

MULTI-FAMILY RECYCLING PILOT at MADISON HEIGHTS

Christine Mathieu | August 2026

EGLE
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

CATALYST COMMUNITIES

GRAHAM SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE
CENTER FOR EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

MH

PROJECT TEAM



Harley Mordarski
Mentor



Kristen Wieland
Technical
Advisor

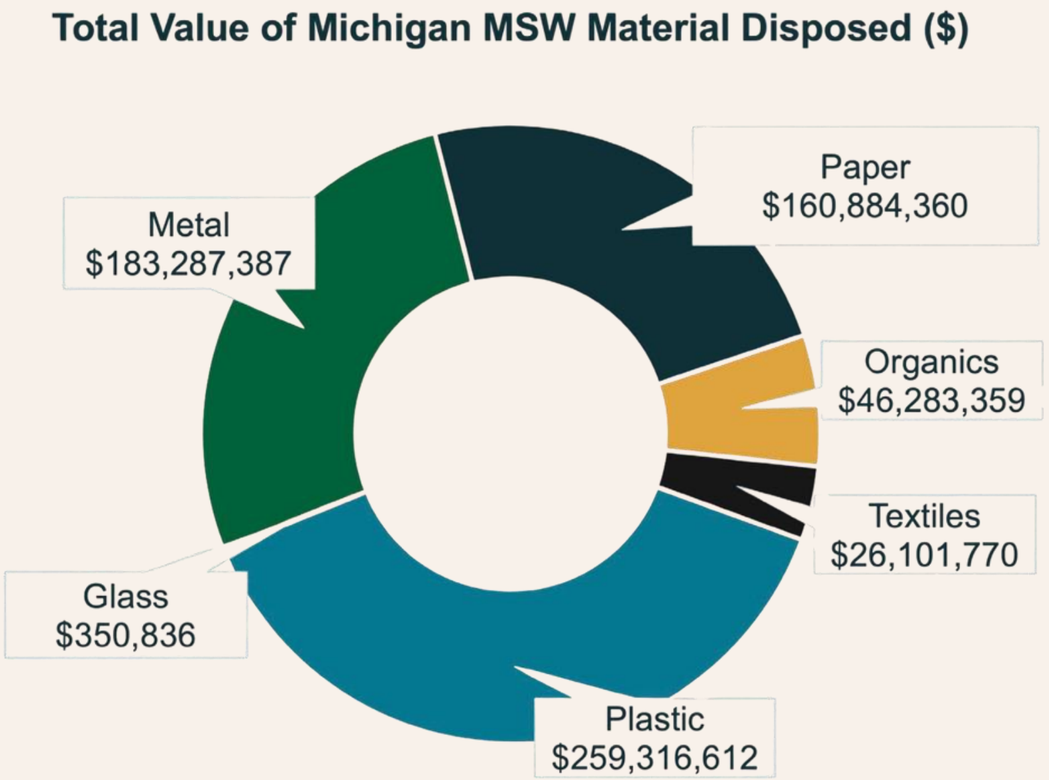
IS RECYCLING STILL RELEVANT?

Recyclable Materials

Market Value
$500–$676 million

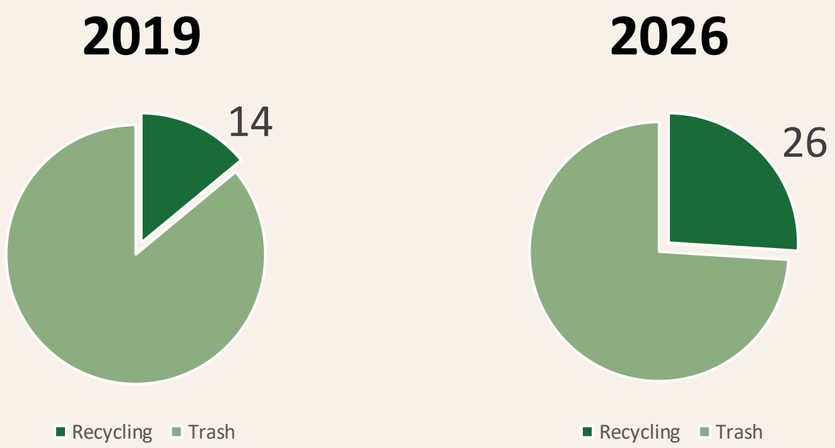
Feedstock Value
$609 - $825 million

4500 Jobs



Schoonmaker, D., Cruz, C. J., Lowen, A., & Veldman, C. (2024). Economic impact potential and characterization of municipal solid waste in Michigan. Michigan Sustainable Business Forum. https://misbf.org/msw

