

## Mayor of Souderton Dan Yocum Mayors Memo!



My New Years Resolution in 2025 is to talk trash...Municipal waste collection, that is! And that is because Souderton soon has some big decisions to make.

Did you know that many years ago, Souderton Borough collected their own trash? That was decades before stringent regulation, and so for much of our modern history Souderton residents could choose their own trash companies. In 2016, after much heated debate, Borough Council chose to adopt single-hauler trash service. The benefits of that decision were immediate. We have fewer trash trucks on the street; that's less disruption to your peace and less heavy trucks wearing-and-tearing our roads & alleys. Residents have uniform red totes (love them or hate them!) at the curb one day a week. You enjoy no-questions-asked bulk pickup every single week. One benefit you might not think about; if your neighbor is delinquent on their trash bill, the trash doesn't rot on the curb for weeks. The single-hauler gets it off the street while the Borough works with the resident for payment. And of course, if the hauler accidentally misses your pickup, you have an advocate at Souderton Borough. Trash haulers might not care about satisfying your individual household, but they do tend to care about keeping in good graces with their multi-million dollar municipal contract.

At the beginning, the competitive bidding process provided our residents with lower-than-average trash prices, at just \$60 a quarter. Some residents felt we took away their right to choose their own provider, which I can understand. But generally speaking, it was a win-win.

J.P Mascaro & Sons was awarded our first three-year single-hauler contract in 2016. We didn't quite realize what we had at the time, but they actually provided great service. When we re-bid the contract in 2018, Mascaro's bid was significantly higher and the Borough chose the lowest bidder in Advanced Disposal. We soon found out why their bid was so artificially low. Their bid price was inadequate, so in exchange for a lower cost, the service quality declined steeply. Then, as seems to be standard in the industry, Advanced was acquired by Waste Management and our service quality deteriorated even further.



In 2021, the three-year contract again expired and was re-bid. It was a "sealed bid", meaning no bidder could see the price anyone else was bidding. The two lowest bidders; Whitetail Disposal and J.P. Mascaro, had almost identical bids. The razor thin margin indicated that the bid price was as competitive as possible. However, those competitive bids were significantly higher than before as trash haulers face the same cost increases that we are all seeing, plus other disposal challenges across the industry. Borough Council again had hours of debate about what to do. While there were some cheaper introductory rates out there on the market, we concluded that eventually, when all factors were considered, the entire trash industry was headed for higher prices. With that in mind, plus all the benefits we've seen since adopting single-hauler service,

Borough Council decided to award the 2022-2025 contract to J.P Mascaro, despite the significant price increase.

You'll see another slight increase in this trash bill, as we chose to adopt an optional contract extension with JP Mascaro for two more years ending in 2026. At the end of this contract period, we will have to re-bid again. Frankly, I am afraid of the prices we might see at that time. At \$60, or even at \$125 a quarter, the benefits outweigh the expense, and residents get a better and more stable rate than if they chose their provider privately. However, if the next rounds of bids double (or more!) as we expect them to, it will be a very tough debate in the Borough whether or not to keep our single-hauler program.





Another change this year is with the Montgomery County Recycling Commission. In years past, this organization has enticed municipalities to encourage recycling by providing grant funds on a per-household basis. This year, they've changed their formula to provide grant funds based on the tonnage of recycling that the trash companies report from each municipality. Therefore, our funds hinge on the quantity of recycling that our residents produce. Recycling is obviously important for so many reasons, but this one hits us right in the pocket. So please do your duty and RECYLCE!

Trash is probably the number one complaint a hear about and see on social media. No trash hauler is perfect, but realistically we benefit from very good service by J.P Mascaro. I have advocated for single-hauler service in our community since its inception. However, consider this a fair warning that in the coming years either your costs will increase dramatically, or Souderton may see an end to the single-hauler program. Keep an eye out when we re-bid the contract. Once we know the cost, we want to hear your thoughts!



*Recycle Right! What can & cannot be recycled?*



 <p><b>Metal</b></p>	 <p><b>Paper &amp; Cardboard</b></p>	 <p><b>Glass</b></p>	 <p><b>Plastic</b></p>
<p><b>UNACCEPTABLE MATERIALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceramics</li> <li>• Dishes</li> <li>• Coffee Cups or K-cups</li> <li>• Drinking glasses</li> <li>• Glass oven ware</li> <li>• Pyrex</li> <li>• VisionWare</li> <li>• Window glass</li> <li>• Mirrors</li> <li>• Light bulbs</li> <li>• Styrofoam packaging</li> <li>• Tissues</li> <li>• Wax Paper</li> <li>• Metallic/Coated paper</li> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Toys</li> <li>• Food contaminated cardboard (i.e. pizza boxes)</li> <li>• Paper towels</li> </ul>			

**My Sincere Thanks**

*2025 marks my 10<sup>th</sup> year since first being elected to Souderton Borough Council. Serving this community is such a privilege. It is a lot of work; full of headaches and heartbreaks. But working towards a better Souderton has been my passion and I am so grateful to all of you who join together and move our community forward. We've come a long way, and there is more work to be done. I'm excited to see what 2025 has in store for us. I wish you a happy and healthy New Year!*