About the Selected Citizens' Council and the Question

1.1 Why are we organizing a Citizens' Council on waste?

Waste is a growing problem. We are producing more and more waste, and the municipality has to collect and process it. Residents pay a waste disposal fee for this. To keep costs as low as possible, we separate waste as much as possible. Plastic, for example, can be reused. But that is not enough. Too much waste still ends up in the gray container or as residual waste in underground containers. Illegal dumping, improperly placed waste, and litter also remain problems. Reducing waste is not only good for our wallets but also for the environment. Raw materials are running out, so reuse of materials is important. Additionally, waste incineration produces a lot of CO_2 emissions. That is why the municipality wants to work with residents to find solutions.

One important question is whether a system would help where the amount of money you pay depends on the amount of residual waste you produce. This means that those who produce less residual waste pay less. The selected Citizens' Council will provide a recommendation on this. The municipality is working on a new waste plan, and the Citizens' Council plays a role in this, as the experiences and ideas of residents are valuable for developing good waste policies.

1.2 What happens to the recommendations of the selected Citizens' Council?

The city council adopts the recommendations as long as they fit within the predetermined rules, and there are no major objections. These are the main conditions:

- **Municipal authority**

The municipality must be able to implement the recommendation. For example, a ban on plastic packaging in supermarkets is not possible because the municipality does not have authority over that. However, the municipality can encourage supermarkets to use less plastic.

- **Legal regulations**

A recommendation must be legally permissible and comply with national and local laws. For example, collecting hazardous waste without separation is not only harmful but also legally prohibited.

- **Financial feasibility**

Costs and revenues must be balanced. Since this varies per recommendation, the municipality assesses whether a recommendation is financially feasible. Feedback on this will be provided to you during the process.

This way, we ensure that together we create recommendations that the municipality can truly implement!

1.3 What question will this first selected Citizens' Council work on?

The city council has asked the selected Citizens' Council to help answer the following main question:

How can we reduce waste in Amersfoort? What measures—such as pay-as-you-go—can the municipality implement to decrease the amount of waste in Amersfoort?

Sub-questions

- **Financial incentives and fairness:** Can a system where you pay per amount of waste (such as Diftar) help reduce waste production?

• **Fair cost distribution:** How can we ensure a fair distribution of costs for households? And should this apply to all types of waste?
• **More efficient waste management:** Less waste means less collection, cleanup, and enforcement. How can we improve this as a city?
• **More reuse and recycling:** How can we ensure that less residual waste is incinerated and more is separated, reused, and recycled?
• **A cleaner city, together with residents:** How can we encourage more people and businesses to contribute to a clean city? And how do we motivate residents to clean up litter or report improperly placed waste?
• **Tailored solutions per neighborhood:** Each district and neighborhood has different waste issues. How can we better address these specific challenges?

2. About Waste and Resources in Amersfoort

In Amersfoort, we aim to produce as little waste as possible and reuse as much as we can. Over the past few years, Amersfoort has gradually achieved better results in waste separation by implementing "reverse collection." This means that the service for collecting valuable materials such as PMD (plastic, metal, and drink cartons), OPK (old paper and cardboard), and GFT (organic waste) is kept as high as possible by collecting these materials from households whenever possible. The service for fine residual waste has been slightly reduced: residents are responsible for bringing this waste to underground containers themselves.

In 2022, each resident produced an average of 160 kg of residual waste. Our first goal is to reduce this to 100 kg per year by 2030 and ultimately to 30 kg by 2040. To achieve this, we need to produce less waste and improve waste separation, both for fine and bulky residual waste. The municipality supports residents in this effort, ensuring that valuable materials and products such as paper, glass, organic waste, PMD, wood, scrap metal, electrical appliances, and second-hand goods can be reused. This saves new raw materials and helps protect the planet.

Working together for a clean city

Many residents of Amersfoort want a clean city and contribute to this goal. Less waste also means less litter on the streets. The municipality and ROVA clean up litter and illegally dumped waste, and many residents help out. However, research shows that people are dissatisfied with litter cleanup. Keeping the city clean is a challenge that requires everyone's help. That is why we are asking the first Selected Citizens' Council to contribute ideas on waste reduction, better waste separation, and a cleaner city.