RECYCLING IN MICHIGAN



National Average 32%



MI Healthy Climate Plan

- 2030: 45% Recycling Rate

RECYCLING IN MADISON HEIGTHS

1992

“Wizard of Waste”

- City-provided → contracted hauling
- Incinerator Shutdown

2025

“Cart+” → “Cart-Only”



2026

Multi-Family Recycling

RECYCLING IN MADISON HEIGTHS

GOALS

Recyclables quality + quantity

Residential recycling service

MI’s Healthy Climate Plan Goal



2025 universal cart rollout

Solid Waste milage – Property Taxes

MULTI-FAMILY RECYCLING PILOT

Outputs

Implementation Plan

Implementation Guidelines

Educational Material



LITERATURE REVIEW



Resources

State + Local Goals

MI Healthy Climate Plan

Solid Waste Management

Recycling Characterization

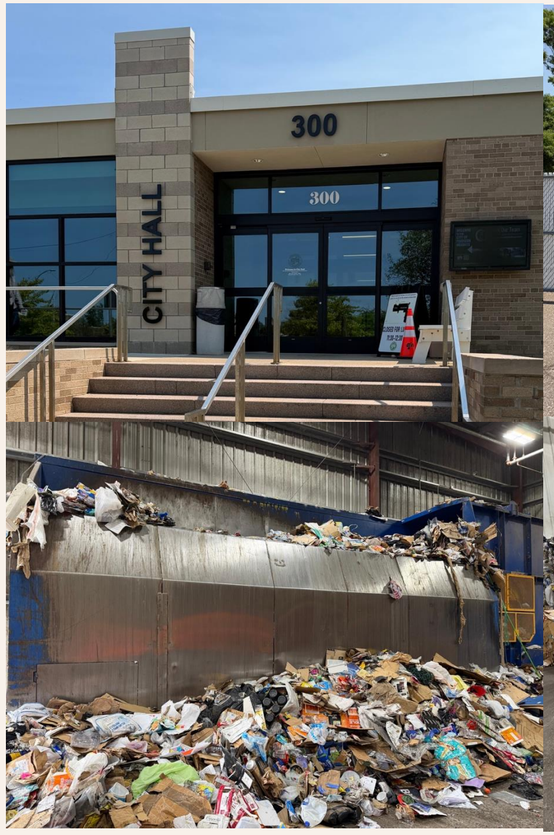
Multi-family Pilots

Recycling Orgs + Waste Haulers

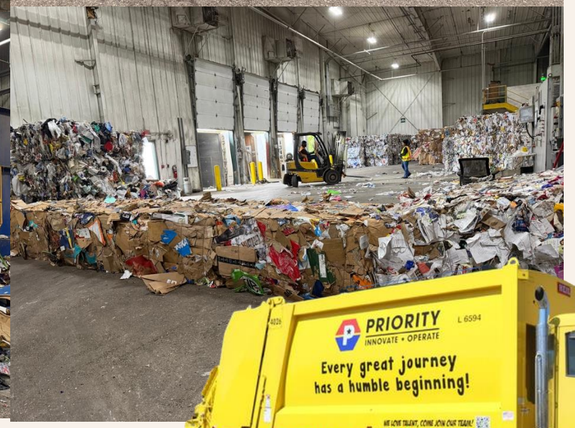
Ordinances

Hauler Contract

STAKEHOLDERS + PILOTS









Pilot Programs

Dallas
Kalamazoo
Portland
St. Louis
Ann Arbor
Houston



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Program Design

Volume Capacity

Access

Monitoring + Data Analysis

Communication

Resident Education



Acknowledgements

City of Madison Heights

Mentor: Harley Mordarski – Assistant to the City Manager, Madison Heights

Technical Advisor: Kristen Wieland, RRS

City of Madison Heights Staff: Sean Ballantine – Director Department of Public Services, Anna O'Bryan – Communications Specialist

Graham Institute / CLC Staff: Sarah Lee, Olivia Stoetzer, Alex Haddad & Fatimah Bolhassan

María Fernanda Calderón – Graphic Design Advisor

CLC 2026 Fellow Cohort

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EGLE
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CATALYST COMMUNITIES

This material is based upon work supported by the Department of Energy and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) under Award Number EE0008653. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Government or any agency thereof. Find this document and more about the CLC Fellowship that supported this project at graham.umich.edu/clcf

