

VOTE YES on Organized Trash Collection NOVEMBER 5



Answers on Organized Trash Collection

There's a lot of misinformation being spread about organized trash in Saint Paul. Here is a list of some of the concerns we've heard from our neighbors and information around those concerns.

1. I want a way to return our trash pickup to the way it used to be. I think voting "no" will do that. Is that true?

No. A no vote means the expenses will shift from the homeowner to the city, which will charge the cost directly to ALL taxpayers through taxes. Some residents will pay more than they do now and all taxpayers will have to pay for residential homeowner trash service, even those who don't use those services, like businesses, homeowners with more than 4 units, and renters. Further, a "no" vote doesn't do ANYTHING about ending the contract or allowing residents to share carts. It cancels the ordinance, yes, but it does NOT cancel the five-year contract the city has with the haulers. Source: City of Saint Paul website.

2. Didn't trash collection fees go up for everyone?

No. Before, many people were paying far more than they are now. Organized trash collection is very much an equity issue. A lot of people were paying *below market rate* and are now paying *their fair share*. Everyone with the same size cart/frequency pays the same price across the city. Before, newer homeowners or those who couldn't negotiate rates were paying a lot more than they are now and were actually subsidizing those who enjoyed below-market rates. *Before organized trash collection, rates for the exact same size cart and frequency varied from \$11 to \$70 per homeowner PER MONTH!* Source: City of Saint Paul Chief Resiliency Officer, Russ Stark.

3. Don't the majority of our fees pay for trash disposal? Shouldn't those who generate little waste pay very little?

No. The majority of our "garbage fees" go to wages, truck use, fuel, administrative overhead, and managing accounts/payments. In fact, the city of Minneapolis' trash disposal fees are similar to ours but are more clearly laid out. Everyone there pays a monthly base fee of \$24.53, and then either pays \$2 for waste disposal of a small cart or \$5 for a large cart. The city of Minneapolis does not offer any other cart choices or frequency of service. And every separate household is required to have service, including 2-4 unit buildings. Back to Saint Paul, our minimum trash collection/removal service is based on weekly, small-cart service. Why? because a trash hauler still goes down the street weekly even for those with every-other-week (EOW) service. Thus, we consider the small weekly service the "base" fee, and

Estimated current rates, based on real quarterly bills

Service level	Total cost per month	Disposal cost per month (from 2017 final contract)	Collection cost per month	+/- base fee
Small EOW (32 gal)	\$20.28	\$1.99	\$18.29	-\$3.17
Small weekly (32 gal)	\$23.45	\$2.40	\$21.05	\$0
Med weekly (65 gal)	\$33.30	\$6.29	\$27.01	+\$9.85
Large weekly (95 gal)	\$34.15	\$7.59	\$26.56	+\$10.70

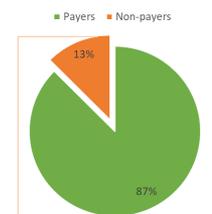
people pay more (or less) based on cart size or frequency of pickup. See the chart above for our 2019 rates.

4. Many people were happily sharing carts with neighbors without any issues. Why can't we go back to that?

It's important to realize this was never legal, and there were issues. Because most of the cost is associated with wages, vehicles, and overhead costs, those who paid for trash service subsidized those who didn't pay.

Over 9,000 households were not paying for trash service, out of 72,000 households in the city, and it seems unlikely there were over 9,000 "low waste" households. They may have hauled their own trash, brought it to work/parks, or illegally dumped it or burned it. Source: *Star Tribune*.

Households Paying for Trash before organized collection



How were non-payers managing their trash?

- Subsidized by paying homeowners
- Hauled their own trash
- Brought it to work/parks
- Illegally discarded it

5. The organized trash collection contract put many small haulers out of business.

No, it didn't. Small/independent haulers around the nation are selling all or part of their businesses to national haulers or simply retiring.

6. I really want curbside organics collection so I can reduce waste and save money.

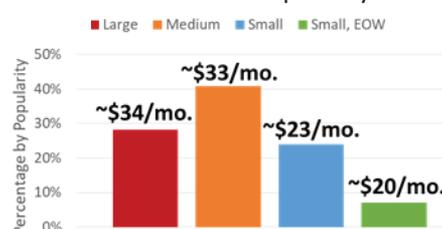
If you want curbside organics collection sooner, vote yes!

The city's plan has been to start curbside organics pickup after the dust gets settled on organized trash collection. If voters vote "no," there's going to be a delay in the start of curbside organics pickup, which was slated for roll-out in 2021. Also, it's likely the system will use a "durable organics bag" method, which means residents put a bag of compostable materials in their trash bin. So the costs associated in the organized trash collection will support the pickup of curbside organics.

