

# Waste Audit Report: City Services Center and City Hall

April 28, 2016

## Waste audit overview

City staff and community members sorted through trash from City Services Center (CSC) and City Hall on April 20, 2016, to:

1. Quantify and categorize trash destined for the landfill to learn how much could be reduced, recycled, or composted.
2. Energize and inform new waste reduction practices coming to City Services Center in July. These practices will be evaluated in the fall with a second waste audit.
3. Demonstrate the city's growing commitment to sustainability and the practice of leading-by-doing.

Participants of the event included city staff, a city council member, community members, and local media.

## Waste management practices

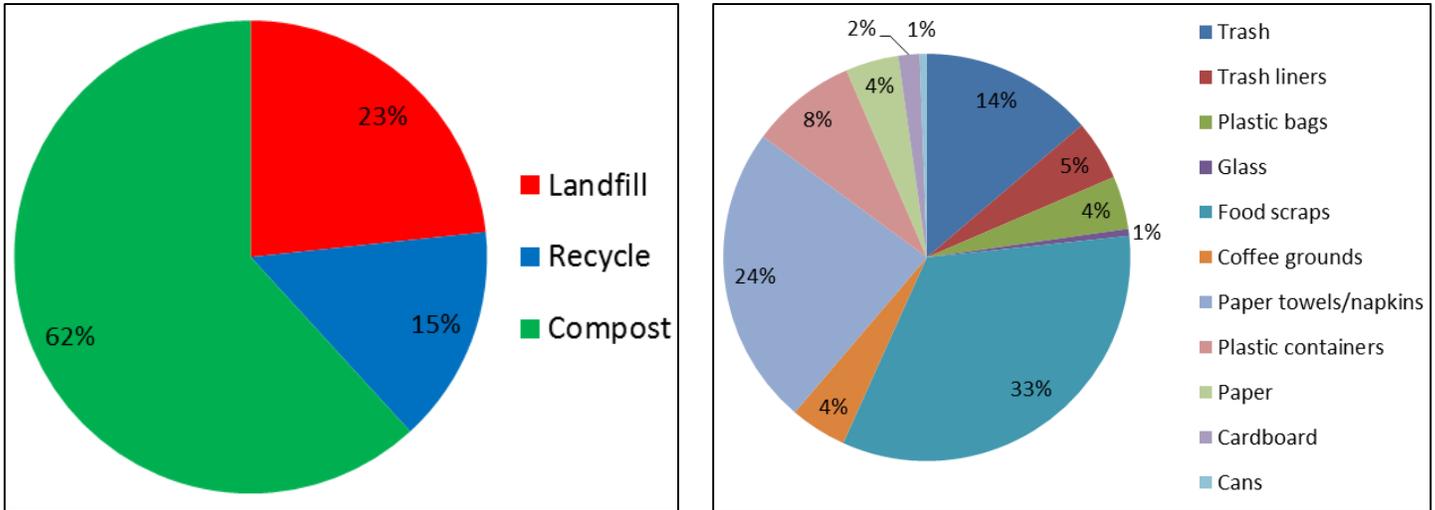
City buildings have recycling and trash bins readily accessible for all staff in offices, break rooms, conference rooms. A compost bin is available outside of CSC but not at City Hall. City janitorial staff empties these containers, and drivers from the city's Solid Waste and Recycling Department take trash to the landfill, recycling to Republic Services, and compost to the Solid Waste Agency.

The waste audit quantified and categorized materials that were already deposited in trash cans. Categories of materials fit the following three larger categories, and the audit also divided each category further:

- Landfill: Trash (wrappers, Styrofoam, food-covered plastics), glass (does not belong in mixed recycling bins), grocery bags/plastic wrap, trash liners.
- Recycle: Plastic containers (mostly clean), cans, cardboard, paper
- Compost: Food scraps, coffee grounds/filters, paper towels/napkins/soiled paper



