

The Dollars and Sense of Program Improvements – SOCRRA’s Story of Moving to Single-Stream and Carts

Michigan Recycling Coalition Conference – Kalamazoo, MI

May 16, 2018



SOCRRA Background

- Established in 1952
- Members: Berkley, Beverly Hills, Birmingham, Clawson, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Pleasant Ridge, Oak Park, Royal Oak and Troy
- 275,000 residents



SOCRRA MRF History

- 1992 – Source Separated MRF funded by MDEQ grant, residents using 18 gallon bins delivered to each household
- 2005 – Upgraded to dual stream processing by installing container sort system
- 2007– New 10 year collection contracts began, dual stream collection specified
- 2017 – 65 gallon carts delivered to single family households
- 2018 – Single stream processing

Critical Date: June 30, 2017

- New or extended collection contracts required
- Dual Stream MRF is 12 years old
- Growing residential demand for carts and single stream

Strategy: Sell conversion to Single Stream and Carts to:

- SOCRRA Board
- SOCRRA community Recycling Committee representatives
- Contractors
- SOCRRA staff

Complicating Factors

- Great Recession of 2008 and 2009 severely limited cities' ability to pay for recycling improvements
- Reduction in recycled commodity prices limited SOCRRA's ability to pay for recycling improvements
- Great Flood of August 11, 2014 put severe financial strain on both SOCRRA and member communities despite FEMA assistance



Sales Path

- 2009 began education to Recycling Committee and Board on value of single stream recycling with carts
- EECBG funding for pilot study of single stream recycling with carts in Beverly Hills (500 homes) and Huntington Woods (400 homes) 2009-10
- EECBG funding for 50% of MRF conversion feasibility study, 2009-10
- Surveys of residents in pilot cart areas
- Presentation of feasibility study to SOCRRA Board, January 2011

Results of Sales Effort

- Created demand for carts and single stream
 - Very high resident satisfaction in pilot areas
 - Demand from residents in non-pilot areas
- Created expectation that project would happen

How to Get Project to Happen?

- Carts
 - Cart Supplier
 - Grant Opportunities
 - MDEQ \$450,000 in 2016 grants
 - The Recycling Partnership \$150,000 in 2017 grants
 - Partnership between SOCRRA/Communities/RRS/Cascade
- MRF
 - RFP Process
 - SOCRRA/RRS/Machinex develop final design and cost

Project Financing

- \$1/household/month surcharge
 - Started discussing June 2015, implemented July 2016
- Explored financing alternatives for \$13 million capital cost
 - Revenue bond sale in October 2016 at 2.50%

Project Timeline

- MRF construction began April 2017
- Cart deliveries started July 2017, completed September 2017
- Converted to mixed recycling collection as cart deliveries started
- Recyclables processed by Royal Oak Recycling April 2017 to January 2018
- MRF began processing January 2018
- Drop-off center closed October 2017 to February 2018

Results

- 27% increase in recycling tonnage
- High level of resident satisfaction
- High quality of incoming recycling
- Open Issues:
 - Glass/ plastic bags
 - MRF residual rate
 - MRF economics



Successfully Communicating Changes

SOCRRA Cart Distribution and Mixed Recycling Transition



Overall Goal

- To seamlessly transition 11 communities from dual-stream recycling to single-stream recycling by August 2017.
 - Note: one SOCRRA community is already utilizing carts and recycling single-stream.



Objectives

- To create a simple, recognizable campaign that helps to unite 12 SOCRRA communities' recycling messaging by March 2017
- To provide tools and resources to communities to easily convey the new recycling changes to residents with SOCRRA campaign appearing in at least 75 percent communities by each communities' cart roll out date.
- To position SOCRRA as the number one resource for educational support for 12 communities increasing website interaction by 15% and Facebook follower insights by 20 percent.

Target Audiences

- Residents
- Elected officials
- Front line staff in member communities
- Board Members
- Recycling Committee Members
- SOCRRA staff
- Other customers: schools and businesses

Communications Campaign

- Four Phases
 - Announcement of MRF Construction and MRF education
 - Preparation for Cart Distribution Promotion
 - Preparation for MRF Completion
 - Educate Residents on Mixed Recycling

Timing

- Communications planning should start at least 18 months prior to new initiative.
- Cushion timelines to accommodate disruptions to your plans - it will happen!
- Can you do it in less? Yes, but give yourself enough time so you will achieve your desired results.



