

# VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE

## Report For The Village Council Meeting 9/16/2025

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Services Contract Renewal Process	Mike Baker Deputy Village Manager

### SYNOPSIS

A motion is requested directing staff to negotiate a solid waste contract for Village Council approval with a preferred vendor based on a preferred service-delivery option.

### STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The goals for 2023-2025 include *Exceptional Municipal Services* and *Steward of Neighborhood, Environmental and Financial Sustainability*.

### FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

### UPDATE & RECOMMENDATION

This item was discussed at the September 9, 2025 Village Council meeting. Based on the discussion at the meeting, staff recommends that:

1. Waste Management and S.B.C. be eliminated from consideration;
2. A traditional Amnesty Day be eliminated from consideration;
3. A motion be considered directing staff to negotiate a solid waste contract for Village Council approval with \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert preferred vendor: Republic Services, LRS or Groot*) based on Option \_\_\_\_ (*insert preferred option: 1, 2, 3 or 4*).
4. The negotiations with the preferred vendor should seek to achieve the following objectives:
  - a. Create incentives that encourage residents to reduce waste and increase efforts to recycle and compost;
  - b. Include outreach to the community to create awareness regarding proposed changes to the solid waste program;
  - c. Explore alternatives to Amnesty Day that encourage more reuse and recycling of materials.

Additional questions were asked by Council members during the meeting. Answers to those questions have been provided, some by Village staff and others were directed to certain vendors for response. The answers by staff and the full responses from these vendors have been included beginning on page 4. **Please note that within their responses, each vendor chose to make modifications to their original proposals. The proposed modifications appear below for each vendor. Staff has not analyzed any of them and will engage with vendors as directed by the Village Council.**

**UPDATE & RECOMMENDATION (CONTINUED)****Republic Services Proposed Modifications**

Based on the discussion from the Village Board meeting, Republic Services would like to offer some additional enhancements to our proposal options for your consideration:

Option #1 - All sticker customers would be eligible to receive a free recycling cart upon request.

Option #2 - Customers would be allowed to place out up to 2 free bulk items per week, should the Village believe that this aligns with your sustainability initiatives moving forward.

**LRS Proposed Modifications**

LRS is prepared to offer an updated senior rate and discuss with staff. To minimize the concern of cost impact to homes producing less waste, we will also make 35-gallon carts/rates available to all homeowners as originally outlined as senior only. In short, LRS is prepared to offer a senior rate and include a 35-gallon rate for non-seniors.

Finally, we would like to ensure staff and council understand we are open to including a year-round organics program, with services every other week through the winter months (December through March).

**Groot Proposed Modifications**

To take it a step further, we would like to give the Village an apples-to-apples comparison that would expand yard waste and organics collection program year round. Please find this option 3B below:

35 Gallon \$21.48

65 Gallon \$25.43

95 Gallon \$27.18

Senior Discount of 20% off all three cart options

This option would provide for a savings of over \$3.4 million over a 5 year contract when compared to the program being considered by the Board.

# UPDATE & RECOMMENDATION (CONTINUED)

Residents would indicate participation for winter yard waste/organics collection. These rates also include the following at NO ADDITIONAL COST.

- Use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Trucks
- An electronic waste recycling program
- Yard Waste Carts
- Two bulk Items per week

Find below a list of items accepted and not accepted under our organics program:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Fruits & Vegetables	Plastics (any type), Plastic Bags, Styrofoam
Dairy Products, Eggs and Shells (no liquids)	Liquids, Grease & Oil
Cake, Cookies, Candy, Nuts & Other Sweets	Glass or Metals
Meat, Poultry, Fish Products (including bones)	Animal/Human Waste
Pasta, Break, Cereals, Rice & Similar Products	Diapers, Pet Litter & Waste
Coffee Grounds/Filters & Tea Bags	Wood, Lumber, or Construction Materials
Food Soiled Paper and Cardboard	Rocks, Concrete & Bricks
Grass Clippings & Yard Waste	Cartons & Glossy Paper Containers
Soiled Tissues, Napkins, Paper Towels (unless used with chemicals/cleaning supplies)	Paper Cups

Although these rates do not currently include a household hazardous waste collection program, Groot would entertain a program that would provide service on an a la carte basis.

**Solid Waste Contract - Questions from September 9, 2025 Village Council Meeting, Responses provided by Village Staff**

**1. How does Downers Grove's rate of recycling compare with neighboring communities?**

According to the [DuPage County 2024 Solid Waste & Recycling Annual Report](#) the average recycling rate across DuPage communities was 23% and the diversion rate was 33.5%. By comparison, Downers Grove had a 26% recycling rate and 35% diversion rate, both slightly better than the county-wide average. Recycling rate is calculated as the tonnage of recyclables collected and divided by the tonnage of total waste (i.e. refuse + recycling + landscape waste). Diversion rate refers to the amount of waste diverted from landfills and includes recycling and landscaping waste.

**2. Is it more effective for a program structure and features to be focused on disincentivizing certain behavior or making it more convenient for acting sustainably?**

The effectiveness of an incentive/disincentive will largely depend on the magnitude and individual's sensitivity to that incentive/disincentive. For example, the effectiveness of a PAYT program depends on price differences between stickers vs. carts and also the cost between sizes of carts. Income also factors into a household's sensitivity to price differences for options. Higher incomes may require larger savings or costs to alter behavior. Alternatively, another approach may be to improve the convenience of a specific behavior or making a desired option the default option. Similarly, the effectiveness of this approach depends on the design of a program and its implementation. Both strategies can be effective, but depend on the context and tradeoffs between options.

**3. Are there ways to quantify the sustainability-related differences of each of the vendors?**

There would be ways to track different environmental metrics to monitor benefits over time moving forward, but it would be difficult to estimate potential benefits for each vendor with a lack of baseline data. There is also a difference in benefits that would be attributable to service package options versus vendors. Service package benefits can be directly linked back to Downers Grove, such as the amount of waste diverted from landfills or the amount of materials recovered through a recycling program. There are some subtle differences between vendors in how services would be provided.

Based on data available in the DuPage 2024 Solid Waste & Recycling Annual Report, below is a summary of the average recycling rates for each vendor in DuPage County.

Vendor	Average Recycling Rate	Count
LRS	26.00%	4
SBC	24.55%	2
Flood Brothers	24.12%	5
Groot	23.97%	8
WM	21.19%	1
Republic Svcs	21.06%	7



Other efforts by vendors may have quantifiable environmental benefits but may not be directly attributable to Downers Grove. For example, capturing landfill gas for power generation reduces emissions and improves air quality elsewhere in the state. Depending on the geographic scale of a vendor's operations, some efforts may have quantifiable benefits that are regional, statewide, or national.

**4. What has been the growth of WasteNot in residential (curbside) customers over time?**

*Response from WasteNot:* WasteNot has experienced consistent growth of its residential curbside service since launching in 2015. Some important growth milestones are listed below:

- **2015:** In the first year of launching a residential service, WasteNot gained over 400 households as customers.
- **2017:** WasteNot hits 1,000 residential households utilizing our services.
- **2021:** WasteNot surpassed 4,000 residential households utilizing our services.
- **2023:** WasteNot surpassed 7,500 residential households utilizing our services and starts providing municipal services with the City of Lake Forest, Village of Morton Grove, and Village of Riverside.
- **2024:** WasteNot expands municipal partnership to include the Villages of Palos Park, Evergreen Park, and Glencoe.
- **Current:** WasteNot currently services over 10,000 households in the Chicagoland area.

We are happy to provide further insight into our growth if needed.

**5. Do you see continued growth within communities or an initial wave of sign ups and then leveling off?**

*Response from WasteNot:* While we do see an initial wave of sign ups when we begin municipal programs, we see consistent growth post-the launch of service as well. WasteNot invests in proactively educating municipal residents on the importance of composting and our services through community engagement at events, direct mailing campaigns to help grow participation, and by partnering with local nonprofits that are environmentally focused.

We see quarterly growth of participation between 5-25% in our municipal service areas with over 80% of the cancellations coming from residents moving out of the service area. No municipality we've serviced has seen a decline in participation in any quarter.

We've seen significant interest from Downers Grove residents in the past and do expect to have an initial surge of sign ups from these inquiries if we were to start a municipal service in the Village.

We are happy to provide further clarity on our municipal participation and growth efforts in addition to references.



5050 W. Lake Street Melrose Park, IL. 60160  
o 708-345-7050 f 708-345-7056 republicservices.com

September 11, 2025

Matthew Timmerberg, Assistant to the Village Manager  
Village of Downers Grove  
850 Curtiss Street  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

RE: Downers Grove Solid Waste RFP Follow-Up

Dear Matt,

Thank you for the opportunity to answer some of the questions that were raised by members of the Village Board during Tuesday night's meeting. Below are the questions you submitted and our answers to each:

***1. In the absence of regular opportunities for disposal, are households disposing of electronic and household hazardous waste in their regular garbage disposal?***

Republic Services has not seen a significant amount of electronic or household hazardous waste (HHW) as part of the normally weekly residential set outs. It appears that the majority of residents are utilizing the available drop off opportunities in the area which are advertised on the Village's website and on the DuPage County website. Should the Village decide to not include the curbside HHW or electronics recycling collection options offered in our proposal in the final program offerings, Republic Services will work with the Village to promote available options for residents to safely and legally dispose of these items.

***2. Are cart customers subsidizing the costs of the solid waste program for households that use only stickers?***

We do not believe that cart customers are subsidizing the program costs for residents who only use stickers. Consistent with the Village's stated environmental sustainability goals, the structure of the program (Option #1) incentivizes households with low waste volumes to select the sticker option, while the cart options typically provide more value for households with more waste. The objective of the program is to give residents the maximum number of options and flexibility to choose the type of service that best meets their specific needs.

**3. *Will sticker programs eventually become obsolete?***

It really is not up to us to decide that. As reflected in our submittal to the Village, Republic Services will always do our best to provide the communities that we serve with pricing for the program options requested. Our goal is to provide the Village with comprehensive service options that best suit the needs of your community while meeting your environmental sustainability goals. Ultimately, it is the Village who will make the final decision on whether the sticker program continues.

**4. *Are there features of your proposal that would encourage materials typically put out for Amnesty day to be re-used or recycled?***

As outlined in our proposal, Republic Services has proactively worked with the Village over the past few years to promote the Amnesty Day in a manner that encourages waste diversion and reuse whenever possible. Consistent with the Village's Environmental Sustainability Plan, we would continue these efforts by encouraging residents to seek out local options for keeping reusable items out of landfills. These options include, but are not limited to:

- **Sharing Connections**- Accepts usable furniture and other select household items
- **Habitat for Humanity Restore** – Accepts furniture and other building items
- **Freecycle** – a nonprofit movement of people who are giving and getting stuff for free
- **Recycle Coach & Earth 911**- Websites that encourage reuse and recycling
- **SCARCE** - SCARCE accepts a variety of items for reuse and recycling

Furthermore, as I pointed out during the discussion at the Board Meeting, there is quite a bit of “informal” recycling and reuse that organically occurs during these events that also reduces the volume of materials going to a landfill.

