

# ORGANICS COLLECTION

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – August 2021



## The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) is introducing a new organics collection service in the City of Port Alberni.

Beginning September 13, 2021, residents of single-family homes will be able to dispose of organics (food and yard waste) in green carts at the roadside. As part of the regional organics diversion program, the ACRD will provide new recycling and organics carts to all single-family homes as an upgrade to three stream waste collection services for the community. It's a critical upgrade that will reduce residential waste and extend the lifespan of the landfill. Below are frequently asked questions about the new program.

### ABOUT THE NEW SORT'NGO ORGANICS COLLECTION SERVICE

#### What is roadside organics collection?

Roadside organics collection adds a green cart to collect food and yard waste that will be delivered to a composting facility and diverted away from the landfill. Blue carts for recycling will also be provided at the same time, replacing the blue box program.

#### Why is this program being introduced?

Food waste contributes to 30-50 per cent of waste currently sent to the landfill and uses up a lot of landfill space. By diverting organics, the Alberni Valley can extend usage of the landfill by an additional 35 years!

Organics also create harmful emissions at the landfill, where it is buried under layers of other waste and without access to oxygen cannot decompose properly. This creates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming and other harmful environmental issues. Organic diversion from landfills is a high priority for senior governments, and 100% of the capital costs associated with this project are funded through government allocated grants.

#### What can go in the new 'Organics' green cart?

Organics material is not garbage at all, and this new organics program will help recycle what is currently considered garbage. Anything that goes into the organics cart will be turned into valuable nutrient-rich soil that can improve growth in gardens and lawns. Green cart-approved items include:

- All food scraps, including meat, bones, dairy and greases
- Yard waste, including grass, leaves, and branches
- Soiled paper (paper towel, pizza boxes, cardboard and tissues)

A good rule of thumb is that almost all waste that causes odours can be placed in the organics cart.

If you aren't sure whether something can go in the organics cart (for example, "compostable" bags, dirt, rocks and pet feces are not considered organics), download the [Sort'nGo ACRD app](#) to search for specific items. The app will tell you which item can go in which cart, or not at all!



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## Can I opt out of this service?

This service will be provided to all homes in the City of Port Alberni – and, like garbage and recycling services, opting out is not an option. Implementing an organics program will prevent the ACRD from having to install a pricey gas capture system at the landfill, which would have a significant cost impact on users.

Diverting organics will also significantly decrease the amount of waste that is going to the landfill – extending its life by decades and postponing the high costs of either siting a new landfill or shipping waste out of the community.

Already composting in your backyard? We encourage you to continue, and send items not suitable for backyard compost systems to the green cart for proper processing.



## Where will I get my cart?

New organics and recycling carts will be delivered to single-family homes in Port Alberni between August 23 - September 10, 2021.

## How often will it be picked up?

The organics cart will be emptied weekly and garbage and recycling carts will be emptied every two weeks on alternating weeks. That means each week, two carts will be wheeled roadside: either organics and garbage, or organics and recycling.

## When will the new service roll out?

The new service is planned to roll out September 13, 2021 for City of Port Alberni residents. The ACRD plans to expand this beyond the City's boundaries, to other incorporated and unincorporated areas within the regional district, in the future and will consult with those communities in 2021.

## ABOUT SORT'NGO – AUTOMATED CART COLLECTION

### What is an automated cart collection service?

An automated collection truck equipped with a mechanical arm (same as current garbage collection methods) will be used to pick up standardized, wheeled carts for organics and recycling. The ACRD will provide new recycling and organics carts to all homes in the service area.

### How often will the carts be collected?

Organics (green) will be collected each week, while garbage (black) and recycling (blue) will be emptied every two weeks, on alternating weeks. Garbage collection can be reduced because waste composition studies show that up to 50 per cent of household waste is organic or compostable. Once these items are diverted, garbage carts will take twice as long to fill.

ACRD residents can keep track of collection schedules, sign up for alerts and check which cart to use for specific items with the Sort'nGo ACRD app.

### What is the cost for this new service?

The current costs for garbage collection in the City of Port Alberni are approximately \$11/month per household. The estimated increase to move to a 3-stream collection system (garbage, organics and recycling) will be \$4/month for a total roadside collection cost of around \$15/month per household.

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## Where should I store the new organics and recycling carts?

The new green and blue carts will look much like the current garbage cart, and can also be stored outside at your property. The cart lid will keep the material dry and intact during inclement weather.

## What about pests and wildlife attracted to the food waste in the carts?

Residents are already dealing with food and yard waste now – they are just putting it into their garbage. The new organics cart will come equipped with a certified bear-resistant lid locking mechanism that will reduce the chance of wildlife accessing the contents. The organics carts are certified by Wildsafe BC and have proved successful in other communities for keeping pests out and keeping communities cleaner.



## ABOUT ORGANICS DIVERSION

### What will happen to the food and yard waste once it's collected?

The material will be composted at a local facility and the finished product will be made available to residents of the Alberni Valley.

### What happens if we don't divert organics?

If high volumes of organic material continue to enter the landfill, greenhouse gas emissions will continue to rise, mandating a gas capture system. This system would cost Alberni Valley residents millions compared to an organic roadside collection service, which has proved to be a successful diversion strategy and cost-effective solution in many other areas of BC. The waste collection changes will result in the best overall value for Alberni Valley residents for waste services.



### What if I already compost at home?

We still encourage you to continue backyard composting, however some food waste like meat, fish, poultry, bones and dairy are unsuitable for home composting systems and need to be sent to a composting facility to be properly processed into compost. As well, yard waste like twigs and small branches will be accepted in the new roadside organic collection service, which requires chipping prior to composting.



## GET IN TOUCH

### How can I provide feedback on the new service?

Visit [letsconnectacrd.ca/organics](https://letsconnectacrd.ca/organics) to provide feedback, ask questions of the project team and sign up for updates.