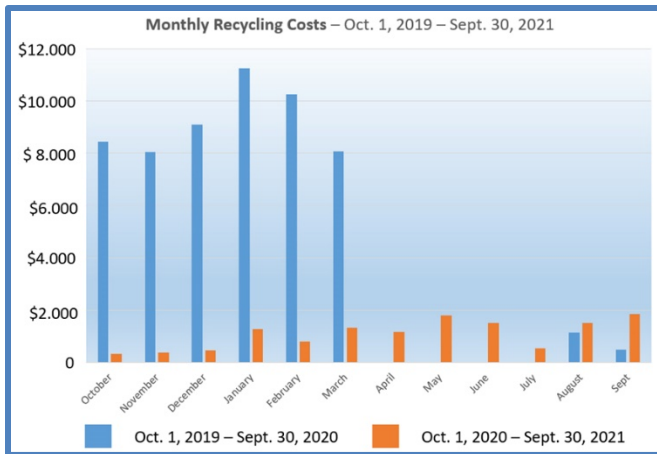


RECYCLING UPDATE 2021



Greetings Refuse & Recycling Customers and Welcome Back!

We are pleased to be sending the 2021 Recycling Update to you to recap the changes to our Recycling Program since our last report in 2019.



Two years ago, the recycling contamination rate was more than 25% - at least 1 out of every 4 items in recycling carts could not be recycled through our program. From the spring of 2019 through early 2020, our cost to process recyclable materials at Republic's Materials Recovery Facility went from \$27.50/ton to \$100.00/ton and they implemented a \$75/ton contamination charge for any delivery more than 15% contaminated. Eighteen months ago, it was nearly 4x more expensive to recycle than to dispose of the same materials in the landfill. The City's cost to recycle 340 tons between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020 was \$56,819.35, equal to

\$167.12/ton. Our program was no longer economically sustainable and this drove the program changes implemented last year to bring down costs, in part by controlling contamination.

On March 17, 2020, City offices were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This extraordinary move was necessary to protect our employees by providing necessary physical distancing in the workplace. Recycling services were suspended to ensure that we would have healthy crew members available to collect the trash. This also gave us the opportunity to review and reset our refuse and recycling collection programs.

Numerous changes were made. Our residential collection routes were consolidated from 4 times per week (Tuesday-Friday) to 3 times per week (Tuesday-Thursday). City Council also revoked the mandatory recycling provision in our ordinances, which allowed for the implementation of our free, opt-in subscription-based recycling program.

From October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021, we recycled 182.6 tons at a cost of \$13,542.00, effectively reducing our per ton fee by 225% - down to \$74.16/ton. Since Recycling Restart in October, 2020, over 1,300 residents have opted into the program. You have been doing a **GREAT JOB** as demonstrated by our consistently low contamination rate, reported at less than 5%. We haven't paid the contamination surcharge in over a year!

Remember, When in Doubt, Check it Out or Leave it Out!

In our single stream, mixed recycling program, we accept:

- #1 & #2 Plastic bottles & jugs
- Aluminum, steel & bi-metal cans
- Mixed paper – including newspapers, magazines, catalogs, junk mail, boxboard, paper bags, paper towel and toilet paper rolls, paper egg cartons and CLEAN pizza boxes.
- Corrugated Cardboard



Please remember, we no longer accept glass or #3 - #7 plastics. Republic does not have a market for these types of plastics, and Republic does not recycle glass, although they do reuse it as a temporary road base for the landfill. However, in the end, that's where it stays: in the landfill. We'll continue to explore alternative glass recycling program options.

While plastic items are useful and convenient, they also come with a high environmental cost. According to the most recent estimates available from the Environmental Protection Agency, just 8.7% of the plastic that was discarded in the U.S. in 2018 was recycled. Additionally, they take decades to degrade once thrown away and are made from greenhouse gas-emitting fossil fuels. Recent backlash against plastics may be due to a growing awareness of the global plastic waste crisis. Plastics litter our streets, fill our landfills and spill out into our streams, lakes & oceans. Avoid single-use plastics and look for eco-friendly alternatives in packaging to start for cutting down plastic waste.