**5. *Please explain how the senior discount would be applied as part of your proposal.***

As outlined in our proposal, residents would need to meet the following requirements in order to qualify for the senior discount:

- Be at least 65 years of age as verified by a valid Illinois Driver's License or state ID.
- Own and occupy the property as verified by a current real estate property bill

- Provide a current Republic Services invoice and account number (if an existing cart customer), or establish a new account if converting from the sticker program.

Residents can sign up for this discounted service by emailing the required information to [senior@republicservices.com](mailto:senior@republicservices.com) or by mailing a copy of the required information to our local office. In some of our other communities that offer senior discounts, we have established relationships with the local senior services agencies to act as a verification partner. These partners submit the required information to us on behalf of the customer. Should this option be selected, Republic Services would seek to establish a similar relationship with the Downers Grove Township Senior Center or other trusted local agencies.

**6. *Are there ways that a low income discount (similar to LiHEAP) could be implemented?***

We believe that the options provided in our proposal give low income households the ability to control their costs based on how much trash they place in the garbage versus what they recycle or reuse. In particular, the pricing in Option #1 provides low income (and all residents), the greatest flexibility in reducing their costs.

Based on the discussion from the Village Board meeting, Republic Services would like to offer some additional enhancements to our proposal options for your consideration:

Option #1 - All sticker customers would be eligible to receive a free recycling cart upon request.

Option #2 - Customers would be allowed to place out up to 2 free bulk items per week, should the Village believe that this aligns with your sustainability initiatives moving forward.

We believe that our proposal options are most directly aligned with the Village's stated environmental sustainability goals. Republic Services values our partnership with the Village and appreciates the opportunity to enter into further negotiations on a final agreement.

Sincerely,

Tish S. Powell

Tish Powell  
Manager of Municipal Sales  
[tpowell2@republicservices.com](mailto:tpowell2@republicservices.com)  
(708)616-7457 mobile



September 11, 2025

Matt Timmerberg  
Assistant to the Village Manager  
Village of Downers Grove  
850 Curtiss St  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

Re: RFP Q&A #2 – LRS

Dear Matt,

On behalf of LRS, we extend our sincere thanks to you, Jason, the Environmental Concerns Commission (ECC), Village staff, and the Village Council for the opportunity to participate in this process. We welcome the opportunity to meet in person to ensure a shared understanding of our proposal and responses.

LRS is fully committed to collaborating with the Village to design a program that aligns with your goals, meets the needs of residents and staff, and delivers the highest level of service.

While we understand an in-person meeting may not be feasible, we are available Monday morning should the opportunity arise. We also recognize that staff may choose to wait for direction from the Village Council before initiating formal negotiations. Regardless of the timeline, LRS is fully prepared and eager to begin discussions. We have listened closely to the concerns and priorities expressed throughout this process and remain flexible and responsive in tailoring a solution that is both effective and competitively priced.

Please find our responses on the following page. Should you have any questions or require further clarification, do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email.

Sincerely,

**Katie Neary**  
Manager of Municipal Services  
(815) 901-2130  
[Kneary@LRSrecycles.com](mailto:Kneary@LRSrecycles.com)

## Village of Downers Grove Q&A #2- LRS

### *1. Will sticker programs eventually become obsolete?*

In short, yes, we believe sticker programs are on a path to becoming obsolete for several reasons.

- a) **Shift Away:** Industry-wide, there is a clear shift away from hybrid programs with a mix of sticker and subscription models and sticker models in general.



- b) **Unsustainable:** Stickers are not sustainable as they are printed on paper, stuck to another paper, with a chemical product to ensure they stick and are weatherproof.
- c) **Inconvenient:** Stickers are inconvenient if you run out on garbage day.
- d) **Increased Contamination:** Communities using sticker systems often have higher contamination rates in their recycling streams. Residents place trash in the recycle cart to save money or because they aren't motivated to recycle.
  1. From reviewing a report, this can be deceiving at surface level as trucks are weighed in as the recycling route from collecting recyclables, but they may contain significant contamination.
  2. Service providers have no way of knowing the level of contamination until the materials are processed. This unknown factor results in more costs and overall negative impact to the environment due to additional processing, trips from transfer trailers to landfills, petroleum in plastics that could've been recycled but due to significant contamination, are unable to meet the criteria necessary for health, safety and product integrity.
  3. Contamination in recycling carts, which is promoted with a sticker model program - can compromise an entire truckload of recyclables, which typically range from 11,000 to 18,000 pounds.
- e) **Subsidization Imbalance:** Subscription users indirectly subsidize sticker users, particularly when sticker users receive "free" recycling services. Recycling involves significant cost and infrastructure.
- f) **Misuse of Neighbor's Carts:** We frequently see situations where residents share (as a good neighbor gesture) and also misuse each other's carts—placing garbage in recycling carts, for example—which leads to additional contamination.

**d) Operational Inefficiency and Safety Risks:** Sticker programs require drivers to exit the vehicle to manually collect waste, reducing efficiency and increasing safety risks. Residential waste collection is among the top five most dangerous professions in the U.S., and fewer exits from the truck help minimize injuries and deaths. It is not uncommon for a driver to be hit by a car when exiting his truck and especially on a high-traffic street. Inefficiency can also necessitate more trucks on the road, increasing fuel usage and traffic.

### Example:

A recent example is the City of Darien, where LRS took over the residential waste contract in April 2022. Darien previously had a program-model like Downers Grove with what we refer to as a hybrid model. City council members and staff recognized that this outdated hybrid model contributed to poor habits, loose debris, and inconsistent curbside appearances. The presence of various container types and loose bags not only detracted from the neighborhood aesthetics but also posed health and safety risks, attracting unwanted pests.

Initially, we heard some hesitation about transitioning to a cart-based program. However, after implementation, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. If you speak with city staff, you'll likely hear the same sentiment: seniors love the carts and the service. Change can be difficult, but we are confident that any initial reluctance in Downers Grove, especially among seniors, will be replaced with satisfaction once the benefits of the cart system are experienced.

Industry-grade carts are designed with ergonomics in mind. They are typically more durable than retail bins, and features such as flip-top lids, handlebars, and wheel bars make them easier to maneuver—especially for seniors and individuals with limited mobility.



To support the transition in Darien, LRS created and promoted educational videos on YouTube, which we're happy to share upon request.

**2. *Are there features of your proposal that would encourage materials typically put out for Amnesty Day to be re-used or recycled?***

Yes. We can't control what scrapers might take unwanted items for reuse, but we know that our recycling collection vehicles could remove bulk recycling items (i.e. large boxes and other commodities) with a curbside weekly collection program that we offered in our option #4. We know Amnesty Day promotes less landfill diversion as we cannot see what residents place in bags placed out.

**3. *Please explain how the senior discount would be applied as part of your proposal.***

LRS is prepared to offer an updated senior rate and discuss with staff. To minimize the concern of cost impact to homes producing less waste, we will also make 35-gallon carts/rates available to all homeowners as originally outlined as senior only. In short, LRS is prepared to offer a senior rate and include a 35-gallon rate for **non-seniors**. LRS will work with Downers Grove staff to come up with a procedure for verifying seniors. We have infrastructure for many programs and often, it's a fillable, short form and driver's license verification.

**4. *Are there ways that a low-income discount (similar to LIHEAP) could be implemented?***

If Downers Grove currently has a program in place, LRS could use that validation to provide a discounted rate for services.

**5. *Can you share any before and after data from the communities that are implementing an organics recycling (food waste) program (i.e. has there been a measurable decrease in the amount of waste being diverted from landfills)?***

LRS is proud to be a leader—and the first to this market with curbside organics collection. On average, participating households divert approximately 3 gallons of food waste per week. Our program allows food scraps to be commingled with yard waste, which facilitates participation but makes it more difficult to isolate data specific to food waste alone.

Nevertheless, we have observed measurable improvements in diversion rates and reductions in landfill-bound material in communities where this program is in place. Oak Park has seen a 65% increase in participation. One notable secondary benefit has been a decrease in yard waste being improperly placed in trash, further supporting sustainability goals.

When LRS transitions a program from another hauler, we often encounter inaccurate or outdated data, particularly from long-standing providers. For example, previous haulers may have included unincorporated addresses, inflating service volume and, it's very common for us to find a significant disregard for contamination instead of educating residents. We take a gentle but impactful approach to ensure residents understand what is and isn't recyclable, with the cart lid itself being a great resource. When we begin service, we update address lists to reflect only incorporated households, providing a true baseline for measuring future performance.





In the City of Elgin—more than twice the size of Downers Grove—LRS was selected as the new residential provider in January of this year. The city’s dedicated Neighborhood Services Department and staff determined the best way to implement cart delivery would be on a quarterly basis to balance operational capacity for all stakeholders and minimize environmental impact. As of now, more than one-third of Elgin households are participating in the organics program, with thousands of requests coming in. We anticipate that number to double within two years based on the approach.

We also offer a local and robust marketing strategy, which we would tailor to Downers Grove. Residents are most influenced by what they see—such as a neighbor's cart—so we leverage this through timely communications. We’ve seen that the elimination of landscape waste stickers, as done in Elgin, is often well received even when costs increase, as the improved service and simplicity provide clear value.

It's important to note that not all residents have access to home composting, particularly those in multifamily properties or homes with professional landscaping services and inability to use a home compost tool. Our curbside food scrap collection provides an accessible, convenient, and environmentally responsible alternative.

Looking ahead, food scrap recycling is expected to play an even larger role in waste diversion strategies as federal and state regulations increasingly emphasize reducing landfill reliance. There is already proposed legislation at the state level supporting this shift.

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### **Additional Notes on Marketing Organic Carts:**

In response to Commissioner Tully’s question about how we market the opt-in program model for organic carts: LRS utilizes a multi-channel communication strategy to ensure maximum outreach and education.

While printed brochures are available as an option, we also find communications from the Village to be impactful as residents may think of our program brochure as junk mail. We have also found Instagram, YouTube videos, and other social media outlets to be extremely impactful, as well as Village newsletters, local news media and resources such as the Herald or Patch, as well as direct cart communication tools (like QR codes and lid stamps). LRS uses cart hangers as well though most residents will be familiar with QR codes, which we will have on the carts as well, that link directly to our customer portal, where residents can find up-to-date resources.

LRS was one of the first companies to include instructional information stamped directly onto the cart lid, ensuring permanent visibility that won’t degrade in adverse weather.

The recycling and composting market is dynamic, with regular changes to what is accepted based on end-market requirements. For example, some compost facilities may reject items like greasy pizza boxes due to the impact on certified compost quality. We start with the basics—items widely accepted at most facilities—and expand participation and education as infrastructure evolves.

