

WHAT RESIDENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE END OF ALLEY RECYCLING IN THE CITY

BY ABBY WOJCIK

St. Louis City ended alley recycling collection services over the summer, a change that affects how 80% of residents dispose of their recycling waste. Roughly three months into the new routine, neighborhoods have frustrations and concerns.

The city condensed the recycling pick-up routes to solely residential roll carts and the locations listed at stlouis-mo.gov. The number of



Alley recycling collection has officially ended, and the number of drop-off sites were increased to place one ideally within a mile of all residents.

drop-off sites were expanded to place a location ideally within a mile of every resident.

There are three Ward 9 drop-off sites:

1. **Behind Schnucks at 4115 McPherson Ave. (available 24/7).**
2. **At Washington Avenue & N. Sarah Street (available 24/7).**
3. **Water Division Lot at 1660 S. Kingshighway Blvd. (available Mon.-Sat., 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.)**

The key factor driving this decision comes from the volume of recycling being declined at refuse plants due to contamination. Roughly 55% of material collected through all methods — roll carts, alley dumpsters and drop-off sites — was rejected at a recycling center for that reason, meaning St. Louis paid a higher recycling fee without getting any of the benefits, a city official said.

Comparably, when alley recycling was paused in the past, during the covid pandemic and after the May 16th tornado to prioritize debris collection, the data shifted to showing 25% contamination from roll

carts and drop-off sites alone.

Considering the effectiveness of alley recycling proving to be both wasteful and costly, city officials hope this change will evolve over time to best serve communities and the environment.

Nevertheless, many residents have expressed the lack of accessibility for the elderly, those with disabilities or mobility restraints. Off-site locations are also a major challenge for those who lack transportation and who live in apartments with little storage space.

Some residents question if their monthly trash service fee of \$14 will decrease. Refuse Commissioner Randy Breitenfeld explained at the Oct. 22 Ward 5 Town Hall Meeting that this fee is not an itemized coverage of the city's four collection services: trash, recycling, green waste and bulk pick-up.

In reality, what the city collects in refuse bills doesn't cover the full cost of providing all of these services, and they're paying for the difference.

"I think in our area of South St. Louis, this was a tough pill to swallow," said 5th Ward Alderman Matt Devoti. "In this area of South St. Louis, there are a lot of committed recyclers. So, the idea that we were changing the way those folks took care of their goods was difficult for a lot of them to understand."

The changes are still in the early stages, and the city will continue to monitor trends and make adjustments where needed. For example, the 5th Ward's drop-off sites were overflowing so quickly that Alderman Devoti advocated for an additional collection visit per week at those locations.

The city is also open to considering programs that would allow for individuals to pay for house pick-up or potentially expanding roll-cart coverage in areas with smaller track-records of contamination and illegal-dumping.

"All options are on the table," Refuse Commissioner Breitenfeld said. "We're looking at all the options. We want this to be good, and we want it to work for everyone."

The best avenue for voicing concerns or ideas is through your alderperson. To support sustainability in your community, try keeping things for creative repurposes. Glass jars make great storage containers and vases. Cardboard boxes can be used for organizing, moving or even garden projects such as weed barriers. Plastic and paper bags can be reused for shopping, trash liners or art projects.

It's also important to choose zero-waste or refillable options whenever possible. These St. Louis businesses have refill stations for grocery, cleaning supplies and self-care items that allow you to bring your own container, as well as plenty of plastic-free products: City Greens Market (The Grove), Local Harvest Grocery (Tower Grove South), Dharma + Dwell (Webster Groves), The Social Goods Marketplace (South Grand), and The Refill Effect (Kirkwood).

Lastly, talk to your neighbors, offer or ask for assistance and arrange joint drop-offs. The best way to navigate change, improve systems and take care of our environment is by working together. place one ideally within a mile of all residents.

OPEN WED-SUN
BRUNCH SAT/SUN

Hand-Crafted House-Infused

RUM

PATIO
DINING

HAPPY
HOUR

WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY

4PM-7PM &
10PM-CLOSE

SPECIALTY
COCKTAILS

LIVE MUSIC



512
N EUCLID AVE
ST. LOUIS, MO 63108
314.367.3644

CHECK OUT OUR UPCOMING EVENTS AT
EVANGELINESSTL.COM



New Brand, New Team,
Same Spectacular Service!

City. County. Wherever you're
headed - we're here to help.

Boxdorfer Burfield Team -
St. Louis Real Estate. Trusted.
Local. Experienced.

BOXDORFER BURFIELD TEAM



Rachel Boxdorfer
314.691.0538 • rboxdorfer@reecenichols.com
Craig Burfield
314.956.4619 • tcburfield@reecenichols.com
office: 314.997.7600