

DRAFT  
Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes  
May 8, 2019, 8am – 9:30am  
City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave, Council Chambers  
Minutes taken by Debby Knight

**Members Present:** Ilana Bebachick, Debby Galef, Rob Gogan, Susy Jones, Debby Knight, Janet Mosley, Michael Papas, Meera Singh, Matthew St. Onge, Quinten Steenhuis

**Members Absent:** Martha Henry, Laura Nichols, Mary Verhage, Kristen Watkins

**Staff Present:** Camilla Elvis, Michael Orr

**Members of the Public Present:** Judy Nathans

**Housekeeping Items:**

- Minutes of April 10, 2019 meeting were approved
- Susy chaired the meeting for the first time

**City Updates:**

- Mike announced that the Budget Hearing for the DPW had been held the previous day; there were no questions about waste and no big questions overall

**Debrief from the City Council hearing on the Zero Waste Master Plan** (presented on April 23, 3:00 to 5:00 PM)

- Mike went through the presentation from the hearing in some detail. Some of the additional information, questions and discussion focused on:
- Trash collection – there has been a steep decrease: currently 16.36lbs/HH/wk, close to the 16lb goal for 2020
- Organics collection – we currently collect around 7 tons/day; details on expectations for the 2 phases of the expansion: next step is to cover buildings with 13+ units receiving city trash hauling, then to those only receiving city recycling services.
- Other possible organics processing options are all too small to accommodate the high volume from Cambridge collection. Several people also talked about the benefits of methane generation from organics processing.
- Trash – how will “right size” containers be determined, what to do with the occasional excess trash. All still undecided.
- Mattress Recycling – going well so far, pickups can be expanded if necessary, currently around 55 mattresses per week, generally positive feedback, question as to how to accommodate demand during peak moving in/out weeks
- We’re looking into expansion of small business recycling provided by the City in 2020.
- Efforts to reduce contamination in the recycling stream – August 2018 it was 10%, the goal for September 2019 is 7%. There was door-to-door outreach in East Cambridge in April, waiting for a debrief from the canvassing team; Fall efforts will include school backpack express, bus and BlueBikes ads.

- Discussion of shift away from cartons and aseptic containers as these low-grade materials can't be handled where they're sent; plastics are way more valuable in the recycling stream; some products, such as milk, can also be purchased in returnable glass containers.
- **What's next for our 4 priorities:**
- Mike and Susy announced that following the ZWMP hearing, the RAC has been tasked with thinking about single-use plastics/products; with this shift, there was no discussion of the other 3 priorities at this time. The single-use issue can be a major focus of the RAC's fall work and is a huge opportunity to shape future policy.
- Mike mentioned that examining single-use plastics/products will involve a lot of data collecting around what is currently needed and used by businesses. There will be many options to consider, including bans and fees on some disposables. Looking at our experiences, such as with the bag ordinance, as well as what other cities such as Berkeley are doing will also be part of the process.
- The question of shifting to compostable paper items also came up. Mike mentioned that keeping them out of the stream is preferable – if everyone shifted to them, it would become a problem. School lunch trays are currently OK, since they account for approximately 200 lbs. of the 7 tons/day in the organics waste stream.

#### **Simple Recycling discussion:**

- Mike has met with the manager of this program as the City explores ways to increase textile recycling. Simple Recycling is a for-profit that is already in business with some other non-profits and is now also doing textile recycling for communities. Key points about the program:
  - The Simple Recycling vehicle follows city trucks on trash days and picks up pink bags that residents set out with textiles for reuse/recycling. Materials are then taken to Woburn for sorting. Those materials are then shipped to another facility. About 90%-95% of the materials end up being reused or recycled. Textiles that just require no repairs can then be sent to thrift shops. Textiles that require some repairs end up at a different facility. Lower quality materials can be used for rags, insulation (for car doors, for example).
  - The City would be paid \$20/ton for the materials collected. Brookline and Somerville have begun the program and love it.
  - Simple Recycling provides a list of materials and sends a mailer to each household that's eligible. All textiles go in one bag – residents don't need to think about sorting. Replacement pink bags are tied onto recycling totes for future use and residents can request extra bags.
  - Several people asked about the impact of this system on donations to local non-profit organizations such as Cradles2Crayons, Goodwill, etc. It was suggested that these organizations be listed first on the Get Rid of It Right tool to support these non-profits.

#### **Action Items**

- Please sign up to volunteer at upcoming events, especially at Riverfest on June 1. Camilla has sent an email listing events where volunteers are needed.

Meeting adjourned just before 9:30 am.