Our commitment to education is continuous and multi-layered, with the goal of helping residents achieve the highest level of landfill diversion possible. We will work closely with Village staff to align messaging, timing, and support tools to ensure a smooth rollout and long-term program success.





Finally, we would like to ensure staff and council understand we are open to including a year-round organics program, with services every other week through the winter months (December through March). It is more sustainable and economically viable using this pickup frequency during the winter as residents don't (usually) fill a cart with organic food scraps every week.



**Groot  
Industries, Inc.**

2500 Landmeier Road  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
Phone: 773/242-1977  
Fax: 773/601-8639  
www.groot.com

**Since 1914**

September 11, 2025

Matt Timmerberg  
Assistant to the Village Manager  
Village of Downers Grove  
850 Curtiss St  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

RE: Update – Downers Grove Solid Waste Contract

Dear Mr. Timmerberg:

Groot Industries appreciates the opportunity to provide the Village with additional information specific to your question and in relation to our proposal. The Village asked the following question:

*Why did Groot choose not to submit on Option 1? Is this an indication that sticker programs will eventually become obsolete?*

We have chosen to no longer offer a sticker only option for various reasons which include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Safety is a concern for our drivers and residents of the communities in which we service. When we provide this type of service, our drivers are more likely to get injured. In addition, when out of the truck cab, safety incidents are more likely to occur with passing walkers/runners, bikers and cars.
- 2) Use of automated collection trucks. Significant upgrades in collection equipment allow for more efficient collection with cost effective rates. A sticker program neutralizes this benefit to us as a hauler regarding efficiency and, to the resident regarding cost.
- 3) We have found in programs that we've transitioned from a sticker program to a fully carted program see a cleaner and more robust recycling program by reduction of contaminants.

#### Additional Information

In the previous meeting, the Board expressed interest in an organics program that would run year round. We feel that our Option 3 program provides the Village with an aggressive proposal that would save the Village approximately \$4.6 million over a 5 year contract when compared to the

Service Locations  
in Elk Grove Village, Chicago, McCook,  
Round Lake Park, Elgin, Aurora

- Waste Collection
- Recycling Processor
- Dumpster Services
- Document Destruction
- Waste Audits
- Demolition Recycling





program that was being discussed by the Board. To take it a step further, we would like to give the Village an apples-to-apples comparison that would expand yard waste and organics collection program year round. Please find this option 3B below:

35 Gallon	\$21.48
65 Gallon	\$25.43
95 Gallon	\$27.18

Senior Discount of 20% off all three cart options

This option would provide for a savings of over \$3.4 million over a 5 year contract when compared to the program being considered by the Board.

Residents would indicate participation for winter yard waste/organics collection. These rates also include the following at NO ADDITIONAL COST.

- Use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Trucks
- An electronic waste recycling program
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- Two bulk Items per week

Find below a list of items accepted and not accepted under our organics program:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
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Dairy Products, Eggs and Shells (no liquids)	Liquids, Grease & Oil
Cake, Cookies, Candy, Nuts & Other Sweets	Glass or Metals
Meat, Poultry, Fish Products (including bones)	Animal/Human Waste
Pasta, Break, Cereals, Rice & Similar Products	Diapers, Pet Litter & Waste
Coffee Grounds/Filters & Tea Bags	Wood, Lumber, or Construction Materials
Food Soiled Paper and Cardboard	Rocks, Concrete & Bricks
Grass Clippings & Yard Waste	Cartons & Glossy Paper Containers
Soiled Tissues, Napkins, Paper Towels (unless used with chemicals/cleaning supplies)	Paper Cups

Although these rates do not currently include a household hazardous waste collection program, Groot would entertain a program that would provide service on an a la carte basis.

We look forward to a long and mutually rewarding relationship with the Village of Downers Grove.

Sincerely,



Josh Molnar  
Municipal Manager  
Groot Industries, Inc



## BACKGROUND

The Village of Downers Grove contracts for solid waste collection and disposal with Republic Services, which includes refuse, recycling, and yard waste. Republic has been the Village’s long-standing provider whose current three-year contract with the Village expires on March 31, 2026.

The current contract serves approximately 15,000 households, consisting primarily of single family homes and provides residents with the option of either renting a refuse and recycling cart, or purchasing disposal stickers to use with their own refuse and recycling containers. A table showing the breakdown of households by type of service options selected appears below.

Program Type	# of Households	% of Total Households
35 Gallon Cart	1,262	8.41%
65 Gallon Cart	5,198	34.65%
95 Gallon Cart	2,941	19.61%
<b>Subtotal Cart</b>	<b>9,401</b>	<b>62.67%</b>
Sticker	5,599	37.33%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

A request for proposal (RFP) process was issued on June 6, 2025 with a response deadline of August 1, 2025, following [Village Council approval](#) of the RFP. The Village received proposals from five vendors. The staff report summarizing the proposals includes the following information to assist with the review and selection process:

### Sections of Staff Report

1. Options Summary
2. Table of Options by Vendor with Staff Recommendations and Commentary
- 3a-c. Cost Comparison by Option
4. Household Cost Impact Analysis - Comparison to Current Costs
5. Attributes of Other Key Features of Solid Waste Proposals

### Attachments

6. Memo re: Alignment with Environmental Sustainability Plan
7. Minutes of July 28, 2025 Environmental Concerns Commission Meeting
8. Clarifying Questions and Responses from Vendors
9. Questions and Answers from Staff

## 1. Options Summary

The RFP requested that vendors submit proposals for any or all of three service plan options for the Village to evaluate and choose from. Any modifications from the Village's current program are italicized.

### Option 1 – Maintain the Village's Current Program (Cart or Sticker)

- Rent a 35, 65, or 95 gallon refuse cart and receive a separate cart for recycling.
- Use privately-owned containers and purchase disposal stickers to attach to their refuse container; Use a private-owned container for recycling.
- Yard waste/compost can be disposed of by attaching a disposal sticker to a personal 35 gallon bin or a yard waste bag. Residents that rent a refuse cart can also rent a yard waste cart for an additional fee.
- Large Items, Bulk Items, and White Goods can be disposed of with the appropriate number of disposal stickers.

### Option 2 – Cart Rental Only w/Senior Discount

- Rent a 35, 65, or 95 gallon refuse cart with a recycling cart of the same size at no additional cost
- *All residents would receive a refuse and recycling cart under this option*
- *A senior discount is provided for qualifying residents renting the 35-gallon refuse cart*
- Yard waste/compost can be disposed of by attaching a disposal sticker to a personal 35 gallon bin or a yard waste bag. Residents that rent a refuse cart can also rent a yard waste cart for an additional fee. Large items, bulk items, and white goods can be disposed of with the appropriate number of disposal stickers.

### Option 3 – Enhanced Service Options

- Rent a 35, 65, or 95 Gallon Refuse Cart with a Recycling Cart of the same size at no additional cost
- *All residents would receive a refuse and recycling cart under this option*
- *A Senior Discount is provided for qualifying residents renting the 35 Gallon Refuse Cart*
- Yard waste/compost can be disposed of by attaching a disposal sticker to a personal 35 gallon bin or a yard waste bag. Residents that rent a refuse cart can also rent a yard waste cart for an additional fee.
- *Leaf pickup with no stickers required provided from the third week of October through the second week of December.*
- *Electronic Waste pickup offered for residents*
- Large items, bulk items, and white goods can be disposed of with the appropriate number of disposal stickers.

## 2. Table of Options by Vendor with Staff Recommendations and Commentary

The following table includes the options available for consideration by vendor. Further information related to each lettered box explaining the color coding appears below the table.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4 *
Republic Svcs	A	B	C	
LRS	D	E	F	G
Groot	H	I	J	
S.B.C.	K	L	M	
Waste Mgmt	N	O	P	

\* Option 4 includes an alternate proposal that only LRS chose to submit, but was not referenced in the RFP.

	= Staff identified as viable vendors/options based on information submitted
	= Staff identified concerns with these options - related to the transition process during review
	= Staff does not recommend
	= Vendor did not submit on this option

### Republic Services

A - C. Staff has determined that all of these options are viable.

### LRS

D. Staff does not recommend this option due to the \$7.00 recycling charge applied to all households. It causes this option to be the most costly for all users under Option 1 and creates an additional burden for sticker users, who will have to pay the monthly fee, create an account, and purchase stickers.

E-G. Staff has determined that all of these options are viable.

### Groot

H. Groot did not submit on option 1.

I-J. Staff has determined that all of these options are viable.

### S.B.C.

K-M. Staff has concerns regarding the proposal submitted by S.B.C. related to the proposed transition process. In a response to Village questions, the vendor requested a definitive answer on their selection by October 1, if possible. This is because their order for new trucks expires after this date, although they did indicate that rental trucks would be available until

new trucks are delivered and in service. Other vendors that provided a specific date (LRS and Groot) both identified December 1, 2025 as the date by which a contract would need to be finalized.

S.B.C. also provided detail in their response indicating a preferred timeline with the distribution of carts beginning on February 16, 2025 (the current contract expires on March 31) and a default distribution to all households of 95-gallon refuse carts and 65-gallon recycling carts. Although these details could potentially be modified during the negotiation process, staff has concerns that:

- 1) This transition process is not aligned with a Village approach that has emphasized customer choice for cart sizes;
- 2) The default refuse cart selection (95-gallon) is not aligned with the Village’s environmental sustainability goals; and
- 3) The 6-week transition plan prior to the expiration of the current contract has the potential to create confusion among residents served by the contract and requires extensive coordination with Republic Services, during this 6-week period when the contracts overlap.

See Section 8: Clarifying questions and responses from vendors for full response from S.B.C.

### **Waste Management**

N. Waste Management did not submit on option 1.

O-P. Staff does not recommend consideration of this vendor due to the cost for services relative to the other more competitive proposals.

<b>3a. Cost Comparison by Option - Option 1</b> <b>Continue Current Village Program</b>						
This continues the Village’s current program which allows residents to rent a refuse cart for a monthly charge with a recycling cart included or use a personal refuse cart with a sticker each week for collection, residents using stickers are responsible for providing their own recycling cart. Stickers are required for everyone for bulk items and yard waste (unless renting a yard waste cart).						
	Current	S.B.C.	Republic	LRS	Groot	WM
Refuse Cart Prices (Monthly)						
35 Gal	\$20.46	\$19.50	\$22.50	\$27.00	N/A	N/A
<b>65 Gal</b>	<b>\$23.28</b>	<b>\$21.50</b>	<b>\$24.50</b>	<b>\$29.00</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
95 Gal	\$30.47	\$26.50	\$28.50	\$31.50	N/A	N/A



Annual Inc	-	3%	4%	4%	N/A	N/A
Stickers	\$4.55	\$3.50	\$4.25	\$4.00	N/A	N/A
Recycling Fee	-	N/A	N/A	\$7.00	N/A	N/A
Yard Waste Cart Prices (Monthly)						
35 Gal	\$20.46	\$6.00	\$22.00	\$12.50	N/A	N/A
65 Gal	\$23.28	\$8.00	\$23.75	\$12.50	N/A	N/A
95 Gal	\$30.47	\$10.00	\$28.00	\$12.50	N/A	N/A

- S.B.C. would charge 1 sticker per bulk item and white goods would be free.
- Republic would charge 1 sticker per bulk item and 8 stickers for white goods.
- LRS would charge a \$7 monthly fee for recycling to all users (cart pricing above includes the recycling fee).
- Under Option 1, LRS would only offer 35 gallon refuse/recycle carts to seniors.
- LRS would charge 2 stickers per bulk item and 10 stickers for white goods.

