



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

Date: November 29, 2011

To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: **City of Minneapolis Recycling Program**

Recommendation:

Direct Public Works Staff to return to the Transportation and Public Works Committee with a recommendation on a new recycling program that best balances the values of cost effectiveness, convenience for customers, and reducing total environmental impact.

Previous Directives:

None

Prepared by: Brette Hjelle, Public Works Interagency Coordinator

Approved by:

Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Reviews Not Applicable

Financial Impact

None

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: Not Applicable

City Goals: Eco-Focused

Comprehensive Plan: Not Applicable

Zoning Code: Not Applicable

Program History

The City of Minneapolis started a curbside recycling test project in 1982. The program has evolved from a private collection system in a 32,000 household test area to a city managed program that collects over 18,000 tons of recyclable materials at 105,000 dwelling units annually. There have been a number of changes over time including changes in collection frequency, the items collected, and some recent pilot programs that are testing different collection program types. Significant milestones for Minneapolis recycling program are listed in Attachment A.

Current Program

The City of Minneapolis currently uses a "Source Separated" recycling program. Recyclable items are separated by residents and set out for collection. Solid Waste employees collect the material in specialized trucks (Attachment B) that keep the material separated. Twenty-four recycling trucks service an average of 400 households per route per day. The separated material is delivered to the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) for processing.

There are currently two recycling program pilot projects being conducted in the city to test one sort and two sort programs in Minneapolis. One sort programs allow residents to place all recyclable materials into one container. The material is collected and delivered to the MRF where it is sorted during processing. Two sort programs require residents to sort recycling into two containers, one for paper/cardboard and one for plastic/glass/metal.

A source separated recycling program requires residents to follow specific instructions for the separation of their recyclables. The guidelines provided to Minneapolis customers for their recyclables are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Recyclable	Process	Place in Paper Bag	Max.
Cans; food, beverage & aluminum foil	Rinse, clean and remove all caps or lids.	Yes	
Glass Bottles & Jars	Rinse, clean and throwaway all caps or lids.	Yes	
Plastic Bottles	Rinse, clean and throwaway all caps or lids.	Yes	
Newspaper	Keep dry. Ads are accepted.	Yes, or bundle with string or twine.	20 lbs.
Magazines and Catalogs	Keep dry.	Yes	20 lbs.
Dry Food Boxboard, Office Paper & Mail	Flatten boxes, remove plastic, and keep dry.	Yes	
Household Batteries	Tape ends of lithium contacts to prevent fire.	No, but Place in clear plastic bag, on top or inside the bin.	
Phone Books	Keep dry.	No, but Place on top or inside the bin.	
Corrugated Cardboard	Flatten each box. Remove and throw away plastic, tape and packing material.	No, but must be bundle with string or twine	20 lbs. 3ft. x 3ft.

Source separated recycling was very common as recycling programs developed in the 1980s. Cities have been converting to other systems, first two sort and then one sort, and today a majority of cities are using one sort recycling programs.

Regulatory Framework and Recycling Goals

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is the primary state agency for solid waste regulation. State statute also mandates counties regulate specific solid waste management activities.

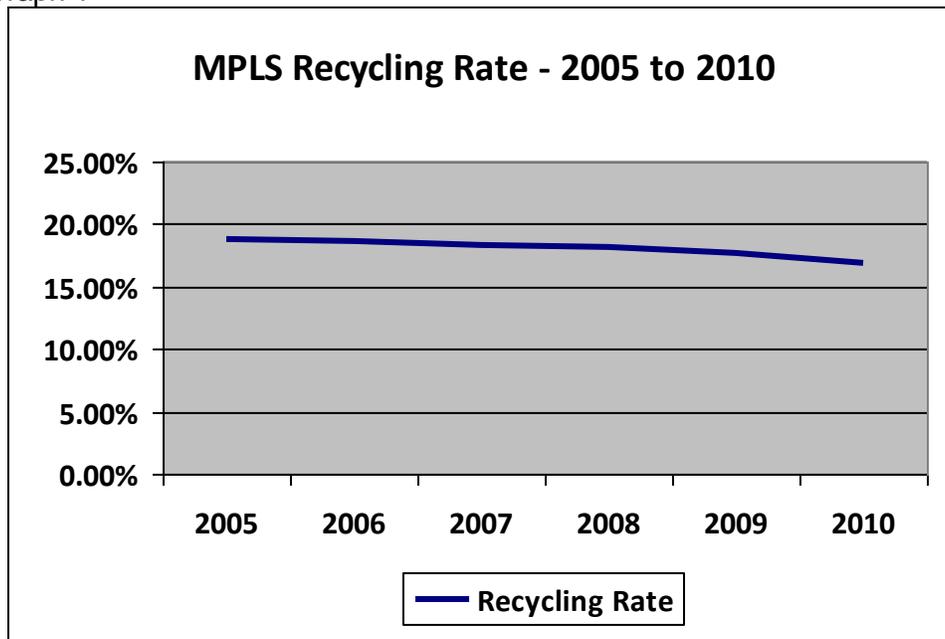
An important item in the regulatory framework is the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan 2010-2030 (Policy Plan). The Policy Plan was adopted by the MPCA in April 2011 and it

includes increased goals for recycling. As a result of this plan, Hennepin County has established a 35% recycling rate goal (by 2015) for cities with an organized collection program.

