

Cleaner City Possible

THE Oklahoma City Council deserves commendation for enacting laws to discourage litter and illegal dumping on vacant lots and roadsides.

If these ordinances are enforced, heavy fines and possible jail sentences for violators could help to clean up widespread unsightliness.

However, if the council is really serious about cleaning up and beautifying our city, it also should consider changing a policy that allows most homeowners to place piles of garbage and trash on sidewalks or curbs in front of their houses twice a week.

Beat-up garbage cans, often battered from being blown in front of passing cars where they create traffic hazards, and plastic bags, boxes and barrels could not be regarded as beautifying adornments by any standards. And when dogs or cats rip open garbage sacks in search of a meal, extensive wind-blown litter is the result.

The trash doesn't appear before houses only on days set for collection. Residents frequently

place piles there a day or two early, especially grass clippings and larger trash items.

This might be for the occupants' convenience, but the general policy seems to be more for the convenience of mechanized equipment and garbage collectors, who may prefer not to walk to the side or back of houses to carry out the trash.

It also could be for the convenience of the council, who might have to adjust budgets to provide for more collectors to make houseside pickups. This service is available now to those willing to pay a modest additional fee, but it is not widely used.

Undoubtedly, there are ways to work out the financial arrangements if the council is really serious about cleaning up and beautifying the city. Whenever additional money is needed to maintain water and sewer services adjustments are made promptly.

The same rationale should apply to garbage services. It is a question of what it's worth to have trash-free city streets.