### 3b. Cost Comparison by Option - **Option 2** All Carts Basic

All residents would be provided with a refuse and recycling cart. Residents would not be allowed to use stickers for weekly refuse. Stickers would still be required for bulk items and yard waste (unless renting a yard waste cart).

	Current	Groot	S.B.C.	Republic	LRS	WM
Refuse Cart Prices (Monthly)						
35 Gal	\$20.46	\$18.48	\$18.00	\$19.50	\$21.38	N/A
<b>65 Gal</b>	<b>\$23.28</b>	<b>\$19.73</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>	<b>\$22.50</b>	<b>\$23.75</b>	<b>\$26.00</b>
95 Gal	\$30.47	\$20.98	\$25.00	\$25.50	\$25.50	\$30.00
Annual Inc	-	5%	3%	4%	4%	5%
Stickers	\$4.55	\$3.85	\$3.50	\$4.00	\$3.55	\$4.75
Senior Disc.	-	\$16.78	-	\$14.63	-	\$2.00 Disc.
Yard Waste Cart Prices (Monthly)						
35 Gal	\$20.46	N/A	\$6.00	\$19.50	\$12.50	N/A
65 Gal	\$23.28	\$15.00	\$8.00	\$22.50	\$12.50	N/A
95 Gal	\$30.47	\$15.00	\$10.00	\$25.50	\$12.50	\$25.70

- All vendors include no additional cost for recycling as part of refuse service.
- Groot would charge 1 sticker per bulk item and a flat fee of \$50.00 per white good.
- S.B.C. would charge 1 sticker per bulk item and white goods would be free.
- Republic would charge 1 sticker per bulk item and 8 stickers for white goods.
- Under Option 2, LRS would only offer 35 gallon refuse/recycle carts to seniors.
- Waste Management would charge 1 sticker per bulk item and a flat fee of \$50.00 per white good.

### 3c. Cost Comparison by Option - **Option 3** All Carts with Free Yard Waste Pickup

All residents would be provided a refuse and recycling cart. Residents would not be allowed to use stickers for weekly refuse. Stickers would still be required for bulk items and yard waste under some proposals, some proposed including the yard waste cart with the monthly refuse cart price. Residents would also receive no add'l cost yard waste pickup from mid-October through mid-December. Vendors also offered electronics and household hazardous waste pickup under this option that the Village could choose to opt-in if it chose for an additional cost.

	Current	S.B.C.	Groot	LRS	Republic	LRS Opt 4	WM
Refuse Cart Prices (Monthly)							
35 Gal	\$20.46	\$19.00	\$21.48	\$21.38	\$21.50	\$24.98	N/A
<b>65 Gal</b>	<b>\$23.28</b>	<b>\$21.00</b>	<b>\$22.73</b>	<b>\$23.75</b>	<b>\$24.25</b>	<b>\$27.75</b>	<b>\$28.88</b>
95 Gal	\$30.47	\$26.00	\$23.98	\$25.50	\$28.50	\$29.75	\$32.88
Annual Inc	-	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Stickers	\$4.55	\$3.50	\$3.85	\$3.55	\$4.00	N/A	\$4.75
Senior Disc.	-	-	\$19.18	-	\$16.13	-	\$2.00 Disc.
Yard Waste Cart Prices (Monthly)							
35 Gal	\$20.46	\$6.00	Inc	\$12.50	\$19.50	Inc	N/A
65 Gal	\$23.28	\$8.00	Inc	\$12.50	\$22.50	Inc	N/A
95 Gal	\$30.47	\$10.00	Inc	\$12.50	\$25.50	Inc	\$25.70

- S.B.C. would charge 1 sticker per bulk item and white goods would be free.
- Groot includes the yard waste cart as part of the refuse cart cost.
- LRS offered an Option 4 alternative that includes the refuse, recycling, yard waste/compost (opt-in), and residents can put out 2 bulk items each week with no stickers required.
- Under Option 3 LRS would only offer 35 gallon refuse/recycle carts to seniors.
- Republic would charge 1 sticker per bulk item and 8 stickers for white goods.
- Waste Management would charge 1 sticker per bulk item and a flat fee of \$50.00 per white good.

#### 4. Household Cost Impact Analysis - Comparison to Current Costs

The table below shows a representation of different users in the Village and how those users' costs would change under the various proposals. Option 2 and 3 do not have an only sticker option, so the price comparison shows the difference between current sticker usage and cart rental costs if one of those options was selected. Numbers in the red reflect more substantial increases in a household's monthly cost compared to similar usage under the current program. Numbers in green reflect more substantial decreases compared to the current program if a user continued their current usage.

User Type **	Option 1 Current Program			Option 2					Option 3					
	SBC	Repub	LRS	Groot	SBC	Repub	LRS*	WM	SBC	Groot	LRS*	Repub	LRS* Opt 4	WM
Low Vol. HH	-\$2	-\$1	\$6	\$9	\$9	\$10	\$15	\$17	\$10	\$12	\$15	\$12	\$19	\$20
Low Vol. Sr. HH	-\$2	-\$1	\$6	\$8	\$9	\$6	\$12	\$15	\$10	\$10	\$12	\$7	\$16	\$18
Sticker Only HH	-\$4	-\$1	\$5	\$2	\$2	\$4	\$6	\$8	\$3	\$5	\$6	\$6	\$10	\$11
Avg. Cart HH	-\$4	\$1	\$5	-\$5	-\$5	-\$2	-\$2	\$3	-\$4	-\$2	-\$2	\$0	-\$5	\$6
High Vol. Cart HH	-\$24	-\$4	-\$21	-\$25	-\$26	-\$10	-\$23	-\$16	-\$25	-\$37	-\$23	-\$7	-\$31	-\$13

\*LRS does not offer 35 gal carts to all residents – price comparison is 65 gal cart option

#### \*\* Description of User Types

- **Low Volume Household (HH)** - Currently uses 2 stickers/month, chooses a 35-gallon cart (if available) under options 2 and 3
- **Low Volume Senior HH** - A senior household that currently uses 2 stickers/month, chooses a 35-gallon cart (if available) under options 2 and 3. Option 1 pricing reflects 2 stickers/month.
- **Sticker Only HH** - Currently uses 4 stickers/month, chooses a 65-gallon cart under options 2 and 3
- **Average Cart HH** - Currently uses a 65 gal. cart + 2 stickers/month, which will continue under the new contract
- **High Volume Cart HH** - Currently uses a 95 gal. refuse cart and 95 gal. yard waste cart, which will continue under the new contract.

## 5. Attributes of Other Key Features of Solid Waste Proposals

Vendor	Electronics & Hazardous Waste	Amnesty/Cleanup Day
<b>Republic Services</b>	Would charge \$2.50 per household for hazardous waste pickup and a varying amount of stickers depending on the electronics item.	Proposed a cost of \$55/hr and \$46/ton for the first year with the \$/hr remaining the same each year and the \$/ton increasing by \$1 per year.
<b>LRS</b>	Each household would be charged \$1.70 per month to offer both electronics and household hazardous waste. LRS is also open to only one program at a lesser cost to be discussed.	Proposed a cost of \$175/hr and \$60/ton for Year 1 with costs increasing each year of the contract. No cost was proposed in Option 4 as LRS would not offer this service under Option 4.
<b>Groot</b>	Each resident has the opportunity to recycle up to 4 electronic items twice a year at no additional charge. Groot did not propose a hazardous waste program but indicated they are open to discussing a possible program.	Included an annual amnesty day in their plan pricing for all options at no additional cost.
<b>S.B.C.</b>	Offered both electronics and household hazardous waste at no additional cost.	Included an annual amnesty day costs in their plan pricing for all options at no additional cost.
<b>Waste Management</b>	Cost for electronics and household hazardous waste would be dependent on the item, they would charge the resident on a per pickup basis.	Included an annual amnesty day in their plan pricing at no additional cost.

## ATTACHMENTS

Memo regarding Alignment with Environmental Sustainability Plan  
 Minutes of July 28, 2025 Environmental Concerns Commission Meeting  
 Clarifying Questions and Responses from Vendors  
 Questions and Answers from Staff

## 1\mw\CAS.25\Solid Waste Negot-MOT

# MEMO

**To:** Village Council

**From:** Jason Michnick, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator

**Date:** September 9, 2025

**Re:** Solid Waste Contract - Alignment with Environmental Sustainability Plan

## Introduction

The Village's Environmental Sustainability Plan (ESP) includes the goal of reducing the amount of waste collected in Downers Grove and diverting waste from landfills through improved recycling and composting efforts. How solid waste services are provided and priced can directly support this goal. Through the RFP process, the Village sought multiple options for providing enhanced collection services targeting difficult to dispose items such as electronics and household hazardous waste, as well as improving options for diverting food waste from landfills, which are estimated to be about 25% of residential refuse. The RFP also requested information related to vendor's operations in an effort to identify those that share similar goals and values for environmental stewardship.

## Key Takeaways

Overall, the Village has multiple options and opportunities that could advance the goals of diverting waste from landfills and reducing the environmental impacts of this critical contracted service. There was no single combination of vendor, service package, and pricing structure that stood out as providing all the best attributes relative to achieving the goals of the ESP. In addition to a detailed analysis of specific proposal elements, the following key takeaways should be considered in the evaluation of options provided.

1. Maintaining a sticker-based pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) program (Option 1) was identified as a top priority by the Environmental Concerns Commission (ECC). Only three vendors (Republic, LRS, and SBC) included this service package in their proposals.
2. The pricing structure for Option 2 and Option 3 (All-Cart Programs) from all vendors lacks a disincentive for producing more waste (i.e., minimal cost differences and the cost per gallon of larger carts is lower than smaller carts)
3. When comparing each vendor's overall efforts to reduce environmental impacts throughout their operations, LRS was a leader in several areas, including state-of-the-art material recovery facilities, while also being able to directly link those efforts to the proposed services provided to Downers Grove residents.

4. Improving composting practices in the community has the potential to advance the ESP waste related goals most significantly. There were multiple approaches to providing this service that ranged from a three-cart inclusive pricing package to stand-alone food-scrap-only curbside pick up services.

Below is a more detailed description and analysis of specific elements of the proposals that were received.