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Madison Height's Department of Public Services (DPS) Director	• Negotiate contract with waste hauler • Inform Priority Waste of new pickup stops along route • Order recycling carts from Cascade Carts Solutions • Coordinate minor cart repair – part replacement
Multi-Family Recycling Program Coordinator at DPS	• Monitor property recycling-pilot interest forms • Provide information and implementation guide to properties • Provide educational outreach material and support property through implementation • Walk through property with property staff • Define capacity needs for each property using the calculator in the program design – capacity section • Update DPS director about any major changes or concerns regarding the multi-family recycling program
Property Management	• Distribute recycling interest survey among residents • Fill out Multi-Family Recycling interest form • Walk through property with the program coordinator • Inform property staff of new program and launch • Communicate issues, needs or feedback to program coordinator • Inform DPS if recycling carts are damaged or need replacing • Contact Priority Waste regarding missed collections or issues present with the recycling pick-up in general
Property Staff (maintenance / leasing)	• Work on enclosures, etc. if needed to place recycling carts before program launch • Place carts and signage as agreed with the program coordinator • Conduct education campaign using materials provided by the program coordinator • Monitor and maintain recycling carts and /or recycling areas
Hauler (Priority Waste)	• Recycling pick-up / hauler **Note**: if stops are missed or if a property has collection complaints they should reach out to Priority Waste directly
Cart Manufacturer (Cascade Cart Solutions)	• Honor carts' 10-year guarantee

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Roles and Responsibilities

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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Property Onboarding Process and Participation Schedule		
Before Program Launch		
Note: The 3 steps before the recycling program launch can vary greatly timewise. Properties may take anywhere from 4-10 weeks to get to program launch.		
	Program Coordinator	**Property**
Step 1 – Program Enrollment	• Receive information after filling out the interest form in the city's website; store each property's information in multi-family database • Share Memo of Understanding and engagement survey template • Provide program information – program overview and education material on recycling and contamination provided for property managers and staff to understand process and logistics • Collect relevant documentation and finalize property enrollment on program	• Complete online survey to opt in Madison Heights' recycling pilot for multi-family properties • Review program overview • (**OPTIONAL**) Distribute survey to gauge residents' interest in recycling program • Sign Memo of Understanding • Gather / review data on resident demographics to determine if translations are necessary
Step 2 – Property Walkthrough	• Property assessment and walkthrough • Use information from engagement survey, unit occupation and capacity calculators to estimate launch capacity for recycling program • Contact Cascade Cart Solutions and place cart order based on estimated capacity • Contact waste hauler and inform them of new recycling pick-up stop at property, confirm weekly schedule and confirm starting date • Provide educational outreach material	• Coordinate and go on walkthrough with program coordinator to assess property • Confirm with program coordinator tentative start date for recycling pick-up • Distribute program information and fact sheets to property staff
Step 3 – Educational Campaign Launch	• Confirm property staff has informed residents of recycling program about to start • Confirm property is working on customizing outreach material • Deliver carts to property • Confirm signage and carts have been placed in convened locations one week prior to pick-up start date • Confirm with hauler service start date	**2 weeks before pick-up start date** • Launch program information to residents – "Recycling Welcome Letter" email, text message, residential app, etc. • Customize and place orders for resident educational material (magnets, printed material (e.g. new tenants' postcards), and / or any other material such as totes) **1 week before pick-up start date** • Signage and carts placed

Property Onboarding Process and Participation Schedule		
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CITY STAFF GUIDEBOOK

Multi-Family Recycling Pilot Program

City Staff Guidebook

City of Madison Heights

Oakland County, MI

Program Design Considerations

Capacity

Estimating recycling capacity is key when a property is opting in to the program. Depending on program take-up, the estimated volume should aim to provide roughly comparable recycling and solid waste capacity. For this pilot program, it is suggested that capacity is estimated using

$$11\ gallons\ per\ unit\ per\ week \times number\ of\ units\ in\ property$$

paired with lessons learned and observations and scale up initial estimated capacity with time. To determine how to scale up, weekly volume assessment is key. Successful programs across the country were reviewed to provide capacity estimate benchmark suggestions for this pilot.[4,6-9,14,19] Using the monitoring data and feedback from property staff, the program coordinator should consider increasing capacity as residents start recycling more, aiming to reach one of the following benchmarks:

- 11-20 gallons / unit / week; this is what most multi-family recycling programs in the country use as their capacity estimates.[4,6,8,14,19]
- 2:1 solid waste : recycling ratio; some other programs base their recycling capacity estimates on this ratio for each property. [7,9]

Consider building layout (e.g., higher rise buildings with fewer dumpsters / containers vs. horizontally distributed complexes with more containers / enclosures; see images below for examples) and review hauler contract to determine container options; confirm with hauler which containers are acceptable under contract requirements.