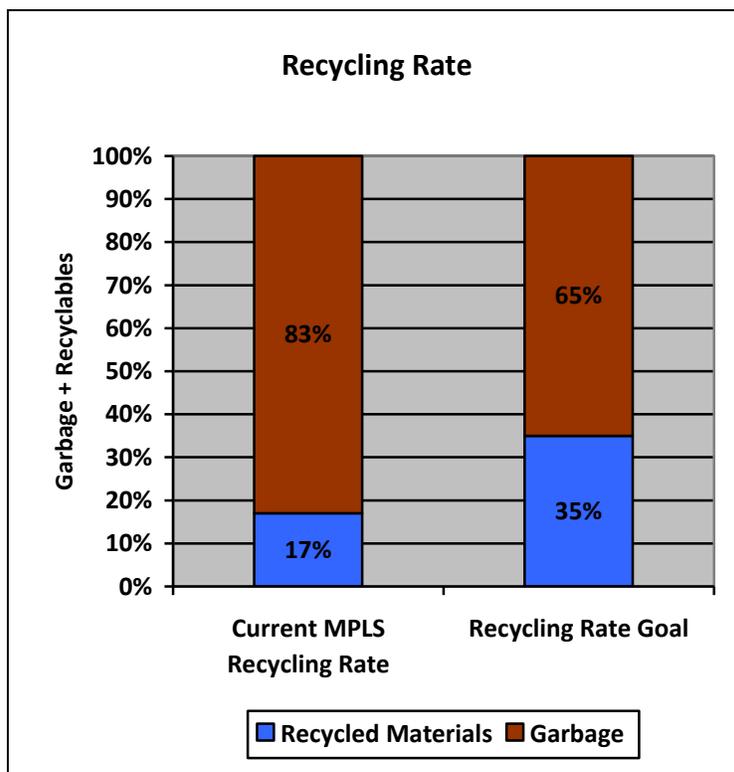
Minneapolis Recycling Program Performance

Recycling rates refer to the tons of recycled materials as a percentage of total waste. Hennepin County's goal for Minneapolis is 35% by 2015. Minneapolis had a 16.9% recycling rate in 2010 with a downward trend over the past five years (Graph 1). Graph 2 shows the current Minneapolis recycling rate in a stacked bar format and the Hennepin County goal for 2015.

Graph 1



Graph 2



The amount of recycling in the one sort and two sort pilot program areas has increased when compared to the city's current source separated system.

Neighborhood	Pilot Type	% Change in Average Daily Weight
Willard Hay	One Sort	+ 84.9%
East Calhoun	One Sort	+ 32.1%
Seward	Two Sort	+ 30%

Recommendation

Based on information available from cities around the country and data collected in Minneapolis pilot projects, the Public Works Department believes changing the recycling program is necessary to improve the city's recycling performance. There are many variables that need further evaluation before implementing a new program, but the evidence from around the country is very strong that conversion to a one sort or a two sort recycling system will divert recycling material from the waste stream.

Therefore, the Public Works Department is recommending that the City Council direct staff to return to the Transportation and Public Works Committee with a recommendation on a new recycling program that best balances the values of cost effectiveness, convenience for customers, and reducing total environmental impact.

Attachments: Significant Milestones for Minneapolis Recycling Program
Current Minneapolis Recycling Truck Image

Attachment A

Significant Milestones for Minneapolis Recycling Program

Year	Change
1982	Curbside recycling test project begins with 32,000 households.
1983	Citywide monthly recycling collection begins. Private contractors are utilized for collection. Materials collected include newspaper, food and beverage cans, glass bottles and jars, cardboard, used motor oil and auto batteries.
1987	Recycling collection frequency increased to twice a month.
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling simplified: collection is now biweekly on the same day as garbage pickup. Residents no longer need to separate glass by color. • City crews and Minneapolis Refuse, Inc. assume residential recycling collections. A recycling discount of \$5/month/unit is added to the utility bill. The recycling credit appears on utility bills only for buildings that are registered for recycling credit and participating in the Minneapolis recycling program.
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three test projects begin collecting plastics for recycling. • Collection of major appliances and large metal items for recycling begins. • Plastic bottles are added to Citywide recycling collection.
1991	Plastic jars, tubs and single-use microwave containers added to plastics collected for recycling.
1993	Magazines added to recycling collection.
1994	Phone books, milk/juice and drink boxes, added to recycling collection.
1996	Boxboard, mail, and office paper added to recycling collection. Because of poor markets, recycling collection is ended for plastic food jars, tubs and single-use microwave containers.
1997	TVs, computers and computer monitors are now collected separate from the garbage. These items are delivered to Hennepin County for processing. Recycling collection of milk cartons and drink boxes ends due to lack of markets and the small volumes collected.
2008	Eastside Co-Op plastic drop off
2010	Mattresses added to recycling stream
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual Stream pilot for recycling started on select city collected routes • Single Stream pilot for recycling started on contract routes.

Attachment B

Current Minneapolis Recycling Truck