Understanding Your Audience

- Important to speak in terms your residents/customers understand
- SOCRRA contracted with a PR/Comms firm to research and survey residents to better understand how to communicate about recycling
- Outcomes:
 - Residents preferred the term “mixed recycling” when it came to describing single-stream recycling.
 - Residents indicated that they want recycling to be “as easy as taking out the trash”, which became the tag line during this campaign.



Meet your new Recycling Cart!

Your new cart makes recycling just as easy as taking out the trash! Start using your new cart as soon as you receive it.

What's New?

- Your new recycling cart - It holds three times more recyclables than before and it's on wheels!
- Mixed recycling—place all your recyclables loose in the cart together. You no longer need to keep paper separate from plastic, glass and metal items.
- All cardboard should be placed in the cart. Please see directions on reverse side.
- No batteries.

What Stays the Same?

- Your collection day.
- Recycling is collected every week.
- Where you put it on collection day - set your cart out the same as you set out your bin.

SOCRRA.ORG

CARTS@SOCRRA.ORG

248.288.5150





Put these recyclables in the cart

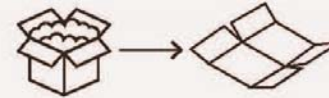
Recycling is just as easy as taking out the trash!









Paper	Cartons	Metal	Glass	Plastic
 <p>Newspaper Junk Mail Cardboard Magazines</p>	 <p>Milk Cartons Juice Boxes</p>	 <p>Empty Cans Aerosol Cans</p>	 <p>Bottles Jars All Colors</p>	 <p>Bottles Jugs Containers</p>

How to Prepare Cardboard

All cardboard must be placed in the cart. Please flatten completely, reducing pieces to no larger than 3' x 3' in size. Please remove and dispose of all packing material. Beware! Cardboard jammed into the cart may get stuck, so please follow these guidelines to ensure your cart can be fully emptied.



Take these recyclables to the SOCRRA drop-off center

Styrofoam	Scrap Metal	Paint & Chemicals	Plastic Bags	Electronics	Batteries
					

NO

Do not put garbage, food, liquids, batteries, medical sharps or yuck in the cart.

Printed on Recycled Content Paper

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248.288.5150

Tactics – Before Cart Distribution



Menu **NEWSPAPERS** News Sports Features Contests Legal Notices Calendar Obits

SOCRRRA rolls out new, larger bins, mixed recycling

By: Tiffany Esshaki | Birmingham - Bloomfield Eagle | Published July 12, 2017

BIRMINGHAM/BEVERLY HILLS — The rumors have been floating around for some time now, and finally the Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority is ready to roll out new mixed recycling collection.

In the Eagle's coverage area, Birmingham and Beverly Hills are served by SOCRRRA for recycling collection. For residents in those municipalities, the most noticeable change will be the larger bins that are slated to be delivered by mid-September.

"Starting in a couple weeks, we'll be delivering carts to all of the single-family homes in our SOCRRRA communities," said Colette Farris, organization development manager at SOCRRRA, adding that residents won't be charged for the new carts or delivery.

"There was a grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Recycling Partnership to be able to assist with the cost of these carts," she said.

The Recycling Partnership is a national nonprofit aimed at promoting recycling as a necessity for healthy environments. It awarded a grant to SOCRRRA to purchase more than 100,000 carts for residents in the

