



## Reduced Firm Item Limit

This backgrounder describes what is meant by a ‘Reduced Firm Item Limit’ and provides information to help assess this Curbside Garbage Collection Option, including:

- The potential to increase the City’s waste diversion rate
- What the option may mean to you financially
- What you may have to do differently with your garbage set out
- Potential benefits with this option
- Key considerations with this option
- How this option has increased the diversion rate at other municipalities

### What does a reduced firm item limit mean?

A “firm” garbage limit restricts the number of garbage items (bags, containers and bulky items) that can be placed out for collection. Any garbage items above the firm limit are left at the curb. Ottawa currently has a 6-item garbage limit on what residents can put out bi-weekly. By reducing this limit this option would allow us to build upon this current collection policy. For perspective, currently in Ottawa:

- The average garbage item set-out is 4.18 items or less every 2 weeks
- 85% of households set out 4 items or less every 2 weeks
- 81% set out 3 items or less every 2 weeks
- 71% set out 2 items or less every 2 weeks

A firm garbage limit is only effective when set below the average household set out.



## Solid Waste Master Plan

### Plan directeur des déchets solides

#### How could this option increase the waste diversion rate?

The waste diversion rate represents the amount of waste diverted from landfill through recycling and green bin programs. The City of Ottawa calculates its waste diversion rate based on collected tonnages, and is done so by dividing the weight of collected material in our waste diversion streams by the total amount of waste collected by the City:

$$\frac{\text{Weight of collected recycling, organics, and leaf and yard waste}}{\text{Weight of collected recycling, organics, leaf and yard waste and garbage}} \times 100$$

If implemented in Ottawa, this option has the potential to reduce our garbage per capita by up to 11% and increase our diversion rate by up to 5 per cent.

#### What would this mean for me financially?

If this option was introduced, homeowners could see their garbage fee increase by up to 38 cents per month (\$4.50 per year). This increase would pay for ongoing outreach and education and operational costs.

If material bans (of recycling and organics) are added with this option, homeowners could expect to see their garbage fee increase by approximately 67 cents more per month (\$8 more per year) due to the additional cost to process the larger amount of recyclables that could potentially be diverted with this policy.

#### What would I have to do differently when setting out my garbage?

The City currently allows households to set up to 6 garbage items to the curb for collection every 2 weeks. With this policy residents would only be allowed to set out the reduced garbage item limit. Garbage items would need to continue to comply with the size and weight



parameters in the City's Solid Waste Management By-law, which is 15kg (33lbs) per garbage item.

#### Potential benefits of this option

- An item limit is already in place at the City and this option would allow us to build upon that 6-item collection policy.
- Encourages residents to become aware of how much garbage they are setting out for collection.
- Municipalities with a firm bag limit in place reported that residents had little to no issues in complying with the program.

#### Key considerations with this option

- Residents with garbage exceeding the limit will need to hold onto the waste until the next garbage collection, bring the waste to Trail Waste Facility for disposal, or make alternative arrangements to dispose of the waste.
- The garbage limit should be set below the City's current average set-out of 4.18 garbage items bi-weekly to encourage participation in diversion programs.

#### What other cities have a garbage item limit in place? Have these programs been successful in other places?

78 municipalities across Ontario have a garbage item limit in place, including Halton Region, Hamilton, Guelph and London.