

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2020, 8am – 9:30am
City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave, Council Chambers
Minute Taker: Mary Verhage

Members Present: Ilana Bebchick, Leah Beckett, Catrina Damrell, Shirley Elliot, Debby Galef, Rob Gogan, Martha Henry, Sakiko Isomichi, Susy Jones, Debby Knight, Lindsay Levine, Scott MacGrath, Janet Mosley, Audrey Ng, Laura Nichols, Richard Nurse, Diane Roseman, Meera Singh, Quinten Steenhuis, Mary Verhage, Kristen Watkins, Suzanne Wong

Members Absent: Holden Cookson

Staff Present: Meryl Brott, John Fitzgerald, Mike Orr

Public Present: Judy Nathans, Michael Papas, Helen Snively

Susy opened the meeting at 8 am.

Members (12 new, 11 returning) introduced themselves with a short bio. Guests introduced themselves.

1. Housekeeping

January minutes were approved with 5 edits.

2. Review of the RAC and its responsibilities

Mike gave an overview of RAC (see his 32 slide presentation attached). Discussion was limited due to time.

Questions raised:

- Can members call in for meetings? ANSWER: Mike to investigate
- Can subcommittees make decisions? ANSWER: per Mike, Yes as long as a member reports back to RAC
- What revenue does the city receive from recycled items (plastics, glass, cans, paper)? Mike to investigate with legal for permission to share this information
- Why aren't all households and businesses served by DPW services? ANSWER per Mike: logistics and taxes

3. City Updates (10 min)

At its February meeting, City Council approved:

- \$97,500 grant to fund various recycling programs including free mattress pickup
- Sending request to City Manager for an update on the mobile recycling center.

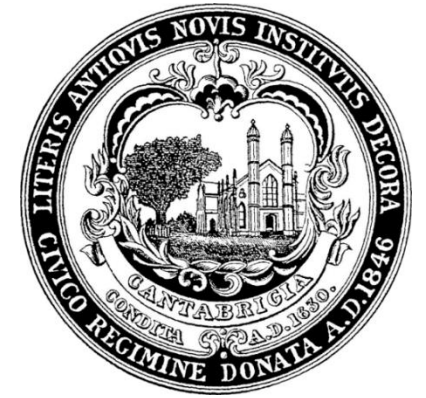
No time for any information from DPW about these 2 items.

4. Closing, 9:15 (15 min)

- Public Comment; none
- Follow-up Action/Decisions
 - Mike: Can members call in for meetings?
 - Mike: What revenue does the city receive from recycled items (plastics, glass, cans, paper)?
 - No minute taker was identified
 - Decision needed: When should elections be held for Chair, Co-chair, Secretary?
 - Due to insufficient time at January's meeting, RAC needs to identify its 2020 goals and evaluate results from 2019
- Announcements

Susy adjourned the meeting at 9:30 am.

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC)



ZERO
WASTE
CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE
DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC
**THE
WORKS**

RAC History

- Established in 1991, part of the [City's Refuse and Litter Ordinance](#) (Chapter 8.24.070G).
- Minimum 9 members appointed by the City Manager, with a demonstrated interest in the relevant topics.
 - Members shall be appointed to terms of 3 years
 - The City seeks representatives from local businesses, property managers, CHA, nonprofit institutions, and users of the Recycling Center.



City Hall, 1989

RAC Governance & Structure

- RAC is an advisory committee to the Department of Public Works (DPW) Commissioner. The City's Director of Recycling or his/her designees is the City staff member appointed to oversee the RAC.
 - City staff are not voting members of the Committee.
- The RAC does not have regulatory authority. Through education/advocacy/analysis/etc, the RAC influences City policies and community action.



RAC, 2014

RAC Governance & Structure

- **RAC members may not deliberate outside of RAC meetings. Email may be considered deliberation.** Please limit emails sent to RAC members to non-RAC matters.
- Example: If City Council asks RAC to comment on single-use plastic policy, there may be no deliberating between RAC members via email.