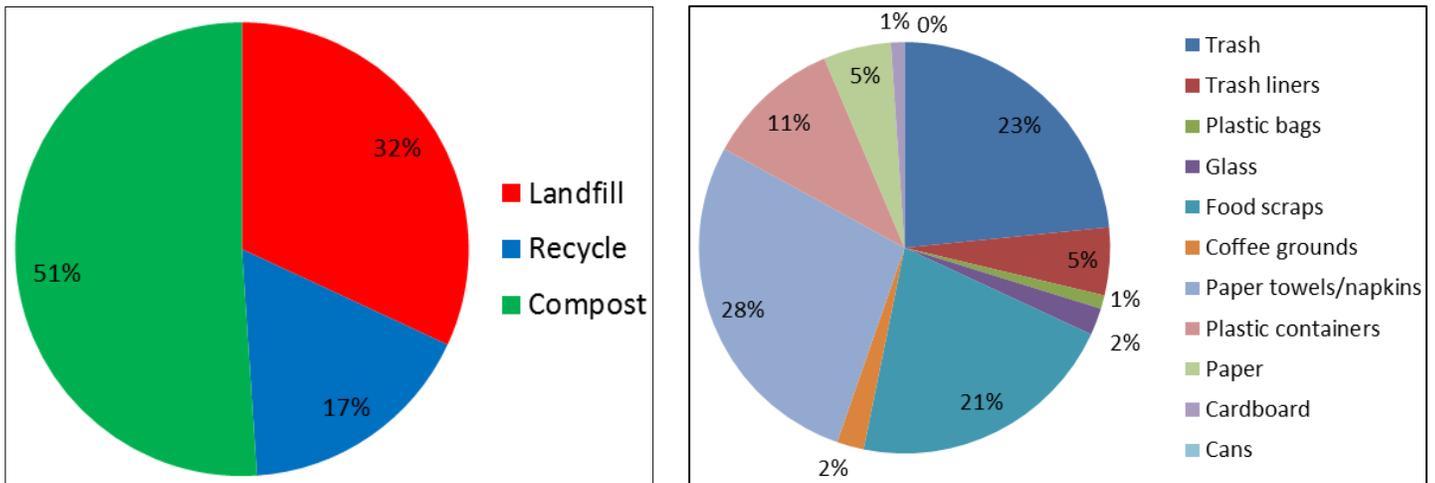
## City Services Center's Trash Composition by Weight



The majority of landfilled trash from CSC can be composted, and improvements to recycling can be made.

- More than 50% of landfilled waste is food scraps and paper towels. A bag of leaves was unexpectedly found in the trash, which was put into the food scrap bin, which increased the food scrap percentage.
- Landfilled trash includes trash liners, plastic bags, and glass, which could all be reduced or, in the case of glass, recycled at home.
- The small quantity of recycling found in the trash shows most people have good access to and understanding of recycling in CSC. Recycling present in trash was mostly plastic containers

## City Hall's Trash Composition by Weight



Similar to CSC, the majority of trash from City Hall can be composted, and recycling improvements can be made, as well.

- Nearly 50% of total waste was compostable in the form of paper towels and food scraps.
- Testament to a good recycling program can be seen in the small amount of recyclables in the trash.
- Plastic containers are the most landfilled recyclable. This might be caused by confusion about how clean a plastic container should be for recycling.

## Waste reduction practices

A suite of practices will be rolled out in CSC in July to gauge how much waste can be reduced and recycled and composted. Practices included the following and will be evaluated in the fall with a second waste audit.

1. Zero Waste Hubs: Existing trash and recycle containers will be paired, and added to the group will be compost containers. These zero waste stations will be the hub of CSC's waste reduction effort.
2. Detailed signage: Signs with pictures posted on new compost bins, all recycle bins, and trash containers. Having this signage at the decision-point will be useful information that should leave few questions unanswered.
3. Tiny Trash: Tiny Trashes will be used at desks instead of existing trash cans, and occupants will be expected to empty their Tiny Trash and recycling bin into nearby Zero Waste Stations.
4. Special items: Wood pallets, batteries, event waste, and ink cartridges are being assessed for best practices and will be part of communications to CSC prior to waste reduction improvements.
5. Communications: Further education and communications will be made prior to changes in CSC's waste infrastructure and expectations.



## Is zero waste possible?

Zero waste means diverting more than 90% of material from the landfill. By reducing waste in CSC, increasing recycling and composting, and taking existing recycling into account, zero waste is possible. Yet it is important to know that most of the waste related to a product is created before the product is in your hands. Maximizing reduction and reuse remain important elements of zero waste efforts.

A second waste audit will be held in the fall to evaluate performance of the new strategies listed above, at which time the weight of recycling will also be quantified to fully understand progress toward zero waste.

