



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS

Chair

JESSE R. BODINE

District Manager

August 30, 2022

Hon. Eric Adams
Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Peggy Shepard
Chair
Office of Environmental & Climate Justice
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Jessica S. Tisch
Commissioner
NYC Department of Sanitation
59 Maiden Lane, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: Corner Basket Recycling Program

Dear Mayor Adams, Chair Shepard, and Commissioner Tisch,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) urges the City to implement a universal, public, corner basket recycling program. Sadly, New York City has no public waste recycling program, an outlier among municipalities around the world. By a Full Board vote of 39 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions and 0 present not eligible, MCB4 requests the City recognize the urgency to reduce the waste in our district and provide a plan for a corner basket recycling and collection system.

Department of Sanitation (DSNY) provided MCB4 with an overview of The City's piecemeal curbside recycling program, including the sponsorship of Business Improvement Districts for curbside recycling. The City's lack of a comprehensive system has long been a costly and environmentally unsound burden for the City of New York. Current curbside recycling bins are often cross contaminated and less than half are eligible for recycling. Due to the lack of a universal

program, the overwhelming majority of materials collected in these recycling bins are sent to landfills, undercutting the efficiency of the recycling bins and wasteful cost of resources.

New York City is lacking in corner basket recycling, specifically:

- number of public recycling bins available
- clear signage and variation of recycling bins (plastic, glass, paper, mixed medium, etc.)
- sorting of materials at the collection point (ensuring materials are recycled and not tossed into landfills)

There is much precedent for successful curbside recycling programs. We urge the City to look into other large population programs and draw from their successes. Attached are different examples of effective public street recycling programs around the world citing strategies used in Vermont, Barcelona, Sweden and Rhode Island. Despite different on-the-ground mechanisms, the common thread to each's success is effective legislation forcing action.

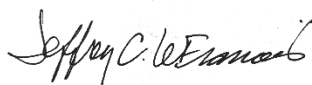
While NYC is slowly adopting some of these measurements, the success rate is extremely low because legislation and culture currently do not support nor provide incentives for participation. Effective legislation is a crucial step towards a successful long-term goal. The insubstantial program, as it stands now, is not a true metric of potential success.

MCB4 proposes an expansion of curbside recycling via adaptive solutions and strategy including but not limited to:

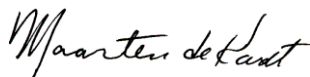
- mandatory recycling legislation
- partnership with DSNY, DEP, the Office of Environmental & Climate Justice, and our local BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) to create standardized bin and labeling system, effectively reinforcing the essential recycling rules and habits
- public education & incentivization, which will help move the current culture towards mainstream actions

MCB4 hopes the City will take their environmental responsibility seriously and start to plan for a greener New York implementing serious zero-waste strategies. We expect that includes a public wastebasket recycling program.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey LeFrancois
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Maarten deKadt
Co-chair
Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee



Leslie Boghosian Murphy
Co-chair
Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee

Enclosures

CC: Hon. Brad Hoylman, NYS Senator
Hon. Linda Rosenthal, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Richard Gottfried, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Council Member
Hon. Sandy Nurse, NYC Council Member

Corner Basket Recycling - Attachment I

From: Manhattan Community Board 4

Between 2014 to 2020, Vermont's Universal Recycling Act focused on recyclable and food waste. Collections are required by law and mandated recyclables are banned from the landfill. The Universal Recycling (UR) law is working. Vermont recycles 72% of mandated recyclables, and nearly 75% of eligible bottle containers are redeemed for cash. In 2020, Vermont adopted the Single-Use Law to transition away from plastic bags, straws, stirrers, and foam food and beverage containers. Vermont's advanced recycling legislation, financial incentives, coded bin system, and extensive outreach to residents and businesses have all helped Vermont achieve its high success rate (**PIC 1**). While NYC is slowly adopting some of these measurements, the successful rate is extremely low because legislation and culture currently does not support nor provide incentives for participation.

Rhode Island was the first state to have created a state-wide standardized system for recycling. The push was because trash was piling up. By 1985, only 13 of Rhode Island's 44 landfills were still taking trash—the rest were full. The Recycling Act of 1986 was a result of public forums, recycling workshops, meetings with decision-makers, and a letter mailing campaign to elected state representatives. Title 23 of the law, section 3 stipulates a percentage of 35% solid waste to be recycled and to divert a min of 50% - this was a stepping-stone for the state. If recycling is not recyclable through Rhode Island's mixed recycling program, items might be eligible for a special drop-off or pick-up program (**PIC 2**).

In Spain and Sweden, waste collection services are mandated throughout the entire country. The design and size of the containers varies according to the town where they are, however, the meaning of each color is the same.

In Spain, The Zero Waste Strategy adopted in 2016 aimed to improve the quality of recycled products and, more specifically, of organic matter. With this strategy, Barcelona reached a level of selective collection close to 60%. Barcelona provides curbside recycling via dumper sized collection bins (**PIC 3**). These bins are available for residential and commercial usage. Green Points are used to dispose of waste that cannot be thrown into street containers (**PIC 4**). Additionally, there are large environmental facilities located on the outskirts of the city and smaller facilities located in urban areas. Although the service is free

for individuals, these areas are specifically aimed at the commercial and services sectors.

Sweden has the most impressive recycling program at almost 99% and has been for many years. Sweden is recycling so much that the country is running out of trash. The country is getting so close to zero waste that they are importing garbage from neighboring countries. Recycling is required by law and trash and recyclables are sorted at home or by businesses before it goes to a recycling center.

