desirable by the haulers; however, several were willing to provide us their service area map on a per day basis.

All haulers were invited to the council meeting for this discussion.

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