

# Organized Waste Hauling and Recycling System FAQs

## Program Overview

### What's happening with waste hauling?

- **Monday, May 4:** The Arvada City Council (business meeting) heard a **First Reading** of a proposed ordinance authorizing an organized waste hauling system for Arvada. A First Reading is the step that places an item on the Council's agenda for a future vote. The May 4 meeting packet and agenda are available. [Current City Council Meetings](#).
- **Monday, May 11:** The Arvada City Council (workshop) will further discuss the proposed ordinance. Public comment is not accepted during Council workshops. The May 11 workshop packet and agenda will be available beginning Friday, May 8: [Current City Council Meetings](#).
- **Monday, June 15:** The Arvada City Council (business meeting/public hearing) **will hear public comment**, deliberate and may vote on the proposed ordinance. [View instructions for providing public comment](#). The June 15 meeting packet and agenda will be available beginning Friday, June 12: [Current City Council Meetings](#).

**Please note:** The City team is exploring ways to enable public engagement on the topic of waste hauling prior to the June 15 Public Hearing. We will announce these opportunities on our website, via social media and in the **ArvadaNews**.

### What will the ordinance include?

- Gives City the authority to bill residents for waste hauling services
- Requires all haulers to provide Residential recycling services within one year
- Annual reporting requirements for waste haulers

### What services will be provided by the selected hauler?

- Trash: Weekly collection, volume-based pricing
- Recycling: Biweekly collection
- Bulky items: Two citywide drop off events included in the monthly fee. On-demand year round curbside pickup (\$15/item)
- Yard debris drop off events: spring event & 3 fall leaf weekend events
- Door-to-curb services for physically impaired

### What is volume-based pricing?

With volume-based pricing your rates would be based on the size of the trash cart you select, so households that produce less trash end up paying less. Households would choose from three different cart sizes, a 32 gallon, 64 gallon and a 96 gallon. Each has a different price. A 96 gallon recycling cart is included for no additional charge. Recycling automatically included

### Is participation in the program mandatory?

No. While residents would be strongly encouraged to participate, Colorado law preserves your right to choose your waste hauler, even if the City contracts with one hauler as part of an organized system. Residents who choose to opt out, would pay a small fee of \$5.13 per month that would allow participation in services such as spring and fall yard waste events and two bulky item drop-off events.

### Will the selected company haul trash and recycling for every household in Arvada?

No. But it will serve the large majority of households. The selected company would provide services to and estimated 32,000 single-family homes, duplexes and townhomes (including housing with fewer than 8 multi-family units) in neighborhoods that **DO NOT** have organized waste collection. Apartment and condominium complexes with eight or more units and commercial properties would be exempt.

\*Homeowners associations (HOAs) that already contract with a waste hauler are not required to participate in the program; however, they may opt in. (All HOAs will pay an 88 cent fee and be included in the bulky item and yard debris services.)

### When would the program start?

The program is projected to start May 3, 2021

## Carts

### **What are the cart sizes and monthly costs for each?**

\$19.90 - 96 gallon holds 7 to 8 tall kitchen bags of trash a week

\$15.70 - 64 gallon holds 4 to 5 tall kitchen bags of trash a week

\$11.50 - 32 gallon holds 2 to 3 tall kitchen bags of trash a week

Currently, non-HOA households pay \$20 to \$29 for these monthly services.

### **Where will additional carts be stored?**

The Contractor is responsible for Cart storage and maintenance.

### **How often can residents change their trash cart size?**

During the initial 180 day implementation of the program, residents may exchange cart sizes at no additional fee. After that period, exchanges may be made once annually at no charge. Any additional cart exchanges shall be billed to the residents for an additional fee of \$15 per exchange.

### **Are we only allowed one trash cart and one recycle cart?**

A resident may have more than one recycling cart. The extra recycle cart is less than \$4./month. A resident may have more than one trash cart provided to them as long as they are already participating in the program at the largest waste cart size (96 gallon). The rate for an extra trash cart is less than \$5/month. The fee includes the cost of the extra cart, as well as the extra service fee.

### **What happens to the carts that residents are already using?**

Residents keep the carts they currently own for their own use. A recycle program will also be implemented for those who want to dispose of their carts.