Recycling Launch
www.socrra.org

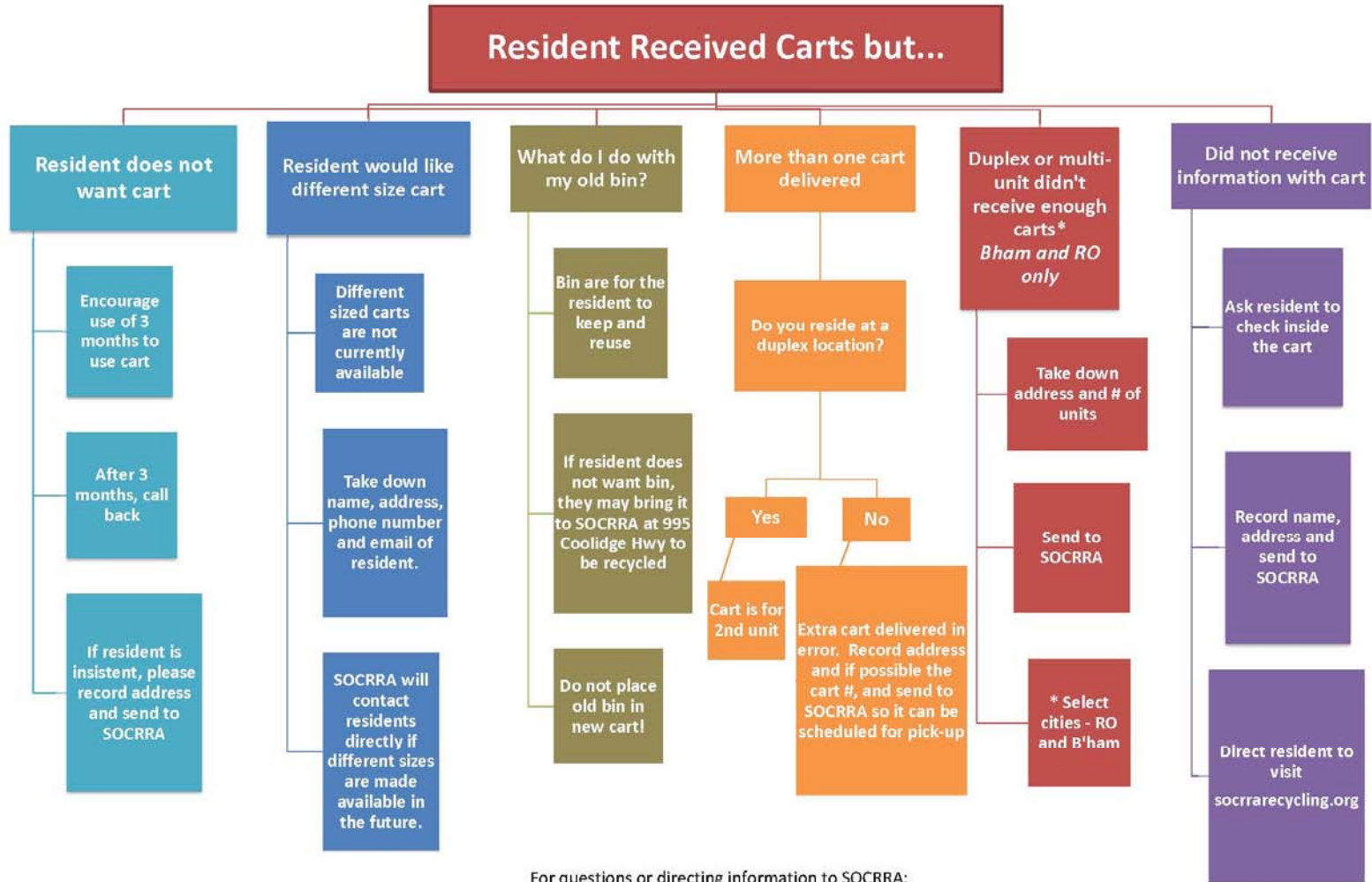
An example of the new recycling bins that residents will receive soon is on display at Birmingham City Hall.
Photo by Tiffany Esshaki

Meet your new recycling cart!

Rolling up to your house this summer.
See what the buzz is all about!



SOCRRA COMMUNITY RESIDENT CALL FLOW CHART FOR CART DISTRIBUTION –UPDATED – 7/11/17



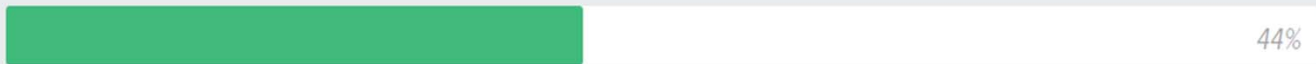
For questions or directing information to SOCRRA:
carts@socrra.org or 248-288-5150 or visit www.socrrarecycling.org

