

RECYCLING IN MADISON

Sustainability Committee
August 2018

Two recent changes

- Recycling challenges brought on by China
- Organics pilot program ended
 - Due to contamination and cost

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

No changes as to what should go into the green recycling cart



PELLITTERI SORTING PROCESS VIDEO

https://youtu.be/JyzPvM_4sJ4

To find this later, go to YouTube and search for "Kipp Street Recycling"

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
 - Created low value, mixed-chemistry plastic bale.

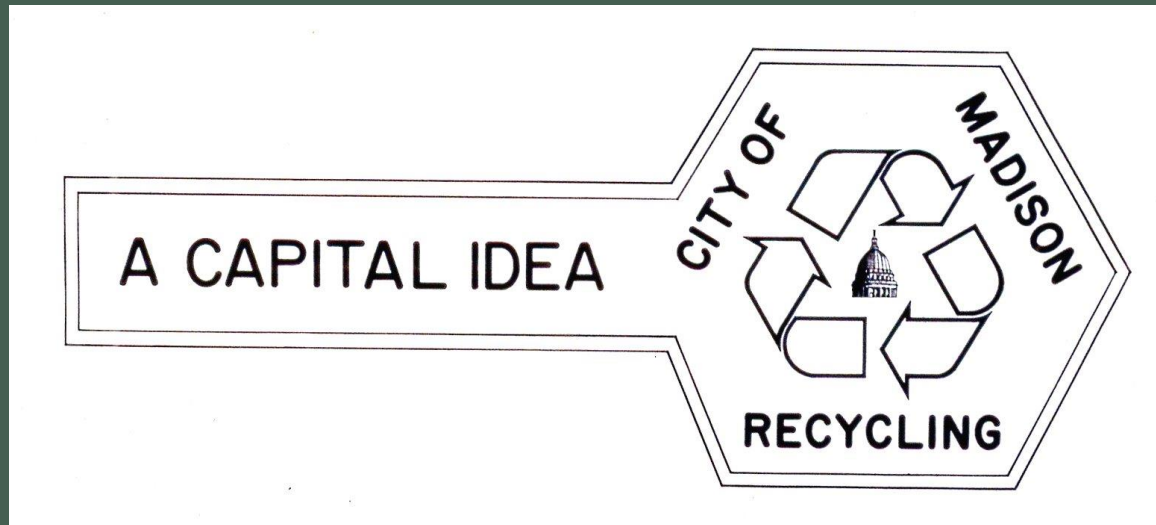


NOTE: Rigid plastic material does not go into the green recycling cart, and was not included in the numbers shown earlier in this presentation

China's impact (Part 2)

- Commodity prices are very, very low right now.
 - A lot of domestic supply now for recyclable materials, especially paper and that depresses the market.
- This will be a problem with the budget.
 - Money received from recycling covers the recycling costs when the market allows

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 was residential or businesses responsible
- Carts were collected with our automated side-loading trucks
 - Carts are not peeked into at the curb, so problems were 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.
- 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 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

Madison's
recycling
program started
September
1968.



QUESTIONS?

Bryan Johnson
Recycling Coordinator
608-267-2626

streets@cityofmadison.com