If trash is often overflowing at this property before pilot launch, it could present a challenge as residents might use recycling carts to dump garbage instead of recycling. Monitoring garbage and recycling capacity will be key, and consistent resident outreach will determine program success.

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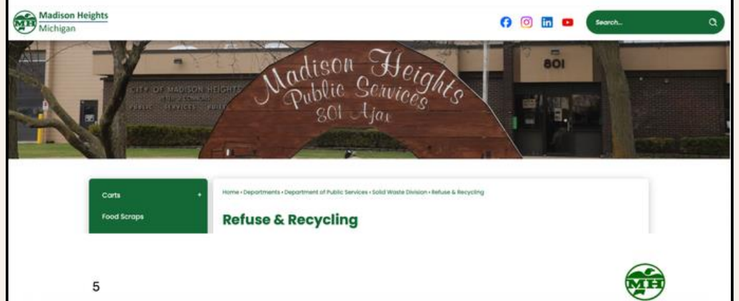
Communicating with Property Management or Staff

Madison Heights can identify and invite multi-family properties to participate in the program through a combination of strategies. Properties can review information in the city's website, navigating to the recycling landing page to the multi-family property section which contains basic information of the program and its purpose. A survey is linked to this section where interested properties can provide their information for the city to contact them. Otherwise, if the city has a database with information on all multi-family properties in its jurisdiction, it might try to contact management at these properties directly and provide information on the program. Once properties have enrolled, other properties might become aware through word-of-mouth or referrals.

The enrolled-property database can also be used by the city to contact properties and inform them of major changes (changes in contract with hauler, change in pick-up schedules, routes, etc.). Additionally, it can be used to remind properties twice a year to engage in resident outreach and monitoring recycling stations / containers. A dedicated e-mail, inbox or inbox rule can be created so that all multi-family communications reach the same place for the program coordinator to monitor. This will allow for more efficient communication with properties.

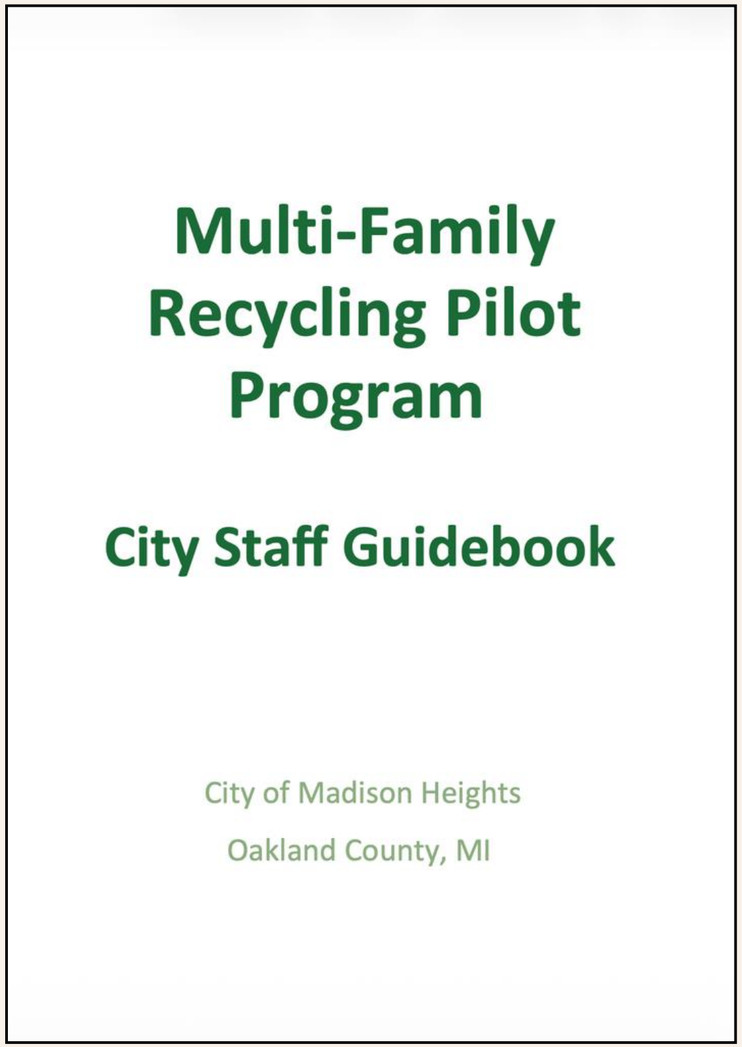
Once a property shows interest in implementing the recycling program, the program coordinator should reinforce program benefits for properties. Share case studies in the reference section for cities who have launched similar programs for properties to explore the benefits of these programs. As an additional benefit, this program will help properties be prepared for future state or local recycling requirements.

