

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS CHANGE:**

**Q.: I liked our single stream recycling. It was easier and more convenient. This is a step backwards. Why?**

A.: This is not a change we wanted to make; it is a change we had to make! The changes in the global recycling market will essentially render single stream recycling obsolete. Because single stream recycling causes a large percentage of all recyclables to become contaminated, there were not many markets willing to take the products. It was almost exclusively Chinese companies that were willing to take these products. With China closing its borders to recyclables, the market for single stream recyclables closed.

Fortunately, there is still a strong global market for “clean” recyclables. This new process will ensure that the materials we recycle in O’Fallon are clean and ready to be purchased by markets all over the world. This should allow O’Fallon to continue to offer recycling at an affordable rate.

**Q.: Why is this not impacting other communities?**

A.: Eventually, every single stream recycling community will be impacted by these changes. The closure of the Chinese market will eventually impact everyone. However, due to lots of variables, including existing contracts, means it will take time for the impact to “roll downhill” to every community. Here in O’Fallon, our local recycling partner saw they could no longer resell recycling products to China and announced very recently that they will close their doors on 10/31. If we had not found another solution by that deadline, every bit of recyclable products we collect would have had to be taken to the landfill beginning 11/1. With this deadline in place, we had to develop a solution very quickly.

Fortunately, we found a solution that will sustain recycling in O’Fallon without interruption. We certainly understand that paper and cardboard recycling is more difficult now, and we are committed to making that easier in the future. But, plastic containers (no #4, #6 and black plastics), glass bottles and jars and aluminum and tin cans can still be recycled curbside. Everything you recycled before is still recyclable. Admittedly, paper and cardboard is more challenging.

**Q.: Well, if this is the way it’s going to be, what if I just won’t recycle anymore? Will you give me a break on my trash rate?**

A.: No. Your trash rate covers the cost of your trash service. Recycling is included at no additional charge. Whether you recycle or not, your rate will not go down. That being said, if too many residents do not recycle, your rates may eventually go up. One of the largest parts of your trash bill is the cost of putting trash in the landfills. This cost is charged on a per ton basis, meaning if the amount of trash going to the landfill increases, our costs will increase. Because trash service is 100% funded by your trash bill charges, these increases would have to be passed on to residents.

However, if our residents do their best to continue to recycle everything they can, we can keep our rates as low as possible.

**Q.: Are other communities going to this solution?**

A.: Yes, several other local communities are looking at this exact same solution, including those who use private trash companies.

**Q.: If I could pick my trash service, this wouldn't be happening, right?**

A.: The timing might be different, but every single-stream recycler will eventually face this issue. The deadlines might vary as existing contracts and other variables may delay the inevitable, but eventually, single stream recycling is going to go away unless the global market changes significantly. In fact, some haulers may continue to offer single stream recycling, but since 25% of the average single stream load is contaminated, much of what they pick up will now be going to the landfill. Many people will think they are recycling, but unless their recycling is 100% clean, which is virtually impossible in a single stream system, their recycling may end up in a landfill instead. And, since our rates are the lowest in the County, you'd be paying more too.

**Q.: Much of my recycling is cardboard. This is not good for me.**

A.: We do understand this is not the best solution for everyone, but it is the best solution we have right now in order to make sure recycling does not have to be stopped in O'Fallon. We are committed to looking for ways to make recycling and cardboard easier in the near future.

**Q.: Where is the Environmental Services building?**

A.: 1550 Progress West Lane. There is a map at [www.ofallon.mo.us/recycling](http://www.ofallon.mo.us/recycling) that will allow you to enter your address and get turn-by-turn directions to the facility.

**Q.: I work. The drop-off hours do not work for me.**

A.: We are looking at adding additional hours in the near future. Unfortunately, with the changes in the global market, paper and cardboard are only recyclable if they product is clean, dry and uncontaminated by food or other chemicals. We have seen from experience that unmonitored recycling bins become dumping grounds for careless or uncaring people to throw their junk. If that happens, your well-intentioned recycling efforts will be ruined and your recyclable materials will end up in a landfill. By monitoring the bins, we can ensure that does not happen. We will continue to look for ways to provide additional monitored drop-off times in the near future.