RAC, 2004

RAC Governance & Structure

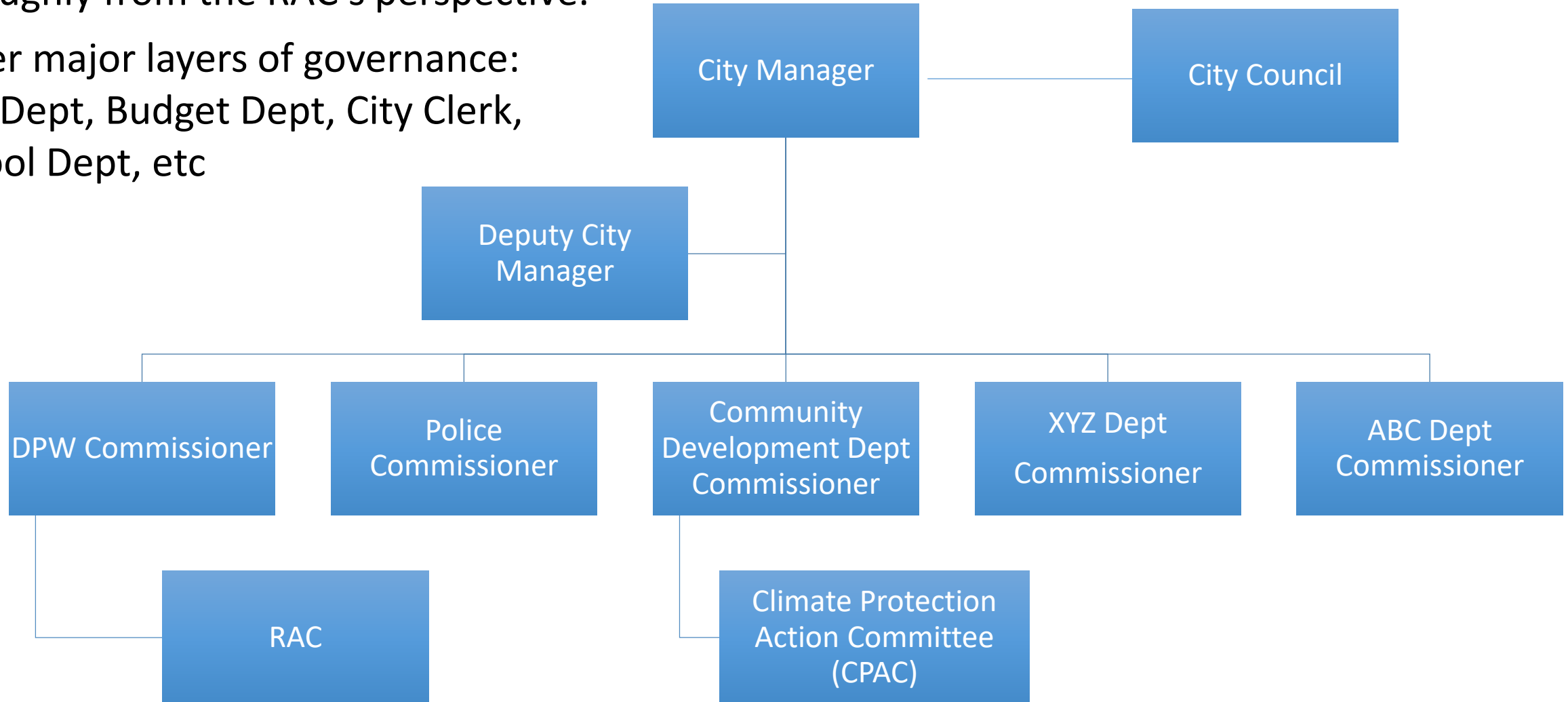
- Members should distinguish between personal and RAC positions on issues. The RAC may appoint member(s) to convey the RAC's views on particular matters to the wider community.
- Members are free to communicate their personal views to the public, the press, or to government. **However, they must make it clear that they are not speaking for the RAC.**
- Example: RAC members may speak to City Councilors, comment on City Council hearings, communicate with City Manager or other City staff, but they must do so as civilians, not as RAC members.



Visual Aid of City governance

- NOTE: This is NOT a precise or perfect representation of the order of governance in City.
- This is meant to be an exercise so RAC members understand how governance works, roughly from the RAC's perspective.

