

# APPENDIX A

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT METHODS AND OUTCOMES

In developing this plan, a variety of stakeholders were consulted through multiple means to gather their expertise, opinions, ideas, and priorities related to current and future waste practices and programs. To solicit this feedback, listening sessions, interviews, a public event, and surveys were utilized. The following stakeholders were consulted:

### CAMBRIDGE RESIDENTS

Information from Cambridge residents was solicited in two ways—first, through a public event held in the evening in June 2024 at the King Open school, and an online survey for the general public with the same questions.

There were two types of questions—multiple choice and open-ended. At the in-person event, people were given stickie-dots as they arrived that were color coded based on the type of residence they lived in (1-2 unit [red], 3-12 unit, [green], or 13+ unit [yellow] building) and placed those dots on answers to multiple choice questions. Participants then moved among tables with overarching topics with open ended discussion questions and wrote down their feedback on paper on the tables.

The same questions asked at the event were put into an online survey promoted through the City’s newsletter and posted on the City’s website, with respondents also identifying what type of housing they lived in.

Approximately 100 people responded to the in-person survey, and more than 600 to the online survey. The responses are described below. Approximately 371 respondents live in 1–2-unit buildings, 225 in 3–12-unit buildings, and 128 in buildings with thirteen or more units.

### Multiple Choice Questions for Residents

Question #1: How easy or difficult is it to use the following programs? Multiple choice answers were: Easy, Medium, Hard, or Not Applicable.

Most people found the majority of programs, except the Household Hazardous Waste program, easy to use. The majority of people who answered the questions this way was from 1-2 family households.

- a) **Curbside Recycling:** All respondents (except 4 who answered Not Applicable) found the curbside recycling program easy to use.
- b) **Curbside Compost:** The vast majority of people (about 670), regardless of housing type, found the curbside food scraps program easy to use. Medium was the next highest choice, with only about 11 people choosing that. Only about five people said it was hard to use.
- c) **Recycle Center:** About 125 people (17 from large apartment buildings, 43 from medium, and 63 from 1–2-unit buildings) found the recycling center easy to use. However, most people (318) said that the recycling center had a medium amount of difficulty to use. The largest block within that (161) were from 1–2-unit buildings, followed by the medium-sized (108) and then the larger buildings. An almost equal number (117) to those who found it easy to

- use found the center hard to use, with 87 of those being from the 1–2-unit buildings. About ¼ of respondents, 211 people, said the question was not applicable, presumably these people have not used the recycling center.
- d) **Household Hazardous Waste:** The largest number of people (316) said this program was hard to use. Most of the people (137) choosing this came from 1–2-unit buildings, 58 were from 13+ unit buildings, and 93 were from 3–13-unit buildings. The second-highest response (265) was that the HHW program had a medium level of difficulty, and 103 people said it was easy to use. One hundred fifty-eight people said the question was not applicable, presumably these people do not use the HHW program.
  - e) **Textile Program:** The majority (384) found the textile program easy to use. The biggest block of people who reported it as easy (200) were from 1–2-unit buildings, the next largest group was the 3-13 unit buildings, and the third group was the 13+ unit buildings. The second-highest ranked response (252 people) was that the program had a medium amount of difficulty to use. Ninety-four people answered that the question was not applicable, and about 45 people said it was hard to use.
  - f) **Yard Waste:** The vast majority of respondents (559) said this program was easy to use, with most respondents being from 1-2 family households. Virtually no one responded that it was hard to use. About 162 people said the question was not applicable, with the majority of those, not surprisingly, being from 3 unit and larger households.

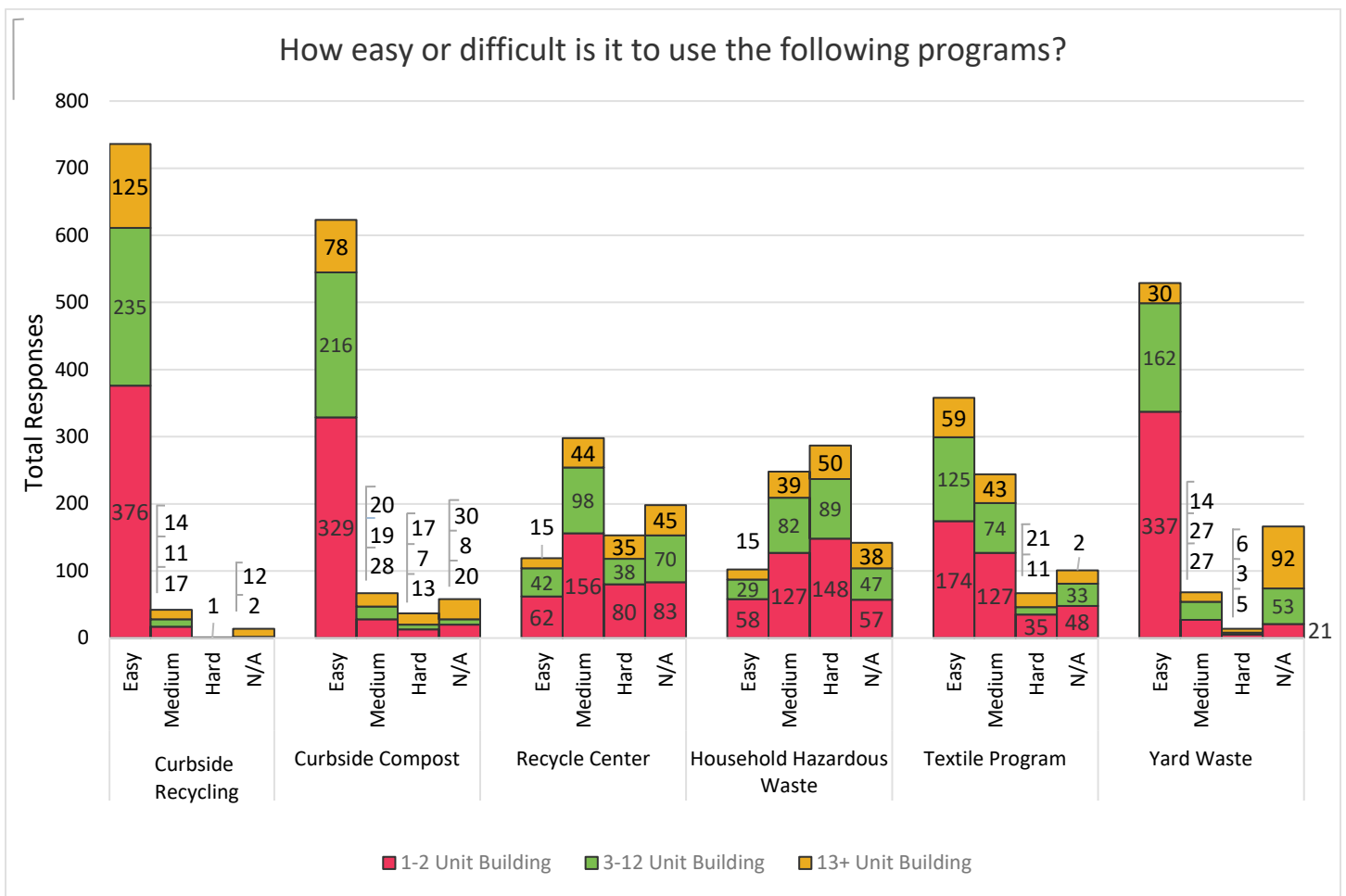


Figure 1: Question #1 Responses from in-person and online surveys

Question #2: How many times in the past year have you visited the Recycle Center at 147 Hampshire St?

- a) Four hundred eighteen (418) people have not visited the recycling center. The biggest block of those (194) were from 1-2 family households.
- b) Three hundred twenty-two (322) people visited 1-3 times. The biggest block of those (161) were 1-2 family households.
- c) One hundred thirty-three (133) people visited four or more times.

