



## CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

100 North Fifth Ave. P.O. Box 8647

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-8647

[www.a2gov.org/recycle](http://www.a2gov.org/recycle)

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **ANN ARBOR TO EXPAND RECYCLING PROGRAM: SINGLE-STREAM SERVICE ANTICIPATED JULY 2010**

ANN ARBOR, Mich. – November 10, 2009 – The City of Ann Arbor is planning to reconfigure its recycling plant to accept an expanded range of materials from residents, schools, and businesses. On Thursday evening City Council authorized staff to pursue development of a single-stream recycling program at the city-owned Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), which is operated by the private contractor FCR/Casella, based in Rutland, Vt. Key components of a single-stream recycling program are that separated recyclables are placed in one recycling bin for collection, and additional materials—especially a wider range of plastics—are added to the list of accepted recyclables.

As part of the upgrade of the city's MRF in mid-2010, Ann Arbor will **add and recycle all clean plastic bottles and household rigid containers marked #1, #2, #4, #5, #6, and #7. Bulky plastic HDPE #2 items such as buckets, crates, trays, outdoor furniture, and many toys will be accepted.** Three types of plastics that will not be included in the expanded program include items marked with a: #3 (PVC for polyvinyl chloride), polystyrene foam (aka Styrofoam™), and plastic bags or film of any sort. The city will continue to accept and recycle: glass bottles and food containers; tin/steel cans; aluminum cans, foil, and trays; metal scrap (such as pots and pans up to 1 square foot and 20 pounds/piece); milk cartons and juice boxes; newspapers; magazines and catalogs; corrugated cardboard (including pizza boxes free of food); paper bags; junk mail; office paper; boxboard (e.g., flattened cereal boxes); telephone books; and gift wrapping paper.

“Ann Arbor has been monitoring the single-stream recycling industry closely,” observes city recycling coordinator Tom McMurtrie, and adds, “Single-stream recycling processing has



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made significant gains in the last few years to be able to address the initial processing problems of cross-contamination of papers and containers.” The city’s MRF operator, FCR, operates dozens of recycling plants in the U.S. including several plants in Michigan that are dual-stream and single-stream recycling plants in five states (New York, North Carolina, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Jersey). Ann Arbor’s single-stream recycling program will be designed to fit the desires of the public to collect and recycle materials at a high level. The city’s expansion into a single-stream recycling system will be advantageous to city businesses, which will be able to combine their papers and containers in one recycling bin inside and outside commercial buildings. This will help address some of the efficiency and quality control concerns raised by some large property managers. The city is also proposing to partner with RecycleBank, a recycling incentive program that measures the amount of materials collected and distributes rewards in the form of coupons, discounts, and cash to recyclers. Under the RecycleBank program, residents will earn an average of \$240 in incentives per year by recycling.

The switch to single-stream pickups from homes and businesses is anticipated to begin mid-2010. In the meantime the new sorting equipment will need to be ordered and installed for the MRF. Later this year, additional proposals will be brought to Council for the purchase of new automated recycling collection trucks, new recycling carts for distribution to residents and businesses, and contract proposals for RecycleBank and Recycle Ann Arbor, the City’s recycling collection service provider. In spring 2010 residents and businesses will be notified of the sizes of recycling carts available for each location at no additional charge.

More information on Ann Arbor’s move to single-stream recycling is posted online at [www.a2gov.org/recycle](http://www.a2gov.org/recycle) under the tab named “single-stream” or by calling the city’s Customer Service Center at 734.99-GREEN or 734.994-2807 or e-mailing [recycle@a2gov.org](mailto:recycle@a2gov.org).

*Ann Arbor has 114,000 residents, spans 27.7 square miles, and was named the No. 1 Healthiest Hometown in the U.S. by AARP The Magazine in 2008. Other notable recognitions include: No. 27 of the top 100 U.S. cities to live in by CNN/Money Magazine in 2008, as well as the fourth smartest city in the U.S. by Forbes Magazine. The city’s mission statement reads: The city of Ann Arbor is committed to providing excellent municipal services that*



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*enhance the quality of life for all through the intelligent use of resources while valuing an open environment that fosters, fair, sensitive and respectful treatment of all employees and the community we serve. # # #*



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Selected FAQs from the information posted online at [www.a2gov.org/recycle](http://www.a2gov.org/recycle), “Single Stream”

1. Why not take PVC, Styrofoam™, or plastic bags? *Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic does not have dependable markets for recycling and the PVC material is a serious contaminant for all other plastic recycling markets. Just one #3 bottle will contaminate an entire bale of #1 plastic water bottles. Both plastic foam and plastic bags create expensive havoc at recycling plants—Styrofoam™ crumbles into pieces and will static-cling to other materials—including papers—and then contaminate these items for recycling. Plastic bags get caught in machine gears throughout the MRF sorting lines and require shutdowns throughout the day to manually cut out the bags from the machinery. To address these items and facilitate recycling, the city will be promoting locations that accept foam and bags, such as the Drop-Off Station and promote waste-reduction options, such as reusing bags.*
2. Will the additional plastics accepted in the Ann Arbor single-stream plant be actually recycled and not landfilled or shipped overseas for unknown purposes? *The city’s MRF operator, FCR, has been domestically recycling additional plastic types from several of their other plants. The plastics marketplace has improved recently and the city is committed to recycling all the items identified under the program. The inclusion of the larger “mixed rigid plastics” is especially exciting given the large quantity of plastic pails, kitty-litter buckets, and toys that are in the waste stream. The exclusion of #3 plastics, foam, and plastic bags underscores the city’s commitment to recycle all the materials on the city’s acceptance list. It would be easier to simply accept all household rigid plastics marked #1-7 and trash the #3s, but that approach would not involve the consumer in understanding and being a partner in the recycling fate of collected materials.*
3. Will new recycling bins be included? My business location has a recycling dumpster for paper and cardboard, and several containers recycling carts. Once single-stream recycling is provided, does that mean we can put our containers into the paper recycling dumpster and not need to use the container carts? *Yes! The combination of papers and containers will help streamline the collection, transfer from inside the building to the storage area, and pickup from the city’s largest location.*
4. Does Ann Arbor need a program to increase recycling? We are already cutting our trash in half with residential recycling and composting waste diversion efforts. *Ann Arbor’s diversion rate is at an annual 400 lbs per household average rate. Similar single-stream recycling communities can achieve 800 to 1,000 lbs/year per household diversion rate. The extra convenience of an easier recycling program will help increase participation from households, and create a system that is easy to use from multi-family locations and the commercial sector. # # #*