Other major layers of governance:
Law Dept, Budget Dept, City Clerk,
School Dept, etc



RAC Officers & Attendance

- Officers will be elected on an annual basis in May unless the RAC decides otherwise
- The RAC shall elect a chair, co-chair, and secretary from its members annually.
- The Officers shall set the agenda in coordination with City staff via conference call.
 - The Chair shall ensure that action items are making progress, that the Minutes are being published, sub-committees are reporting back promptly and accurately.
 - The Co-Chair shall assist the Chair and fill in for the Chair in his/her absence.
 - The secretary or his/her designee shall be responsible for attendance, decision minutes, & submitting a draft to the City within 5 days of the meeting.
- All members must attend and participate in most of the years' monthly meetings. Meetings are monthly September thru June, typically on the second Wednesday at 8am.
- Each month a different RAC member volunteers to draft and send minutes to Secretary.
- Each member must notify the chair or the staff if s/he will be absent from a meeting
- Currently—Chair: Susy Jones, Secretary: Debby Galef

Proposed Rules for RAC

- RAC will make decisions by consensus whenever possible. Majority votes shall dictate decisions. A quorum is necessary for votes. Quorum= 51% of RAC members.

Proposed rules for meeting etiquette:

- Start and end meetings on time.
- Stick to the agenda topic, and point at hand.
- You may speak when recognized by the Chair. Loudly project voice or speak into microphone at all times.
- Practice respectful communication
- Alternate using your voice and making space for other voices
- Aim for consensus in decision-making. If consensus isn't forthcoming, vote.
- Come to closure on issues in a timely way.



RAC, 2014

State Ethics Commission and Open Meeting Law

- Each year the City requires RAC members to complete a State Ethics Commission training. The City will distribute info and an acknowledgment form to complete and return to Recycling Director, or to the City Clerk.
- The RAC uses the Commonwealth's [Open Meeting Law](#) as a guide for:
 - Notice of posting
 - Rules of Meetings of Public Bodies
 - Minutes



RAC, 2014

Minute Taking guidance from Open Meeting Law

- Public bodies are required to create and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings. The minutes, which must be created and approved in a timely manner, must include:
- the date, time and place of the meeting;
- the members present or absent;
- the decisions made and actions taken, including a record of all votes;
- a summary of the discussions on each subject;
- a list of all documents and exhibits used at the meeting.

While the minutes must include a summary of the discussions on each subject, a transcript is not required.



Proposed RAC Responsibilities

- Understand info available to the public on the City's recycling webpage: CambridgeMA.Gov/Recycle.
- Take a leadership role in projects, such as research, organizing & attending events.
- Participate in creating committee direction and implementation of ideas regarding policies, programs, and technical matters.
- Work with the DPW, Climate Protection Committee, and other appropriate City staff to provide feedback on City initiatives and collaborate on various projects;
- Research different approaches to communication, education and best practices for recycling, composting, reuse and waste reduction programs;
- Disseminate outreach materials and post flyers in the community to educate the public;
- Write articles for all varieties of media promoting City programs and services including newspaper editorials, blog posts, newsletter articles, etc;
- Initiate, plan, attend and run events to promote recycling, composting, reuse and waste reduction;
- Recruit additional volunteers for specific events and projects;
- Develop positions on city& state level policies & programs
- Meet with the community and volunteer in at least 2-3 events, such as Danehy Park Family Day, Area 4 Community Pride Day, MayFair, Oktoberfest, Family Fun Day, RiverFest, Fresh Pond Day, Arts in the Park, Summer in the City, and other block parties or public events.



About the City's Solid Waste & Recycling Division

- Trash collected by 6 DPW trucks 5 days/wk
- Compost collected by 2 DPW trucks 5 days/wk
- Recycling collected by private contractor in 6 trucks 5 days/wk
- Yard waste collected by private contractor in 1-2 trucks 5 days/wk, April 1-Dec 31.
- Christmas Trees collected by DPW (soon to be private contractor), 5 days per week for first two weeks in January
- TVs, appliances, scrap metal, A/C's picked up 2 days/wk by DPW (permit required; some free, some have cost).
- Mattress collected 1-2 days/wk by private contractor.



