



Residential Organics Collection Best Management Practices Toolkit for Municipalities

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term/Phrase/Name
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ASL	Automated Side Loader
BMPs	Best Management Practice(s)
BPI	Biodegradable Products Institute
CDL	Commercial Driver's License
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
HRG	Hennepin Recycling Group
JPA	Joint Powers Agreement
MMSW	Mixed Municipal Solid Waste
MPCA	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
RFB	Request for Bid
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFQ	Request for Qualifications
SCORE	Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment
TCMA	Twin Cities Metropolitan Area



Executive Summary

Dakota County retained Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to develop this Residential Organics Collection Best Management Practices Toolkit (Toolkit) to support best practice methods in the region for organics collection. The Toolkit is being developed in response to municipalities that have expressed interest in learning best practice organics policy and collection system approaches of Twin Cities curbside collection programs. Currently, there are no residential curbside collection being provided by cities or haulers in Dakota County.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) mandated residential curbside organics collection to be available throughout the metropolitan area in cities with a population greater than 5,000 by 2030. Dakota County's 2024 – 2044 Solid Waste Management Plan (Solid Waste Management Plan) was updated to incorporate this state-required strategy. The County's strategy is to amend Dakota County Ordinance 110 (Solid Waste Management) to require licensed haulers to provide the service to residential customers in suburban areas (e.g., single-family homes or where each household has their own collection bin). The county anticipates working on ordinance amendments in 2027. Ordinance 110 has existing requirements for haulers to use standardized labels on their organics containers and to provide standardized education to customers they provide with organics collection services. Cities can choose to implement additional curbside organics policy approaches for their community, as long as they do not conflict with county requirements.

The County's role in this project supports the Solid Waste Management Plan tactic to "provide support (e.g., funding, technical assistance, educational materials) to interested municipalities to research or implement best waste management collection practices." The County is not directing individual city policy choices. Instead, the Toolkit was intended to provide practical resources and technical assistance to help interested cities that want to evaluate city-specific policy options (e.g., staffing levels, code requirements, service delivery approaches, hauler licensing provisions or contractual language), communicate with elected officials and residents, and implement services in ways that reduce confusion and participation barriers. Cities may defer to County Ordinance 110 requirements, use local licensing provisions within open hauling, or organize service through contracts.

The objectives of this project are to:

- Provide a practical decision support system Toolkit that cities can use to evaluate residential curbside organics collection approaches and communicate options to city councils and other decision-makers.
- Compare open and organized collection frameworks for organics service, including advantages, disadvantages, typical timelines, and implementation steps.
- Benchmark communities in the TCMA, including examples of municipalities that have adopted different collection structures and any recent transitions between system types.
- Summarize key statutory and policy considerations that affect how organics service is delivered and funded.
- Incorporate implementation considerations that cities commonly need when selecting a system, including existing hauling structures, potential JPA models, code and ordinance considerations



(including container-related provisions), clear visuals, and standardized labeling approaches consistent with County requirements.

To inform the Toolkit, the project combined coordination with Dakota County and city staff, review of local policy and ordinance frameworks, and benchmarking of select Twin Cities communities to capture practical lessons from communities that have implemented curbside organics programs.

The Toolkit provides side-by-side comparisons of open collection versus city-contracted collection approaches and statutory considerations, case summaries from municipalities that transitioned to organics collection, and “quick start” tables that outline typical timelines, major steps, responsible parties, and key decision points for municipal consideration. It also includes a Dakota County suburban city solid waste code inventory and a section analyzing code readiness for cities, for example, where a city ordinance indicates only two carts are allowed and would need revision, focused on organics definitions, cart storage, set-out expectations, and references to hauler licensing.

Local best practice case studies and a system inventory of TCMA municipalities supplement the guidance with real-world examples and implementation exhibits that address cart options, third-cart storage considerations, participation practices, and other cross-cutting topics, such as “everyone pays” and cart and compostable bag procurement and distribution. Everyone pays is a universal organics fee built into the base residential solid waste rate, so participants are not charged more than nonparticipants. This approach aligns with Minnesota Statute § 115A.93, subd. 3(c), and MPCA’s clarification to Hennepin County that organics collection is treated as recycling for rate-setting.

Across the benchmark communities (communities in the TCMA area that were surveyed for this report, outlined in **Section 2.3**), operational details vary, but several transferable patterns repeat.

1. Participation depends on lowering barriers, not just service availability. Communities repeatedly emphasized that clear calls to action, simple enrollment steps, prompt cart delivery and first-week guidance make starting easy.
2. The everyone pays model needs clear, plain language, paired with approachable action steps, so residents understand both why the charge exists and how to participate.
3. Contamination is manageable when expectations are simple and repeated and when response protocols are consistent and predictable for residents and customer service staff.
4. Cities described the rollout as an implementation phase that benefits from frequent coordination and communication with haulers on cart inventory, staffing, route adjustments, missed pickups, tagging protocols, and seasonal changes.
5. Organizing collection services can standardize organics pricing for residents.
6. Provide carts only to residents who affirmatively opt-in for organics collection services, which can help residents understand the cart’s purpose and which materials are accepted. Requires sustained outreach to grow participation.

1.0 Background and Objectives

Dakota County (County) retained Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) to develop this Residential Organics Collection Best Management Practices Toolkit (Toolkit) to support best practice methods in the region for curbside organics collection to residents. The toolkit is being developed in response to municipalities that expressed interest in learning best practice residential organics policy and collection system approaches of Twin Cities curbside collection programs in preparation of rollout of curbside organics programs.

This toolkit uses plain language where possible. When referencing city code, ordinances, or contracts, the toolkit uses the term “organics” as it appears in the source document to remain consistent with the governing language. “Food scraps” is the preferred term for resident-facing messaging. “Residential” refers to a residential structure where each household has their own collection bins. The toolkit focuses on the residential curbside context described in Dakota County’s planning and the TCMA policy expectations.

For purposes of the toolkit, “suburban municipalities” generally refers to the suburban areas in the county, which includes the cities of Empire, Lilydale, Mendota, and Sunfish Lake.

“Open hauling” refers to a collection system in which residents subscribe directly to a licensed hauler, and the city influences service availability and standards primarily through licensing and ordinance requirements. “Municipality-contracted” refers to a system where the city holds the collection contract (single hauler or multiple haulers by zone), and service standards, pricing structure, and program requirements are primarily set through the contract and associated program documents. In Minnesota statute, this approach is commonly referred to as “organized collection” under Minnesota Statute § 115A.94, meaning a specified collector (or organization of collectors) is authorized to serve a defined geographic service area.

1.1 Solid Waste Management Plan

Dakota County’s 2024 – 2044 Solid Waste Management Plan (Solid Waste Management Plan) includes the state-required strategy to make residential curbside organics collection available in cities with populations greater than 5,000 by 2030. The plan includes a strategy to amend Dakota County Ordinance 110 (Solid Waste Management) to require licensed haulers to provide the service to residential customers (e.g., single-family homes) in suburban areas. The Solid Waste Management Plan identifies County implementation tactics that may include amendments to Dakota County Ordinance No. 110, start-up resources to reduce participation barriers, and support for municipalities interested in researching or implementing best waste management collection practices. Currently there are no residential curbside collection services being provided by cities or haulers in Dakota County. The county anticipates working on ordinance amendments in 2027.

Ordinance 110 has existing requirements for haulers to use standardized labels on their organics containers and to provide standardized education to customers they provide with organics collection services. Cities can choose to implement additional curbside organics policy approaches for their community, as long as they do not conflict with county requirements.

While the 2030 requirement is driven by the MPCA, the County’s role in this project is to support research of best waste management collection practices for municipalities that have expressed interest. The County is not directing individual city policy choices. Instead, the Toolkit was intended to provide practical resources



and technical assistance to help interested cities that want to evaluate best practice organics collection policy options. Cities may choose to take a more active role through local licensing provisions, franchising, contracting, joint powers agreements (JPAs) and/or other policy tools, but those choices remain at the city level.

1.2 Dakota County Solid Waste Ordinance

Dakota County Ordinance 110 (Solid Waste Management) provides the regulatory foundation for solid waste management in the county. The ordinance includes organics collection requirements for certain commercial entities (businesses, schools) and for haulers that provide organics collection to their customers. It defines organics as the food waste and the designated list of organics published on the Dakota County website (food scraps). This provides the baseline for what materials may be accepted in an organics program and gives Dakota County flexibility to refine accepted materials administratively without changing the ordinance text.

1.2.1 Organics Collection Requirements For Haulers

Ordinance 110 establishes hauler licensing requirements. Dakota County licenses municipal solid waste haulers operating within the county, which gives it an established mechanism to set and enforce service expectations across haulers, even within an open hauling system. This licensing authority is important because it already allows the County to standardize key elements of organics service, including accepted materials, cart labeling, and customer education. Together, these provisions provide a solid foundation for future ordinance updates related to residential curbside organics collection. For haulers that provide organics collection services, they must:

- **Provide standardized customer messaging:** Haulers must provide the county's standardized solid waste abatement (food scraps) messaging to customers that includes the list of organics they accept, in print or electronic form, upon initial service and annually thereafter. That messaging must be consistent with solid waste abatement messaging published on the county's website. In addition, the Solid Waste Management Plan includes a strategy to "Update Dakota County Ordinance 110" to require haulers to provide customers feedback when they are not sorting recycling or organics correctly and provide standardized messaging to customers on a quarterly basis at minimum." This may include expanded, more frequent educational messaging related to residential curbside organics collection. County staff anticipate working on this and other ordinance amendments in 2027 to implement all regulatory strategies in the Solid Waste Management Plan.
- **Use standardized labels on hauler-supplied containers:** Haulers must use county standardized labels on containers that identify acceptable materials, show images of acceptable materials, use standard color coding, remain visible and legible, and include preparation instructions where applicable in accordance with standards published on the county's website. **Figure 1-1** depicts Dakota County's standardized organics label.

In addition, licensed haulers must submit an amended license application prior to implementing service changes, label hauler-supplied containers with container capacity and properly itemize customer invoices for each waste type to include container sizes, collection frequency, taxes and fees, and service period.

Figure 1-1 Dakota County Standardized Hauler Label



1.2.2 Future Ordinance Update for Residential Curbside Organics

Dakota County anticipates amendments to Ordinance 110 to implement all regulatory strategies in the Solid Waste Management Plan, including to require licensed haulers to provide the service to residential customers (e.g., single-family homes or where each household has their own collection bins) in suburban areas. Anticipated ordinance changes may include requiring a hauler implementation plan, prohibiting a container delivery charge, and requiring haulers to collect recyclables, trash, and organics on the same day for residential customers. The county anticipates working on ordinance amendments in 2027.

2.0 Methodology

Burns & McDonnell developed this toolkit using a blended approach that combined project coordination with Dakota County, community benchmarking, and targeted document review. The intent was to capture both what is required (policy and ordinance context) and what works in practice (program design and implementation lessons learned).

2.1 County Project Coordination

The project began with a kick-off meeting with Dakota County staff on October 21, 2025, to confirm the project's purpose, target audience, deliverables, key decision points, and terminology. Following the kick-off, Burns & McDonnell held bi-weekly check-in meetings with County staff. These meetings were used to:

- Provide progress updates and refine priorities
- Review interim findings and draft materials
- Align on definitions and consistent language
- Identify additional communities to contact and topics to explore

2.2 City Project Coordination

Burns & McDonnell met with the County and city recycling and solid waste coordinators on November 4, 2025. The meeting included a project overview and a facilitated discussion focused on implementation realities and decision-maker needs. A toolkit overview presentation was shared with attendees.

Meeting input was used to refine toolkit content and to prioritize topics anticipated to be most relevant to city councils and program administrators, including:

- **Outcomes that matter most:** Cost considerations, resident impacts, customer service performance, and wear on city roads.
- **Top barriers to implementation:** Misinformation and public confusion, perceived bill impacts, participation uncertainty, and contamination concerns.
- **Service model preferences:** Interest in organized, open and hybrid approaches, including discussion of participation thresholds and potential subcontracting considerations tied to ordinance or licensing frameworks.
- **Community examples to study:** Recommendations for case study communities and models to benchmark, which informed the selection of survey and interview targets.

This meeting also helped identify communication needs for residents and elected officials, reinforcing the importance of clear visuals, consistent labeling, and plain-language terminology throughout the Toolkit.

2.3 Community Benchmarking

To ground the Toolkit in real-world practice across the TCMA, Burns & McDonnell benchmarked communities using two complementary methods: surveys and interviews with follow-up discussion. The benchmarked communities were not selected using a rigid set of predetermined criteria. Instead, the selection was informed through discussion with Dakota County and city staff, with emphasis on communities that were reasonably comparable in size and representative of the hauling structures most relevant to Dakota County.

The benchmarking effort focused on communities that could provide practical insight for Dakota County's suburban context. Communities in Ramsey and Washington counties were not included because their waste management systems are structurally distinct from Dakota County, and a similar approach was taken with Anoka County communities that offer organics service. Carver and Scott counties were also not the focus of this effort, as there are no cities or haulers currently providing residential curbside collection services. In general, the selected benchmarked communities reflect a combination of staff recommendations, community size, and applicable hauling structures.

2.3.1 Survey Outreach

Burns & McDonnell distributed a structured survey to selected communities to collect consistent baseline information on:

- Collection system type, service model (open vs. organized), and changes to the system
- Program scope (materials accepted, container approach and eligibility)
- Education and contamination management practices
- Costs, contract provisions, and rate-setting considerations
- Operational issues and implementation lessons

The completed surveys and tabled summaries are provided in **Appendix A** (Transition Surveys) and **Appendix B** (Best Management Practices). A summary table of the surveys is provided in **Appendix C**.

2.3.2 Interviews and Follow-up Discussions

Burns & McDonnell conducted interviews with community staff via Microsoft Teams meetings and phone calls. These conversations were used to add context that surveys often miss, such as:

- The rationale behind program design choices
- Implementation sequencing and timeline
- Council and resident concerns, and how they were addressed
- Operational realities, including vendor coordination
- Lessons learned and recommended best practices

Meeting notes from the interviews are provided in **Appendix D**.

2.4 Policy and Ordinance Review

Burns & McDonnell reviewed relevant county and city solid waste ordinances and hauler licensing tools to understand the existing policy framework that may impact organics collection. This review focused on Dakota County suburban cities with populations greater than 5,000 residents. A review of additional suburban cities, as requested by County staff, was also completed since haulers serving these communities may be subject to the 2030 residential curbside organics service requirement, similar to the municipalities where the County requires haulers to provide weekly recycling to residential customers.

2.5 Synthesis and Toolkit Development

Information from meetings, surveys, interviews, and document review was compiled and analyzed to identify common approaches, decision points, and best practices. Burns & McDonnell translated those findings into practical content cities can use, including side-by-side comparisons of organics collection approaches in TCMA municipalities and decision-support content to inform local policy discussions.



3.0 Organics Collection System Types Summary

Cities most often implement organics service through one of two types of collection systems:

- **Open hauling:** Multiple haulers are allowed to operate in the city under a licensing framework. Residents choose any hauler licensed by the city and subscribe directly for service.
- **Municipality-contracted service:** The city establishes service through its organized collection authority and selects one hauler or a defined set of hauling zones with each zone assigned a specific hauler and collection day through a formal procurement process. Residents receive service through the contracted structure. In this Toolkit, “organized collection” refers to statutory authority and related legal or administrative steps, while “municipality-contracted” describes the service model in plain terms.

This section presents how each organics collection system type functions in practice and compares key considerations specific to organics collection.

3.1 System Type Functions

3.1.1 Open Hauling

In an open hauling system, a city (or the County, depending on the licensing structure) licenses haulers to operate within its jurisdiction. This split authority reflects Minnesota Statutes, § 115A.93¹, which requires mixed municipal solid waste collectors to be licensed by the jurisdiction where collection occurs. Cities and towns may issue those licenses, and the county board assumes that licensing authority by resolution when a city or town does not. Requirements are typically implemented through licensing conditions and local ordinance language. Residents retain choice among licensed providers and manage service directly with their selected hauler. In this model, program consistency and performance depend on the strength of licensing requirements, compliance monitoring, and the degree to which haulers are required to uniformly adopt organics service offerings.

3.1.2 Municipality-contracted

In a municipality-contracted system, the city uses its statutory authority under Minnesota Statutes, § 115A.94², to structure collection and select hauler service through a procurement process. A city must comply with the procedural requirements of the organized collection statute before adopting organized collection for solid waste. There may be additional procedural requirements for home rule charter cities.

A related legal question arises when a city is considering municipality-contracted collection of recyclable materials, including source-separated compostable materials such as organics. Minnesota law is not entirely clear on whether a city that contracts for the collection of recyclable materials, including source-separated compostable materials such as organics, must comply with the procedural requirements of the organized collection statute. The issue arises because Minnesota Statute § 115A.94 applies to organized collection of solid waste, while recyclable materials are treated separately in statute and include source-

¹ [Sec. 115A.93 MN Statutes](#)

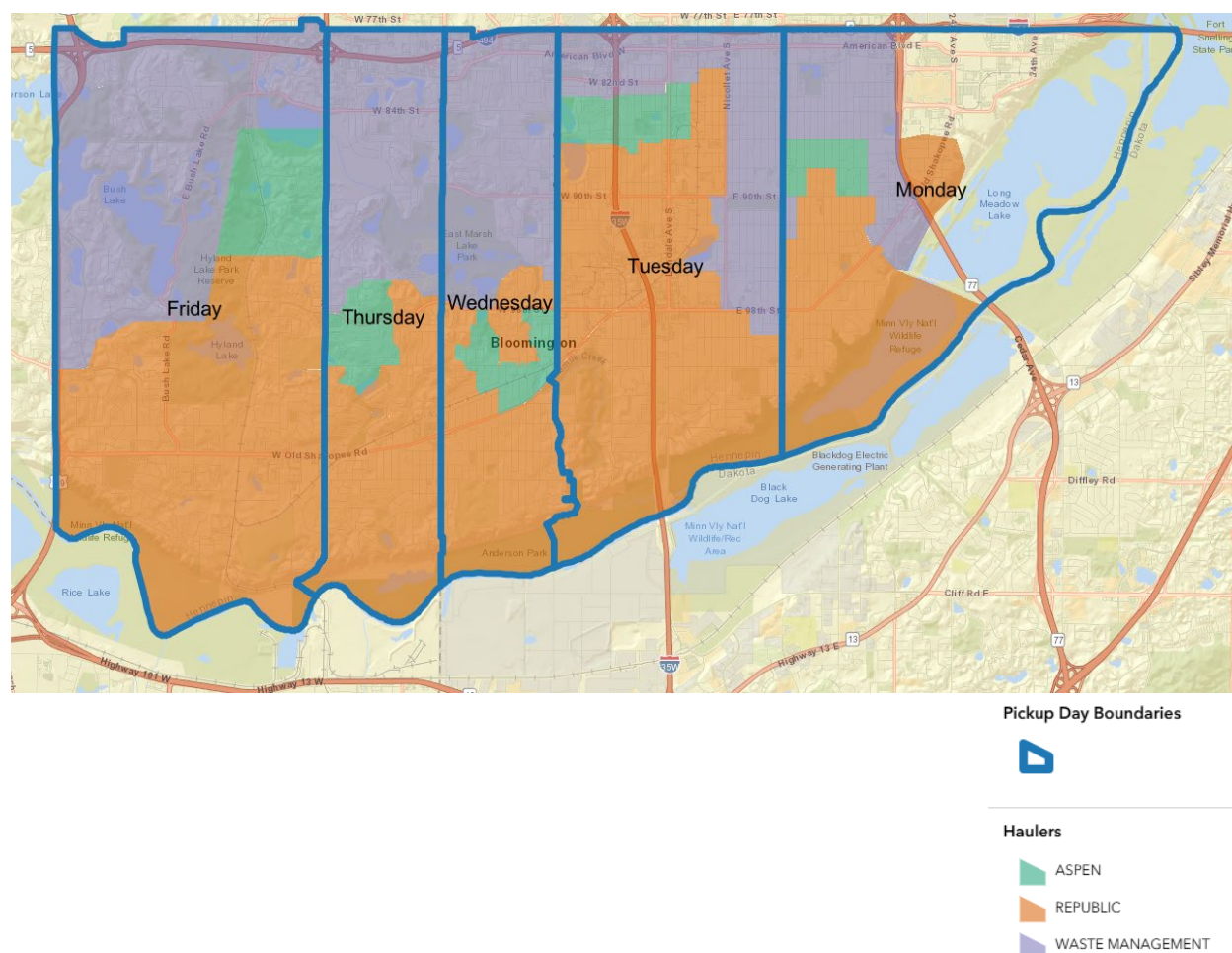
² [Sec. 115A.94 MN Statutes](#)

separated compostable materials. The League of Minnesota Cities notes that this question likely depends on whether “solid waste” in the organized collection statute is interpreted to include recyclable materials. It cites *Waste Recovery Cooperative of Minnesota v. County of Hennepin*, where the Minnesota Court of Appeals concluded that telephone directories collected for recycling were part of a separate waste stream and were not being discarded as solid waste. As a result, cities considering contracted collection of recyclable materials or organics should consult their city attorney to determine whether the organized collection statute applies to the proposed program. Minnesota Statute § 115A.94 is provided in **Appendix E** and the League of Minnesota Cities – City Solid Waste Management memo is provided in **Appendix F**. The memo describes both open and organized collection models.

For the purposes of this Toolkit, **Section 3.3.2** lays out the statutory requirements for organized collection of solid waste under Minnesota law, which provides the legal framework against which collection of recyclable materials and organics could be considered.

Once that legal framework is established, the city defines the details of service through its contract and supporting ordinance provisions. Service standards, pricing or rate structure, education requirements, reporting, and performance expectations are then established through the contract and supporting ordinance provisions. **Organized collection can be structured in different ways. Some cities contract with a single hauler to serve the entire city, while others divide the city into service zones and contract with one or more haulers to serve specific geographic areas.** Dakota County’s two current organized collection cities, Farmington and Hastings, use a single-hauler model, but other Minnesota cities demonstrate that zoned service is also a viable way to structure municipality-contracted collection. The city of Bloomington, Minnesota offers a zoned organized waste collection system, which means the city has assigned residents a hauler from a list of licensed haulers as part of the city contract. **Figure 3-1** depicts an example of an organized zone collection system from the city of Bloomington.

Figure 3-1 Example Organized Zone Collection System



3.2 Organics Collection System Type Comparison

The following comparison focuses on the practical decision points that influence successful organics collection programs, including oversight tools, the speed of implementation, the consistency of carts and labels across a community, and how contamination is addressed.

Key elements of comparison include:

- **Governance and oversight:** How much control the city has over service standards and how much ongoing administration is required.
- **Procurement and licensing processes:** The complexity, timeline and staff effort required to implement or change the service.
- **Performance accountability:** The mechanisms available to manage service quality and responsiveness.
- **Cost and rate design:** Transparency, equity and how pricing structures influence participation.
- **Operational coordination:** Ability to align organics cart collection with trash and recycling collection to reduce the number of collection truck trips on local streets, limiting road wear and emissions as much as possible.

- **Customer service experience:** Consistency of messaging and clarity of resident points of contact.
- **Data and reporting:** Ability to gather consistent program data for planning, evaluation, and compliance.
- **Organics specific considerations:** Contamination control, cart standardization, labeling, and consistent education.

Table 3-1 summarizes the key elements of comparison for open hauling versus municipality-contracted organics collection.

Table 3-1 Comparison of Open Hauling Versus Municipality-Contracted Organics Collection

Element	Open Hauling	Municipality Contracted
Governance and Oversight	Flexible framework: residents retain the choice of hauler; reduces the city's administrative burden. Oversight is primarily through licensing and ordinance compliance.	The city has stronger control to set service standards and align with policy goals. Requires more city staff time to procure, administer, and manage the contract, but may not necessarily require additional staff.
Procurement and Licensing	The licensing process can be straightforward and quicker to adjust over time. Service approaches may vary across providers, reducing standardization.	Competitive procurement can standardize service and secure favorable terms. Process is resource-intensive and subject to statutory timelines and procurement requirements.
Performance Accountability	Market competition may drive service improvements; enforcement relies on ordinance provisions and complaint resolution. Fewer proactive tools without specific license conditions.	A contract can establish key performance indicators, remedies, and audit rights to drive consistent service. Residents have less flexibility if service issues arise with the selected provider.
Cost and Rate Design	Residents can shop among haulers; rates may vary and be less transparent, increasing the risk of higher prices and inequities across neighborhoods.	Uniform rates can promote equity and transparency. Less individual choice: rate adjustments are tied to contract terms and city decision-making. Municipality-contracted hauling is often, but not always, less expensive than open hauling.
Operational Coordination	Haulers can innovate in routing but may experience lower efficiency; set-out days may differ across neighborhoods, increasing truck activity.	Integrated routing and harmonized set-outs can reduce the number of truck operating in neighborhoods. Active oversight can result in collection efficiency, with needs to adjust routes over time.
Environmental Impact	More trucks on the roads means increased emissions and road wear and tear. It is harder for a city to hold multiple haulers accountable for	Optimized routes reduce the total miles driven, reducing emission and road wear. All residents receive the same carts, the same instructions, and the same service day,



Element	Open Hauling	Municipality Contracted
	meeting diversion and contamination goals.	which reduces confusion and lowers contamination.
Customer Service	Residents keep existing relationships with their chosen hauler; multiple points of contact and varying information can dilute consistent messaging.	A single point of contact can simplify service requests and education. Centralization may feel less personalized to some residents if the customer service contact is not local and not specifically called out in an RFP.
Data and Reporting	Data collection and reporting may vary by hauler, limiting comparability across the city.	Standardized reporting supports planning and oversight. Uniform reporting requirements can add administrative effort for the hauler.
Organics Considerations	Providers may customize programs quickly. Cart sizes, labels and contamination protocols may vary across haulers.	Standardized carts, labels, and messaging can align across residents, including alignment with Ordinance 110 expectations. Standardization can reduce flexibility to evaluate alternative approaches.

3.3 Statutory Pathways for City Curbside Collection Systems

To complement the model comparison, this section describes the statutory pathways available to Minnesota cities and towns that wish to adopt local policy approaches for residential organics collection. Dakota County licenses all municipal solid waste haulers operating in the county and intends to require those haulers, through its licensing framework, to offer curbside organics service to residential customers in suburban areas. The pathways described below therefore are not needed to create a baseline organics service requirement. Instead, they are additional tools cities may use to go beyond Dakota County's hauler requirements.

3.3.1 Open Hauling Statutory Pathway

In an open hauling system, curbside collection is delivered by multiple haulers operating in a city under a licensing framework. The pathway for implementing organics collection in an open hauling environment is built around aligning local licensing requirements and ordinance provisions with state statute, while using clear service standards and reporting expectations to support consistent program delivery.

Step 1. Establish the licensing authority

Minnesota Statute § 115A.93 authorizes cities and towns to license collectors of solid waste and recycling within their jurisdiction. County boards shall, by resolution, adopt the licensing authority of a city or town that does not issue licenses.

Step 2. Set licensing conditions that support organics collection

Licensing conditions can be used to require or support organics service availability and to establish consistent expectations across multiple haulers. State statute explicitly allows a licensing authority to impose requirements consistent with county solid waste policies as a condition of receiving and maintaining

a license. Dakota County intends to use this authority through its countywide hauler licensing framework to require curbside organics service for residential customers in suburban areas. Accordingly, cities do not need to separately license organics service but may choose to do so.

Step 3. Address “Everyone Pays” requirements

Minnesota statute requires licensing authorities to establish pricing structures for mixed municipal solid waste that increase with the volume or weight collected and to prohibit collectors from charging residents who recycle more than those who do not. MPCA has clarified that, in communities where organics service is provided under licensing authority, curbside organics collection is treated as “recycling” for purposes of Minnesota’s pricing provision, meaning residents cannot be charged more for subscribing to organics service than those who do not. This is commonly referred to as “everyone pays,” a universal organics fee structure where the cost of organics service is built into the base residential solid waste rate for all customers in the service area. In an open model, the “everyone pays” structure still applies but the cost of service may vary from hauler to hauler. This approach aligns with Minnesota Statute § 115A.93, subd. 3(c), which requires licensing authorities to prohibit collectors from imposing a greater charge on residents who recycle than residents who do not. A letter dated January 30, 2023, from the MPCA to Hennepin County noted that recyclable materials include source-separated compostable materials and food waste managed through composting and other biodegradative processes. This letter is provided as **Appendix G**. This is described further in **Section 10.1**.

Local Licensing Implementation Elements

The steps above outline the statutory pathway for implementing organics service in an open hauling system. Beyond that baseline, cities may choose to use local licensing provisions to establish clearer service expectations, support more consistent resident messaging, and strengthen oversight across haulers. At a minimum, cities using local licensing provisions should address the following topics in local code, licensing language, and related implementation materials.

- 1. Accepted and prohibited materials**

Define the food scraps and other materials that may be placed in the organics cart and clearly identify prohibited items. This section should align with Dakota County Ordinance 110.

- 2. Service model and collection requirements**

Define the basic service expectations for licensed haulers, including eligible households, cart sizes, missed pickup procedures, and seasonal or holiday schedule adjustments. This section should also reflect applicable Dakota County Ordinance 110 requirements, including same-day collection expectations.

- 3. Cart availability, delivery, and service coordination**

Identify expectations for cart availability, delivery timing, replacement procedures, and coordination with trash and recycling service.

- 4. Contamination monitoring and response**

Define how contamination will be identified, documented, communicated, and corrected. This section may address contamination notices, cart tagging, customer education, non-collection procedures, and escalation for repeated violations.



5. **Education, outreach, and cart labeling**

Require licensed haulers to provide customer education and cart labeling consistent with Dakota County Ordinance 110. It could also include additional print or electronic materials, website content, service guides, and multilingual education so residents receive consistent information across haulers.

6. **Reporting and recordkeeping**

Require regular reporting on program performance, including participation, contamination issues, missed pickups, customer complaints, and other service metrics. Licensing requirements can also support program monitoring beyond standard reporting of collected materials. While quantities are already reported through existing requirements, licensing provisions may help cities and Dakota County track setout rates, contamination, service issues, and other operational indicators that show how well a program is performing. This information can be used to identify challenges, improve resident education, and refine program implementation over time.

7. **Billing clarity and everyone pays implementation**

If a city uses local licensing provisions, it may address billing clarity and nondiscriminatory pricing concepts in a manner consistent with state law and Dakota County requirements. This could include a statement such as: “A licensed hauler shall not impose a greater charge for residential curbside organics collection service on a customer who participates in food scraps collection than on a similarly situated customer who does not participate in food scraps collection.”

8. **Compliance and enforcement**

In open hauling systems, performance accountability is typically managed through licensing administration. Common compliance tools include license renewal conditions, defined corrective action steps and enforcement provisions tied to ordinance compliance. These tools are particularly important for organics collection, where program success depends on consistent education, cart labeling, contamination response, and reliable reporting across multiple providers.

MPCA published an ordinance and licensing best management practice options in 2015 that provide examples of “good, better, best” license elements cities can adapt, including organics-related provisions and reporting practices. While parts of it are outdated, it is still a useful resource. **Appendix H** provides this guidance.

Key takeaways: Taken together, the open hauling pathway can be summarized as: establishing the licensing authority, adopting license and ordinance provisions that support organics service and consistent public messaging, aligning pricing provisions with state statute and MPCA clarification, require reporting and administer compliance through license issuance and renewal.

3.3.2 Municipality-Contracted Statutory Pathway

In Minnesota, “organized collection” is the statutory framework that allows a city or town to establish a defined collection system in which a specified collector, or an organization of collectors, is authorized to serve a geographic area. In practice, this is the legal pathway most commonly used to support municipality-contracted residential collection, whether through a single-hauler or zoned collection model. As noted in **Section 3.1.2**, Minnesota law is not entirely clear on whether a city that contracts for the collection of recyclable materials, including source-separated compostable materials such as organics, must comply

with the procedural requirements of the organized collection statute. For the purposes of this Toolkit, this section lays out the statutory requirements for organized collection of solid waste under Minnesota law, which provides the legal framework against which collection of recyclable materials and organics could be considered.

Step 1. Notify the public and licensed collectors

If more than one licensed collector operates in the community, the city must first provide notice that it is considering organized collection. This notice goes to the public and to all licensed collectors operating in the city.

Step 2. Allow the exclusive negotiation period

After notice is provided, the city must allow at least 60 days for exclusive meetings and negotiations between the city and all licensed collectors. The purpose of this period is to give existing collectors an opportunity to develop a proposal for organized collection through an organization of collectors. Before these negotiations begin, participating collectors and elected officials must meet and confer regarding waste collection issues such as road deterioration, public safety, pricing, and other considerations unique to organized collection.

Step 3. Determine whether an agreement is reached

If the city and licensed collectors reach an agreement during the exclusive negotiation period, the city may proceed with organized collection through the agreed-upon local controls, following public notice and a public hearing. In that case, a solid waste collection options committee is not required. If no agreement is reached, the city may move to the next step and establish a solid waste collection options committee.

Step 4. Establish a solid waste collection options committee

If exclusive negotiations do not result in an agreement, the city may form a solid waste collection options committee by resolution. The committee is responsible for studying additional collection methods and evaluating at least three options: the existing system, a single collector serving the entire city, and multiple collectors serving different sections of the city.

Step 5. Evaluate collection options and gather input

The committee evaluates the selected options using criteria established by the city, which may include cost, traffic, safety, environmental performance, impacts on residents and collectors, and other relevant considerations. The committee must also gather information on organized collection systems in other communities and seek input from the governing body, city staff responsible for solid waste issues, currently licensed collectors, and residents who pay for service.

Step 6. Complete the committee report

The committee issues a report summarizing its research, findings, and any recommendations to the governing body.

Step 7. Provide public notice and hold a hearing

Before deciding whether to implement organized collection, the governing body must consider the committee's report, provide public notice, and hold at least one public hearing.

