

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Nov. 14, 2023**

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## **Oxnard Announces Community Meeting Dates for Customers to Learn About City's Environmental Resources Services, Operational Costs, and Rate Adjustments**

OXNARD, Calif – The City of Oxnard is hosting a series of meetings for community members to learn more about the City's Environmental Resources (ER) Division, which protects public health and the environment by safely and efficiently disposing of trash and recyclables, and ensures compliance with local, State and federal laws relating to trash disposal and recycling.

Oxnard's ER services include collecting, sorting, processing, and disposing of waste six days a week for 34,154 residential properties and 16,378 commercial customers, which includes apartment buildings. The division handles approximately 294,938 tons of waste annually and recycles approximately 12,918 tons of material and 14,177 tons of organics, which includes green waste and food scraps. Combined, this weight is almost as heavy as the Empire State building.

The City's ER Division is an enterprise fund, which is self-supporting through the rates its customers pay for its services. The funds from ratepayers are invested into ER's operations, supplies, maintenance, repairs, infrastructure, and its long-term capital improvement program (CIP) projects.

It is a common industry-standard to perform comprehensive utility rate studies every three to five years. The last time the City approved a cost of service study for ER was in May 2012, with a rate increase effective January 2013. Over the past decade, when also accounting for the removal of the City's Infrastructure Use Fee (IUF) in 2021, Oxnard's residential rate (96-gallons) has gone from \$30.15 to \$30.78 per month and the most popular commercial rate (4-yard/once per week) has gone from \$224.81 to \$230.86 per month. This represents a 2.1% residential increase and a 2.7% commercial increase over 10 years. Over that same decade, the consumer price index has increased by 33.9%.

In 2022, the City hired Raftelis Inc., a consulting firm with expertise in utility rate studies in California and across the country, to perform a cost of service study for the ER Division. Their scope of work includes developing long-range financial plans for waste services and assisting with the California Proposition 218 process and public hearing for rate adoption.

An initial draft of the Fiscal Year 2023-24 cost of service study shows the ER division expenditures are anticipated to materially outpace revenues, resulting in a negative ending cash balance no later than Fiscal Year 2024-25. The combination of minimal rate increases, unfunded State mandates, elevated inflation, and the need for significant capital investment to replace and rehabilitate assets is expected to result in a growing structural deficit.

As part of the preliminary ER cost of service study process, City staff and Raftelis will provide information on the operational requirements and state mandates of the solid waste collection services and solicit customer feedback on their service needs. Community feedback will help ensure the ER rates that customers pay for reach the following goals:

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1. Cover Operations and Maintenance Costs (O&M)
2. Cover Capital Investments
3. Are Legally Compliant
4. Promote Financial Viability
5. Include Community Values
6. Provide Fairness and Equity

The public is encouraged to attend one of the upcoming community meetings listed below, address the City Council during general public comment, or send questions and comments to [refuse.rates@oxnard.org](mailto:refuse.rates@oxnard.org).

<b>Oxnard Environmental Resources Cost of Service Study Meeting Schedule</b>		
<b>Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2023 Community Meeting 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.</b>	<b>Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023 City Council Meeting 6 p.m.</b>	<b>Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023 Community Meeting 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.</b>
South Oxnard Center <i>(In person meeting)</i>  200 E. Bard Rd. Oxnard, CA 93033	City Council Chambers <i>(Hybrid Meeting - In person or virtual)</i>  305 W. 3rd St. Oxnard, CA 93030	City Council Chambers <i>(Hybrid Meeting - In person or virtual)</i>  305 W. 3rd St. Oxnard, CA 93030

An additional meeting will be held in January 2024. For upcoming meeting dates and more information related to the ER Division cost of services, please visit [www.oxnard.org/refuserates](http://www.oxnard.org/refuserates).

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