



City of Omaha  
Jean Stothert, Mayor

**Office of the Mayor**  
1819 Farnam Street, Suite 300  
Omaha, Nebraska 68183-0300  
(402) 444-5000  
FAX: (402) 444-6059

## SOLID WASTE REQUEST FOR BIDS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

October 24, 2018

### **Q: WHY DO I HAVE TO USE 96-GALLON CARTS?**

A: The new contract will require everyone to use carts. The 96-gallon carts, with wheels and lids will be provided by the company. There is no direct cost to the citizens. The carts will replace the small green recycling bins and cans currently provided by citizens. An exchange program will be offered after a 90-day trial period for those who prefer a smaller cart (**48 gallons**). Residents can also “opt out” of a cart.

During the six-month test of the carts (November 2016-April 2017), 82% of the participants surveyed said they strongly favor or moderately favor the cart system.

The carts are designed for durability and to easily move heavy loads. City code Chapter 18, Sections 101-106 will apply to the storage of the carts.

The carts will be covered by a 12-year warranty.

### **Q: WILL YARD WASTE BE COLLECTED SEPARATELY?**

A: We don't know yet. The cost of separate collection will be a significant factor in this decision. This is not the next contract. This RFB will give us information about the affordability of the services we want in the next contract.

The companies that submit bids are required to provide costs on 3 options.

#1-Three carts; one each for garbage, yard waste and recyclables. Garbage and yard waste would be collected separately weekly. Recyclables would be collected every other week.

#2-Three carts, co-mingled garbage and yard waste collected weekly in two carts, recyclables collected every other week in one cart.

#3-Two carts; one cart for garbage co-mingled with yard waste collected weekly, and a second cart for recyclables collected every other week.

**Q: WHY IS UNLIMITED YARD WASTE COLLECTION BEING DISCONTINUED?**

A: Currently, the annual cost of unlimited curbside collection is nearly \$4 million. This expense is not sustainable for the taxpayers. The majority of homeowners have minimal or no yard waste. Survey participants indicated they typically use 1-3 yard waste bags or containers weekly which would be comparable to a 96-gallon cart.

The next contract will require that yard waste must be placed inside the cart provided. However, there will be new alternatives for free, unlimited disposal of yard waste and a sticker program for a small cost that is successful in other communities and will allow for curbside collection.

The City will expand the annual Spring Cleanup to include yard waste which is currently not offered. A new Fall Cleanup will also be held each year beginning in 2019 for residents to dispose of yard waste, garbage and household items. These cleanup programs will coincide with the peak seasons for yard waste.

In the future, citizens will also be able to take yard waste directly to the Oma-Gro facility at the Papillion Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility at 15705 Harlan Lewis Road. There will not be a tipping fee for homeowners to dispose of yard waste at this location.

The contractor will also offer a voluntary, paid sticker program for those who want unlimited yard waste collection at the curb. The contractor will determine the price of the stickers and the retailers where stickers can be purchased. Only yard waste bags marked with a sticker will be collected by the contractor. The contractor will also offer an extra cart service, for a fee, for those who need additional curbside collection capacity.

**Q: WHY IS THE SOLID WASTE COLLECTION SYSTEM CHANGING AND WHEN WILL THE CHANGE BE EFFECTIVE?**

A: The City's current contract with Waste Management expires December 31, 2020. This contract has been in effect since 2006 and was originally awarded to Deffenbaugh Industries. Waste Management purchased Deffenbaugh in 2014. The current, outdated system will be replaced with a system that meets current industry standards to provide safe, clean and efficient collections. The new system will benefit residents in many ways, including safety, convenience, and added capacity for recycling which will divert material from the landfill.

The trucks will be equipped with automated arms that lift the carts off the curb and empty into the truck.

The new contract will be awarded in 2019 and the new system must be in place prior to the expiration of the current contact.

**Q: MY TRASH IS COLLECTED FROM AN ALLEY. DOES THIS CHANGE APPLY TO ME?**

Yes. In some parts of the city, including neighborhoods with alleys, narrow streets with on-street parking on both sides of the streets, and large trees that hang over the street, the contractor will use a semi-automated truck. The automated arm that lifts the carts from the curb are on the back of the truck instead of the side. The driver will push the carts to the back of the truck so they can be lifted and emptied.

**Q: HOW MUCH WILL THE NEW CONTRACT COST?**

A. Our estimates project the cost of the next contract will increase significantly.

The City currently pays approximately \$20 million annually for solid waste collection; \$14 million to Waste Management, plus tipping fees at Pheasant Point Landfill which are based on the volume of material discarded. These costs are paid from the city's General Fund budget. State law requires the City of Omaha to collect solid waste without a direct charge to the taxpayer. **Nebraska State Statute 13-2020(4)**. In all other Nebraska cities, citizens pay for waste collection with private haulers.

**Q: WILL THE CITY STILL PRODUCE AND SELL OMA-GRO**

A: Yes

**Q: WILL THE SPECIAL COLLECTION PROGRAM STILL BE OFFERED?**

A: Yes. Households where all residents have a medical disability or are at least 70 years old qualify for special collection. Participants in the special collection program will also use carts, and can begin the new collection program with the smaller cart option. To apply for this program, call 402-444-5238.

**Q: CAN I HAVE EXTRA CARTS?**

A: Yes. If a citizen wants more than the carts provided by the City for basic service, additional carts will be available from the contractor for additional curbside capacity. Citizens requesting the additional cart will pay the contractor directly.

**Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY OLD TRASH CANS AND GREEN BINS?**

A: We recommend you keep the green recycling bin for storage or to transport glass to a recycling center. The cans can be used for other purposes including backyard composting.

**Q: WHO WILL CHOOSE THE NEXT CONTRACTOR?**

A: The Request for Bids (RFB) was published on October 24. Bids are due January 30<sup>th</sup>. The bids will be reviewed and a recommendation will be made to Mayor Stothert. The Mayor will then forward a recommendation to the City Council. The Council will make the final decision.

The bid documents are available at this link: <https://www.douglascountypurchasing.org/current-requests-for-bids-a-proposals>