## Recycling

The collection and processing of materials that are considered recyclable is a key function of the Village’s solid waste services. All vendors proposed a single-stream recycling program which allows residents to place certain items in a separate recycling bin. These items are collected by a dedicated truck and ultimately taken to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) where they are separated by their materials. These sorted materials are then sold and processed through various methods to turn them back into raw materials. A MRF’s sorting technology and the market for a specific material can dictate what items a resident can place in a recycling bin and the effective recycling rate of a program.

All vendors generally use the process described above, but vary in the technology available at the MRF that is used. Groot owns its own MRF with advanced equipment such as optical sorters. LRS owns multiple MRF’s in the region and proposes to use the Heartland MRF and their recently constructed Exchange MRF. These have advanced equipment and the Exchange MRF is certified by the Recycling Certification Institute. SBC contracts with LRS and WM owned MRF’s and proposes to primarily use the LRS Heartland MRF. Republic and WM both propose to use the WM-owned Hodgkins MRF. Below is a list of the materials that each vendor listed as acceptable in their single-stream recycling:

	<b>Groot</b>	<b>LRS</b>	<b>SBC</b>	<b>Republic</b>	<b>WM</b>
Glass	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Aluminum	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tin and Metal Cans	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cardboard & Paper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newspaper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



	<b>Groot</b>	<b>LRS</b>	<b>SBC</b>	<b>Republic</b>	<b>WM</b>
Plastics 1-5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Only 1, 2, 5	Only 1, 2, 5
Plastics 6 (styrofoam)					
Plastics 7 (misc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Aseptic Packaging	Yes	Yes			
Coated cartons (e.g. tetra pak)	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Dry Cell Batteries		Yes			
All proposed MRFs use some form of optical sorting technology					

### Pricing and Plan Structures

Pricing can be an effective tool for reducing waste if there are pricing incentives for producing less waste and disincentives for high waste. A pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) program is a key strategy for structuring this type of incentive/disincentive. A sticker-based PAYT program provides the most incentive to reduce waste, especially for residents that do not require weekly service. Below are the vendors that provided pricing options for maintaining a sticker-based PAYT program. No vendor submitted a proposal that included the use of RFID or other technology for a PAYT program.

<b>Groot</b>	<b>LRS</b>	<b>SBC</b>	<b>Republic</b>	<b>WM</b>
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

All-cart programs that have different prices for different size carts use a volume-based approach to PAYT, but the price differences between cart sizes is often insignificant and ineffective at providing a disincentive for producing more waste. All vendors propose pricing that has lower marginal costs by volume, with the cost per gallon for a 95 gallon cart being about half the cost per gallon for a 35 gallon cart.

	<b>Groot</b>	<b>LRS*</b>	<b>SBC**</b>	<b>Republic</b>	<b>WM</b>
Price difference between 35 and 95 gallon cart	\$2.50	\$4.12 - \$4.77	\$7	\$6 - \$7	Does not provide 35 gallon cart option

\* LRS only offers a 35 gallon can to seniors  
 \*\* SBC defaults to residents receiving a 95 gallon cart and would require residents to request smaller carts

## Organics Recycling (Composting)

Composting refers to the process of organics recycling in which organic materials are broken down through natural processes, resulting in a rich organic material that can be added to soil. Per Illinois law (415 ILCS 5/22.22), yard waste cannot be disposed of in a landfill. Waste haulers collect and process yard waste through a separate waste stream than refuse. Yard waste is collected and brought to a composting facility that specializes in managing the composting process.

The “composting program” requested in the RFP specifically requested that vendors provide an option for residents to include food scrap organics in their composting waste stream (yard waste). It is estimated that a quarter of residential refuse is compostable. Since food scraps are also organic and break down through the same process as yard waste, waste haulers and communities have introduced the option of including food scraps with yard waste as a way to meet goals related to reducing tonnage of material taken to landfills. Because of the scale of the composting operations, certain organic waste that cannot be composted in a traditional home compost pile/bin are able to break down in an industrial composting operation (i.e. meat, dairy, bones, greasy pizza boxes, etc.)

Each of the proposals agreed to allow for food scraps to be included with yard waste with some minor variations in approach to providing this service and the types of things that can be compostable. Below is a table that summarizes the types of organics and materials that they will accept through yard waste collection.

Vendor	Vegetables and Fruit	Breads and Grains	Cheese/Dairy & Meat	Paper products (coffee filters, uncoated paper plates, pizza boxes)	BPI Certified Compostable Plastics
<b>Groot</b>	Yes	Yes			
<b>LRS</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes (no bones)	Yes (some restrictions)	
<b>SBC</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<b>Republic</b>	Yes	Yes	(only Urban Canopy)	(only Urban Canopy)	(only Urban Canopy)

<b>WM</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<b>WasteNot</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

In addition to some variation in the materials collected, there was also some minor variation in approaches to providing this service. Only Republic offered a year-round strategy to implement an organics program through a third-party vendor during the winter when it is likely that food scraps would freeze in organics carts and make collection difficult. LRS stated they are willing to discuss strategies for a year-round program but did not commit to one. All other vendors will only collect organics from April to December.

The cost of implementing a “compost program” is also a major consideration for achieving the intended goals of diverting compostable waste from landfills. Depending on the option and vendor, the cost for residents varies. Below is a summary of the cost of participating in a “compost program” through a rented cart.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4 (LRS)
Groot	NA	\$15 cart	No additional cost	
LRS	\$12.50 cart \$4 bag	\$12.50 cart \$3.55 bag	\$12.50 cart \$3.55 bag	No additional cost
SBC	\$6 - \$10 cart	\$6 - \$10 cart	\$6 - \$10 cart	
Republic	\$22 - \$28 cart \$4.25 bag	\$19.50 - \$25.50 cart \$4 bag	\$19.50 - \$25.50 cart \$4 bag \$40/mo for winter Urban Canopy program	
WM		\$25.70 cart	\$25.70 cart	
WasteNot Inc.	Stand alone opt in service: \$18/mo (one bucket every two weeks) \$30/mo (one bucket weekly) \$172/mo (64 gallon cart week) ← for apartment buildings			
Only LRS and Republic allow residents to dispose of food scraps in a stickered yard waste bag				

The Village also received a proposal from WasteNot Inc. to provide a stand alone opt-in food-scrap “compost program.” Residents interested in participating would receive a 5-

gallon compost bucket that is swapped out through a curbside collection program. Collection can occur weekly or every two weeks at the resident's choice. WasteNot Inc. utilizes an electric fleet of vehicles for collection. Participating residents are also eligible to receive finished compost for their own use, if desired. WasteNot Inc. also collects more materials than any of the other vendors that submitted proposals. The Village would have to restructure its scavenger licenses to allow for WasteNot Inc. to offer this service to residents.

## Organizational Sustainability Efforts

Proposals were also evaluated to identify what efforts each vendor is making to reduce the environmental impact of their own operations. Shared understanding and goals to reduce environmental impacts can benefit an important partnership between the Village and its contracted waste hauler. A vendor's efforts may also support the Village's ability to track progress towards ESP goals. Below is a comparison of various sustainability initiatives that each vendor identified in their proposal.

	<b>Groot</b>	<b>LRS</b>	<b>SBC</b>	<b>Republic</b>	<b>WM</b>
Emissions Reduction Goal		Yes		Yes	Yes
CNG Fleet	Yes	Yes		Yes*	Yes
Fleet Electification	Yes**	Yes*		Yes*	
Methane Capture/Use at Landfills	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Advanced Plastic Recycling				Yes*	
Proactive Education and Outreach	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
<p>*Proposal discussed program or effort that was regional/national but not directly related to proposed services in Downers Grove</p> <p>**Groot worked with Lion Electric to develop an EV truck in 2020</p>					

## Education and Outreach

A key component of achieving the ESP goals of diverting waste rely on residents being well informed about how to properly dispose of various items. Proper disposal limits contamination of recycling and organic waste that can inadvertently lead to more ending up in landfills. The Village will play a major role in promoting awareness, but an active partnership with a vendor can supplement and strengthen the overall effort. Below is a summary of the education and outreach elements that each vendor highlighted in their proposal.

	<b>Groot</b>	<b>LRS</b>	<b>SBC</b>	<b>Republic</b>	<b>WM</b>
Recycling Cart Information Stickers		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Website Information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Proprietary App	Yes			Yes	Yes
Recycling Coach Support		Yes			
Educational Materials and Videos		Yes		Yes	Yes
Special Event or Farmers Market Participation				Yes	

## Other Sustainability Elements or Items Identified by ECC

<b>Amnesty Day</b>	The ECC recommends the discontinuation of Amnesty Day in lieu of using funds for recycling events and/or drop off locations.
<b>Leaf Pick Up</b>	The ECC does not recommend including free leaf pick up for residents as it would disincentivize residents from leaving portions of fallen leaves that are beneficial for insects and soil health.
<b>E-Waste &amp; Household Hazardous Waste</b>	The approach to this service should limit the necessity of additional trucks and vehicle miles traveled as it might result in more emissions that negate the benefit of the service.

**Village of Downers Grove  
Environmental Concerns Commission**

Civic Center  
850 Curtiss Street  
July 28, 2025  
Meeting Minutes

Chair Pelloso called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm and asked for a roll call.

Commissioner	Present	Absent
P. Bolton	x	
L. Dantoft		x
L. Donnelly		x
K. Lerner	x	
B. Johnson	x	
L. Pelloso	x	
Also present: Jason Michnick, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator, Village of Downers Grove		

Chair Pelloso declared a quorum present.

**Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes from the April 28, 2024 meeting was made by K Lerner.  
Seconded by P. Bolton. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Public Comment - Items not pertaining to the agenda**

None.

**New Business**

**Solid Waste RFP**

Staff provided the commission with an overview of an RFP for solid waste services that is currently open. The RFP was presented to the Village Council in May and released in June.

During their discussion, Council stated a desire to have the commission provide input into the process to ensure alignment with the Environmental Sustainability Plan. Responses are due on August 1 and it is anticipated that a recommendation will be provided to Council in September. The ECC is being asked to consider strategies and priorities that staff can use in the evaluation process and presenting the proposal responses to Council.

The RFP includes a description of the services being offered by Republic through the Village's current contract. This includes an option for residents to use stickers as a pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) strategy, or rent a cart that is billed quarterly. The RFP requests that firms provide pricing for three alternative service packages:

- Option 1: Current Program
- Option 2: All-Cart Program with Senior Discount
- Option 3: All-Cart Program with Enhanced Services

Option 2 and 3 may also include a PAYT pricing strategy that would utilize technology like RFID chips or GPS to bill customers. Option 3 would include household hazardous waste, e-waste, and year round yard waste collection. The RFP also includes a series of questions in the Statement of Qualifications around waste streams, recycling contamination, and efforts to reduce emissions.

The commission also reviewed the elements of the Environmental Sustainability Plan directly related to solid waste services. Following this review, the commission discussed the following topics related to the RFP:

#### *Pay-as-You-Throw (PAYT)*

The commission felt that maintaining a PAYT program was the most important element of evaluating RFP responses. This approach to providing solid waste services provides the most incentive for households not to dispose of garbage every week. The commission was also intrigued by the electronic approach to stickers using an RFID chip in a cart, similar to what Wheaton has implemented. If this was an option, it would be important to maintain paper billing options for seniors.

