

# VILLAGE OF FAIRFAX

## Recycling Contamination Outreach

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### Background

In 2018, the Village of Fairfax achieved a recycling rate of 13.38%; however, Rumpke identified through brief observation that Fairfax had a higher contamination rate than other communities. The common contaminants found at the Rumpke Material Recovery Facility (MRF) are as follows: batteries, plastic bags, and textiles. Residential curbside recycling is provided in Fairfax through a contract with Rumpke, and is picked up every other Tuesday.

### Goal

As the target community for 2019, for the Village of Fairfax, the District's main goal was to decrease residential recycling contamination by 20%. The secondary goal for Fairfax was to increase the residential recycling rate by 5%.

### Strategies

#### 1 - Educational Learning Opportunities

To address contamination in Fairfax, the District provided face-to-face educational outreach to organizations and events within the community to educate 217 individuals on recycling right. The District provided education to:

- Mariemont Kiwanis Club – 11 Individuals
- Fairfax City Council – 20 individuals
- Fairfax Block Watch – 10 individuals
- Mariemont Junior High – 41 individuals
- Cincinnati Sports Club Spring Break Camps – 33 individuals
- Fairfax Concert in the Park – 18 individuals
- Fairfax Fun Fest - 84 individuals

#### 2 - Billboard

To bring awareness around contamination of plastic bags to Fairfax, the District paid for a billboard ad. The billboard was purchased from Norton and was placed on Wooster Pike. The billboard ad was very similar to the second mailer to keep a consistent message of contamination (Figure 2). The billboard was posted in June 2019.

#### 3 - Mailer

The District provided two mailers to households in Fairfax. The first mailer was sent the 1st week of May 2019 and provided information to residents on what is recyclable (Figure 1). The second mailer was targeted at reducing contamination bagged recyclables and was sent 2 weeks after the first mailer (Figure 2). Each mailer was sent to all 761 households. The strategy of the second mailer was to focus on one single contaminant as suggested by best outreach practices from the [Recycling Partnership](#). The District used the Recycling Partnership's free resources to create the graphics for the mailer.

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### Strategies Continued...

#### 4 - Community Newsletter

To increase awareness and education around contamination, the District worked with Fairfax to provide a short educational article in their monthly newsletter, Fairfax Forum. The article was published in April 2019 (Figure 3).

### Cart Auditing

This was the District's first target community to address contamination. To measure the success of the outreach, the District performed a pre and post cart audit of Fairfax's households. To conduct the audit, District staff walked selected streets and audited all homes with recycling carts at the curb. During the audit, District staff would open the lid of a recycling cart and observe what type of contamination could be seen at the top of the cart. Staff noted contamination that fell within four categories, "bagged recyclables," "plastic contamination," "other" and use of recycling carts for "garbage."

The pre-audit results indicated that approximately 64% of households in the study showed some contamination (Figure 4). Non-recyclable plastics were the most common contaminant in recycling containers; these included plastic items that were not bottles and jugs (Figure 5 and Figure 6). Because plastic bags are a concerning contaminant for MRF operations, the District audited to determine the percentage of residential carts that included bagged recyclables (recyclables secured in a plastic bag) and plastic contamination (plastic bags in cart but not bagged, plastics films, plastic tubs, and other plastics that were not bottles and jugs). Approximately 19% of households had bagged recyclables in their recycling carts; this became the focus of the outreach strategies.

After completing the above outreach tactics, in August 2019 the staff performed a second cart audit to measure the success of the outreach. The District did not record specific households in either audit, to retain privacy of residents; therefore during the second audit District staff surveyed the same streets and audited all carts at the curb, 101 households were audited during each audit.

### Budget

Products/Services	Cost
Residential Mailers	\$1,107.77
<b>Mailer Postage</b>	<b>\$1,288.00</b>
Billboard	\$1,180.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,575.77</b>

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### Results

The results showed that overall contamination was decreased approximately 7%. Although the District's goal was to reduce overall contamination by 20%, the District decided that its main contamination focus would be to encourage residents to not bag recyclables. Examining bagged recyclables during the second cart audit revealed a 42% decrease of bagged recyclables in Fairfax. Therefore, focused outreach on the specific contaminant exceeded the goal of 20% reduction.

One finding that increased from the first to second cart audit was the "other" column. "Other" contamination was classified by items such as batteries, paper products that are not recyclable (paper towel, cups, plates, etc.), and scrap metal. During the first and second audit, more than 50% of carts surveyed labeled with "other" contamination, involved non-recyclable paper products and more than 30% of carts surveyed labeled with "other" contamination involved scrap metal. This information provides the District and Fairfax with ideas for future targeted contamination issues to address with the community.

