

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2026 8:00am – 9:30am
Meeting Minutes Taker: Meera Singh
Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: Dailey Brannin, Dave Demme, Debby Galef, Tracie Gordon, Sakiko Isomichi, Debby Knight, Emily Lee, Richard Nurse, Carlie Peters, Dawn Quirk, Helen Snively, Rob Vandenabeele, Stephanie Wasiuk.

Members Absent: Elka Kuhlman, Diane Roseman, Quinten Steenhuis.

Staff Present: Mike Orr

Public Present: Courtney Forrester, Tamene Tedla, Amy Waltz

1. Housekeeping:

Minutes from December 2025 were approved.

New RAC cohort anticipated to start February 11. Eleven new members.

2. Presentation and Discussion by Dailey Brannin and Courtney Forrester on Harvard University Waste Stewardship Plan

See attached presentation.

Zero Waste Plan is called Waste Stewardship Plan – part of the Sustainability Action Plan and Campus Sustainability Mission

HU still collects 18 tons of trash per day

Recycling & Waste Services/FMO (Dailey's office), EHS (Courtney) and the Office for Sustainability

Q&A followed the presentation

3. City Updates:

Average daily trash tonnage went down slightly in 2025

Year	Average Daily Trash Tonnage
2021	52.98
2022	50.07
2023	48.48
2024	48.21
2025	47.87

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4. Goal setting: Goals for the new year to be discussed at the next meeting

- 2026 Free Store

- Any other suggestions?

5. Discussion regarding the new Mobile Recycling Center –

- Where can/should it be?

Do we have contacts/inroads at any of the suggested locations to facilitate collaboration?

Suggestions – Rindge Towers, Walden Square, Just a Start, Twin Cities, Kennedy-Longfellow School is vacant

- The Mobile Recycling Center event will take place on Wednesdays

Event will be from 4:00 to 7:30 PM (space will be blocked from 2:00 to 8:30 pm)

- Could we arrange one for Earth Day?
- Piggy back with Shredding Day and/or other city events and initiatives (Fresh Pond Day, Danehy Park Day?)

6. Public Comments

Amy W. seconds the suggestion for the Mobile Recycling Center to be held at Danehy Park at the New Street section.

7. Action items:

Tracie Gordon will send out an email to those who volunteered to help with outreach to the City Council re. a January 21st meeting.

Closing

The meeting ended at 9:35 am.

HARVARD
CAMPUS SERVICES



Waste Stewardship at Harvard

*Cambridge RAC Meeting
January 14, 2026*

Agenda

- Background
- Waste Stewardship Framework
- Resources & Shout-Outs
- Looking Forward



Why Zero Waste?