Tactics – During Distribution

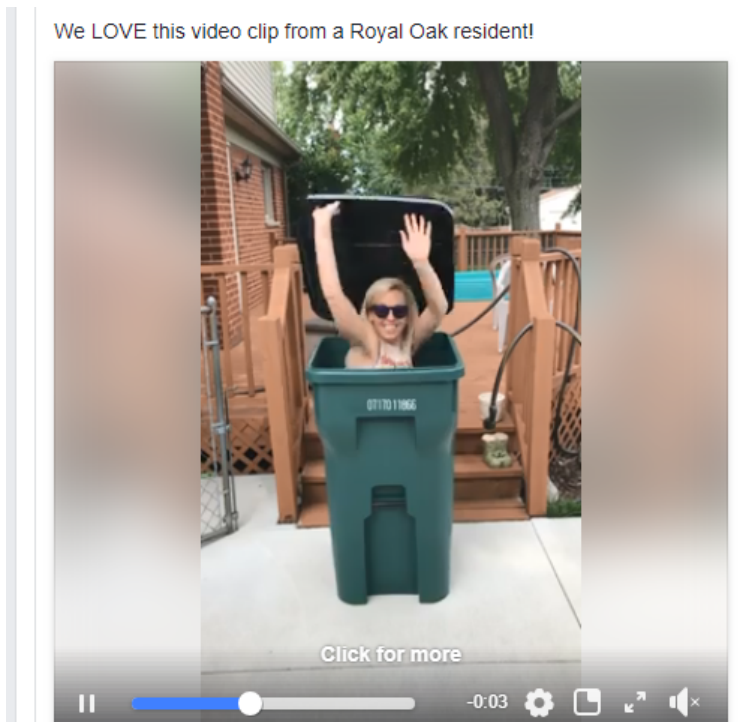
Ferndale

Delivery starts July 17th. Delivery will start with households whose collection day is Monday. Once complete, the crews will move on to households serviced on Tuesday, and so on until all households are delivered carts. This does not mean that your cart will arrive on your collection day, it merely provides the order in which delivery will occur.

CART DELIVERY PROGRESS



Resident Engagement - Send us a selfie!



Tactics – Post Cart Distribution

 **SOCRRA**
Published by Anna Collinson Lynott [?] · September 6, 2017 ·

This just in! SOCRRA sees increase in recyclables collected in August 2017!



SOCRRARECYCLING.ORG
Carts = Increase in Recycled Tons!
With the new recycling carts in use across SOCRRA communities, this...

 **SOCRRA E-News Update**
WWW.SOCRRA.ORG AUGUST 2017

Coming Soon
Mixed Recycling Launch
www.socrra.org

Stay up-to-date via our website, Facebook page and our monthly newsletter to learn about exciting recycling news at SOCRRA!

995 Coolidge Hwy., Troy
(Between 14 Mile and Maple Rds., across the street from Meijer)
www.SOCRRA.org

 LIKE US ON facebook

Your Questions Answered!
SOCRRA cannot thank our residents enough for making the transition to carts go so smoothly. Here are some answers to the most frequently asked questions.

I have always put Styrofoam and plastic bags in my curbside bin. Why the change with the new recycling cart?
Styrofoam and plastic bags have never been okay to place in your curbside bin. If you were putting these materials in your bin, they ended up getting sorted out as trash at the recycling facility. Styrofoam is accepted at SOCRRA's drop off center and we're proud to say we are now the largest recycler of foam in the state!
Plastic bags get too contaminated when mixed with other recyclables in the bins and can cause major problems if they get tangled in the equipment at the recycling facility. But they are also accepted at SOCRRA's drop off center and many stores now have drop offs for plastic bags. The only plastic bag that is acceptable to place in your cart is a see through bag filled with shredded paper.

Why the change to no longer accept batteries and scrap metal with the new recycling carts?
Safety is the primary reason these items are no longer collected in your new recycling cart. Batteries can pose a fire hazard at the recycling facility and scrap metal can easily damage the equipment. As with plastic bags and Styrofoam, batteries and scrap metal can be recycled at the SOCRRA Drop-off Center, 995 Coolidge Highway in Troy.

Why can't I recycle my old bin in my new cart?
The old curbside bins are too bulky to collect in the new recycling carts. Please bring unwanted bins to SOCRRA's Drop-off Center, 995 Coolidge Highway in Troy – they will be sent back to the manufacturer to be recycled. Please consider reusing your old bin – they make great storage containers for the garage or basement and can also be used to collect recyclables before placing them in your new cart.

Cart Delivery Update

Cart delivery is happening, and fast! For up to date progress, visit www.socrrarecycling.org and click on "Cart Delivery". Click on your city and learn about when cart delivery starts and delivery status.

Ferndale

Measurement/Evaluation

- Facebook “likes”/followers increased by 64%
- Microsite generated 14,200 unique visitors
- Phone calls – highest on first days of delivery for a community, dropped off after a few days.
- Recycling amounts from residential collection increased by 27%
- High quality of material coming in (people are recycling right!)

Costs

- On average programs should allocate and spend \$1.00 per household.
- For major program changes, programs should increase that spend to \$2.00 - \$3.00 per household.
- Thru partnership with The Recycling Partnership, SOCRRA was able to be reimbursed up to \$70,000.
- Costs include: graphic design, printing, fulfillment (addressing mailers, stuffing bags for carts), postage

Key Points

- Give yourself enough time – at least 6 months
- Don't be thrifty – allocate budget to communications
- It's not just creating a new flyer – there is a lot more to this whole communications thing!
- Make sure you consider ALL the audiences impacted by your program changes
- Set measurable objectives and track outcomes

Thank you!



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