

## Larger Garbage Cart Study Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Q: What is the Larger Garbage Cart Study?**

The San José Residential Garbage and Recycling Program will conduct a study from July 2022 to December 2024 to test whether larger garbage carts reduce recycling cart contamination. In July 2022, Garden City Sanitation exchanged 32 and 64-gallon garbage carts for 96-gallon garbage carts. Participants with higher level collection service (96- and 128-gallons) were offered an additional 96-gallon cart during the study. In 2024, for all new participants, Garden City Sanitation and GreenTeam of San Jose will exchange 32 and 64-gallon garbage carts for larger garbage carts by January 31, 2024.

### **Q: What is recycling contamination?**

Recycling contamination includes items that are not on San José's list of recyclables and/or soiled recyclables that are too dirty to be sold on the commodities market. Soiled recyclable materials cannot be recycled and are landfilled, which increases greenhouses gases and costs for residents, and reduces the opportunity to recover natural resources. Visit [SanJoseRecycles.org](https://www.sanjoserecycles.org) to find out what goes into your garbage, recycling, or yard trimmings containers.

### **Q: Why does recycling contamination matter?**

A high contamination rate means that San Jose's recycling service providers cannot sell these items through the recycling market and instead of reusing them to make new products, they are landfilled. Landfilling material lowers the City's recycling rate and ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and comply with state regulations. It also costs the service providers more to process contaminated material, which can impact ratepayer costs.

### **Q: Why is the City of San José conducting this study?**

A Fall 2022 third-party study found that the citywide average contamination rate among Single-Family Dwelling recycling routes is 57%, with some routes having as much as 89% contamination. City staff use multiple approaches to reduce recycling contamination, and this study will inform staff whether a larger garbage cart can help. If it does, staff may consider expanding larger garbage cart availability.

### **Q: What is the intention of this study?**

The study will test the effectiveness of providing about 9,000 single-family dwelling households with a larger garbage cart in reducing recycling contamination.

### **Q: What was the selection process for the Study?**

About 9,000 single-family dwelling households along multiple routes with recycling contamination rates ranging from 69% to 79% were selected for this study. Routes were selected to represent recycling contamination above the citywide average of 57%. The routes were chosen to include areas throughout the city and include Monday through Friday collection schedules.

**Q: What is the timeline for the Study?**

The study began in July 2022 where participants received their larger carts, and the study will end in December 2024.

**Q: What is this Study going to cost me?**

The great news is it's FREE! Participants will continue to pay their current service rates, with no additional charge for the larger carts during the study.

**Q: Is my participation mandatory?**

Participation is voluntary and households may opt out. Please contact us by email at **Recycle.Plus@sanjoseca.gov** or call **(408) 795-1823** so we can remove you from the study.

**Q: When will my larger cart be delivered?**

New carts will be delivered during the month of January 2024 on your regular collection day between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Your collection company will leave information clearly identifying your participation in the study. Please leave your cart out so that it can be exchanged.

**Q: When is my collection day?**

Enter your address into the San José 311 [My Collection Schedule](#).

**Q: I don't have room for a larger garbage cart. Can I still participate in the study or should I opt out?**

If your curbside setout location does not have sufficient space to accommodate the larger cart, we recommend that you opt out. Please contact us by email at **Recycle.Plus@sanjoseca.gov** or call **(408) 795-1823**.

**Q: How do I participate if I plan to be away during the month of January?**

Please contact us by email at **Recycle.Plus@sanjoseca.gov** or call **(408) 795-1823** so we can make other arrangements with you.

**Q: I never received my cart. What do I need to do to get it?**

Please contact us by email at **Recycle.Plus@sanjoseca.gov** or call **(408) 795-1823** so we can check the status of your delivery.

**Q: How do I return my cart when the study is over? What if I want to keep it?**

Towards the end of the study, we'll contact participants about next steps for how to keep the larger cart for an additional fee or return to your smaller size.