For our commercial recycling customers, we have been contacting and working with you to tailor commercial recycling services that meet your needs, while helping us control contamination rates. Commercial customers also take the "Recycling Pledge" and so far 52 commercial pledges have been signed, plus Oberlin College, which has 12 Corrugated Cardboard Only dumpsters in place. We continue to work with our commercial customers to improve waste reduction, recycling and landfill diversion. As an example, one business has provided 55-gallon plastic barrels, which are now being repurposed as rain barrels as part of the Storm Water Management Rain Barrel Program!



The Oberlin Public Works Department also offers additional drop-off recycling programs – CFL & LED light bulbs; the Oral Care Brigade program (tooth brushes, empty toothpaste containers, floss containers and their packaging), and a metal lid collection – all conveniently located in the entrance to Oberlin City Hall at 85 South Main Street.

Beginning December 8, 2021 and continuing through January 10, 2022, there will also be a drop-off box for recycling holiday lights in the lobby of the Police Department/Municipal Court (85 S. Main St.).

Another recycling option that Oberlin residents are encouraged to use is the *Paper Retriever bins* located throughout town for cardboard, mixed paper and bagged shredded paper. These bins are accessible 24/7.

Other recycling options include:

- ♻️ Cleveland Clinic, Cole Eye West (309 W. Lorain St.) accepts old prescription glasses donations of both adults & kids glasses for reuse.
- ♻️ Plastic bag recycling drop-off is available at Discount Drug Mart, Lowes, Home Depot, Kohl's, Walmart & Giant Eagle stores. (Each may have slightly different requirements – check with the store for details)



You can find the *Residential Recycling Pledge*, the recycling video (narrated by one of our Oberlin High School students!), Public Works calendar, refuse & recycling guidelines, 3R resources and much more on the city's website (www.CityofOberlin.com). Our 3R Resource webpage offers a number of ways to reduce, reuse and repurpose items. Our *Events for Less Waste* webpage gives you the latest information on current or upcoming event offerings, such as shred days, plastic bag swaps, tire collection, as well as our *Recycling Rebates* program.

If you haven't already done so, please download our free **Oberlin Refuse & Recycling Mobile App** from the App Store or Google Play for message reminders on trash and recycling pick-up, brush collection, fall leaf collection and all special recycling events through-out the year. The collection calendar can also be accessed on our Refuse & Recycling webpage. In the app, you can simply type in your address in the search bar to view the dates and times of the collections/events. You can also use the *Waste Wizard* function within the app to look up recycling and/or disposal options for all kinds of materials. **And be sure to Like Us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter for weekly reduce, reuse and recycle pro tips!**

Beginning October 18, 2021, the City of Oberlin & Barnes Nursery have partnered to bring a **Food Waste Composting Program** to Oberlin residents. Food waste is estimated to be 1/4 - 1/3 of our waste stream. Residents that sign up to participate in the program will receive a **FREE** counter-top collection bin to collect food scraps in. When ready, food waste can be dropped off at any of the 4 local drop off sites (Oberlin Community Services, Prospect School, Spring Street Extension or Oberlin IGA).



For more information, and to sign up, visit:

www.BarnesNursery.com/Composting/Oberlin or call **888-421-8722**.

Looking ahead to March 2022, the Lorain County Solid Waste District received a community grant from the Ohio EPA to partner with the City of Oberlin for recycling waste audits. Educational programming and curbside audits will be conducted to identify contaminants, improve efficiency and help us reach our goal of 0% contamination. By increasing education and outreach, we will be able to keep costs down, increase proper recycling, and engage with residents for recycling feedback.



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If you have any questions, comments or suggestions on the City of Oberlin's Recycling Program, please contact:

Recycling Coordinator Lori Sprosty

CityofOberlin @CityofOberlin
(440) 935-0096 | Recycling@CityofOberlin.com
www.CityofOberlin.com