**Q.: Can we get a smaller recycle bin?**

A.: At this point, no. We simply do not have smaller cans that work with our trucks available. This is an option we can further explore in the future though.

**Q.: Do I pay for my recycle bin?**

A.: No. You do not pay for your recycling cart or your 1st trash cart. You only pay the \$5/\$8 fee for a 2nd trash cart. The 1st trash cart and the recycling cart are included in your service free of charge.

**Q.: St. Peters residents use a blue bag system that allows all of their recyclables to go in one bin. Can we do that?**

A.: We have and will continue to explore dual-stream options in use by other communities, including St. Peters. The blue bag system they use works well for them. But it is a very manual and expensive process. Changing our system to something like that would be costly and would take time. That being said, we will be looking at every option as we go forward.

**Q.: My friend lives in another city. He says they have single stream and he doesn't know anything about this.**

A.: Eventually, these issues will hit every single stream market. But when that happens will vary based on contracts and other variables. Here in O'Fallon, our deadlines were accelerated when our local recycling partner announced it would close its doors on 10/31.

**Q.: Is there anyway O'Fallon could continue single stream recycling?**

A.: We looked at this option. The initial additional cost to the City – which would have to be passed on to our customers – is at least \$1 million a year. And, because the global market is changing so fast, there is no guarantee that amount wouldn't go up within months as the global single stream market continues to tighten and eventually shuts down completely, leaving us in this exact same situation.

**Q.: Can we order additional trash containers? If so what is the price?**

A.: If you feel you need an additional trash cart, you may order one at a cost of \$5 per month for a 64 gallon container and \$8 for a 96-gallon. However, everything you were recycling before is still recyclable.

Admittedly, paper and cardboard may be more of a challenge, but we encourage you to really consider keeping these items out of the landfills by recycling!

**Q.: Can we cancel our recycling service?**

A.: You may choose not to recycle, but it's included free of charge in your trash costs, so your rate will not change. We encourage you to keep recycling! Even just recycling those items you can still place in your bin (glass, plastic containers and aluminum and tin cans) is better than nothing. Keep recycling those items if nothing else.

**Q.: Do I need a new recycling cart?**

A.: No. Your current cart will continue to be used for those items that can be collected curbside.

**Q.: Do I need to take the lids off of plastic bottles, glass jars, etc.**

A.: No. Lids can stay on.

**Q.: Is this a cost-cutting measure?**

A.: Absolutely not! In fact, this will likely end up being more expensive. But, it is a change that has to be made if O'Fallon will continue to be able to recycle.

**Q.: If single stream is going away, can O'Fallon become a dual stream community (like St. Peters)?**

A.: This is certainly something that will be looked at long term, but in the short term, our entire infrastructure is built for a single stream-system. Trucks, equipment, space, and staffing issues would all need to be addressed in order to make this kind of switch. Long term, all options are on the table and will be considered, but this certainly cannot happen overnight.

**Q.: Can I trade my recycle bin for a second trash bin?**

A.: No. You still need your recycle bin. If you feel you need an additional trash cart, you may order one at a cost of \$5 per month for a 64 gallon container and \$8 for a 96-gallon. However, everything you were

recycling before is still recyclable. Admittedly, paper and cardboard may be more of a challenge, but we encourage you to really consider keeping these items out of the landfills by recycling!

**Q.: I don't want to recycle anymore. Come take my cart.**

A.: We hope you will reconsider and continue to, at least, continue to recycle those items that can still be recycled curbside. But, if you really do not want to recycle, you may call customer service and discuss this with them. Because recycling is offered as a free service with your trash bill, you will not see a reduction in your bill.

**Q.: I'd much rather have you guys pick up my paper and cardboard rather than plastics, glass and cans.**

A.: One thing to keep in mind is that most paper and cardboard is biodegradable, while many plastics and cans are not or take much, much longer to degrade, filling up landfills for eternity. Although we obviously would prefer that all recyclable materials avoid the landfills, if it comes down to keeping paper/cardboard or plastics/cans out of the landfill, it is much better for the environment to keep the plastics and cans out of the landfills. But we must emphasize, we would prefer none of it go to the landfill.