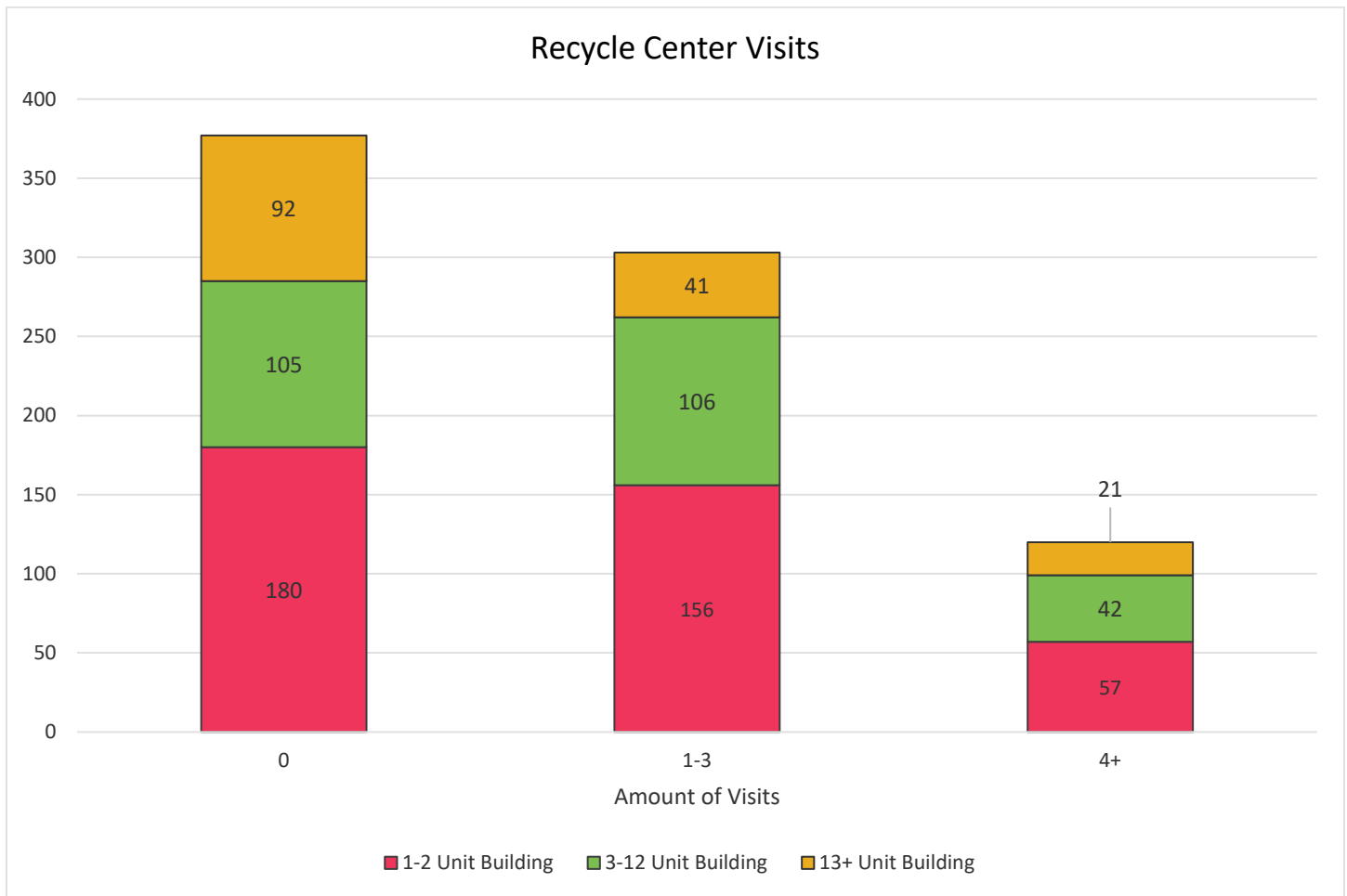


Figure 2: Question #2 Responses from in-person and online surveys

Question #3: What would make the recycling center more appealing to use (choose 1 answer)?

- a) Closer to my home: One hundred eighty-one (181) people chose this response.
- b) More welcoming and usable layout within DPW yard: One hundred thirty people (130) chose this response.
- c) More items accepted: Ninety-eight (98) people selected this response.
- d) More convenient hours: This answer had by far the largest number of respondents, at 282.
- e) Not applicable: This number had the second highest number of responses (187), presumably meaning that they did not use the recycling center, which aligns with the previous question.

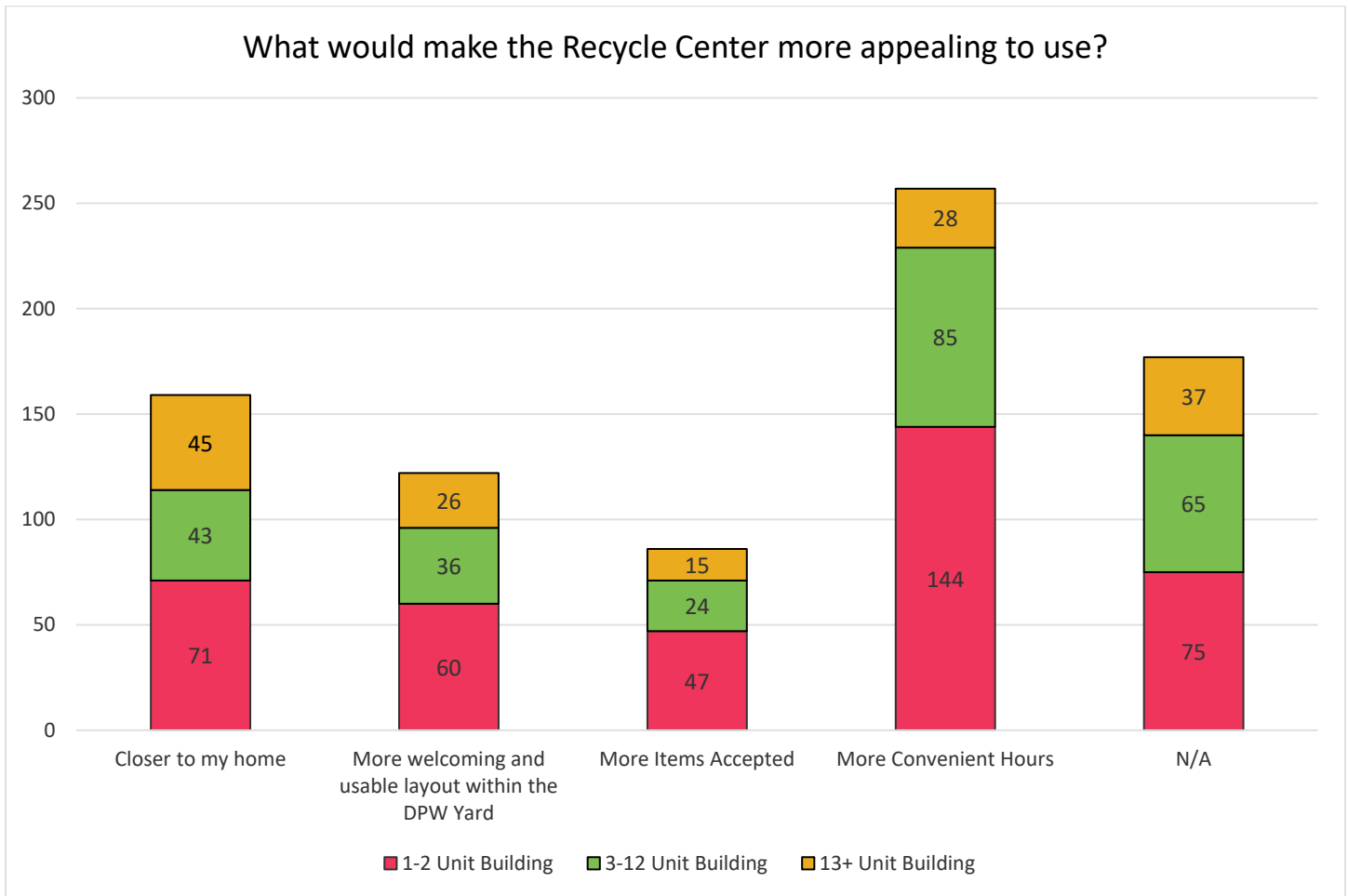


Figure 3: Question #3 Responses from in-person and online surveys

Question #4: In the past year, have you participated in these informal means of reducing waste? (choose up to 3)

- a) **Yard Sale/Swap Party:** 133 responses, with the smallest number being from large apartment buildings (who presumably have less outdoor space for a sale)
- b) **Gave Items Away on Craigslist:** This virtually tied with yard sales, at 135 responses.
- c) **Facebook (e.g., Buy Nothing, Marketplace):** This option had 270 responses.
- d) **Gave items Away on Next Door:** 62 responses.
- e) **Set Items out on Curb, Porch, etc.:** This had the second largest number of responses, at 500. Most people (279) who chose this response were from 1-2 family households.
- f) **Donated to a Non-Profit:** This had the largest number of responses, at 607.

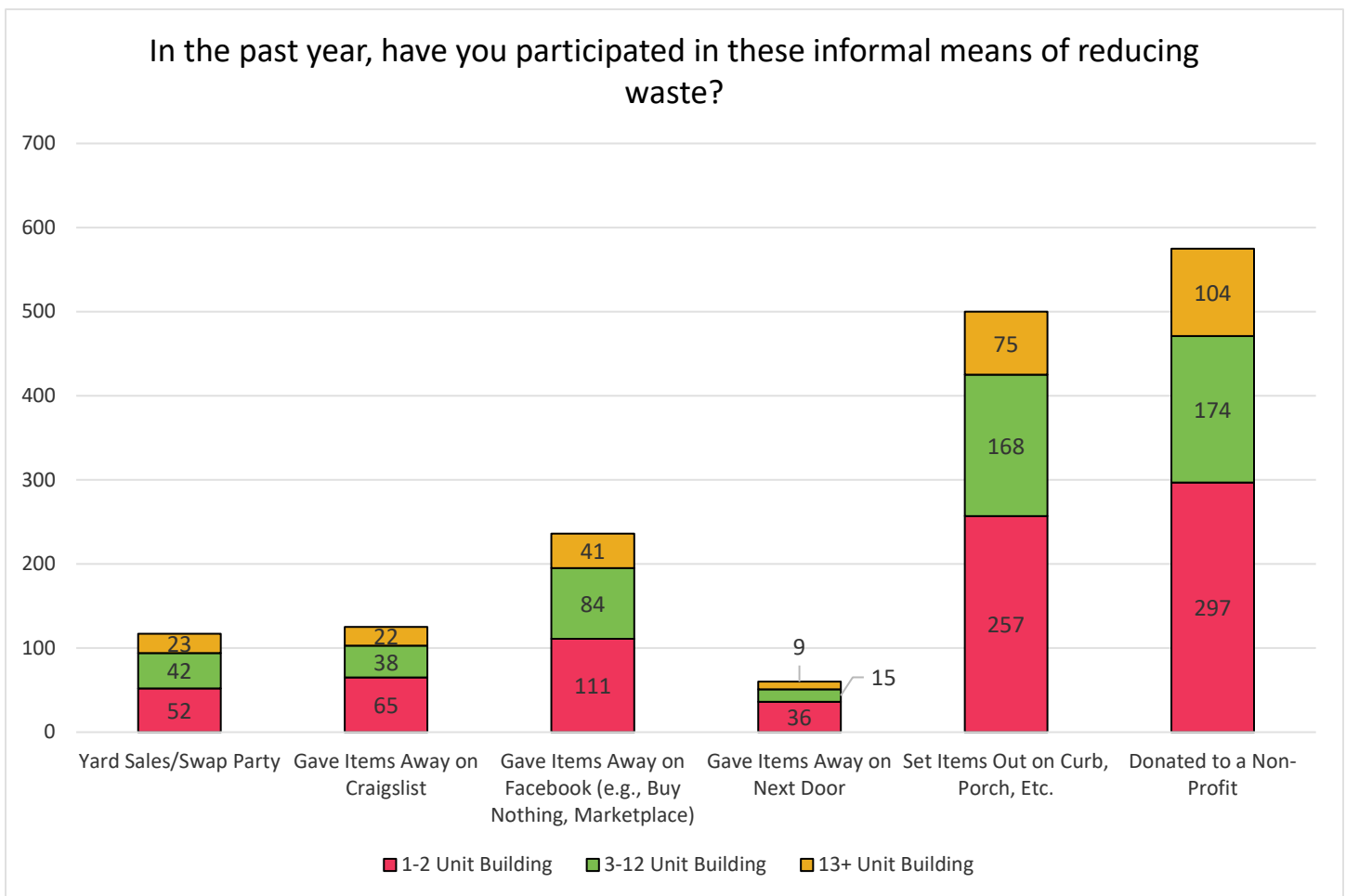


Figure 4: Question #4 Responses from in-person and online surveys

Question #5: If you live in a building > 3 units, what may help your building recycle or compost more (choose up to 2)