Step 8. Select the implementation approach

If the city decides to proceed, it selects how organized collection will be implemented. Minnesota law allows organized collection to be established as a municipal service through negotiated contract, procurement process, or other means, using one or more collectors or an organization of collectors.



Step 9. Procure or negotiate service and establish program standards

Many cities pair the organized collection process with a procurement process, such as a Request for Proposal (RFP), to select a hauler and define service expectations. This is typically where the city establishes service standards, pricing or rate structure, education requirements, customer service expectations, reporting requirements, contamination response procedures, and other program design details. Organized collection may be structured as a single-hauler system serving the entire city or as a zoned system in which one or more haulers serve designated geographic areas. This is described further in **Section 3.3.3**.

Step 10. Implement organized collection

Organized collection may begin no sooner than six months after the effective date of the city's decision to implement it.

Step 11. Administer the program and monitor performance

After implementation, the city administers the agreement or local controls and oversees performance through contract requirements, standardized program elements, reporting, and ongoing review.

3.3.3 Procurement and Contracting Process

Dakota County cities have several options if they choose to go above and beyond Dakota County licensing requirements and want to establish contracted organics collection services. The League of Minnesota Cities guidance located in **Appendix F** states that the competitive bidding requirements in the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law do not apply to city contracts for solid waste, including organics collection, because those agreements do not fall within the statutory definition of a contract subject to Minnesota Statute § 471.345. Cities usually have their own requirements for competitive procurement process to enter into a contract with a private solid waste management company and should therefore work closely with their city attorney.

This section provides an overview of key decisions needed during the procurement and contracting process. It starts by examining different procurement processes, then provides tips with key information that should be included in the scope of services and contract.

Local programs have multiple options for procuring any solid waste collection service, including organics. The procurement process may use a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), Request for Bids (RFB), or RFP process. An RFP method is generally recommended as it allows cities to consider various factors in the decision-making process. Also known as a “best value” approach, an RFP is more versatile in allowing a more exhaustive exploration of varying service parameters from different companies and is not just based on price alone. Given the complex and long-term nature of collection contracts, the RFP “best value” approach may be the preferred framework. The RFP process allows cities to give additional consideration to non-financial factors, such as ability to perform the service and service performance history. Non-financial factors are important when considering a service that impacts public health, safety, and general welfare.

Key steps in RFP-based procurement include:

Step 1. City develops RFP

The City considers its goals and objectives and reflects them in its RFP, considering how the RFP elements will translate into the final contract.

Step 2. Companies develop and submit proposals

Proposers develop their submittals, with opportunities to have questions answered by submittal in writing or during a pre-proposal meeting.

Step 3. City evaluates, negotiates, and awards contracts

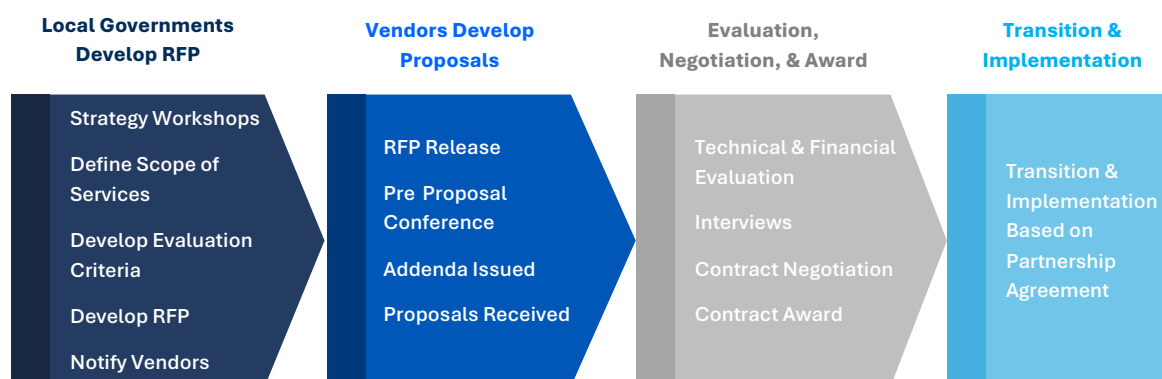
Proposals are reviewed technically and financially, often involving interviews with prospective companies. Contract negotiations commence, and a formal award is made.

Step 4. Transition and implementation of contract

The level of effort and time needed for transition and implantation of a contract can vary widely. The transition may be less challenging when a solid waste management or organics collection company already operates in the local market and has available capacity. Transition and implementation efforts are more involved in cases where an organics collection company is entering a market since they must acquire operating facilities and rolling stock, which impacts the schedule.

Figure 3-2 displays the key steps in the RFP process.

Figure 3-2 Key Steps in the RFP Process



A city should carefully consider the length of its organics collection services contracts. Decisions on contract length can significantly affect how many proposals or bids may be submitted and how competitive they are. Several factors determine the optimal contract length, but the most critical factor is whether the company is starting a new operation requiring equipment. If a private company starts a new operation, it will ideally seek to recover its capital costs over the contract's life. Consequently, aligning contract length to the useful life of capital assets can help cities and private companies achieve a lower price.

For example, an Automated Side Loader (ASL) collection vehicle typically depreciates on a seven-year schedule. A contract may align a seven-year initial term with the depreciation schedule and allow for flexibility with multiple one-year or one three-year contract extension(s) for a maximum total of 10 years of contract length. Contract extensions are subject to approval by both parties. Cities should be aware that a vendor may decline contract extension and anticipate the potential need to go out to bid. There may be a tendency by cities to prefer shorter-term contracts due to potential past negative experiences. However, pricing will be more competitive if the contract term is aligned with vehicle and equipment depreciation.

A well-drafted scope of services and contract gives proposers a clear understanding of the city's expectations and creates the foundation for successful program implementation. For residential organics collection, the solicitation and resulting contract should define the service model, establish measurable

performance standards, and clearly assign responsibility for carts, education, contamination monitoring, reporting, and processing. Cities need to account for applicable Dakota County Solid Waste Ordinance 110 requirements, such as the designated list of acceptable organics, standardized educational messaging to customers, standardized labels on carts, and same-day collection of trash, recycling, and organics.

At a minimum, cities should address the following topics in the scope of services and contract:

1. Accepted and prohibited materials

Define the organics and other materials that may be placed in the organics cart and clearly identify prohibited items. This section should align with Dakota County Ordinance 110.

2. Service model and collection requirements

Describe the basic service structure, including who is eligible for service, collection frequency, cart set-out requirements, cart sizes, missed pickup procedures, and any seasonal or holiday schedule adjustments. This section should also reflect any applicable Dakota County Ordinance 110 requirements, including same-day collection expectations.

3. Cart supply, delivery, and route planning requirements

Identify who will supply carts, kitchen pails, liners, and other program materials, and describe delivery timing, assembly, distribution responsibilities, and replacement procedures. This section should also address route planning expectations, including how organics collection will be integrated with trash and recycling service and any start-up planning needed for new routes.

4. Contamination monitoring and response

Establish contamination standards and describe how contamination will be identified, documented, communicated, and corrected. Best practices include route audits, cart tags or notices, contamination thresholds, and clear procedures for repeated violations.

5. Education and outreach responsibilities

Assign responsibility for customer education before and after program launch. This may include printed materials, cart labels, website content, service guides, outreach events, and multilingual education. This section should specifically reference compliance with Dakota County Ordinance 110 requirements for standardized customer education and standardized cart labeling.

6. Customer service requirements

Specify who will manage missed pickups, cart repairs and replacements, billing questions if applicable, complaint response, and communication with residents. The contract should set minimum response times and define how service issues will be tracked and reported to the city.

7. Reporting and recordkeeping

Require regular reporting on program performance including participation indicators, contamination issues, missed pickups, and customer complaints. Reliable reporting allows the city to evaluate service quality and make informed program adjustments over time.

8. Performance standards and remedies

The contract should include corrective action plans, withholding of payment, or other contract remedies.



9. Pricing and adjustment provisions

The solicitation should clearly describe the pricing form and any adjustment method for fuel, inflation, service changes, contamination, and participation escalators. Clear pricing terms improve proposal comparability and reduce the risk of later disputes or renegotiation.

10. Alignment between the RFP and contract

The draft contract should be included with the RFP, so proposers understand the city's legal and operational expectations from the outset. Evaluation criteria should align with the scope of services and reward proposals that best address service quality, implementation, experience, processing approach, education, and cost.

3.4 Key takeaways

Dakota County Ordinance 110 establishes the minimum framework for residential organics collection. Cities that want to build on that framework have different tools depending on how service is structured. In open hauling systems, city licensing can be used to create more consistent expectations across haulers, especially for billing clarity, reporting, customer service, and implementation. In municipality-contracted systems, procurement and contract documents give cities more control over the details of service, including carts, rollout, collection coordination, contamination response, reporting, and customer service. Across both models, the most effective local actions are the ones that make the program more consistent, easier for residents to understand, and easier for staff to manage.

4.0 TCMA System Inventory

This section identifies and classifies a representative set of TCMA cities that offers residential curbside organics collection under four governance models: open hauling (residents choose among licensed haulers), municipality-contracted single hauler (one hauler serves all households under a city contract), municipality-contracted zoned or multi-hauler (a city assigns two or more haulers by zone or territory) and under a JPA. For the communities selected, communities in Ramsey, Washington, Scott, and Carver counties were not selected due to incompatible waste collection models or lack of organics programs.

Program structures and start dates can change, so the classification relies on publicly posted city and program webpages as the source of record. **Appendix I** provides the TCMA Systems Map. **Table 4-1** provides a summary of a sample of TCMA municipality residential curbside food scrap collection programs.

Table 4-1 Sample TCMA Municipality Residential Curbside Food Scrap Collection Programs

System Type	Community	Offering	Source Link
Open Hauling	Eden Prairie	Open hauling: all three residential haulers must offer curbside organics	City of Eden Prairie
Open Hauling	Rogers	Open hauling: all four residential trash haulers must offer curbside organics	City of Rogers
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Plymouth	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler	City of Plymouth
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Minnetonka	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler	City of Minnetonka
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Maple Grove	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler	City of Maple Grove
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Golden Valley	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler.	City of Golden Valley
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Edina	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler	City of Edina
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Hopkins	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler	City of Hopkins
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	St. Louis Park	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler	City of St. Louis Park
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Long Lake	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler	City of Long Lake
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Columbia Heights	City program: weekly collection of 7-gallon pail by Better Futures; billed on utility	City of Columbia Heights
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Brooklyn Park	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler	City of Brooklyn Park
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Maple Plain	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler	City of Maple Plain
Municipality-contracted Single Hauler	Robbinsdale	City-contracted: weekly organics collected by a single hauler	City of Robbinsdale
Municipality-contracted Zoned/Multi-hauler	Bloomington	Organized multi-hauler consortium; weekly organics collection	City of Bloomington

System Type	Community	Offering	Source Link
Municipality-contracted Zoned/Multi-hauler	Richfield	Organized multi-hauler system; organics included in city program	City of Richfield
Municipality-contracted Zoned/Multi-hauler	Champlin	Champlin Refuse, Inc. a consortium of two companies, each with assigned territory	City of Champlin
JPA	Hennepin Recycling Group		
	Brooklyn Center	HRG city: recycling program expanded to include weekly curbside organics (separate cart).	Hennepin Recycling Group
	New Hope	HRG city: recycling program expanded to include weekly curbside organics (separate cart).	City of New Hope
	Crystal	HRG city: curbside organics added to recycling program in 2025; weekly pickup	City of Crystal
Open Hauling: Organics collection is Not Required	Coon Rapids	Open hauling: single hauler offers subscription curbside organics service	Walters Recycling
Open Hauling: Organics collection is Not Required	Lino Lakes	Open hauling: single hauler curbside organics (available to customers)	City of Lino Lakes
Municipality-contracted Hauling: Organics collection is Not Required	Fridley	City-contracted: curbside organics available through a single hauler	City of Fridley

Across the TCMA, the four governance models appear at different levels of prevalence in practice. In the representative set summarized in the classification table, municipality-contracted single-hauler programs are the most common for organics collection. Open-hauling examples are present but less common in the selected set; municipality-contracted zoned or multi-hauler structures appear the least often; and JPA-based programs constitute a smaller but notable subset in which multiple cities deliver a shared, standardized curbside program through a joint powers structure. This distribution lines up with the broader regional backdrop. According to the *Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan 2022-2042*³, roughly 60 percent of TCMA communities already have organized recycling collection, but only 37 percent of TCMA cities currently contract for residential mixed municipal solid waste (MMSW) collection, well below the approximately 70 percent of cities nationwide that use contracted residential MMSW collection.

As cities add curbside organics, many consider municipality-contracted systems because they can clarify roles and expectations, making it easier to communicate and administer. Depending on local goals and constraints, approaches with more standardized service terms can simplify resident messaging, support consistent program rules across a city, and improve route planning. At the same time, other communities may prioritize flexibility, market choice, or a lighter municipal role, which can point toward open-hauling models.

Open hauling remains a common baseline structure for trash collection in Minnesota cities overall, but not for organics collection. Hennepin County has had a curbside organics availability requirement in place since January 2022, based on revisions to Ordinance 13 approved in November 2018. Hennepin County's model required cities to make organics service available through city licensing or organized collection

³ [Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan, 2022-2042](#)

arrangements. Dakota County's proposed approach is different in that it would place the requirement at the hauler-license level under Ordinance 110, rather than requiring cities to establish organics service through local licensing or contracting mechanisms. However, that runway makes Hennepin a strong place to benchmark TCMA collection models because many cities have already worked through the practical decisions that come after a mandate: governance structure, cart rollout, service standards, contamination response, and customer service workflows. Eden Prairie and Rogers are examples of cities that retained an open hauling framework for trash collection and met the organics requirement through hauler licensing, requiring all licensed residential trash haulers serving the city to offer curbside organics recycling.

Municipality-contracted single hauler is the most common model, and based on interviews with multiple communities, it also appears to be the most effective at driving resident participation because the service is available consistently to all households and is integrated into the standard curbside system. Once the contract is in place, the approach is also straightforward to administer: one hauler, one set of service standards, one contamination response approach and clearer customer service pathways. It tends to capture a key operational benefit cities cite when moving away from open hauling, fewer trucks per neighborhood and more efficient routing. The MPCA's organized collection materials similarly highlight route efficiency and other system advantages as drivers for organized collection decisions.

Municipality-contracted zoned or multi-hauler systems are less common largely because they combine many of the "hard parts" of organized collection with fewer of the simplifications. Cities still have to design zones or allocate customers, run a more complex procurement or transition process, manage multiple contractors and handle consistency across haulers (rates, carts, education, contamination response, performance metrics). Richfield's description highlights the added coordination step of assigning households among existing haulers (often tied to market share concepts) and Champlin's consortium model shows the extra structure needed to make territory assignments work in practice.

The JPA model sits in a different niche. Rather than each city building and administering a full program on its own, multiple cities share a standardized structure and contract. The Hennepin Recycling Group (HRG) is a clear example, serving Brooklyn Center, Crystal, and New Hope. HRG contracted services for curbside organics began March 31, 2025, with sign-up and program information centralized through HRG. The JPA model is described in greater detail in **Section 6.4**.

5.0 Municipal Organics Collection Implementation Summaries

This section summarizes real-world experiences with system change from several Hennepin County municipalities that have modified how they provide residential curbside organics collection. The benchmarking effort focused on communities that could provide practical insight for Dakota County's suburban context. Communities in Ramsey and Washington counties were not included because their waste management systems are structurally distinct from Dakota County, and a similar approach was taken with Anoka County communities that offer organics service. Carver and Scott counties were also not the focus of this effort, as there are no cities or haulers currently providing residential curbside collection services. The case study review found no examples of municipalities moving from organized collection to open collection for organics. Instead, the changes observed were from open collection to organized collection for organics, while some cities, such as Eden Prairie and Rogers, have remained open systems. The case study details were compiled from multiple sources, including completed municipal surveys, follow-up phone interviews and/or Microsoft Teams meetings, and information published on each municipality's website and public meeting materials. Together, these sources document the rationale for each change, the implementation process and timeline, service and governance details, outcomes observed, and practical lessons learned that can inform Dakota County municipalities considering a similar transition or implementation. Surveys are provided in **Appendix A** and meeting notes in **Appendix D**.

5.1 Contracted-Hauling to Open Hauling

The case study review found no examples of municipalities moving from organized collection to open collection for residential organics collection services.

5.2 Open Hauling to Municipality-Contracted Service

The following cities transitioned from open hauling to municipality-contracted organics collection services.

5.2.1 City of Minnetonka

The City of Minnetonka, located in south-central Hennepin County, has a population of 52,651⁴ and operates with open trash collection alongside municipality-contracted recycling and organics services. Hennepin County has had a curbside organics availability requirement in place since January 2022, based on revisions to Ordinance 13 approved in November 2018. Under Hennepin County Ordinance 13, the responsibility to implement organics service rests with the city. Cities can meet that requirement either by contracting for citywide service or by requiring licensed residential haulers to provide organics service. **This is different from Dakota County's planned approach, in which the County, rather than individual cities, would require county-licensed haulers to provide organics service to residential customers in suburban areas.**

The city initially used an open-hauling approach for organics, requiring licensed haulers to provide curbside organics collection. **The city's ordinance caps the number of licensed haulers at four.** In 2024, the city council directed staff to negotiate the next recycling contract to include organized organics collection. As

⁴ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Minnetonka city, Minnesota](#)

noted by staff, under the city's new contract, the collection of organics cost decreased from an average of \$7 per month to \$4 per month, and participation increased significantly. Before the city contracted services, roughly 500 to 700 households participated in the organics collection program. Currently, approximately 2,600 households participate, which resulted in a 4% increase in participation after switching from open to contracted collection.

Minnetonka supported the shift to organized curbside organics collection by amending its city code to formally incorporate organics recycling into the city's contracted recycling program. The ordinance amendment aligned the code language with the new service structure, clarifying that organics collection would be provided through the city's recycling contract rather than solely through licensed haulers under the open hauling framework. This step helped codify the city's role in setting service expectations and provided a clear legal basis for program implementation, billing, and ongoing administration under the municipality-contracted model.

The city used SCORE funding, Minnesota's state recycling and organics grant funding administered through counties, to cover the first year of residential organics service. In Hennepin County, this funding model aligned with Ordinance 13, which places responsibility on cities to make residential organics service available, either through a city-run program or by requiring haulers to offer the service. Dakota County's planned approach is different. Rather than requiring cities to provide organics service, Dakota County intends to require county-licensed haulers to offer curbside organics service to their residential customers in suburban areas. **For that reason, SCORE pass-through funding to cities is not assumed in the same way in Dakota County.**

A community survey about transitioning to organized trash collection showed insufficient support, so trash collection remains open.

City of Minnetonka Survey/Interview Highlights

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider? Having a city phone number for residents to call to report issues, rather than calling the hauler. In addition, the more advanced notice you give residents about rollout details, the better.

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently? Provide a 6- to 12-month notice to open haulers that the program will transition to city-organized service, along with a clearer description of the transition process. Previously, haulers purchased carts for their customers, and some haulers were frustrated when the contracted hauler provided new carts. Duplicate sign-ups occurred among existing participants during the rollout, requiring cleanup and verification.

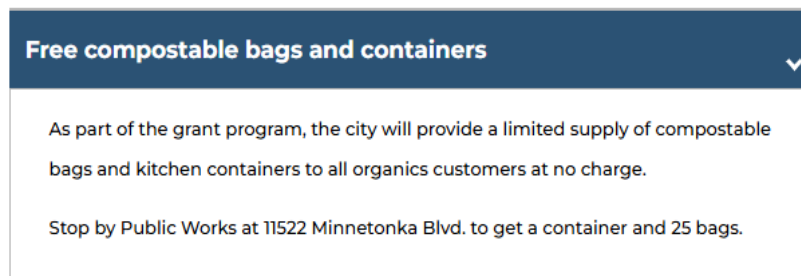
Key outreach strategy: For launch support, the city offered a limited supply of compostable bags and kitchen containers at Public Works (25 bags plus a container), framed as part of a grant-supported effort to make it easier for households to start using the cart immediately. Minnetonka used Minnetonka Matters as a public engagement channel during the ordinance and contract decision process, including a defined public comment window and posted documents, which gave residents a clear place to track what was changing and when. Minnetonka Matters is the City of Minnetonka's online engagement and project information site. It is where the city posts updates on planning, capital projects, ordinances, and other initiatives, and where residents can sign up for email and text notifications and share feedback.

Key takeaways:

The city positioned the change around cost transparency and simplification: consolidating recycling and organics under one contracted hauler and moving the organics charge onto the city utility bill (instead of variable hauler charges) created a clearer, more predictable structure for residents. As reported by staff, haulers were charging more than \$7 per month, and under the city contract, the price dropped to \$4 per month. Minnetonka paired the contract transition with clear, repeated public-facing information that answered the two questions residents ask first: “What do I do next?” and “Why am I paying for this?” Minnetonka leaned into transparency about the everyone pays structure. The city’s site includes a dedicated “Why am I being charged?” explanation that ties the universal charge to the combination of Hennepin County’s organics availability requirement and state law language prohibiting higher charges for recyclers than non-recyclers.

Figure 5-1 depicts the City of Minnetonka key outreach strategy of a free starter kit.

Figure 5-1 Key Outreach Strategy: Free Starter Kit



5.2.2 City of Long Lake

The City of Long Lake is located in western Hennepin County and had a 2020 Census population of 1,741⁵. Long Lake operates with open hauling for trash (residents select from licensed haulers), while recycling and organics are city-organized services provided through a single city contract. This structure reflects a common “hybrid” pathway in Hennepin County communities, where cities retain open hauling for trash but organize recycling, and then layer organics into the organized recycling contract when open organics pricing and service consistency become a concern.

Hennepin County’s organics collection availability requirement became effective in January 2022, following revisions to Ordinance 13 approved in November 2018. Long Lake initially met the requirement through an open-hauling approach, requiring licensed haulers to provide organics service. Over time, staff observed that the open organics model led to inconsistent resident pricing and confusion, raising equity concerns and prompting the city to transition organics to a city-organized service structure aligned with the existing recycling contract.

Beginning January 7, 2025, the city’s contracted hauler began providing residential curbside organics recycling under a city contract. Under the city program, organics collection is funded through a surcharge on all city utility bills. State law (Minnesota Statute §115A.93, subd. 3c) is cited by the city as the reason households cannot be charged more for participating than for not participating, which results in an everyone

⁵ [Long Lake 2020 Census Results](#)

pays structure in communities where organics service is available. The city explains that households are not required to participate, but households cannot opt out of paying for the program.

The monthly residential organics charge for weekly curbside collection is \$4.25, effective January 2025. Long Lake's organics program uses a 64-gallon cart, and the RFP did not specify an organics cart size or designate a smaller 32- or 35-gallon cart option. This was identified as something they would do differently in the next RFP by the city. The contract rate is based on a sliding scale tied to participation; therefore, the 2026 rate was not identified in the benchmarking materials submitted in 2025. The city also directed trash haulers to remove any organics-related charges from their customer invoices once the city program began, shifting the organics cost from hauler billing to the city utility bill.

Participation is opt-in, meaning residents have to proactively sign-up to participate, in the practical sense that carts are not automatically delivered. The city notes it is not automatically distributing organics carts because some residences may have limited space or limited interest, and residents can request a cart by contacting the city. Organics pickup occurs weekly on the same day as Long Lake's biweekly recycling. The recycling service is also city-contracted and provided citywide as single-sort curbside recycling, with multifamily buildings able to opt in to the city contract. Long Lake's RFP included organics as a bid alternate to inform a decision on whether rates would be cheaper for residents under a city contract. Staff emphasized that the shift from open organics to organized service required significant implementation effort but viewed the change as worthwhile based on fairness and predictability for residents.

Two practical transition issues emerged. First, the city needed customer information from haulers and found some data incomplete, which led to mismatches during rollout (some residents received carts even though they had not signed up under the open model, while some residents who previously had service did not receive carts initially). Second, cart size was not specified in the RFP, and the contracted hauler repurposed 64-gallon trash carts for organics, which staff noted is larger than ideal for typical residential organics collection.

Long Lake's low density and rural character influence participation. Staff noted many residents already manage organics through backyard composting, which can reduce demand for an organics cart compared to more urban communities. Staff also noted that the everyone pays requirement, even for households that do not request a cart, has been a point of frustration for some residents and requires careful communication.

City of Long Lake Survey/Interview Highlights

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider? Align organics with an existing city-organized recycling contract to stabilize rates, reduce resident confusion caused by variable hauler pricing and clarify accountability for service standards and communications. Long Lake's experience suggests that, in small communities, consistency and predictability can be as important as the mechanics of collection.

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently? During procurement and rollout, specify key implementation details up front and build a clear transition plan. Based on staff experience, two items warrant early clarity: cart sizing and container standards in the solicitation documents, and participant data transfer requirements from open haulers to support accurate cart delivery and avoid duplicate or missed households during rollout.

Key outreach strategy. Long Lake uses straightforward, direct messaging that explains the “why” behind the everyone pays structure and provides a clear action step to participate. The city also reinforced the rollout through utility billing communications, including the new monthly organics charge, the fact that carts would not be automatically delivered, and instructions for signing up.

Key takeaways. Long Lake’s case study illustrates why smaller communities may choose to move from open organics to a city-organized service, even while keeping trash open hauling: organized contracting can improve fairness, rate consistency, and predictability for residents compared to variable hauler pricing.

5.2.3 City of Maple Grove

The City of Maple Grove, located in northern Hennepin County, has a population of about 72,739⁶ and operates with open trash collection alongside municipality-contracted recycling and curbside organics services. Maple Grove launched citywide curbside organics collection in January 2025, with weekly service provided by a single contractor. Prior to the city program, organics collection was managed through individual trash haulers with separate billing. With the 2025 launch, that hauler-based charge was dropped, and the organics fee shifted to the city utility bill.

Maple Grove added curbside organics through an extension of its recycling contract. The contract extension outlines a three-year term (January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2026) and identifies a curbside organics collection rate of \$3.25 per certified dwelling unit per month at 0 to 10 percent participation, with tiered rate increases as participation grows, plus a 5 percent annual inflator applied to both recycling and organics collection rates. A certified dwelling unit is defined as a single-family home and each residential unit in a building with up to eight units or a townhouse complex; residential units in buildings with more than eight dwelling units, other than townhouses. Staff also described planning assumptions that program participation would be roughly 10 to 15 percent initially, with growth into the next tier during the contract period.

Maple Grove made a couple of targeted ordinance changes to support the shift from hauler-provided organics to a city-organized program. In March 2024, the city adopted an ordinance amending Chapter 26 (Solid Waste Management) and adding language to Section 26-34 that required refuse haulers to provide weekly curbside organics collection for residential customers on the same day as other recycling services. Later in 2024, the city adopted Ordinance No. 24-13, which amended City Code Sections 26-34 and 26-92 to remove the requirements previously placed on individual licensed collectors, stating that organics recycling would instead be managed under the city’s organized recycling contract effective January 6, 2025.

Operationally, Maple Grove’s program uses standardized carting: organics are collected in a cart and placed in a compostable bag inside it. The city provides a clear accepted materials list and directs residents to city and county resources for first-time participants.

City of Maple Grove Survey/Interview Highlights

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider? Citywide organics pickup by one contractor, paired with standardized carting (35-gallon) and a clear accepted materials list, with a required compostable bag, is the best method.

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently? Not indicated.

⁶ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Maple Grove city, Minnesota](#)

Key outreach strategy: Maple Grove paired the January 2025 rollout with a set of simple, resident-facing messages delivered through a web hub and supporting handouts. The city’s organics recycling webpage serves as the main landing page for first-time participants, with clear instructions on cart requests, cart sizing (a standard 35-gallon cart, with the option to request a larger cart), what to do if carts are missed, and how to manage moves or cart changes. Outreach materials also focus on the friction points that typically prevent early adoption, particularly odors and in-home storage. Maple Grove’s Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) content includes practical tips, such as keeping wet organics in the fridge or freezer and transferring them to a compostable bag right before collection. Finally, the city directs residents to Hennepin County resources as a consistent reference point for organics education and guidance on accepted materials, which helps reinforce regional consistency in what residents should place in the cart.

Key takeaways: Maple Grove did not provide a specific key takeaway in the survey. However, a clear takeaway from their rollout is the value of pairing a new organized organics service with a tiered rate structure and a multi-channel communications plan, so the program can scale as participation grows.

Figure 5-2 depicts the Maple Grove frequently asked questions from their website.

Figure 5-2 Maple Grove Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

Below you will find information that might help you understand how to find things or learn about information you might need to know about your city or town.

Organics recycling (12)

All Content

What is organics recycling?	▼
Who must offer organics recycling?	▼
What is the frequency / day of collection?	▼
How do I sign up for organics recycling?	▼
Who pays for organics recycling and what is the cost?	▼
Why can't a fee be charged to only those who participate?	▼
Do I also get charged fees for bags or carts?	▼
Who provides bags or carts?	▼
What bags should be used for organics recycling?	▼
Will the organics container smell?	▼
Where does the organics material go?	▼
Are there rebates or reimbursement for participating?	▼

5.2.4 Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

The City of Brooklyn Park, located in northeast Hennepin County, has a population of 82,893⁷ and operates with open trash collection alongside contracted recycling and organics services. Brooklyn Park also serves as the administrator for the Hennepin Recycling Group (HRG), a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) formed in 1988 by the cities of Brooklyn Center, Crystal, and New Hope to pool staffing, contracting power and program resources. Under an agreement with the HRG cities, Brooklyn Park provides administrative services for HRG programs and leverages hauler contracts on HRG's behalf.

Brooklyn Park's organics program was implemented in phases. Before the city's curbside program began, organics service was offered by trash haulers as an add-on, with residents paying a monthly fee, and participation was reported to be low. Beginning in March 2025, Brooklyn Park expanded its recycling program to include weekly curbside organics collection using a separate cart, and trash haulers discontinued providing organics service at that time. Brooklyn Park participates in a joint organics program with the HRG cities, using two contracts served by the same vendor. **Participation increased from roughly 1 to 2 percent under the prior open model to approximately 10 percent after the organized program launched.**

Brooklyn Park's code requires licensed residential haulers to offer source-separated organics service. The city later implemented citywide curbside organics through its recycling contract with a single provider, and trash haulers discontinued separate organics service. As a result, the codified language does not fully reflect the current service delivery model, which is implemented through contract and program administration rather than ordinance.

Under the prior open organics model, households typically paid about \$5 to \$8 per month. Under the current city-organized program, the cost is \$2.90 per household per month for organized weekly collection using 35-gallon carts. Households receive a starter kit that includes five compostable bags, and the carts are labeled in accordance with Hennepin County standards, with multilingual instructions. Organics drop-off sites remain available, and the city plans to add a seasonal drop-off site in fall to accommodate peak materials such as pumpkins. **Figure 5-3** depicts the Hennepin County standard organics label.

⁷ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Brooklyn Park city, Minnesota](#)

Figure 5-3 Hennepin County Standard Organics Label



City of Brooklyn Park Survey/Interview Highlights

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider? Update ordinances, amend contracts, meet with the city council, adjust the billing structure, and implement a new communications plan. Establish a clear contamination threshold with an escalation process (tagging, follow-up education, and non-collection when the threshold is exceeded), since tagging alone, when carts are still routinely serviced, functions mainly as education rather than performance control.

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently? Understand resident preferences (i.e., cart size) before negotiating with haulers to avoid inefficiencies. After transitioning to organized, a 35-gallon cart is now the contracted cart size. Ensure effective communication and commitment before rollout. Adequate staffing is critical; the lack of an extra driver caused early service problems.

Key outreach strategy: Brooklyn Park described outreach as a shared, ongoing function rather than a one-time rollout activity. Program communications are coordinated across the partner cities using shared mailers, social media, and newsletters so residents in each community receive consistent messages about how the program works and what belongs in the organics cart. To support resident questions during and after rollout, the program designated a dedicated an existing staff person to respond to calls, creating a clear,

reliable point of contact and helping keep messaging consistent across the cities. Looking ahead, Brooklyn Park noted several “in-person plus visual” tactics intended to expand awareness beyond standard mail and web touchpoints. Planned outreach includes tabling at farmers markets, presentations to homeowner associations and video outreach distributed through social channels.

Key takeaways: Brooklyn Park’s experience reinforces that shifting from an add-on, hauler-provided organics model to a city-organized program can materially change both participation and the resident cost story. Under the prior open model, participation was reported at roughly 1 to 2 percent, and households typically paid about \$5 to \$8 per month. After the organized rollout, participation increased to approximately 10 percent, and the program rate was reported at \$2.90 per household per month for weekly collection using 35-gallon carts. For other communities, that combination of clearer program structure plus lower, uniform pricing is a practical argument for organized service, especially when residents are sensitive to variable hauler pricing and “fee without clarity” confusion.

5.3 Lessons from Collection System Transition Planning

While the benchmark review did not identify any examples of a city moving from municipality-contracted organics collection to open organics collection, the City of Anoka provides a useful example of collection system transition planning. Although the case is not specific to residential curbside organics, it offers practical insight into public process, outreach, voter understanding, and the challenges communities may encounter when considering a broader change in collection structure.

The City of Anoka is one of the metro-area examples where voters considered a switch to organized collection and rejected it, leaving the competitive market (open hauling) in place. The City of Anoka, located in Anoka County, has a population of 18,068⁸. The city currently operates with open trash and yard waste service (residents contract directly with licensed haulers) and municipality-contracted single-sort recycling billed through the city’s utilities.

