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Proposal would mandate recycling

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City Council is considering an ordinance that would require all residents receiving municipal refuse collection to recycle glass, plastic, paper, yard waste and other materials.

"Lakewood has been very proactive already and participation in the recycling program is very good. We're just forcing those other people to get in," said Council President Michael Dever, who introduced the ordinance. "It's a twofold benefit because it's a cost savings and it's good for the environment."

The city estimates that landfill expenditures cost taxpayers a total of \$774,902 for an estimated 46 million pounds of waste in 2007. Although the city will not earn a profit from recycled materials, there is no cost to dispose of the waste, saving the city a \$42.10 per pound dumping fee.

If the ordinance is passed,
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RECYCLING

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Residents will either be charged a fee or refuse collection will be stopped to the home until recyclables are separated from other solid waste. Minimum fees range from \$100 to \$500.

A 60-day grace period is provided to give residents time to adjust to the new procedures and a three-strike warning system similar to the

one in place for other refuse violations would apply, according to Dever.

"I foresee that this is going to be an educational process on how to put your trash out correctly," he said. "I don't see the city being punitive the first year. We'll be reaching out to people to notify them."

To that end, a book of guidelines is currently in the works to provide residents with information on how to properly dispose of waste.

The new refuse regulations would go into effect June 1,

coordinating with the start of the automated refuse collection system in May.

"It's really important that these are done together and this is an additional item in a list of what you do with your trash," said Nickie Antonio, at large councilwoman and public works committee member. "One of them happens to be not putting your recyclables in the trash."