

6 unincorporated areas to vote on single hauler trash system

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Residents in six of DuPage County's unincorporated areas will have the chance to vote on a single hauler trash system come next month's primary elections.

While most Illinois residents get their trash hauled through their municipality, 20,000 residents in several DuPage unincorporated areas currently shop around and choose their own haulers. As a result, neighborhoods often have four or five different trash days on their streets.

Some homeowners enjoy the freedom to choose, but

others have concerns about pollution, noise and road wear and tear.

County Board member Sheila Rutledge has been working toward a single hauler ordinance that would be approved through a county board vote, but has paused her efforts in anticipation of the upcoming referendums.

"I've said from the start that I don't care how it gets done; it just needs to get done. It's just kind of ridiculous, the wasted resources." Rutledge, who also serves as the county's environmental committee chair, said. "It's the right time to ask this question."

While unincorporated

Naperville, Lisle and Downers Grove have single-hauler trash collection, the six townships that don't are Wayne, Bloomingdale, Addison, Winfield, Milton and York.

In most of those areas, there are six trash haulers, Rutledge said. That means some neighborhoods have 12 trucks rumbling up and down their streets each week — as opposed to the possibility of two under a single contract. In November, Rutledge fielded survey responses from residents who live in the six unincorporated areas to get a pulse on where homeowners stand. The questionnaire asks about residents' current haulers and monthly costs, as

well as their thoughts on a single-hauler contract.

The survey results yielded a 10.5% response rate across the townships. In response to whether they favored the implementation of single-hauler collection in their township, a majority of respondents — 68.2% — said yes.

However, 46% of those respondents said they would only support the implementation if it saved them money.

Rutledge, who lives in an unincorporated area near Winfield, said her main concern is environmental impact.

"As a county leader, we're supposed to advocate for people to do the small things, as

well as the big things. I think regarding climate change, we have to do the small things right now, and I think this is one of them," she said. "We may not be seeing as much effect now, but (climate change is) going to get here, and we need to take steps now to try to reduce the effects of that."

• *Jenny Whidden is a climate change and environment writer working with the Daily Herald through a partnership with Report For America supported by The Nature Conservancy. To help support her work with a tax-deductible donation, see dailyherald.com/rfa.*