There is a system of seven categories for sorting household refuse and there are curbside or recycling stations within 300 meters of all residential areas (**PIC 5**). The curbside bins are also available in public spaces. Sweden's business partnership is equally impressive. Sweden reformed their tax system so that citizens can benefit from cheaper repairs on used items and recycling programs for cash. The Swedish Waste Management Association works to facilitate the move towards a circular economy, where people use products for longer and in smarter ways. This includes motivating and guiding citizens and consumers to change their behavior. But it's also about providing the infrastructure needed for people to do the necessary sorting for themselves. Additionally, the increased threat of climate change has also led Sweden to use waste to power everything from buses to apartment heating systems. Rubbish is burnt in low-carbon incinerators and food waste is turned into climate-friendly biogas fuel.

Solution + Strategy

Clear bags and signage at programs / events (temporary).

Plastic (heavy duty) bins and signage in public common areas.

Solar-powered bins in public areas, sidewalks, and government spaces.



Event waste disposal at a Shelburne Museum concert involves three bins for attendees to toss trash, recycling, and compostable items.



Waste Watcher Compost, Recycling and Landfill Bins



Solar-powered trash cans in City Hall Park

Solution + Strategy

Mixed Recycling

Paper, cardboard, and cartons

Metal cans, lids, and foil

Glass bottles and jars

Plastic containers



Solution + Strategy

Green is for glass bottles and jars.

Blue is for paper and cardboard.

Yellow is for plastic packaging
(bottles, cans and plastic bags)

Brown is for organic waste
(food and gardening waste)

Grey is for waste not included in
the other categorie



Barcelona Green Points

Green points are used to get rid of waste can't be thrown into street containers. Green points can be mobile and fixed. Each neighborhood has its own.

Aimed at commercial activity. Individual usage for old furniture and junk collection.



Solution + Strategy

Recycling is serious business from residential to commercial to public space collections.

	BIN 1 Emptied every other week				BIN 2 Emptied every four weeks				Hang-on-box Hang on bin 2	
	FOOD WASTE	RESIDUAL WASTE	COLOURED GLASS BOTTLES AND JARS	NEWS-PAPERS	PLASTIC PACKAGING	PAPER PACKAGING	TRANSPARENT GLASS BOTTLES AND JARS	METAL CONTAINERS	LIGHT SOURCES	BATTERIES
TYPE OF WASTE										
EXAMPLES OF WASTE	Leftover food, peel of fruit and root vegetables, meat, fish and seafood offal, used coffee grounds, pasta, eggshells, tea bags, wilted cut flowers, paper towels, etc.	Remaining waste is what is left after you've sorted your waste. This includes envelopes, nappies, cat litterbox sand, vacuum cleaner bags, dishrags, pet waste, cotton buds, toothbrushes.	Bottles and jars made of coloured glass (e.g. green or brown) THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE drinking glasses, as these are not considered packaging. Instead, they need to be brought to the recycling centre.	News-papers and magazines, catalogues, softcover books, advertising flyers and booklets without plastic, sheets of paper, etc.	Ketchup containers, ice cream boxes, shampoo and conditioner boxes, potato crisps and candy bags, plastic bags, cold cut boxes, toothpaste tubes, smaller Styrofoam packages, etc.	Milk, buttermilk and yoghurt containers, cereal containers, egg cartons, detergent boxes, pizza boxes, wrapping paper, paper bags, paper cups, toilet paper rolls etc.	Bottles and jars made of transparent glass. THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE drinking glasses, as these are not considered packaging. Instead, they need to be brought to the recycling centre.	Caps, container tops, aluminium foil, metal tins, metal tubes, etc. THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE tea lights, as these are not considered packaging. Instead, they need to be brought to the recycling centre.	Light bulbs, high efficiency bulbs, LED bulbs, halogen bulbs. THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE fluorescent tubes. These are hazardous waste and must be brought to the recycling centre.	Small batteries, such as AA and AAA. THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE large batteries, such as car batteries. These are hazardous waste and must be brought to the recycling centre.
HOW TO PLACE WASTE IN BINS	Pack these in paper bags. Fold them carefully. The bags are included in your service.	Pack these in plastic bags. Make sure the plastic bags are properly sealed.	Empty the container of any contents and then place them directly in the proper compartment.	Place directly in the proper compartment.	Empty the bigger-container of any contents and then place them directly in the proper compartment.	Empty the container of any contents and then place them directly in the proper compartment.	Empty the container of any contents and then place them directly in the proper compartment.	Empty the container of any contents and then place them directly in the proper compartment.	Place directly in the proper compartment in the hang-on box.	
ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS	Do not fill the bag above the broken line. Paper bags must not be placed in a plastic bag. If the waste is very wet, place a newspaper or paper towel at the bottom.	Sharp objects must be packed in a safe manner. Broken plates must be brought to the recycling centre.	Remove any corks, caps or tops, and sort them according to their material. Labels do not need to be removed.	Envelopes and post-its are disposed of as remaining waste. No paper or plastic bags may be placed in the compartment for newspapers.	Please compress soft plastic objects and place them in a bag. DO NOT pack soft plastic objects inside hard plastic objects. Deposit bottles must be brought to a deposit return machine.	If the package has any other material, remove what is easy to remove, such as screw-on caps. Flatten the packages before disposing of them. Large cardboard cartons should be brought to the recycling centre.	Remove any corks, caps or tops, and sort them according to their material. Labels do not need to be removed.	Deposit bottles must be brought to a deposit return machine. Pots, frying pans and similar objects are considered bulky waste and must be brought to the recycling centre.	Store this box indoors. The cover of the box must be able to be closed. When the box needs to be emptied, hang it on Bin 2 on the pick-up date.	

You are not required to wash the packages. If you wish to wash them.