In 2024, Anoka evaluated a transition from open hauling to organized collection for trash, recycling, and yard waste, using a resident-led Solid Waste Collection Options Committee, public engagement, and a citywide mailer describing how organized service would work and what it would change (including fewer collection trucks and reduced street impacts). The city solicited competitive proposals and negotiated a draft organized collection contract with one hauler, with service proposed to begin June 1, 2025 (and optional yard waste beginning mid-April 2025, if selected). The organized collection proposal was placed on the November 5, 2024, general election ballot and was rejected by voters (51.98 percent No, 48.02 percent Yes). In Anoka, voter approval was required through the city’s home rule charter process. City materials indicate that the city received a petition to amend the charter so that any move from the existing open hauling system to organized trash collection would need voter approval, after which the organized collection proposal itself was placed on the ballot.

Following the election, Anoka’s residential system remains open for trash and yard waste. The city has an attrition provision in its code. If a hauler does not renew its license, it cannot continue to operate. The city previously had six licensed haulers, and there are now four. No more than three residential collection

⁸ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Anoka city, Minnesota](#)

licenses and three commercial collection licenses may be in force at any time, except that all companies licensed by the city as of September 1, 2015, may continue to be relicensed with conditions⁹.

Also, the code defines single-sort recyclables containers provided by the city, references disposal of recyclables through the city's organized curbside collection recycling program and limits curbside recycling collection to city employees or collectors authorized by the city. The code also provides the billing mechanism, stating that recycling collection charges are set by the city council and billed to the property owner, which aligns with Anoka's utility-billed, municipality-contracted recycling service.

The city's current contract provides single-sort service and is scheduled to expire on March 31, 2028. The city noted that recycling would shift to open hauling when the contract expires.

The council voted 3-2 on January 5, 2026, to again explore organized collection. Planned street repair and reconstruction projects appear to have influenced council support and decision-making. The community remains divided on open versus organized collection.

City of Anoka Survey/Interview Highlights

What is one curbside collection program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider? Repeat outreach approaches that worked well (flyers, public meetings, surveys).

What is one curbside collection program practice that your city would do differently? Allow more time for public education. Improve communication timing ahead of elections, particularly for early and absentee voters.

Key outreach strategy: Primary communication channels include a quarterly newsletter (the most successful, especially with older residents), very active social media and mailed flyers. As the process moved toward a ballot decision, Anoka leaned on broad, direct communication designed for residents who do not follow council packets. The citywide mailer describing what organized service would change, including fewer collection trucks and reduced street impacts, is the standout tactic because it makes the concept concrete and visual. The city also paired public engagement with a competitive procurement step, which helped ground the conversation in real pricing and service commitments rather than hypotheticals.

Key takeaways: When a collection system change goes to a public vote, the decision can hinge as much on timing and trust as on price or service design. Anoka's experience suggests that cities should build in extra lead time for public education (especially for early and absentee voters), repeat outreach through multiple channels and clearly connect the "why" (for example, price, street maintenance, and truck traffic) to the proposed service model. For Dakota County communities, the transferable takeaway is that the decision pathway matters. Plain-language communications can build credibility and surface real concerns, but successful adoption still depends on aligning the change with the issues residents feel most directly and revisiting the case when conditions change.

⁹ [City of Anoka City Code Article III Solid Waste Collection](#)

5.4 Summary of Implementation Summaries (From Open to Contracted Organics)

Upon comparing the contents of benchmark community's surveys and interviews, there are several practices that communities have used to create a successful organics program and several practices that did not work well. The following key findings highlight patterns, transferable lessons, and effective and ineffective practices in organic collection.

5.4.1 Key Finding: Organizing Can Standardize Organics Pricing

Cities moved from open organics to municipality-contracted organics to address uneven pricing and confusion. Minnetonka, Long Lake, Maple Grove, and Brooklyn Park all began with a version of “organics available through open hauling,” where individual haulers offered organics as an add-on or were required to make them available. In each case, **the open model produced inconsistent resident pricing** and an unclear resident experience: different rates, different enrollment pathways and different levels of outreach depending on the hauler. When cities shifted organics into a municipality-contracted service (often layered into an existing recycling contract), the primary benefit was predictability. The program became easier to explain, easier to administer and more consistent across households.

Transferable lesson: If the goal is equitable access, stable pricing, and consistent service expectations, municipalities tend to achieve them faster by organizing organics under a city contract, even if trash remains open-hauling.

5.4.2 Key Finding: Lower Rates, Higher Participation

Rates typically dropped after organizing, and participation increased. Where you have numbers, the direction is consistent: city-organized programs reduced monthly organics costs compared to hauler add-on pricing, and participation increased once service was standardized and the “how to participate” steps became clearer. Minnetonka saw both a cost reduction and a major increase in participation after switching to city-organized organics. Brooklyn Park moved from a low-participation hauler add-on model to a city-organized program with higher participation and a lower monthly charge. Long Lake and Maple Grove also shifted billing from haulers to city utility bills with clearly stated monthly charges. These changes also reduced the “shopping problem” for residents, meaning they no longer had to compare organic offerings across haulers or ask their hauler what was available.

Transferable lesson: If organics is organized, the pricing story becomes simpler and typically more competitive, and participation improves when the program becomes visible as a city service rather than a niche add-on.

5.4.3 Key Finding: Repeat Everyone Pays Messaging

Everyone pays requires explicit, repeated messaging, or it becomes a customer service issue. Long Lake and Minnetonka show the practical reality of an everyone pays structure: households will ask why they are paying if they did not request a cart. Maple Grove and Brooklyn Park also reflect the same dynamic, with content built around explaining the legal driver and the billing shift from haulers to the city. Cities that addressed this directly, early, and repeatedly reduced confusion and calls. In practice, the best framing is direct and behavior-oriented: residents are already paying for the service and can request a cart at any time.

Transferable lesson: In an everyone pays model, “why am I being charged” is not a one-time question. It is a standing communications need. Treat it as part of program operations, not a rollout-only issue.

5.4.4 Key Finding: Reduce Start-Up Barriers

The biggest barrier is not collection; it is starting. In these programs, weekly collection is not the hard part. The hard part is getting a household from “aware” to “started.” The same barriers show up everywhere: uncertainty about what is compostable, bag requirements, odors and what to do in the kitchen. Cities that reduced first-use friction tended to emphasize basic tools and short, practical guidance. Examples include starter supplies (bags, caddies, small kits), cart labels and resident-facing “yes” and “no” lists. Brooklyn Park also illustrates that a dedicated staff contact for resident calls can stabilize early rollout and reduce confusion.

Transferable lesson: An organics collection starter kit that helps residents succeed in week one pays off. A small starter roll of bags, a kitchen caddy and clear cart labels are low-cost tools that reduce avoidable problems and improve early habit formation.

5.4.5 Key Finding: Implementation Drives Success

Implementation details matter more than cities expect. Multiple communities flagged rollout challenges that are not “policy” issues but still drive resident frustration. Long Lake’s issues with incomplete participant data transfer and cart sizing ambiguity demonstrate how procurement details can become operational headaches. Minnetonka flagged the importance of giving haulers advance notice and managing duplicate sign-ups when the program transitioned from hauler-managed organics to a contracted system. Brooklyn Park emphasized the importance of staffing capacity and having a strong commitment before rollout. These are all versions of the same lesson: transition planning is an operational project with data, logistics and staffing constraints, not just a contract decision.

Transferable lesson: Specify cart sizing and service standards up front in the RFP and contract, require clean participant data transfer, set a transition timeline that includes hauler notice and plan for staffing and route ramp-up during the first months.

6.0 Local Best Practice Case Studies

This section summarizes the best local practices from TCMA municipalities that operate residential curbside organics programs using five different approaches: open hauling for solid waste, recycling, and organics; a hybrid approach with open hauling except for organics; a joint powers agreement; and a city that uses nonprofit for collection services. The case study details were compiled from multiple sources, including completed municipal surveys, follow-up phone interviews and team meetings and information published on municipal websites and in public meeting materials. Together, these sources describe how communities structure and operate their programs, including service design and standards, governance and contracting approaches, outreach and education tactics, contamination management and practical lessons that can inform Dakota County municipalities planning or refining curbside organics collection. The surveys are included in **Appendix B**, and meeting notes are included in **Appendix D**.

6.1 Open Hauling (Trash, Recycling, Organics): Eden Prairie

The City of Eden Prairie is located in southern Hennepin County with a population of 62,905¹⁰. The city operates an open hauling system for trash, recycling, organics, and yard waste. To comply with Hennepin County Ordinance 13 requirement that cities offer organics service (effective January 1, 2022), Eden Prairie requires licensed haulers to offer curbside organics collection to households, excluding multifamily properties. In Eden Prairie's open hauling framework, residents request an organics cart directly from their hauler. Eden Prairie reports that all residential customers are billed by their hauler for organics service regardless of participation status, and residents cannot opt out of the organics charge even if they do not request a cart. In a May 3, 2023, notice to licensed waste haulers, the City of Eden Prairie told haulers they had to change their billing systems so organics subscribers were not charged more than non-subscribers, and then stated: *"You will be required to verify compliance as part of your licensure renewal application. Haulers not in compliance will not be eligible to have their license renewed in 2024."*

Weekly curbside organics recycling is provided to single-family households, typically using a 35-gallon cart, and is collected on the same day as trash and mixed recyclables. Eden Prairie requires haulers to offer curbside organics service, but they do not prescribe a uniform organics cart size. The city and haulers both provide education and respond to residents' questions and complaints. Eden Prairie also requires haulers to provide annual reporting to the city on programming metrics such as tons collected, contamination levels and participation.

The city and haulers share responsibility for resident education and complaint resolution. Survey responses indicate that haulers manage customer service, billing, cart delivery and maintenance, routing changes, and field outreach, while education content and delivery are shared between the city and haulers. Residents purchase their own kitchen containers and compostable bags, and no starter kit or free bag distribution program is indicated. Eden Prairie requires annual reporting from haulers and collects baseline metrics, including stops or households served, tons collected and contamination information, submitted via an email template.

In terms of participation, Eden Prairie reported 19,224 eligible households and 2,771 (14 percent of eligible households) enrolled or served households in 2024, indicating that cart-by-request service can limit

¹⁰ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Eden Prairie city, Minnesota](#)

enrollment without continued promotion and easy enrollment steps. The average resident fee reported was \$6.83 per household per month. Because all households are billed regardless of cart request status, Eden Prairie identified direct mail and social media as the most effective communication channels, supported by the city website, email, text, and multilingual content. Messaging emphasizes climate or soil benefits and building community norms around participation.

Eden Prairie demonstrates a compliance pathway for residential organics availability within an open-hauling system by using licensed-hauler requirements to establish consistent baseline expectations across haulers. The cart-by-request approach avoids distributing unused carts, but it also appears to suppress participation unless paired with sustained outreach and simple enrollment. The city also highlighted a common resident concern about managing an additional cart, noting that if composting rules allowed co-collection of organics and yard waste in a single container, it could reduce the cart storage and space concerns that residents frequently raise.

City of Eden Prairie Survey/Interview Highlights

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider? Use a licensed hauler model that requires all haulers serving the city to offer organics service and provide consistent baseline expectations (cart availability by request, education, and reporting). Eden Prairie’s approach shows how a city can meet the organics availability requirement without shifting to municipality-contracted collection.

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently? As reported by staff, if compost rules allowed it, combining organics and yard waste in one container would reduce the “additional cart” concern that residents frequently raise.

Key outreach strategy: The city found that mailers and social media were the best ways to get the word out about organics collection services.

Key takeaways: Eden Prairie demonstrates a compliance pathway under open hauling by requiring licensed haulers to offer organics service, with carts provided upon request. The city reports that all households are billed for organics service regardless of participation, which makes outreach that emphasizes “you are already paying for it” especially important. This cart-by-request model can reduce unused carts, but it may also limit participation unless paired with sustained outreach and simple, low-friction enrollment steps.

Figure 6-1 depicts how Eden Prairie emphasizes everyone pays.

Figure 6-1 How Eden Prairie Emphasizes Everyone Pays**Organics Recycling Charge Requirement**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency recently clarified Minnesota State Statute 115A.93 prohibits waste haulers from imposing a greater charge on residents who recycle organic materials than on those who do not.

Therefore, waste haulers must charge all residential customers a fee for curbside organics recycling collection regardless of participation status.

Organics recycling carts are only provided upon request. Residents may choose to not request a cart but cannot opt out of the organics recycling charge.

6.2 Hybrid Approach (Open Trash, Contracted Recycling and Organics): City of Plymouth

The City of Plymouth is located in central Hennepin County, with a population of 78,551¹¹. Plymouth's residential collection system is "hybrid" across waste streams: trash remains open subscription (residents select and contract directly with one of four licensed hauler), while recycling is organized through a city contract. Plymouth used that organized recycling platform as the springboard for adding curbside organics collection, rather than attempting to reorganize the entire residential system at once.

In November 2023, the city directly negotiated with its hauler as the recycling contract neared expiration to add organics. City council initially expressed concern about adding another program and another cart, but staff used an online resident survey to evaluate receptiveness. Results showed roughly 90 percent of respondents were either supportive or indifferent to organics service, which helped shift the discussion from "should we organize" to "how do we roll it out well". The rollout took nine (9) months and carts were distributed in March 2024. From a project management perspective, Plymouth's experience is useful because it reflects a realistic municipal pathway: adding organics by modifying an existing organized program can be faster, lower friction and more politically feasible than a full-scale system redesign.

There are 26,000 eligible single-family households, of which about 3,000 are enrolled, or roughly 12 percent of eligible households. The 35-gallon organics carts are collected weekly, and residents provide their own kitchen caddies and compostable bags. Residents are billed by the city utilities at \$3.50 per household per month. The contract pricing structure is tied to participation, with the monthly price per dwelling unit increasing as participation increases and the hauler collects more organics carts. **Table 6-1** presents the contract pricing schedule for curbside organics collection by participation level.

Table 6-1 Plymouth Curbside Organics Collection Service Price Per Month Per Dwelling Unit

Source-Separated Organic Material Percent Participation Monthly Price per Dwelling Unit (City Contract Rate)								
Year	Calendar Year	0%-10%	10%-15%	15%-20%	20%-25%	25%-30%	30%-40%	40%-50%
0	2024	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00	\$5.50	\$6.00

¹¹ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Plymouth city, Minnesota](#)

Source-Separated Organic Material Percent Participation Monthly Price per Dwelling Unit (City Contract Rate)								
1	2025	\$3.12	\$3.64	\$4.16	\$4.68	\$5.20	\$5.72	\$6.24
2	2026	\$3.24	\$3.79	\$4.33	\$4.87	\$5.41	\$5.95	\$6.49
3	2027	\$3.37	\$3.94	\$4.50	\$5.06	\$5.62	\$6.19	\$6.75

Plymouth has also discussed trash cart sizing as a potential future policy tool. Staff noted that offering or encouraging smaller trash carts could reduce monthly service costs for households that are able to downsize, while also strengthening the incentive to separate food scraps from trash. In that sense, smaller trash cart options may improve the value proposition of organics participation, particularly for households that can divert enough food scraps to manage with less trash capacity.

In follow-up discussion, Plymouth emphasized a communications challenge that shows up in many organized recycling and organics systems: a large share of households does not realize they are paying for organics service. The everyone pays funding structure can be a feature because it supports a uniform cost structure and consistent service expectations across households. It also raises the stakes on clear, repeated messaging so residents understand the cost model and how to obtain a cart if enrollment is not automatic.

Service specifications reported by Plymouth include a 7:00 a.m. set-out time on collection day, a stated contamination threshold of about 10 percent, with carts above that threshold not collected, and the option to request extra setouts. Weather-related service disruptions are addressed through delayed collection as needed, typically as soon as possible and sometimes shifted by one day. Plymouth also noted that walk-up service is available for residents who need accessibility accommodations. The contract includes a maximum number of walk-up stops, and Plymouth reported that it has not approached that limit to date.

Plymouth's model also provides a division of labor. The city manages core program administration functions through its organized contract, while the hauler manages the operational fieldwork. Plymouth identified the hauler as responsible for cart procurement and maintenance, route design, field outreach, education delivery, missed pickup response and holiday or weather communications.

Plymouth uses frequent, multi-channel communication to maintain awareness and reduce barriers to participation. Outreach includes quarterly mailed newsletters, postcards with organics best management practices and practical tips, email, and social media. City staff reported that mailed materials are the most effective channel for reaching residents.

Core messages emphasized climate and soil benefits and the convenience of diverting organics, paired with practical guidance that addresses the usual resident concerns, particularly odor, cart storage and "not generating enough material." Plymouth's experience suggests that even with high general support in surveys, sustained participation growth still depends on friction reduction: simple enrollment, reminders timed to seasonal behavior shifts and clear "what goes where" communication that residents can quickly act on.

Operationally, contamination management is primarily cart-based. The hauler checks carts periodically; when contamination is too high (over 10 percent), carts may be tagged and sometimes not collected.

Plymouth noted that the city often learns tagging is occurring when residents' calls increase, which is a common feedback loop in programs where cart tagging is the primary enforcement tool.

Plymouth also requires ongoing program reporting from the hauler, including households or stops, set-out data, tons, contamination and misses or complaints.

Plymouth pairs curbside service with residential drop-off, which provides flexibility for residents who do not want a cart, have seasonal volumes, or prefer self-haul. The city operates one residential organics drop-off site at a maintenance facility. The organics dumpster at the maintenance facility site is unmonitored and unsecured but labeled, and while it is intended for residential use, Plymouth noted some business use occurs in practice. The city described an informal arrangement in which a business helps pick up litter in exchange for using the site, a pragmatic response to a common operational reality at unmonitored drop-offs.

City of Plymouth Survey/Interview Highlights

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider? Use a variable pricing approach based on participation rates. Use excellent communication, establish frequent contact with haulers before moving to organized collection.

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently? When curbside organics were launched, the city purchased an entire pallet of compostable bags for residents. It was far more than needed, and they are still distributing the same boxes at events.

Key outreach strategy: Plymouth uses frequent communication through quarterly mailed newsletters, postcards with organic BMPs and tips, emails, and social media posts. The city has found that mailers are the most effective.

Key takeaways: Plymouth demonstrates a practical hybrid pathway for adding organics by leveraging an existing organized recycling contract while leaving trash and yard waste in open subscription. This approach allowed the city to move relatively quickly from concept to cart rollout and to centralize key functions, such as billing, through the utility system. At the same time, Plymouth's experience highlights two implementation realities that other cities should plan around: (1) participation may remain modest in a cart-by-request enrollment model, even with strong survey support; (2) everyone pays funding requires persistent, plain-language outreach so residents understand both the fee and how to receive service. Finally, Plymouth's program lead expressed the view that a fully organized collection is likely the lowest-cost long-term structure for curbside organics, which frames Plymouth's hybrid approach as a step that builds organizational capacity and resident familiarity while keeping future options open.

6.3 Fully Contracted (Trash, Recycling, Organics): St. Louis Park

The City of St. Louis Park is located in central Hennepin County, with a population of 50,010¹². The city uses an organized collection system with a city-contracted single hauler for trash, recycling, organics, yard waste, and bulky items. St. Louis Park's organics program has a long runway compared to most Minnesota communities. The city began collecting organics and yard waste together in 2013, which influenced early cart sizing and resident expectations.

¹² [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: St. Louis Park city, Minnesota](#)

In 2019, the city stopped co-collecting organics with yard waste and separated organics into a distinct stream. Staff attributed this shift to capacity and infrastructure requirements associated with food waste management.

There are 12,365 eligible single-family households, of which 5,290 are enrolled (43% of households). St. Louis Park offers both curbside and drop-off options for organics, the cost for these programs is combined with all waste collection fees, so there is not a rate broken out. Curbside organics collection is provided weekly for single-family households through the city's organics hauler, and residents are instructed to set carts out by 7:00 a.m. on their assigned day. The city's organized residential program also includes multiplex housing with two to four units, with an opt-in pathway for some five to eight-unit buildings. For multifamily residents without curbside organics service, the city supports access through drop-site options. The survey notes that the hauler services several citywide multifamily drop sites, with roughly 250 active participants. The city's organics webpage similarly directs multifamily residents to drop-site information.

St. Louis Park uses a sign-up model where residents opt in to receive an organics cart. The standard residential organics cart reported in the survey is 35 gallons. This current sizing reflects the program's post-2019 food-only approach. Historically, the city offered larger organics carts (64-gallon and 96-gallon), a legacy of the earlier co-collection approach. Staff noted that the 96-gallon option is no longer offered, and 64-gallon carts are allowed only in some instances.

St. Louis Park's survey response also identifies a practice the city recommends that other communities consider by providing carts only to residents who affirmatively sign up for organics service. The city noted that sign-up helps residents understand the cart's purpose and which materials are accepted. This approach can reduce the number of unused carts in the field, but it typically requires sustained outreach to grow participation.

St. Louis Park provides program support materials beyond the cart. The survey indicates the city provides compostable kitchen bags at no cost through pickup at city facilities, with an annual allotment of either 52 13-gallon bags or 130 3-gallon bags per household. Staff also reported that the program provides a starter kit and allows paper grocery bags for dry materials. A practical lesson from St. Louis Park is that distribution logistics matter. In the survey, the city noted that it currently distributes annual allotment bags at two city buildings that operate for the city, but do not align well with every resident's schedule due to limited hours. Looking ahead, the city is planning a 2026 sign-up campaign that includes providing residents with kitchen caddies, building on experience using free caddies as a sign-up incentive.

St. Louis Park's survey responses show a structured division of responsibilities that still includes shared accountability, with residents most often feeling the impacts. Customer service is managed by both the city and the hauler, while billing is city-managed through utility billing. Cart procurement, delivery, and maintenance are marked as shared responsibilities. Field outreach activities, such as contamination tagging and follow-up, are also shared, as are missed pickup resolution and holiday or weather communications.

From a service standards standpoint, the program allows extra setouts outside the regular collection day, arranged directly between the contractor and the resident and billed directly by the contractor. For accessibility, the contract language summarized in the survey describes an optional "walk-up" service (collection from near the home or garage) that is normally an extra-fee service offered by the contractor. Staff added an important equity detail: doorstep pickup fees are waived for residents with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-related accommodations.

St. Louis Park uses a tiered contamination response that escalates with repeat issues. Staff described a sequence in which the first occurrence results in a cart tag, the second occurrence for the same issue results in a tag plus a letter, and the third occurrence results in a letter plus cart removal. The survey similarly notes tags or warnings left by the hauler and cart removal after multiple tags for the same issue within a 12-month period.

A University of Minnesota graduate student's capstone project evaluated which outreach approaches were most effective in a 2022 organics sign-up campaign. Staff reported that "community norm" messaging performed best, and a mailed postcard with prepaid postage generated the strongest sign-up response. A "myth-busters" letter was also used to address common misconceptions.

City of St. Louis Park Survey/Interview Highlights

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider? Providing carts only to those who indicate they want to collect organics (signup). This ensures they know what is accepted and understand the cart's purpose.

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently? The city currently distributes bags for the annual allotment at two city buildings. For a small city, this is feasible, though these hours do not work for some (between the two buildings, hours are 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM).

Key outreach strategies: Mailers are the most effective outreach method; the messaging emphasizes community norms, climate benefits, and cost savings. A group of students from the University of Minnesota conducted a study for their capstone project in 2021 and found that "community norm" messaging and prepaid postcard sign-ups were the most effective.

Key takeaways: St. Louis Park illustrates the advantages of a mature, organized organics program that is integrated with an organized solid waste collection system and city utility billing. The program's long history shows how design choices evolve over time, particularly the shift from co-collection with yard waste to a food-only organics stream, driven by infrastructure and capacity requirements. The city's opt-in cart distribution approach helps focus carts on participating households, while ongoing outreach and periodic sign-up campaigns support growth in participation. St. Louis Park's annual bag allotment, starter materials, and practical setup guidance reduce common barriers such as odors and in-home collection logistics. Finally, the city's contamination enforcement ladder and its use of tested "community norm" messaging provide two highly transferable practices for communities seeking both higher participation and lower contamination.

6.4 Joint Powers Agreement: Hennepin Recycling Group

The Hennepin Recycling Group (HRG) began in 1988, when the cities of Brooklyn Center, Crystal and New Hope created a JPA to pool staff time, contracting power and program resources needed to meet Hennepin County recycling mandates. Initially, HRG was staffed by a City of Crystal employee, and administration was transferred to the City of Brooklyn Park in 1994. HRG and Brooklyn Park have an agreement under which Brooklyn Park provides administrative services for HRG's programs and uses its hauler contracts (programs are both included in RFPs). In 2003, HRG and Brooklyn Park were the first in Minnesota to implement single-stream recycling.

HRG's path reflects how regulatory pressure, resident experience, and pricing dynamics can push a group of cities from "service available by request" to a more organized, standardized system. Per program leadership, the 2018 revisions to Hennepin County's ordinance created a deadline-driven need for organics service availability (effective January 1, 2022). In 2019, the four councils were hesitant to provide service directly and instead required haulers to offer organics to residents who asked. Participation remained very low (about 1 to 2 percent). In 2023, an MPCA interpretation (communicated via letter) reinforced that organics collection in this context is subject to Minnesota Statute 115A.93, subd. 3(c), including the restriction on charging residents more if they recycle than if they do not. By 2024, city councils agreed the status quo was not working for residents, particularly where households reported new charges without clear service. HRG began the organized collection process in June 2024 and rolled out service with Waste Management in April 2025.

HRG's organics program is structured as a city-contracted single-hauler service for organics (and recycling), while trash, yard waste and bulky items remain resident-selected open subscription services. Organics service is available through both curbside collection and drop-off options, with curbside service targeted at single-family households. Organics are collected weekly using 35-gallon carts.

HRG's setup intentionally keeps the most resident-facing functions with the cities, while the hauler focuses on field operations. The cities manage customer service or call center functions and bill organic services on the city utility bill. The hauler is responsible for cart procurement, delivery, and maintenance, as well as route design and service-day changes. Field outreach activities (including contamination tagging, audits, and follow-up) are shared responsibilities. Education content and delivery (mailers, web content, social media, and events) are led by the cities and missed pickup or complaint resolution, is shared. Holiday or weather service communications are led by the city.

HRG provides kitchen caddies for free via a pickup site, helping reduce the "what do I do in my kitchen" barrier without imposing delivery logistics. Residents generally purchase their own compostable kitchen bags at retail, but the program includes a small starter supply: five compostable bags provided with cart delivery as part of the welcome packet. That matches HRG's broader approach of reducing early barriers while keeping long-term costs stable and predictable. **Figure 6-2** depicts a kitchen starter kit.

Figure 6-2 Hennepin Recycling Group Kitchen Starter Kit



HRG emphasized convenience and cost savings as core resident messages. Communication channels used include mailers, the website, social media and email or text, with mailers identified as the most effective channel. In terms of tools, HRG identified the starter kit as the most effective tangible support, supplemented by cart lid labels and cart tagging for early contamination management. Meeting notes reinforce that the program is staffed to support resident questions, with one dedicated staff person supporting call response across coordinated communities.

After the city-provided rollout, HRG reported that participation increased from roughly 1 to 2 percent to around 10 percent. Drop-off remains available, and HRG discussed adding an additional drop site in the fall to meet peak seasonal demand (for example, post-Halloween pumpkins). Early operational challenges included staffing realities on the hauling side, where the lack of an extra driver contributed to service problems early in the rollout. HRG also noted that carts are labeled in accordance with Hennepin County standards and include multiple languages, which support consistent sorting expectations across diverse households.

HRG funds recycling and related services through a recycling service fee on residents' utility bills. Currently, the cost for organics collection is \$2.90 per household per month; under open hauling, it was reported to be \$5 to \$8 per household per month.

Hennepin Recycling Group Survey/Interview Highlights

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider? One practice the HRG would recommend is over-communicating early and often, using multiple channels and repeated touchpoints. Treat education as an ongoing program function, not a one-time rollout.

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently? One thing the HRG would do differently is plan for cart demand more aggressively by securing a larger initial inventory. Having sufficient carts available at rollout and during early enrollment helps avoid delays, reduce frustration, and support steady participation growth.

Key outreach strategies: Direct mailers and a starter kit. Mailers provide clear, repeatable guidance on what goes in the organics cart, set-out expectations and where to get help. A starter kit paired with cart delivery helps residents begin using the program immediately and reinforces correct participation from day one.

Key takeaways: HRG demonstrates how a JPA can deliver curbside organics at a relatively low, stable monthly cost while sharing staffing and outreach capacity across multiple cities. It also shows a realistic transition pattern: "opt-in by request" under open hauling produced minimal participation, while an organized rollout with consistent carts, labeling and repeated communications drove a measurable jump in participation. From an implementation standpoint, HRG's experience points to three recurring success factors: (1) strong, repetitive outreach using channels that actually move behavior (mailers), (2) clear assignment of resident-facing responsibilities to the cities with operational responsibilities to the hauler and (3) early alignment on cart supply, cart sizing preferences and contamination thresholds so the program can shift from launch-mode education to steady-state operations without confusion.

6.5 Other System: Columbia Heights

The City of Columbia Heights is located in southern Anoka County with a population of 22,358. The city uses a contracted single hauler for both trash and recycling. For organics, the city contracts with external companies. In April 2024, the city partnered with Better Futures, a nonprofit, to create an organics collection pilot program. While organics collection is optional for residents, the cities in Dakota County noted during the project coordination meeting that the nonprofit structure was notable and worth additional investigation.

The organics collection pilot is a two-year program that will run through April 2026. The city expects to extend the contract for three additional years to establish a full contract period. The program is structured to serve a broad set of customers, including residential households, multifamily properties, and city facilities. The city's website also notes that apartment and condominium buildings may request organics starter kits (and participate through building or property manager coordination).

Residents who enroll receive a city-provided 7-gallon metal pail and a free starter kit with compostable bags certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) (compostable bag certifier), along with a free bag of finished compost. This design choice is not just a "container preference." It is tied to how Columbia Heights collects organics. The survey's open-ended best practice response emphasizes avoiding a third cart and a commercial driver's license (CDL) collection truck, noting that households generate less than 10 pounds of organics per week, so a pail plus a one-ton truck can be sufficient. Meeting notes echo the operational logic: low tonnage allows collection with one-ton trucks hauling barrels to a transfer station rather than relying on full-size packer trucks. Staff flagged this as a particularly good fit for a community with many alleys.

The pails are emptied weekly by the hauler, and the organics collection day may differ from the trash and recycling. There are 6,300 eligible households, of which 500 are enrolled, or about 8 percent of households. Participants pay about one-third of the total program cost, with the remaining costs covered by city fees and grants. The recycling, yard waste and organics package costs residents approximately \$12 per month, or \$4.46 per month per participant for organics only.

Contamination issues have been limited to date, according to city staff. The program's enforcement tool is straightforward: pails are tagged and not emptied when contamination is present, with special attention to organics placed in plastic bags. This "tag and do not collect" approach sets a clear behavioral boundary without relying on fees or complex enforcement ladders during a pilot period.

Columbia Heights' outreach emphasizes climate or soil benefits, convenience, and cost savings. Communications channels include mailers, the city website, social media, email or text, events, and multilingual content. Mailers, email, and text were identified as the most effective channels, which aligns with the program's low-friction sign-up pathway and the need for repeated reminders that participation is optional and requires a request through the city's support form.

City of Columbia Heights Survey/Interview Highlights

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider? Avoid another cart and a Commercial Driver's License truck; you only need a pail and a one-ton truck, as there are fewer than 10 pounds/week/household. Also, avoid co-mingling with trash processing; there are thousands of tons of trash just to look for a few tons of organics.

What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently? Require a city route rather than allowing the hauler to make their own.

Key outreach strategy: The most effective methods are mailers, emails/text, and starter kits.

Key takeaways: Columbia Heights provides a useful case study for communities considering a lower-infrastructure organics model. Instead of starting with carts and packer trucks, the city matched container choice and collection equipment to expected tonnage and local alley constraints, using small pails and one-ton trucks hauling barrels to a transfer station. The program also shows how to reduce barriers at launch through a starter kit, a first-roll bag supply and simple sign-up tools tied to utility billing. Finally, the program’s early contamination management approach is intentionally simple: a BPI-certified, clear bag requirement, tagging and non-collection when plastic bags are found, and direct communication channels that staff have found effective.

6.6 Summary of Local Best Practices

Across the benchmark communities, operational details vary, but the same themes recur in how programs gained traction and how cities managed day-to-day challenges. The patterns below reflect what staff emphasized as most practical for implementation, especially in programs where service is broadly funded and carts are provided when residents request them.

6.6.1 Key Finding:

Availability Is Not Participation

Participation is a behavior-change problem, not a service-availability problem.

Simply making organic service available does not automatically translate into participation. Programs that relied on residents to request a cart saw modest participation unless outreach stayed

Provide carts only to residents who opt-in for organics collection services, which can help residents understand the cart’s purpose and which materials are accepted. Requires sustained outreach to grow participation.

active and the sign-up step was highly visible and easy to complete. Participation grows when cities reduce friction at every step: a clear call to action, minimal steps to request a cart, quick delivery, and immediate “how to start” guidance so residents use the cart right away instead of letting it sit.

Transferable lesson: Treat participation as an ongoing behavior-change effort by making sign-up effortless and pairing quick cart delivery with immediate “how to start” guidance.

6.6.2 Key Finding: Keep Guidance Simple

Programs work best when cities repeatedly answer basic organics questions with simple yes-no guidance.

Cities described that residents have persistent questions about basics: what goes in the cart, what bags are allowed, why yard waste is separate and how to avoid odors. Confusion increases when the organics fee applies to all households, including those that have not requested a cart. In those cases, messaging needs to clearly explain both the funding structure and the action step: residents are already paying for the service and can request a cart at any time. Programs were most stable when they treated these questions as normal and planned for them to be repeated. Communities that leaned into simple, repeatable guidance, particularly a short “yes” list and “no” list, experienced fewer contamination issues, and fewer frustrated customer service calls.

Transferable lesson: Plan to answer the same “what goes in, what bags, odors, and why yard waste is separate” questions on repeat, and use a short, consistent yes-no list that customer service and outreach can deliver the same way every time.

