

## Recycling in Summit: The Inside Scoop

Earlier this month, The City of Summit began working with a new vendor, F. Basso Jr. Rubbish Removal Inc., for residential recycling. With this new vendor comes a need for Summit residents to abide by the rules of the more cost-effective and environmentally friendly dual-stream curbside collection system.

The City has always implemented a dual-stream system although the previous vendor allowed residents to dispose of recycling in a single collection bin. While potentially convenient, this system contaminated an excessive amount of the City's collected material and did not allow for it to be recycled. To increase the amount of recyclable material collected, the City is requiring all Summit residents to separate all recyclable material into two bins – one for glass, plastic and cans and the other for paper and cardboard. Further, F. Basso Jr. Rubbish Removal Inc. will utilize two different trucks on Thursdays to pick up recyclable materials. One truck will pick up paper material and another will collect commingled material such as plastic, cans, and glass.

Dual-stream systems solve the problem of recyclable material becoming contaminated and then disposed of in landfills. Mixed paper (including newspapers, cardboard, and paper) is separated from commingled material (plastic, cans, and glass) at the curb. Both are picked up separately by the vendor. This system avoids contamination of material, and makes the processing of it much easier and more cost-effective for facilities. Additionally, the amount of recyclable material sent to the landfill is significantly reduced; a 2009 report from the Container Recycling Institute gives some statistics on this. In single-stream systems, only 40% of mixed glass is recycled into fiberglass and containers, with another 40% sent to landfills due to contamination. In dual-stream systems, the percentage of mixed glass that is recycled is more than doubled at 90%, with nearly nothing winding up in landfills.

Summit started recycling in the 1950's, years before it became a state requirement. There was a municipal dump, where residents could even bring iron and metal to recycle. In the early 60's, a group of Summit residents began to collect old newspapers in an effort to divert them from the landfill. The current Transfer Station, located at 40 New Providence Avenue, was built in 1970 and became operational in 1971. Years later, Summit started recycling glass, which was another advanced idea. Recycled glass was separated by color (brown, green, or white), and then delivered to a nearby cullet (glassmaking) factory. Here, employees would refine the recycled glass down to make new glass, deflecting all of this material from the landfill.

In 1987, the "New Jersey Statewide Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act" was passed, requiring all 21 counties in the state to recycle 15% of their solid waste. The percentage increased to 25% in the first year of the plan ([http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/recy\\_act\\_link.htm](http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/recy_act_link.htm)). The mandatory recycling was executed through a curbside pickup and/or a depot for residents to drop off recycling. Summit already had a community depot, but 1987 was the year of its first curbside contract for recycling pickup. Newspaper, cardboard, and commingled material (plastic, cans, and glass) were collected. Years later, the City wanted to expand recycling efforts even more, and asked residents to start recycling bulky Styrofoam pieces, big plastic items like patio chairs, and plastics numbered 3-7. The latter had an enormous impact on the amount of solid waste the City generated, as most of this

material had always been sent to the landfill.

The Recycling Advisory Committee was founded in 2005 and is appointed by Summit's Common Council. As Chairman of the committee, Marjorie Fox shares that this group of 10 members works to increase recycling around the City, as well as raise awareness of recycling efforts. They are constantly looking at new opportunities in this area, such as textile and Styrofoam recycling, the latter of which became a City initiative put forth and implemented by the committee. With a large focus on education, the group has designed recycling flyers for Summit and attends events such as Community Night and the farmer's market in an effort to spread the word about recycling. Fox states that the largest obstacle this committee faces is how to effectively get the word out about recycling in Summit. The Recycling Advisory Committee is excited about the plans for the Summit Free Market's permanent program, which will hopefully get many community members involved in recycling and reuse efforts for years to come.

"Summit residents are very aware of how important recycling is," explains Paul Cascais, acting Director of the Department of Community Services. "As a leader in recycling, the switch in recycling vendors and the implementation of a dual-stream collection system makes sense for this engaged and active community. If the past is any indication of what's to come in the future, Summit will continue to be a leader in recycling and waste management for many years to come."

For more information about recycling in Summit, visit <http://cityofsummit.org>. Any further questions about recycling pickup should be directed to the Department of Community Services at 908-273-6404 or F. Basso Jr. Rubbish Removal Inc. at 844-374-2998.