About the City's Solid Waste & Recycling Division

- Public area trash bins serviced by DPW in 2 trucks, 5-7 days per week.
- Public area recycle bins serviced by private contractor, 5-7 days per week.
- The City started a Small Business Recycle Program (SBRP) in 2018. Private contractor services 123 businesses 4 days per week.
- Textiles are collected at private entities via retail stores, drop-off donation bins.
- City hosts 4 household hazardous waste events per year
- Recycle Center open 3 days per week, accepting books, electronics, bulbs, mercury items, recyclables, scrap metal, and has a swap shelf.



Where does waste go?

- Trash goes to transfer station in Boston where it is trucked to waste-to-energy facility or landfill (apprx 50/50 split)
- Compost hauled to Charlestown, then to Greater Lawrence Sanitary District for anaerobic digestion.
- Recycling hauled to Casella in Charlestown.
- Yard waste and Christmas Trees hauled to Woburn.
- TVs and electronics hauled to NH for sorting/processing.
- A/C's and fridges: Refrigerants removed by contractor, then added to other scrap metal for recycling in Everett.
- Mattresses hauled to UTEC in Lawrence for processing (and recycling the commodities embedded in them).
- Batteries, bulbs, and Mercury items are hauled to Fall River



How much of the City does DPW service?

- Apprx 50,000 households (HH) in Cambridge. DPW services or contracts out service for:
 - Trash and Compost: 32,500 HH
 - Recycling and Yard Waste: 44,800 HH
 - Recycle Center, Hazardous Waste, TVs/electronics, mattresses, etc: all HH
 - Institutions aren't included.
- Apprx 1000 retail stores and several thousand businesses in Cambridge. City doesn't provide waste services for any business except for the 123 businesses in the Small Business Recycle Pilot.



City policies

- Recycling is mandatory for all businesses, residents, and institutions.
- Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB) Ordinance: March 2016. Input from RAC helped support reuse (in form of 10 cent charge for bags at retail stores)
- Polystyrene Ordinance: October 2016. Bans all #6 plastics from being dispensed by foodservice stores.
- RAC provided recommendation to the Commissioner of DPW on a single-use plastics ordinance (Dec. 2019)
- 2009: City set goal for trash reduction. Baseline of 2008, reduce trash 30% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.



BRING YOUR OWN BAG

Avoid the minimum
10¢ charge
on each checkout bag

Together, we can
reduce waste and
protect the environment.



No more single use
plastic bags, it's the law.
Checkout bags
must be compostable,
recycled paper, or reusable.