6.6.3 Key Finding: Predictable Responses Manage Contamination

Contamination is manageable when the response is predictable. Programs described contamination as manageable when responses were consistent and easy for residents to understand. The most transferable practice was a tiered approach: first a tag, then a warning, followed by follow-up education, and then escalation for repeat issues. Several communities emphasized that the point is not punishment but clarity and consistency. A predictable approach reduces argument-driven calls and helps customer service staff respond consistently.

Transferable lesson: Use a predictable, tiered contamination response (tag, educate, escalate) so residents and customer service staff know exactly what happens next.

6.6.4 Key Finding: Coordinate Early With Haulers

Early hauler coordination drives rollout stability. Whether in an open-hauling system or a municipality-contracted program, communities noted that frequent operational communication was most important during rollout and the first months of service. Issues such as cart inventory, staffing, route adjustments, missed pickups, tagging protocols, and seasonal volume swings are common start-up conditions. Cities that treated this as an active implementation phase, rather than a “set it and forget it” service, reported smoother stabilization and fewer resident complaints.

Transferable lesson: Build in frequent city-hauler coordination during rollout to stabilize cart supply, routes, tagging protocols and early service issues before they become resident complaints.

6.6.5 Key Finding: Multifamily Requires Intentional Design

Multifamily participation does not happen automatically. While curbside service often starts with single-family households, benchmark communities emphasize that organics programs become more equitable and more visible when multifamily residents have a clear pathway to participate, often through drop sites or building opt-in structures. The lesson was that multifamily access requires deliberate design and ongoing outreach and cannot be assumed to happen automatically.

Transferable lesson: Design a deliberate multifamily pathway (drop sites or building opt-in) and resource it with targeted outreach because participation will not appear on its own.

6.6.6 Key Finding: Mailers Get the Best Response

Mailers consistently produce the strongest participation response. Multiple cities reported that mailed materials produced the strongest participation response and were the most reliable way to reach residents. Mailers were described as effective for both launches and routine reinforcement, especially when they included a direct-action step, such as a sign-up link, QR code, phone number, or prepaid response option. Social media and email were helpful supplements, but mailers consistently proved the strongest driver.

Transferable lesson: Prioritize mailed outreach with a clear call to action (pre-paid postage card, link, phone number) as the most dependable driver of sign-ups, with digital channels as support.

6.6.7 Key Finding: Norms Beat Technical Messaging

Community norm messaging outperformed technical messaging. One community referenced outreach testing that found “community norm” framing was more effective than fact-heavy explanations. Programs that highlighted neighbors' participation, that the community was diverting organics, or that “this is what we do here” described stronger engagement than programs that relied primarily on rules or long lists. This approach also works well when paired with a clear, simple action: request a cart, start with organics, and keep plastic out.

Transferable lesson: Lead with community norm framing paired with a short, clear action step to motivate participation more effectively than technical or rule-heavy messaging.

6.6.8 Key Finding: First-use Tools Reduce Barriers

First-use tools reduce barriers and reduce customer service demand. Communities repeatedly flagged that residents struggle most at the “first week” stage: where to keep scraps in the kitchen, what bag to use and how to keep it clean. Starter kits, cart labels, caddies, and simple tip sheets were cited as practical tools that help residents quickly develop a routine. These tools also reduce customer service demands by answering common questions before they become complaints.

Transferable lesson: Reduce first-week friction with practical starter tools (caddy, labels, tip sheet, starter bags) to speed habit formation and cut customer service demand.

7.0 Timelines and Major Steps

This section provides practical, step-by-step roadmaps for how a city in Dakota County could establish a new curbside organics collection program under both open-hauling and municipality-contracted model if they would like to go above anticipated County hauler requirements to provide curbside collection to residential customers. Each roadmap identifies the recommended sequence of actions, primary responsible parties, key decision points, and typical timing, helping city staff understand what is needed from initial policy direction through full program rollout and early stabilization.

For the **open hauling** pathway, the roadmap focuses on the ordinance and licensing actions needed to incorporate organics service, coordination with licensed haulers and the tools available to drive consistency across multiple providers. This includes required alignment with Dakota County education and labeling provisions, cart standards, and common customer education practices.

For the **municipality-contracted** pathway, the roadmap begins with the statutory organized collection process and the related city policy actions. As noted in **Section 3.1.2**, Minnesota law is not entirely clear on whether a city that contracts for the collection of recyclable materials, including source-separated compostable materials such as organics, must comply with the procedural requirements of the organized collection statute. For the purposes of this Toolkit, this roadmap lays out the statutory requirements for organized collection of solid waste under Minnesota law, which provides the legal framework against which collection of recyclable materials and organics could be considered. It then follows the typical progression through competitive procurement, hauler selection, contract negotiation, and implementation coordination, including cart procurement and distribution planning and program launch activities.

Table 7-1 provides a quick start guide for city staff implementing an open hauling system.

Table 7-1 Quick Start: Open Hauling

Phase	Major Actions if a City Adopts Policies Beyond County Hauler Requirements	Responsible Party (RP)	Typical Timing
Scope and Policy	Align scope and policy with Dakota County Ordinance No. 110.	City	Month 0
Licensing Framework	Confirm County licensing and ordinance touchpoints	City, County as applicable	Month 0
Standards and Adoption	Adopt license and ordinance changes (service standards, contamination, customer service)	City council, staff	Months 1-2
County-required Materials	Apply Dakota County education and labeling provisions	County, city, haulers	Months 1-3
Hauler Coordination	Carts, routing, collection day alignment, call center workflows	City, haulers	Months 1-3

Reporting Setup	Define metrics, template, and schedule	City, County, haulers	Months 2-3
Launch and Stabilize	Rollout, monitor, correct, refine	City, haulers	Months 3-6+

Table 7-2 provides a deeper dive into the steps and decision points for city staff using an open hauling system. At a minimum, cities will need to review their hauler licenses, if applicable, to confirm they do not conflict with the amended county ordinance and hauler requirements. This review of county ordinance and hauler requirements is the first step. If a city wants to go further, the remaining portions of this table would then apply.

Table 7-2 Open Hauling: Step, Responsible Party and Key Decision Points

Step	Responsible Party	Key Decision Points
Confirm Licensing Approach	City staff and city council	City licensing vs. deferring to Dakota County licensing.
Define Organics Service Expectations	City staff (with Dakota County input as needed)	Baseline universal residential scope per County definition (single-family and multifamily with three or fewer attached units with individual hauler-supplied carts). Minimum service standards (service accessibility, cart sizing, contamination response, customer service).
Stakeholder Engagement	City staff; licensed haulers; Dakota County staff (as applicable)	Hauler readiness and operational impacts. Cart procurement and lead times. Collection day alignment. Contamination tagging and non-collection thresholds. Customer service workflows. Division of responsibilities for resident complaints and escalation. How universal participation and service availability will be communicated to residents and haulers.
Draft Licensing Language and Implementation Plan	City staff and legal counsel (coordinate with Dakota County as needed)	Required organics service availability language. Minimum service standards to codify. Effective date and transition period. Whether to prohibit cart delivery fees. Enforcement approach and remedies.
Draft City Code Language	City council and city staff	Identify which provisions will be set in city code versus managed through licensing conditions (for example: set-out times, container storage, nuisance, enforcement mechanics). Align ordinance adoption and publication steps with the city's applicable ordinance procedures (statutory city vs charter city).

Step	Responsible Party	Key Decision Points
Develop Education and Labeling Materials	Dakota County (standards and materials); city staff (local delivery); licensed haulers (distribution and cart labeling)	County-approved materials and cart labels. Outreach channels and schedule. Contamination messaging approach. Bag guidance and any minimum standards. Consistent use of “food scraps” terminology rather than “organics.”
Establish Reporting and Data Submittals	City staff (and Dakota County, as applicable); licensed haulers	Reporting frequency. Required metrics (service availability, participation proxies, tons collected, contamination tags and non-collections, missed pickups, complaints). Definitions. Data format and submittal method. How data will be validated and used.
Service Rollout and Availability	Licensed haulers (service and carts); city staff (oversight and outreach); Dakota County (supporting resources)	Start date. Enrollment approach and cart delivery method. Initial contamination response and tag sequence. Customer service escalation path. Launch communications and FAQs.
Compliance and Early Performance Monitoring	City staff (and Dakota County, as applicable); licensed haulers	Corrective action triggers. Enforcement thresholds. Reporting quality expectations. Education refresh needs. Whether adjustments to service standards are warranted based on early performance.
Stabilization Review	City staff; Dakota County staff; licensed haulers	Updates to licensing standards and messaging. Contamination thresholds and response sequence refinements. Cart sizing or options changes. Customer service standard adjustments. Reporting definition and template refinements. Priorities for year 2 improvements.

Table 7-3 provides a quick start guide for city staff implementing a municipality-contracted system. Cities with organized collection can move directly to the ordinance amendment and procurement steps.

Table 7-3 Quick Start: Municipality-contracted

Phase	Major Actions if a City Adopts Policies Beyond County Hauler Requirements	Responsible Party	Typical Timing
Scope and Policy	Council direction on scope and policy	City council, staff	Month 0



Statutory Engagement	Public notice and 60-day hauler negotiation	City, haulers	Months 0-2
Committee and Hearing	Options committee, report, public hearing	City, committee	Months 2-4
Council Decision	Decide to implement (6-month minimum lead time begins)	City council	Month 4-6
Ordinance and Procurement	Draft and adopt ordinance, complete procurement process described in Section 3.3.3	City	Months 6-12
County-required Materials	Apply Dakota County education and labeling provisions	County, city, hauler	Months 11-12
Transition and Launch	Carts, outreach, routing, data onboarding, start service	Hauler, city	Months 13+

Table 7-4 provides a deeper dive into the steps and decision points for city staff using the municipality-contracted system.

Table 7-4 Municipality-Contracted: Step, Responsible Party and Key Decision Points

Step	RP	Key Decision Points
Council Direction	City council; city staff	Confirm policy direction to pursue organized collection under Minnesota Statute § 115A.94.
Notice and Hauler Negotiation	City staff; licensed haulers	Determine whether the 60-day exclusive negotiation process applies (city or town with more than one licensed collector). Define city priorities for negotiations (zone creation, traffic, safety, environmental performance, service, price).
Solid Waste Collection Options Committee	City council; options committee; city staff support	Confirm committee appointment, scope, and work plan. Confirm the required collection methods that will be evaluated (existing system, single collector citywide, multiple collectors by zones). Confirm evaluation criteria (costs to residents, impacts on choice, miles driven and road impacts, city implementation costs, waste reduction incentives, impacts to collectors, other community impacts).
Committee Report and Public Hearing	Options committee; city staff; city council	Confirm the committee's recommended system structure (single hauler vs zoned, or other organized collection structure). Confirm the minimum service standards that should be carried forward into ordinance and procurement. Confirm what resident and hauler input from the hearing changes (service standards, pricing approach, transition strategy). Public notice and at least one public hearing are

Step	RP	Key Decision Points
		required before deciding to implement organized collection.
Council Decision	City council; city staff	Decide whether to implement organized collection. Confirm system structure direction (single hauler vs zoned or negotiated collectors if that pathway is used). Confirm the “go-live” constraint: organized collection may begin no sooner than 6 months after the effective date of the council decision to implement.
Draft Ordinances and Program Standards	City staff; legal counsel	Decide what goes in ordinance versus contract or program standards (cart requirements, set-out rules, contamination response sequence, customer service standards, reporting requirements). Align ordinance adoption and publication steps with the city’s applicable ordinance procedures (statutory city vs charter city). If using a negotiated collector’s proposal, confirm any required agreement term elements (initial agreement term noted in statute).
Ordinance Adoption	City council; city staff	Effective date and transition provisions. Enforcement tools and remedies (administrative actions, penalties, appeal process if applicable). Participation framing and resident communications (universal service message, service availability requirements).
Procurement and Contract Negotiation	City staff; procurement staff; city council (award); prospective haulers	Contract model (single hauler vs zoned). Performance metrics and remedies. Reporting definitions, data format, and data ownership. Subcontracting rules and any limits. Cart supply, delivery approach, and route planning requirements. Customer service expectations and escalation path.
Education and Labeling (Dakota County Provisions)	Dakota County (standards/materials); city staff (local delivery); contracted hauler (distribution/labeling)	Outreach channels and cadence. Contamination messaging approach (education-first vs stricter launch approach). Standardized cart labels and consistent “food scraps” terminology.
Transition Period	Contracted hauler; city staff	Cart order and delivery timeline. Route planning and collection day assignments. Call center readiness and resident support process. Final readiness criteria for launch.
Start Service	Contracted hauler; city staff	Launch approach for contamination response sequence. Initial performance reporting schedule and early issue triage. Customer service escalation path and roles.
Compliance and Stabilization Review	City staff; contracted hauler	Corrective action triggers and contract remedies. Adjustments to service standards, education cadence, cart options, and reporting definitions based on early performance. Confirm any contract modifications needed for year 2 improvements.

8.0 Dakota County Suburban City Code Inventory

This section summarizes select city code provisions that commonly affect curbside collection programs, even when a city is not directly operating the service. Local ordinances shape day-to-day implementation details that matter for residential organics, including where carts can be stored, when they can be placed at the curb, container standards (for example, tight-fitting lids and watertight requirements) and any limits on the number of licensed residential haulers. These provisions can either support the smooth rollout of a new organics cart or create friction if requirements are unclear or inconsistent with how haulers operate.

The following table is intended as a quick reference for Dakota County cities subject to the 2030 requirement to provide curbside organics service. It highlights common ordinance “pressure points” cities should review early, such as cart set-out windows, container size and type expectations, nuisance language related to odors and weekly removal and licensing frameworks (including cities that defer licensing to Dakota County). Cities could use this information to identify where minor code edits, administrative guidance, or resident education may be needed to accommodate a third cart and reduce contamination and nuisance issues during implementation.

Table 8-1 inventories ordinance provisions pulled directly from code that commonly affect day-to-day curbside collection logistics, including cart set-out and storage requirements, container standards, and hauler licensing structures, but the level of detail and terminology varies widely across communities.

Table 8-1 Existing Dakota County Suburban City Code Inventory

	Cart Placement/Storage Requirements	Number of Residential Waste Containers Allowed/Container Requirements	Hauler Licensing Structures	Source
Lakeville	Containers shall be accessible at times of collection and shall be placed near the street, but not within the traveled portion of the roadway.	Every household and commercial/ industrial establishment having mixed MSW to dispose of shall provide itself with one or more metal or plastic cans sufficient to receive all mixed MSW that may accumulate between the times of collection. The city provides all recyclable material containers to residents.	It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in the business of collecting mixed Municipal solid waste or recyclable material without having first secured from the city council a license to do so.	CITY CODE of LAKEVILLE, MINNESOTA

	Cart Placement/Storage Requirements	Number of Residential Waste Containers Allowed/Container Requirements	Hauler Licensing Structures	Source
Eagan	In residential dwelling areas, storage containers for trash, refuse, and recyclables shall be permitted at curbside or other permitted collection point from 6:00 p.m. of the night preceding collection day until 6:00 a.m. on the day after designated collection day. At all other times, such containers must be stored inside the dwelling unit or garage or at a point behind the front of the dwelling unit or garage.	It is unlawful for any person to store trash or refuse on a residential dwelling premises for more than one week. All such storage shall be in watertight, metal, or plastic containers of not less than five gallons with tight-fitting covers.	It is unlawful for any person to collect and haul trash, refuse, recyclables, yard waste or organics for hire without a license from the city.	Code of Ordinances Eagan, MN
Burnsville	No collections of trash, recyclable materials and/or organics shall be made except for between the hours of 6:30 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. Monday through Friday in residential use areas	Every household and commercial establishment in the city must be under contract for the collection of trash and recyclables, solid waste with a licensed hauler. No container requirements.	No person shall haul trash or recyclables in the city without first securing a license from the city.	Burnsville: Municipal Code

	Cart Placement/Storage Requirements	Number of Residential Waste Containers Allowed/Container Requirements	Hauler Licensing Structures	Source
Apple Valley	No individual residential collection of refuse, recyclables or yard waste shall be made, except between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Individual residential collection operations during these hours may also be conducted on Saturdays, to accommodate recognized national holidays or a special pick-up as herein defined.	The licensee shall provide the customer with a close-fitting covered container of not less than 30-gallon capacity for recycling, and, at a customer's request, the licensee shall provide a larger capacity close-fitting covered container to the customer at no additional cost to the customer.	It shall be unlawful for any person to collect refuse, recyclables, or yard waste without a license from the city and an account relationship with the owner, lessee, or occupant of the premises.	APPLE VALLEY, MINNESOTA CODE OF ORDINANCES
Inver Grove Heights	Containers shall not be allowed to sit at the curb for more than twelve (12) hours prior to collection by a licensed collector and shall be removed from the curb within twelve (12) hours after collection.	Mixed municipal solid waste is hauled in containers equipped with tight-fitting covers that are also watertight on all sides and the bottom.	Within the city, no person shall engage in the collection of construction debris, recyclable materials, or mixed municipal solid waste, including trash, rubbish, yard waste, industrial solid waste, and refuse, without first securing a license from the city council.	CITY CODE of INVER GROVE HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA

	Cart Placement/Storage Requirements	Number of Residential Waste Containers Allowed/Container Requirements	Hauler Licensing Structures	Source
Rosemount	Collection of Waste and Recyclable Materials by Residential Haulers: Haulers shall conduct collections as follows: West of Akron Avenue collection may occur only on Monday or Tuesday. The East of Akron Avenue collection may occur on any day of the week. Hours of Collection: Haulers shall conduct collections as follows: Monday through Friday, from six o'clock (6:00) A.M. to eight o'clock (8:00) P.M. Saturday, from six o'clock (6:00) A.M. to eight o'clock (8:00) P.M. Sunday, from eight o'clock (8:00) A.M. to six o'clock (6:00) P.M.	All solid waste and recyclables accumulating between the times of collection shall be placed in tightly closed containers specifically designed for such purpose.	It shall be unlawful for any person to collect solid waste without first having secured a license to do so from the city council.	CITY CODE of ROSEMOUNT, MINNESOTA
Farmington	No person shall place any refuse in any street, alley, or other public place, or upon any private property, whether owned by such person or not, within the city except it be in a proper container for collection or under express approval granted by the city.	Containers for MSW shall be provided by the city, and containers for recyclable and yard waste materials shall be provided by the city's contractor.	All refuse accumulated in the city shall be collected, conveyed, and disposed of by the city.	CITY CODE OF FARMINGTON, MN

	Cart Placement/Storage Requirements	Number of Residential Waste Containers Allowed/Container Requirements	Hauler Licensing Structures	Source
Hastings	All residential solid waste collection shall take place between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. There shall be no residential solid waste collection on Sundays or Christmas Day. All residential solid waste collection shall be at the street curb unless separate arrangements are made with the hauler to pick up the solid waste at a different part of the residential dwelling.	Not specified, reference to the contract for organized collection.	It is unlawful for any person to haul solid waste or recycling for hire from any residential structure other than a multi-unit residential building within the city without being issued a residential hauler's license from the city. The City of Hastings finds that it is in the best interests of its residents to have organized solid waste collection from residential buildings other than multi-unit residential buildings within the city.	Hastings : Municipal Code
West St. Paul	Collection days for mixed municipal waste, recycling and yard waste are limited to Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday on non-holiday weeks.	Containers may be set out no sooner than one day prior to collection day; Containers (and any material not picked up by the trash hauler) must be removed from the front yard, driveway, or public boulevard by the end of collection day.	No person may haul, collect, or transport rubbish from residences, other than the person's own residence, within the city without a residential hauler's license. No more than four residential licenses shall be granted.	WEST ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA CODE OF ORDINANCES
South St. Paul	The cans, containers, and receptacles must be placed so that the trash they contain is readily accessible for removal and emptying by collectors, and so that they will not be a public nuisance or in any degree offensive.	Each container, can, or receptacle must have a tight-fitting cover for receiving and holding contents without leakage or odor escape.	No person shall engage in the residential collection of refuse without first being issued a residential refuse collection license by the city council.	Code of Ordinances South St. Paul, MN Municode Library

	Cart Placement/Storage Requirements	Number of Residential Waste Containers Allowed/Container Requirements	Hauler Licensing Structures	Source
Mendota Heights	No collections of trash, other refuse, and/or recyclable materials shall be made except between the hours of seven o'clock (7:00) A.M. and six o'clock (6:00) P.M. Monday through Friday.	Containers are equipped with tight-fitting covers that are also watertight on all sides and the bottom.	It shall be unlawful for any person to collect, haul, solicit or buy any trash, other refuse, and/or recyclables from or to any place within the corporate limits of the city, other than his own residence or place of business, without first having obtained a license to do so,	CITY CODE of MENDOTA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA
Empire	Not specified.	Nuisances: Trash cans or other refuse containers which are not rodent-free or fly-tight, or which are so maintained as to constitute a health hazard or to emit foul and disagreeable odors and which waste is not removed at least once a week;	Every person who owns or occupies property within the City of Empire for business, commercial, or residential purposes shall contract with a hauler for collection services for mixed municipal solid waste that may accumulate on the property at least once a week. No licensing provisions.	City of Empire Waste Hauler Ordinance

	Cart Placement/Storage Requirements	Number of Residential Waste Containers Allowed/Container Requirements	Hauler Licensing Structures	Source
Lilydale	Haulers must provide weekly trash and recycling services to residents, with pickup between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. It shall be the duty of every person whose trash or recycling is collected by a trash or recycling collection service to place the trash and recycling containers directly behind the curb line of the street abutting their property or, in the absence of a curb, directly behind the ditch line abutting their property during their designated date and time of collection.	Trash and recycling containers shall be watertight and constructed of a solid, durable metal, plastic, or paper material.	No licensing provisions.	Solid Waste Abatement Ordinance.pdf
Sunfish Lake	The city points residents to Dakota County Ordinance 110 (Solid Waste Management) and links to it on the city website.	Nuisances: trash cans which are not rodent-free or fly-tight, or which are so maintained as to constitute a health hazard or to emit foul and disagreeable odors	The city points residents to Dakota County Ordinance 110 (Solid Waste Management) and links to it on the city website.	The Solid and Hazardous Waste code was repealed in its entirety. Nuisances: 603. Other Nuisances
Mendota	All waste materials, debris, refuse, or trash, except vegetable matter compost, shall be kept in an enclosed building or properly contained in a closed container designed for such purposes.	Nuisances: trash cans which are not rodent-free or fly-tight, or which are so regularly unmaintained as to constitute a health hazard.	Any business within the limits of the City of Mendota must receive a license from the city.	MENDOTA_0001.PDF

8.1 Code Readiness for Municipalities

Dakota County municipalities can support curbside organics through local code using three primary pathways.



1. The first is to defer to Dakota County for key program elements, relying on County definitions and, where applicable, County licensing standards while keeping city code streamlined.
2. The second is to retain open hauling and use city code to regulate the local marketplace, which typically means adding or clarifying organics-related language in hauler licensing provisions and setting baseline expectations that apply to all licensed haulers.
3. The third is to organize service through a municipality-contracted model, where the city sets program expectations primarily through contract specifications and program documents, and local ordinance language focuses more on authorizing the city program and aligning definitions and storage rules with how the service is delivered.

Because these pathways place responsibility in different places (County, licensed haulers under city oversight or a city contract), this section screens local ordinances for three “readiness” elements that consistently affect implementation and resident understanding: (1) whether organics is defined in code, (2) whether storage and set-out requirements address organics alongside trash and recycling and (3) whether hauler licensing provisions explicitly include organics, defer licensing to the County or are largely irrelevant because service is organized through a city contract. The subsections below summarize where each community is already aligned and where targeted code edits could improve clarity and support rollout.

8.1.2 Organics Definition

County Ordinance 110 definition: **Organics** means food waste and the [designated list](#) of organics published on Dakota County’s website (food scraps).

City definition present (organics including food scraps): Lakeville; Eagan; Burnsville; Inver Grove Heights; Rosemount; Hastings; West St. Paul; South St. Paul; Mendota Heights; Lilydale.

City definition missing or not explicit (add/clarify): Apple Valley (has “compostable material” but not an organics definition); Farmington; Empire; Mendota.

City defers to the County definition: Sunfish Lake.

8.1.3 Storage Requirements

Add organics storage requirements: Lakeville; Eagan; Burnsville; Apple Valley; Inver Grove Heights; Rosemount; West St. Paul; South St. Paul; Mendota Heights; Mendota; Sunfish.

Handled through municipality-contracted collection (storage expectations sit in contract/program documents): Farmington; Hastings.

No storage requirements identified for solid waste: Empire.

Already addressed in code: Lilydale.

8.1.4 Hauler Licensing References

Already includes organics in licensing framework: Eagan; Inver Grove Heights.

Add organics to licensing language: Burnsville; Apple Valley; Rosemount; Lakeville; West St. Paul; South St. Paul; Mendota Heights.

No city licensing, defers to County: Empire; Lilydale; Sunfish Lake.

Municipality-contracted collection (licensing not the pathway): Farmington; Hastings.

Other note: Mendota (code indicates any business needs a license).

9.0 Implementation Approaches and Exhibits

Municipalities across the TCMA have taken varied paths in designing and rolling out residential curbside food-scrap collection programs. As communities consider new or expanded organics services, understanding what has worked well elsewhere becomes critical. This section summarizes implementation considerations that cities frequently encounter, including cart selection, storage constraints, participation strategies, and supporting exhibits. The intent is to provide practical guidance that aligns with Dakota County requirements and reflects lessons learned from communities.

9.1 Collection Cart Options

Cities in the TCMA commonly rely on one primary container type for curbside food-scrap collection: a standard outdoor curbside cart (typically 35-gallon) with only one size variation in the benchmarked communities in Columbia Heights. The container type influences routing, equipment needs, resident convenience, and contamination control.

A 7-gallon bin can be an appropriate solution for communities with lower expected tonnage, narrow alleys, or limited resident storage space. These bins can be serviced by a one-ton truck rather than a CDL-required packer truck, which may reduce operational cost and road wear. The bin's compact size also helps mitigate odor and rodent concerns when kept indoors or in a garage.

A 35-gallon curbside cart is the most common option in the TCMA-surveyed communities. This cart size is large enough to accommodate weekly volumes while small enough to fit typical garage and curbside footprints. A 35-gallon cart differentiates organics from standard trash and recycling carts (commonly 94-gallon) and can be serviced using traditional automated or semi-automated collection equipment. Cart consistency also supports regional education and labeling standards.

It is common practice for carts to be clearly labeled with photo-based Yes/No guidance at the point of disposal and to use a distinct color or lid to differentiate organics from trash and recycling. Durable decals or lid labels are typically more effective than temporary flyers. Maintaining a consistent cart color will help reduce contamination levels. When labelling carts and coordinating communication, it is crucial that cities use standardized language and labels to ensure consistency. Lack of standardization can create confusion for residents. Dakota County has phased out the term “organics” and is replacing it with “food scraps” for educational materials to maintain plain language for residents. In the city code, the term organics is still used.

Labelling must be in accordance with Dakota County Ordinance 110 Section 16.06 or as amended:

Ensure each trash, recycling and organics container has a visible sign or label that is consistent with the Department's solid waste abatement messaging, including:

1. Indicates which materials are acceptable in designated containers by using the term “Trash” or “Recycling” or “Recycle” or “Organics.” Any other waste types must be clearly labeled with the materials accepted.
2. Shows images of acceptable materials.
3. Is color-coded: blue for recycling; green for organics; and gray or black for trash.
4. It is visible and legible to users.
5. Includes preparation instructions where applicable.



Figure 9-1 illustrates common cart types and labelling options used in communities.

Figure 9-1 Collection Cart Examples



Better Futures/Columbia Heights
7-gallons

City of Minnetonka
35-gallons

9.2 Third-Cart Storage Analysis

One of the most frequent resident concerns during public outreach relates to the addition of a third cart, especially for households with limited garage or driveway space. This subsection provides an assessment of how a standard 35-gallon organics cart affects typical residential storage configurations.

Figure 9-2 illustrates an example configuration showing how cart sizes and placement can be adjusted to minimize storage footprint. On the left, two traditional 96-gallon carts are shown, with a combined footprint of about 14.58 square feet. The second layout shows a possible configuration with an organics cart added. With food scraps diverted from the trash cart, the trash cart could be reduced to a 35-gallon cart. In this layout, the carts have a combined footprint of about 14.24 square feet. Although this configuration takes up less total floor space, it may require additional linear wall space in a garage, increasing from approximately 60 inches to 70 inches depending on cart placement. A household may also save on monthly garbage bills by reducing trash cart size, such as through a lower service level and reduced taxable service. Communicating storage considerations during outreach can help address resident concerns, especially when paired with visuals and practical tips.

Figure 9-2 Cart Configurations

9.3 Increasing Program Participation

9.3.1 Survey Results

Of the surveyed communities, the City of St. Louis Park has the highest participation rate at 43 percent. This high level of participation reflects the city's efforts to increase program signups. The program fee is included as a non-taxable portion of the solid waste rate, which is why the city advertises participation as free. The city previously provided a kitchen caddy at no charge as a sign-up incentive and plans to offer it again in 2026. Compostable bags are also free to residents. Other methods the city has used include cart tagging for contamination education, starter kits, targeted reeducation, lid labels, events, community norms, its website, social media, emails, texts, and school and partner outreach. By combining multiple outreach methods, education and awareness are more widespread. More information on the St. Louis Park outreach campaign follows.

St. Louis Park Outreach Campaign 2022

In an effort to increase participation in the organics collection program, the city sent an organic myth-buster mailer to all residents. Alongside the mailer was a postcard that residents could use to sign up for the program with prepaid postage.

Common concerns debunked in the myth buster flyer are provided below (city responses are italicized):

- I do not have much food waste – *Any amount of composted organics makes a positive environmental impact.*
- I use the trash disposal – *Trash disposals are not meant for intentional food waste; clogging might occur, and the wastewater treatment system gets strained.*
- Organics will smell bad and attract pests – *Bagging compost and weekly collection keeps carts clean; the odor is no different than regular trash.*
- I do not have room for organics – *Small countertop caddies or under-the-sink bins take up limited*

space.

Before the flyer was sent out, participation was 40 percent, and it has since increased by 3 percent. Sign-up campaigns have proven effective for spreading education and raising awareness of program features.

Figure 9-3 graphs the organics program participation rates per benchmarked city for the communities that reported the requested data in the surveys.

Figure 9-3 Organics Program Participation per Benchmarked City

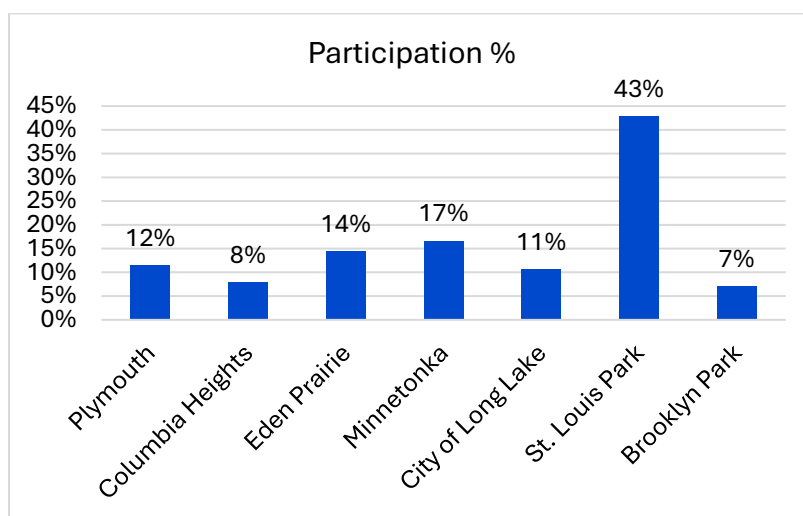
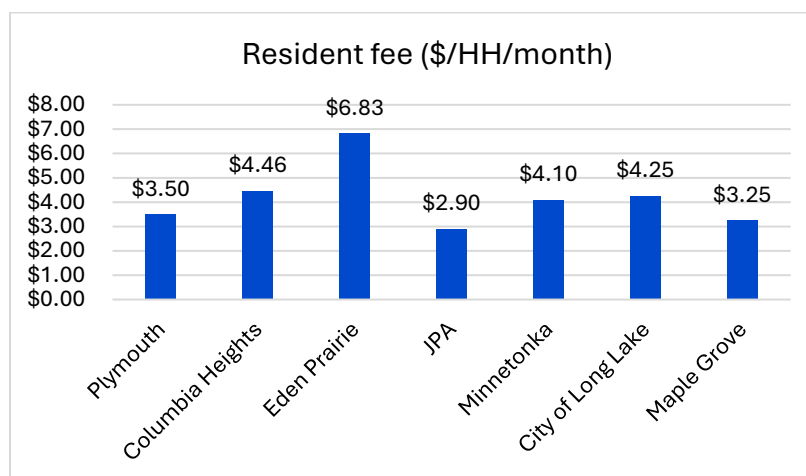


Figure 9-4 graphs the organics program cost per benchmarked city for the communities that reported the requested data in the surveys.

Figure 9-4 Organics Program Cost per Benchmarked City



The rates included are from cities which were interviewed via the implementation and best practices surveys (**Appendix A and Appendix B**). Note that haulers operating in Hennepin County cities may receive a tipping

fee subsidy for organics and Eden Prairie is an open hauling system. Also note that there are gaps in the data provided by cities, so the graphs do not align perfectly.

9.3.2 Outreach Takeaways from Surveys

Based on surveys and interviews conducted with benchmark cities, the most effective methods for increasing participation are:

- In-person outreach
- Mailers (postcards, newsletters, and infographics)
- Emails, texting, and social media
- Tagging for contamination with a letter explaining the problem
- Starter kit

When working to reduce contamination, organized initiatives lead to improved understanding and a shift in participation.