#### *Pricing Structure*

Pricing can be an effective tool for creating an incentive/disincentive and the commission felt that larger carts should be priced much higher than smaller carts, such as a 95 gallon cart being twice as much as a 35 gallon cart. However, there was some concern raised about whether there was overlap between lower-income households and higher amounts of waste. The Village should be aware that higher prices may impact low-income households as garbage is a bill that cannot be avoided easily.

#### *Year-Round Composting*

The commission supported moving forward with some approach to year round food waste collection. While commingling yard waste and food scraps is beneficial for residents that produce yard waste, it might not benefit all residents. A stand alone food scrap collection program would be easier to use and could offer residents a less frequent pick up schedule than weekly. However, consideration should be given to whether it would increase the amount of miles traveled by collection trucks, potentially increasing emissions and impacts on roads.

#### *Leaf Pick Up*

The commission does not recommend a free leaf pick up program. This service would only benefit residents that dispose of leaves curbside, forcing others to subsidize the cost. It also disincentivizes residents from composting leaves and “leaving leaves” for insects and other animals that benefit from coverage during winter months.

#### *Amnesty Day*

The commission does not recommend continuing with an amnesty day program, though they understand its value. Instead, alternatives such as drop off locations and recycling events should be developed. A recommendation to use the cost of an amnesty day towards recycling events, such as the Greener grove event in October.

#### *E-Waste and Household Hazardous Waste*

The commission raised concerns about the implementation of such a program, especially whether it would result in an additional truck being needed for limited use of the program. Rather than offering the service as one where residents could place these items out whenever they want, it should be limited to certain days. The Village should weigh the net benefit versus impacts of additional miles traveled. Alternatively, a drop off location similar to the Naperville facility could be investigated or these services could be provided at recycling events.

#### *Waste Streams & Material Recovery*

The commission felt that transparency in waste streams and recycling would be valuable if they were verifiable. While it is important to try to limit environmental impacts of downstream waste processes, the primary objective of the RFP process should be selecting a program that incentivizes waste reduction within households. If two proposals are similar in scope and price, this should be used as a factor that differentiates them.

#### *Company Sustainability Efforts*

The commission also supported using company sustainability efforts, such as reducing emissions and environmental impacts of their operations, as a secondary factor in the evaluation process. The primary evaluation should be on how service implementation would work to reduce household waste and divert waste from landfills starting curbside.



### *Styrofoam*

The commission also raised the desire to see a solution for styrofoam recycling. Most single stream recycling operations do not accept styrofoam. Staff indicated that there are potential third-party solutions outside of the RFP process, if no proposal includes a solution for styrofoam.

### *Performance Measures*

The commission identified a number of performance measures that would be desirable from an environmental perspectives. Contaminations rates in recycling would be useful for informing messaging and education efforts. Effective recycling rates would also a useful measure to understand how much from recycling collection is actually recovered versus what ends up in a landfill. The commission would also like the chosen vendor to submit reports on the miles driven by trucks during collection.

### *Next Steps*

Village staff will need to review the RFP responses before next steps are known. There may be a single proposal that is a clear winner or multiple proposals that offer similar service levels and pricing. Staff will keep the commission informed if there is a need for further evaluation of the proposals at a future meeting.

### **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by P. Bolton. Seconded by K. Lerner. The motion to adjourn was carried on a voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 7:38pm.

## 8. Clarifying Questions and Responses from Vendors

### Republic

**1. Regarding the proposed waste audits described on page 46, how will Republic ensure accurate composition data while utilizing the WM Hodgkins material recovery facility?**

See separate response dated August 20, 2025

### S.B.C.

**Email Questions and Responses from September 3, 2025:**

**In preparation for the Village Council meeting on September 9, we would like to clarify some information related to S.B.C.'s proposal. In your proposal, it is indicated that S.B.C. contracts with LRS and all recyclable materials collected in Downers Grove would be processed at the Heartland Material Recovery Facility (MRF). Below are three questions related to this specific part of S.B.C.'s proposal:**

- 1. Are all materials processed the same way at this facility or are there any differences due to it being a contracted service?**

Heartland facility has separate areas for MSW and Recycling. When the driver pulls on to the scale he's to tell the director what material is inside the truck and then is directed to the proper area for dumping. The material is all categorized and separated. The material is processed the same way for all Recycling. Trash and Recycling are never processed together and always kept separate.

- 2. Would S.B.C. be able to provide any waste audit data related to the types of materials being collected in Downers Grove and processed at the Heartland MRF?**

Yes, We provide LEED reports and also full tonnage reports on all material that goes to this facility and also other facilities we dump at for both materials.

- 3. What is the term of S.B.C.'s agreement with LRS and is there any potential that a different MRF would be used at any point in the next six years?**

We currently have a PO with LRS for all locations across the Chicago land area. The PO does renew yearly as rates change. These POs are always yearly and start at the 1st of each year. We also have a PO with Wm (Waste Management) for all Chicago land area facilities as well. If things were to change in the term of the six years we have Wm as a second facility to dump all materiel located at 6120 River Rd Hodgkins, IL 60525. Our third option would be Loop Recycling located at 301 W Lake St Northlake, IL 60164.

### **Email Questions and Responses from August 19, 2025:**

Thank you for the update and questions regarding the RFP submitted by S.B.C.

First, Our Family here at S.B.C. would be honored to be chosen as the new waste and recycling hauler for Downers Grove and our promise would to provide the best possible service to the Village and its residents. We strongly recommend contacting our municipal references for feedback on our service.

Please see detailed answers to your questions below

**1. In order to allow for the transition process described in the proposal to be successfully completed, when is the latest possible date when your company would need to have the contract approved?**

We currently hold a Purchase order for 10 additional brand new trucks that's Valid till 9-15-25. That purchase order does expire after the 15th of September. The Purchase order does guarantee we would have all trucks ready before April 1st of 2026. We can extend it to October 1st and will do so out of good faith. Rental trucks are always available at any time. We prefer not to go this route and ask for a definitive answer by October 1st if possible.

Our cart manufacturer, Sierra Carts, is located in Lake Forest Illinois and can have all carts completed and manufactured for February 1st delivery to S.B.C. with notice of November 1st at the latest.

**Please also describe what the negative impacts would be of not completing a contract by that date.**

We assure the Village, staff, and its residents this would not be the case. We can assure all residents will have carts by the start date of the contract. The best and most responsible way is to deliver default carts. Each home would receive 1- 95 trash and 1- 65 recycling. This would assure every home has carts before contract start date. We then would allow residents to call or email in swaps for smaller sizes. This service would be complimentary for the 1st year of the agreement. Our plan is the below time line.

- February 16th start deploying carts on Monday routes. Working Monday through Saturday on delivery's for all weeks below.
- February 23rd start deploying carts on Tuesday routes.
- March 2nd start deploying carts on Wednesday routes.

- March 9th start deploying carts on Thursday routes.
- March 16th start deploying carts on Friday routes.
- March 23rd. Clean up any missed deliveries and start complimentary swaps for smaller carts or additional carts.
- April 1st service start day for Wednesday residents.

During this time as we are deploying carts we will work with republic services and allow them to service S.B.C. carts. As we deploy Republic would come in and remove carts a week after S.B.C. delivers. S.B.C. will provide a map every night of deployment updating the Village and also Republic of what areas are completed. With past experience Republic normally will hire a 3rd party to remove the carts, this makes it very easy for communication. As we deliver the carts they follow and remove. We would recommend having a separate email chain with all parties involved including the Village Staff for daily updates. This will also help the Village communicate through Social media and website posts to its residents. Please note as Republic removes their carts they service S.B.C. carts during the transition period. We would give full authorization for this service allowing them to have time to make sure all carts are removed by April 1st also not impacting the residents as much as possible.

**2. Are customers who do not rent an organics cart permitted to dispose of food scraps in yard waste bags combined with yard waste?**

Residents are not permitted to disposing of food scrapes in yard waste bags. We encourage food waste to be kept out of the landfill as much as possible and will be accepted in personal yard waste carts, and also brown craft bags.

Please let me know if there is any additional questions and if you would like to schedule a zoom call or in person meeting to discuss in more detail. Here at S.B.C. we have team who have worked for Republic, LRS, and also WM for multiple years some old Downers Grove drivers who know the community well! But came to S.B.C. on our goals and values. We have built a strong leadership group at S.B.C. to assure the Village of Downers Grove has its new partnership!

## **Waste Management**

### **Email Questions and Responses from August 21, 2025:**

**1. In order to allow for the transition process described in the proposal to be successfully completed, when is the latest possible date when your company would need to have the contract approved? Please also describe what the negative impacts would be of not completing a contract by that date.**

Per ops below. Negative impacts would be not having the resources in time to successfully execute a new program.

Trucks: Mid-February 2026.

Toters: 60 days due to the volume.

Staff: 45 days max.

Routes: 1 week

## **LRS**

### **Email Response from August 21, 2025:**

Thank you for your patience while I confirmed our response with my team. I'm grateful for the well-organized approach to the RFP and process. Please see attached and let me know if there are any other questions.

## **Groot**

### **Email Response from August 20, 2025:**

**1. In order to allow for the transition process described in the proposal to be successfully completed, when is the latest possible date when your company would need to have the contract approved? Please also describe what the negative impacts would be of not completing a contract by that date.**

We would feel confident with an approved executed contract by the 1st of December. Sourcing trucks, although not impossible, would begin to be more difficult after that date. Let me know if you need additional information.

Does the Village anticipate it may need more time than that?

**VoDG Response: The Village anticipates contract approval by December 1.**



5050 W. Lake Street Melrose Park, IL. 60160  
o 708-345-7050 f 708-345-7056 republicservices.com

August 20, 2025

Matthew Timmerberg, Assistant to the Village Manager  
Jason Michnick, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator  
Village of Downers Grove  
850 Curtiss Street  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

RE: Downers Grove Solid Waste RFP Follow-Up

Dear Matt & Jason,

Thank you for the opportunity to elaborate on the waste assessment included in our proposal.

*Question from Village of Downers Grove*

Regarding the proposed waste audits described on page 46, how will Republic ensure accurate composition data while utilizing the WM Hodgkins material recovery facility?

*Response from Republic Services*

When conducting the waste assessments, sample truck loads from Downers Grove residential routes would be segregated at our Northlake Transfer Station for visual analysis in order to determine the composition of the loads. The goal of these snapshots is to understand trends, identify opportunities for improved diversion and document progress since the last assessment (if applicable). Once the assessment is completed, the recycling material would then be taken to the WM Hodgkins material recovery facility for processing. I have attached samples of waste assessments we have conducted in the past as examples for your consideration.

