



# Recycling in Madison

COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

JUNE 2018

# Two recent changes

- ▶ Rigid plastic program ending (2017)
  - ▶ Due to commodity importing restrictions
- ▶ Organics pilot program ended
  - ▶ Due to contamination and cost

No  
changes in  
what can  
go into the  
recycling  
cart

# RECYCLABLES ONLY

## PLASTICS



- » Containers #1 thru #7
- » Bottles – leave on lids
- » Dairy tubs and lids
- » Milk jugs
- » Laundry bottles
- » Berry and deli containers
- » Clamshell and blister packs

Plastic bags must be bagged  
in clear or white bags:



## PAPER



- » Corrugated cardboard
- » Phone books
- » Boxes
- » Newspaper & all inserts
- » Envelopes & junk mail
- » Paper bags
- » Magazines
- » Milk cartons
- » Juice boxes
- » Gable top containers

Shredded paper must be  
bagged in clear or white bags:



## METAL



- » Aluminum cans
- » Steel & tin cans
- » Pots & pans
- » Small metal appliances
- » Empty aerosol cans
- » Metal less than 18 inches  
long and less than 10  
pounds

Bottle caps & other small  
metal objects must be inside  
a pinched metal can:



## GLASS



- » Bottles – remove caps
- » Jars – remove lids

## Recycling Video

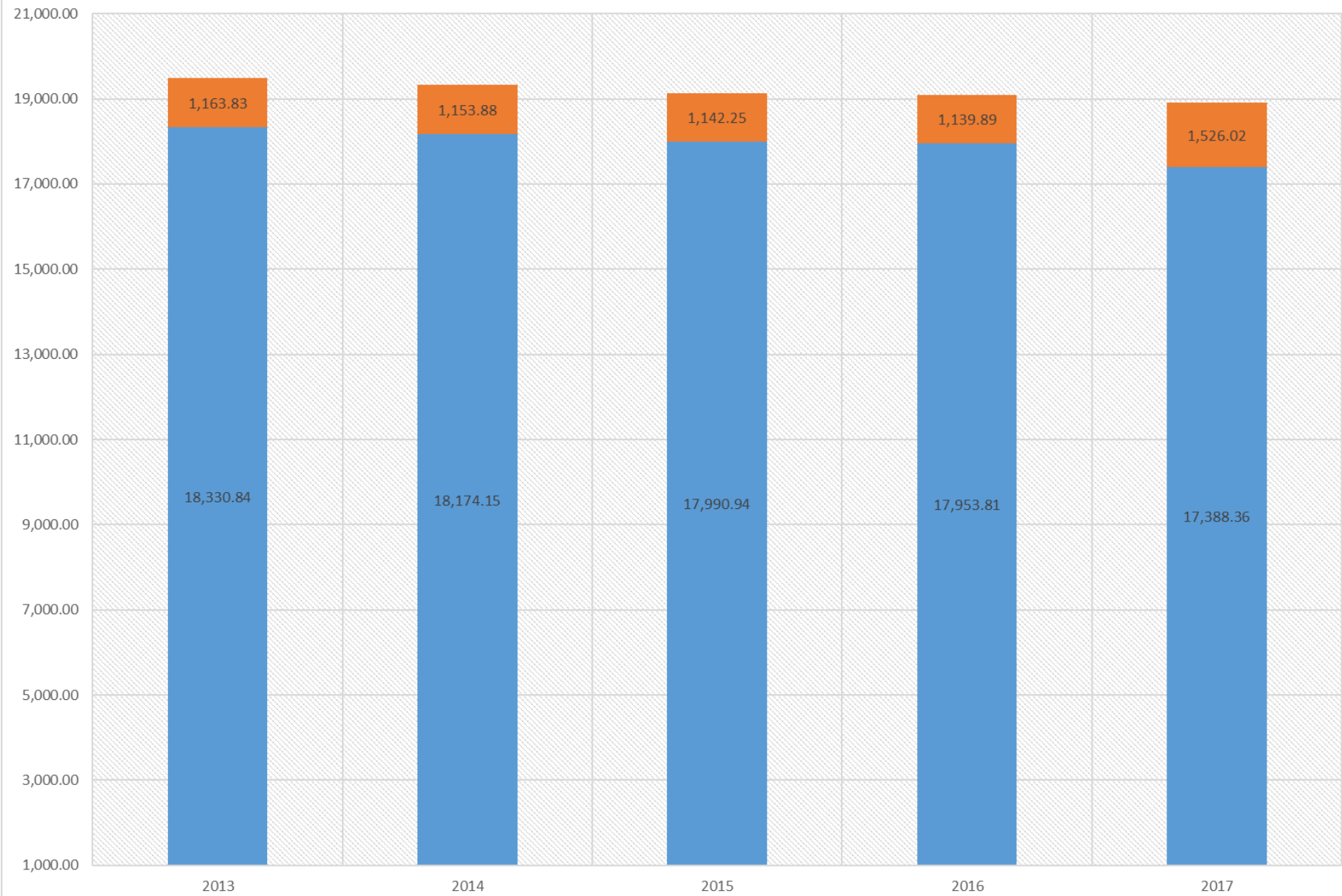
► [https://youtu.be/JyzPvM\\_4sJ4](https://youtu.be/JyzPvM_4sJ4)