- a) Landlord/Property Manager Engagement: 147 responses, with the largest number (56) coming from 13+ unit buildings, followed by 1–2-unit buildings (53)
- b) Custodians or Other Support Staff Sorting Waste Properly: 55 responses. Interestingly, 19 people in 1-2 family buildings chose this response.
- c) More Buy-In from Other Tenants in the Building: This answer got the highest number (183) of responses, with the largest number (90) coming from 3–12-unit buildings. Twenty-five responses were from people in 1-2 family dwellings.
- d) More Carts for Storing Recycling or Compost: 79 responses, with 1-2 family dwellings being the smallest (22) number, and 13+ unit buildings the highest (37).
- e) Culture of Waste Reduction in the Building or Neighborhood: This received the second-highest number of responses, at 166, with the most (68) coming from 3–12-unit buildings.
- f) Other: Over 300 people responded “other,” though there was no option to enter specific answers.

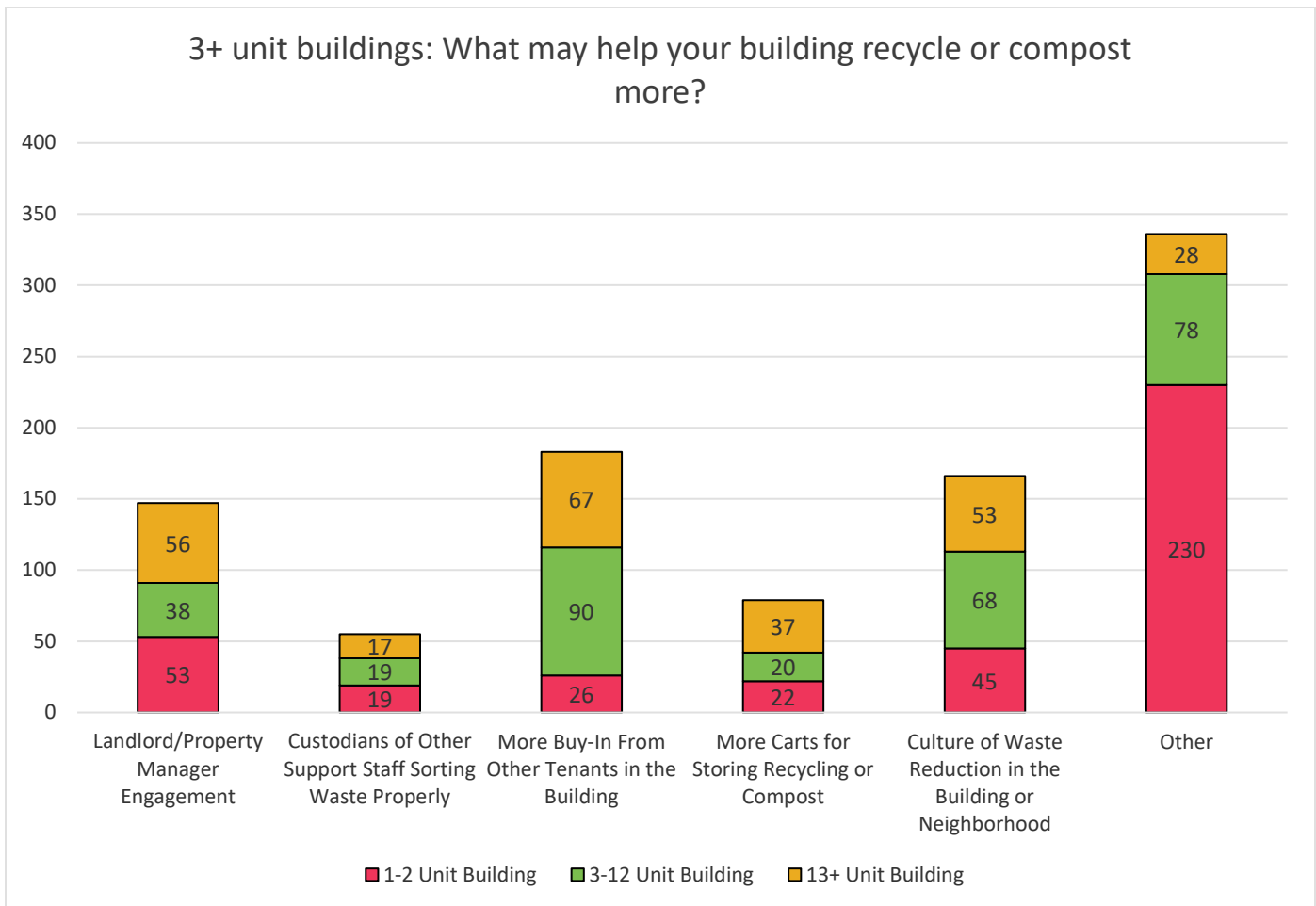


Figure 5: Question #5 Responses from in-person and online surveys

Question #6: Should the Compost program name change to any of the following:

- a) Food Waste Program: 255 felt the program should change its name to reflect the items the program takes.
- b) Green Cart Program: The smallest number of people, 53, supported changing the name to the color of cart used.
- c) Food Scraps Program: 78 people selected this choice.
- d) I Don't Think the Program Should Change Its Name: A slight majority of people, 314, felt the program should retain its current name.
- e) Other: 78 (no option was given for people to fill in specifics)

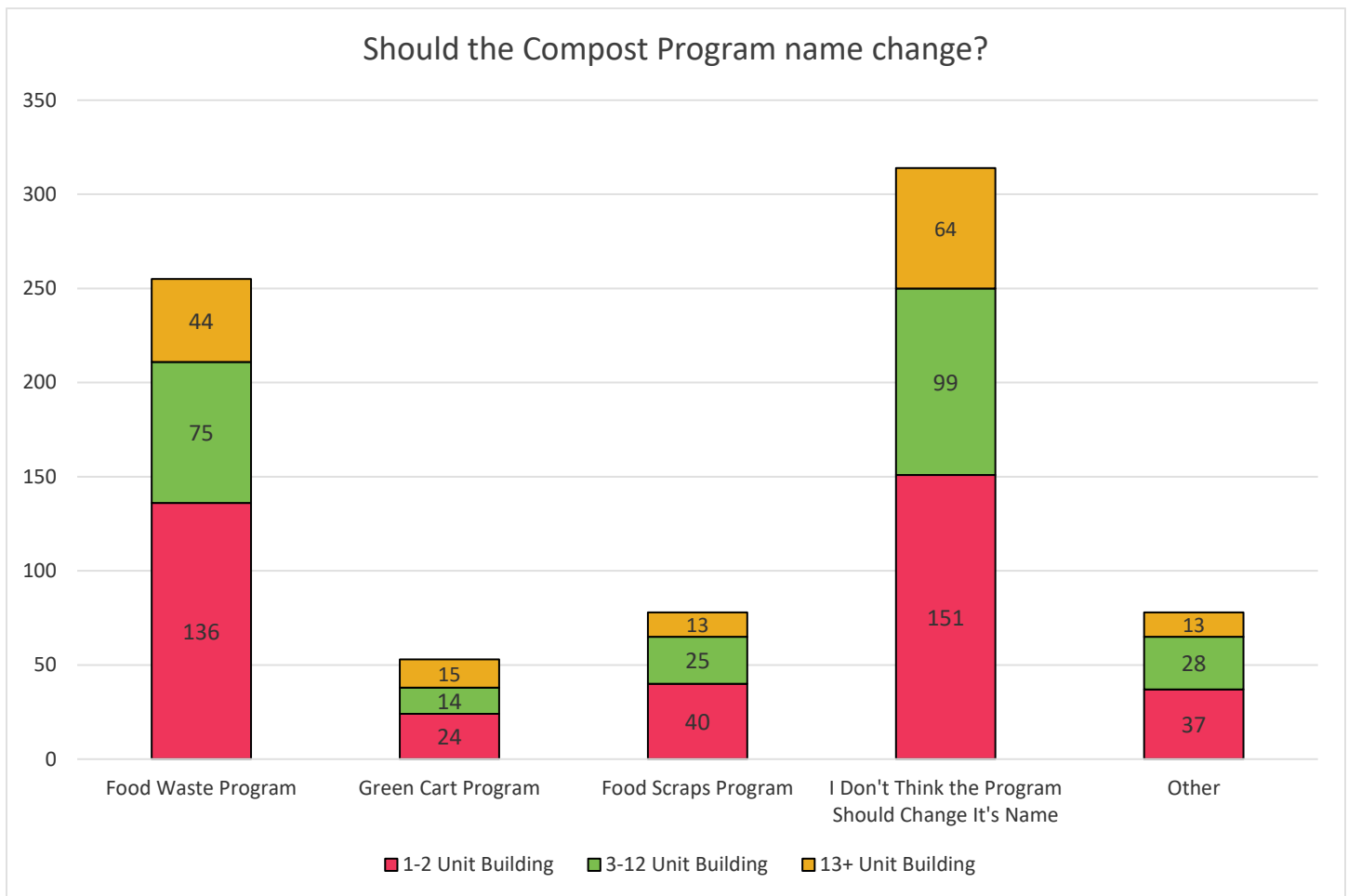


Figure 6: Question #6 Responses from in-person and online surveys

Question #7: Have you participated in the City’s food (compost) program at home?

