

Marohi matua 2 | Key proposal 2

Te kohi para me ngā panoni pūtea tautoko Waste collection and funding changes

The purpose

We know that Wellingtonians care deeply about our city's environment. Reducing the city's waste is critical to achieving a more sustainable future and will help us to reduce our emissions.

We have an opportunity to make changes now because our current waste collection contract expires in June 2026, and the age of the current trucks means a new fleet will be part of the new contract. Collections trucks are specially made and can take more than a year to arrive once we order them.

At the moment, Council operates a user pays bag system for rubbish that is used by about 40 percent of the city, with the rest using a private rubbish service. We also provide a recycling wheelie bin or bags to all households and a 45L glass crate.

Therefore, for this Long-term Plan it's time to talk trash.

The organic opportunity

Food scraps and garden waste are at the heart of our waste problem. They make up about 58 percent of what households put in their rubbish. Currently 23,000 tonnes of organic waste goes to the Southern Landfill every year. We divert 5,000 tonnes, but to meet our 2030 targets, we need to divert at least another 11,500 tonnes. Organic waste that is buried in landfill generates methane as it breaks down, so capturing and processing this material will reduce emissions.

That's why, instead of just rolling over our waste contract or going with the same service, we want to introduce a kerbside organics collection for Wellingtonians. Many other councils have already made this change.

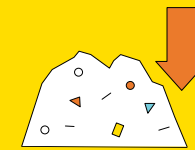
If we introduce this new service, we need suitable processing facilities to be available to turn the organic

material into beneficial products. We are collaborating with Hutt City Council and Porirua City Council on options for a regional solution to share costs and get the best value for money for our communities. We are also working to obtain central government funding to help establish this service.

Waste collection services work together to influence how people use them and how much waste is diverted. A change to one part of the system means we need to look at the rest – should we have wheelie bins for rubbish? Are our recycling bins big enough? Do we want a different collection method for glass?

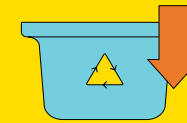
Any changes will be implemented from 2026 and more details will be communicated as plans are finalised in the next two years.

The Council's He anamata para kore mō Pōneke Zero Waste Strategy aims to reuse materials and products for as long as possible in the city (a circular economy) and has the following targets:



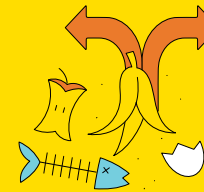
Reduce total waste to landfill by

50%
by 2030



Reduce kerbside waste to landfill by

40%
by 2030



Divert

50–70%
of organic waste from landfill **by 2030**



Reduce biogenic methane emissions by at least

30%
by 2035



More information
Our Zero Waste Strategy



The options

We are proposing options in two areas:

1. Rubbish and Organics

Our preferred option is a rates-funded rubbish wheelie bin that will be collected fortnightly, combined with a rates-funded weekly organics service for food scraps and garden waste (Option F).

2. Recycling and Glass

Our preferred option is providing a bigger 240L fortnightly recycling wheelie bin and retaining our 45L fortnightly glass service (Option C).

These options are our preferred options because they will result in the highest amount of waste to be diverted from the landfill and the greatest reuse of materials and products for as long as possible.

Details and notes on all the options are below, including the proposed introduction of a new targeted rate for our rubbish and organics collection.

Tell us what your preferred option is for our waste collections in your submission.

The following information should be read in conjunction with the options for both Rubbish and Organics, and Recycling and Glass.

Notes on the proposed options

Introducing the new services

- The rubbish collection will change to fortnightly once organics is introduced. This saves money and increases the use of the organics collection by more than 20 percent. The change could cause some odour issues from material that cannot go in the organics bins. Rubbish will remain weekly if no organics service is introduced.
- Due to Wellington's streetscape, some households cannot safely use a wheelie bin collection service because this will create traffic delays or obstruct footpaths. These households will still use bags for rubbish and recycling, with a glass crate and a 23L food scraps only bin (if the service is introduced). We will review the households that currently receive recycling bags to see if any can safely switch to wheelie bins.

A targeted rate for rubbish and organics

The proposed new rubbish wheelie bin and organics collection services will be funded using a mandatory targeted rate, which is likely to be a flat fee for all households that can receive the services. A mandatory targeted rate is needed because the revenue from landfill fees isn't enough to fund organics on top of recycling.