# By the numbers:

## Recycling collected in Madison by Streets

	Recyclables	Residue	Total Tons
2013	18,330.84	1,163.83	19,494.67
2014	18,174.15	1,153.88	19,328.03
2015	17,990.94	1,142.25	19,133.19
2016	17,953.81	1,139.89	19,093.70
2017	17,388.36	1,526.02	18,914.38

Recycling Collected by Streets Division





# Why are the tonnages decreasing?

- ▶ Changes to packaging
  - ▶ Stuff is getting lighter
- ▶ Changes in consumer habits
- ▶ Changes where people are living
  - ▶ Streets does not collect from apartments/condos of more than 8 units

# Why did the residue number go up?

- ▶ Pellitteri performed a sort/audit of the material Madison collects in 2017.
  - ▶ Sort revealed a higher percentage of residue (garbage) than previous sort
- ▶ Are people putting more garbage into the recycling carts?
  - ▶ Maybe?



# Where does China fit in?

- ▶ China had been a large consumer of the world's recyclable material
- ▶ China changed their importing rules in 2017
  - ▶ Set very strict standards for contamination
  - ▶ Much of the world can't hit these new standards today

# China's impact (Part 1)

- ▶ Rigid plastic drop-off program ended
  - ▶ “Rigid plastics” are things like 5-gallon buckets, children’s sandboxes, etc.
  - ▶ Rigid plastic program commingled a lot of different plastic types & at present, no market for this material

*NOTE: Rigid plastic material does not go into the green recycling cart, and was not included in the numbers shown earlier in this presentation*

## China's impact (Part 2)

- ▶ Commodity prices are very, very low right now.
  - ▶ A lot of domestic supply now for recyclable materials, especially paper
  - ▶ 55% of what the Streets Division collects is paper products

# What can Madison do?

- ▶ Keep recycling
  - ▶ Our material is recycled
- ▶ Keep it clean
  - ▶ Stop “wishcycling” things like coffee pods
- ▶ Basically, follow current collection rules

# Organics: Brief History

- ▶ Pilot started in 2011. By 2018, grew to include approximately 1,100 homes and 40 businesses.
  - ▶ 2011 plan was to have an anaerobic biodigester by 2016 to accept and process city's food scraps
- ▶ In 2011, material was taken to a composter in Columbia County that was not producing a compost for gardeners/farmers
  - ▶ This means the system did not need to pluck out the garbage, diapers, and pet waste.
- ▶ Columbia County composter closed. Anaerobic digester dropped from budget planning. Garbage remained in the carts.
- ▶ Multiple other processors were tried, each of them making a compost for consumers. And garbage in the organics carts remained a problem.

# What do you mean by garbage?

- Plastic bags
- Plastic coffee lids
- Plastic takeout boxes
- Plastic cutlery
- Plastic netting
- Glass bottles
- Metal cans
- Butter wrappers
- Yogurt containers
- Dirt clods & brush
- Diapers
- Toys
- Clothing & towels
- And other weird stuff as well





# Who puts garbage & plastic bags in a food scrap program?

- ▶ Unclear if it's residential or businesses responsible
- ▶ Carts were collected with our automated side-loading trucks
  - ▶ Carts are not peeked into at the curb, so problems are not noticed until material is dumped out of the truck



# Why end the pilot now?

- ▶ Only one processor that is within a 4-hour round trip drive of Madison.
- ▶ Due to contamination issues, the local processor wanted to charge an incredibly high rate to accept the material.
- ▶ Decision making went like this:
  - ▶ We know there's contamination in the material, and
  - ▶ We can't seem to control the contamination in our current routing/collection scheme, and
  - ▶ The one option to process the dirty material is too high, therefore
  - ▶ It makes sense to end the pilot and rethink how to provide this service

# How is the program successful in other cities/locations?

- ▶ All seem to have a composter nearby
- ▶ All seem to collect it by first peeking into the carts
  - ▶ Other contamination control on back end as well, either handpicking or mechanical solutions
- ▶ All seem to charge a monthly fee

# How can we make this program a success?

- ▶ Many options available
  - ▶ Including an RFP for a private hauler
- ▶ Rebranding the program as “food scrap recycling” should eliminate confusion around the word “organics”
- ▶ Strictly limit what is acceptable in the program to just food & maybe paper bags
- ▶ Need to peek into the carts at the curb and reject the bad ones
  - ▶ But cart peeking may turn a 1-person collection job into a 2-person job and makes collections slower

# There's more to recycling, too...

- ▶ Electronics (including batteries)
- ▶ Yard waste & leaves
- ▶ Brush
- ▶ And on and on....

# Questions?

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