

**City of Saint Paul
Garbage Advisory Committee
Draft Report version 1
4/14/2022**



**SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA**



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Still to be done:

Complete the History section in the Introduction (staff with Committee review)

Committee to discuss the “Next Contract Mechanics” section to determine Majority/Minority solutions

Committee to discuss Costs – Pricing – Services – Service Holds section to determine Majority/Minority solutions

Committee to discuss Bulky Items section to determine Majority/Minority solutions

Committee to finish above 3 items, staff to complete first “complete” draft for Committee to review and finalize

Introduction

The November 2019 consideration of the 2020 garbage rates included comments by the public which proposed creation of a garbage advisory group to provide input to the Council for future changes to the Coordinated Collection (CC) Program. The current contract for garbage, bulky item, and yard waste collection ends September 30, 2023. The City must consider what the next iteration of the program will be, and what changes could be considered.

A Garbage Advisory Committee, comprised of residents who applied for a position, was convened. Eighteen members were appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of Council Members. The members represented the wide diversity of St. Paul residents:

- Various geographic, income, language, and cultural areas of the City
- Homeowners, renters and rental property owners with 1-4-unit or townhouse properties
- Persons who wished to adjust and improve the CC program and those opposed to it
- Persons with some garbage knowledge and those without
- Persons highly engaged in the Sustainability movement, and those who were not

The charge of the Committee was to advise the City on issues associated with the City's solid waste management programs and as individually interested, to be an ambassador for the Committee and the City with neighbors and neighborhood organizations. Changes to recycling and organics collections were not included in the Committee's work, except as they informed the Committee on the role of those programs in an integrated solid waste management system.

All meetings of the Committee were open to the public. A public web page specific to the Committee's work was established which held all meeting and recordings, materials and a web form for submission of public comments ([Garbage Advisory Committee | Saint Paul Minnesota \(stpaul.gov\)](https://www.stpaul.gov/garbage-advisory-committee)) were posted. There was also time on the Committee's meeting agendas for non-Committee individuals to provide comments and advice.

This Report of the Committee provides program areas for the City to evaluate as it moves forward with the CC program. Each of the sections contain options recommended by a majority of the Committee members, with differing or opposing recommendations also presented.

Each section contains a sentence outlining the topic, the majority option and minority option(s). Comments by Committee members are included in the options, and a complete

list of all comments and ideas, from the Committee and from the public, are included in Appendix A.

History

Staff to complete for Committee review

Description of the development of the Coordinated Collection program, the goals of that program, and the implementation.

Compare original program goals promoted at start of CC to current outcomes.

Use information from the City's Residential Garbage website page: [Coordinated Collection | Saint Paul Minnesota \(stpaul.gov\)](https://www.stpaul.gov/Coordinated-Collection)

Next Contract Mechanics

The Committee members considered ways the process of implementing the next garbage program could be improved.

Existing Program

Pluses, Minuses, Concerns, Comments

- Keep St. Paul clean, we all want that.
- Small haulers were able to sell their routes for good price – they had time to adjust or get out
- Need transparency of increasing County tipping fees and of taxes on garbage and impact on prices
- Invest and really promote reduce/reuse/recycle NOT throw away more. The trash and recycling companies' line is "When in doubt, throw it out" which just adds fuel into the throw away mentality.
- Contract with a local hauler who cares if customers are happy (or not) with service
- Move garbage collection to City department vs. a trash business
- Single hauler/Municipal service citywide
- More teeth to Customer Service
- Contract End date –is current contract too long
- Open Meetings or hybrid meetings so the public can watch the negotiation meetings, not necessarily contribute during the meeting, but can watch live +++++
- Transparency to negotiations and/or contract details
- Frustration that details of contract negotiations and details weren't clear
 - Put into the intro/History?
 - Big promises that weren't kept
- Be clear about what is possible
- We previously had <national hauler> and fired them for poor service
- We wish the truck didn't have to make 2 passes down the alley
- We wish the company was more local +
- Allow apartment buildings to use bulky program, if have City service with dumpsters (instead of carts) – expand to larger units; help prevent illegal dumping

Proposed Solutions

(support for RFP with the rest of the items that we'd like to put in the RFP; includes items from the hauler bucket list)

- Let haulers compete
- Include municipal collection option ++
- Include a municipal collection option +++++