- a) Yes, I do curbside collection: Most respondents (666) set out food scraps at the curb.
- b) Yes, I take food scraps to one of the City’s drop off sites: Twenty-one people take their food scraps to a City drop off site. Some of those include people who have curbside collection, as they live in 1-2- or 3-12-unit buildings. Ten people live in buildings of 13 or more.
- c) No, I haven’t tried composting yet: 61 people selected this response, with most (33) living in 13+ unit buildings.
- d) No, I compost another way: Twenty-three people compost using a different method than the City’s curbside program, most of them (13) live in 1–2-unit buildings.
- e) Other: Thirty-four people answered Other, though no space was included for examples.

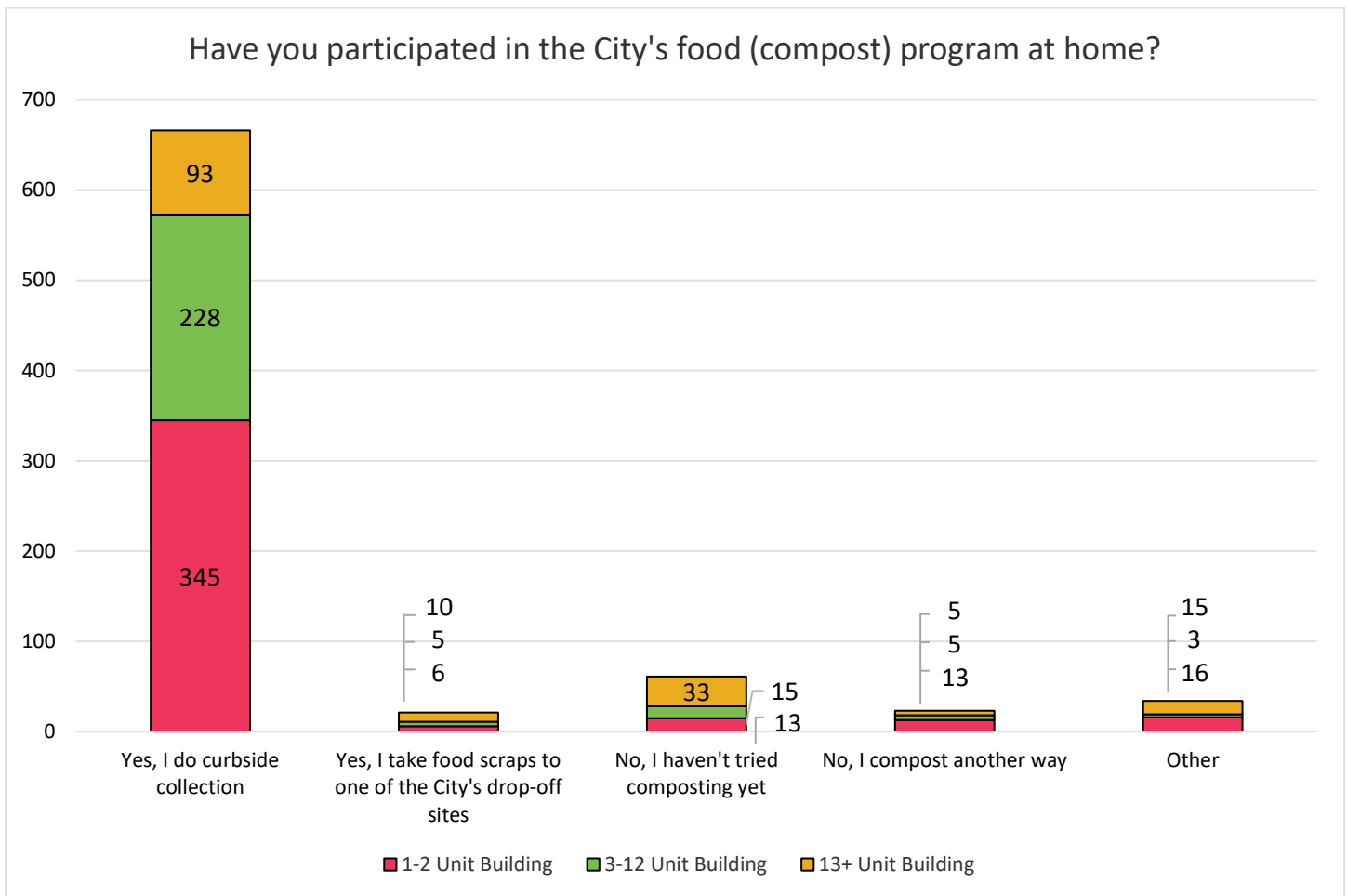


Figure 7: Question #7 Responses from in-person and online surveys



Question #8: Have you used the City's Get Rid of it Right tool in the last year?

- a) Don't Know: 133 people were not sure if they have used this on-line tool or not.
- b) 0 Times: 67 respondents have not used the tool.
- c) 1-3 Times: The vast majority of people who responded, 362, have used the tool several times in the past year.
- d) 4+ Times: 235 people have used it four times or more.

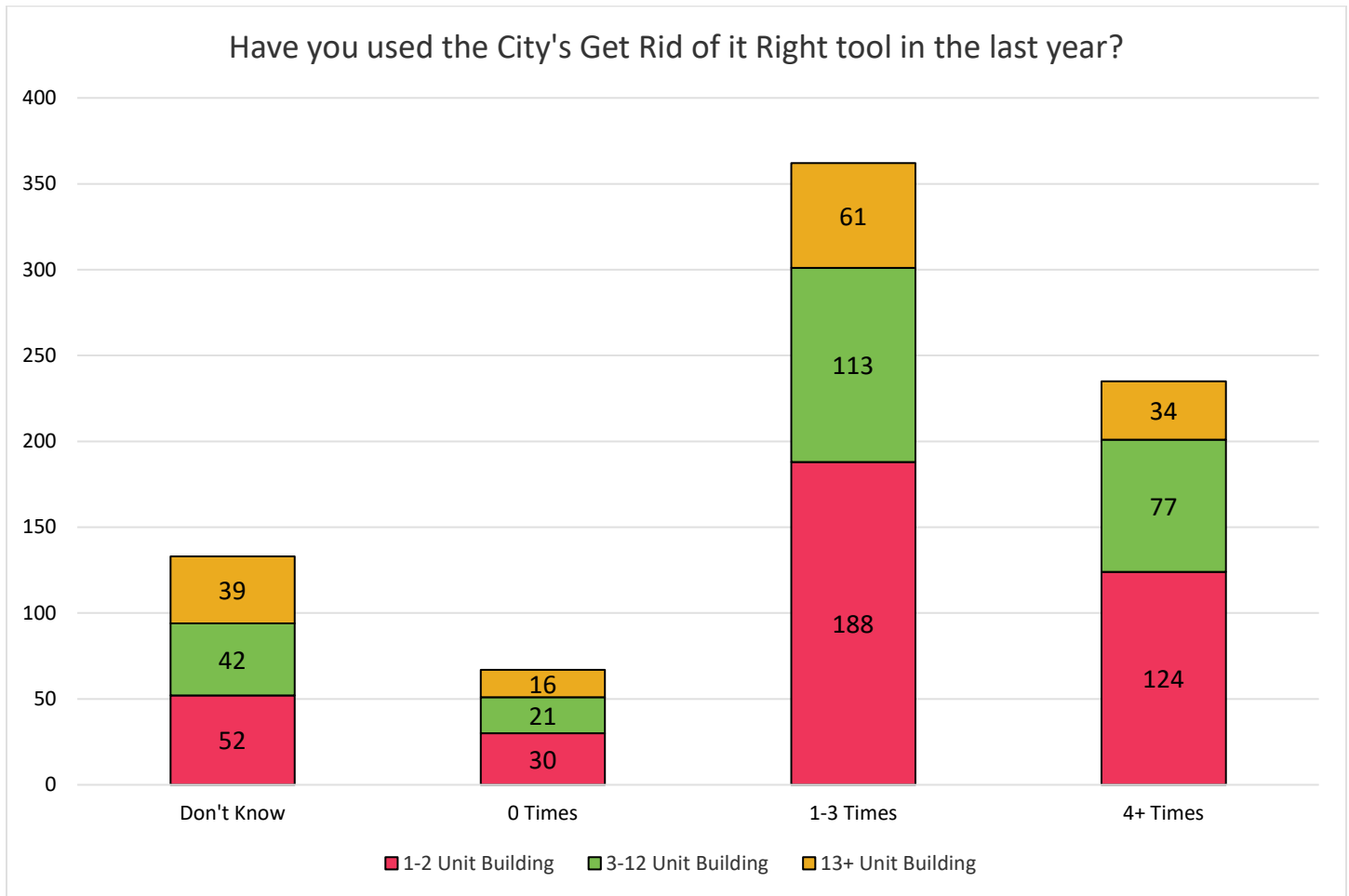


Figure 8: Question #8 Responses from in-person and online surveys

Question #9: In 2023, Cambridge recycled more than 16 million pounds of cans, bottles, paper, and cardboard. Is there anything that prevents you from recycling more?