Last, the program coordinator must review stakeholder responsibilities with each property while participating in the program. Go over the roles and responsibilities table in this guidebook or have a quick conversation to remind them of their responsibilities and / or commitments when enrolling in this program.



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CITY STAFF GUIDEBOOK



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PROPERTY STAFF GUIDEBOOK

Multi-Family Recycling Pilot Program

Property Staff Guidebook

City of Madison Heights

Oakland County, MI

Background

Madison Heights allocates funds generated through millage rates to support community services, including curbside and multi-family recycling collection. The city's contracted waste hauler, Priority Waste, includes recycling services for multi-family properties (properties with 5+ dwelling units). As residential waste and recycling collection are funded through the Solid Waste milage levied through the Property Tax, multi-family properties that participate in the recycling pilot program will not incur additional service costs. This provides an opportunity for property managers to offer an attractive amenity to residents at no additional direct cost, while maximizing the use of publicly funded services.

Across the country, successful multi-family recycling programs have found links between recycling and resident satisfaction. Clean, well identified recycling areas and visible recycling options are now a basic expectation in many residential markets. These programs help reduce garbage volume and reduce overflowing dumpsters, litter, and illegal dumping. This can improve the overall appearance of the property and make common areas more pleasant, which residents often associate with good management and care. Cleaner waste disposal areas can also decrease pest issues and odors, contributing to a healthier environment in the property and potentially reducing bills. Participating in multi-family recycling program can also align properties with Madison Heights' sustainability goals and other local and state regulations.

Multifamily recycling is increasingly marketed as a desirable residential amenity. National renter surveys indicate that recycling is valued by a majority of renters, and some renters report a willingness to pay more to live in communities that provide recycling and other sustainability features. As a result, property owners may view recycling not only as a waste management service but also as a competitive leasing amenity. Recycling programs may also strengthen the relationships between property management and residents. Through clear program instructions and responsiveness to resident feedback, management can signal interest in residents' wellbeing. Over time, this program can become part of properties' identity, which can support community pride and encourage residents to treat common spaces with more respect.

Out of 350 000+ renters who responded to the "Top Apartment Amenities According to Renters" survey in 2020:

79% say recycling is one of the best community amenities[1]
20% say it is a community necessity[1]

92% of respondents of the 2022 AMLI Sustainable Living Index say they recycle[2]

Property FAQs

What will the program cost for my property?

In the City of Madison Heights this program comes at no cost for multi-family properties as these properties already pay a solid waste millage rate. Under the contract the city has with Priority Waste, recycling pick-up for these properties is covered and paid for with the tax collected through the solid waste millage rates. Rather than representing an additional cost, this program allows properties to effectively receive a service they are already paying for. If you want to know more on the millage rates or your property's contributions, use the Tax search in this link

Will there be an additional service fee for recycling pick-up at my property?

Your property won't have to pay additional fees for the recycling pick-up service. This service is covered through the solid waste millage rate your property pays. In fact, it may actually reduce the amount of trash that you pay to dispose of, or the frequency of service.

Is my property responsible for procuring the recycling containers?

No. Madison Heights' Department of Public Services will contact the cart provider and place an order for containers according to the estimated needs for your property.

Am I responsible for contacting Priority Waste (hauler) to start service?

No. Madison Heights' Department of Public Services (DPS) will contact Priority Waste and coordinate recycling pick-up for your property. DPS staff will inform your property on the start date and scheduled weekly service.

