

June 2009

Boston Moves to Single-Stream Recycling on July 1

Waste haulers must offer commercial customers recycling collection and disposal services

Based on successful pilot recycling programs in selected neighborhoods, the City of Boston will institute residential single-stream recycling citywide on July 1. This service change should lead to increased recycling, decreased waste tonnage and reduced or more manageable solid waste disposal costs. Cleaner streets and a better environment also are touted as benefits of this program.

Neighborhood single-stream recycling started as a pilot program in Jamaica Plain/Roslindale in May 2007 and was introduced over time in parts of the South End and North End. Single-stream recycling involves putting all acceptable recyclable materials in one recycling cart with no separation of paper, plastic, cans and glass. These wheeled carts range in size from 64-95 gallons, which is as much as seven times larger than the normal 14-gallon curbside recycling bin.

The neighborhood pilot programs have shown increased recycling usage with the single-stream program. The Jamaica Plain/Roslindale program involving 2,500 households increased recycling tonnage by 52% and reduced waste tonnage by 20% over six months. The South End program increased recycling tonnage by 143% and decreased waste tonnage by 19% over a four-month period.

The City will deliver the blue 64-gallon recycling carts by neighborhood to residents with one to six units between July 2009 and

June 2010. Buildings with seven or more units that receive city trash pickup services are required by law to have recycling programs and maintain carts in centralized locations for all building residents to use. In parts of the City where large carts are not practical for collection, recyclables can be put in large heavy-duty clear plastic bags.

Savings from recycling are projected to total \$1.2M in FY10 based on an estimated 30,000 recyclable tons. Single-stream collection accounts for 11,000 tons of that total for a net increase savings of \$464,000. Currently Boston's waste disposal costs are \$76.00 per ton and its recycling processing costs are \$33.84 per ton, a difference of \$42.15 per ton. The City's recycling processing contract is with FCR Recycling, a division of Casella Waste located in Charlestown. From the sale of paper, Boston received \$92.00/ton in October 2008 but in May 2009 received only \$14.50/ton.

Commercial Recycling

Effective March 1, 2009, a [city ordinance](#) requires that all waste haulers offer all commercial solid waste customers "the services of collecting and properly disposing of recyclables." The ordinance also requires that the haulers provide informational materials explaining its recycling services. Failure to comply with the regulations would result in fines and after the third violation, revocation of the hauler's permit in Boston by the Commissioner of Public Works.