

Middletown Recycling Coordinator's Report November 25 – January 19, 2024

Material Tonnages (see end of report)

Grants

DEEP SMM Grant – Co-Collection Pilot Program –

The program is working. A very early analysis shows a 30% reduction in trash. As of early January, we delivered 15,000 lbs of very clean food scraps to Quantum. As waste reduces, the cost of disposal reduces, which means it will be a lower budget for tip fees, which will lower costs or allow the District to offer additional programs, such as once a week recycling or small yard debris pick up. We have had many people come into the office telling us they have been trying and have noticed the amount they throw out is less. We have many people requesting additional recycling containers.

There has been a lot of [public outcry](#) about the program. Residents have been very vocal at Council meetings and to the [media](#). We are working to [answer questions](#) and address concerns.

Outreach – The City has continued to educate customers through social media, the app, the website, onsite visits, phone and email conversations, cart tagging and meetings. The first meeting of the informal Citizens Advisory Committee was held on January 8 at Russell Library. Thirty people attended. Chris Holden ran the meeting. Mark Dancy from Waste Zero gave an overview of the trash disposal situation and the program. There was a lively question and answer session and discussion about many topics. Topics for future discussion include education and outreach, landlords and tenants, and enforcement. The group decided to meet monthly. The next meeting is February 12. Information on this group is posted [here](#). I am in the process of adding all the handouts and notes from the meeting. Channel 30 reported on this meeting [here](#).

Bag Assistance and Waste Audits – We have received 34 applications for bag assistance. No one has taken us up on the offer for a waste audit. This information is on the [Sanitation District landing page](#), but I plan to make it its own page, so it is more noticeable.

Bag Giveaway – We offered a free starter pack of bags in two stores through January 15. The bags are still available at City Hall. We gave away about 400 free packs.

Sanitation District **FREE**

STARTER PACK GIVE-AWAY!



For residents of the Sanitation District participating in the new waste reduction program, the City of Middletown is giving out a free one-time starter pack of 13 15-gallon orange trash bags and 13 8-gallon green food scrap bags.

1. Download the Community Connect App

- Register your address and click "Voucher".

2. Redeem your voucher at:

- Price Chopper (855 Washington Street)
- Stop & Shop (416 E. Main Street)
- City Hall (245 DeKoven Drive, Room 210)

Download the App



www.middletownct.gov/201/Sanitation-Division



If you cannot download the app, bags will also be available at:

- City Hall, Room 210
- Russell Library, Saturday, December 16th 12:00pm–5:00pm & Sunday, December 17th 1:00pm – 5:00pm

Compliance – Starting in January, the City started [spot checking carts](#) for compliance. Carts that do not have any orange bags or are using fake orange bags are stickered. The sticker is here:

OOPS!

You didn't use the required orange & green bags for your trash.

City-issued bags can be purchased at:

Price Chopper 855 Washington St Available at Guest Services Desk	Smith & Bishe 155 Main St
Corner Stop 221 Newfield St	Stop & Go 294 So. Main St
Reboot Eco 131 River Rd	Walgreens 311 E. Main St & 633 Washington St
City Hall, Dept. of Public Works 245 DeKoven Dr., Room 210	

For more information call 860-638-4858 or use this QR code to go to the website

Most of the people either correct the violation on their own; meaning the trash is in orange bags next time we collect or they call the office. Most of the calls are from people who were unaware of the program.

We have installed a new camera on the truck to read the color of the bags. This will help give us information on participation as well. We haven't tracked that since the beginning of the program. The camera needs to be "trained" before we can actually use it and it is currently going through that process. We plan to switch this camera to the recycling truck at some point to help improve recycling compliance as well.

Using artificial intelligence is a new way for towns to monitor waste and recycling compliance. You may have seen SCRRRA is also using this technology. Press Release is [here](#).

