



City of Omaha
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(Omaha, NE) – After more than two years of study, public outreach and coordination with the Omaha City Council, a Request for Bids (RFB) is now advertised for a long-term solid waste contract with the City of Omaha. The RFB will provide information about the affordability of services in the next contract.

“This is a critically important decision,” said Mayor Stothert. “We need a modern, safe, efficient and green collection system that we can afford. We will choose the best system possible within our current budget. I will not support a tax increase to pay for this contract.”

Companies will be required to bid on a collection system that uses automated trucks and covered carts to collect garbage, recyclables and yard waste. Bidders will be required to provide costs on 3 options.

- Three carts; one each for garbage, yard waste and recyclables. Garbage and yard waste would be collected separately weekly. Recyclables would be collected every other week.
- Three carts, co-mingled garbage and yard waste collected weekly in two carts, recyclables collected every other week in one cart.
- Two carts; one cart for garbage co-mingled with yard waste collected weekly, and a second cart for recyclables collected every other week.

YARD WASTE:

Each option eliminates unlimited, curbside collection of yard waste, which currently costs approximately \$4 million annually. The next contract will require that yard waste must be placed inside the cart provided.

There will be new alternatives for free, unlimited disposal of yard waste.

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

In the future, citizens will also be able to take yard waste directly to the Oma-Gro facility at the Papillion Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility at 15705 Harlan Lewis Road. There will be no tipping fee for homeowners to dispose of yard waste.

For those who want unlimited yard waste pick-up curbside, the successful bidder will also be required to offer a voluntary, paid sticker program. The contractor will determine the price of the stickers and the retailers where stickers can be purchased. Only yard waste bags marked with a sticker will be collected by the contractor.

CARTS:

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

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

TRUCKS:

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

The contractor will be required to use alternative-fueled trucks, phased in over the first seven years of the contract.

“We have considered input from thousands of citizens to develop a bid that provides a base level of service that will meet the needs of most people,” said Mayor Stothert. “We have options for continued free yard waste disposal and also continued unlimited curbside pickup for citizens who want to pay for additional service. We have options for smaller carts and an opt-out program. We will continue to produce Oma-Gro, and we anticipate an increase in recycling by replacing small bins with carts. These steps are responsive to the suggestions we have received.”

The Request for Bids (RFB) has been in development for more than two years. The process included a series of public open houses, a test of automated collection by 2,500 homeowners in six neighborhoods, follow-up telephone surveys, comparative studies of comparable cities, environmental studies, and input from citizens and the Omaha City Council.

“The objective of the next contract is to provide a consistent, manageable level of service throughout the City by providing a base level of service, and enhancing the options we offer citizens,” said Public Works Director Bob Stubbe. “We anticipate a high level of interest in our RFB.”

“This contract will impact the city budget for the next 20 years,” said Finance Director Steve Curtiss. “We have considered best industry practices and best cost estimates to design an RFB that provides the services taxpayers want.”

The current contract has been in effect since 2006 and was originally awarded to Deffenbaugh Industries. Waste Management purchased Deffenbaugh in 2014. The City currently pays approximately \$20 million annually for solid waste collection, \$14 million to Waste Management, plus tipping fees at the Pheasant Point Landfill. The contract expires December 31, 2020.

The next contract is expected to cost substantially more. It will be in effect for ten years with an option for two 5-year extensions.

The Request for Bids is posted at this link: <https://www.douglascountypurchasing.org>. Bids are due January 30, 2019. The bids will be reviewed and a recommendation will be forwarded to Mayor Stothert for approval. Once approved, the City Council will review and make the final decision.