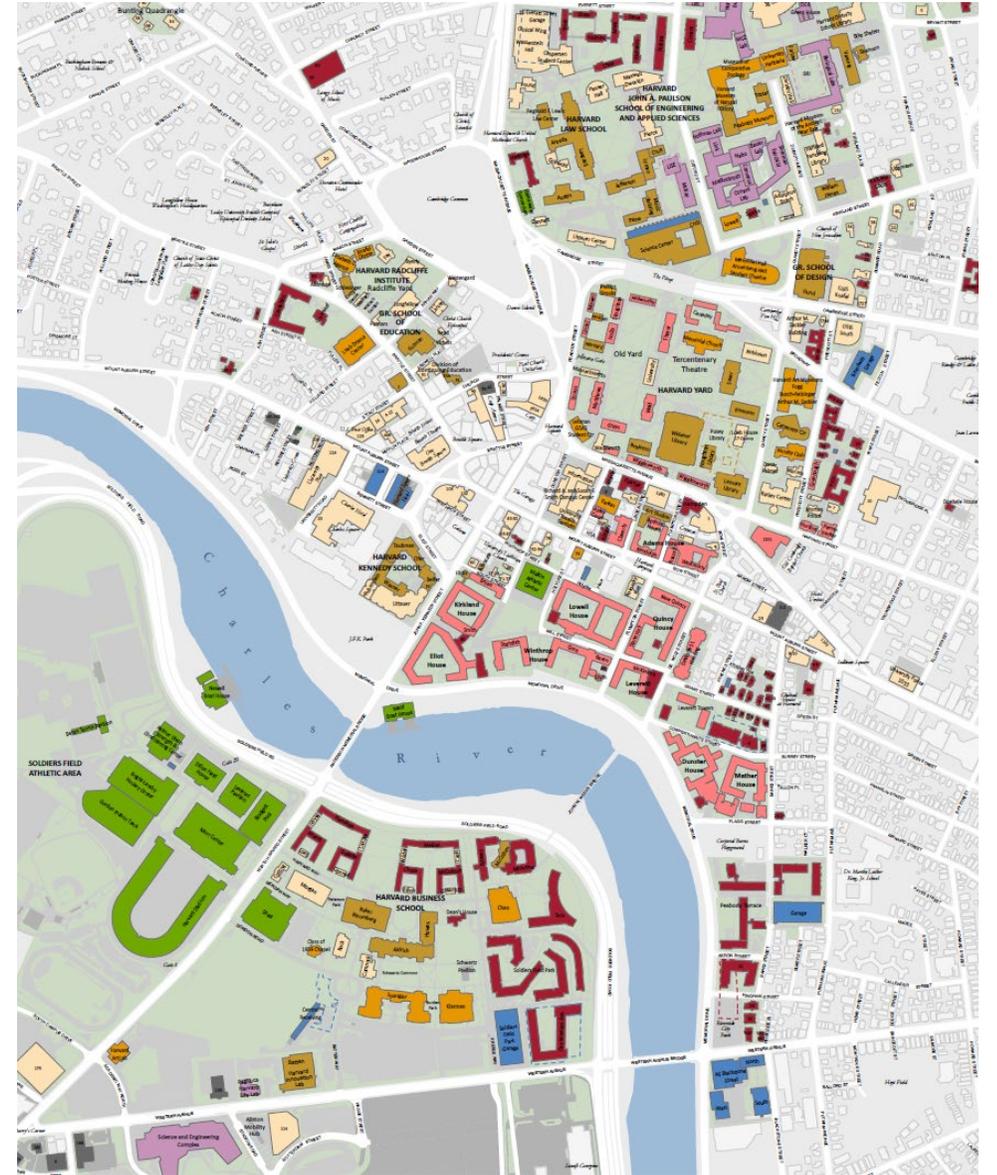
- Environmental impact
- Disposal capacity
- Efficiency and costs
- Harvard Sustainability Action Plan
- Campus Services' mission

Harvard's Waste in FY25



Campus Ecosystem

- 25,266 students (undergrad and grad)
- 19,639 faculty and staff
- 500+ buildings in Cambridge, Allston, and Longwood
- 14+ independent Schools/units



Buildings by Use Type

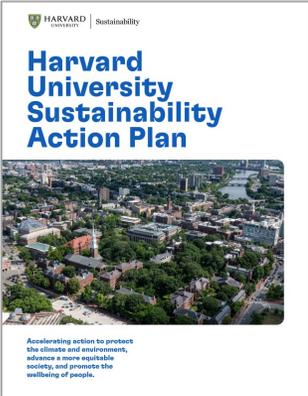
Campus Waste Partners



Background

Waste Stewardship Steering Committee

Builds upon past 30 years of Harvard Recycling



2023

Sustainability Action Plan released

Goal: develop a strategic zero-waste plan by the end of 2024

Waste Stewardship Working Group

60+ person working group, representatives from all schools and major units.

Jan 2024

Dec 2024

Waste Stewardship Framework completed



Deliverable: University-Wide Zero Waste Framework

- Value and tracking system
- School-specific plan templates
- Other university-wide, systematic recommended changes



Working Group



I enjoyed the participatory nature of the meetings and the variety of activities to keep everyone engaged.

This working group and its leaders were incredibly well organized, engaging, thoughtful, and effective.