Messaging that emphasized community norms performed better than technical explanations. One community shared outreach testing result showing that “community norm” framing was more effective than fact-heavy messaging. Communications that highlighted neighbor participation, collective food scrap diversion, or a sense that “this is what we do here” produced stronger engagement than messages focused on rules or long lists. This approach was even more successful when paired with a simple action, such as requesting a cart, starting with food scraps, or keeping plastic out.

Tools that support residents during their first week reduce friction and lower customer service demand. Communities consistently noted that residents struggle most when they are just getting started, including where to store scraps, which bags to use and how to keep things clean. Starter kits, cart labels, kitchen caddies, and simple tip sheets were frequently mentioned as practical resources that help residents establish routines quickly. These tools also reduce customer service inquiries by answering common questions before they become complaints.

Many cities maintain current, easy-to-navigate websites that help residents access accurate information. Clear online guidance plays an important role in building understanding, and FAQ sections help residents find answers to common questions without having to call or email.

10.0 Other Considerations

This section addresses cross-cutting implementation issues that strongly influence participation, program consistency, and equity in residential organics collection across the TCMA. The topics apply regardless of governance model, but the “how” looks different under open hauling versus organized municipal systems. The discussion focuses on two practical areas cities repeatedly flagged in interviews: how programs are funded (including everyone pays expectations) and how key program inputs are procured (carts and compostable bags).

10.1 Everyone Pays

What it means: “Everyone pays” is a pricing approach where all households contribute to the cost of curbside organics service, regardless of whether or not they participate in the program. A common resident reaction is: “Why do I need to pay for this if I don’t plan on participating?” Minnesota statute requires that residents who participate in an organic recycling program not be charged more than those who do not. This is often the legal and policy foundation cities cite when structuring an everyone pays rate¹³.

Open hauling: Under open hauling, pricing is spread across multiple private haulers, which can make everyone pays harder to implement and explain. If the city (or County) sets organics availability expectations through licensing, the city may also need parallel licensing standards or ordinance language that address non-discriminatory pricing concepts and resident messaging, so households are not charged more for participating than for not participating. A provision in ordinance could state “A licensed hauler shall not impose a greater charge for residential curbside organics collection service on a customer who participates in food scraps collection than on a similarly situated customer who does not participate in food scraps collection.”

The operational challenge is consistency: multiple haulers may interpret rate design and enrollment steps differently unless expectations are clearly stated and reinforced.

Municipality-contracted systems: Under municipality-contracted systems, everyone pays is typically managed by embedding the program cost in a base solid waste rate or utility fee. This approach simplifies implementation because the city can set a single pricing structure, a single explanation, and a single set of service expectations for all households. Residents may still opt in operationally (for example, requesting a cart), but the community-wide fee supports program readiness, education, and consistent service delivery.

Key takeaway: Everyone pays is as much a communications issue as a pricing issue. If residents perceive the program as optional but billed universally, participation can lag unless the city clearly explains the statutory and service design rationale.

10.2 Cart Procurement and Ownership

What it means: Carts are one of the biggest practical and visible implementation decisions. The governance model influences who owns carts, how costs are recovered and how quickly a program can launch.

¹³ [Sec. 115A.93 MN Statutes](#)

Typical approaches: Communities use several different approaches to cart procurement and ownership. In some programs, carts are hauler-owned and hauler-funded, with costs recovered through customer rates. Other programs are city-owned and city-funded, typically using grants or program fees to recover costs. A smaller subset uses a shared procurement model, where the city and hauler split responsibilities, such as the city purchasing carts while the hauler manages delivery, maintenance, or replacement. These choices affect rollout speed, standardization and how easily programs can align cart labeling and contamination practices.

Across the benchmarked communities, cart responsibilities fall into three clear patterns. In hauler-led programs, the hauler manages both cart procurement and cart delivery and maintenance, as shown by Plymouth (municipality-contracted), Eden Prairie (open hauling), and HRG (municipality-contracted). Columbia Heights (contracted) provides a 7-gallon organics pail. A hybrid approach appears in St. Louis Park (contracted), where the city procures the carts, but delivery and maintenance are shared between the city and the service provider.

Open hauling: Under open hauling, carts are typically procured and owned by the hauler, with costs recovered through customer rates. If not provided in ordinance or hauler licensing, cart brands, colors, sizes, and replacement practices can vary by provider. That variation can complicate resident education, labeling consistency, and contamination feedback, especially when a city is trying to communicate one set of “rules” while several haulers manage the hardware differently.

Municipality-contracted systems: Under municipality-contracted systems (single hauler or zoned), cart procurement is more often standardized across the community. Carts may be city-procured and city-owned (often funded through a grant or program fees) or procured by the contracted hauler under contract requirements that specify cart type, color, labeling, delivery timelines, and replacement terms. Even when the hauler purchases the carts, the city can require a uniform cart standard through the contract, which supports clearer messaging, consistent resident experience, and smoother program enforcement.

Key takeaways: A standardized approach to waste collection provides clarity for residents and reduces contamination. This is most effective when communities use clear, consistent visuals and terminology in all public-facing materials. A city's ability to enforce these standards, especially regarding cart specifications and program rollout, is largely determined by its specific governance model. Open hauling typically leads to hauler-procured carts and greater variation across brands, sizes, and management practices, unless mandated by ordinance or code. Municipality-contracted systems can require a uniform cart standard even when the hauler purchases the carts. Cart ownership also affects long-term costs and customer experience, since city-owned carts can simplify replacements and future program changes but require upfront capital and asset tracking, while hauler-owned carts shift those responsibilities to the contractor. Finally, cart procurement and delivery logistics are often a critical detail of program roll-out, so cart procurement timing, replacement policies and cost recovery need to be defined early and aligned with how the program is being presented to residents.

10.3 Compostable Bag Procurement and Distribution

What it means: Bag procurement refers to how compostable bags are obtained and distributed to residents for lining kitchen caddies or organics carts, and who pays for them. Bag strategy affects participation, equity, and contamination by influencing how easily residents can keep organics contained and clean.

Typical approaches: Bag procurement falls along a spectrum from resident-purchased to program-provided. Approaches include residents purchasing bags on their own, or the city providing a limited starter supply (e.g., one free roll or a small bundle delivered with the cart), or city-funded, ongoing distribution (e.g., an annual allotment).

In the benchmarked communities, approaches ranged from residents purchasing bags on their own (Plymouth and Eden Prairie), to providing a limited starter supply such as one free roll (Columbia Heights) or a small bundle delivered with the cart (HRG, five bags), to city-funded ongoing distribution such as an annual allotment equivalent to one bag per week (St. Louis Park, 52 per year).

Open hauling: In the benchmarked examples, bag procurement is resident-driven. Eden Prairie relies on residents to purchase their own compostable bags, with no routine program distribution noted in the benchmark data.

Municipality-contracted systems: Contracted programs show more variation. Columbia Heights reduces barriers by providing a limited starter supply (one free roll). The HRG example includes a small starter distribution tied to cart delivery (five bags). St. Louis Park represents the most supportive approach in the benchmark set, with the city providing an ongoing supply equivalent to one bag per week (52 per year).

Key takeaways: Bag procurement is a practical participation lever. Resident-purchased bags are the lowest-cost option but can create friction and uneven access, especially early in the rollout. Starter supplies help residents try the program and establish habits. City-funded, ongoing distribution supports consistency and equity and can simplify messaging about acceptable liners, but it requires a clear funding mechanism and a defined distribution method.

Appendix A – Implementation Surveys

Curbside Organics Collection Transition Case Summaries

Community Name: _____

Person Completing Survey: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____



- 1. When did the transition from organized collection to open collection occur for trash and recycling?** (when the conversation started)

- 2. What triggered the change?** (check all that apply)

Resident interest/demand

Cost stabilization/predictability

Performance concerns with prior model

Access to facility/processor

Policy alignment (state/county goals)

Grant funding opportunity

Contract alignment with recycling

Equity/access objectives

Route efficiency/tonnage capture

Supported politically

Hauler market dynamics (entry/exit)

Other _____

Comments:

- 3. What are the key process steps you completed to make the switch?** (check all that apply)

Stakeholder interviews/listening sessions

Resident survey/polling

Pilot or phased rollout

Ordinance or code change

RFP/bid

Contract amendment

Cart procurement/distribution

Billing change (city utility vs. hauler invoice)

Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, events)

Council workshops/public meetings

Other _____

Comments: The city mails a quarterly newsletter, which is the most successful

4. What do you see as the biggest benefit to the city switching from organized to open collection?

City Council vote (3-2).

5. What do you see as the biggest benefit to the residents switching from organized to open collection?

Ordinance provisions require attrition, meaning that if a hauler does not renew its

6. During the switch what were the most successful practices? (biggest benefit)

7. During the switch what is one thing you would do differently?

Follow-up:

We would like to set up a time to briefly discuss your responses, which day or days and time of day would work best?

December 15 th	AM	PM
December 16 th	AM	PM
December 17 th	AM	PM
December 18 th	AM	PM
December 19 th	AM	PM

If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education: _____

Curbside Organics Collection Transition Case Summaries

Community Name: _____
Person Completing Survey: _____
Title: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____



1. When did the transition from open organics collection to organized organics collection occur? (when the conversation started)

2. What triggered the change? (check all that apply)

- Resident interest/demand
- Cost stabilization/predictability
- Performance concerns with prior model
- Access to facility/processor
- Policy alignment (state/county goals)
- Grant funding opportunity
- Contract alignment with recycling
- Equity/access objectives
- Route efficiency/tonnage capture
- Supported politically
- Hauler market dynamics (entry/exit)
- Other _____
- Comments:

3. What are the key process steps you completed to make the switch? (check all that apply)

- Stakeholder interviews/listening sessions
- Resident survey/polling
- Pilot or phased rollout
- Ordinance or code change
- RFP/bid
- Contract amendment
- Cart procurement/distribution
- Billing change (city utility vs. hauler invoice)
- Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, events)

Council workshops/public meetings

Other _____

Comments:

4. How are residential customers billed?

Included in base city utility Hauler invoice Other _____

Comments:

5. How often are organics collected?

Weekly cart service

Every-other-week

Co-collected with yard waste

Other _____

Comments:

6. What size are the residential cart containers?

35 gallons 64 gallons 96 gallons Other _____

7. If data is available, please describe program performance from 2024:

Eligible households: _____

Enrolled/served households: _____

Average set-out rate: _____

Missed pickups (per 1,000 stops): _____

Complaint rate (per 1,000 accounts): _____

Average resolution time (hours): _____

Resident fee \$/HH/month: _____

8. What worked well? (select three that mattered most)

Contract structure

Billing/affordability design

Education/engagement

Council/community backing

Hauler performance

Staff capacity/project management

Other

9. What do you see as the biggest benefit to the city switching from open to organized collection?

the City Council opted to add organized curbside organics as a city service starting January 2025, and amended code so individual garbage haulers would no longer be required (or allowed) to charge residents for organics service they did not provide once the city program began.

10. What do you see as the biggest benefit to the residents switching from open to organized collection?

Stat. 115A.93, subd. 3(c) that limits charging participants more than non-participants. This

11. During the switch what were the most successful practices? (biggest benefit)

organized curbside organics.

12. During the switch what is one thing you would do differently?

Follow-up:

We would like to set up a time to briefly discuss your responses, which day or days and time of day would work best?

December 15 th	AM	PM
December 16 th	AM	PM
December 17 th	AM	PM
December 18 th	AM	PM
December 19 th	AM	PM

If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education: _____

Curbside Organics Collection Transition Case Summaries

Community Name: _____
Person Completing Survey: _____
Title: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____



1. When did the transition from open organics collection to organized organics collection occur? (when the conversation started)

2. What triggered the change? (check all that apply)

- Resident interest/demand
- Cost stabilization/predictability
- Performance concerns with prior model
- Access to facility/processor
- Policy alignment (state/county goals)
- Grant funding opportunity
- Contract alignment with recycling
- Equity/access objectives
- Route efficiency/tonnage capture
- Supported politically
- Hauler market dynamics (entry/exit)
- Other _____
- Comments:

3. What are the key process steps you completed to make the switch? (check all that apply)

- Stakeholder interviews/listening sessions
- Resident survey/polling
- Pilot or phased rollout
- Ordinance or code change
- RFP/bid
- Contract amendment
- Cart procurement/distribution
- Billing change (city utility vs. hauler invoice)
- Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, events)

Council workshops/public meetings

Other _____

Comments:

4. How are residential customers billed?

Included in base city utility Hauler invoice Other _____

Comments:

5. How often are organics collected?

Weekly cart service

Every-other-week

Co-collected with yard waste

Other _____

Comments:

6. What size are the residential cart containers?

35 gallons 64 gallons 96 gallons Other _____

7. If data is available, please describe program performance from 2024:

Eligible households: _____

Enrolled/served households: _____

Average set-out rate: _____

Missed pickups (per 1,000 stops): _____

Complaint rate (per 1,000 accounts): _____

Average resolution time (hours): _____

Resident fee \$/HH/month: _____

8. What worked well? (select three that mattered most)

Contract structure

Billing/affordability design

Education/engagement

Council/community backing

Hauler performance

Staff capacity/project management

Other

9. What do you see as the biggest benefit to the city switching from open to organized collection?

10. What do you see as the biggest benefit to the residents switching from open to organized collection?

11. During the switch what were the most successful practices? (biggest benefit)

12. During the switch what is one thing you would do differently?

32-gallon carts which led to wait times for residents to get a cart.

Follow-up:

We would like to set up a time to briefly discuss your responses, which day or days and time of day would work best?

December 15 th	AM	PM
December 16 th	AM	PM
December 17 th	AM	PM
December 18 th	AM	PM
December 19 th	AM	PM

If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education: _____

Curbside Organics Collection Transition Case Summaries

Community Name: _____

Person Completing Survey: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____



1. When did the transition from open organics collection to organized organics collection occur? (when the conversation started)

2. What triggered the change? (check all that apply)

Resident interest/demand

Cost stabilization/predictability

Performance concerns with prior model

Access to facility/processor

Policy alignment (state/county goals)

Grant funding opportunity

Contract alignment with recycling

Equity/access objectives

Route efficiency/tonnage capture

Supported politically

Hauler market dynamics (entry/exit)

Other _____

Comments:

3. What are the key process steps you completed to make the switch? (check all that apply)

Stakeholder interviews/listening sessions

Resident survey/polling

Pilot or phased rollout

Ordinance or code change

RFP/bid

Contract amendment

Cart procurement/distribution

Billing change (city utility vs. hauler invoice)

Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, events)

Council workshops/public meetings

Other _____

Comments:

4. How are residential customers billed?

Included in base city utility Hauler invoice Other _____

Comments:

5. How often are organics collected?

Weekly cart service

Every-other-week

Co-collected with yard waste

Other _____

Comments:

6. What size are the residential cart containers?

35 gallons 64 gallons 96 gallons Other _____

7. If data is available, please describe program performance from 2024:

Eligible households: _____

Enrolled/served households: _____

Average set-out rate: _____

Missed pickups (per 1,000 stops): _____

Complaint rate (per 1,000 accounts): _____

Average resolution time (hours): _____

Resident fee \$/HH/month: _____

8. What worked well? (select three that mattered most)

Contract structure

Billing/affordability design

Education/engagement

Council/community backing

Hauler performance

Staff capacity/project management

Other

9. What do you see as the biggest benefit to the city switching from open to organized collection?

10. What do you see as the biggest benefit to the residents switching from open to organized collection?

contract price dropped to \$4/mo.

11. During the switch what were the most successful practices? (biggest benefit)

hauler. The more advance notice to give residence details for rollout the better.

12. During the switch what is one thing you would do differently?

Follow-up:

We would like to set up a time to briefly discuss your responses, which day or days and time of day would work best?

December 15 th	AM	PM
December 16 th	AM	PM
December 17 th	AM	PM
December 18 th	AM	PM
December 19 th	AM	PM

If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education: _____

Curbside Organics Collection Transition Case Summaries

Community Name: _____
Person Completing Survey: _____
Title: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____



1. When did the transition from open organics collection to organized organics collection occur? (when the conversation started)

2. What triggered the change? (check all that apply)

- Resident interest/demand
- Cost stabilization/predictability
- Performance concerns with prior model
- Access to facility/processor
- Policy alignment (state/county goals)
- Grant funding opportunity
- Contract alignment with recycling
- Equity/access objectives
- Route efficiency/tonnage capture
- Supported politically
- Hauler market dynamics (entry/exit)
- Other _____

Comments:

3. What are the key process steps you completed to make the switch? (check all that apply)

- Stakeholder interviews/listening sessions
- Resident survey/polling
- Pilot or phased rollout
- Ordinance or code change
- RFP/bid
- Contract amendment
- Cart procurement/distribution
- Billing change (city utility vs. hauler invoice)
- Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, events)

Council workshops/public meetings

Other _____

Comments:

4. How are residential customers billed?

Included in base city utility Hauler invoice Other _____

Comments:

5. How often are organics collected?

Weekly cart service

Every-other-week

Co-collected with yard waste

Other _____

Comments:

6. What size are the residential cart containers?

35 gallons 64 gallons 96 gallons Other _____

7. If data is available, please describe program performance from 2024:

Eligible households: _____

Enrolled/served households: _____

Average set-out rate: _____

Missed pickups (per 1,000 stops): _____

Complaint rate (per 1,000 accounts): _____

Average resolution time (hours): _____

Resident fee \$/HH/month: _____

8. What worked well? (select three that mattered most)

Contract structure

Billing/affordability design

Education/engagement

Council/community backing

Hauler performance

Staff capacity/project management

Other

9. What do you see as the biggest benefit to the city switching from open to organized collection?

a more equitable pricing across households. An added benefit is that the City

10. What do you see as the biggest benefit to the residents switching from open to organized collection?

is \$4.25.

11. During the switch what were the most successful practices? (biggest benefit)

free refuse and recycling collection.

12. During the switch what is one thing you would do differently?

Follow-up:

We would like to set up a time to briefly discuss your responses, which day or days and time of day would work best?

December 15 th	AM	PM
December 16 th	AM	PM
December 17 th	AM	PM
December 18 th	AM	PM
December 19 th	AM	PM

If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education: _____

Appendix B – Best Management Practice Surveys

Organics Collection Local Best Practices Survey



Community Name: _____

Person Completing Survey: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Most recent change to your organics program (MM/YYYY): _____



1. What is the service structure by waste stream? (check all that apply)

Waste Stream	Open subscription	City-contracted single hauler	City-contracted multi-hauler by zones	City-operated (municipal)	JPA ¹	Other
Trash						
Recycling						
Organics						
Yard Waste						
Bulky						

¹Joint Powers Agreement

ALL QUESTIONS BELOW PERTAIN TO ORGANICS

2. Please provide your scope and service models:

What types of organics diversion opportunities are available in your community?

Curbside

Drop-off

Both

What types of customers are served through your curbside organics program?

Single-family

Multifamily

Municipal/commercial facilities

Other: _____

How often are organics collected?

Weekly

Every-other-week

Other: _____

What size are the residential cart containers?

35 gallons

64 gallons

96 gallons

Other: _____

Are food scraps and yard waste collected in the same cart?

Yes No

What types of materials are accepted in your residential program?

All food scraps

Yard waste

BPI-certified products

Paper towels/napkins

Other: _____

Does your residential curbside organics program have a bag policy?

BPI-certified only

No bags

Paper only

No policy

How are residential customers billed?

City utility bill

Hauler invoice

Other: _____

3. What are the roles and responsibilities of the city and hauler? (check all that apply)

Process Step	City	Hauler	Shared	N/A
Customer service/ call center				
Billing and collections				
Cart procurement, delivery, maintenance				
Bag procurement				
Route design and service-day changes				
Field outreach (contamination tagging, audits, and follow-up)				
Education content (copy/design)				
Education delivery (mailers, web, social, events)				
Missed pickups / complaint resolution				
Holiday or weather service communications				

4. Who provides the following provisions? (check all that apply)

Item	Provided by	Resident Cost	Distribution
Kitchen bucket/ caddy	Resident (purchase/ provide their own) City County JPA Hauler Other: _____	Free One-time fee	Delivered Pickup site Retail
Compostable kitchen bags	Resident (purchase/ provide their own) City County JPA Hauler Other: _____	Free Voucher/discount Resident purchase	Delivered Pickup site Retail

If free compostable kitchen bags are provided, what is the allotment per household/year?
_____ (bags or liners)

5. What are the curbside organics collection contracting details? (if applicable)

Please provide hauling contract basics:

Term: _____ years
Start date: _____
End date: _____
Renewal: _____

Please describe key service specifications:

Set-out rules: _____
Contamination thresholds: _____
Extra setouts: _____
Weather or snow protocols: _____
Residential accessibility: _____
Other: _____

Extra setouts: The additional collection of regular household organics recycling outside of the regularly scheduled collection day. Extra collections are arranged between the Contractor and billed by the Contractor directly to the customer.

Residential accessibility: An optional service offered by the Contractor to any customer for an extra fee payable directly to the Contractor. In subscribing to this service, the customer keeps their cart or bin near their house or garage. The Contractor “walks up” to collect their materials and returns the cart to its original location. Customer has an obligation to make drive way and side walk safely accessible removing snow and ice, applying salt/sand.

Weather or snow protocols: Contractor may postpone Collection due to severe weather at the sole discretion of the Contractor. “Severe Weather” shall include, but shall not be limited to, those cases in which strikes, riots, terrorist acts, compliance with Applicable Laws, fires, pandemics, epidemics, inclement weather such as snow, sleet, ice or cold, or in which the temperature at 6:00 a.m. is minus twenty (-20) degrees Fahrenheit or colder, and other acts of God that might jeopardize the safety of the Contractor’s staff or result in unsafe driving conditions.

Please describe enforcement tools:

Tags/warnings: _____

Contamination fees: _____

Service holds: _____

Other: _____

Please select annual rate or contract adjustments:

CPI

Fuel index

Tip-fee passthrough

Other: _____

6. Please describe your implementation steps for organized collection of organics: (if applicable, add program anecdotes if needed)

Stakeholder interviews/listening sessions: _____

Resident survey or polling: _____

Pilot or phased rollout: _____

Ordinance or code change: _____

RFP/bid or contract amendment: _____

Cart procurement and distribution: _____

Billing system change: _____

Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, web, social, events): _____

Contamination policy and education/enforcement: _____

Council workshops or public meetings: _____

Other: _____

Decision-to-launch duration: _____ months

7. If data is available, please describe program performance from 2024:

Eligible households: _____

Enrolled/served households: _____

Average set-out rate: _____

Missed pickups (per 1,000 stops): _____

Complaint rate (per 1,000 accounts): _____

Average resolution time (hours): _____

Resident fee \$/HH/month: _____

solid waste rate, as our residential G, R, O, YW is all organized.

8. Please outline communications, contamination, and behavior changes:

Brand or program name: _____

What types of core messages were sent to residents? (select all that apply)

Climate/soil

Convenience

Cost savings

Clean kitchen tips

Community norm

Other: _____

What type of communication channels were used, and which were most effective?

(select all that apply)

Type of Communication	Check box if used	Check box for most effective
Mailers		
Bill inserts		
Website		
Social media		
Email/SMS		
Events		
School/partner outreach		
Multilingual content		
Accessibility adaptations		

What tools were provided, and which were most effective? (select all that apply)

Type of Communication	Check box if used	Check box for most effective
Starter kit		
Lid labels		
Accepted-items magnet		
How-to videos		
Web sorting tool		
Contamination tactics		
Cart tagging		
Targeted re-education		
Repeat-offender protocol		

9. Please provide your hauler data and reporting requirements:

What is your reporting frequency?

Monthly
Quarterly
Annually

What information do you require from the hauler? (select all that apply)

Stops or households
Set-out data
Tons
Contamination
Misses/complaints
Tagging/enforcement
Outreach touches
Other: _____

How do you receive the data from the hauler?

Portal

Email template

Data feed

Other: _____

10. What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider?

ensures that they know what is accepted and understand what the cart is for.

11. What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently?

small city this is feasible, though we know our hours don't work for some (between the two building hours are 7-4:30).

Follow-up:

We would like to set up a time to briefly discuss your responses, which day or days and time of day would work best?

December 15 th	AM	PM
December 16 th	AM	PM
December 17 th	AM	PM
December 18 th	AM	PM
December 19 th	AM	PM

If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education: _____

helpful info on how new participants can set up their in-home collection.

Organics Collection Local Best Practices Survey



Community Name: _____

Person Completing Survey: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Most recent change to your organics program (MM/YYYY): _____



1. What is the service structure by waste stream? (check all that apply)

Waste Stream	Open subscription	City-contracted single hauler	City-contracted multi-hauler by zones	City-operated (municipal)	JPA ¹	Other
Trash						
Recycling						
Organics						
Yard Waste						
Bulky						

¹Joint Powers Agreement

ALL QUESTIONS BELOW PERTAIN TO ORGANICS

2. Please provide your scope and service models:

What types of organics diversion opportunities are available in your community?

Curbside

Drop-off

Both

What types of customers are served through your curbside organics program?

Single-family

Multifamily

Municipal/commercial facilities

Other: _____

How often are organics collected?

Weekly

Every-other-week

Other: _____

What size are the residential cart containers?

35 gallons

64 gallons

96 gallons

Other: _____

Are food scraps and yard waste collected in the same cart?

Yes No

What types of materials are accepted in your residential program?

All food scraps

Yard waste

BPI-certified products

Paper towels/napkins

Other: _____

Does your residential curbside organics program have a bag policy?

BPI-certified only

No bags

Paper only

No policy

How are residential customers billed?

City utility bill

Hauler invoice

Other: _____

3. What are the roles and responsibilities of the city and hauler? (check all that apply)

Process Step	City	Hauler	Shared	N/A
Customer service/ call center				
Billing and collections				
Cart procurement, delivery, maintenance				
Bag procurement				
Route design and service-day changes				
Field outreach (contamination tagging, audits, and follow-up)				
Education content (copy/design)				
Education delivery (mailers, web, social, events)				
Missed pickups / complaint resolution				
Holiday or weather service communications				

4. Who provides the following provisions? (check all that apply)

Item	Provided by	Resident Cost	Distribution
Kitchen bucket/ caddy	Resident (purchase/ provide their own) City County JPA Hauler Other: _____	Free One-time fee	Delivered Pickup site Retail
Compostable kitchen bags	Resident (purchase/ provide their own) City County JPA Hauler Other: _____	Free Voucher/discount Resident purchase	Delivered Pickup site Retail

If free compostable kitchen bags are provided, what is the allotment per household/year?
_____ (bags or liners)

5. What are the curbside organics collection contracting details? (if applicable)

Please provide hauling contract basics:

Term: _____ years
Start date: _____
End date: _____
Renewal: _____

Please describe key service specifications:

Set-out rules: _____
Contamination thresholds: _____
Extra setouts: _____
Weather or snow protocols: _____
Residential accessibility: _____
Other: _____

Please describe enforcement tools:

Tags/warnings: _____

Contamination fees: _____

Service holds: _____

Other: _____

Please select annual rate or contract adjustments:

CPI

Fuel index

Tip-fee passthrough

Other: _____

6. Please describe your implementation steps for organized collection of organics: (if applicable, add program anecdotes if needed)

Stakeholder interviews/listening sessions: _____

Resident survey or polling: _____

Pilot or phased rollout: _____

Ordinance or code change: _____

RFP/bid or contract amendment: _____

Cart procurement and distribution: _____

Billing system change: _____

Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, web, social, events): _____

Contamination policy and education/enforcement: _____

Council workshops or public meetings: _____

Other: _____

Decision-to-launch duration: _____ months

7. If data is available, please describe program performance from 2024:

Eligible households: _____

Enrolled/served households: _____

Average set-out rate: _____

Missed pickups (per 1,000 stops): _____

Complaint rate (per 1,000 accounts): _____

Average resolution time (hours): _____

Resident fee \$/HH/month: _____

8. Please outline communications, contamination, and behavior changes:

Brand or program name: _____

What types of core messages were sent to residents? (select all that apply)

Climate/soil

Convenience

Cost savings

Clean kitchen tips

Community norm

Other: _____

What type of communication channels were used, and which were most effective?

(select all that apply)

Type of Communication	Check box if used	Check box for most effective
Mailers		
Bill inserts		
Website		
Social media		
Email/SMS		
Events		
School/partner outreach		
Multilingual content		
Accessibility adaptations		

What tools were provided, and which were most effective? (select all that apply)

Type of Communication	Check box if used	Check box for most effective
Starter kit		
Lid labels		
Accepted-items magnet		
How-to videos		
Web sorting tool		
Contamination tactics		
Cart tagging		
Targeted re-education		
Repeat-offender protocol		

9. Please provide your hauler data and reporting requirements:

What is your reporting frequency?

Monthly
Quarterly
Annually

What information do you require from the hauler? (select all that apply)

Stops or households
Set-out data
Tons
Contamination
Misses/complaints
Tagging/enforcement
Outreach touches
Other: _____

How do you receive the data from the hauler?

Portal

Email template

Data feed

Other: _____

10. What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider?

11. What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently?

Follow-up:

We would like to set up a time to briefly discuss your responses, which day or days and time of day would work best?

December 15 th	AM	PM
December 16 th	AM	PM
December 17 th	AM	PM
December 18 th	AM	PM
December 19 th	AM	PM

If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education: _____

<https://docs.plymouthmn.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=1378981&dbid=0&repo=Plymouth>

Organics Collection Local Best Practices Survey



Community Name: _____

Person Completing Survey: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Most recent change to your organics program (MM/YYYY): _____



1. What is the service structure by waste stream? (check all that apply)

Waste Stream	Open subscription	City-contracted single hauler	City-contracted multi-hauler by zones	City-operated (municipal)	JPA ¹	Other
Trash						
Recycling						
Organics						
Yard Waste						
Bulky						

¹Joint Powers Agreement

ALL QUESTIONS BELOW PERTAIN TO ORGANICS

2. Please provide your scope and service models:

What types of organics diversion opportunities are available in your community?

Curbside

Drop-off

Both

What types of customers are served through your curbside organics program?

Single-family

Multifamily

Municipal/commercial facilities

Other: _____

How often are organics collected?

Weekly

Every-other-week

Other: _____

What size are the residential cart containers?

35 gallons

64 gallons

96 gallons

Other: _____

Are food scraps and yard waste collected in the same cart?

Yes No

What types of materials are accepted in your residential program?

All food scraps

Yard waste

BPI-certified products

Paper towels/napkins

Other: _____

Does your residential curbside organics program have a bag policy?

BPI-certified only

No bags

Paper only

No policy

How are residential customers billed?

City utility bill

Hauler invoice

Other: _____

3. What are the roles and responsibilities of the city and hauler? (check all that apply)

Process Step	City	Hauler	Shared	N/A
Customer service/ call center				
Billing and collections				
Cart procurement, delivery, maintenance				
Bag procurement				
Route design and service-day changes				
Field outreach (contamination tagging, audits, and follow-up)				
Education content (copy/design)				
Education delivery (mailers, web, social, events)				
Missed pickups / complaint resolution				
Holiday or weather service communications				

4. Who provides the following provisions? (check all that apply)

Item	Provided by	Resident Cost	Distribution
Kitchen bucket/ caddy	Resident (purchase/ provide their own) City County JPA Hauler Other: _____	Free One-time fee	Delivered Pickup site Retail
Compostable kitchen bags	Resident (purchase/ provide their own) City County JPA Hauler Other: _____	Free Voucher/discount Resident purchase	Delivered Pickup site Retail

If free compostable kitchen bags are provided, what is the allotment per household/year?
_____ (bags or liners)

5. What are the curbside organics collection contracting details? (if applicable)

Please provide hauling contract basics:

Term: _____ years
Start date: _____
End date: _____
Renewal: _____

Please describe key service specifications:

Set-out rules: _____
Contamination thresholds: _____
Extra setouts: _____
Weather or snow protocols: _____
Residential accessibility: _____
Other: _____

Please describe enforcement tools:

Tags/warnings: _____

Contamination fees: _____

Service holds: _____

Other: _____

Please select annual rate or contract adjustments:

CPI

Fuel index

Tip-fee passthrough

Other: _____

6. Please describe your implementation steps for organized collection of organics: (if applicable, add program anecdotes if needed)

Stakeholder interviews/listening sessions: _____

Resident survey or polling: _____

Pilot or phased rollout: _____

Ordinance or code change: _____

RFP/bid or contract amendment: _____

Cart procurement and distribution: _____

Billing system change: _____

Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, web, social, events): _____

Contamination policy and education/enforcement: _____

Council workshops or public meetings: _____

Other: _____

Decision-to-launch duration: _____ months

7. If data is available, please describe program performance from 2024:

Eligible households: _____

Enrolled/served households: _____

Average set-out rate: _____

Missed pickups (per 1,000 stops): _____

Complaint rate (per 1,000 accounts): _____

Average resolution time (hours): _____

Resident fee \$/HH/month: _____

8. Please outline communications, contamination, and behavior changes:

Brand or program name: _____

What types of core messages were sent to residents? (select all that apply)

Climate/soil

Convenience

Cost savings

Clean kitchen tips

Community norm

Other: _____

What type of communication channels were used, and which were most effective?

(select all that apply)

Type of Communication	Check box if used	Check box for most effective
Mailers		
Bill inserts		
Website		
Social media		
Email/SMS		
Events		
School/partner outreach		
Multilingual content		
Accessibility adaptations		

What tools were provided, and which were most effective? (select all that apply)

Type of Communication	Check box if used	Check box for most effective
Starter kit		
Lid labels		
Accepted-items magnet		
How-to videos		
Web sorting tool		
Contamination tactics		
Cart tagging		
Targeted re-education		
Repeat-offender protocol		

9. Please provide your hauler data and reporting requirements:

What is your reporting frequency?

Monthly
Quarterly
Annually

What information do you require from the hauler? (select all that apply)

Stops or households
Set-out data
Tons
Contamination
Misses/complaints
Tagging/enforcement
Outreach touches
Other: _____

How do you receive the data from the hauler?