EPA Healthy Communities Grant (Reusable take out containers) – Thank you to Stephan Allison who helped collect the reusable containers from all the restaurants. These were delivered back to Useful in Smithfield Rhode Island. CET is writing up a case study on the project. I will share this when it is completed.

Miniature Liquor Bottle Grant

The City receives approximate \$33,000 twice a year from the surcharge on small liquor bottles (nips). I was asked for a review of what we have been spending this funding on. Per state law this funding can only be spent on waste reduction and litter control efforts. Here is a listing:

- Education on Packaging EPR
- Outreach to restaurants on Feed the Earth program in the Sanitation District
- Summer Recycling Assistant
- Kitchen Counter Food Scrap containers
- Litter grabbers
- Litter coloring books for events/schools
- Reusable coffee cups for Refill Not Landfill Coffee Cup Passport program (half paid for by Rockfall Grant)
- Rental of reusables for Tree Symposium
- Rental of tent for Repair Café
- Mugs and Cups for Mayor's Holiday Coffee

Projects being considered for this funding:

- Adopt a Road Litter Clean up
- Foodcycler pilot program
- Summer recycling assistant

There is a [grassroots effort to pass legislation](#) to allow municipalities to ban these small bottles. Currently towns cannot do that, even if they wanted to.

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is developing a regional climate action plan for the Hartford-East Hartford-Middletown MSA, funded through the EPA's new [Climate Pollution Reduction Grant](#) (CPRG) program. A [workshop](#) was held on December 5, 2023 to solicit ideas for the CPRG. Both I and Marek Kozikowski provided verbal comments from the City. A meeting was held at the Free Center on December 18, 2023 to solicit further ideas.

Administration

RRAC – Minutes are completed and recordings have been uploaded to the City Granicus website. 2024 Meeting Schedule is posted [here](#).

Transfer Station Certification Applications – Renewal applications were submitted for twelve highway department employees.

Complaints/Issues Handled –

- 1 cart replacements or repair
- 2 Cart on the curb violations
- 1 new restaurant
- 1 waste hauler complaint

- 8 business assists
- Gather information for 2 FOIA requests
- Numerous resident calls and emails
- 2 Municipal building assists
- 9 Sanitation District Discrepancies

Hauler Ordinance and Recycling Center Policy updates - The City has issued 1,722 resident passes and 41 commercial hauler licenses to date.

Contracts/Purchases

- Cooking Oil Agreement
- SMM Grant Consultant & Bag Contract
- DEEP Contract Amendment – Phase 2
- Heavy Duty Roll offs
- Corrugated Cardboard Contract Extension

Conversations–

- Discussion with consultant completing a benchmark solid waste study for Norwalk
- Mass DEP Deputy Director regarding PAYT and co-collection
- Inquiry from CRCOG regarding SAYT program
- Mansfield regarding MSW and recycling pricing

Other Projects

Sustainable CT – The Common Council recognized the Sustainable CT silver certification at its December 5, 2023 Council meeting. Thank you to all the residents, city staff and Wesleyan interns and staff who assisted with this enormous undertaking. We currently are drafting the webpage to highlight these efforts and then connect with city staff about next steps. Middletown’s application can be found [here](#).

Sustainability – I am working with a city intern to improve the [city’s sustainability webpage](#). We are developing a brand new page. If you have ideas on what you would like to see on this page, let me know.

DBD Trash Containers – I have been working closely with the Downtown Business District to purchase new waste and recycling containers for Main Street. We are planning for the new containers to be delivered and installed the end of April.

Compost Bin Garden – The Wesleyan students who cleared out the jumping worms from the compost bin garden designed this informational [poster](#). I am going to need help developing a system for people to use this area and maintaining the garden. If anyone is interested please let me know, otherwise I will reach out to the master composting program.

Fishing Line Recycling Information – Information on where the line is sent can be found [here](#).