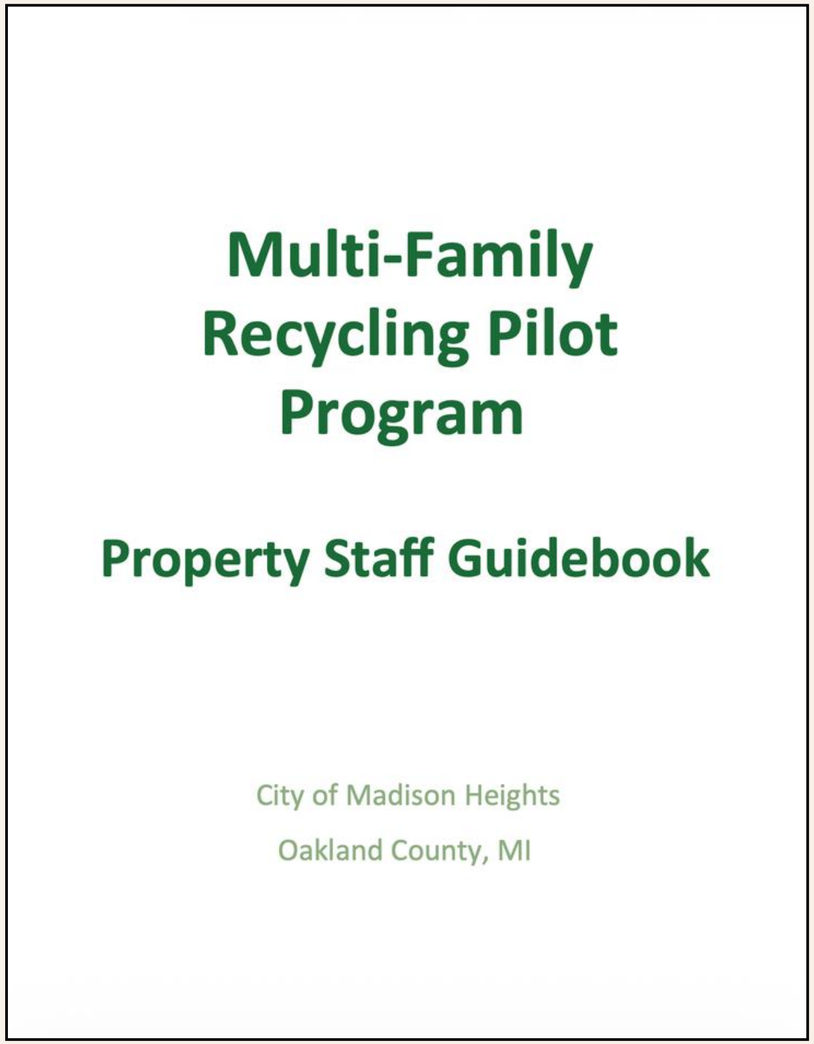
What will my property be responsible for?

Your property will be responsible for placing carts in the agreed upon locations. Your property will also be responsible for carts and signage maintenance as well as a more in-depth monitoring of recycling areas twice a year. Biannual education refreshers on the recycling program are to be provided to residents.

Who should I contact if I need more carts / my carts are damaged / I'm having other issues?

Contact DPS and inform them if you need help with any of these things. If heavily damaged, the carts have a 10-year guarantee. If the damage is minor DPS can replace damaged parts. If carts go missing or are stolen the property will have to pay for new carts.

PROPERTY STAFF GUIDEBOOK



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STEP-BY-STEP



Step-by-Step to Enroll in: Multi-Family Recycling

1. Fill out the city's survey to opt into the program.
2. Property manager reviews the program information, completes and signs Memo of Understanding. Sends survey to assess resident interest and potential engagement with the program.
3. Walk through property with city staff to assess container placement, current trash service, and estimate recycling capacity needs.
4. Get information from city confirming hauler pick-up start date.
5. Label and / or ensure containers are color-coded. Place recycling containers in locations convened with city staff as this is the information the hauler will have.
6. Provide property staff (maintenance, janitorial, leasing) with recycling fact sheet.
7. Launch resident education (magnets, letters, door hangers, e-mails, social media, etc.) as service starts.
8. Monitor containers and collect data for fullness and contamination; talk to city staff through implementation period to adjust service levels as needed.
9. Refresh education at least twice a year and with each major resident turnover period.
10. Use checklist to evaluate program status and container conditions twice a year.

Madison Heights Michigan | Questions? Contact DPS Phone: (248) 589-2294 | Multi-Family Recycling | Madison Heights

MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING

Memorandum of Understanding

Purpose

The parties enter this MOU to collaborate on a pilot initiative to implement recycling at multi-family properties in the City of Madison Heights. The pilot is intended to reduce waste sent to landfill, improve recycling outcomes, and educate residents on proper recycling practices through coordinated planning, measurement, outreach, and site improvements.