Please let me know if you have further questions as you review our proposal. Our team is happy to address any question or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

Tish S. Powell

Tish Powell  
Manager of Municipal Sales  
Tpowell2@republicservices.com  
(708)616-7457 mobile

## Sample Visual Recycling Audit

**Date:** TBA

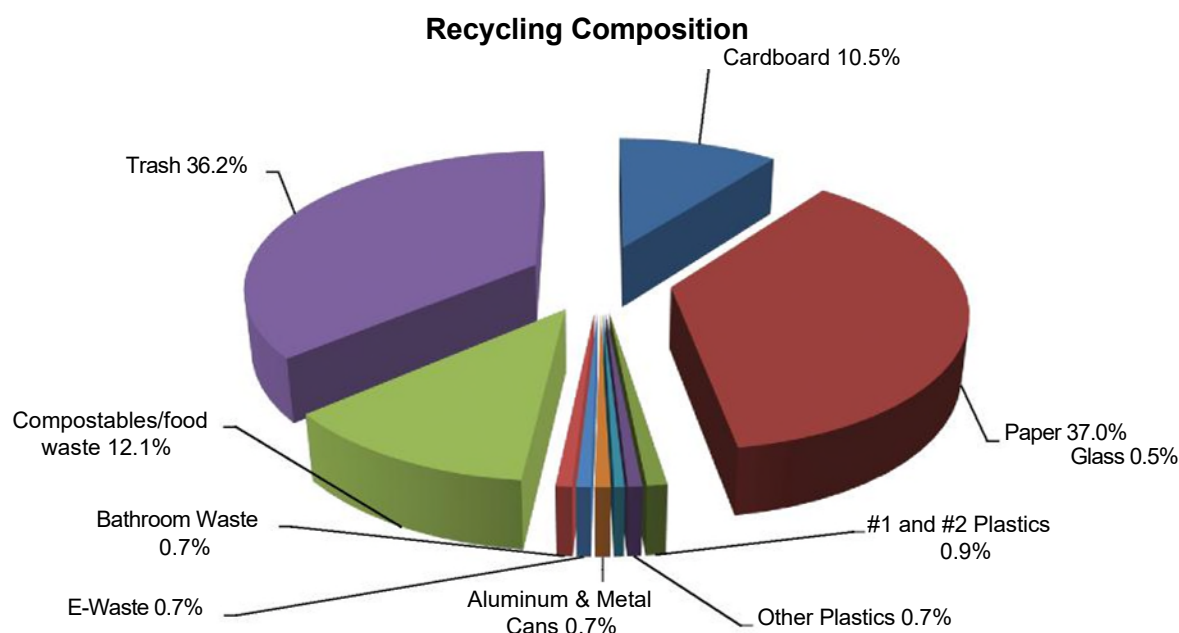
**Summary:** Republic Services team observed the recycling being emptied at the Republic Services Material Recovery Facility.

### Recommendation and observations:

Weight: 2.69 tons. Many bags and contamination were seen.

- **The contaminated materials were** Food, plastic packaging, bags, food packaging, shredded paper, clothing, bathroom waste and household items. None of these items should be put in a recycle compactor. This accounted for an estimated 20% of the load.
- Many electronics and household items were seen in recycling: 100's of CD's, over 60- Large 3 ring binders, 4 pairs of shoes, 6 large frames, staplers, tape dispensers, files, hard cover books and personal items. Approximately 20% of the load. While many of these items are not accepted in our recycling program, there are local options for diversion thru organizations such as SCARCE and electronics recycling programs that could be utilized.
- Nine bags of shredded paper found in recycling. Shredded paper needs to be sent through shredding vendors to recycle.
- Communication is needed for the residents about what items are acceptable and non-acceptable. Can pictures be shared on the village website or newsletter?

**Recycle Composition:** Based on the contents visually observed, it is estimated that the make-up of the material was:







## Good Job of recycling



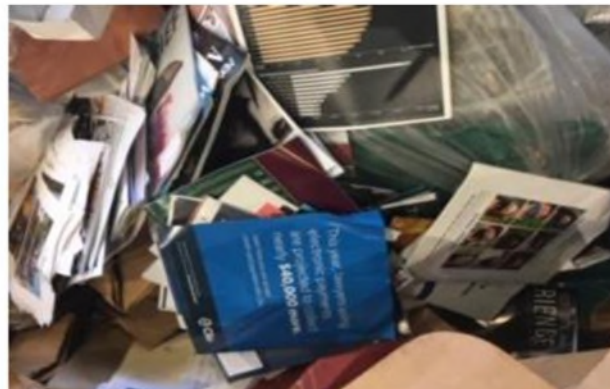
Overview of load.



10% of load was cardboard. This looks great!



Great job of recycling newspaper.



More paper recycling.



Nice bottle and can recycling. Eliminate plastic bags.



Nice job of capturing white paper.



# Contamination pictures



#6 Solo cups are not acceptable.



Styrofoam is not acceptable in the recycling.



Styrofoam and plastic packaging are not recyclable.



Tissues, napkins and food waste are not acceptable.



Material should never be in black bags. This would be pulled out as trash. A missed opportunity.



Plastic wrap is not acceptable. Please remove the plastic before putting it in the recycling.





# More contamination:



Soft packaging plastic should not be in recycling.



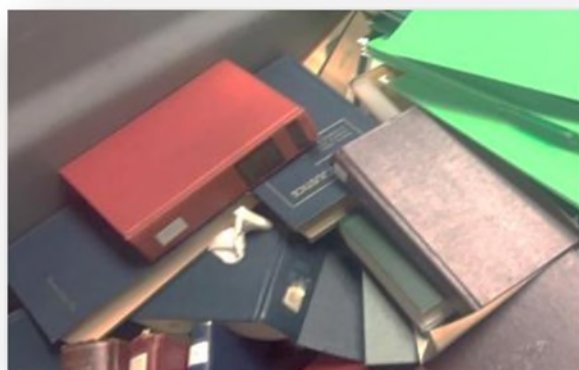
Bottles need to be empty. This could break during compaction and contaminate the good recycling.



Contamination of food and food packaging. This should go in the trash.



5 large binders holding over 100 CD's each. These can't be recycled through the single stream program.



Hard cover books are not acceptable.



Printer and computer screen. This is electronic waste. This should not be in waste or recycling.





**9 bags of shredded paper in plastic bags.**



**Bags of composting found in the recycling.**



**4 pairs of shoes found. Donate or go in waste.**



**Many plugs and cords found. These are not acceptable in recycling.**



**Over 60 large 3 ring binders. Paper could be recycled if Removed from binders.**



**6 very large picture frames 16x24. All should be waste.**





## Visual Waste Audit

**Date:** TBA

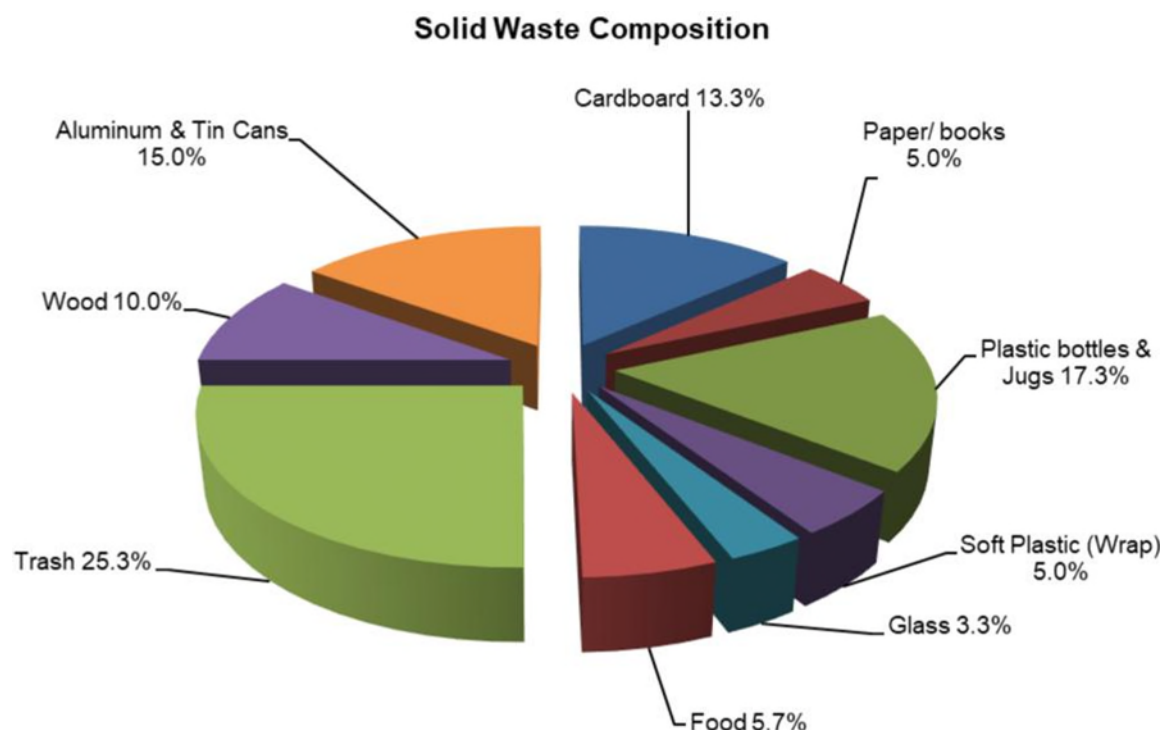
**Summary:** ACT Recycling Solutions, for Republic Services, observed the trash truck being emptied at the Republic Services MRF.

**Route:** Sample only

### Recommendation and observations:

- Weight: .75 tons.
- A large amount of the load was cardboard, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, office paper and wood.
- 53% of the waste could have gone into a single stream program.
- About 5% of waste could have been composted. This consisted of miscellaneous napkins and food.
- According to the driver, this route has a high amount of cardboard and bottles & cans regularly.
- It is recommended that this building be a site for onsite training.

**Waste Composition:** Based on the contents observed, it was visually estimated that the make-up of the material was:





**View of load**



**Cardboard should be recycled.**



**Plastic film belongs in waste, but cardboard should be recycled.**



**Broken down cardboard always should be recycled.**



**Office paper can be recycled.**



**10% was construction and should be added to a C&D dumpster.**





Plastic bottles and aluminum cans need to be recycled.



More bottles and cans, a missed opportunity.



Clear bags of recycling put in black bag waste.



A bag full of plastic bottles. Could go in the recycling.



Assorted kitchen waste, 50% could have been put in recycling.



Shrink wrap belongs in waste.



August 21, 2025

Dear Matt and Jason,

On behalf of LRS, we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to respond and commend the Village of Downers Grove for conducting such a thoughtful and thorough evaluation process.