- a) If I Knew More About What Is and Isn't Recyclable: 130 felt they could do better if they knew more about what is and isn't recyclable.
- b) If I was More Confident that Recycling Actually Works: 79 people unsure that their efforts lead to actual recycling and feeling surer about this could help them.
- c) If Access to Recycling At Home was Easier: 20 people felt that recycling at home could be easier.
- d) If Access to Recycling Outside of Home was Easier (i.e., at Work, Retail/Restaurants, Public Spaces): 148 people answered that they would do more if there were more options outside of the home.
- e) I Already Recycle As Much as Possible: Over half of the people who responded (433) said they are already recycling as much as they can. Whether this is true, or they are not aware of what else they could do is unclear.

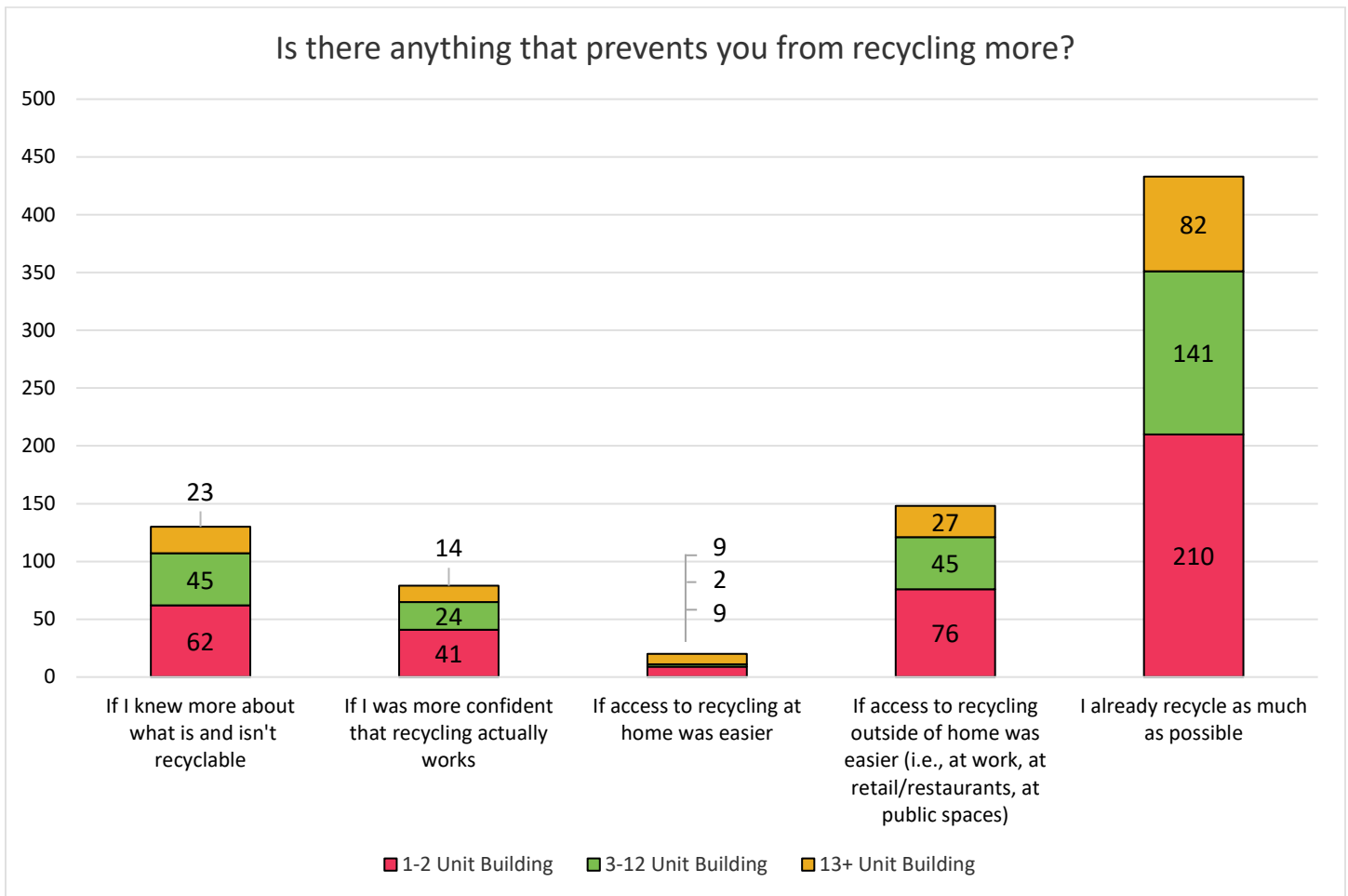


Figure 9: Question #9 Responses from in-person and online surveys

## Open-Ended Questions

There were four key topics plus a catch-all category with open-ended questions:

1. Food waste and compost
2. Single-use items
3. Reduce and reuse
4. Trash Reduction
5. Other

Over seven hundred people answered the on-line survey.

## 1. HIGH-LEVEL TAKEAWAYS

### Food Waste & Compost

- Residents want free bags that don't rip or leak, with more widespread pick-up locations or a delivery system.
- There is some support for mandatory composting or at least program expansion into larger buildings.
- Residents want restaurants and schools to participate in compost programs.
- More outreach is needed. Popular strategies for promoting the program include messaging around rat control, flyers, and regular reminders.
- More engagement is needed with landlords and property managers.

### Single Use Plastics

- There is broad support for a ban on single use plastics.
- Residents want to see change in restaurants in particular; these are likely the businesses they have the most interaction with on a day-to-day basis and are therefore the most visible. They support surcharges on single use plastics, opt-in/out options on takeout orders, and recyclable/compostable alternatives to single use plastic takeout items, be that through encouragement and incentives or legislative changes.
- Residents want reusable alternatives to takeout containers, whether that is requiring restaurants (and bulk food retailers) to accept BYO items or starting a reusable container program in the city.

### Reduce & Reuse

- Residents want more swapping opportunities, through semi-regular neighborhood events, an online city run platform, and/or one or multiple permanent free store locations.
- Geographic accessibility is essential to siting swap events and free store locations. Swap events in particular should rotate throughout the city and be neighborhood based.
- There is some interest in curbside pickup and more collection bins for divertible trash items.
- Messaging should share tips, tricks, and true stories of re-use as well as emphasize the importance of reducing consumption in the first place.
- There is some interest in more fix-it clinics and reuse/repair events.

### Trash Reduction Goals

- PAYT is a controversial policy among Cambridge residents.
- There is significant frustration around non-recyclable packaging in grocery stores and from online delivery.
- Some residents would like the recycling program to accept more items, the compost program to expand to more buildings, and for the city to offer more opportunities to reuse items.

- There is some support for trash audits and the general use of incentives and disincentives (fines) to achieve trash reduction goals.
- Education was the most mentioned method for achieving goals, with specific support for waste reduction programming in schools and continued public education campaigns.

#### Other

- Residents have questions about what can/can't be recycled, what happens to the items they recycle, and if recycling actually makes a net positive environmental impact.
- Some respondents were frustrated by survey questions that didn't allow them to choose 'N/A'.
- Several respondents would be interested in continued engagement with zero waste programming: some left personal contact information.
- Many people are interested in diverting pet and diaper waste from the trash.

Below is a more detailed summary of the responses from both the in-person event and survey. The complete set of individual responses has been provided separately to the City.

## 2. FULL RESPONSES

### Food Waste and Compost

How can we get more people to use the compost program?

Landlord engagement was a frequent response. Comments included complaints about landlords taking away bins, ignoring requests for composting, or banning composting. Suggestions included doing random trash audits and fining landlords for noncompliance, working through condo homeowners' associations, and stressing that it can reduce pests and save money.

The largest number of comments may have been related to outreach and education. This included how-to videos, including how to reduce odors and leaks; using more pictures; having a more comprehensive list of acceptable items; providing a list of places that sell compostable bags; telling people composting is a priority over recycling and disposal; the relationship between the food scraps program and reducing rats; the environmental benefits; why alternatives (such as disposal and in-sink systems) are bad; that it is easy to use; and tips for keeping the bin clean. Education about the energy benefits from the program was also stressed—such as how many pounds of food turn into how many units of energy, and a video of how the food scraps are turned into energy.

Targets for education include grocery stores, restaurants, and schools. Platforms for outreach could include social media, notices with tax bills, mention in the City's newsletter, volunteers at block parties and festivals and sports events, and separate mailings. Focused outreach for different segments of the population was also suggested—such as elderly, renters, city employees, transient populations, and new residents.

There were a wide variety of comments about compost bags. These included allowing all kinds of bags, not requiring bags, delivering bags on a regular basis, expanding distribution sites for bags, subsidizing the cost of the bags, providing larger bags, and collaborating with stores to sell bags.

Incentives were suggested as ways to boost participation, such as a tax rebate or reduction, getting an additional visitor parking permit, having neighborhood competitions with a reward, pay as you throw for trash but not for organics or recycling, getting a gift for signing up, a coupon to the farmers market, reduction in parking ticket fees, and providing incentives just to people in low-income housing.

There were some suggestions for how to improve the kitchen bins and system. Among them were having a better seal on the bins, having larger bags, using metal bins, making the bins smaller, making them larger, advertising more attractive ones, and preventing fruit flies.

Comments on the outdoor rolling bins are that they are too small, too heavy, difficult to roll, they don't latch well, it's hard to get new carts, smaller carts could be provided for buildings with limited outdoor space, and liners should be provided.

Other topics that came up less frequently include making composting mandatory and increasing collection frequency and drop off sites.

What, if any, changes would you like to see to the program?

More engagement with businesses was the most common comment—these include requiring restaurants to use compostable containers, having cafeterias at large businesses separate food scraps, having institutions, including schools do more, and using volunteers to sort waste at school cafeterias.