# April 23<sup>rd</sup> City Council Health & Environment Committee Hearing

Zero Waste Master Plan

Curbside Compost Update

Recycle Right Campaign

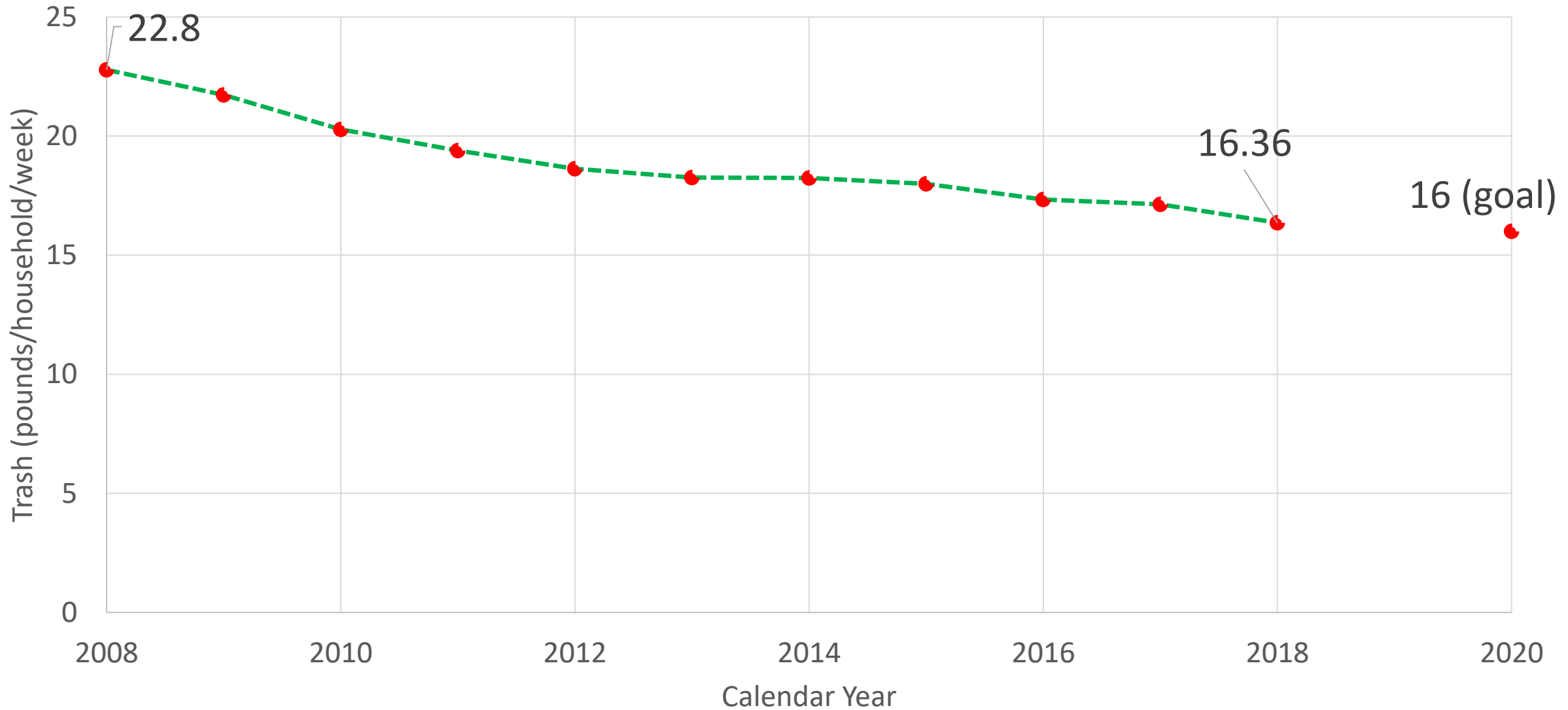
Small Business Recycle Pilot

Single-Use Plastics



**ZERO**   
**WASTE**  
**CAMBRIDGE**

# 2020 Residential Trash Reduction Goal



2050 Goal: 80% reduction, 4 lbs/HH/wk

# Zero Waste Master Plan

- ZWMP process began in 2017 with our consultants
- Public meetings were held in late-2018 for public comment and Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) comment
- RAC input has been important in the ZWMP process
- Draft ZWMP is online and we're still seeking public comment





# Zero Waste Master Plan --Recommendations

Option	Recommendation	Timing
Organics	Phase 1: Expand program to residents on City's trash collection routes (7,500 households) Evaluate collection operations. Phase 2: Expand program to residents on City recycling collection routes (12,000 households)	Phase 1: 2019-2020 Phase 2: 2021-2022
Trash	"Right size" trash container; 32 to 48 gallons per household. Provide a mechanism for occasional excess trash.	2021-2023
Reduce/ Reuse	Continue to support reduction/reuse activities in the community including Fix-It clinics, reuse events, food waste reduction, and waste exchange/swaps.	2019 and ongoing
Mattress Recycling	Collect mattresses and recycle them via MassDEP grant program.	2019