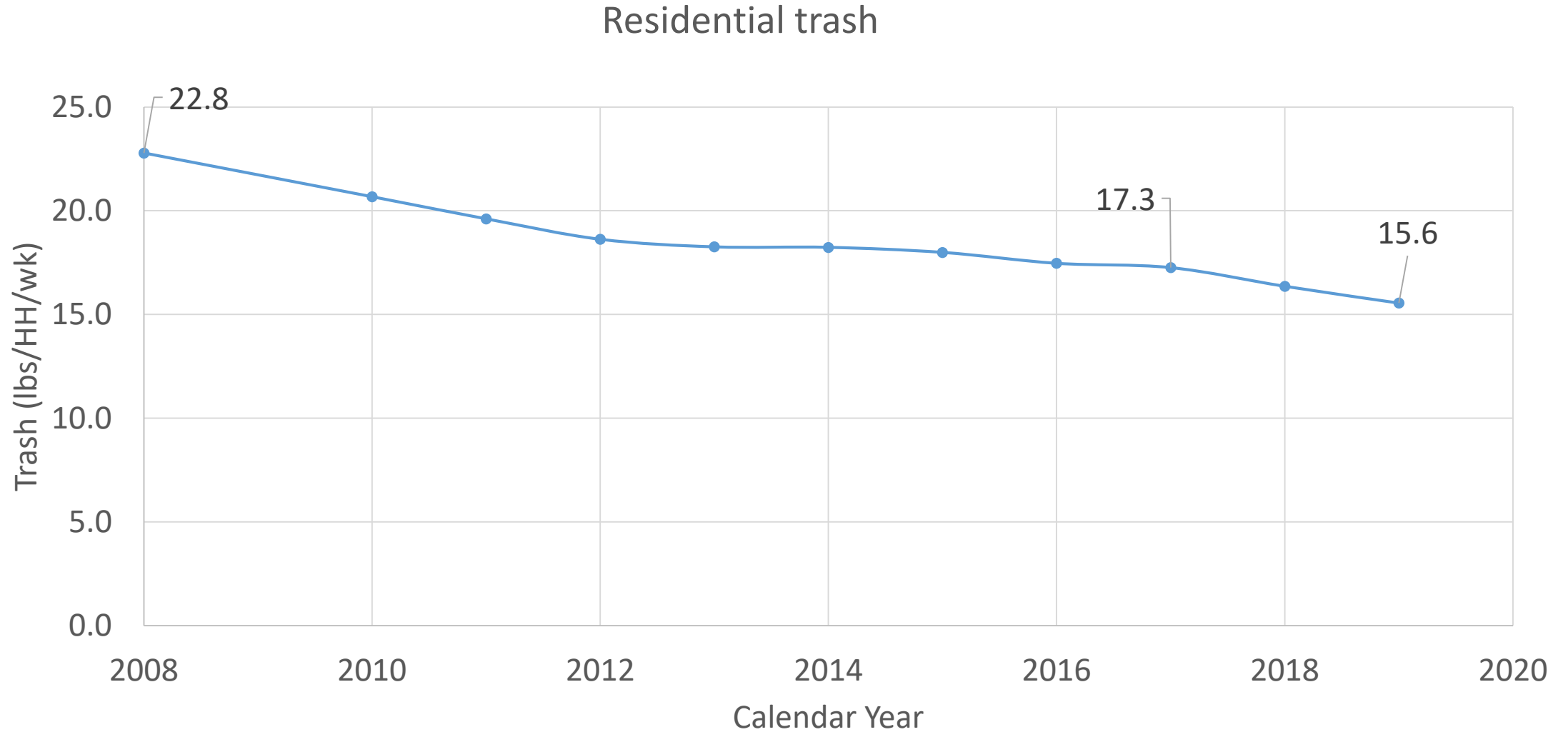
Minimum 10¢ charge
on each checkout bag
provided at the point of sale.

City of Cambridge
Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance
Effective March 31, 2016
CambridgeMA.Gov/BYOB

Recent Initiatives of DPW and Recycling

- Zero Waste Master Plan
- Curbside Compost
- Recycle Right
- Mattress recycling
- Single-use Plastics
- Fix It Clinics
- Get Rid of It Right tool

2020 Residential Trash Reduction Goal



2020 Goal: 30% reduction (16 lbs/HH/wk)

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
- Final ZWMP published in Summer 2019