Portal

Email template

Data feed

Other: _____

10. What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider?

11. What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently?

Follow-up:

We would like to set up a time to briefly discuss your responses, which day or days and time of day would work best?

December 15 th	AM	PM
December 16 th	AM	PM
December 17 th	AM	PM
December 18 th	AM	PM
December 19 th	AM	PM

If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education: _____

Organics Collection Local Best Practices Survey



Community Name: _____

Person Completing Survey: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Most recent change to your organics program (MM/YYYY): _____



1. What is the service structure by waste stream? (check all that apply)

Waste Stream	Open subscription	City-contracted single hauler	City-contracted multi-hauler by zones	City-operated (municipal)	JPA ¹	Other
Trash						
Recycling						
Organics						
Yard Waste						
Bulky						

¹Joint Powers Agreement

ALL QUESTIONS BELOW PERTAIN TO ORGANICS

2. Please provide your scope and service models:

What types of organics diversion opportunities are available in your community?

Curbside

Drop-off

Both

What types of customers are served through your curbside organics program?

Single-family

Multifamily

Municipal/commercial facilities

Other: _____

How often are organics collected?

Weekly

Every-other-week

Other: _____

What size are the residential cart containers?

35 gallons

64 gallons

96 gallons

Other: _____

Are food scraps and yard waste collected in the same cart?

Yes No

What types of materials are accepted in your residential program?

All food scraps

Yard waste

BPI-certified products

Paper towels/napkins

Other: _____

Does your residential curbside organics program have a bag policy?

BPI-certified only

No bags

Paper only

No policy

How are residential customers billed?

City utility bill

Hauler invoice

Other: _____

3. What are the roles and responsibilities of the city and hauler? (check all that apply)

Process Step	City	Hauler	Shared	N/A
Customer service/ call center				
Billing and collections				
Cart procurement, delivery, maintenance				
Bag procurement				
Route design and service-day changes				
Field outreach (contamination tagging, audits, and follow-up)				
Education content (copy/design)				
Education delivery (mailers, web, social, events)				
Missed pickups / complaint resolution				
Holiday or weather service communications				

4. Who provides the following provisions? (check all that apply)

Item	Provided by	Resident Cost	Distribution
Kitchen bucket/ caddy	Resident (purchase/ provide their own) City County JPA Hauler Other: _____	Free One-time fee	Delivered Pickup site Retail
Compostable kitchen bags	Resident (purchase/ provide their own) City County JPA Hauler Other: _____	Free Voucher/discount Resident purchase	Delivered Pickup site Retail

If free compostable kitchen bags are provided, what is the allotment per household/year?
_____ (bags or liners)

5. What are the curbside organics collection contracting details? (if applicable)

Please provide hauling contract basics:

Term: _____ years
Start date: _____
End date: _____
Renewal: _____

Please describe key service specifications:

Set-out rules: _____
Contamination thresholds: _____
Extra setouts: _____
Weather or snow protocols: _____
Residential accessibility: _____
Other: _____

Please describe enforcement tools:

Tags/warnings: _____

Contamination fees: _____

Service holds: _____

Other: _____

Please select annual rate or contract adjustments:

CPI

Fuel index

Tip-fee passthrough

Other: _____

6. Please describe your implementation steps for organized collection of organics: (if applicable, add program anecdotes if needed)

Stakeholder interviews/listening sessions: _____

Resident survey or polling: _____

Pilot or phased rollout: _____

Ordinance or code change: _____

RFP/bid or contract amendment: _____

Cart procurement and distribution: _____

Billing system change: _____

Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, web, social, events): _____

Contamination policy and education/enforcement: _____

Council workshops or public meetings: _____

Other: _____

Decision-to-launch duration: _____ months

7. If data is available, please describe program performance from 2024:

Eligible households: _____

Enrolled/served households: _____

Average set-out rate: _____

Missed pickups (per 1,000 stops): _____

Complaint rate (per 1,000 accounts): _____

Average resolution time (hours): _____

Resident fee \$/HH/month: _____

8. Please outline communications, contamination, and behavior changes:

Brand or program name: _____

What types of core messages were sent to residents? (select all that apply)

Climate/soil

Convenience

Cost savings

Clean kitchen tips

Community norm

Other: _____

What type of communication channels were used, and which were most effective?

(select all that apply)

Type of Communication	Check box if used	Check box for most effective
Mailers		
Bill inserts		
Website		
Social media		
Email/SMS		
Events		
School/partner outreach		
Multilingual content		
Accessibility adaptations		

What tools were provided, and which were most effective? (select all that apply)

Type of Communication	Check box if used	Check box for most effective
Starter kit		
Lid labels		
Accepted-items magnet		
How-to videos		
Web sorting tool		
Contamination tactics		
Cart tagging		
Targeted re-education		
Repeat-offender protocol		

9. Please provide your hauler data and reporting requirements:

What is your reporting frequency?

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annually

What information do you require from the hauler? (select all that apply)

- Stops or households
- Set-out data
- Tons
- Contamination
- Misses/complaints
- Tagging/enforcement
- Outreach touches
- Other: _____

How do you receive the data from the hauler?

Portal

Email template

Data feed

Other: _____

10. What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider?

11. What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently?

would have been nice. Another can was the second most common complaint after added cost.

Follow-up:

We would like to set up a time to briefly discuss your responses, which day or days and time of day would work best?

December 15 th	AM	PM
December 16 th	AM	PM
December 17 th	AM	PM
December 18 th	AM	PM
December 19 th	AM	PM

If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education: _____

Organics Collection Local Best Practices Survey



Community Name: _____

Person Completing Survey: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Most recent change to your organics program (MM/YYYY): _____



1. What is the service structure by waste stream? (check all that apply)

Waste Stream	Open subscription	City-contracted single hauler	City-contracted multi-hauler by zones	City-operated (municipal)	JPA ¹	Other
Trash						
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Organics						
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How are residential customers billed?

City utility bill

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Other: _____

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Billing and collections				
Cart procurement, delivery, maintenance				
Bag procurement				
Route design and service-day changes				
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Education content (copy/design)				
Education delivery (mailers, web, social, events)				
Missed pickups / complaint resolution				
Holiday or weather service communications				

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Residential accessibility: _____
Other: _____

Please describe enforcement tools:

Tags/warnings: _____

Contamination fees: _____

Service holds: _____

Other: _____

Please select annual rate or contract adjustments:

CPI

Fuel index

Tip-fee passthrough

Other: _____

6. Please describe your implementation steps for organized collection of organics: (if applicable, add program anecdotes if needed)

Stakeholder interviews/listening sessions: _____

Resident survey or polling: _____

Pilot or phased rollout: _____

Ordinance or code change: _____

RFP/bid or contract amendment: _____

Cart procurement and distribution: _____

Billing system change: _____

Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, web, social, events): _____

Contamination policy and education/enforcement: _____

Council workshops or public meetings: _____

Other: _____

Decision-to-launch duration: _____ months

7. If data is available, please describe program performance from 2024:

Eligible households: _____

Enrolled/served households: _____

Average set-out rate: _____

Missed pickups (per 1,000 stops): _____

Complaint rate (per 1,000 accounts): _____

Average resolution time (hours): _____

Resident fee \$/HH/month: _____

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Cost savings

Clean kitchen tips

Community norm

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Bill inserts		
Website		
Social media		
Email/SMS		
Events		
School/partner outreach		
Multilingual content		
Accessibility adaptations		

What tools were provided, and which were most effective? (select all that apply)

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How-to videos		
Web sorting tool		
Contamination tactics		
Cart tagging		
Targeted re-education		
Repeat-offender protocol		

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Annually

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Stops or households
Set-out data
Tons
Contamination
Misses/complaints
Tagging/enforcement
Outreach touches
Other: _____

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Email template

Data feed

Other: _____

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11. What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently?

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December 15 th	AM	PM
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December 17 th	AM	PM
December 18 th	AM	PM
December 19 th	AM	PM

If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education: _____

Appendix C – Survey Summaries Compiled

Organics Transition Summary Survey Results

Transition Overview

Community	Transition Type	Transition conversation start date (MM/YYYY)	Resident interest/ demand (Y/N)	Cost stabilization/ predictability (Y/N)	Performance concerns with prior model (Y/N)	Access to facility/processor (Y/N)	Policy alignment - state/county goals (Y/N)	Grant funding opportunity (Y/N)
Minnetonka	Open-Contracted	Jul-24	N	Y	N	N	N	N
City of Long Lake	Open-Contracted	Aug-24	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Maple Grove	Open-Contracted	Jan-25	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
Brooklyn Park	Open-Contracted	Apr-25	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
City of Anoka	Open		N	N	N	N	N	N

Community	Contract alignment with recycling (Y/N)	Equity/access objectives (Y/N)	Route efficiency/ tonnage capture (Y/N)	Supported politically (Y/N)	Hauler market dynamics - entry/exit (Y/N)	Other trigger description	Trigger comments
Minnetonka	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	NA
City of Long Lake	Y	N	N	N	N	N	NA
Maple Grove	N	Y	N	N	N	N	According to City Council minutes, Maple Grove initially relied on haulers administering organics after the mandate, but during recycling contractor extension negotiations the City Council opted to add organized curbside organics as a city service starting January 2025, and amended code so individual garbage haulers would no longer be required (or allowed) to charge residents for organics service they did not provide once the city program began.
Brooklyn Park	N	Y	N	N	N	N	NA
City of Anoka	N	N	N	Y	N	Staff	The City has tried to organize several times in the past. The primary driver is wear and tear on roads.

No response

Organics Transition Summary Survey Results

Process and Design

Community	Stakeholder interviews/ listening sessions (Y/N)	Resident survey/polling (Y/N)	Pilot or phased rollout (Y/N)	Ordinance or code change (Y/N)	RFP/bid (Y/N)	Contract amendment (Y/N)	Cart procurement/ distribution (Y/N)	Billing change (city utility vs hauler invoice) (Y/N)	Communications plan (mailers, FAQs, events) (Y/N)	Council workshops/public meetings (Y/N)
Minnetonka	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
City of Long Lake	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Maple Grove	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
Brooklyn Park	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
City of Anoka	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y

Community	Other process step description	Process comments	Billing - included in base city utility (Y/N)	Billing - hauler invoice (Y/N)	Billing - other (Y/N)	Billing - other description	Billing comments	Collection Frequency	Cart Size in gallons
Minnetonka	NA	NA	Y	N	N	NA	NA	Weekly	35 gallons
City of Long Lake	NA	NA	Y	N	N	NA	NA	Weekly	64 gallons
Maple Grove	NA	NA	Y	N	N	NA	NA	Weekly	35 gallons
Brooklyn Park	NA	NA	Y	N	N	NA	NA	Weekly	35 gallons
City of Anoka	NA	The City mails a quarterly newsletter, which is the most successful way to communicate with residents.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Organics Transition Summary Survey Results

Performance Metrics 2024

Community	Eligible households	Enrolled/ served households	Average set out rate (%)	Missed pickups per 1,000 stops	Complaint rate per 1,000 accounts	Average resolution time (hours)	Resident fee (\$/HH/month)
Minnetonka	16,850	2,800		Not tracked	Not tracked	0.1	\$4.10
City of Long Lake	700	74					\$4.25
Maple Grove		25,888	10-15% participation				\$3.25
Brooklyn Park	43,000	~3,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$5.00-\$7.50
City of Anoka	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

No response

Organics Transition Summary Survey Results							
Success Factors							
What worked well (three than mattered most)							
Community	Contract structure selected (Y/N)	Billing/ affordability design selected (Y/N)	Education/ engagement selected (Y/N)	Council/community backing selected (Y/N)	Hauler performance selected (Y/N)	Staff capacity/project management selected (Y/N)	Other success factor selected (Y/N)
Minnetonka	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
City of Long Lake	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
Maple Grove	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Brooklyn Park	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
City of Anoka	NA	NA	N	NA	NA	NA	NA

Community	Other success factor description	What do you see as the biggest benefit to the city switching from open to organized? (organized to open for Anoka)	What do you see as the biggest benefit to the residents switching from open to organized collection? (organized to open for Anoka)	During the switch what were the most successful practices?	During the switch what is one thing you would do differently?
Minnetonka	NA	Fewer trucks on the roads with only one company providing the service.	Cost savings for residents. Haulers were charging over \$7 per month and with city contract price dropped to \$4/mo.	Having a number at the city for residents to call to report issues instead of calling the hauler. The more advance notice to give residents details for rollout the better.	Provide 6-12 month notice to open haulers that the program would be moving to organized by city, and clearer description of transition process. We thought we had it clear on the rollout but discovered we needed to make additional clarifications on steps.
City of Long Lake	NA	While implementation requires a significant effort, the organized system creates a more equitable pricing across households. An added benefit is that the City negotiated refuse and recycling collection for City facilities at no charge.	Cost savings. Residential haulers were charging upwards of \$7. Contracted rate is \$4.25.	Contract negotiations. The City got a great rate for their residents and negotiated free refuse and recycling collection.	Put the cart size in RFP and designate a small cart size (32 or 35 gallon).
Maple Grove	NA	According to City Council minutes, Maple Grove initially relied on haulers administering organics after the mandate, but during recycling contractor extension negotiations the City Council opted to add organized curbside organics as a city service starting January 2025, and amended code so individual garbage haulers would no longer be required (or allowed) to charge residents for organics service they did not provide once the city program began.	"Everyone Pays" pressure: Later in 2023, the City points to an MPCA interpretation of Minn. Stat. 115A.93, subd. 3(c) that limits charging participants more than non-participants. This drove resident questions about mandatory charges and helped shape the City's approach.	During recycling contractor extension negotiations the City Council opted to add organized curbside organics.	
Brooklyn Park	NA	Service availability - haulers were not promoting organics recycling	Lower price, service availability, enhanced education	Communications	Better coordination with the hauler. They did not plan to have a sufficient number of 32-gallon carts which led to wait times for residents to get a cart
City of Anoka	NA	NA. The City is still actively pursuing organized collection as of a January 5, 2026 City Council vote (3-2).	Residents have hauler choice; however, there are only four licensed haulers. Ordinance provisions require attrition, meaning that if a hauler does not renew its license, it cannot continue to operate.	The flier created for the vote.	Better public education and don't rush the process.

No response

Organics Best Management Practice Survey Results

Program Snapshot

Community	Most recent change date (MM/YYYY)	Organics service structure	Trash service structure	Recycling service structure	Yard waste service structure	Bulky service structure	Organics diversion opportunities	Curbside customers served - single family (Y/N)	Curbside customers served - multifamily (Y/N)	Curbside customers served - municipal/commercial (Y/N)	Other customers description
Plymouth	11/2023	Contracted	Open	Contracted	Open	Open	Both	Y	N	N	NA
Columbia Heights	4/2024	Better Futures	Contacted	Contracted	Other	Other	Curbside	Y	Y	N	City facilities
Eden Prairie	12/2021	Open	Open	Open	Open	NA	Curbside	Y	N	N	NA
St. Louis Park	01/2019	Contracted single hauler	Contracted single hauler	Contracted single hauler	Contracted single hauler	Contracted single hauler	Both	Y	N	N	Multifamily drop sites
JPA	4/2025	Open	Contracted single hauler	Contracted single hauler	Open	Open	Both	Y	N	N	NA

Community	Collection frequency	Residential cart size - primary	Food scraps and yard waste same cart (Y/N)	Materials accepted - all food scraps (Y/N)	Materials accepted - yard waste (Y/N)	Materials accepted - BPI products (Y/N)	Materials accepted - paper towels/napkins (Y/N)	Materials accepted - other description	Bag policy	Billing method
Plymouth	Weekly	35 gallons	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	NA	No policy	City Utility
Columbia Heights	Weekly	6 gallon	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	NA	BPI-certified	City Utility
Eden Prairie	Weekly	35 gallons	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	NA	No policy	Hauler Invoice
St. Louis Park	Weekly	35 gallons	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	NA	BPI-certified	City Utility
JPA	Weekly	35 gallons	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	NA	BPI-certified	City Utility

Organics Best Management Practice Survey Results

Roles and Responsibilities

Community	Customer service/call center	Billing and collections	Cart procurement, delivery and maintenance	Bag procurement	Route design and service day changes	Field outreach - contamination tagging/audits/follow up	Education content - copy/design	Education delivery - mailers/web/social/events	Missed pickups/complaints resolution	Holiday or weather service communications
Plymouth	Shared	City	Hauler	NA	Hauler	Hauler	Shared	Shared	Shared	Shared
Columbia Heights	Shared	City	City	NA	Hauler	Shared	City	City	Shared	City
Eden Prairie	Hauler	Hauler	Hauler	Hauler	Hauler	Hauler	Shared	Shared	Shared	Hauler
St. Louis Park	City and Hauler	City	Shared	City	City	City and Hauler	City	City	City and Hauler	City and Hauler
JPA	City	City	Hauler	City	Hauler	Shared	City	City	Shared	City

Organics Best Management Practice Survey Results

Tools and Costs

Community	Kitchen caddy - provider	Kitchen caddy - resident cost	Kitchen caddy - distribution	Compostable bags - provider	Compostable bags - resident cost	Compostable bags - distribution	Free bag allotment per HH/year
Plymouth	Resident	One-time fee	Retail	Resident	Resident	Retail	NA
Columbia Heights	County	One-time fee	Delivered	County	Resident	Retail	First roll free
Eden Prairie	Resident	One-time fee	Retail	Resident	Resident	Retail	NA
St. Louis Park	Have provided free of charge in past as a signup incentive. Are planning to offer again in 2026.	Varies	Varies	City	Free	Pickup site	52-13 gallon bags or 130-3 gallon bags, they can pick
JPA	City	Free	Pickup Site	Resident	Resident	Retail	5 with cart delivery

Organics Best Management Practice Survey Results											
Contract and Service Specs											
Community	Contract term (years)	Contract start date	Contract end date	Renewal terms summary	Set out rules summary	Contamination thresholds summary	Extra set outs policy	Weather/snow protocols summary	Residential accessibility provisions summary	Uses tags/warnings (Y/N)	Other key specs
Plymouth	3	1/1/2024	12/31/2027		By 7:00 AM	10%	By request	ASAP	Some walkup	Yes	
Columbia Heights	2	4/2024	3/2026		curb		Personal pails			Yes	
Eden Prairie											
St. Louis Park	5	10/2023	10/2028		Weekly, on assigned day		The additional collection of regular household organics recycling outside of the regularly scheduled collection day. Extra collections are arranged between the Contractor and billed by the Contractor directly to the customer.	Contractor may postpone Collection due to severe weather at the sole discretion of the Contractor. "Severe Weather" shall include, but shall not be limited to, those cases in which strikes, riots, terrorist acts, compliance with Applicable Laws, fires, pandemics, epidemics, inclement weather such as snow, sleet, ice or cold, or in which the temperature at 6:00 a.m. is minus twenty (-20) degrees Fahrenheit or colder, and other acts of God that might jeopardize the safety of the Contractor's staff or result in unsafe driving conditions.	An optional service offered by the Contractor to any customer for an extra fee payable directly to the Contractor. In subscribing to this service, the customer keeps their cart or bin near their house or garage. The Contractor "walks up" to collect their materials and returns the cart to its original location. Customer has an obligation to make drive way and side walk safely accessible removing snow and ice, applying salt/sand.	Yes	Also allow paper grocery bags, recommend for dry materials only
JPA	NA	4/1/2025	6/30/2027		at curb by 6:30 a.m.	in discussion	NA	mutually agree on delays	free walkup service available	N	NA

Community	Tags/warnings description	Uses contamination fees (Y/N)	Contamination fees description	Uses service holds (Y/N)	Service holds description	Other enforcement tools	Rate adjustment - CPI (Y/N)	Rate adjustment - fuel index (Y/N)	Rate adjustment - tip fee passthrough (Y/N)	Rate adjustment - other description
Plymouth	Placed by driver	N	NA	NA	NA	NA	N	N	N	By participation
Columbia Heights	tagged, not emptied	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N	N	N	3% auto
Eden Prairie										
St. Louis Park	Left by hauler	N	NA	Y	Cart removed after multiple tags for same issue in 12 month period.	NA	N	N	N	Set rate increases based on # of stops. See contract for more info.
JPA	NA	N	NA	N	NA	NA	Y	N	N	NA

No response

Organics Best Management Practice Survey Results

Implementaion Steps

Community	Stakeholder interviews held (Y/N)	Resident survey/polling (Y/N)	Pilot or phased rollout (Y/N)	Ordinance/c ode change (Y/N)	RFP/bid or contract amendment (Y/N)	Cart procurement/d istribution (Y/N)	Billing system change (Y/N)	Communications plan (Y/N)	Contamination policy and enforcement approach (Y/N)	Council workshops/public meetings (Y/N)	Other (Y/N)	Decision to launch duration (months)
Plymouth	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	
Columbia Heights	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	
Eden Prairie	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	NA
St. Louis Park	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	
JPA	N	N	N	Y	Y	welcome packets included with cart delivery	Y	Y	N	N	N	9

No response

Organics Best Management Practice Survey Results							
Performance Metrics							
Community	Eligible households	Enrolled/served households	Average set out rate (%)	Missed pickups per 1,000 stops	Complaint rate per 1,000 accounts	Average complaint resolution time (hours)	Resident fee (\$/HH/month)
Plymouth	26,000	3,000					\$3.50
Columbia Heights	6,300	500		maybe 1 month	very few		\$4.46
Eden Prairie	19224	2771		Only 7 reported for 2024			\$6.83
St. Louis Park	12,365	5290					Organics is included in the non-taxable portion of the solid waste rate, as our residential G,R,O,YW is all organized.
JPA			from 1-2% to 10%				

No response

Organics Best Management Practice Survey Results													
Communications and Behavior													
Community	Brand/program name	Message used - climate/soil (Y/N)	Message used - convenience (Y/N)	Message used - cost savings (Y/N)	Message used - clean kitchen tips (Y/N)	Message used - community norm (Y/N)	Message used - other description	Mailers used (Y/N)	Bill inserts used (Y/N)	Website used (Y/N)	Social media used (Y/N)	Email/SMS used (Y/N)	Events used (Y/N)
Plymouth	NA	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Columbia Heights	NA	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Eden Prairie	NA	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
St. Louis Park	2022 Organics signup campaign	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
JPA	NA	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N

Community	School/partner outreach used (Y/N)	Multilingual content used (Y/N)	Accessibility adaptations used (Y/N)	Starter kits used (Y/N)	Lid labels used (Y/N)	Magnets or printed quick guides used (Y/N)	Videos used (Y/N)	Web sorting tools used (Y/N)	Contamination Tactics	Cart tagging used (Y/N)	Targeted reeducation used (Y/N)	Repeat-offender protocol
Plymouth	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Columbia Heights	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N		N	N	N
Eden Prairie	N	Y	N									
St. Louis Park	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
JPA	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N

most effective
No response

Organics Best Management Practice Survey Results													
Data and Reporting													
Community	Reporting frequency	Requires - stops/households (Y/N)	Requires - set out data (Y/N)	Requires - tons (Y/N)	Requires - contamination data (Y/N)	Requires - misses/complaints (Y/N)	Requires - tagging/enforcement data (Y/N)	Requires - outreach touches (Y/N)	Requires - other description	Data delivery method	What is one curbside organics program practice that your city employs that you would recommend other cities consider?	What is one curbside organics program practice that your city would do differently?	If possible, upload or link any helpful documents such as contracts, outreach, and education
Plymouth	Monthly	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Email	Using the variable pricing approach based on participation rates, good communication, frequent contact with haulers about moving to organized collection.	Getting a pallet of bags was too much.	www.plymouthmn.gov/organics The contract, and contract extension can be found on the link below, Agenda Item 8.1. https://docs.plymouthmn.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=1378981&dbid=0&repo=Plymouth
Columbia Heights	Monthly	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Monthly bill	Avoid another cart and CDL truck, only need a pail and a one ton truck as there are less than 10 lbs./week/HH also avoid co-mingling with trash processing thousands of tons of trash just to look for a few tons of organics.	Require a city route rather than allowing the hauler to make their own.	
Eden Prairie	Annual	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Email		If there was an option to have organics/yard waste in a combined container in HC that would have been nice. Another can was the second most common complaint after added cost.	
St. Louis Park	Monthly	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Cart Inventory	Email and asset management database, Cartegraph, (for tagging, misses, complaints, etc.)	Providing carts only to those that indicate they want to collect organics (signup). This ensures that they know what is accepted and understand what the cart is for.	We currently distribute bags for the annual allotment at two of our city buildings. For a small city this is feasible, though we know our hours don't work for some (between the two buildings hours are 7 - 4:30).	See www.stlouisparkmn.gov/organics for organics set-up and tips subpage that has helpful info on how new participants can set up their in-home collection.
JPA	Annual	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Emailed PDF	You can't over communicate.	Have sufficient carts available.	

No response

Appendix D – Interview Meeting Notes

Meeting Notes

Meeting Subject	City of Anoka Organic Survey Follow-Up
Meeting Date	January 7, 2026
Start Time	1:00 Central
End Time	1:30 Central
Location	Microsoft Teams
Project Name	Dakota County Residential Organics BMP
Project No.	190720
Notes Prepared By	Mia Pollasky
Notes Issued Date	1/7/2026

Attendee	Organization	Title
Pam Bowman	City of Anoka	Communications & Recycling Manager
John Exner	Dakota County	Environmental Specialist
Mia Pollasky	Burns & McDonnell	Assistant Engineer
Heather Krauel*	Burns & McDonnell	Senior Planner

* indicates meeting organizer

Anoka Key Takeaways

- **System type:** The City operates open hauling for trash, with organized collection for recycling (in place since the 1980s). The City has tried to organize several times in the past. The primary drivers are wear and tear on roads and keeping prices low. The most recent effort was in 2024.
- **Vote and decision process:** The City developed an organized collection proposal using a resident-led Solid Waste Collection Options Committee, public meetings, and surveys, then shared a citywide mailer explaining the proposed change and how it would work.
 - The City solicited competitive proposals and negotiated a draft contract with ACE Solid Waste, Inc. as the lowest-cost bidder, with service proposed to begin June 1, 2025 (yard waste beginning mid-April 2025, if selected).
 - The organized collection proposal was placed on the November 5, 2024, general election ballot. Voters rejected the proposal (51.98% No, 48.02% Yes). As a result, the recycling contract will expire in March 2028 and move to open collection.
 - The City had limited time to inform the public following meetings with haulers, in part due to a restraining order. Early and absentee voters did not receive the mailed flyer before the election.
- **Licensing:** The City has an attrition provision in code. If a hauler does not renew its license, it cannot continue to operate. The City previously had six licensed haulers and there are now four. City code does not allow new hauler licenses to be issued.
- **Customer service and communication:** Primary communication channels include a quarterly newsletter (the most successful, especially with older residents), very active social media, and mailed flyers.

- **Community sentiment and policy direction:** The Council voted 3-2 on January 5, 2026, to move forward again with organized collection. Planned investments in streets appear to have influenced Council support and decision-making. The community remains divided on open versus organized collection.
- **Lessons learned:** Allow more time for public education. Repeat outreach approaches that worked well (flyers, public meetings, surveys). Improve communication timing ahead of elections, particularly for early and absentee voters.

Meeting Notes

Meeting Subject	City of Long Lake Organic Survey Follow-Up
Meeting Date	January 15, 2026
Start Time	1:30 PM Central
End Time	1:45 PM Central
Location	Phone interview
Project Name	Dakota County Residential Organics BMP
Project No.	190720
Notes Prepared By	Heather Krauel
Notes Issued Date	1/15/2026

Attendee	Organization	Title
Jeanette Moeller	City of Long Lake	City Clerk
Heather Krauel*	Burns & McDonnell	Senior Planner

* indicates meeting organizer

City of Long Lake Key Takeaways

- **Hauler structure and governance:** Garbage service remains open hauling with licensed haulers. Recycling and organics are City-organized services provided through a single City contract (served by the same vendor).
- **Program evolution:** The program followed a similar arc to other Hennepin County cities. Haulers were initially required to offer organics, but due to inconsistent pricing, the City decided to include organics in the RFP for recycling services, including:
 - Biweekly, citywide residential recycling collection at all individual residences, and at multifamily complexes/buildings on an opt-in basis.
 - Refuse and recycling collection for designated City buildings and facilities at no charge.
 - A bid alternate for weekly, citywide organics collection service.
- **Program change driver:** Staff noted the shift from open organics to organized service required significant implementation effort, but it was worth it in the long run based on fairness to residents. Under the open model, haulers charged inconsistent pricing for organics, which created equity concerns and resident confusion.
- **Billing and affordability:** Staff emphasized that organized collection improved rate consistency and predictability for residents compared to variable hauler pricing under the open system.
- **Implementation lessons learned:** The City required customer information from haulers, but some of the data were incomplete. Some residents received carts even though they had not signed up under the open hauling system, while other residents who previously had service did not receive a cart. In addition, cart size was not specified in the RFP. The contracted hauler repurposed 64-gallon trash carts, which staff noted is too large for residential organics collection.
- **Local context and participation barrier:** Long Lake has a more rural, low-density character, and staff noted many residents already manage organics through backyard composting. As a result, resident interest in a curbside organics cart is lower than in more urban communities, and the requirement that all households pay for the service, even if they do not request a cart, has been a point of frustration for some residents.

Meeting Notes

Meeting Subject	City of Brooklyn Park and HRG Organic Survey Follow-Up
Meeting Date	December 16, 2025
Start Time	8:30 Central
End Time	9:00 Central
Location	Microsoft Teams
Project Name	Dakota County Residential Organics BMP
Project No.	190720
Notes Prepared By	Mia Pollasky
Notes Issued Date	12/17/2025

Attendee	Organization	Title
Tim Pratt	City of Brooklyn Park	Recycling/Support Services Manager
John Exner	Dakota County	Environmental Specialist
Mia Pollasky	Burns & McDonnell	Assistant Engineer
Heather Krauel*	Burns & McDonnell	Senior Planner

* indicates meeting organizer

Brooklyn Park/Hennepin Recycling Group (HRG) Key Takeaways

- **Joint program and contracts:** Two contracts, Brooklyn Park and HRG (Brooklyn Center, Crystal, and New Hope), same vendor.
- **Shared outreach and staffing:** Shared mailers, social media, newsletters, one dedicated staff person for call response.
- **Regulatory and rollout timeline:**
 - 2018: Hennepin County revised ordinance requiring organics service available to all households that have curbside recycling, effective January 1, 2022. Cities have flexibility in how they meet this (citywide contract, hauler requirement, or drop-off for smaller cities).
 - 2019: Four city councils are hesitant to provide service. Required the haulers to provide the service to those that asked. Not many asked.
 - 2023: MPCA makes a ruling via a letter to Hennepin County that organics collection falls under Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd. 3(c) says a licensing authority must prohibit haulers from “imposing a greater charge on residents who recycle than on residents who do not recycle.”
 - 2024: City councils agree they need to provide the service as residents were complaining about new charges by hauler and no service. Started process to organize collection June 2024.
 - 2025: Rollout with Waste Management April 2025.
- **Rates and service details:** \$2.90 per household per month. Pre-contract service was \$5.00-\$8.00. Starter kit includes 5 compostable bags. WM carts labeled using standards from Hennepin County; in multiple languages.
- **Participation and outreach strategies:** Participation increased from ~1-2% to ~10% after city-provided rollout. Planned engagement: farmers market tables, HOA presentations, video outreach via social. Drop sites remain available; new drop site planned for spring (peak seasonal use, e.g., pumpkins).
- **Contamination and collection operations:** Bins tagged for contamination but mostly still collected, need future contamination threshold definition.

- **Lessons learned:** Understand resident preferences (cart size) before negotiating with haulers to avoid inefficiencies. Strong communication and commitment needed before rollout to ensure participation and acceptance. Importance of adequate staffing, and lack of an extra driver caused early service problems.

Meeting Notes

Meeting Subject	City of Columbia Heights Organic Survey Follow-Up
Meeting Date	December 15, 2025
Start Time	2:00 Central
End Time	2:30 Central
Location	Microsoft Teams
Project Name	Dakota County Residential Organics BMP
Project No.	190720
Notes Prepared By	Mia Pollasky
Notes Issued Date	12/18/2025

Attendee	Organization	Title
Jesse Davies	City of Columbia Heights	Refuse & Recycling Coordinator
John Exner	Dakota County	Environmental Specialist
Mia Pollasky	Burns & McDonnell	Assistant Engineer
Heather Krauel*	Burns & McDonnell	Senior Planner

* indicates meeting organizer

Columbia Heights Key Takeaways

- **Starter materials and equipment:** City provides a 6-gallon metal pail with label which is paid for by City and replaced if needed. County provides kitchen starter kit and one roll of compostable bags.
- **Program funding structure:** Participants pay about one-third of total program cost. Remaining costs covered through City fees and grants. Recycling/yard waste/organics package costs residents ~\$12/month. \$4.46 per month for just organics.
- **Pilot and timeline:** Current pilot with Better Futures runs through April 2026. Expected to extend contract for three additional years for a full contract period. Took 3 months to launch the program.
- **Collection operations:** If contamination is high, carts are tagged, not collected if organics are in a plastic bag. Very few contamination issues to date. Pick-up available at door if needed for accessibility, no additional fee. Previous yard/food waste co-mingled program; residents were offered a separate bin when transitioning. No service interruption when new carts were rolled out. Low tonnage allows use of 1-ton trucks hauling barrels to transfer station instead of full packers. This works for a city with lots of alleys. Hauler route somewhat irregular; contract renewal expected to formalize dedicated routes.
- **Hauler and contract details:** Contract includes 3% annual increase; haulers can negotiate adjustments.
- **Future rate and behavior lever:** City plans to encourage residents to downsize trash carts to 30-gallon to cut trash collection costs roughly in half. City is working on a waste reduction challenge.