Waste collection in Amersfoort

As a municipality, we are obligated to collect waste and resources from households. Waste refers to materials that are incinerated after collection, such as residual waste. Resources are materials that can be reused, such as glass, old paper and cardboard, wood, and electrical appliances.

We strive to balance sustainability, service, and costs. This means minimizing residual waste incineration while maximizing the collection of reusable resources. We do this in a way that is easy for residents and keeps costs as low as possible.

Waste and resource collection in Amersfoort is managed by ROVA:

- ROVA operates for 23 municipalities, covering a service area of approximately 870,000 residents across four regions: Zwolle, Twente, Achterhoek, and Eemland. In the Eemland region, ROVA also collects waste in Woudenberg and Bunschoten-Spakenburg.
- ROVA works closely with Afvalverwijdering Utrecht (AVU), which handles the transfer, transport, and processing of fine and bulky residual waste, as well as organic waste (GFT), for all municipalities in the province of Utrecht.
- Additionally, ROVA, AVU, and Circulus collaborate under CirkelWaarde, an organization committed to a circular economy. They ensure that household waste is processed in a sustainable way while keeping costs as low as possible.

Collection systems in Amersfoort

Waste is collected in various ways in Amersfoort:

- At-home collection: Old paper and cardboard (OPK), organic waste (GFT), and plastic, metal, and drink cartons (PMD) are collected in mini-containers. Where mini-containers are not feasible, communal collection containers are provided.
- Neighborhood containers: Packaging glass and textiles are collected through containers placed in neighborhoods.
- Recycling center: Larger waste items and resources can be dropped off for free at the recycling station on Nijverheidsweg-Noord. A new recycling center is being developed at De Wieken industrial area, set to open in 2027. This facility will focus more on reuse, with an expanded drop-off point for second-hand goods. Not only will items be sold, but parts and materials will also be reused.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

The national government is increasingly holding producers and importers financially and organizationally responsible for the waste management of their products. This system is called Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). The collection and return of these products often take place in public spaces, meaning municipalities also play a role. For example, Amersfoort provides collection containers for textiles.

Currently, there are agreements in place for the collection and reuse of:

- Car tires and wrecked vehicles
- Batteries and accumulators
- Electrical and electronic equipment
- Textiles
- Plastic packaging, metal packaging, and drink cartons (PMD)
- Single-use plastic and cans (litter prevention)
- Diapers (starting January 1, 2026)

Why even less waste?

Everything we buy and use – from food to clothing and transportation – has an impact on our world. Producing these goods requires a lot of energy, water, and land, putting increasing pressure on natural resources. Additionally, waste contributes to climate change, as we still rely heavily on new raw materials, and waste is often incinerated, increasing environmental pollution. The Earth has finite resources, and to maintain a healthy living environment, we must reduce waste and use resources more efficiently. That's why it is crucial to minimize waste and increase reuse.

The selected Citizens' Council is exploring the question: "How can we reduce waste in Amersfoort?"

Reducing waste is essential because it leads to:

- Less scarcity of raw materials
- Lower waste collection and processing costs (and therefore lower waste disposal fees)
- Reduced CO_2 emissions from production and incineration
- Less pollution from waste processing
- A cleaner and more pleasant city
- Greater biodiversity

Difference between household and commercial waste

The law distinguishes between household waste and commercial waste. The municipality is required to collect household waste and raw materials. Through policies—such as different collection methods, pricing structures, and service levels—the municipality can encourage residents to reduce residual waste and separate more recyclable materials.

For businesses and institutions, however, the municipality does not have this authority. National regulations determine the rules for commercial waste, and the Regional Implementation Service (RUD) Utrecht is responsible for oversight. However, the municipality can inform and encourage businesses to reduce waste and maximize material reuse (circular entrepreneurship).

Processing costs

The costs of waste processing are a major reason to reduce waste. Although processing recyclable materials such as plastic and paper has become more expensive due to stricter quality requirements, it remains cheaper than processing residual waste.

Due to the CO_2 tax on incineration, this cost difference will continue to increase in the coming years. Residual waste that is not separated must be incinerated, which is harmful to the environment and raises costs for both the municipality and, ultimately, for residents and businesses.