Madison Recycling

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Who we are as a city

- Capital city of Wisconsin
  - Home of University of Wisconsin – Madison
  - Located in Dane County, WI

- Population of roughly 250,000
  - 57% of population has bachelor’s degree or greater
  - 4 out of 5 have at least some college

- Much of Madison located on isthmus between Lake Mendota and Lake Monona
From Twitter: @MedFlightDoc
Who we are as a recycler

• Recycling municipal service provided at no extra charge to residents
  ◦ Solid waste services included in property taxes
  ◦ Every resident automatically enrolled – no opt out

• Streets Division provides curbside collection for 75,000 properties of 8 residential units or fewer
  ◦ Also operates two year-round drop-off sites for residents only
Some Recycling Numbers

- 19,903 tons of recycling collected curbside in 2016 with 6% contamination rate
- Overall in 2016, 58.4% diversion for all waste
  - Includes all materials collected, such as large items, electronics, brush, yard waste, etc.
How did we get here?

- In 1989, yard waste banned from Dane County landfill
  - Concurrent with state ban of material from all landfills
- In 1991, Dane County landfill banned recyclable items, specifically: “ferrous metal cans, aluminum cans, corrugated cardboard, glass bottles and jars, HDPE and PET plastic containers, tires and lead acid batteries from all other solid waste
- City of Madison also banned recyclable items from landfills at that time & a created a mandatory recycling ordinance
  - State government recycling laws started around this time
Enforcing the bans & compliance

- Recycling participation has always been very high.
  - Active policing hasn’t been necessary
- Non-compliance handled on by complaint basis by code enforcement officials
Achieving High Participation Rate

- Madison very aggressive in education program from the start of the program
  - Television, radio, print ads
  - Regular publication of recycling guidebook called the Recyclopedia & other information
  - Robust City website

- City & county ordinance require landlords share recycling information to tenants
Recyclopedia

- Always in demand, especially with residents w/o internet access

- For the digital capable
  - MyWaste smart phone app
  - Recyclopedia.org
Program history

• Curbside recycling began in 1991 with bags of material at curb

• Transitioned to automated collection and roll out carts in 2005
  ◦ Single stream recycling
    • Saves time. Save tax dollars. Increases participation.
Rollout Carts

- Residents given 3 cart options initially for refuse & recycling collection
  - 35 gallon
  - 65 gallon
  - 95 gallon
What we learned about carts

- Don’t need 3 sizes
  - 95 gallon only

- Opportunity to take more material

- Cart lids being different vs. entire cart being different

- People grumble, then adapt and grow to love them
It takes a village

- Great collaborative relationship with local, family-owned MRF to handle recyclables
- City ordinances
  - And local government buy-in
- County ordinances
- State laws
Questions?

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