Notes on the targeted rate:

- A general rate is not appropriate as commercial properties will be charged but not receive any benefit from the service.
- Households will not be able to opt out of the proposed targeted rate. This will ensure the service is cost effective and no household is disadvantaged (eg it avoids the risk of landlords choosing to opt out, leaving renters to arrange their own service).
- The Council is exploring whether to offer alternate bin sizes for residents to choose from, with the associated final targeted rate costs reflecting the bin size. This will make the service more affordable for households that already produce very little waste and will accommodate larger households.



- The targeted rate will not apply to any property that cannot receive any Council collection service. Some households cannot receive the services because their bins need to be collected from private land – this is the same as the current waste service. These are mostly on private roads or part of an apartment or townhouse complex. Council will consider collection options for these properties in future.
- Properties in the central city will continue to receive daily rubbish collection and weekly recycling collection.

Option costs

- The costs for any additional operating expenses for the new collection services, the new targeted rates and any associated debt for the options are provisional and presented as a range because these services will not be put in place for two years.
- The status quo options may have some cost increases when the new contract is negotiated, and the cost ranges provided reflect this.
- All of the cost estimates are based on the best information currently available for similar services around the country.
- Operating costs are in addition to what is currently budgeted to run the Council waste collection – the difference in cost from introducing the new services.
- Recycling and glass collections will remain fully funded through a levy included in the landfill fees, meaning no impact on rates.
- The debt for this proposal across the 10 years of the plan is to fund any new bins that may need to be purchased for the implementation and for our potential contribution to a regional organics processing facility. The amount provisioned for in our budgets is the highest estimate for these proposals. However, the final amount of capital expenditure needed, and therefore debt, would be dependent on a comprehensive procurement process and the negotiation of the new waste collection contract. Any changes to the proposals will be consulted on through relevant Annual Plans.
- There is the potential for the debt impact of these proposals to be \$0m. An example would be if a waste management company purchased any new bins or funded the construction of a new organics processing facility and then charged the Council an annual fee. This would then increase the mandatory targeted rate. All options will be considered as the project develops. Further consultation will likely occur if we proceed with a change.



Rubbish and Organics

We are proposing to change our rubbish collection to wheelie bins and to introduce a new organics service.

Option A

Weekly 50L rubbish bags and no organics collection – status quo



Operating Costs, and Rates impact (Year 3)

Additional operational cost: between \$0m and 11.7m over Years 3 to 10 of the plan. Rates impact: None as rubbish remains user pays.

Debt impact (10 years)

No impact as no change to services. See Option cost notes for more information.

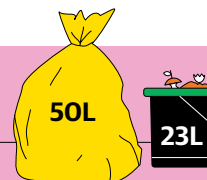
- Estimated material diverted from landfill: none
- Estimated reduction in emissions from landfill: none.

What this means

- Worker safety – bags have the highest risk of injury
- Private rubbish service – can be used instead of the Council service
- Truck movements – multiple trucks per week from private and Council rubbish collectors
- If the number of people using Council rubbish bags continues to fall the cost per bag will rise over time.

Option B

Fortnightly 50L rubbish bags and weekly 23L food only bin



Operating Costs, and Rates impact (Year 3)

Additional operational cost: between \$40.4m and \$75.2m over Years 3 to 10 of the plan. Rubbish remains user pays. Targeted organics rate (per household): **between \$90 and \$124**

Debt impact (10 years)

Between \$0m and \$21.6m. See Option cost notes for more information.

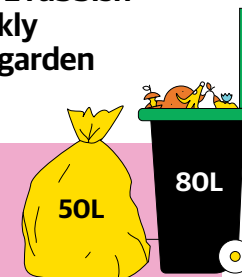
- Estimated material diverted from landfill: 1,500–4,700 tonnes
- Estimated reduction in emissions from landfill: 900–2,700 tonnes of eCO₂.

What this means

- Worker safety – bags have highest risk of injury and 23L bins have medium risk
- Private rubbish service – can be used instead of the Council service
- Truck movements – multiple trucks per week from private and Council collectors
- If the number of people using Council rubbish bags continues to fall the cost per bag will rise over time.

Option C

Fortnightly 50L rubbish bags and Weekly 80L food and garden wheelie bin



Operating Costs, and Rates impact (Year 3)

Additional operational cost: between \$50.6m and \$89.1m over Years 3 to 10 of the plan. Rubbish remains user pays. Targeted organics rate (per household): **between \$107 and \$147**

Debt impact (10 years)

Between \$0m and \$21.6m. See Option cost notes for more information.

