

Automated Recycling Pilot Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is automated recycling?

In an automated recycling program, special recycling carts are picked up by a mechanical arm on a truck rather than manually lifted.

Why is the City doing an automated recycling pilot?

Automated recycling may make the municipal collection program more efficient, cleaner, and safer. It also provides the capacity for greater recycling. The City of Albany has selected just fewer than 2,000 properties to participate in the pilot program this summer. The City will then evaluate the effectiveness of this program and make recommendations for the future. There is no plan to remove bins from properties in the initial pilot.

Am I included in the program?

You can check if your address is included in the pilot program at www.albanyrecycles.com.

What happens if I'm included in the program?

A new free 64-gallon recycling cart (more than double the size of the current bins) will be delivered to your property close to the start of the program. You do not need to be home to receive the cart. Once the program begins, you will only be able to use this cart for your recyclables. The cart is easy and safe to maneuver and rolls across all types of terrain.

When do I start using my new cart?

Do not use the new cart until the program begins – the carts are too large to be manually lifted. A door hanger will be delivered shortly before you receive your cart noting your start date. If you do not receive a door hanger, call the Department of General Services at 518-434-2489 to find out what day you should begin using your new cart.

What can I put in my new recycling cart?

The recycling program will continue to be single-stream, meaning there is no need to sort recyclables. Do not use plastic bags inside your cart – these are only recyclable at grocery stores. Cardboard does not have to be bundled, but must fit inside your cart.

What do I do on my collection day?

On the night before your collection day, wheel your cart out to the edge of the curb. Carts must be placed away from other objects so that the collection arm has enough space to make the collection safely without tipping over other containers or damaging property. Make sure the container handle faces away from the street toward your home so that the automated arm does not break the lid by attempting to dump it backward.

Do I have to bring my recycling cart out if it isn't full?

You do not have to bring your cart to the curb every week if it is not full – the program is most green and efficient if the trucks do not have to make unnecessary stops.

What do I do if I have more recycling than will fit in my cart?

You cannot put multiple bins out and must store your excess recycling until the next collection day.

Why do I need to provide space between my recycling cart and other items out for collection?

A different vehicle collects each item, so access is important. Also, the collection arm on the automated truck requires space to make the collection safely so that it will not tip over other containers or damage your property. Please keep the containers away from mail boxes, fire hydrants, telephone poles and other obstacles that may interfere with the collection.

Is my collection day changing?

No – your collection day will remain the same. Your recyclables should be placed curbside, after 7:00 p.m. or dusk but before midnight, the evening prior to the designated waste collection and recycling collection day.

What should I do with my old recycling bin?

You can keep your old recycling bin(s) for storage, but they cannot still be used for weekly collection. The automated trucks can only lift the 64-gallon carts. If you would like to dispose of your old bin, place it curbside on your trash night with a note requesting it be thrown away with your trash collection.

What if my cart gets damaged or stolen?

The carts are the property of the City of Albany and each one is assigned to a specific address. All reports of damage or theft will be investigated and should be reported to the Department of General Services at 518-434-2489. Residents are responsible for keeping carts clean.

I live in a multi-unit property that shares recycling bins. What should I do?

Contact your landlord to find out how many carts your property will be receiving and work with your landlord and neighbors to determine who will be responsible for bringing the cart out to the curb each week.

What should I do with my cart if I move?

Carts are the property of the City of Albany and must remain at the address to which they are assigned. If you are moving, please inform the Recycling Coordinator of changes in occupancy by calling 518-434-2489 or emailing albanyrecycles@albanyny.gov.

More questions?

Give us a call at 518-434-2489 or email the Recycling Coordinator at albanyrecycles@albanyny.gov.