7. I'm being forced to pay for trash service I don't need.

We disagree. As described above, there's a "base" cost to simply have any trash service, regardless of how much or how little you generate. A city of our size should have basic utility services provided, like electricity, water, and sewer, and an organized trash collection system. That comes at a cost, with a basic cost of service

Cart Size and Popularity



that each household should have to pay. The least expensive option, the small bin with every-other-week service, is only being used by 7% of households, according to the city. Switch to a smaller cart or reduce your service to every-other-week and save money today!

8. Other cities around us charge SO MUCH LESS for trash service.

No, they don't. Minneapolis residents pay \$24.53 a month + \$2 or +\$5 per month. Saint Paul residents pay between \$20.28 a month for small cart every-other-week service, up to \$34.15 a month for large, every-week service. In fact, our city gives us four choices of service, where Minneapolis only gives their residents two choices for trash service.

9. The only way to get something better than what we have now is to "vote no."

Again, we disagree. We believe that working *with* the city and haulers to tweak the existing contract is a better way to improve the organized trash collection system. The city is willing to negotiate; the haulers may need more incentives to do so. We believe this is a problem we can solve together.

10. Because trash rates are "high" now, they're only going to go up and we'll have to pay more.

Not true! Rates for 2020 will actually be going down! Why? Because the haulers didn't know the exact volume or trash generated per household (partly because so many households weren't paying for trash service before). The haulers and the city have a year's worth of data now, and they've found that residents dispose of less trash than was estimated. In fact, those with the smallest trash service (small cart, every other week) will see the greatest reduction in trash service fees.

Cart size	Small (EOW)	Small	Medium	Large
2020 Monthly Rates	\$19.09	\$22.32	\$30.91	\$33.03
2020 Quarterly Rate	\$57.27	\$66.96	\$92.73	\$99.09
Quarterly Decrease	\$3.56	\$3.38	\$3.35	\$3.35
Annual Decrease	\$14.24	\$13.52	\$13.40	\$13.40

2020 adjusted rates, per draft ordinance language

11. The city didn't allow residents to have a say.

Yes, it did. The city actually had a very public process, with nearly 50 meetings on the topic starting two years before coordinated trash pickup started. There were 10 draft contracts, with the final one agreed upon by the city and each of the haulers. The final contract meets priorities set by the City Council. In fact, it was *because of residents' interest* that the city started to research this topic in the first place! To see how the city engaged with the community, visit the city of Saint Paul's Coordinated Collection page.

12. The city is unwilling to work on issues of sharing carts, either for single-family homeowners or multi-unit dwellings.

Not true. According to Council Member Amy Brendmoen, the city is very interested in discussing this opportunity with haulers, and contracts can be opened if both parties agree. At this moment, both parties are not in agreement to open

the contract. Also, because few residents are currently taking advantage of the least costly option, it may imply that residents aren't serious about lowering rates through less waste generation. It will take administrative work to allow cart-sharing in an equitable way and it would help to see a larger number of EOW signups to justify spending staff time on this.

13. I'm a renter in a large building. This doesn't impact me.

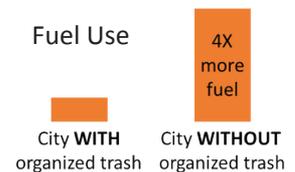
Yes it does, because costs WILL impact renters if voters vote no. It's our understanding that because all taxpayers (renters, homeowners, business owners) will pay for residential trash service through the tax system, an increased cost to landlords will likely be passed along to their renters.

14. I'm a condo owner in a 5+ unit building. This doesn't impact me.

Yes it does. If voters vote no, condo owners will pay TWICE for trash service. Even though condo buildings separately contract for trash service (as businesses do), if voters vote "no" and the fiscal responsibility shifts from residential bills to costs embedded in taxes, EVERY taxpayer (whether resident or business) will be assessed in their taxes for residential trash services, even if they pay for trash service separately.

15. There are still a lot of trucks on the road; the reduction in # of haulers didn't make a big difference.

Not true. There are long-term benefits of organized trash. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency estimates that cities with unorganized trash collection use 375% more fuel (nearly four times) than organized trash. Roads and alleys have far fewer heavy vehicles going down them, so there are cost savings from wear and tear on the roads. There is a reduction of vehicle noise and disruption from trucks in our lives.



16. Isn't the city supposed to charge more per gallon for those who generate more trash?

No, it's not a legal requirement. According to Minnesota Statute 115A, what's required is that the a larger garbage container is priced higher overall than a smaller garbage container, and Saint Paul's pricing meets that requirement. Nowhere does the law state that the costs have to be on a per-gallon rate. In fact, in Minneapolis, the price for a large garbage cart is only \$3 more than a small cart; by comparison, the difference between a large and small cart in Saint Paul is \$10.70. Saint Paul residents have more of an incentive to reduce their trash and choose a smaller size.

We think these answers make it clear:
VOTE YES
 to keep organized trash collection in Saint Paul!

Created by Zero Waste Saint Paul and endorsed by Sustain Saint Paul. If you feel any statement is incorrect, please email zerowastesaintpaul@gmail.com.