- Estimated material diverted from landfill: 3,500–8,700 tonnes
- Estimated reduction in emissions from landfill: 1,300–3,300 tonnes eCO₂.

What this means

- Worker safety – bags are highest risk for injury, but wheelie bins are lowest risk
- Wind – 80L wheelie bin less likely to be affected
- Private rubbish service – can be used instead of the Council service
- Truck movements – multiple trucks per week from private and Council collectors
- If the number of people using Council rubbish bags continues to fall the cost per bag will rise over time.

**Option
D****Weekly 80L rubbish wheelie bin and no organics collection****Operating Costs, and Rates impact (Year 3)**

Additional operational cost: \$91.9m and \$127.1m over Years 3 to 10 of the plan. Targeted rate for rubbish (per household): **between \$204 and \$260**. No organics collection

Debt impact (10 years)

Between \$0m and \$3.3m. See Option cost notes for more information.

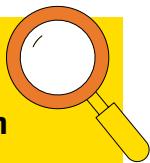
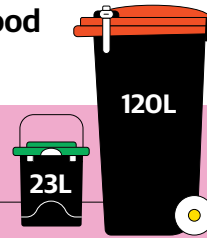
- Estimated material diverted from landfill: none
- Estimated reduction in emissions from landfill: none.

What this means

- Worker safety - automated wheelie bin collection has the lowest risk of injury
- Private rubbish service - will be in addition to the Council service
- Truck movements - one rubbish truck per week.

For more information

Read the Notes on the proposed options on page 36 and 37.

**Option
E****Fortnightly 120L rubbish wheelie bin and weekly 23L food only bin****Operating Costs, and Rates impact (Year 3)**

Additional operational cost: between \$103.9m and \$160.5m over Years 3 to 10 of the plan. Targeted rates (per household): Rubbish **between \$154 and \$210**, and Organics **between \$90 and \$124**

Debt impact (10 years)

Between \$0m and \$25.1m. See Option cost notes for more information.

- Estimated material diverted from landfill: 1,500–4,700 tonnes
- Estimated reduction in emissions from landfill: 900–2,700 tonnes of eCO₂.

What this means

- Worker safety - Automated wheelie bin collection is lowest risk, but manually collected 23L bins are medium risk
- Wind - 23L bins are likely to blow around
- Private rubbish service - will be in addition to the Council service
- Truck movements - one organics truck weekly and one rubbish truck fortnightly.

**Option
F****Fortnightly 120L rubbish wheelie bin and weekly 80L food and garden wheelie bin****Operating Costs, and Rates impact (Year 3)**

Additional operational cost: between \$114.7m and \$175.0m over Years 3 to 10 of the plan. Targeted rates (per household): Rubbish **between \$154 and \$210**. Organics **between \$109 and \$147**

Debt impact (10 years)

Between \$0m and \$25.1m. See Option cost notes for more information.

- Estimated material diverted from landfill: 3,500–8,700 tonnes
- Estimated reduction in emissions from landfill: 1,300–3,300 tonnes of eCO₂.

What this means

- Worker safety - automated wheelie bin collection has the lowest risk of injury
- Wind - 80L wheelie bin less likely to be affected
- Private rubbish service - will be in addition to the Council service
- Truck movements - one organics truck weekly and one rubbish truck fortnightly.



Preferred option



Recycling and Glass

We also want to make some changes to our recycling service, which will remain funded by the recycling levy in our landfill gate fees, meaning no impact on rates.

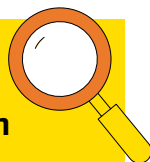
Our current recycling bins and glass crates are nearly 15 years old and starting to break. We will need to issue new bins to everyone in the city soon, so we have an opportunity to consider if we should change the kind of bins we use.

There are two options for the recycling wheelie bins: replace them with a bin of the same size or one that's about double the size. Many recycling wheelie bins are full to overflowing on collection days and people are crushing items to fit more in the bin. Crushed items are more difficult to process so this is not recommended.

For glass, there is the opportunity to look at a different collection method – a wheelie bin rather than the glass crate.

For more information

Read the Notes on the proposed options on page 36 and 37.