**Q.: What should I use to bring the paper and cardboard in? Should I bundle it?**

A.: Anything that makes it easy on you. Paper grocery bags and cardboard boxes are an easy, ideal solution because those can be recycled alongside everything you bring in. However, you can bring your paper and cardboard in to us in any convenient bag, box, bin, etc. You will just dump it out when you get here.

**Q.: Why does O'Fallon want me to recycle less?**

A.: The last thing we want is for residents to cut back on recycling. Recycling is cheaper for us - and you - and obviously much, much better for the environment. We are doing what we can to make sure recycling can continue in O'Fallon. Had we not made these changes, recycling in O'Fallon would have ended on 10/31 because we would have had no place to take the product except the landfill. It's not a perfect solution, we know that and readily admit it. But it is the best we have to keep recycling right now. We will continue to try to improve it, and we appreciate your cooperation as we go through this transition.

**Q.: Will my rates go up?**

A.: This new agreement with St. Peters is essentially a test. Although both their staff and ours believe this can work long term, we need to try it and see. So, for the rest of the year, that is exactly what we are doing. We are testing it out. If it works, we believe we can do this without raising rates in the near future. But, it is very important that our residents do their part. This plan only works if our residents follow the new rules. If we send contaminated loads to the St. Peters, those loads will go to the landfill and O'Fallon will be billed for the disposal. If that continues, our costs will go up and the project will fail. That could mean anything from raised rates for residents or the possibility of the program ending.

If our residents do a great job of complying, we plan to enter a longer term agreement, and we do not anticipate significant rate changes.

**Q.: I won't be able to recycle as much, can I get another trash cart?**

A.: You will be able to recycle the same amount of items as before. The difference is paper and cardboard now need to be separated and brought to the Environmental Services building at 1550 Progress West Drive, O'Fallon, MO 63366 for drop off, rather than placing those items in your recycling carts. Because all of the same things are recyclable with this new program, you should not have additional trash.

Still, if you feel you need an additional trash cart, you may order one at a cost of \$5 per month for a 64 gallon container and \$8 for a 96-gallon.

**Q.: I don't want to deal with paper anymore. Can I get another trash cart?**

A.: We really encourage you to keep recycling. Putting cardboard in the trash just means more going to landfills. We do understand that this is more difficult than it has been, and we are looking at options to make it easier in the future. But, in the short term, we encourage you to keep recycling, even if it is more difficult!

Still, if you feel you need an additional trash cart, you may order one at a cost of \$5 per month for a 64 gallon container and \$8 for a 96-gallon.

**Q.: Should I bag my recycling?**

A.: NO

**Q.: Can I recycle the following items:**

Aluminum foil                NO

Aluminum pans              NO

#4 or #6 plastic            NO

Black plastic bottles      NO

Plastic bags                NO. Although most grocery/department stores allow these bags to be recycled at their locations. They cannot go in your cart, however.

**Q.: What if I do not want to comply?**

A.: Your recycling will not be picked up. You will either need to clean out your recycling loads or place the load in your trash cart, and it will be taken to a landfill.

**Q.: Is this change permanent?**

A.: This new agreement with St. Peters is essentially a test. Although both their staff and ours believe this can work long term, we need to try it and see. So, for the rest of the year, that is exactly what we are doing. We are testing it out. It is our intention that this will be permanent. As with any new programs, there may be some minor tweaks or changes required as we learn and adjust. But, outside of minor adjustments, our hope is that this test period goes well and we can enter into a long-term agreement with St. Peters later this year.

**Q.: How will the City know if I'm properly recycling?**

A: During the first couple of weeks of this new program, our staff will actually go around and inspect recycling carts before they are picked up. Carts that are deemed contaminated by non-recyclables, paper, cardboard, etc., will not be picked up. Carts that are not picked up will be tagged and the loads must be fixed prior to the next pick-up date.

**Q.: Where do I take my paper and cardboard for recycling?**

O'Fallon's Environmental Services building at 1550 Progress West Lane, O'Fallon, MO 63366.

**Q.: Are there any other locations for paper/cardboard drop off?**

A.: Not at this time, but we will explore more options in the coming months.