### **How will residents receive new carts? Who pays for those carts? Who owns those carts? Clarify that there will be no additional cost than the monthly fee for waste service for the carts.**

The City is buying and will own the carts used for the program. The City will retain ownership of the carts in the event that a resident leaves the City program for any reason. The cost of the carts is included in the monthly service fees.

## Contract Questions

### **How did you choose the vendor?**

The submitting Contractors were scored by the evaluation committee and all four submissions were found to be capable of implementing and managing an organized waste hauling contract. The City solidified the program details and a formal Best And Final Offer (BAFO) was requested from all four Contractors. The BAFO submissions were then reviewed by the committee based on the original evaluation criteria, the presentations and pricing for the final Contractor selection. Republic Services is the selected vendor.

### **What criteria was used for the RFP?**

The City's RFP Evaluation Committee reviewed components including price, superior customer service, stability of service and inclusion of local waste contractors currently serving the City. A full page of evaluation criteria were reviewed and is available on Bidnetdirect.com. Registration is free.

### **What type of data/metrics are we asking the vendor to provide and how will this information be used?**

There is a list of monthly reports required as part of the contract. Some of the metrics in these reports are used to fulfill the City's obligation to the Recycling Partnership for the grant to help fund recycle carts. Other metrics are required for use by our billing department and for the City's program coordinator to assess Customer Service levels and possible fines.

### **Will the selected company service the city indefinitely?**

The City/Vendor contract would be in place for several years at a time. Each contract would contain performance measures and service level requirements. The contract would have provisions giving the city opportunities to address concerns with the services. If all contract renewals are approved, the program will be solicited again after 7 years.

### **For residents who initially choose to not participate in the City's hauling program, will there be an option for them to opt-in at a later date? How will this be handled? How often can folks join the City's program?**

Yes. Residents who do not participate may opt to participate later. There will be a short, as of yet to be determined, period during initial implementation when joining the program is not available so that we may have a stable and efficient stand up of the program. After that period, residents may join at any time by calling the Republic dedicated local office.

**If residents choose to not use the extra benefited services (bulky item and yard debris drop-off) – can they be exempt from the \$5.13 a month for the minimum service fee?**

No. The organized system offers community-wide benefits – such as reduced trash truck traffic and road damage, that we all benefit from regardless of whether we directly or indirectly use the services. Under the current open market system, there is a community cost that isn't being accounted for (mainly road damage, noise and air pollution and threats to safety). This new program (and the minimum service fee) helps to better account for that cost and reduce it for the entire community.

**Can this now go up for a vote, since we now have more details on pricing, services and who the selected hauler will be?**

City Council and staff have been evaluating organized waste hauling options for more than a year. This includes a community survey to residents on what they would like to see in a program. Service contracts such as this are commonly decided by council action after extensive review and public process. City Council has instructed staff to provide community engagement and publicize the opportunity for public input at the public hearing before making any final decision on moving forward.

## Customer Service

**How will customer service be implemented and ensured?**

The Contractor will be responsible for providing all customer service functions including informing customers of current services, handling customer requests and resolving customer complaints. The Contractor will maintain a local Denver metro office for the receipt of service calls and complaints, which will be open and available for calls Monday through Friday of each week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Contractor will provide an employee attendant during all hours that such office is required to be open to take care of complaints, orders for special pickup service or to receive instructions. The Contractor will maintain a real time app or website link for customer service and education purposes.

Contracts will be required to give the City the opportunity to address any concerns in service and the option to end the contract if the hauler is not meeting the City or residents' needs. The selected hauler's contract with the City will require data tracking with reports on customer service metrics and issue resolution.

**Will the selected company have complete control over prices and quality of service?**

The City used a competitive bidding process to determine service costs and service quality. Pricing would also be based on the types of services a household selects. The selected hauler will be accountable for pricing and quality of services. The contract could be terminated if the hauler does not meet the quality of service desired by the City and its residents.

**How will violations be handled – specifically if residents put out more trash than what fits in their bin? Or worse, putting trash in their recycling bin?**

Bags placed on the curb without the extra bag tag available for purchase will not be picked up. There will be extensive education provided to educate residents on how to effectively recycle.