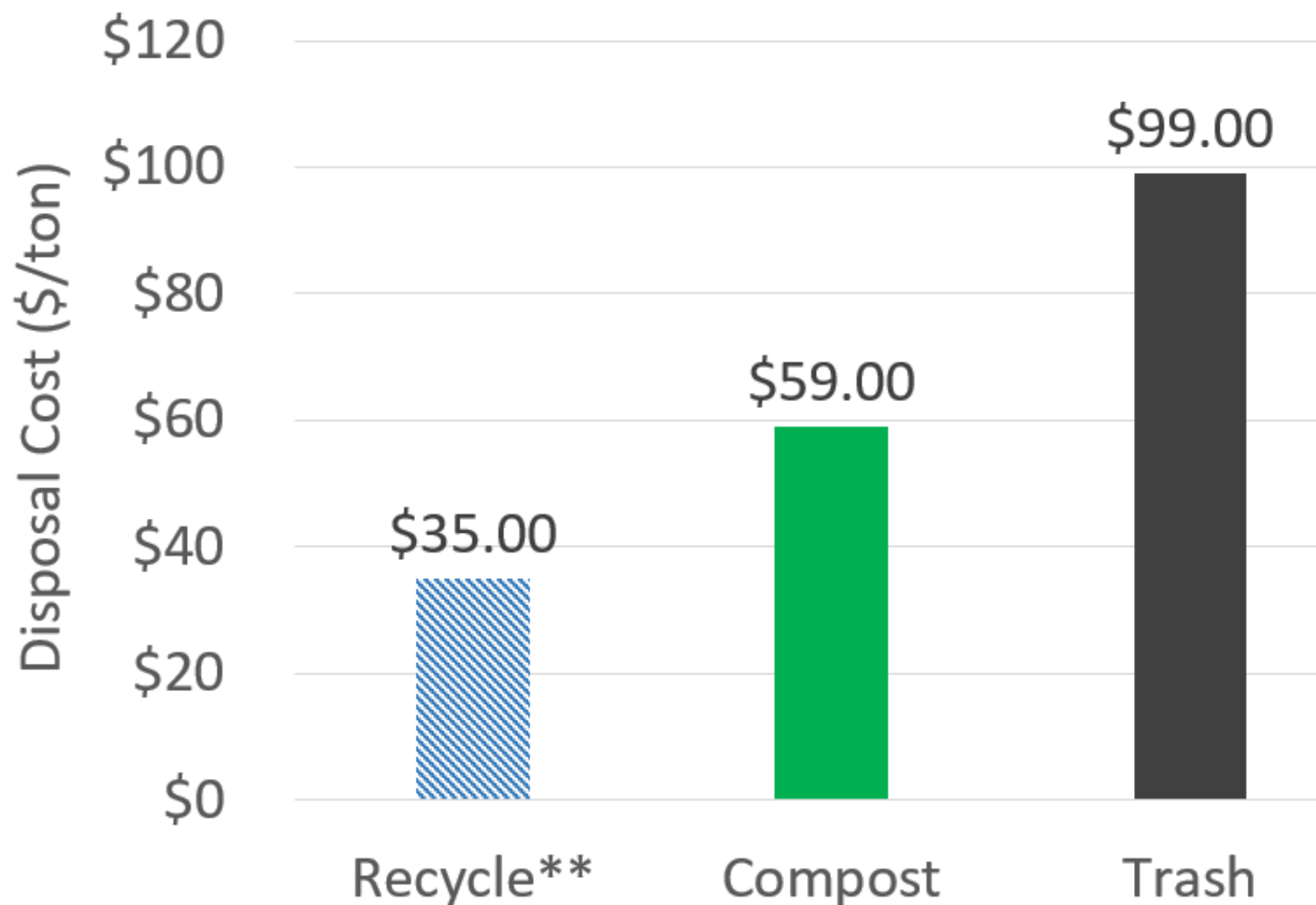
Zero Waste Master Plan --Recommendations

