

City of Saint Paul *Recycle it Forward*

A comprehensive assessment of recycling and waste management

Executive summary

Most Saint Paul residents would like a single-sort recycling system that accepts more plastics, a curbside or alley collection system for organic waste, and more convenient disposal options for their unwanted bulky items like furniture and appliances. Two-thirds of residents are willing to pay more for these new services. These are some of the key findings of a recent assessment conducted by Wilder Research for the City of Saint Paul to better understand resident perceptions, needs, and preferences related to recycling, trash, organics, and bulky waste. The City is working to significantly reduce landfilled waste as the state of Minnesota aims to recycle 60% of waste and divert 15% of waste for organics recycling by 2030.

Findings point to six recommendations to reinvigorate Saint Paul's recycling and waste management system:

1. Launch a major educational and promotional campaign to inform residents and reinvigorate their enthusiasm around recycling, composting, and waste reduction.
2. Expand and simplify the selection of plastics collected for recycling.
3. Transition to a single-sort recycling collection system with wheeled, lidded carts.
4. Transition to a source-separated organics (SSO) collection system (curbside or alley), paired with expanded education on food waste prevention and backyard composting.
5. Diversify bulky waste management to offer more convenient reuse and disposal options.
6. Coordinate trash collection to lower costs, reduce truck traffic, and design trash pricing to incentivize recycling.

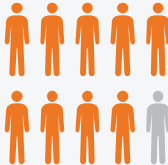
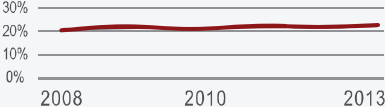
The recommendations for new services echo the expressed preferences of residents, most of whom would like to see additional plastics collected (90%), curbside/alley collection of bulky items (84%), single-sort recycling (77%), and curbside/alley collection of organics (73%). Key stakeholder insights also strongly support these recommendations.

While each recommendation carries significant potential to help Saint Paul residents to reduce landfilled waste in Saint Paul, these recommendations are best adopted as a full package – a holistic, system-wide overhaul. The synergy and complementary efficiencies in the recommended system are key to meeting the City's ambitious long-term waste reduction and diversion goals.



This assessment included a mailed survey of 1,285 Saint Paul residents, six resident focus groups, and interviews with 13 experts in the field.

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CURRENT STATUS	RESIDENT RESPONSE	RECOMMENDATION
35% of residents in Saint Paul are unclear about the recycling program¹ 	Current recycling education materials are informative, clear, and translated into many languages but many residents never see them 	Launch an educational campaign to inform and reinvigorate enthusiasm for recycling, composting, and waste reduction 
Saint Paul currently only accepts #1 and #2 plastic bottles with necks and many residents are confused about which plastics can be recycled 	9 in 10 residents want to recycle more plastics 	Expand and simplify the selection of plastics collected for recycling 
2010 Twin Cities waste² 60% of waste not recycled  40% of recycled waste was recycled	Sorting requirements, lack of bins, and bin capacity present significant barriers to recycling  3 in 4 residents want single-sort recycling	Transition to a single-sort recycling collection system with wheeled, lidded carts 
Backyard composting rates have remained stagnant in Ramsey County and many residents do not have this option¹ 	Three-quarters of residents want curbside or alley collection of organic waste 	Transition to a source-separated organics collection system (with curbside or alley pick-up) 
Improper disposal of bulky items is common in Saint Paul 	9 in 10 residents are willing to use a curbside or alley collection service for bulky items and half are willing to pay more for it 	Offer more convenient reuse and disposal options for bulky waste 
Saint Paul residents pay more for trash than residents in neighboring communities with coordinated collection³ 	More than half of residents - think they pay too much for their trash hauling services - report problems with street wear and tear, noise, and air pollution from garbage trucks 	Coordinate trash collection to lower costs, reduce truck traffic, and incentivize recycling 

All statistics are based on the 2013 Saint Paul resident survey unless noted otherwise.

1 Solid waste management in Ramsey County: a report for Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health. Wilder Research, March 2013.

2 Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan 2010, prepared by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in consultation with the Metropolitan Counties. Available at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=15714>.

3 Analysis of Waste Collection Service Arrangements. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, June 2009 (Foth Infrastructure & Environment). Available at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=4514>.