Property's Responsibilities

The Property agrees to:

- Participate in an initial walkthrough of the property with City Staff and discuss potential measurement tools (cart contamination, volume estimates, resident engagement, among others) for the pilot within [*number*] weeks after execution of this MOU.
- Provide reasonable site access for walkthroughs, technical assistance visits, and implementation support during normal business hours.
- Distribute recycling education materials related to the pilot (staggered distribution as defined per implementation plan at launch; property wide refreshers twice a year), templates provided at no cost by the City of Madison Heights.
- Designate a staff liaison responsible for coordination, communications, and submission of required reports.
- Report missed collections or other service delivery issues to Priority Waste, notifying the City of recurring issues or concerns relating to the pilot program.
- Promote the recycling program by informing new residents about the service upon move-in and encouraging their participation.
- Maintain recycling carts in an accessible location free from obstructions. The property owner is responsible for ensuring the carts remain on-site. If the carts need to be relocated, the City of Madison Heights must be notified so program records can be updated. Inform the City if carts are damaged and/or need repairs.

City's Responsibilities

The City agrees to:

- Provide an orientation to the Property regarding the pilot process and expectations.
- Support campaign development, including educational messaging, ordering, and delivery of marketing materials when available.
- Provide guidance on recycling access, resident engagement, contamination reduction, and measurement methods (recycling volume, contaminated carts, among others) through an implementation guide.
- Coordinate the delivery of recycling carts and collection by incorporating the property into the City's waste hauler collection routes.
- Maintain recycling carts by providing repairs, replacement parts, or cart replacements as needed due to normal wear and tear.
- Provide program support by serving as a collaborative partner and working with the property owner to address operational issues, resident education, and program improvements.

MONITORING CHECKLISTS

Monitoring Checklist	Revision	
	Page	

Madison Heights Michigan

Property & Staff Information	
Property name:	Date:
Staff member:	

Baseline ☐ N/A	Baseline monitoring to be done weeks 1 – 2 after program launch
How many containers were delivered to property?	
Are containers placed in their intended locations?	
Are all recycling containers being used?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Are most containers filled up to	☐ 25% capacity ☐ 50% capacity ☐ 75% capacity ☐ 100% capacity ☐ Overflowing ☐ Other capacity:
Are the recycling areas clean and accessible?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Are the recycling areas clearly labeled?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Are there bulky items dumped or is there littering around recycling areas?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Are there signs of pests or bad smells close to containers?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Is there visible contamination in containers?	☐ Plastic bags ☐ Food ☐ Trash ☐ Hoses / cords ☐ Others (Christmas string lights, etc.)
What proportion of containers were found to be contaminated?	☐ 25% ☐ 50% ☐ 75% ☐ 100% ☐ Other:
Comments (If most containers are at 100% capacity or overflowing more containers need to be requested to city staff. If a lot of contamination is noticed, outreach needs to focus on addressing contamination. Are there specific containers showing contamination? If so, could outreach be targeted to buildings closest to these containers?):	

Recycling Containers	
How many containers initially delivered to property?	
How many containers found in the property?	
Are all containers in their designated location?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Are containers labeled?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Are containers in good condition?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Comments (Are there missing containers? Does the property need replacement containers due to damage?):	

Recycling Containers		
How many containers initially delivered to property?		
How many containers found in the property?		
Are all containers in their designated location?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are containers labeled?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are containers in good condition?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Comments (Are there missing containers? Does the property need replacement containers due to damage?):		

RESIDENT GUIDEBOOK



WHY WE RECYCLE

Saves energy and water

Preserves natural resources

Reduces pollution and greenhouse gases

Grows local economy and builds stronger communities

Did you know Southeast Michigan's landfills have less than 20 years of remaining capacity?

Recycling allows to extend landfills' lifespan avoiding the creation of new disposal sites close to home.

Michigan is recycling more than ever, but we still send hundreds of millions of dollars to the landfill in usable materials every year.

The national recycling rate is about 32%, Michigan's recycling rate is about 26%, up from 14.24 % in 2019. Michigan remains below the U.S. average despite recent gains.

Through this effort you can help the city and state reach the goal of a 30% recycling rate by 2029.



Multi-Family Recycling
Madison Heights

RESOURCES

Feedback

Contact property management to provide feedback or ask questions about recycling in your property

Add QR to enrolled properties management contact

Plastic Film Recycling

Disposing of plastic bags or film? Use the Plastic Film Recycling tool to find the nearest drop-off center to you



Recycling Raccoons

Unsure if an item is recyclable? Use the Recycling Raccoons Search tool to look for instructions on how to dispose of specific items



ERG Environmental Services (HHW Drop-Off Facility)

Disposing of HHW? ERG Accepts items for $0.75 per pound, $20 minimum

13040 Merriman Road, 48150
(Turn at Industrial Road and into parking lot.
Don't use the NORTH driveway)

Mon-Fri 9 am to 5 pm



RESIDENT OUTREACH

CAN I RECYCLE IT?