**There are concerns about Republic trucks being too large for our neighborhoods, drive too fast and in an unsafe manner. How will the City regulate/work with the hauler to address these concerns?**

Unsafe operation of any vehicle should be reported to the Arvada Police Department.

**The City is currently limited in their ability to intervene when trash haulers provide low quality customer service. How will that be different under the new program?**

Failure to perform to Arvada's expected high level of customer and collection service will be discouraged, to the extent possible, through penalties for certain infractions and through default for more serious lapses in service provisions defined in the contract.

## Costs

**Will a single hauler system drive up costs for curbside trash and recycling?**

No. A single hauling system allows for a more efficient collection service, which results in lower costs. The City has requested and received competitive proposals from the Waste Hauling companies. This system allows the City to minimize price increases for the duration of the contract, which is up to seven years at a time. Price escalations are limited based on a national index.

**Will an organized system create a monopoly in the City for trash hauling?**

No. A monopoly gives a company the power to charge overly high prices. The City is obtaining competitive pricing for trash hauling and recycling to give the community the best price possible. In addition, any homeowner can opt out of the program.

**Do the current fees include costs that could change due to the instability in the recycling market?**

Yes, there is the possibility for some market driven cost fluctuations built in to the contract as follow: Starting June 1, 2021, a \$.07 increase/decrease will be added to the per recycling cart rate for every \$5 per ton increase/decrease in average commodity tipping fee costs, using the most previous rolling 12-month period as the baseline. The rate increase/decrease will be assessed annually. Under no circumstances shall any increase pursuant to this section be permitted to exceed \$.35 per recycling cart per year.

### **Clarify the price increases allowed in the contract after the first two years.**

Annually, effective at the end of the second year of the Agreement, May 1, 2023, Contractor shall have the option to increase prices. During the option periods, the City will consider an adjustment to the pricing structure. For consideration of price increases above, the Contractor must document that it was subject to price increases by the agreed upon National Water/Sewer/Trash Index. This change shall be based on the most recent 12 month period available. Price adjustments shall not fall below a floor of 2.5% and shall not exceed a ceiling of 3.5% annually, plus any new Regulatory fees imposed by state or national agencies or law, subject to approval by City Council Resolution.

## **Environmental Benefits**

### **How will an organized system prevent road damage or noise/air pollution?**

Reducing the number of trucks on our streets will reduce road damage and noise pollution. In the current system, as many as nine trucks or more (from different haulers) pick up trash each week on any given street. The weight of these trucks causes tremendous wear and tear on them, and the constant starting and stopping of these trucks as the engines ramp up and down results in more air and noise pollution. In an organized system, one truck visits each street per week (every two weeks for recycling), reducing wear and tear on the streets and reducing air and noise pollution.

### **What is the number of Waste Hauling trucks that will be on the road with this implementation vs. what is on the road now?**

Unfortunately, the City does not have data on the number of trucks presently on the streets as these are private enterprises. There are nine licensed Waste Hauling providers in the City and historical accounts that many non-HOA neighborhoods see multiple trucks every week.

### **Is the selected provider using routing software to calculate the best routes?**

Yes, the software is called Route Editor.

### **If residents can choose to remain with their current hauler and not participate in the City's program, how can the City say that there would only be one trash truck and one recycle truck on our neighborhood street?**

True, there would be some cases where neighborhood streets would see more than one trash truck due to some residents remaining with their current hauler or choosing a different hauler. We expect this to be a very small portion of the city, since in other cities that have similar programs only 1-3% of residents choose to select their own hauler and not participate in the city's program.

## **Recycling and Composting**

### **How will the City of Arvada monitor the recycling market? How will the City ensure that material collected for recycling will be recycled? What happens when the recycling market changes, or gets worse?**

The Contract requires the Contractor to deliver materials to a licensed Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). There are reporting requirements from the MRFs to ensure this process is being completed. The City and the Contractor can also review the list of materials accepted for recycling and make revisions if necessary over time. There is the possibility for some market driven cost fluctuations built in to the contract as follow: Starting June 1, 2021, a \$.07 increase/decrease will be added to the per recycling cart rate for every \$5 per ton increase/decrease in average commodity tipping fee costs, using the most previous rolling 12-month period as the baseline. The rate increase/decrease will be assessed annually. Under no circumstances shall any increase pursuant to this section be permitted to exceed \$.35 per recycling cart per year.