Option A

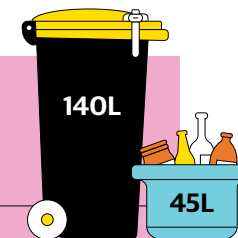
Fortnightly 140L recycling wheelie bin and fortnightly 45L glass crate – status quo

Operating Costs, and Rates impact (Year 3)

Additional operational cost: between \$5.0m and \$20.6m over Years 3 to 10 of the plan. No rates impact.

Debt impact (10 years)

Between \$0m and \$5.2m. See Option cost notes for more information.



- Recycling cost: smaller or larger bins cost about the same to collect
- Glass cost: bins are about 20 percent cheaper to collect than crates
- Smaller recycling bins and glass crates are cheapest to buy
- Estimated material diverted from landfill: no increase.

What this means

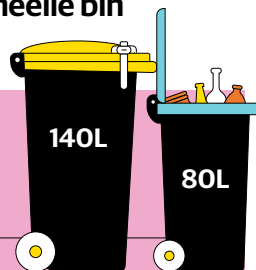
- No increase in recycling capacity and people will still crush items, which makes them hard to sort and process
- Glass in crates can be colour sorted meaning it can be recycled into new bottles which is a circular use
- Worker safety – manual collection of crates is medium risk.

Option B**Fortnightly 140L recycling wheelie bin and four-weekly 80L glass wheelie bin****Operating Costs, and Rates impact (Year 3)**

Additional operational cost: between \$0m and \$12.4m over Years 3 to 10 of the plan. No rates impact.

Debt impact (10 years)

Between \$0m and \$7.4m. See Option cost notes for more information.



- Recycling cost: smaller or larger bins cost about the same to collect
- Glass cost: bins are about 20 percent cheaper to collect than crates
- Glass wheelie bins are more expensive to buy than crates
- Estimated material diverted from landfill: no increase.

What this means

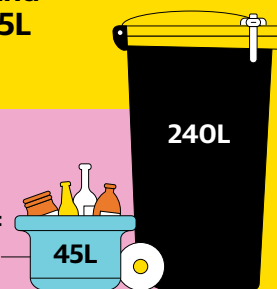
- No increase in recycling capacity and people will still crush items, which makes them hard to sort and process
- Four-weekly collection of glass is cheaper than fortnightly
- Glass collected in a wheelie bin can't be colour sorted to be remade into bottles, so it is ground into a sand substitute for roading. This is not a circular use of the material
- Worker safety – automated collection of bins is lowest risk.

Option C**Fortnightly 240L recycling wheelie bin and fortnightly 45L glass crate****Operating Costs, and Rates impact (Year 3)**

Additional operational cost: between \$2.8m and \$20.6m over Years 3 to 10 of the plan. No rates impact.

Debt impact (10 years)

Between \$0m and \$5.6m. See Option cost notes for more information.



- Recycling cost: smaller or larger bins cost about the same to collect
- Glass cost: bins are about \$750,000 (20 percent) cheaper to collect than crates
- Glass crates are cheaper to buy than wheelie bins, but larger recycling bins are more expensive
- Estimated material diverted from landfill: up to 5,500 tonnes.

What this means

- This option increases recycling capacity
- Glass in crates can be colour sorted meaning it can be recycled into new bottles which is a circular use
- Worker safety – manual collection of crates is medium risk.



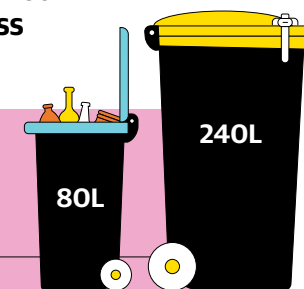
Preferred option

Option D**Fortnightly 240L recycling wheelie bin and four-weekly 80L glass wheelie bin****Operating Costs, and Rates impact (Year 3)**

Additional operational cost: between \$0m and \$12.3m over Years 3 to 10 of the plan. No rates impact.

Debt impact (10 years)

Between \$0m and \$7.8m. See Option cost notes for more information.



- Recycling cost: smaller or larger bins cost about the same to collect
- Glass cost: bins are about \$750,000 (20 percent) cheaper to collect than crates
- These bins are the most expensive to buy
- Estimated material diverted from landfill: up to 5,500 tonnes.

What this means

- This option increases recycling capacity
- Four-weekly collection of glass is cheaper than fortnightly
- Glass collected in a wheelie bin can't be colour sorted to be remade into bottles, so it is ground into a sand substitute for roading. This is not a circular use of the material
- Worker safety – automated collection of bins is lowest risk.