



To: Honorable City Council
From: John Moreno, City Manager
By: Adriana Figueroa, Public Works Director
Date: July 9, 2024

**SUBJECT: TAX ASSESSMENT OF CHARGES FOR DELINQUENT REFUSE
COLLECTION FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2023**

BACKGROUND

The City of Paramount has an exclusive franchise with Athens Services, Inc. (Athens) for refuse collection. Athens bills residential customers quarterly, in advance, for charges incurred for the collection of garbage, recyclables, green waste, and other refuse.

Paramount Municipal Code, Section 13.20.210 requires the City to assist Athens with the collection of delinquent residential invoices. This section further states that ten (10) days after City Council approval is obtained for the assessment of unpaid accounts (see attachment), the City can then submit the assessments for outstanding dues to the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office for placement upon the applicable property owner's tax bill.

DISCUSSION

The City has placed unpaid trash collection bills as assessments against properties for over 30 years. Properties are assessed only after Athens representatives have made all reasonable attempts to collect the delinquent amounts. In addition to sending the normal quarterly bills and past due notices listing any unpaid amounts, Athens notified the affected property owners and tenants of the unpaid amounts by letter on May 29, 2024 and June 14, 2024. On June 26, 2024, the City re-notified the affected property owners that any unpaid amounts would be placed as assessments against their property and that the City Council would hold a public hearing on July 9, 2024, to discuss the assessments for delinquent trash bills. By the time these unpaid bills are presented to the City Council, both the property owner and tenants have cumulatively received six notices of the delinquent amount. In addition, on June 25, 2024, the City published a public hearing notice in the Paramount Journal.

The City occasionally receives calls from property owners expressing concerns about the assessment. Many property owners claim that their property was unoccupied during the delinquent billing period, occupied by tenants, or that they did not own the property during the period in question. The City investigates these claims and informs Athens of the need to adjust accounts when appropriate.

The list of delinquent accounts and assessments is attached to this report. As of the writing of this report, there are 272 delinquent accounts, representing \$112,767.24 for Calendar Year 2023. The list of delinquent accounts and the total of these accounts will change due to payments still being processed through July 31st. The updated list of delinquent accounts will later be submitted to the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller for processing.

FISCAL IMPACT

Each delinquent account is assessed an administrative fee of \$60 to cover fees and charges from the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office for placement in the property tax rolls. Once the lien is paid, the City receives 10%, or \$6, of the administrative fee to cover administrative expenses related to the tax lien process.

VISION, MISSION, VALUES, AND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

The City's Vision, Mission, and Values set the standard for the organization, establish priorities, uniformity and guidelines; and provide the framework for policy decision making. The Strategic Outcomes were implemented to provide a pathway to achieving the City's Vision. This item aligns with Strategic Outcome No 6: Efficient, Effective, and Fiscally Responsible - Deliver an efficient and effective City government in a fiscally responsible, transparent and collaborative manner.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Notwithstanding any testimony received during the public hearing, it is recommended that the City Council authorize the City Manager to submit the updated Calendar Year 2023 delinquent refuse collection charge list to the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller after July 31st for processing.