- Hire expert Counsel. We (the taxpayers) must have good negotiators this time around vs last time.
- Shorter contract than current one
 - Less than 5 years +++
 - Less than 3 years
- Make the City the hauler
 - Fewer complaints, City workers get benefits
 - Could be very expensive
 - Over time the City should look at being the hauler (generate revenue?)
- Local Customer Service
 - Require haulers to have Customer Service/Operations office within the City – move to elsewhere
- More teeth in contract to hold haulers accountable for service +
- Track and reduce vehicle miles travelled, including from hauler’s garage to the service area
- Include 5+ unit properties in next contract to reduce the number of trucks in neighborhoods +++
- Explore 5+ unit service – move to contract mechanics
- City promote Reduce/Reuse/Recycle, NOT “Throw away more.” -
- Track total waste across City so we can accurately gauge waste reduction plans/goals – can do for 1-4 units.
- Give incentives to reduce total waste ++
- City programs to encourage reuse (e.g., FreeCycle) ++
- Give \$\$ incentives to recycle +++

Majority (to be completed)

- Use Request For Proposals (RFP) +++++

Minority

- Provide context based on situation if appropriate – i.e. specific to landlords)

Opt-Out/Cart Sharing

This topic contains the situations Committee members discussed to allow Very Low waste generators to opt out of the City’s CC program or share services, and situations in which persons in multi-unit properties or who are neighbors could be allowed to share cart(s) and services.



Existing Program

Pluses, Minuses, Concerns

Committee Member Comments Not in favor of Opt-Out options

- Everyone has some waste
- It costs money to check to make sure properties are still cleaned up
- Opt-out and cart share allows some residents to get a discount and creates inequality. New system which requires all to have carts is more equitable.
- Opt-out and cart share risks only some will have knowledge and resources to use the system and will be subsidized

Proposed Solutions

- Garbage Reduction should be the over-riding Goal
- Allow zero wasters to opt out via an application
 - Use Maplewood example of application with fee, and requirement for “regular” service if illegal or neighbor-dump
 - If zero-wasters opt out they pay an additional annual Recycling Service Fee
- Allow Townhouse/Homeowner Associations to opt in or opt out
- Allow multiunit properties to share carts +
 - No minimum mandated number of carts, or at least one cart per address
 - This decreases the number of carts at a property which enhances the neighborhood
- Cart-sharing could be applied for, with a fee to pay for enforcement
- Allow neighbors in single family homes to share carts +++
- Allow dumpsters (not carts) at multiunit properties or on a block if the block organizes +
- If there is overflow at cart-sharing property, City could require more carts as instructed by DSI
 - Alternate: If there is an overflowing trash issue and it is brought in front of Council they owner would lose the ability to choose cart number/size
- Adopt a program similar to Maplewood, with one-time form with fee to opt-out

Majority (to be completed)

Minority (to be completed)

- (provide context based on situation if appropriate – i.e. specific to landlords)



Billing/Customer Service

Existing Program

Pluses, Minuses, Concerns

- Multi-language support should be easily available

Proposed Solutions

- City should handle Customer Service/billing (unified) ++++++
- Have a single bill with yard waste and bulkies all in one +++
- Multi-language support should be easily available
- Walk-up service should be available to seniors/anyone who asks (Dr note may be required to request this; but haulers generally accept the reason)
- Winning <contractor> should have office/presence in Saint Paul for local help with pickups and questions
- Physical presence less important; understand our contract and operations here +

Majority (to be completed)

Minority (to be completed)

Costs – Pricing – Services – Service Holds

Existing Program

Pluses, Minuses, Concerns

Cost

- Decrease overall costs for all
- Encourage waste reduction
- Abolish charge when cart lid is open six inches unless grossly overstuffed
 - Asked this of other cities – if we have to move a bag to tip the cart then it’s an “excess” charge; others 3 inches or more; there is no standard
 - Do we know how many extra bag charges have happened in last year?
 - We will check on the info; do we have this data?
- Provide more information for new residents about cart sizes
- Single family home extra cart should cost same as multiunit additional carts (e.g., each property has service fee plus fee for number of carts at property similar to Minneapolis pricing model)
- Give people options of a smaller cart and a smaller bill
- All services for one price (single, inclusive, price for Yard waste, bulky, etc.) +++

Service Hold – Didn’t discuss comments/solutions, Committee to decide

- Remove need to give haulers reason for service hold and/or put service hold in place of opt-out when household creates small trash amounts
- Allow service holds even if dwelling is occupied (alternate for very small generators)
 - +
- Service holds and opt-outs should remain separate. Service hold should not be used in place of opt-out
- There should be a written plan to hold or stop garbage temporarily that outlines:
 - What qualifies
 - How much is saved
 - When service is stopped and started

Admin – Didn’t discuss comments/solutions, Committee to decide

- The Administrative fees that the City charges on the property taxes are too high
- Break out the City Garbage Annual Service Fee into categories (Cart bond replacement costs \$__; City Administration costs \$__; Cash flow stabilization costs \$__)
- Change city administration fee to be per property address, not per trash cart