Meeting Notes

Meeting Subject	City of Minnetonka Organic Survey Follow-Up
Meeting Date	December 17, 2025
Start Time	2:00 Central
End Time	2:30 Central
Location	Microsoft Teams
Project Name	Dakota County Residential Organics BMP
Project No.	190720
Notes Prepared By	Mia Pollasky
Notes Issued Date	12/17/2025

Attendee	Organization	Title
Darin Ellingson	City of Minnetonka	Street & Park Operations Manager
John Exner	Dakota County	Environmental Specialist
Mia Pollasky	Burns & McDonnell	Assistant Engineer
Heather Krauel*	Burns & McDonnell	Senior Planner

* indicates meeting organizer

Minnetonka Meeting: Key Takeaways

- Hauler structure + ordinance:**
City ordinance allows four haulers; no cap change planned and no new haulers entering.
- Customer service + communication:**
City provides a phone number for organics issues so Republic does not handle complaints.
County supports outreach with large mailings.
- Program funding + launch:**
Used a SCORE grant to cover first year of residential organics service.
Prior to city involvement, only one hauler collected organics with ~500–700 participating households.
City took over program in March 2025; participation increased to ~2,300, now ~2,600 households.
- Community sentiment + policy direction:**
Community survey on organized trash showed insufficient support for pursuing organized collection.
- Cart + enrollment transitions:**
Haulers previously purchased carts for their customers; some haulers were frustrated when City provided new carts.
Duplicate sign-ups occurred among original participants during rollout; required cleanup/verification.

Meeting Notes

Meeting Subject	City of Plymouth Organic Survey Follow-Up
Meeting Date	December 15, 2025
Start Time	8:30 Central
End Time	9:00 Central
Location	Microsoft Teams
Project Name	Dakota County Residential Organics BMP
Project No.	190720
Notes Prepared By	Mia Pollasky
Notes Issued Date	12/17/2025

Attendee	Organization	Title
Chris McKenzie	City of Plymouth	Engineering Services Manager
John Exner	Dakota County	Environmental Specialist
Mia Pollasky	Burns & McDonnell	Assistant Engineer
Heather Krauel*	Burns & McDonnell	Senior Planner

* indicates meeting organizer

Plymouth Key Takeaways

- **Drop-off setup:** Plymouth operates one residential drop-off site at a maintenance facility and added food scraps (organics) to the single-sort recycling drop-off center. The organics dumpster is unmonitored/unsecured but labeled.
- **Who uses it:** The site is intended for residential use only, but some businesses also use it. There is an informal arrangement where a business helps pick up litter in exchange for using the site.
- **Start-up materials lesson learned:** When curbside organics launched, the City purchased an entire pallet of compostable bags for residents. It was far more than needed and they are still distributing the same boxes at events.
- **Contract approach and cost impact:** The City directly negotiated with Republic Services as the recycling contract neared expiration to add organics. With a City contract, prices decreased.
- **Program timeline:** Roughly nine months from start to implementation.
- **Walk-ups:** The contract includes a maximum number of walk-ups, and Plymouth is not close to exceeding it.
- **Contamination management:** The hauler checks carts periodically. If contamination is too high, the cart is not collected and/or is tagged. The City typically learns tagging is occurring when there is an influx of resident calls.
- **Council and public support:** City Council initially pushed back, but an online survey showed about 90 percent of residents were in favor or indifferent, which helped move the program forward.
- **Ongoing outreach:** Plymouth uses frequent communications (quarterly mailed newsletters, postcards with organics BMPs and tips, email, social media). Mailers are the most effective.
- **Rate structure perception:** Chris believes more than half of households do not realize they are paying for organics service (everyone pays).
- **Resident concerns:** Common concerns include odor, not wanting an additional cart, and not generating enough material to justify a cart.
- **Future lever discussed:** The City has discussed reducing trash cart size and reducing the price.
- **Hauler coordination:** The City told haulers early about the organics launch.
- **Overall viewpoint:** Chris believes organized collection is the best and lowest-cost option for organics.

Meeting Notes

Meeting Subject	City of St. Louis Park Organic Survey Follow-Up
Meeting Date	December 19, 2025
Start Time	3:00 PM Central
End Time	3:30 PM Central
Location	Microsoft Teams
Project Name	Dakota County Residential Organics BMP
Project No.	190720
Notes Prepared By	Mia Pollasky
Notes Issued Date	12/29/2025

Attendee	Organization	Title
Kala Fisher	City of St. Louis Park	Public Services Superintendent/Deputy Public Works Director
Heather Krauel*	Burns & McDonnell	Senior Planner

* indicates meeting organizer

St. Louis Park Key Takeaways

- **Program evolution, cart sizing, and material separation:** The program originally co-collected organics and yard waste beginning in 2013, which is why larger carts were offered. The city previously offered 64-gallon and 96-gallon organics containers. The 96-gallon option is no longer offered, and 64-gallon carts are allowed only in some instances. Co-collection ended in 2019, when the program separated food waste from yard waste due to food waste capacity and infrastructure requirements (food waste had to be managed on an engineered pad).
- **Accepted liners and bag support:** Paper grocery bags are allowed, but the program recommends using them for dry materials only. In addition to providing a starter kit, the program also provides an annual allotment of bags.
- **Collection system viewpoint:** Staff noted that communities with open collection for organics tend to be less successful than communities with organized collection.
- **Multifamily access:** Drop sites are available for multifamily residents, and participation is opt-in.
- **Upcoming participation push:** A 2026 sign-up campaign is planned that includes providing residents with a kitchen caddy.
- **Accessibility accommodation:** Doorstep pickup fees are waived under ADA-related accommodations.
- **Waste characterization:** The program has conducted waste sorts to understand set-out behavior and contamination.
- **Contamination enforcement progression:**
 - **1st occurrence:** cart tagged
 - **2nd occurrence (same issue):** tag plus letter
 - **3rd occurrence (same issue):** letter plus cart removal
- **Messaging that worked best:** A University of Minnesota graduate student capstone (2021) tested outreach approaches and found “community norm” messaging was most effective. A mailed postcard with prepaid postage produced the strongest sign-up response, and a myth-busters letter was also used.

Appendix E – Minnesota Statute § 115A.94

115A.94 ORGANIZED COLLECTION.

Subdivision 1. **Definition.** "Organized collection" means a system for collecting solid waste in which a specified collector, or a member of an organization of collectors, is authorized to collect from a defined geographic service area or areas some or all of the solid waste that is released by generators for collection.

Subd. 2. **Local authority.** A city or town may organize collection, after public notification and hearing as required in subdivisions 4a to 4f. A county may organize collection as provided in subdivision 5. A city or town that has organized collection as of May 1, 2013, is exempt from subdivisions 4a to 4f.

Subd. 3. **General provisions.** (a) The local government unit may organize collection as a municipal service or by ordinance, franchise, license, negotiated or bidden contract, or other means, using one or more collectors or an organization of collectors.

(b) The local government unit may not establish or administer organized collection in a manner that impairs the preservation and development of recycling and markets for recyclable materials. The local government unit shall exempt recyclable materials from organized collection upon a showing by the generator or collector that the materials are or will be separated from mixed municipal solid waste by the generator, separately collected, and delivered for reuse in their original form or for use in a manufacturing process.

(c) The local government unit shall invite and employ the assistance of interested persons, including persons licensed to operate solid waste collection services in the local government unit, in developing plans and proposals for organized collection and in establishing the organized collection system.

(d) Organized collection accomplished by contract or as a municipal service may include a requirement that all or any portion of the solid waste, except (1) recyclable materials and (2) materials that are processed at a resource recovery facility at the capacity in operation at the time that the requirement is imposed, be delivered to a waste facility identified by the local government unit. In a district or county where a resource recovery facility has been designated by ordinance under section 115A.86, organized collection must conform to the requirements of the designation ordinance.

Subd. 4. [Repealed, 2013 c 45 s 7]

Subd. 4a. **Committee establishment.** (a) Before implementing an ordinance, franchise, license, contract, or other means of organizing collection, a city or town, by resolution of the governing body, must establish a solid waste collection options committee to identify, examine, and evaluate various methods of solid waste collection. The governing body shall appoint the committee members.

(b) The solid waste collection options committee is subject to chapter 13D.

Subd. 4b. **Committee duties.** The committee established under subdivision 4a shall:

(1) determine which methods of solid waste collection to examine, which must include:

(i) the existing system of collection;

(ii) a system in which a single collector collects solid waste from all sections of a city or town; and

(iii) a system in which multiple collectors, either singly or as members of an organization of collectors, collect solid waste from different sections of a city or town;

(2) establish a list of criteria on which the solid waste collection methods selected for examination will be evaluated, which may include: costs to residential subscribers, impacts on residential subscribers' ability

to choose a provider of solid waste service based on the desired level of service, costs and other factors, the impact of miles driven on city streets and alleys and the incremental impact of miles driven by collection vehicles, initial and operating costs to the city of implementing the solid waste collection system, providing incentives for waste reduction, impacts on solid waste collectors, and other physical, economic, fiscal, social, environmental, and aesthetic impacts;

(3) collect information regarding the operation and efficacy of existing methods of solid waste collection in other cities and towns;

(4) seek input from, at a minimum:

(i) the governing body of the city or town;

(ii) the local official of the city or town responsible for solid waste issues;

(iii) persons currently licensed to operate solid waste collection and recycling services in the city or town; and

(iv) residents of the city or town who currently pay for residential solid waste collection services; and

(5) issue a report on the committee's research, findings, and any recommendations to the governing body of the city or town.

Subd. 4c. Governing body; implementation. The governing body of the city or town shall consider the report and recommendations of the solid waste collection options committee. The governing body must provide public notice and hold at least one public hearing before deciding whether to implement organized collection. Organized collection may begin no sooner than six months after the effective date of the decision of the governing body of the city or town to implement organized collection.

Subd. 4d. Participating collectors proposal; requirement. Before establishing a committee under subdivision 4a to consider organizing residential solid waste collection, a city or town with more than one licensed collector must notify the public and all licensed collectors in the community. The city or town must provide a period of at least 60 days in which meetings and negotiations shall occur exclusively between licensed collectors and the city or town to develop a proposal in which interested licensed collectors, as members of an organization of collectors, collect solid waste from designated sections of the city or town. The proposal shall include identified city or town priorities, including issues related to zone creation, traffic, safety, environmental performance, service provided, and price, and shall reflect existing haulers maintaining their respective market share of business as determined by each hauler's average customer count during the six months prior to the commencement of the exclusive negotiation period. If an existing hauler opts to be excluded from the proposal, the city may allocate their customers proportionally based on market share to the participating collectors who choose to negotiate. The initial organized collection agreement executed under this subdivision must be for seven years. Upon execution of an agreement between the participating licensed collectors and city or town, the city or town shall establish organized collection through appropriate local controls and is not required to fulfill the requirements of subdivisions 4a, 4b, and 4c, except that the governing body must provide the public notification and hearing required under subdivision 4c.

Subd. 4e. Parties to meet and confer. Before the exclusive meetings and negotiations under subdivision 4d, participating licensed collectors and elected officials of the city or town must meet and confer regarding waste collection issues, including but not limited to road deterioration, public safety, pricing mechanisms, and contractual considerations unique to organized collection.

Subd. 4f. **Joint liability limited.** Notwithstanding section 604.02, an organized collection agreement must not obligate a participating licensed collector for damages to third parties solely caused by another participating licensed collector. The organized collection agreement may include joint obligations for actions that are undertaken by all the participating licensed collectors under this section.

Subd. 5. **Counties; organized collection.** (a) A county may by ordinance require cities and towns within the county to organize collection. Organized collection ordinances of counties may:

- (1) require cities and towns to require the separation and separate collection of recyclable materials;
- (2) specify the material to be separated; and
- (3) require cities and towns to meet any performance standards for source separation that are contained in the county solid waste plan.

(b) A county may itself organize collection under subdivisions 4a to 4f in any city or town that does not comply with a county organized collection ordinance adopted under this subdivision, and the county may implement, as part of its organized collection, the source separation program and performance standards required by its organized collection ordinance.

Subd. 6. **Organized collection not required or prevented.** (a) The authority granted in this section to organize solid waste collection is optional and is in addition to authority to govern solid waste collection granted by other law.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision 5, a city, town, or county is not:

- (1) required to organize collection; or
- (2) prevented from organizing collection of solid waste or recyclable material.

(c) Except as provided in subdivision 5, a city, town, or county may exercise any authority granted by any other law, including a home rule charter, to govern collection of solid waste.

Subd. 7. **Anticompetitive conduct.** (a) A political subdivision that organizes collection under this section is authorized to engage in anticompetitive conduct to the extent necessary to plan and implement its chosen organized collection system and is immune from liability under state laws relating to antitrust, restraint of trade, unfair trade practices, and other regulation of trade or commerce.

(b) An organization of solid waste collectors, an individual collector, and their officers, members, employees, and agents who cooperate with a political subdivision that organizes collection under this section are authorized to engage in anticompetitive conduct to the extent necessary to plan and implement the organized collection system, provided that the political subdivision actively supervises the participation of each entity. An organization, entity, or person covered by this paragraph is immune from liability under state law relating to antitrust, restraint of trade, unfair trade practices, and other regulation of trade or commerce.

History: 1987 c 348 s 27; 1989 c 325 s 26,27; 1990 c 600 s 1,2; 1991 c 337 s 46; 1993 c 249 s 20,21; 2013 c 45 s 1-6; 2018 c 177 s 1-8

Appendix F – League of Minnesota Cities – City Solid Waste Management

INFORMATION MEMO

City Solid Waste Management

Understand city authority and requirements to regulate the collection and disposal of solid waste and the roles of state and county oversight. Read about city licensing authority and permitted assessments and fees. Learn about open and organized systems of solid waste collection, including their advantages and disadvantages. Includes a flowchart showing the process for adopting organized collection.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 412.221, subd. 22 \(3\).](#) [Minn. Stat. § 410.33.](#) [Troje v. City Council of City of Hastings](#), 310 Minn. 183, 245 N.W.2d 596 (1976).

[Minn. Stat. § 443.18.](#) [Minn. Stat. § 410.01.](#)

See [Minn. Stat. §§ 443.18-443.35](#) for more information about first class cities' authority and restrictions regarding solid waste management.

See Information Brief, [Minnesota Solid Waste History](#), Minnesota House of Representatives.

I. Authority, oversight, and definitions

A. Authority to regulate

All cities are authorized to provide for or regulate by ordinance the disposal of sewage, garbage, and other refuse. This broad grant of police power authorizes cities to regulate the collection and disposal of solid waste.

B. Authority to acquire, construct, and operate solid waste facilities—first class cities

First class cities (Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, and Rochester) are authorized:

- To acquire by purchase or condemnation lands on which to build plants for the destruction of garbage and other refuse.
- To purchase, build, operate, and maintain such plants for the destruction of garbage and other refuse.
- To provide for the collection of all such garbage or refuse and its delivery to destruction plants or other places.
- To pay and contract to pay for the same in such annual installments and at such a rate of interest on deferred payments as the city council determines.

Each of these actions must be authorized by at least a three-fourths vote of all members of the city council. First class cities have additional authority and restrictions regarding solid waste management.

C. State oversight

Before the 1970s, open burning and open dumping were the most common forms of solid waste management.

This material is provided as general information and is not a substitute for legal advice. Consult your attorney for advice concerning specific situations.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.46. For Government and Partners: Materials and waste management, MPCA.](#)

[See Minn. Stat. ch. 115A.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.02.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.46. Minn. Stat. § 400.16. Minn. Stat. § 473.149. Minn. R. ch. 9215.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.46 subd. 5.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 473.149. See Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan 2022-2042.](#)

Beginning in the 1970s, the Minnesota Legislature adopted a variety of waste management regulations, and it gave the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) regulatory oversight over the management of solid waste and recycling.

The MPCA develops and enforces the state's solid waste management regulations. It also is responsible for approving the solid waste plans that counties must adopt. The MPCA offers a variety of tools to help counties, cities, and townships develop and support systems that recover resources and manage waste.

The Minnesota Legislature adopted the Waste Management Act in 1980. It establishes the following descending order of preference for waste management:

- Waste reduction and reuse.
- Waste recycling.
- Composting of source-separated compostable materials, including, but not limited to, yard waste and food waste.
- Resource recovery through mixed municipal solid waste composting or incineration.
- Land disposal that produces no measurable methane gas or that involves the retrieval of methane gas as a fuel for the production of energy to be used on-site or for sale.
- Land disposal that produces measurable methane and that does not involve the retrieval of methane gas as a fuel for the production of energy to be used on-site or for sale.

D. County oversight

Minnesota counties have primary responsibility for solid waste management, including recycling. All counties are required to adopt a solid waste plan that must include waste reduction and recycling provisions, as well as provisions to minimize the amount of waste disposed of in landfills.

After the MPCA has approved a county's solid waste plan, a city located in that county may not enter into a binding agreement governing solid waste management activity or develop or implement solid waste management activity (other than activity to reduce waste generation or reuse waste materials) that is inconsistent with the county's plan without the county's consent.

Metropolitan counties must develop solid waste management plans that are consistent with the most recent "metropolitan long range policy plan."

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 21.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 31.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 116.06, subd. 22.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.951.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 115A.96.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 17a.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 115A.9565.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 115A.931.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 115A.932.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 115A.9155.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 115A.9157.](#)

E. Definitions

1. Mixed municipal solid waste

Mixed municipal solid waste is defined as “garbage, refuse, and other solid waste from residential, commercial, industrial, and community activities that the generator of the waste aggregates for collection.” Mixed municipal solid waste does not include “auto hulks, street sweepings, ash, construction debris, mining waste, sludges, tree and agricultural wastes, tires, lead acid batteries, motor and vehicle fluids and filters, and other materials collected, processed, and disposed of as separate waste streams.”

2. Solid waste

Solid waste is defined as “garbage, refuse, sludge from a water supply treatment plant or air contaminant treatment facility, and other discarded waste materials and sludges, in solid, semisolid, liquid, or contained gaseous form, resulting from industrial, commercial, mining, and agricultural operations, and from community activities.” Solid waste does not include:

- Hazardous waste.
- Animal waste used as fertilizer.
- Earthen fill, boulders, rock.
- Concrete diamond grinding and saw slurry associated with the construction, improvement, or repair of a road when deposited on the road project site in a manner that is in compliance with best management practices and rules of the agency.
- Sewage sludge.
- Solid or dissolved material in domestic sewage or other common pollutants in water resources, such as silt, dissolved or suspended solids in industrial wastewater effluents or discharges which are point sources subject to permits under section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, dissolved materials in irrigation return flows.
- Source, special nuclear, or by-product material as defined by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended.

State law specifically prohibits certain items from being included in mixed municipal solid waste or in solid waste, including: telephone directories, major appliances, electronic products containing a cathode-ray tube, yard waste, tires, motor and vehicle fluids and filters, mercury or mercury-containing devices or products from which the mercury has not been removed for reuse or recycling, fluorescent tubes, and certain batteries.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.935.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 38.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 25a.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 32b.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 32a.](#) [Minn. Stat. § 115A.93.](#)

State law also prohibits the disposal of solid waste generated outside Minnesota unless the waste meets all the solid waste management regulations of the state in which it was generated and contains none of the items otherwise banned from mixed municipal solid waste in Minnesota.

3. Yard waste

Yard waste is defined as “garden wastes, leaves, lawn cuttings, weeds, shrub and tree waste, and prunings.”

4. Recyclable materials

Recyclable materials are defined as “materials that are separated from mixed municipal solid waste for the purpose of recycling or composting, including paper, glass, plastics, metals, automobile oil, batteries, source-separated compostable materials, and sole source food waste streams that are managed through biodegradative processes.” Recyclable materials do not include refuse-derived fuel or other material that is destroyed by incineration.

5. Source-separated recyclable materials

Source-separated recyclable materials are defined as “recyclable materials, including commingled recyclable materials, that are separated by the generator.”

6. Source-separated compostable materials

Source-separated compostable materials are defined as materials that:

- Are separated at the source by waste generators for the purpose of preparing them for use as compost.
- Are collected separately from mixed municipal solid waste and are governed by the licensing provisions of section 115A.93.
- Are comprised of food wastes, fish and animal waste, plant materials, diapers, sanitary products, and paper that is not recyclable.
- Are delivered to a facility to undergo controlled microbial degradation to yield a humus-like product meeting the MPCA’s class I or class II, or equivalent, compost standards, and where process rejects do not exceed 15 percent by weight of the total material delivered to the facility.
- May be delivered to a transfer station, mixed municipal solid waste processing facility, or recycling facility only for the purposes of composting or transfer to a composting facility, unless the commissioner determines that no other person is willing to accept the materials.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94.](#) See Section IV, *Solid waste and recycling collection*, for more information about organized collection.

[Waste Management in Minnesota, Minnesota State Auditor.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 5.](#) See Section IV, *Solid waste and recycling collection*, for more information about organized collection.

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 5.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 473.811, subd. 5\(b\).](#) [Minn. Stat. § 473.121.](#)

7. Organized collection

Organized collection is defined as “a system for collecting solid waste in which a specified collector, or a member of an organization of collectors, is authorized to collect from a defined geographic service area or areas some or all of the solid waste that is released by generators for collection.”

8. Open collection

Open collection is generally defined as a system for collecting solid waste or recyclable materials where individual residents and businesses are free to contract with any collector licensed to do business in the city.

II. City regulation and licensing

A. Required regulation

There are three situations where cities are required to regulate solid waste collection.

1. County organized collection ordinance

Any county can adopt an ordinance requiring cities or towns within its boundaries to organize collection of solid waste. If a city does not comply with the county’s organized collection ordinance, the county can organize collection itself.

A county’s organized collection ordinance—in addition to requiring solid waste collection—may also require the separation and separate collection of recyclable materials, specify the material to be separated, and require cities to meet any performance standards for source separation contained in the county’s solid waste plan.

2. Cities in the metropolitan area

Cities in the metropolitan area must adopt an ordinance regulating the collection of solid waste within its boundaries. The metropolitan area includes the counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota (excluding the cities of Northfield and Cannon Falls), Hennepin (excluding the cities of Hanover and Rockford), Ramsey, Scott (excluding the city of New Prague), and Washington. If a city is located in a metropolitan county that has adopted a collection ordinance, the city must adopt either the county ordinance by reference or a stricter ordinance. If a city is located in a metropolitan county that has adopted a recyclable-separation ordinance, the ordinance applies in all cities within the county that have failed to meet the local abatement performance standards stated in the most recent annual county report.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.941.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.941.](#) See Section IV, *Solid waste and recycling collection*, for more information about organized collection.

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.941 \(b\).](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.151.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd. 1.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd. 2.](#) [Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd. 1\(a\).](#) *Troje v. City Council of City of Hastings*, 310 Minn. 183, 245 N.W.2d 596 (1976).

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd. 3\(a\).](#)

3. Cities with a population of 1,000 or more

Any city, regardless of where it is located, with a population of 1,000 or more must ensure that every residential household and business in the city has solid waste collection service.

To comply with this requirement, cities are authorized to organize solid waste collection, provide collection by city employees, or require by ordinance that every household and business has a contract for collection services. An ordinance with such a requirement must also provide for enforcement. Cities must follow specific procedural requirements before adopting organized collection of solid waste.

A city with a population of 1,000 or more may exempt a residential household or business from the requirement to have solid waste collection service if the household or business ensures that an environmentally sound alternative is used.

B. Recycling required at city facilities

All statutory and home rule charter cities are required to ensure that facilities under their control, from which mixed municipal solid waste is collected, have containers for at least three recyclable materials, such as, but not limited to, paper, glass, plastic, and metal. Cities also must transfer all recyclable materials collected to a recycler.

C. Licensing

1. Solid waste collectors

State law prohibits any person from collecting mixed municipal solid waste for hire without a license from the jurisdiction where that waste is collected.

Cities are authorized to license solid waste collectors. If a city does so, it must submit a list of licensed collectors to the MPCA. County boards are required to adopt by resolution the licensing authority of any city that does not license solid waste collectors. If a city acts as a licensing authority, it may impose requirements that are consistent with the county's solid waste policies. In addition, state law establishes several requirements that must be imposed for any license issued to a solid waste collector.

First, a license must require collectors to impose charges for collection of mixed municipal solid waste that increase with the volume or the weight of waste collected. For example, a solid waste collector could charge fees that increase with the increasing volume of solid waste generated by customers.

RELEVANT LINKS:

Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd. 3(d).

Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd. 3(e).

Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd. 3a.

Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd. 3(c).

Minn. Stat. § 115A.553, subd. 2. Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd. 1(b).

Minn. Stat. § 115A.46, subd. 5.

Orr v. City of Rochester, 193 Minn. 371, 258 N.W. 569 (1935).

Garbage carts of different sizes, measured by their volume in gallons, could be issued to customers who can decide what size garbage cart best suits their disposal needs.

The commissioner of the MPCA may exempt a licensing authority from this requirement if the county in which the city is located has an approved solid waste plan that concludes that variable rate pricing is not appropriate for that jurisdiction because it is inconsistent with other incentives and mechanisms

implemented that are more effective in attaining the goals of discouraging on-site disposal, littering, and illegal dumping. The commissioner may also exempt a collector from this requirement while revisions are being made to the county's solid waste plan if certain conditions are met. The exemption is only effective until the county solid waste plan is revised.

Second, a license that requires a pricing system based on volume instead of weight shall determine a base unit size for an average small quantity household generator of waste and establish, or require the licensee to establish, a multiple unit pricing system that ensures that amounts of waste generated in excess of the base unit amount are priced higher than the base unit price.

Third, a license shall prohibit collectors from imposing a greater charge on residents who recycle than on residents who do not.

2. Recycling collectors

Counties can require either county or municipal licenses for the collection of recyclable materials. A person may not collect recyclable materials for hire unless that person is licensed locally or is registered with the MPCA. Each county must ensure that materials separated for recycling are taken to markets for sale or to recyclable material processing centers. No county may prevent a person that generates or collects solid waste from delivering recyclable materials to a recycling facility of the generator's or collector's choice.

If a city acts as a licensing authority, it may impose requirements that are consistent with the county's recycling policies. A city can also impose requirements that are in addition to or different from the county's policies if the city's requirements are designed to reduce waste generation or promote the reuse of waste materials.

3. License fees

State law does not address the amount that cities can charge for licenses for collection of solid waste or recyclable materials. Generally, a license fee must be reasonable.

RELEVANT LINKS:

Waste Systems Corp. v. County of Martin, 985 F.2d 1381 (8th Cir. 1993). *C & A Carbone, Inc. v. Town of Clarkstown, New York*, 511 U.S. 383 (1994).

Ben Oehrleins and Sons and Daughter, Inc. v. Hennepin County, 115 F.3d 1372 (8th Cir. 1997).

City of Philadelphia v. New Jersey, 437 U.S. 617 (1978). *United Haulers Ass'n, Inc. v. Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Management Auth.*, 550 U.S. 330 (2007).

LSP Transmission Holdings, LLC v. Sieben, 954 F.3d 1018, 1026 (8th Cir. 2020).

General Motors Corporation v. Tracy, 519 U.S. 278, 306 (1997).

Paul's Industrial Garage, Inc. v. Goodhue County, No. 21-2614 (8th Cir. 2022).

Minn. Stat. §§ 115A.83-115A.86.

Minn. Stat. § 115A.83 subd. 2. Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subds. 27 and 28.

It should not be viewed as a source of revenue and should be in an amount that is close to the direct and indirect costs in issuing the license and regulating the licensed activity.

D. Requiring use of specific waste facility

Some municipalities have adopted ordinances that regulate the flow of solid waste, for example, by designating where it must be taken for disposal. This is generally done as a tool to achieve solid waste management goals.

Flow control ordinances may raise constitutional issues under the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution if they interfere with the flow of interstate commerce.

Courts have recognized a distinction under the Commerce Clause that generally allows municipalities more authority to take actions affecting solid waste if they are acting as a “market participant” instead of as a government regulator. When a municipality is providing for or contracting for waste management services, it generally is thought to be acting as a market participant.

The dormant Commerce Clause prohibits states from implementing regulations that favor in-state economic interests by burdening out-of-state competitors. However, courts have found that local governments may provide differential treatment to entities that perform different services in the same market as long as no actual or prospective competition exists. For example, a county ordinance that requires waste be made into refuse-derived fuel (RDF) and transferred to a state-run energy plant instead of contracting an out of state entity that transfers waste to a landfill does not violate the dormant Commerce Clause because the out-of-state entity performs a different service.

State law authorizes counties or sanitary districts to adopt a designation ordinance requiring that all solid waste generated within a specific geographic area must be delivered to a specific solid waste facility. A designation ordinance does not apply to the following materials:

- Materials separated from solid waste and recovered for reuse in their original form or for use in manufacturing processes.
- Materials that are processed at a resource recovery facility at the capacity in operation at the time that the designation plan is approved by the commissioner of the MPCA.

RELEVANT LINKS:

Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd.
3. Minn. Stat. § 115A.86.

Minn. Stat. § 473.813.

LMCIT staff can assist in reviewing city contracts, especially provisions related to insurance and liability. For more information, contact Chris Smith, Risk Management Attorney, at csmith@lmc.org or 651-281-1269.

Minn. Stat. § 115A.93, subd.
5. Minn. Stat. § 13.02, subds.
9, 12.

Minn. Stat. § 443.015. See Adopting Assessments for Unpaid Charges for Garbage Collection and Disposal Services, LMC Model Resolution.

- Materials that are separated at a permitted transfer station located within the boundaries of the designating authority for the purpose of recycling the materials if either: (1) the transfer station was in operation on Jan. 1, 1991; or (2) the materials were not being separated for recycling at the designated facility at the time the transfer station began separation of the materials.
- Recyclable materials that are being recycled, and residuals from recycling if there is at least an 85 percent volume reduction in the solid waste processed at the recycling facility and the residuals are managed as separate waste streams.

If a city organizes collection, by contract or as a municipal service, it may include a requirement that all or any portion of the solid waste be delivered to a waste facility identified by the city. This requirement would not apply to recyclable materials and materials that are processed at a resource recovery facility at the capacity in operation at the time the requirement is imposed. In a district or county where a resource recovery facility has been designated by ordinance, organized collection must conform to the designation ordinance's requirements.

Cities in the metropolitan area have authority to directly negotiate and enter into contracts—for a term not to exceed 30 years—for the delivery of solid waste to a waste facility, and the processing of solid waste. Contracts made by direct negotiations shall be approved by resolution.

Before a city in the metropolitan area enters into a contract for a period of more than five years, it must submit the proposed contract and a description of the proposed activities under the contract to the commissioner of the MPCA for review and approval.

E. Customer lists

Customer lists that solid waste collectors provide to cities are private data on individuals, or nonpublic data with regard to data not on individuals, under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

III. City assessments and fees

A. Assessments for unpaid services

Any statutory city or city of the fourth class that provides, by contract or otherwise, for garbage collection and disposal may by ordinance require the owners of all property served to pay the proportionate cost of the service to their properties.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Providing for Assessment of Unpaid Charges for Garbage Collection and Disposal Services, LMC Model Ordinance.](#)

[Minn. Stat § 443.26 – 443.35.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 443.29.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.921, subd. 1.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.921, subd. 1\(b\).](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.921, subd. 2.](#) [Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 7.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.921, subd. 2.](#)

The city council may annually levy an assessment equal to the unpaid cost as of Sept. 1 of each year against each lot or parcel of land. The assessment may include a penalty not to exceed 10 percent of the unpaid amount, and shall bear interest not exceeding 6 percent per year. Such assessments shall be certified to the county auditor and shall be collected and remitted to the city treasurer in the same manner as assessments for local improvements.

First class cities (Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, and Rochester) have additional authority to collect unpaid charges for rubbish disposal in a civil action, or to assess them against the property receiving the service and collect them as other taxes are collected.

B. City fees

1. Operators of disposal facilities

A city may charge a fee that cannot exceed \$1 per cubic yard of waste, or its equivalent, on operators of facilities for the disposal of mixed municipal solid waste located in the city. The fees must be credited to the city's general fund. Revenue produced by 25 cents of the fee must be used only for purposes of landfill abatement or for mitigating and compensating for the local risks, costs, and other adverse effects of the facilities.

Revenue produced by the balance of the fee may be used for any general fund purpose.

There is an exemption from this fee for waste residue from recycling facilities at which recyclable materials are separated or processed for the purpose of recycling, or from energy and resource-recovery facilities at which solid waste is processed for the purpose of extracting, reducing, converting to energy, or otherwise separating and preparing solid waste for reuse if there is at least an 85 percent weight reduction in the solid waste processed.

A city also may charge a fee not to exceed 50 cents per cubic yard of waste, or its equivalent, on operators of facilities for the disposal of construction debris located within the city. The revenue from the fees must be credited to the city general fund. Two-thirds of the revenue must be used only for purposes of landfill abatement or for purposes of mitigating and compensating for the local risks, costs, and other adverse effects resulting from the facilities.

There is an exemption from 25 percent of this fee if the facility has implemented a recycling program that the county has approved, and 25 percent if the facility contains a liner and leachate collection system the MPCA has approved.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.929.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 36.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.919.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 115A.921.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.923.](#)
For more information about these fees see Section III. B., *City Fees*. [Minn. Stat. § 115A.929.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.945.](#)

[Analysis of Waste Collection Service Arrangements](#), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, June 2009.

Two-thirds of the revenue from this fee must offset any financial assurances required by the city for a construction debris facility. The maximum revenue that may be collected for this type of fee must be determined by multiplying the total permitted capacity of a facility by 15 cents per cubic yard. Once the maximum revenue has been collected for a facility, the fees in this subdivision may no longer be imposed.

2. Accounting for fees

Cities that provide for solid waste management shall account for all revenue collected from waste management fees, together with interest earned on revenue from the fees, separately from other revenue collected by the city.

Cities must report revenue collected from the fees and use of the revenue separately from other revenue and use of revenue in any required financial report or audit.