### Fairfax 2019 Cart Audit Comparisons

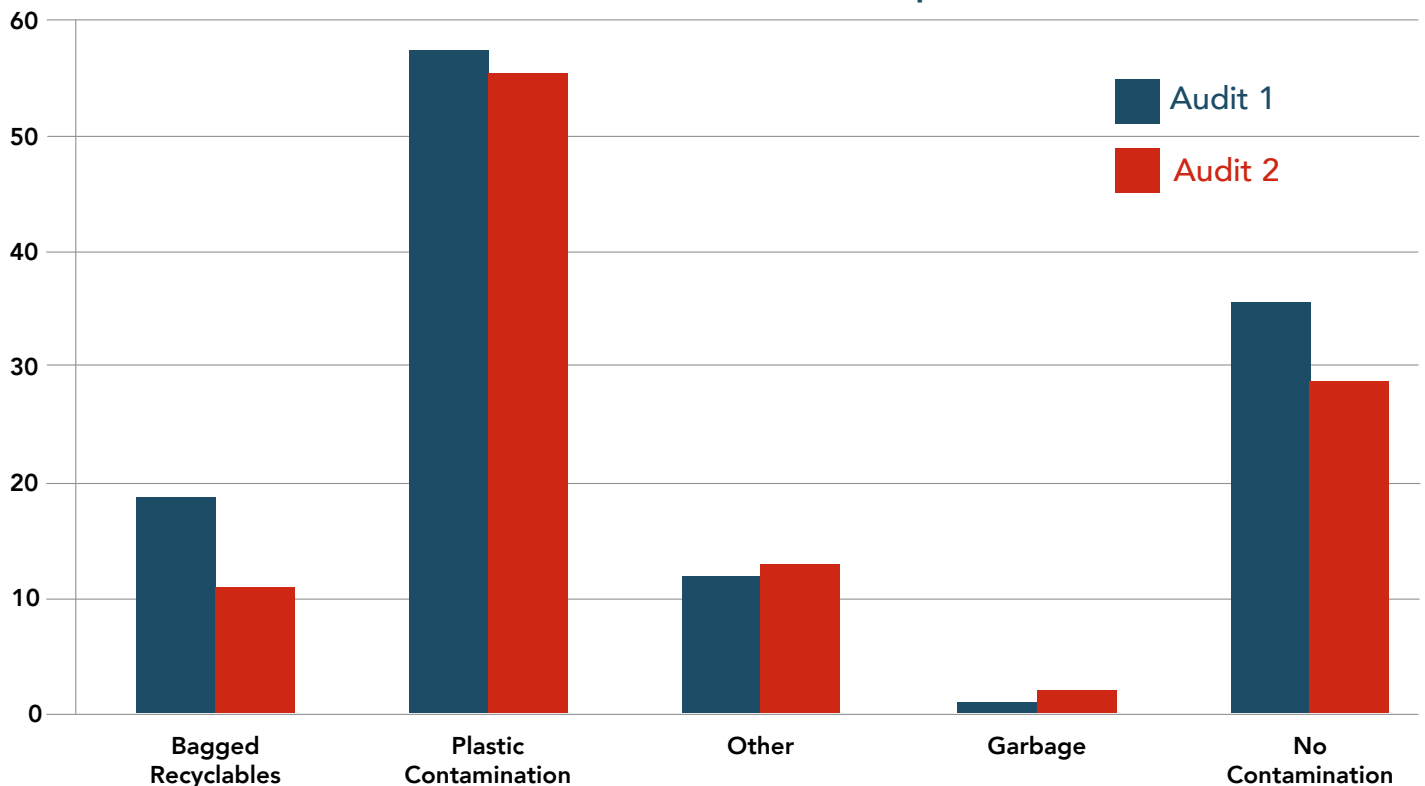


Figure 7 Pre and Post Cart Audit Data

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## Recycling Contamination Outreach

### Figures



Figure 1 Recycling Mailer



Figure 2 Contamination Mailer 2



Figure 3 April 2019 Fairfax Forum Contamination

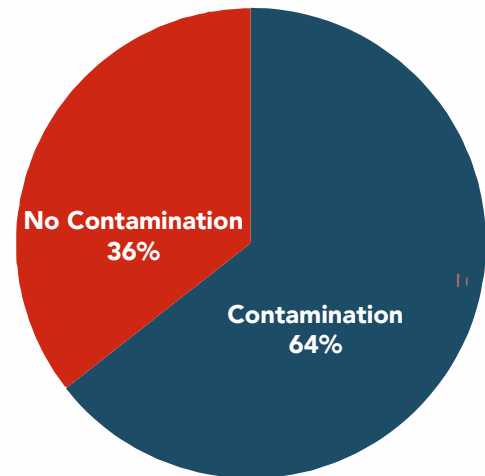


Figure 4 Pre-Outreach Contamination



Figure 5 Bagged Recyclables



Figure 6 Plastic Contamination (egg carton, 6 pack ring, straws, bagged recyclables, etc.)