What makes LRS uniquely qualified as the ideal partner for the Village is our:

- **Award-winning experience** in municipal transitions across Illinois, and beyond.
- **Locally headquartered teams** in marketing, operations, customer service, and sustainability
- **Flexible and scalable program infrastructure** tailored to meet the Village's needs
- **Innovative sustainability leadership**, including first-to-market solutions and educational outreach
- **Commitment to partnership**, with a goal of reducing the burden on Village staff and ensuring a seamless transition, along with regular daily services

We are proud to offer a comprehensive suite of services that go beyond basic waste collection—designed to support the Village's goals:

☒ Reduce Waste Entering Landfills ☒ Encourage Proper Recycling of Materials ☒ Make It Easy for Residents to Understand and Use the Program ☒ Provide Options for Residents to Choose From ☒ Maintain Competitive Pricing

Please find our responses on the following page to include a short answer, and more details for reference. I am available anytime to talk and we are hopeful the Village will consider meeting with us to further discuss our proposal.

Sincerely,

**Katie Neary**

Manager of Municipal Services

(815) 901-2130

[Kneary@LRSrecycles.com](mailto:Kneary@LRSrecycles.com)

# QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

## QUESTION 1:

Does the \$7.00 monthly charge for recycling in Option 1 apply only to sticker users, or does it apply to all customers? **For example:** Would a resident using a 65-gallon cart pay \$22 per month, or \$29 per month (\$22 plus a \$7 recycling fee)?

***LRS -Short Answer: \$29 per month***

- a) The \$7 recycling fee applies to **all customers**, including those enrolled in the subscription refuse-cart program.
- b) Using the example provided, a resident with a 65-gallon cart would pay **\$29/month** (\$22 for refuse + \$7 for recycling).
- c) This fee helps LRS recover essential costs associated with labor, equipment, and handling required to provide recycling services.

## QUESTION 2:

Are customers who do not rent an organics cart permitted to dispose of food scraps in yard waste bags combined with yard waste?

***LRS -Short Answer: Yes***

- a) LRS encourages residents to mix food scraps with yard waste during the landscape season.
- b) Alternate (Option 4) offers a sustainable and affordable solution with free organic carts for all residents.
- c) We're thrilled to report, since January of 2025, nearly **one-third of City of Elgin residents** are choosing to participate in the newly adopted, opt-in, organics program with significant growth expected in the coming year as requests are continuing to flood our request portal.
- d) Residents with lawn care services may use organics carts solely for food scraps.
- e) For those using yard waste bags, we suggest **thicker-ply, durable bags** to prevent tearing, especially in windy and wet conditions.
- f) LRS offers educational resources to promote sustainable practices. As a **founding member of the Illinois Food Scrap Coalition** and a recognized leader in food scrap recycling, our commitment is awarded, proven, and continuously improving.
- g) As reflected in our Innovative programs like our **"ride-along" seasonal collection, aerobic digesters, first electric vehicles** and **state-of-the-art recycling infrastructure**. LRS is excited to bring these forward-thinking practices to Downers Grove and collaborate on advancing environmental stewardship.

**3. What is the latest possible date your company would need to have the contract approved to ensure a successful transition? Please also describe the negative impacts of not completing a contract by that date.**

**LRS Short Answer: December 1, 2025**

- a) LRS prefers contract approval by **October or November 2025** for optimal planning and resident satisfaction. However, we are prepared to proceed with final approval **no later than December 1, 2025**.
- b) For a community of approximately 15,000 homes, a **5–6 month lead time** is ideal. This allows for:
  - Cart selection and ordering (which takes 5–6 weeks)
  - Equipment, procurement and deployment
  - Staff hiring and onboarding
  - Development of a dedicated web portal, cart selection tool, and program brochure
  - A robust outreach campaign to inform residents, especially seniors—about service changes

**Negative Impacts of Delayed Approval:**

- a) Fewer communication opportunities due to **holiday schedules and municipal staff availability**
- b) Reduced resident awareness and preparedness as word of mouth has influence
- c) Compressed timelines for cart delivery and staffing
- d) Limited ability to use outreach channels like newsletters, social media, local radio, and news outlets (Shaw, The Patch, Herald, Chicago Tribune)
- e) This service touches every home weekly—often with **two to three separate services**. A well-planned transition ensures a smooth rollout and a positive experience for both residents and Village staff.
- f) LRS is committed to using **new trucks** which are **already secured for Downers Grove** and providing a highly experienced team to support the Village. We aim to reduce the burden on Village staff and deliver a seamless, resident-focused transition and elevate the level of customer service using our recently released and tech-savvy, Customer Portal, allowing customers to access anything they need pertaining to service, while allowing options for residents to still call and speak with a local representative.

# **9. Questions and Answers (Provided by Staff)**

## **1. Are the increases shown in the comparison tables as percentages fixed? What fees were proposed?**

The percentage increase in the table shows how much the cart rental prices and sticker prices increase from year to year. Each proposal had a fixed percentage increase that was the same from year to year.

## **2. Is composting within yard waste considered recycling?**

Yes, it is referred to as organics recycling. Yard waste and food scraps that are collected in an organics cart or yard waste bag are taken to a composting facility. These facilities process the organic waste into a rich organic soil which is then available for sale.

## **3. Is yard waste picked up and disposed of using a separate truck?**

During times when yard waste is picked up there are three passes for each household on their pickup day.

## **4. What items are considered “bulk items?” Are there limitations?**

“Bulk items” is any additional refuse that does not fit in the customer’s bin, including extra garbage bags. Exclusions include hazardous waste, household electronics, or other items not accepted by refuse companies either because they cannot be put into landfills due to regulations, or are dangerous for the driver and truck to handle such as construction debris or basketball hoops.

## **5. How do other utilities such as ComEd identify low income households?**

Utilities such as ComEd requires enrollment in LIHEAP for low income customers to qualify for utility bill discounts. Additional info on LIHEAP is available at <https://dceo.illinois.gov/communityservices/utilitybillassistance/howtoapply.html>

## **6. For option 1 proposers, where can stickers be purchased?**

Stickers are currently available to be purchased at the following locations.

Location	Address	Municipality (If Outside DG)
Civic Center	850 Curtiss St	
Ace Hardware	6216 Main St	

Jewel-Osco	1148 Ogden Ave	
Jewel-Osco	6215 Main St	
Jewel-Osco	7335 Cass Ave	Darien
Jewel-Osco	4 E Ogden Ave	Westmont
Jewel-Osco	2317 75th St	Woodridge
Wannemakers	1940 Ogden Ave	
Walgreens	6240 Belmont Rd	

The Village could work with the selected vendor to reassess the locations where stickers are sold.

### **7. How are leaves handled/disposed of?**

Leaves would be collected through yard waste collection. Residents would be required to dispose of leaves through a rented organics cart or yard waste bags. Under option 3, residents would not be required to sticker bags during a designated period.

### **8. How is composted material handled once it is picked up? What is the end result?**

Each vendor takes composted materials (yard waste and accepted organics) to a composting facility. At the facility, organic material is left out to decompose through natural processes in the same way that a resident might do so at home, just at a much bigger scale. Once breakdown is complete, a finished compost product can be sold as a rich organic soil. Only LRS and WasteNot discussed the resale process of their composting operations. LRS has some restrictions in the organic materials they will collect and avoid contamination in an effort to maintain an organic compost certification for their end product. WasteNot offers compost back to customers or communities they work with.

### **9. What is allowed to be composted under the Waste Not program?**

- All food waste (cooked or raw), including, but not limited to:
  - fruits & vegetables
  - coffee grounds/filters, tea, tea bags
  - meat, fish, bones, seafood, and seafood shells
  - eggshells, nut shells, nuts, pits, spices, and herbs
  - dairy & non-dairy alternatives
  - baked goods & grains
  - flour, sugar



- all BPI-certified products, certified compostable plastics (soft or rigid), and any products marked as “commercially compostable”
- 100% paper products, including:
  - paper towels
  - egg cartons
  - Napkins
  - paper sugar packets
  - kraft paper bags
  - flour & sugar bags
  - newspaper
- 100% paper products that are wet or soiled
- pizza boxes
- natural fibers/products, including:
  - 100% cork
  - 100% silk
  - 100% cotton
  - 100% wood
  - 100% bamboo
  - 100% sugarcane
- yard waste, flowers, plant trimmings
- cellulose sponges & natural loofahs
- Pet food, pet fur, untreated human hair, nail clippings
- Houseplants, weeds, soil, plant clippings & trimmings

**10. Is any proposer other than LRS offering waste audits and recycling effectiveness rates?**

Yes, Republic has offered to conduct waste audits as a new service. Please refer to the answer provided by Republic for additional information on their waste audits.

**11. In the LRS proposals, are the 35 gal carts only available to seniors? Does this concept apply to all 4 options? If not, which options?**

LRS proposes to only offer 35 gallon carts to seniors in all of their options.

**12. For all proposers, can customers “mix and match” the waste cart, recycling cart and yard waste card sizes?**

This flexibility for households to choose refuse and recycling cart size was called for in the RFP. Staff will work with the preferred vendor to maintain customer choice around cart sizes in the final contract.

**13. For all proposers, please explain in further detail how recycled materials are processed and what the end products are. Are there differences in what can be recycled among the proposals?**

For all vendors, recyclable materials are collected in Downers Grove and brought to a transfer station or directly to a material recovery facility MRF. At a MRF, different equipment is able to sort through and separate items based on their material (i.e. plastics, aluminum, glass, etc.). Different MRFs have more advanced equipment, such as optical sorters and robotic arms that can identify materials and contaminants for faster and more effective material separation.

Once materials are sorted, they are compressed into a bail (large cube). These bails of recovered material are then sent or sold to other processing facilities. Highly recyclable materials such as aluminum and glass are easily turned back into the raw material needed to remake a product. Plastics are numbered based on the type of material that it is. Some plastics can be shredded and melted back into pellets that are used as a raw ingredient in manufacturing other plastic products. Some plastics can only be “down-cycled” into a material that is less complex. A classic example of this is plastic water bottles being turned into polyester fabric. Other plastics cannot be recovered and transformed into new plastic products. These are often sorted out at a MRF and disposed of at a landfill. Recent technology utilizing high temperatures and pressure are able to melt these plastics back into a petroleum base and used as a fuel.

A critical part of recycling is the presence of a market for recovered materials. While there are processes to recover and recycle plastics, there is not a guaranteed interested party in purchasing it. The market can be dynamic and shifts in demand can impact effective recycling rates or the amount of plastic that ends up in landfills.

All vendors generally use the process described above, but vary in the technology available at the MRF that is used. Groot owns its own MRF with advanced equipment such as optical sorters. LRS owns multiple MRFs in the region and proposes to use the Heartland MRF and their recently constructed [Exchange MRF](#). These have advanced equipment and the Exchange MRF is certified by a third party. SBC contracts with LRS and brings recyclables to their Heartland MRF. Republic and WM propose to use the WM-owned Hodgkins MRF.

LRS stated that they use certain recovered plastics to manufacture their refuse and recycling carts, and only sells recovered plastics to purchasers within the US. No other

vendor made a claim to using recovered plastic or provided explicit detail in the supply chains of recovered materials.