A city provides solid waste management and is subject to this requirement for a separate accounting and reporting if a city engages in any activities that are intended to affect or control the generation of waste, or engages in any activities that provide for or control the collection, processing, and disposal of waste. State law defines waste management fees as:

- All fees, charges, and surcharges collected under sections 115A.919, 115A.921, and 115A.923 of the Minnesota Statutes.
- All tipping fees collected at waste management facilities owned or operated by the city.
- All city charges for waste collection and management services.
- Any other fees, charges, or surcharges imposed on waste for the purpose of waste management, whether collected directly from generators, indirectly through property taxes, or as part of utility or other charges for city-provided services.

Any city that provides or pays for the costs of collection or disposal of solid waste must, through a billing or other system, make the prorated share of those costs for each solid waste generator visible and obvious to the generator.

IV. Solid waste and recycling collection

A. Types of collection systems—open collection and organized collection

The two main types of collection systems for solid waste and recycling are commonly referred to as “open collection” and “organized collection.”

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subds. 1, 3.](#) See Section IV.D., *Procedural requirements for adopting organized collection*, for more information.

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 3.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 471.345.](#) [Minn. Stat. § 412.311.](#) *Schwandt Sanitation of Paynesville v. City of Paynesville*, 423 N.W.2d 59 (Minn. Ct. App. 1988).

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 3.](#) [Minn. Stat. § 115A.86.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 3.](#)

A 2009 study authorized by the MPCA estimated that the number of cities with open solid waste collection was between 65 to 80 percent, and the number of cities with organized solid waste collection was between 20 to 35 percent. The same study indicated that the number of cities with open recycling was estimated to be between 40 to 60 percent, and the number of cities with organized recycling was estimated to be between 50 to 60 percent.

Open collection is generally defined as a collection system where individual residents and businesses are free to contract with any collector licensed to do business in the city.

Organized collection is defined as a “system for collecting solid waste in which a specified collector, or a member of an organization of collectors, is authorized to collect from a defined geographic service area or areas some or all of the solid waste that is released by generators for collection.”

A city must comply with certain procedural requirements in the organized collection statute before adopting organized collection of solid waste. There may be additional procedural requirements for home rule charter cities.

A city may organize collection as a municipal service where city employees collect solid waste from a defined geographic service area or areas. In the alternative, cities may organize collection by using one or more private collectors or an organization of collectors. The agreement with the private collectors may be made through an ordinance, franchise, license, negotiated or bidded contract, or by other means.

The competitive bidding requirements in state law do not apply to city contracts for solid waste collection because a contract for these services does not meet the definition of a “contract” that is subject to the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law.

Organized collection accomplished by contract or as a municipal service may include a requirement that all or any portion of the solid waste—except recyclable materials and materials that are processed at a resource-recovery facility at the capacity in operation at the time the requirement is imposed—be delivered to a waste facility identified by the city. In a district or county where a resource-recovery facility has been designated by ordinance, organized collection must conform to the ordinance’s requirements.

Cities are prohibited from establishing or administering organized collection in a way that impairs recycling. Further, cities must exempt recyclable materials from organized collection upon a showing by the person who generates the recyclables or a collector of recyclables that the materials are or will be separated from mixed municipal solid waste by the generator, separately collected, and delivered for reuse in their original form or for use in a manufacturing process.

RELEVANT LINKS:

Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subds. 1, 3. Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subds. 25a, 31. Minn. Stat. § 116.06, subd. 22.

Waste Recovery Coop. of Minn. v. Cnty. of Hennepin, 475 N.W.2d 892 (Minn. Ct. App. 1991).

Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 6.

Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 4. Minn. Stat. § 115A.94.

Jennissen v. City of Bloomington, 913 N.W.2d 456 (Minn. 2018). *Clark v. City of Saint Paul*, 934 N.W.2d 234 (Minn. 2019). *Jennissen v. City of Bloomington*, 938 N.W.2d 808 (Minn. 2020).

It is not absolutely clear whether a city that decides to enter into an agreement for the collection of recyclable materials, including source-separated compostable materials, with one collector or an organization of collectors is required to comply with the procedural requirements in the organized collection statute. The answer likely depends on whether the definition of “solid waste” referenced in the organized collection statute should be interpreted to include recyclable materials.

The Minnesota Court of Appeals, in a published opinion, considered a similar issue of whether telephone directories, which were collected for recycling, were subject to a county’s designation ordinance requiring mixed municipal solid waste to be disposed of at a county-designated facility. The court of appeals concluded that the telephone directories did not meet the definition of mixed municipal solid waste or of solid waste because they were being collected for recycling in a “separate waste stream” and were not being “discarded” as solid waste.

If a city is considering entering into an agreement for the collection of recyclable materials with one collector or an organization of collectors, it should consult its city attorney to determine whether it must follow the procedural requirements in the organized collection statute.

B. Organized collection is generally optional

The organized collection statute provides that the authority to organize the collection of solid waste is optional and is in addition to authority governing solid waste collection granted by other law. The statute also provides that a city may exercise any authority granted by any other law, including a home rule charter, to govern collection of solid waste. A city would only be required to organize collection if the county in which it is located has by ordinance required cities within its jurisdiction to organize collection.

The Waste Management Act defines cities as “statutory and home rule charter cities authorized to plan under sections 462.351 to 462.364.” Therefore, both statutory and home rule charter cities may adopt organized collection using the procedures outlined in the organized collection statute.

The Minnesota Supreme Court has held that the Waste Management Act does not preempt home rule charter cities from regulating the process for organizing the collection of solid waste. Instead, the Supreme Court concluded that the Act establishes the minimum procedural requirements that cities must follow before adopting organized collection, and that home rule charter cities may be subject to additional procedural requirements, including those adopted through a citizen petition for a referendum or for a proposed charter amendment.

RELEVANT LINKS:

Analysis of Waste Collection Service Arrangements, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, June 2009.

Analysis of Waste Collection Service Arrangements, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, June 2009.

The Benefits of Organized Collection, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Feb. 2012. *Analysis of Waste Collection Service Arrangements*, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, June 2009.

C. Open collection versus organized collection: pros and cons

1. Open collection

There are several frequently cited advantages of open collection:

- Residents have more choice and are free to select a solid waste collector based on their preference.
- There is a direct relationship between the solid waste collector and its customers.
- There are minimal administrative costs for cities.
- Smaller solid waste collectors are better able to enter the market in an open collection system by servicing a portion of city residents.

In contrast, there are several frequently cited disadvantages of open collection:

- Open collection generally results in a more expensive monthly cost for residents.
- Multiple collectors mean more truck traffic and the resulting negative side effects, including the potential for added street maintenance costs, and increased vehicle noise and emissions, fuel consumption, and vehicle accidents.
- There may be inconsistent charges for the same level of service in a city.
- Cities have reduced ability to manage solid waste collection.

2. Organized collection

There are several frequently cited advantages of organized collection:

- The price paid by households in an organized collection system is generally lower per month for similar service levels than in an open collection system due to increased efficiencies from serving every household or business in the community or on a particular route.
- Limiting the number of solid waste collectors allows cities to decrease the impacts of increased truck traffic, including the potential for added street maintenance costs, vehicle noise and emissions, fuel consumption, and vehicle accidents.
- Cities have greater ability to manage solid waste collection and can establish service requirements.
- Standardized service makes public education easier.
- Cities' ability to seek requests for proposals on a regular basis helps lower costs.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Analysis of Waste Collection Service Arrangements](#), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, June 2009.

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, 2013 Minn. Laws ch. 45.](#)

See Appendix A, Organized Collection Flowchart.

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 4. Minn. Stat. § 115A.94.](#)

[Jennissen v. City of Bloomington](#), 913 N.W.2d 456 (Minn. 2018). [Clark v. City of Saint Paul](#), 934 N.W.2d 234 (Minn. 2019). [Jennissen v. City of Bloomington](#), 938 N.W.2d 808 (Minn. 2020).

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4d. Minn. Stat. § 331A.03.](#)

In contrast, there are several frequently cited disadvantages of organized collection:

- Households and businesses do not get to choose their collector.
- Cities have greater administrative involvement and costs.
- Small collectors have higher entry costs to get into the market and competitive opportunities are limited to contract openings.
- The statutory requirements for switching from open collection to organized collection are time consuming and can be difficult politically.

D. Procedural requirements for adopting organized collection

There are several procedural steps a city must take before it is authorized to adopt organized collection of solid waste.

The Minnesota Legislature adopted significant changes to the organized collection statute in 2013 that were designed to simplify the process for adopting organized collection. Any city that has adopted organized collection as of May 1, 2013, is exempt from the new requirements.

The Waste Management Act defines cities as “statutory and home rule charter cities authorized to plan under sections 462.351 to 462.364.” Therefore, both statutory and home rule charter cities may adopt organized collection using the procedures outlined in the organized collection statute.

The Minnesota Supreme Court has held that the Waste Management Act does not preempt home rule charter cities from regulating the process for organizing the collection of solid waste. Instead, the Supreme Court concluded that the Act establishes the minimum procedural requirements that cities must follow before adopting organized collection, and that home rule charter cities may be subject to additional procedural requirements, including those adopted through a citizen petition for a referendum or for a proposed charter amendment.

1. Notice to public and to licensed collectors

A city with more than one licensed collector must first give notice to the public and to all licensed collectors that it is considering adopting organized collection. State law does not specify how notice should be provided. The League recommends providing both published notice and individual mailed notice to each licensed collector.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4d.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4e.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4d.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4d.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4d.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4d.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4c.](#)

LMCIT staff can assist in reviewing city contracts, especially provisions related to insurance and liability. For more information, contact Chris Smith, Risk Management Attorney, at csmith@lmc.org or 651-281-1269.

2. Exclusive negotiation period with licensed collectors

After the city provides notice of its intent to consider adopting organized collection, it must provide a negotiation period that is exclusive between the city and all collectors licensed to operate in the city. This exclusive negotiation period must be at least 60 days, but it may be longer if the city chooses.

Before the exclusive meetings and negotiation, participating licensed collectors and elected officials must meet and confer regarding waste collection issues, including but not limited to road deterioration, public safety, pricing mechanisms, and contractual considerations unique to organized collection.

A city is not required to reach an agreement with the licensed collectors during this period. The purpose of the exclusive negotiation period is to allow the licensed collectors an opportunity to develop a proposal in which they, as members of an organization of collectors, will collect solid waste from designated sections of the city.

The proposal must contain identified city priorities, including issues related to zone creation, traffic, safety, environmental performance, service provided, and price, and must reflect existing collectors maintaining their respective market share of business as determined by each hauler's average customer count during the six months before the beginning of the exclusive negotiation period.

If an existing collector opts to be excluded from the proposal, the city may allocate its customers proportionally based on market share to the participating collectors who choose to negotiate.

If an organized collection agreement is established as a result of the exclusive negotiation period, the initial agreement must be in effect for seven years. Upon execution of an agreement between the participating licensed collectors and the city, the city shall establish organized collection through appropriate local controls. The city does not need to establish a solid waste collection options committee if it reaches an agreement with the licensed haulers during the exclusive negotiation period; however, the city must first provide public notice and a public hearing before officially deciding to implement organized collection. Organized collection may begin no sooner than six months after the effective date of the city's decision to implement organized collection.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94 subd 4a. Minn. Stat. ch. 13D.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4b.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4b.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4b.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4b.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4b.](#)

3. Solid waste collection options committee

If a city does not reach an agreement with its licensed collectors during the exclusive negotiation period, it may form by resolution a “solid waste collection options committee” to study additional methods of solid waste collection. The city council appoints the committee members. The committee is subject to the open meeting law and has several mandatory duties.

First, the committee shall determine which methods of solid waste collection to examine, which must include at least three methods of collection: (1) the existing system of collection; (2) a system in which a single collector collects solid waste from all sections of the city; and (3) a system in which multiple collectors, either singly or as members of an organization of collectors, collect solid waste from different sections of the city.

Second, the committee shall establish a list of criteria on which the organized collection methods selected for examination will be evaluated, which may include: costs to residential subscribers; the impacts on residential subscribers’ ability to choose a provider of solid waste service based on the desired level of service, costs, and any other factors; the impact of miles driven on city streets and alleys and the incremental impact of miles driven by collection vehicles; initial and operating costs of implementing the solid waste collection system; providing incentives for waste reduction; impacts on solid waste collectors; and other physical, economic, fiscal, social, environmental, and aesthetic impacts.

Third, the committee shall collect information regarding the operation and efficacy of existing methods of organized collection in other cities and towns.

Fourth, the committee shall seek input from, at a minimum:

- The city council.
- The city official responsible for solid waste issues.
- Persons currently licensed to operate solid waste collection and recycling services in the city.
- City residents who currently pay for residential solid waste collection services.

Finally, the committee must issue a report on its research, findings, and any recommendations to the city council.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4c.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4c.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 3.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 7.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 115A.94, subd. 4f.](#)
[Minn. Stat. § 604.02.](#)

4. Public notice and public hearing

A city council shall consider the committee's report and recommendations. A city must provide public notice and hold at least one public hearing before deciding to implement organized collection.

5. Implementation

A city can begin organized collection no sooner than six months after the effective date of the city's decision to implement organized collection. A city may organize collection as a municipal service where city employees collect solid waste from a defined geographic service area or areas. In the alternative, cities may organize collection by using one or more private solid waste collectors or an organization of collectors. An agreement with private collectors may be made through an ordinance, franchise, license, negotiated or bidded contract, or by other means.

6. Anticompetitive conduct

A city that organizes collection is authorized to engage in anticompetitive conduct to the extent necessary to plan and implement its chosen organized collection system and is immune from liability under state laws relating to antitrust, restraint of trade, and unfair practices, and other regulation of trade or commerce.

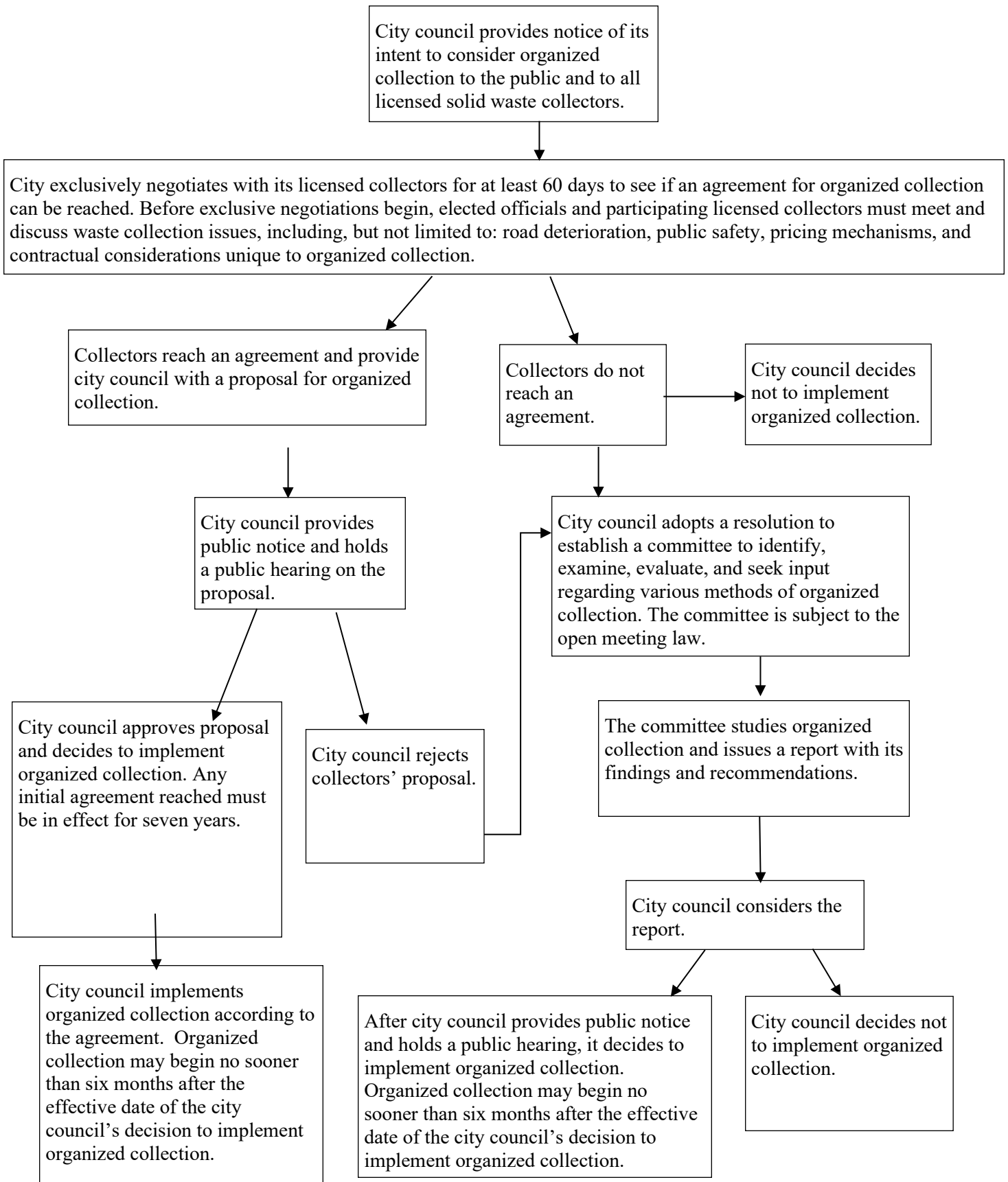
7. Joint liability limited

An organized collection agreement must not obligate a participating licensed collector for damages to third parties solely caused by another participating licensed collector, notwithstanding section 604.02 of the Minnesota Statutes. The organized collection agreement may include joint obligations for actions that are undertaken by all the participating collectors.

V. Conclusion

Cities have broad authority to regulate the collection and disposal of solid waste. Cities exercise this authority subject to state and county oversight. Cities should work closely with their city attorneys when exercising this authority by requiring licenses, imposing fees and assessments, entering into contracts, and adopting ordinances. Cities must comply with procedural requirements in the organized collection statute before they may adopt organized collection of solid waste.

Appendix A: Organized Collection Flowchart



Appendix G – MPCA Letter to Hennepin County

January 30, 2023

Dave McNary
Assistant Director
Hennepin County Environment and Energy Department
701 4th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Mr. McNary:

MPCA is aware of confusion among cities and haulers that collect organics via subscription service. Cities and haulers want clarity on compliance for pricing organics recycling. Can customers be charged for this as an add-on service? Relevant state statutes are provided below. Minn. Stat. § 115A.93 subd. 3 (c) says that a licensing authority shall prohibit collectors from imposing a greater charge on residents who recycle than on residents who do not recycle. According to definitions in Minn. Stat. § 115A.03, subd. 25a and 25b, recycling includes the process of collecting recyclable materials. Recyclable materials include source-separated compostable materials, materials separated from MMSW for the purpose of composting, and sole source food waste streams.

Licensing authorities are therefore required to prohibit collectors from imposing a greater charge on residents who subscribe to organics collection than those who do not. MPCA expects that licensing authorities will identify ways in which to comply with this particular language. In addition, the licensing authorities should communicate this obligation to the haulers they license. If a complaint is brought to our attention, MPCA will work with the licensing authority to reach compliance. If you have questions about this letter, please reach out to Peder Sandhei at 651-757-2688 to discuss. As with all legal issues/questions, please seek advice from your local attorney to make sure that your licensing agreements are compliant with the language of Minn. Stat. § 115A.93.

Sincerely,



Peder Sandhei
Principal Planner
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

115A.03

Subd. 25a. Recyclable materials.

"Recyclable materials" means materials that are separated from mixed municipal solid waste for the purpose of recycling or **composting**, including paper, glass, plastics, metals, automobile oil, batteries, **source-separated compostable materials**, and sole source food waste streams that are managed through biodegradative processes. Refuse-derived fuel or other material that is destroyed by incineration is not a recyclable material.

Subd. 25b. Recycling.

"Recycling" means **the process of collecting and preparing recyclable materials** and reusing the materials in their original form or using them in manufacturing processes that do not cause the destruction of recyclable materials in a manner that precludes further use.

115A.93

Subd. 3. License requirements; pricing based on volume or weight.

(a) A licensing authority shall require licensees to impose charges for collection of mixed municipal solid waste that increase with the volume or weight of the waste collected.

(b) A licensing authority may impose requirements that are consistent with the county's solid waste policies as a condition of receiving and maintaining a license.

(c) **A licensing authority shall prohibit mixed municipal solid waste collectors from imposing a greater charge on residents who recycle than on residents who do not recycle.**

(d) The commissioner may exempt a licensing authority from the requirements of paragraph (a) if the county within which the authority is located has an approved solid waste management plan that concludes that variable rate pricing is not appropriate for that jurisdiction because it is inconsistent with other incentives and mechanisms implemented within the jurisdiction that are more effective in attaining the goals of this chapter to discourage on-site disposal, littering, and illegal dumping.

Appendix H – City Solid Waste Ordinance and Licensing Best Management Practice Options

City Solid Waste Ordinance and Licensing Best Management Practice Options

Good Ordinance/License Practices

- See the [Good License Template](#) for legal language that would be adopted by ordinance and included in the license -- see [Services Agreement Template](#) -- a city issues to solid waste/recycling hauler(s). Cities in 2015 that have adopted at least portions of these practices include: Cottage Grove, Newport, Carver and Chaska.

- ❑ **Hauler ordinance/license and enforcement**

License all garbage and recycling haulers and provide an administrative fine system for violations of the ordinance. Administrative fines been preferred by many cities instead of a misdemeanor-type enforcement system.

- ❑ **Background checks for haulers in the City**

Authorize city police to require hauler and State of MN information. This is similar to requirements for “Peddlers” that most cities have on their books. Solid waste and recycling drivers know where vulnerable adults live, who is on vacation for an extended period of time, and what houses are being built or remodeled. This information about residents could be used for unlawful purposes.

- ❑ **Daily hauling districts**

Keep residential trash and recycling trucks on a particular street only on a specified day each week, instead of allowing trucks anywhere in the City on any day. This is a benefit to public safety, road wear and tear, reduction in noise and neighborhood aesthetics. Garbage carts serviced at the curb would only be put out and in public sight one day each week.

- ❑ **Multi-material collection**

Require all trash haulers to provide recycling services to all trash customers, and allow those haulers to also offer Bulky Waste, SSO (Source-Separated Organics) and Yard Waste services to customers. This does not require that all haulers offer Bulky Waste, SSO and Yard Waste services, but it sets your City up for these services as you progress in your solid waste programs. If your City already has organized recycling collection, the license language in the Good template must be modified.

- ❑ **Volume-based pricing**

Require a Pay as You Throw (PAYT) trash program. This ordinance/license language defines three cart sizes, and requires that the different costs charged by haulers for each cart size – this differential being a state law - be sufficient to encourage recycling and waste reduction: at least a 25% difference between the prices of the cart sizes.

- ❑ **Hauler fee transparency**

Require collectors to annually or quarterly inform the City of the rates and fees haulers will charge residents, so that the City can post these on its website and be informed of the differential costs between the cart sizes, of changes (in fees for hauling and disposal, and in county/state taxes), and can provide information to residents if they have questions about special fees (fuel surcharges, cart rental, environmental/landfill, etc.) and discounts. Rates and fees should be posted on the city’s web site as an at-least annual update for residents.

☐ **Basic hauler reporting requirements**

Require haulers to provide information to the City and/or County: data required by the county and the State, and other data as defined by the City.

☐ **Multi-unit and commercial containers**

Require that multi-unit residential and commercial properties have containers for trash and recyclables. If the City does not furnish carts, language may be changed to require collectors to furnish containers. A city may wish to reference their zoning code here.

☐ **Waste Processing**

Designate a preferred facility in the license between the city and waste haulers. Cities that simply license haulers to operate in their city may not legally require waste/recyclables to be taken to a specific processing facility but may share the city/county/regional/state perspective on preferable facilities.

Better Ordinance/License Practices

- See the [Better License Template](#) for legal language that would be adopted by ordinance and included in the license -- see [Services Agreement Template](#) -- a city issues to solid waste/recycling hauler(s).

☐ **The Good practices**

Include all the Good ordinance/license practices: background checks for haulers, daily hauling districts, multi-material collection, volume-based pricing, hauler fee transparency, basic hauler reporting, multi-unit and commercial containers, and ordinance/license enforcement.

☐ **Solid Waste Standards**

Authorize the City Administrator or Manager to develop standards, which allow for timely changes of items such as the types of recyclables collected or hours of operation, through an administrative process, instead of through an ordinance process.

☐ **Commercial licenses**

Require licensing of haulers of wastes from businesses and multifamily properties.

☐ **Maximum number of residential hauling licenses**

Cap the number of residential hauling licenses at the number in place on a date selected by the City, with licenses in subsequent years contingent on serving a minimum number of residential accounts. A city may determine however that maintaining a minimum of 2-3 haulers provides the benefit of competition that would otherwise be assured if the city organized garbage collection and issued a periodic RFP for services.

☐ **Bi-weekly garbage collection / weekly recyclables collection**

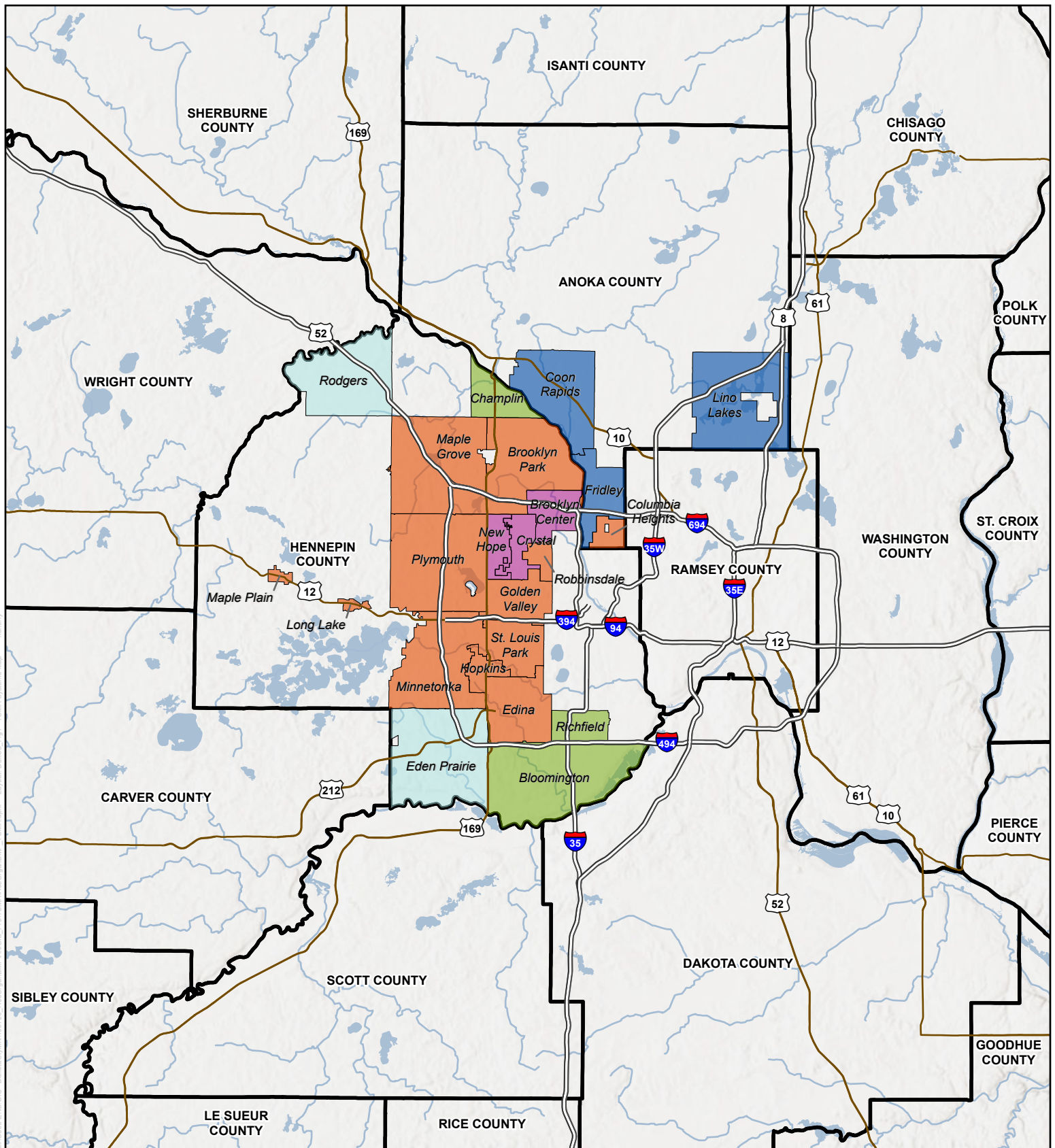
Require residential haulers to set 4 cart size/frequency categories, with prices for service varying by the size of the container (approximately 30, 60 and 90-gallons) and frequency of pick-up. A “very small generator” category is established: a 30-gallon (approximately) cart collected every other week. There should be at least a 35% difference between the prices of the 4 cart size/frequency categories. Bi-weekly garbage collection pairs nicely with weekly recyclables collection (and adding organics collection).

☐ Bulky Waste and Yard Waste Collection <i>Require collectors to provide bulky waste or yard waste services if requested by residents, which may involve additional fees.</i>
☐ Source Separated Organic Materials (SSO) Collection <i>Require collection of SSO as a separate waste stream, with requirements for proper collection, collection frequency (weekly or bi-weekly) and processing.</i>
☐ Enhanced hauler data reporting <i>Require licensees to submit City-specific semi-annual and annual reports that include data specified in the City's Solid Waste Standards, covering tonnage data, number of accounts, complaints received, educational material provided to accounts.</i>
☐ Noise restriction <i>Require commercial haulers to comply with the City's noise ordinance, though which specification of collection hours is allowed.</i>
☐ Residential, commercial, container placement <i>Specify allowable locations for containers. Specify placement of commercial containers, including containers at multiple unit residential dwellings, in enclosed areas in accordance with the City's zoning code.</i>
☐ Roll-off container placement <i>Restrict roll-off container placement to private property, or public right of way with a specific City permit.</i>
☐ Roll-off licensing <i>Require, as a condition of licensing, background checks of roll-off companies and/or employees. Because roll-off containers are often sited at construction sites which have valuable building materials, background checks provide a level of assurance for your community. Cities in 2015 that license roll-off haulers include St. Paul, Minneapolis & Forest Lake.</i>
☐ Roll-off insurance <i>Require from roll-off licensee a certificate of insurance for injury and property damage.</i>
☐ Roll-off reporting & recovered materials <i>Roll-off companies must file an annual data report to the City that includes documentation of construction and demolition recyclable materials processed.</i>
Summary of Best Ordinance/License Practices ☒ See the Best License Template for legal language that would be adopted by ordinance and included in the license -- see Services Agreement Template -- a city issues to solid waste/recycling hauler(s).
☐ The Better practices <i>Include all the Good practices.</i> <i>Include all the Better practices: Solid Waste Standards, commercial licenses, maximum number of residential hauling licenses, bi-weekly garbage collection, Bulky Waste and Yard Waste collection,</i>

Source Separated Organic collection, enhanced data reporting, noise restriction, container placement for residential and commercial, and roll-off container placement, licensing, insurance, reporting.
☐ More flexibility in Solid Waste Standards <i>Further define and expand the authority of the City Administrator or Manager to develop standards, which allow for timely changes of items such as the types of recyclables collected or hours of operation, through an administrative process, instead of through an ordinance process. For example, a city may choose to promote the collection efforts of electronics retailers and perhaps the county rather than city collection of electronics.</i>
☐ Minimum market share to maintain hauler license <i>Cap the number of residential hauling licenses at the number in place on a date selected by the City, with licenses in subsequent years contingent on haulers serving a minimum percentage of residential customers to maintain license eligibility, rather than a minimum number of residential accounts.</i>
☐ Enhanced volume-based pricing / collection frequency <i>Establish at least a 50% difference between the prices of the 4 cart size/frequency residential hauler categories: approximately 30, 60 and 90-gallons and a “very small generator” category for a 30-gallon (approximately) cart collected every other week. Cities may also want the 60- or 90-gallon bi-weekly cart collection option.</i>
☐ Enhanced hauler data reporting with penalties <i>Require due-dates for reporting and administrative penalties for failure to report. Residential licensees submit City-specific semi-annual and annual reports that include data specified in the City’s Solid Waste Standards, covering tonnage data, number of accounts, complaints received, educational material provided to accounts. Reports can also include the rates and fees haulers will charge residents to assure that the city web site accurately reflects what haulers are charging.</i>
☐ Roll-off data reporting & recycling goals <i>Require city-specific data from haulers of solid waste from commercial businesses and in roll-off containers. Have construction and demolition roll-off haulers compare percent recyclable materials processed to goals set by the hauler, or by the demolition permit holder, or by the city.</i>
☐ Roll-off license fee <i>Require roll-off licensee applicants to pay a fee.</i>
☐ Roll-off identification <i>Require that every container (box) have the name & phone number of the owner of the container.</i>
☐ Roll-off placement pre-approval <i>Require City approval (Public Works Department or other) before a roll-off licensee places a roll-off container in the public Right of Way.</i>
☐ Roll-off refundable fee <i>Require payment before each container is sited, to be refunded when the reporting requirements for that container are met.</i>

Developed by foth.com of Lake Elmo, MN for MPCA and MN GreenStep Cities. Comments welcomed via <http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/contact.cfm>

Appendix I – TCMA Map



Select System Types *

- JPA
- Municipality-Contracted Single Hauler
- Municipality-Contracted Zoned/Multi-hauler
- Open Hauling
- Open Hauling: Organics Collection Not Required

- Interstate
- US Highway
- County Boundary

Scale: 1:510,000
 Date: 1/8/2026
 Data Sources:
 Burns & McDonnell,
 ESRI, US Census

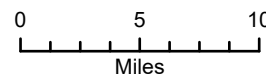


Figure 1
Select System Types



**System types reflect conditions as of 1/1/2026*