Additional comments included urging the City not to mix the food with sludge, using more compost in City gardens, more frequent collection, multi-lingual instructions, making the universities participate, having a bin cleaning day, providing support to those who want to set up backyard composting, and putting food scrap bins at the library.

Would you continue composting if buying special compost bags cost \$15-25/year?

About 15 people said yes, but that \$25 was too much. Two people said no.

If you don't participate regularly or at all in the City food program, what are the barriers?

Barriers include lack of access to indoor and/or outdoor bins, lack of understanding of how to participate, bugs and rats, limited space, trash valets in buildings won't pick up the food scraps, the bins are gross, lack of realization that the program restarted after COVID, inconvenience, odors, and too many steps.

What other ideas, questions, or thoughts do you have about the compost program?

Several people thought the program was already mandatory. Some people would like to see collaboration with local farmers and more compost giveaways. One person wondered how to make the program more appealing. Some would like to see compostable bags for produce. Several expressed surprised at the cultural acceptance. Some pointed to the need to reduce food waste. Another comment included adding garden waste. Other overall suggestions were about how to improve the overall recycling program, not just compost.

### Single Use Items

What do you think can be done to reduce single use product consumption?

A wide variety of food service items were suggested for targeting, such as burrito bowls, cups, straws, utensils, plastic water bottles, Styrofoam, takeout containers, and black plastic. Solutions include suggesting BYO utensils for events with food, working in schools and City departments, and working with the commercial sector. More messaging was suggested, such as explaining harms, recommending alternatives, using persuasion to educate people about why this is important, organizing a consumer campaign against single use products, focusing on what isn't recyclable, having more flyers and signs, certifying businesses that have zero waste practices and publish their names on the City's website, and letting retailers know about better alternatives.

Financial support was suggested for upfront waste reduction costs, including dishwashers, reusable items, and compostable alternatives.

Consumer behavior could be incentivized by restaurants providing discounts to customers who bring their own reusable items or charging extra for single use items, taxing single use items, or having a take-out tax.

State level action was also mentioned, including bans and deposits.

A cultural shift was brought up as needed, though there were few suggestions about how to do this aside from having peers set an example and setting an example in schools.

Other suggestions include having a spot to drop off unused single use utensils, installing more bottle filling stations, requiring restaurants to accept reusables, providing a map of bottle fillers, having 3 bin systems everywhere, encouraging development of new products at universities, and having a universal City-wide returnable takeout container program.

Businesses can be helped by connecting them with reuse businesses like Recirclable and Reuzzi, coordinating bulk orders of reusables for restaurants, developing a reduced packaging takeout option, encouraging more retail bulk bin sections, inviting businesses with reusable containers to do business in the City, and creating a return to the store and wash/reuse program.

There were several suggestions about requiring or increasing the use of compostable and recyclable items, though they are single use items.

What kinds of products do you think could be avoided altogether or substituted with reusable products?

As in the previous question, most answers related to food service items: cups, straws, food containers, plastic cutlery, produce bags, everything except medical items, water bottles, and produce bags. Other responses were around packaging and non-recyclable products.

What kinds of messages would motivate people to use fewer disposable products?

Answers fit into several categories—telling people about reusable alternatives; emotional messages such as marine life trapped in bags or funny drawings; transparency about waste, including images of trash vs recycling end uses; doing a public trash audit regularly so people can see what is in trash; data about cost savings; and messaging asking if the disposable item is necessary.

Many of the answers were not about messaging, per-se, but about tools to reduce single use products, such as banks and financial incentives.

Other thoughts?

One person wondered whether restaurants and consumers can afford more expensive stuff. Another shared experience in Germany where reusable packaging programs have yet to find traction.

### Reduce and Reuse

What are some ideas to capture items before they are trashed, particularly during moveout?

More curbside and neighborhood pickups or collection spots for items that aren't containers, paper, or organics were suggested, such as textiles and other items for Goodwill and Habitat, hazardous waste, and electronics.

Education was seen as an important tool. Educational messages include reduction being a civic duty, the environmental impacts of waste, focusing on food waste and fast fashion, reminding people to first use what they already have or think about what they need before buying more, promoting a culture of swapping/lending/borrowing, and sharing suggestions of ways to reduce and reuse along with stories of people doing it. Other ideas include having a list of repair shops, promoting the community refrigerators, and suggesting long-lasting items.

Marketing ideas were to work with Lesley students; have more posters, billboards, and bus signs; use social media more; do more mailers; and create a rap video. Suggestions also included asking residents for ideas and holding a one month Buy Nothing challenge.

Working with schools on all levels was also addressed. These ideas included having home assignments on reducing and reusing, collaborating with the universities on collection and donation sites, and providing students with reusable items.

People also suggested more instructions for what, where, and how to donate or swap.

The recycling center was mentioned a number of times. Ideas included having a bike donation hub, having a mobile recycling center (including a truck during moveout time), expanding the hours, and making the site more welcoming and appealing.

#### Exchanges/Free Stuff

There were many ideas to promote exchanges of usable items. For moveouts, these include having a warehouse or other temporary or permanent storage space for items that can be redistributed and siting “pods” around the City. Swapping ideas include encouraging employers to have building-based swap programs, promoting sites like Facebook Marketplace, having fix-it clinics in association with moveouts, having more swapping events, connecting swapping to block parties and street fairs, creating “Little Free Library” style boxes for other items, having a building materials reuse facility, and holding a community-wide yard sale. One person suggested these types of events could be called “Free for All.”

Incentives were suggested that might be part of a zero-waste app, or created to encourage landlords to offer reusable items to new tenants and for tenants to not dispose of household items when they move out. Other incentives could be rebates for putting bins out less often, competitions for who puts out the least trash, some incentive for zero waste businesses (such as thrift shops), incentives to donate unsold food, an award for the Cambridge Recycler of the Year, more incentives to promote bulk and refill programs, and grants for waste reduction initiatives.

Disincentives might include fines, bin tagging, naming, and shaming, and banning fast fashion retailers.

#### What materials or products would you like to see avoided altogether?

Plastic items were the most frequently mentioned; these include bags, utensils and straws, black plastic, and polystyrene. Other items mentioned were tampons, junk mail, and batteries. Toxic substances, such as BPA and PFAS, were also included.

#### What kinds of opportunities, events, and education can help promote repair and reuse?

Repair events were most frequently mentioned—sewing and mending clinics; fixit it clinics; mutual aid fix-it meetups; pop-up repair shops; and repair and reuse workshops for furniture, electronics, and other items. Corporate fix-it and takeback events were also suggested.

Events could be held in workplaces, schools, libraries, as part of an art event, or as part of another zero-waste event such as Plastic-Free July.

Several people recommended tool libraries, Libraries of Things, and rental programs as ways to reduce consumption.

As a converse to the idea of collecting move-out items for use by the community, one recommendation was to collect reusable items from the community to provide to college students.

For education, a suggestion was to make sure the Get Rid of it Right App was in multiple languages.

#### What does a Zero Waste Cambridge Look Like to You?

Many of the answers had to do with reuse and reducing single use items and providing more zero waste stores. Others had to do with being able to recycle more. Bigger vision responses were about a less wasteful culture, more circularity, and beauty.



### Other thoughts?

Other thoughts were to have more separation of food scraps, more calls to ban or restrict single-use items and packaging, identifying who the top contributors to waste in the City are and focusing on the largest category, working with universities to develop new types of packaging, expanding the bottle bill, and supporting Extended Producer Responsibility.

### Trash Reduction Goals

Are there new materials you'd like to see diverted, either by you or other groups around the City?

Answers included diapers, cartons, bioplastics, packaging, furniture, cooking oil and grease, pet waste, and containers with a deposit.

How can we increase participation in recycling & compost citywide? How can we divert more items from the trash?

By far, the largest number of answers related to education. Ideas included adding reuse/repair/giveaway options to Get Rid of it Right; targeting educational campaigns to housing types; continuing and expanding the existing PR campaigns around organics, what is recyclable, where and how to recycle, and what happens to recyclables; focusing on carbon costs; gamifying zero waste; having more meaningful 1:1 interactions with residents; increasing signage; doing more education with schools, with one suggestion being to have young people talk to the community; and holding workshops on zero waste practices.

Many recommendations centered around the collection and use of data. Ideas included polling households to better understand why they are or are not participating; various approaches to doing trash audits; community surveys; comparing trash quantities between neighbors; mapping little free libraries, food pantries, community fridges, etc.; and tracking and reporting progress towards zero waste goals.

Ideas for incentives included those that would encourage landlords to educate tenants; reduced property taxes for low waste households; competitions—between neighborhoods, schools, and other communities; incentives for shopping at farmers markets; going to every other week trash collection; and mandating composting.

Ideas for disincentives include fines for not recycling; taxing undesirable packaging; taxing deliveries; shaming people; and finding ways to discourage businesses from giving away swag.

Ideas to increase participation in composting included rebranding, providing free bags, using bigger compost bags, addressing other organic wastes such as diapers, pet waste, and packaged food; and having a more attractive kitchen bin.

Ideas for improving the recycling center include expanding the hours; having an additional site(s) or pop up; holding more shredding events; providing more opportunities for electronics recycling; providing a site for disposal/recycling of rocks, soil, and concrete; having a cardboard exchange area; providing options for people without cars; and accepting more types of plastics.

Ideas to increase reuse include pickups and redistribution, more types of and opportunities for swaps, having an organized day for leaving things on the curb, having a permanent staffed free store or leave and take locations, following the MIT furniture exchange model, more little free libraries, replicating Weston Nursery's plant pot recycling program, and more repair cafes.

Ideas to increase recycling were mostly about taking more materials, such as cartons, films, packaging, and toiletries. Placing more recycling and food scrap containers around the City was also suggested.

Ideas to reduce waste include more use of cloth towels, more bulk stores, more BYO, various ways to reduce packaging, more refill stations, and partnering with TerraCycle.