# Zero Waste Master Plan --Recommendations

Option	Recommendation	Timing
<b>Curbside Recycling Improvements</b>	Continue Recycle Right campaign, and curbside enforcement to improve capture of target materials and reduce contamination.	2019 and ongoing
<b>Recycling Center</b>	Consider reconfiguration of the Recycling Center to focus on collection and/or consolidation of specific materials.	2020/2021
<b>Textile Recycling</b>	Develop and implement a textile recycling strategy either run by the City or in partnership with an existing organization.	2020/2021
<b>Commercial Recycling</b>	Expand Small Business Recycle Pilot Explore Small Business Compost Pilot	2020 2021-2022

# Mattress Recycling Update

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- Collection began April 11.
- 4 collection days since then.
- 200 mattresses and 5 tons diverted from trash thus far!





# Curbside Organics Update

- Apprx. 7 tons collected daily
- 1800 tons diverted since April 2018
- Apprx. 7.3% decrease in trash April 2018-March 2019. (typical year over year decrease= 0.5-1%)
- 25,000 households have access to program



# Curbside Organics Expansion: Phase 1

- DPW to begin phasing in curbside organics to 7,500 households in 227 buildings in Fall 2019 (13+ unit buildings with City trash).
- Rollout will take approximately 12 months.
  - DPW to host up to 5 community meetings for large building owners/managers.
  - DPW to meet with each property manager and owners on-site.
- Potential tonnage to increase to 8-10 tons per day





# Curbside Organics Expansion Phase 2

- DPW must evaluate collection operations and routing prior to Phase 2 expansion.
- An additional 12,000 households in 13+ unit buildings have City recycling collection (208 bldgs).
- Expansion to be considered in 2021
- Potential tonnage to increase to 10-12 tons or more per day



# Curbside Organics Processing

Other facilities that accept food waste in Boston-area are:

Black Earth Compost; Manchester, MA

Brick Ends Farm; Hamilton, MA

Needham Public Works; Needham, MA

Rocky Hill Farm, Saugus, MA

Vanguard Renewables; Haverhill, MA

For a variety of reasons, none are currently able to handle 2000 tons of food waste from Cambridge annually.

For future organics rollout, more tonnage will be more difficult





# Recycle Right Campaign Update

- Fall 2018 average contamination: 10%
- Sept 2019 Goal: 7% contamination
- Video & Press release for beginning of campaign – July 2018
- Curbside Monitoring Began 9/1/18.
  - 4400 carts inspected
  - High & Medium contamination had OOPS tag put on cart
  - Postcard mailed to High contamination buildings
  - Drivers reject recycling more frequently

## OOPS!

We need your help to

**Recycle Right.**

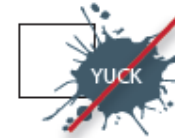
Leave these items out of your recycling cart:



Do Not Bag Recyclables  
No Garbage



No Plastic Bags,  
Films or Wrappers



No Food or Liquids  
(empty all containers)



No Clothing or Linens  
(donate)



No Tangles,  
Cords, Hoses, Hangers  
or Electronics



No Hazardous Items,  
Wood or Scrap Metal

NOTES

Thank you for your attention to this--

**Don't let your recycling get rejected.  
Recycle Right.**

**THE WORKS**  
CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

CambridgeMA.Gov/Recycle  
617.349.4800

# Recycle Right Campaign Update

- Citywide Mailer – December 2018
- Water Bill Inserts –Feb 2019
- Recycle Right + Mattress Postcard Citywide – early April 2019
- Door-to-Door outreach—Mid-April

## Recycle Right

Cambridge's curbside recycling continues to be recycled despite challenges in the industry. But, costs have increased. Help us reduce costs by cleaning up contamination in your recycling.

*Remember:*



No Bagged Items  
No Garbage



No Plastic Bags,  
Films or Wrappers



No Tangles  
(no hoses, wires,  
hangers or electronics)



No Clothing  
or Linens  
(donate)

## Mattress Recycling



Beginning April 8, mattresses and box springs will no longer be trashed. The City has partnered with a nonprofit to collect and recycle mattresses at no cost to residents. To schedule your free collection visit [CambridgeMA.Gov/Mattress](https://www.cambridgema.gov/mattress).

### Get Rid of It Right



Wondering how to dispose of an item? Download the **"Zero Waste Cambridge"** app or visit [CambridgeMA.Gov/Recycle](https://www.cambridgema.gov/recycle).

### Citywide Composting Turns One!



Thank you for joining in this effort.  
[CambridgeMA.Gov/Compost](https://www.cambridgema.gov/compost)

**Stay updated on your waste services:**  
Subscribe to Recycling's monthly e-newsletter at [CambridgeMA.Gov/Subscribe](https://www.cambridgema.gov/subscribe).

# RECYCLE

Curbside recycling is mandatory in Cambridge. Together, we have diverted thousands of tons of materials from the trash.