It was one of the most enjoyable working groups I've sat on for the University! I felt heard and loved the small-group joint discussions where many different perspectives were put forth, but it still all felt very collaborative.

Very engaging





**Advance
Sustainable
Purchasing &
Procurement**



**Build and
Develop
Reuse
Systems**



**Ensure
Standard
Recovery
Infrastructure**



**Educate and
Engage
Campus
Community**



Build the Foundation

Data

Ethos and Culture

Waste Stewardship Framework



**Advance
Sustainable
Purchasing &
Procurement**



HARVARD
Office for Sustainability

Purchasing Guide

**To Buy Or
Not To Buy?**



**HMS Lab Purchasing
Project**





Build and
Develop
Reuse
Systems



HUDS Reusables Program



Recycling & Surplus Center

Free furniture, office
supplies, and more!

PROGRAM

Easy steps for waste-free takeout.



- 1. Swipe** for your meal at the checker's station.
- 2. Request** a green to-go container from the checker.
- 3. Check out** the container at the MeeScan device.
- 4. Return** container **within 3 days** to the **dish drop** when you are done with it.

We will clean and sanitize the container (required between every use per MA state Food Code), check it back in and put it back in circulation.

What happens if you don't return it? Unreturned containers incur a \$10 charge to your term bill.

Container lost its bar code? Return it in person with your name.





Ensure
Standard
Recovery
Infrastructure



WHAT WASTE GOES WHERE?

Ask the Waste Wizard!



Explore Harvard's new waste sorting tool to find the best disposal option for any item!

Find it here:



[tinyurl.com/
thewastewizard](https://tinyurl.com/thewastewizard)



GSD Waste Zones





Educate and Engage Campus Community



Top Tips

How can you prevent waste?

Know before you throw

Pay attention to waste signage so that you can recycle right!
Use the Waste Wizard when you're unsure.

Buy better

Refuse extras: skip the stuff!
Buy only what you need.
Think about the materials: buy recyclable or compostable.

Be a champion

Lead by example.
Share these tips with your peers!
Advocate for better waste practices at events.



Reduce food waste

Plan ahead.
Store food properly.
Compost the rest!



Go reusable

Make a habit of bringing reusables with you - start with a water bottle, then mug, utensils, straw, and so on! What switch can you make?



Give items new life

Have a broken item? Fix it!
No longer need something? Donate it!
Feeling creative? Repurpose it!



Stay involved

Subscribe to Harvard Recycling newsletter!
Check out Office for Sustainability resources on waste reduction.



HLS Zero Waste Commencement





Build the Foundation

Data



EHS



HBS Student
Waste Audits



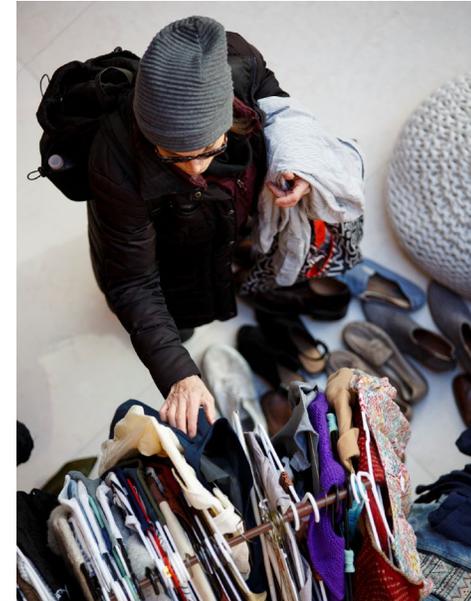


Build the Foundation

Ethos and Culture



**Waste Stewardship
Coalition**



Freecycle

Next Steps

- School & unit-level implementation
- Purchasing Task Force
- University-wide capacity building



We do not need everyone doing zero-waste perfectly – we just need many people doing it well with systems in place to move us in the right direction.



Reach out:

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Courtney Forrester, courtney_forrester@harvard.edu