### C. PAYT (Pay-As-You-Throw, In favor or Against)

Twenty-seven people who were in favor of Pay as You Throw provided comments. These included that implementation may be difficult and offering suggestions of various ways to price it. Some said it should be for all trash, while others said it should only be over a threshold.

Thirteen people were not sure how they felt about it. Comments include that awareness is key, that it would have to be enforced, and that there would have to be a weight limit.

Of the seventeen people against it, respondents were concerned that it might incentivize dumping, it would be difficult with so many multifamily buildings, it would impact low income and marginalized people, and fines should be charged for overage instead.

One person suggested reducing the frequency of collection as trash volumes decrease.

Many people made comments relating to creating a cultural shift away from consumerism. Suggested methods included social media campaigns pressuring wasteful companies to change practices to create higher quality/longer lasting products and stopping the handing out of throwaway items at City events.

While not trash reduction, an anti-litter campaign was also suggested.

Many people support policy changes, such as restricting single use products for takeout, restricting the use of various types and uses of plastics, banning items that are not recyclable, expanding the bottle bill, supporting extended producer responsibility, and holding contractors accountable for construction waste. Working regionally was suggested as a way to move forward.

Figuring out how to do all this given the transiency of the population in Cambridge is a challenge to overcome.

### Other

There was a range of other input provided, such as:

- changing (or not) the name of the food scraps program
- cleaning up the DPW yard
- improving the zero-waste app
- being more ambitious
- doing more school education
- reducing plastic water bottles
- redirecting usable items left on curbs.
- encouraging more artisan use of materials
- improving communication and education by using storytelling

- doing more with the commercial sector
- using carrots and sticks
- encouraging more donation
- expanding HHW collection
- collecting more materials
- expanding services
- doing more surveys
- understanding why people don't participate.
- providing more information about how to reduce and recycle
- moving the recycling center to an area with better public transportation
- educating janitorial staff
- improving bins and dumpsters.

Many people provided positive comments to the City for its zero waste efforts. A sample of such feedback includes;

- happiness and amazement in seeing personal trash volumes decrease due to the food scraps program
- remarks about the ease of use of the various programs
- expressions of general program satisfaction
- gratitude towards the hard work of City staff
- satisfaction with kitchen food scraps bins
- excitement about programs such as the Free Store and textile collection
- happiness with educational materials, including the Zero Waste Cambridge app
- kudos for this being a City priority
- satisfaction with the carts and bins, including in helping to reduce rodents

One (of many) comments summed it up this way: "Overall, I think DPW is absolutely fantastic. I find the DPW resources and website intuitive and easy to use. Keep up the great work 😊"

### Stakeholder Input (Fall 2024)

In October 2024, following the 10/22/24 City Council hearing where the DPW introduced draft strategies for ZWMP 2.0, DPW launched the "Zero Waste Master Plan – Seeking Feedback" campaign, providing links to the October 22, 2024 presentation and draft strategies, with feedback open until November 30. The feedback that was received can be seen here:

The situation in the schools is Not Good. The utensils are not compostable or recyclable. The yogurt (sugarful and nasty) is seldom eaten, yet TWO containers are given to the students to represent protein. Since the plastic containers can't be washed, it goes to the landfill, joining sandwich wraps and milk cartons. What are we teaching our children?
have all apartments use biodegradable bags for organic waste, disposal in City provided container.
I've tried to get my company to compost, but they won't so I would love to see all commercial buildings required to divert food waste.

Reducing single-use serviceware from food establishments by making opt-in is easy and effective.

I think that these are great actions and support them. Why would it take 4-6 years for the long-term strategies?

It's not clear how you would get answer to a question that you have such as the one that I submitted.

It would be great to have the recycling center open a bit before 4pm on Tuesday and Thursdays...especially because it's so dark in the winter.

It saddens me that there are so many black plastic containers, which aren't recyclable here. Can we request restaurants to provide take out containers to be white, clear or heavy cardboard?

Really like the following:

- Mandate Food Waste Diversion for all residential and commercial buildings and Enforce mandatory food waste diversion
- Research and analyze whether City should implement Hybrid Pay-As-You-Throw
- Work with CHA and other property managers to increase diversion and sanitation.

Because recycling cannot identify black plastic- and because every takeout container seems to be black, can city sponsor an initiative to change takeout to a color that can be sorted at recycling? It seems ridiculous to throw these black plastic containers into trash

Or pay for whatever equipment the recycler needs to properly i.d and sort black plastic

The commercial trash generation statistics are staggering: over 120,000 tons. They dwarf the residential. I hope mandating food waste diversion will address some of this, but otherwise I don't really see where these goals are getting at the massive commercial trash problem. I also see many dumpsters without locking lids behind restaurants. It smells and the rats openly running around. I also see complaints over and over on SeeClickFix about this. Please start with some fining and code compliance! Maybe more officers if the job isn't getting done.

I like the idea of alternatives for move out times. I do think that property owners / condo associations should be fined by weight and/or volume for excessive move out trash (I say this as a condo owner). It would get passed on to the offending unit/owner very quickly and they can pass the cost on to the renter. I also think doing curbside "donation" pickup before move out dates would help many people. I know several elderly people as well as students without vehicles who cannot drive to the recycle center to donate items. Make reuse pickup the easy default, and trashing things more expensive and inconvenient.

I also wish this analysis took into consideration the cost, nuisance, and environmental impact of trash trucks (and recycle and compost) driving all over the city picking up bins at every person's doorstep. When you did your review of peer cities for best practices, did you perhaps look outside the United States? I haven't traveled a lot, but was so surprised to see that European cities handle their residential trash very creatively. They have small neighborhood drop off points where collection takes place (trash and compost required a card to unlock, recycle was free). These large metal containers are in the ground, which improves rodent issues and streamlines collection. They are found near public transit, edges of plazas and parks, in store parking lots, etc. I really wish a new system/ paradigm shift could be explored

here. It would decrease trucks all over the streets, lessen costs of bins for every address, and decrease the rodent problem. It also requires someone to walk or wheel a couple of blocks with their trash, which makes them more aware of the weight (yes, I saw elderly and disabled people participate easily).

Pay-As-You-Throw will just encourage people to dump their waste elsewhere. Especially in a city with a number of college students and recent graduates.

Waiting an extended length of time to move to an enforced food waste mandate will only make residents believe you aren't serious about it. But you should be able to describe how that will be implemented.

Huge amounts of trash" consist of discarded furniture incl childrens' furnishings, carriages, seats, cribs or playspaces, toys, etc. Much of this is re-useable and hoping someone will pick them out of the trash randomly leaves way too much discarded material."

Many Cambridge restaurants are attempting to reduce single-use service ware - a very good thing. However, it doesn't seem really successful. I don't know which of the pieces of service ware go in compost, which in recycle, which in landfill. A few restaurants label their containers, but it still doesn't seem to work. Plastic forks, napkins, paper plates, all end up mixed in all of them. Is there a way Cambridge can support restaurants to make single-use disposal in the eating establishments clearer? I'm sure, given time, customers can learn to do it right.

I agree with the strategies, about the recycle center it would be good to add more hours and day to accessibility. I live in in East Cambridge and be close to the recycle center is a key for me to recycle plastic bag metal things, instead to put them in the trash can. Maybe if you open other location would impulse more people to recycle more.

It would be hard when property owners do not live in these buildings .

I have the problem someone is putting dog waste in my compost bin, so my bin does not get picked up and I have to clean it up. I do believe the person knows they should not be doing this. I have no way of preventing someone else from using any of my containers.

I am in support of all of the short and medium-term strategies. My initial reaction to the hybrid pay-as-you-throw program was negative, but understand the goal it to analyze the benefits. As a condo owner with shared trash, I would be concerned about paying for my neighbors trash. My condo produces the most recycling and compost and least amount of trash. I would also be concerned that people would increase contamination of recyclables in order to reduce the fees for trash.

All good ideas. One caveat, if you're going to mandate food waste diversion why wait to enforce it?

I think the hybrid pay-as-you-throw is an awful idea. As our taxes have increased the last two years under the current administration, another fee would be problematic for those of us on fixed incomes.

Pay for trash????!!!! Not submitting a plan. Compost attracts mice and rats, etc. Diificult in apts, etetc. Dont be cheap. Horrible plan.

How does the city ensure residents don't hoard their trash to avoid Hybrid Pay-As You-Go program? (I don't know details of what this program means, but that's my first thought)

Educational program to inform people not to throw pet waste in other people's residential trash, or other type of trash in other people's compost bins. We frequently get people coming on our property (!) to dispose of their trash and put it in the wrong bin! (Drives us crazy!)

In order to collect more compost, it shouldn't be a requirement that all neighbors within a certain block - my landlord owns multiple homes including a small apt building- and it was required that all of my neighbors receive a compost bin. I don't know if anyone would use it besides us because we rarely see our neighbors and I don't know what units are vacant in the apt building. I want to compost and there's plenty of other people in my neighborhood that do. But I won't be allowed to because I couldn't get with all my neighbors to see if they would too.

Requiring property managers to SUBMIT ANNUAL solid waste management plans sounds outrageous. Property owners are already overburdened with municipal regulations, which is ultimately another factor that increases costs and rents.

What does pay as you throw entail? It doesn't explain in detail how this would work or cost to residents. I am not in favor of this if residents have to pay for their trash to be removed.

I'm very grateful for the DPW and emergency responders who somehow manage to function in a drug infested state with horrible infrastructure and perpetually loud events and threatening protests.

Opening multiple disposal sites with clear instructions, signage, and hours of operation would be helpful.

Facilitating a furniture and household goods exchange might reduce large object disposal.

The stores in Davis Square sell loads of useless junk. The filthy, cramped, bumpy, sidewalks are depressing and difficult to navigate.