School Waste Programs

- Food Waste Education Efforts in the Schools – I met with the High School Environmental Club to discuss and help with their recycling efforts. They have created a recycling unit that they use in

the café and they have made sure recycling is available in all the classrooms. They are offering these two ideas to the elementary schools, but were having trouble connecting with the principals. I connected them with Randall Mel who will assist in getting the recycling units in the elementary school cafeterias.

- Resusables with Rethink Disposable – Randall Mel, Director of Food Services, is coordinating the purchase of several reusable items to replace single use items in the school cafes. When more information is available, I will share.

Field Trip to Quantum BioPower Anaerobic Digester – I am currently trying to coordinate a field trip for local and state legislators. I have received limited interest. I was hoping to do it before the legislative session started.

Leaf Pick up & Christmas Tree Collection - Both are completed.

Swap Shack – Update from Chairman.

Glass Recycling – Finally, here's a [landing page](#) for the glass recycling at the recycling center. Thank you for your patience. I need to add more pictures and information, but it is a start.

Filming at the Recycling Center – The 2023 Recycling Center Tour has been [uploaded](#). I am not pleased with my performance in this version, so I plan to re-do it in again in the spring.

Draft Ordinance – We are preparing a draft ordinance to increase the cost of bulk waste pick up when residents don't follow the rules. I have not had time to work on this, but do feel it is very important.

FoodCycler Pilot Program – Let's discuss! This company offers a municipal program to sell food scrap dehydrators to residents. It can be similar to the community compost bin sale, or more involved, where the city offers a subsidy for purchasing the unit and requires participants to provide feedback on the use. It is important to note that this is not a composting unit. Most of these are not composters, they are dehydrators, even though they are sold as "composters". They dehydrate the food waste, so it still needs further processing. It can be brought to a food scrap drop off or added to a compost bin, but it should not be added to soil as a soil amendment. That message would need to be very clear. This could be offered as an option for residents, although it is a costly option. I can provide more details verbally at our meeting.

More information on the confusion of these units can be found [here](#).

The US Composting Council also has a statement on these devices. I was not able to link it, but if you google US Composting Council Food Scrap Dehydrators, you should be able to find it.

New Intern – Welcome to Annarita Scamardella who started interning with the Department on January 9, 2024. Annarita is working at the information desk in the lobby and helping guide the public to the proper offices. She also is working on several recycling and sustainability projects while she is there. Already she has created and improved Department spreadsheets, organized the hauler licenses and registrations and translated our bag assistance form and our recycling center permit form into Italian and Spanish. She will be also be working with me to improve the City's environmental sustainability and storm water management pages.

Other Miscellaneous

- Updated stormwater management information on the website – not completed.
- Updated snow management information on the website.
- Coordinating Eversource HeatSmart Program. This will be starting again.

Outreach and Public Education events:

- Social Media, Website updates, Civic Send, Newsflashes, calendar postings & press releases
- Ecoin presentation
- City Hall visits to all offices
- Media interviews (linked above)
- Beman Afterschool program
- Butternut Knoll Condo Association
- Trash Talk at the Free Center
- Water Refill Station to event at MHS
- Interview with WTIC radio – drive time interview
- Numerous meetings with residents and businesses on SAYT

Meetings & Webinars

- Middletown Sustainable CT certification efforts
- HeatSmart meetings with Eversource
- SWAC
- EPR Working group meeting
- Gaia environmental education program
- CRC Board Meetings
- Monthly Meeting with Mayor
- SMM Grant meetings with DEEP and Waste Zero
- Meeting with BOE food services & Rethink Disposal
- Meeting with CLF about food waste legislation
- Trash Talk with other communities in Manchester
- Meetings with Sanitation District drivers
- Zero Waste Coalition
- Sanitation Commission
- Public Works Commission
- CRCOG: Climate Action Plan meetings
- Foodcycler meeting
- 3 student intern interviews
- Sustainable Fairfield Food Scrap Group
- SMM Communities Group
- Community Compost Training
- [NVCOG Curbside PAYT Webinar](#) **Passcode: &ak71m2w**