## What can you recycle?

### Recycling is easy!

- ✓ Rinse containers. No food or liquids.
- ✓ Flatten or nest boxes when possible.
- ✗ Do not bag recyclables in a plastic bag.

#### IMPORTANT!

### Some items DO NOT go in the recycling cart:

✗ Plastic Bags / Film, Wrappers (See below)	✗ Electronics
✗ Hoses & Cables	✗ Pots / Pans, Scrap Metal
✗ Clothes Hangers	✗ No Paper Towels / Plates / Takeout Containers
✗ Clothing / Textiles (See below)	

### Plastic bags?

Bring plastic bags and plastic film to the grocery store or Recycling Center.

### Clothing / textiles?

Clothing, linens, shoes and accessories in all conditions can be donated. For info, use our "Get Rid Of It Right" tool.

#### METAL CANS & FOIL



#### GLASS BOTTLES & JARS



#### PLASTIC CONTAINERS



#### PAPER & CARDBOARD



Search for how to dispose of everyday items!

Visit [CambridgeMA.Gov/Recycle](https://www.cambridgema.gov/recycle) to use our "Get Rid Of It Right" tool, or download the "Zero Waste Cambridge" app.



# Recycle Right Campaign Update

- New “NO” sticker for carts.
- New Recycle label.
- School Backpack Express –April 2019
- CHA Outreach--Jan 2019- ongoing–
  - Recycle Bags distributed to 600 residents at 14 properties



**NO** Food Liquids



**NO** Bagged Recycling Garbage



**NO** Plastic Bags Plastic Wrap

CambridgeMA.Gov/Recycle





# Recycle Right Campaign Update



- Bus Shelter & Blue Bike Ads--December 2018
- Newsletter - Monthly
- Facebook & Twitter-- Weekly Or Monthly







City of Cambridge Department of Public Works (Official)

February 14 · 🌐

Roses are red,  
Recycle bins are blue,  
When you open your package,  
It can't all be recycled- be sure to sort through!

Styrofoam, air pillows, plastic ties, and wrapping cannot be recycled curbside. Use the Get Rid Of It Right Tool at <http://Cambridgema.gov/theworks> if you aren't sure!



👍❤️ You and 23 others

2 Comments 2 Shares



[CambridgePublicWorks](#) @CambridgeDPW · Jan 17

1800 people have played our Waste Sorting Game. Here are the top three items that still cause confusion.

- Metal hangers: NO recycle bin. Bring to Recycle Center
- Soiled Pizza Boxes: OK for Recycle Bin
- Oil-based paint: Household Hazardous Waste Event

[cambridgema.recycle.game](http://cambridgema.recycle.game)



# Cartons & Aseptic Containers

- Removed from statewide recycling list
- Currently, cartons downgrade the quality of Casella's mixed paper bale
- Too many downgrades may result in rejection
- Thus, we need to work together to minimize cartons/aseptic containers in recycling
- Cartons & Aseptic containers aren't considered contamination at Casella





# Small Business Recycling Pilot

- Launched November 2018
- 123 businesses
- 150 tons collected in 6 months
- Explore expansion in Fall 2020 when curbside recycling collection contract is up for renewal.



# Sample of Single-Use Plastic Laws

- Brookline Bylaw (effective Jan 2020):
  - Food establishments are prohibited from providing food in PS, PVC, or PET serviceware
  - Selling or distributing foam polystyrene food serviceware or packing material is prohibited
  - Produce bags shall be a recyclable paper bag, reusable bag, or a compostable plastic bag.
  - Town may not use Town Funds to purchase Bottled Water (1L or less) for the department's own general use in offices.



# Sample of Single-Use Plastic Laws

- Berkeley, CA Ordinance (effective Jan 2020):
  - Only reusable foodware can be used for dine-in service
  - Prepared Food Vendors shall charge \$0.25 for every Disposable Cup.
  - Disposable Foodware must be accepted by Berkeley compost program
  - Income from charges shall be retained by the Food Vendor.
  - Disposable straws, stirrers, napkins, condiment packets, utensils and other items shall be provided free of charge, and only upon request by the customer or at self-serve stations.

# Single-Use Plastics & Our Recycling

- Recyclable plastics have value in our recycling.
- Reduce and reuse aspect of Berkeley Ordinance is good.
- BYOB Ordinance has resulted in 50-80% reduction in single-use bag consumption
- Polystyrene Ordinance eliminated Styrofoam in food-service establishments

March 2019 Approximate value  
and % of recycling by weight

Commodity	Apprx Value (per ton)	Apprx % of Recycling Stream**
Aluminum	\$1000	1%
Plastics	\$300	5%
Steel/Tin	\$150	3%
Cardboard	\$80	15%
Mixed Paper	-\$1	48%
Glass	-\$65	18%
Trash	-\$95	9%