The street configurations are bizarre, inefficient, and undersized for vehicles needed for this climate and all the driving required across long distances. The weather, housing, cost of living, and terrible roads generate so much stress that any driving is unpleasant at best.

Massachusetts needs so many overhauls, updates, and corruption clean up that all I ever do is hope to leave before I lose hope. I'm very concerned for the people who have to work here being perpetually undermined in myriad ways. We have no representation in Massachusetts. Politicians here spew loads of nonsense.

Regarding Reduce single-use serviceware from Food Establishments - I would love to see an ordinance that requires all serviceware to be made from natural materials. Delta Airlines already uses disposable wooden silverware inflight. Plastic straws should be banned and replaced with paper straws.

I think this plan looks really great.

Two suggestions:

- with the enforcement part, look at doing some kind of fine structure, similar to parking tickets for street cleaning, higher fines for repeat offenders

- with property owners, include City buildings - libraries and all DHSP buildings. It is really important for the City staff and buildings to model the goal

Mandatory composting in all residential buildings is not a good idea. It will cause roaches. Voluntary is fine because the person is careful in keeping food tightly enclosed in their apartment before placing into compost bins. Whereas, a person who does not want to compost will be lackadaisical, and not always take care to properly store food remains in apartment. Voluntary is always better.

The city does not pick up trash from large multifamily buildings. Therefore the city does NOT have the legitimacy to micro-manage a service it does not provide. Incentives (such as picking up mattresses) are fine; mandates are NOT.

Mayor Simmons speaks about how your pet projects you are so proud of often disadvantage underrepresented communities." Reducing trash to 4# per household per week and Pay-As-You-Throw discriminate against large families with small children."

I do not think this plan does enough to stop trash at the source. I make an effort to reduce my plastic waste but so much is out of my control. For example, the majority of my plastic trash/recycling comes from food packaging. Unless I do something extreme like only subsist off the bulk food aisle or boycott all take out, there is little I can do as an individual to prevent the trash.

Please consider including a plan to work with businesses to reduce plastics that end up in the trash cans of customers. I would love for local grocery stores make it easier for customers to avoid coming home with piles of plastic trash (for example, no plastic egg cartons, more refill options).

Another idea is to create incentives for businesses to innovate around trash reduction. Maybe a tax break for restaurants that don't provide single-use cutlery and packaging or a task force that investigates what and how to overcome challenges businesses face in reducing their plastic footprint.

How about education/messaging on the 2 biggest impact things that commercial and residents can do right now to reduce the amount of waste they contribute to the stream. And how about working with Amazon to get them to retrieve the packaging that accompanies every delivery they make. I bet 50% of the waste from most households at this point - whether recycled or not - can be traced back directly to Amazon.

Please start a pet waste program of some kind for cat litter and dog poop (composting is possible). I'm not sure it's been addressed, but I'm certain it's a hefty percentage of our solid waste and it's time to deal with it.

Comment on strategy 4, single-use serviceware from Food Establishments: Think about more than plastic. Disposable wooden chopsticks, especially uncoated ones, ought to be able to be recycled or composted in some way, but I believe that, today, they end up in trash.

Along, the same lines, please look, not just at restaurants, but at assorted takeout and delivery operations. Their deliveries seem to often involve, not just serviceware, but packaging that uses multiple items in plastic bags and films that are essentially none-recyclable even in/from locations in the city that will accept them.

Also, while it is on the medium-term list, it is not at all clear (even from the Council presentation) what Hybrid Pay-As-You-Throw" would mean in Cambridge where we have curbside trash pickup."

I'm glad to see the attention to improving the Recycle Center. As my walking ability has deteriorated with age, I'm more aware of the mess it can be after wet weather, and sometimes having to carry heavy items (e.g. scrap metal) a little far at busy times.

1. Switch selling food waste from methane-producing Lawrence PW to non methane producing compost facilities.
2. Encourage home owner food composting in rodent-resistant above ground composters.
3. Discourage home garbage disposals which flush food into waste water increasing cost of treatment.
4. Stop selling any sludge slurry to Castella where it is sold for fertilizer rich in PFAS.
5. Expand number of recycling centers in the city.

This is great but when speaking to the public, I would change the language to be easier to understand - i.e. food waste diversions? Maybe change to food waste separation or just describe how to get rid of food waste.

Sadly I know of some places in Cambridge where the residents do not adhere to this and it has been hard to change their habits. I might suggest an easy graphic flyer in multiple languages (or just visuals) and blanket the area with them. I know that is waste but, hopefully it will have a positive effect in the future.

Cambridge strategies assume that every citizen is able-bodied and capable of transporting trash and recyclables to some location other than curbside. At the same time the city is focused on discouraging car ownership. And it wants to build housing that would increase the population by some unidentified percentage. It is time to start looking at this project from the perspective of the humans who would like to participate but are unable to for any number of reasons.

Please prioritize food waste diversion mandates and getting all remaining apartments participating in curbside food waste plans within the first year, as this is crucial to address methane and climate impacts. The emphasis should be on reducing food waste as well as diverting it.

Climate action requires immediate and drastic reduction in waste - we should achieve our 80% goal within 5 years, not decades from now. Most households can reduce waste to below 2 lbs/week (90% zero waste goal) soon after beginning food waste composting - the majority of waste reduction should coincide with mandated composting.

Don't bother with hybrid pay as you throw. It is not a good match for multi-unit buildings, and our waste needs to be far less than our current cart capacity. All other 'medium term strategies' are important to include in 1-3 year strategies - but they can extend beyond 3 years if needed.

Additional waste reduction options and conveniences are needed. In particular: we need additional drop sites for metal, enhanced bottle refund bill & a bulk collection site, collection options for pet waste, cooking oil, used carpet / pads, cartons, and minor household repair debris.

Community participation will mean the difference between meeting trash reduction goals in one year, or dragging them out for decades with devastating climate and environmental results. Community enthusiasm for waste reduction will need to help inspire rapid commercial waste reduction.

The ZWMP needs to convey a sense of urgency - this must be reflected in our goals! Cambridge citizens are our greatest strength, but our goals are telling them things are on track; when we are actually heading for climate disaster! Reducing trash has many benefits and no downsides. It is among the easiest goals to achieve with minimal household effort. Citizen's enthusiasm for reducing climate harms through trash reduction will need to extend into the workplace to help tackle the huge commercial waste problem as well.

Comparison of Waste Reduction Goals:

Boston's goal is 80% reduction by 2030

Cambridge's goals are only 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050.

This does not even meet the MA goal of reduction by 90% by 2050.

70% reduction in 3 years with mandated composting seems reasonable, considering that our waste characterization study indicated that 55% of trash could be diverted.

A goal of 80% by 2030 could help do our part, & a goal of 90% by 2030 could help lead.

No matter what our goals say - it is crucial that the real aim is as soon as possible, because the climate requirements for change are already upon us.



Ways to make reducing and diverting trash more convenient:

- We need additional drop sites particularly for scrap metal - especially in the North/West Cambridge area. A bin system similar to the clothing/textile bins would work well!
- We need options to appropriately dispose of scraps from minor home improvements - broken glass/window frame, wood scraps, flooring, a random brick or cement block... These sometimes end up in the trash - where should they go?
- We need good solutions for pet waste! EPA says to place dog poo in the toilet - no one does this; kitty litter can add 10 lbs to a household's weekly trash.
- Household cooking oil is a valuable resource which needs a drop-off recycling solution.
- Recycling carpets was a previous unmet ZWMP goal - can we implement this both for commercial and residential units?
- There is no bulk collection of refundable bottles/cans anywhere near Cambridge - could this be added to the recycle center; or perhaps as a periodic bottle drive? Could we encourage a shed type facility on an underutilized lot (perhaps a back area of the Fresh Pond Mall) or encourage a facility in a nearby town? Can liquor stores be required to accept return bottles?
- Milk/Juice cartons are a source material for construction supplies. Cambridge could offer a clean supply - could we add this to the recycle center, or curbside recycling?
- The recycle center could use signage - but everyone I spoke with seemed happy with how things were run. Notably about 14 out of 15 people wanted to bring the book exchange shelf back! There is a city-wide need for better access to Recycle Center services - perhaps 24 hour drop bins outside the municipal yard for metal, plastic bags & electronics? An additional drop site for metal and plastics is fairly essential (electronics are covered by Staples/Best Buy). A full second recycle center site would be ideal - or perhaps a mobile site.
- Please, do not collect yard waste in trash trucks off season! Yard waste should never be sent to landfills! Please extend the season earlier into March if needed, or leave the yard waste curbside.

Hopefully there will be more strategies in the ZWMP for:

- Goals that reflect the urgency for immediate reduction of waste; and in particular the reduction of organic waste that produces Methane. Many species' survival relies on this!
- Increasing the convenience of recycling and the number of items that can be recycled/diverted.
- Strategies to divert more items from trash that are already banned from landfills (yard waste, textiles, e-waste, construction materials...); as well as newly excluded food waste.
- Reducing single use service-ware needs to include encouragement/incentives for reuse (ie small dishwashers in schools are needed to eliminate mountains of plastic-ware; <https://www.recirclable.com/> for take out food). There is no mention of reducing small water bottles, nips, other single use plastics, and expanded bottle bill. More efforts for reducing waste of every kind, but particularly food waste!

- More details on the Commercial Sector and a strategy that reward the most rapid reduction in waste during the first 3 years. We cannot afford to spend 3 years simply measuring and documenting waste for future reduction. Technical assistance should be available at the outset - Boston has considerable technical assistance for businesses available on-line that could provide a starting point.

It would be great to be able to give feedback on a more developed draft!

I commend you for these strategies, I hope you will focus especially on enforcing food waste diversion in order to minimize methane. Too many buildings and households still throw their food waste in the general trash. You could do random inspections of trash to make sure that food waste bins are being used and focus on educating especially large buildings with many residential units to compost food waste.