Proposed Solutions

Cost

- Charge by weight (If little trash is in the cart give discount, since bill extra when lid is six inches open)
- Charge by volume so small carts do not subsidize large carts

Example:	96 gallon	\$50
	45 gallon	\$25
	32 gallon	\$18
	32 gallon EOW	\$ 9
- Allow small cart every-other-week to call for temporary weekly or extra service for a fee
- Give discount for one/year bill/payment ++
- Get rid of charge when cart lid is open 6 inches
- If carts are empty, monthly fee should be reduced (Converse of overstuffed Carts or carts with lid open)
- There is a minimum cost to garbage <service> that should be paid regardless of how much is thrown out
- Single family home extra cart should cost same as multiunit additional carts (e.g., each property has service fee plus fee for number of carts at property)

Majority (to be completed)

Minority (to be completed)

Bulky Items

Bulky items include furniture, large plastic toys, appliances, electronics and TVs, and other waste items that do not fit into a garbage cart. Bulky items do not include construction and demolition wastes, car parts, stumps and large branches, or large landscape materials.

Existing Program

Pluses, Minuses, Concerns

Didn't discuss comments/solutions

Options for the Type of Bulky Pick-up Program

- Increase the number of bulky item pickups for all as part of cart service pricing
- If Bulky Service is part of cart service pricing, give end-of-year rebate if not used++++
- Offer 1 bulky item pickup per address and let owners buy in for additional pick-ups (similar to yard wastes by-the-bag) +
- Allow one day per year curbside pickup across Saint Paul as opt-in option (Bloomington model) +++
- Opt-in to bulky item service (no pick-ups as part of cart service) ++++
- Have same contract as Maplewood and other cities and include bulky items
-

Concerns about the Types

- If it is an incentive, there should not be a limitation on the number of bulky items
- There is a concern that bulky item pickups will not stop illegal dumping
- Concern was expressed for folks that can't store bulky items for a whole year (Bloomington model)
- Don't make it a seasonal pick up

Ways to Improve a Bulky Item Program

- Re-use/recycle mattresses like Second Chance Recycling does
- Need to define who is authorized to schedule pickup (owner, renter/tenant)
- Need a better/easier way to schedule a bulky item pickup+++
- Better communication that program exists
 - One number to call
 - Language Line
- Consistent rules on how many hours/days to call ahead (48 hrs., 1 week?)

- Tried to use it. The hauler kept asking what size the bulky was and then said it was too big
- Tried to use it and was too difficult to contact the hauler to schedule the pickup

From what other cities do

- Citywide bulky pickup days/weeks especially around colleges ++
- One day per year “curbside” pickup service across Saint Paul (similar to Bloomington) ++
- I’d like to see free pickup of all large items (like Minneapolis) instead of just two or three a year

Proposed Solutions

Majority (to be completed)

Minority (to be completed)

Yard Waste/Organics

Yard wastes include grass clippings, garden weeds, bundles of small branches, and fall leaves. Yard wastes do not include organics, pet wastes, stones, hardscape materials, large branches or stumps.

Organics include food wastes, non-recyclable paper (paper towels, tissues), and compostable to-go containers. Ramsey County is developing an organics collection program that will allow residents to put organics in a special compostable bag which will be collected with their garbage and processed at the R&E Center.

Existing Program

Residents can contract with haulers for April – November weekly service, including a YW cart and up to 8 bags per week.

Residents can also purchase “a la carte” service by calling the hauler

Pluses, Minuses, Concerns

- Not everyone uses it, many back-yard compost or use the Ramsey Co. drop-off
- Include yard waste in cost of full-service (not separate) so that everyone has yard waste service.
- Encourage more composting in yard or leaving the grass clippings on the lawn
- Yard waste collection, either annual or a la carte, should be easier to arrange. Now difficult to contact hauler and/or arrange for pickup
- When durable compostable bag program begins in 2023 compost will be taxed



- Be transparent to community about this
- Increasing the trash cart size to allow room to throw in compost bags, instead of taking them to a drop-off means more \$ to haulers
- Yard waste by the bag instead of whole year commitment
- Stickers from City for yard waste by the bag or extra bags of trash

Proposed Solutions

Majority

- Keep Yard Waste Collection as separate option, a la carte
- Have the option to pay for Yard Waste Collection per bag instead of full season (have both annual and a la carte options)

Minority

- Incorporate cost of yard waste into the full garbage program so everyone has yard waste service

Green Options

Green Options are suggestions the Committee members identified to move Saint Paul toward a more sustainable solid waste management program.

The Committee eliminated this section and directed the items be incorporated into other sections

Programs from other places

The Committee eliminated this section and directed the items be incorporated into other sections

Appendix

Will contain all Committee and Public comments received; will continue to add to this