Accepted Items:
Once empty, clean and dry, toss in blue recycling cart



Plastic Bottles
Clear &
colored



Containers
Juice containers
Egg cartons



Glass Bottles
Clear &
colored



Cardboard
Flattened boxes
Box board



Plastic Containers
Jugs
Storage
Tubs



Paper
Looseleaf paper
Newspaper
Junk mail



Glass Jars
Clear &
colored



Metal
Empty cans
Aerosol cans
Aluminum / Tin

Not Accepted (Not Recyclable) Items:
Please seek other disposal options



Polystyrene
Plastic Cups
or Cutlery



Plastic Bags
Bubblewrap
Packing Materials



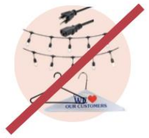
Textiles
Clothes / Toys
Diapers



Batteries
Do not
dispose of in
trash either



Greasy Pizza
Boxes
Greasy
cardboard



Hangers & Tanglers
Wires / Cables
String Lights

Multi-Family Recycling
Madison Heights

Questions? Contact the Department of Public Services (DPS)
801 Ajax Drive, Madison Heights, MI 48071
Phone: (248) 589-2294

Madison Heights
Michigan

RESIDENT OUTREACH: POSTCARDS

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

As a new community member, we invite you to participate in our recycling program. Through recycling we help preserve our environment, we reduce energy consumption, and contribute towards lower Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

What are the main things we need to keep in mind?



We can recycle clean glass and plastic bottles, cans, paper, and cardboard



We keep out food, liquid, greasy cardboard, and plastic bags

To learn more information about recycling at our property, scan the QR code.

Our property staff is happy to answer any questions you might have with the program, please reach out!

Multi-Family Recycling | Madison Heights

SKIP THE BAG AND RECYCLE RIGHT

Plastic bags in the recycling stream can become tangled in the sorting equipment at Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs). Bags often cause delays and pose risks to operators who may need to cut them out of the gears to reboot the sorting process.

Preparing your recyclables by rinsing and drying them eliminates the need for liners.



Use a small bin or reusable tote bag to collect your recyclables and carry them to the closest recycling container.



To dispose of plastic bags correctly, visit:

https://plasticfilmrecycling.org

Disposing of flexible plastics appropriately helps preserve our Midwest ecosystems and increase resource efficiency.

Multi-Family Recycling
Madison Heights

RESIDENT OUTREACH

RECYCLING IS COMING TO OUR PROPERTY!

Working with the City of Madison Heights our property will launch on-site recycling service for our residents.

In the coming weeks, residents will receive additional resources showing where the recycling containers are located in the property and additional recycling guidelines with FAQs.

Recycling containers will be clearly labeled, identified for recycling with signage reminding us which items can be recycled.

We invite you to make use of this service and thank you for your efforts to ensure we are recycling right!

What are the main things we need to keep in mind?



We can recycle clean glass and plastic bottles, cans, paper, and cardboard

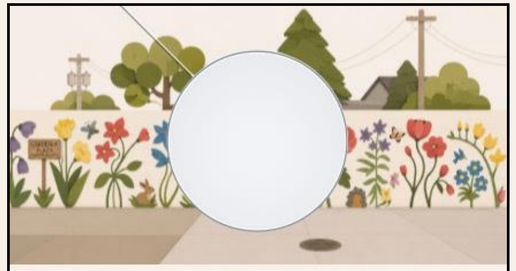


We keep out food, liquid, greasy cardboard, and plastic bags

Our property staff is happy to answer any questions you might have with the program, please reach out!

Madison Heights Michigan

Multi-Family Recycling Madison Heights



LET'S RECYCLE!

Madison Heights welcomes residents to our new multi-family property recycling program.

The city has launched a program that comes at no additional cost to participating properties. We invite you to participate and learn more about recycling.

Follow 3 simple steps to start recycling:



Recycle clean bottles, cans, jugs, paper and cardboard (see back for list)

Quickly rinse any food or liquid residue out of your items

Don't bag recyclables and don't recycle loose plastic bags

Plastic Bags Don't Go in the Recycling

If you collect your recyclables in plastic bags you should empty the loose contents in the recycling container. Loose plastic bags don't go in the recycling either; reuse or dispose elsewhere.

RESIDENT OUTREACH







THANK YOU!

Mentor - Harley Mordaski

Technical Advisor - Kristen Wieland

Graham Sustainability Institute + Staff

2026 CLC Fellow Cohort



Questions?

This material is based upon work supported by the Department of Energy and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) under Award Number EE0008653. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Government or any agency thereof. Find this document and more about the CLC Fellowship that supported this project at graham.umich.edu/clcf.