### **How much material collected actually gets recycled? Where is the recycling going? Is it true a lot of recycling is going to the landfill?**

The hauler is required to take all recyclable materials to a certified Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). At the MRF, the materials are sorted and then sent around the country to be made into new products. It is not true and never has been true that a lot of recycling is going to the landfill. Most of our recyclable materials are being recycled in the U.S. and kept out of landfills. On occasion, some companies have been caught mixing recycling with trash, but those companies have been penalized for those instances. The overwhelming majority of the time, most companies are taking your recyclable materials to a MRF to have them sorted for recycling.

Most recycling facilities are able to sort out and recycle about 85% of the materials collected. The remaining 15% is typically non-recyclable materials such as dirt, furniture, plastic bags or other materials that are not accepted for recycling. To ensure that your materials are properly recycled, it is important to follow the guidelines and recycle only the paper products and containers that are accepted in your program. Any materials that are put in the carts that are not on the list of acceptable materials will not be recycled, such as plastic bags, clothing or food waste.

### **What efforts are underway in Arvada to reduce consumption of waste materials like paper, plastic, etc.?**

There is certainly more our city and community can do to reduce waste. Changing to an organized waste hauling system is a very important first step. Using a volume-based pricing system will encourage residents to be more cognizant of the amount of waste they produce and to think more about their purchasing habits.

### **Will the yard debris collected under the new contract be composted?**

Yard debris collected at the spring and fall events will be composted per the contract. Yard debris put in your trash cart will not be composted.

### **Why is composting not included?**

Currently the cost to collect and transport household residential compost is too large for the city to include in the contract. This does not preclude the city adding curbside compost to the contract in the future when the cost is reduced. Changing to an organized waste hauling system now enables the city to add composting at a later date.

### **What is the value of having residents recycle?**

Recycling is one of the fastest, most cost effective steps we can take to fight climate change. For every one ton of materials we recycle, we save three tons of carbon emissions. For example, recycling an aluminum can saves 92% of the energy it takes to make it from virgin minerals and is back on the shelf in 60 days. Recycling also keeps materials out of landfills, which pollute our air and water. Trash from Arvada is dumped at landfills in Golden, Erie or Aurora. Recycling creates nine times more jobs than landfills per ton and returns more money to our local economy. Recycling conserves natural resources, protects our land, water, forests and air.

## **HOA Questions**

### **Why do HOAs have to pay for a service they do not use?**

Currently, in most cases, residents in HOAs have to pay a fee (usually around \$15) for one large item to be picked up. Bulky item events are very popular among residents and there has been a lot of public support to reinstate these events. With the new system, HOAs will be able to participate in all large-item collection events; there are two planned per year, as well as spring and fall yard waste cleanups. The 88 cent per month fee will be required. Again, the organized system offers community-wide benefits.

### **How do I sell my HOA on the additional \$0.88/month charge?**

The 88 cent per month charge to HOA residents is a fee to pay for the city's new services provided by the contract hauler – bulky item and yard debris collection.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **How should residents handle extra bags of trash or waste they produce? An example, currently a resident has 5 bags of waste in winter months and 10 bags in the summer (includes grass clippings)?**

The resident has the choice of adding a second cart during high volume periods like the one described. There is also the option of buying extra bag tags at \$3.50 per tag. These may be purchased at City Hall and possibly other locations yet to be determined. A mail option is also available for a small fee.

### **Where will the bulky item and yard debris collection take place?**

The exact locations have not been determined, however there will be at least one location on the east and west sides of the City.

### **As many homeowners in Arvada cut their own lawns weekly during the spring, summer and fall, are these weekly grass clippings included in the trash fee, and disposed of by the homeowner as regular trash?**

Yes, grass clippings and other yard debris can be disposed of with your regular trash. The city will provide a spring clean-up event for branches and other yard debris and will collect leaves during three weekends in the fall. Residents are also encouraged to consider leaving their grass clippings on the lawn for healthier grass. See more information from the CSU extension office. Alternatively, there are some companies that also offer curbside collection of yard debris and food scraps for composting, such as Rocky Mountain Composting and Compost Colorado.