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

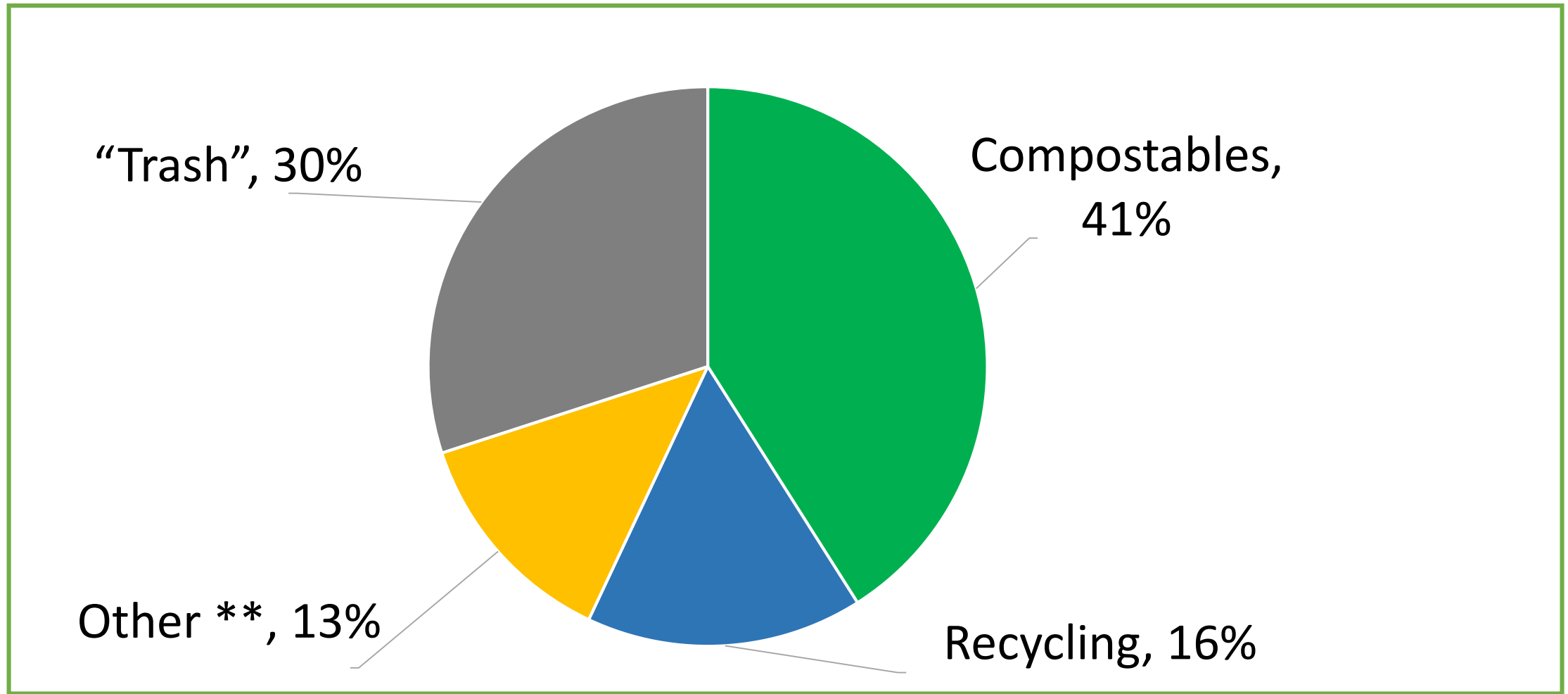
Option	Recommendation	Timing
Curbside Recycling Improvements	Continue Recycle Right campaign, and curbside enforcement to improve capture of target materials and reduce contamination.	2019 and ongoing
Recycling Center	Consider reconfiguration of the Recycling Center to focus on collection and/or consolidation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

FY19 Disposal Costs (Tip Fee only)



**Currently pay \$70/ton to recycle due to excessive contamination.

What's still in our trash barrels?



**Other: Textiles, Electronics, Scrap metal



Recycle Right

Level of Contamination in Cambridge Recycling

Minimal	59%
Moderate	31%
Major	10%

Based on Summer 2018 survey of 1165 recycle carts citywide



Most Problematic Contaminants

Contaminant	Plastic Bags, Film, Wrappers	Plastic Bagged Recycling	Paper Towels, Tissues, Napkins	Excessive Food & Liquid	Paper Plates, Take-out container
# of carts	605	248	238	168	160
% of carts **	52%	21%	20%	14%	14%

Contaminant	Clothing & Textiles	Trash	Tanglers, Cords, Hoses	Straws, Utensils	Wood, Metal, Electronics
# of carts	116	55	52	43	34
% of carts **	10%	5%	4%	4%	3%

**Total Percentage is greater than 100% because some carts had more than 1 contaminant

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

Recycle Right Campaign Results

- 2018 contamination: 11%
- 2019 contamination: 5.9%



Curbside Organics Update

- Apprx. 7 tons collected daily
- 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 as of Summer 2019



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



Processing organics

3-year contract (Expires: April 1, 2021)

- 1st site: CORe in Charlestown
- 2nd site: Greater Lawrence Sanitary District in North Andover

Final processing: anaerobic digestion

- Methane is used to make electricity and heat.
- Waste heat used to catalyze digestion process.
- Offsets demand for fossil fuel.

Apprx 90% of food scraps go to making clean energy

Both MassDEP and EPA support Cambridge's process for managing organics