What else I'm watching and reading:

[Middletown Press Article on SAYT, November 29, 2023](#)

[West Hartford UBP/Co-collection Pilot Program](#)

[Waste 360 PAYT Explanation](#) – (video) highly recommend for high level overview

[North Haven New Controversial Trash Facility](#)

[Should you agitate, innovate or orchestrate?](#)

[Biocycle Article on new EPA food waste hierarchy](#)

[Natick Pay As You Throw Program](#) (video)

[Southhold Pay as You Throw Program](#) (video)

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim O'Rourke

Kim O'Rourke, Middletown Recycling Coordinator

Materials

Recycling Tonnages – Full tonnage amounts and costs for curbside recyclables can be found here:

Food Waste

Month	FY 21	FY 22	FY23	FY 24
Month	lbs	lbs	tons	tons
July		7956	11.86	16.2
Aug		9933	12.15	15
Sept		25165	11.56	14.5
Oct		22101	14.07	14.86
Nov		27945	11.8	12.8
Dec		30005	12.8	14.5
Jan		26558	15.14	
Feb		26618	15.15	
Mar		35860	15.75	
Apr		29945	16.32	
May	795	39005	15.17	
Jun	5330	33545	16.1	
Total	6125	314636	167.87	

Cardboard (Current cost \$0/ton)

Cardboard - Tonnage					
Month	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
July	34.86	34.45	32.51	24.02	16.68
August	30.92	33.57	30.5	30.09	20.56
Sept	26.39	30.39	25.33	39.55	16.18
Oct	35.22	31.27	33.44	28.78	1.93
Nov	38.62	28.27	38.24	28.95	17.17
Dec	39.87	27.62	31.26	29.44	13.08
Jan	33.74	33.58	18.51	35.48	
Feb	25.33	26.9	27.8	21.17	
Mar	28.65	30.06	29.42	26.7	
April	15.03	34.3	28.36	30.48	
May	31.27	28.16	32.58	32.67	
June	28.96	32.77	21.24	29.13	
Total	368.86	371.34	349.19	356.46	

Single Stream Recycling

Mixed Recycling Tonnage					
Month	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
July	56.35	78.63	68.02	51.08	51.07
Aug	66.19	53.48	61.15	46.78	60.8
Sept	57.46	53.82	57.9	64.26	46.2
Oct	70.77	54.47	63.42	63.63	49.04
Nov	60.93	56.12	61.95	53.18	48.15
Dec	60.31	67.63	68.67	61.58	52.85
Jan	59.13	54.31	56.34	61.56	
Feb	59.41	60.3	52.09	42.89	
Mar	88.82	71.71	66.85	51.76	
Apr	46.46	103.4	65	54.31	
May	54.26	146.58	56	65.51	
June	57.14	62.21	60.29	52.08	
Total	737.23	862.66	737.68	668.62	

Costs of Single Stream Recycling

Recycling Payment/Reimbursement - Mixed Recycling per ton					
Month	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
July	\$62.75	\$82.76	\$15.20	\$41.18	\$95.08
Aug	\$66.30	\$81.68	\$2.11	\$68.15	\$98.65
Sept	\$65.40	\$77.41	\$6.85	\$88.70	\$91.28
Oct	\$64.03	\$72.73	\$5.25	\$99.98	\$86.26
Nov	\$63.10	\$69.44	\$5.65	\$98.13	\$81.00
Dec	\$61.94	\$65.65	\$22.60	\$97.41	\$76.71
Jan	\$86.52	\$64.38	\$41.70	\$100.54	
Feb	\$88.53	\$61.95	\$39.28	\$98.90	
Mar	\$90.06	\$59.15	\$31.95	\$93.99	
Apr	\$84.54	\$51.64	\$28.78	\$89.15	
May	\$74.67	\$48.90	\$27.44	\$84.90	
June	\$79.28	\$42.00	\$31.22	\$84.90	