

# WASTE AND WEALTH

## DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION

A clean city is a more sustainable one. Baltimore's long-term goal *must* be zero-waste. We must work to nearly eliminate the disposal of waste at landfills and waste to energy facilities and to ensure the majority of municipal solid waste is reused, composted, recycled or prevented through source reduction. Baltimoreans should expect nothing less from themselves and their government.

## EQUITY INDICATORS

The impact of improperly disposed trash and litter is felt more by low income and minority communities. Resources that support proper disposal of trash and litter need to be distributed equitably, including corner trash cans and recycling bins, and the existing sanitation and housing codes need to be strictly enforced in all parts of the city. Baltimore needs to adopt a new mindset, one that emphasizes recycling, composting, reusing, reducing and creating jobs.

## CURRENT STATUS

Baltimore has taken some important steps to become a cleaner city while reducing the amount of waste that is landfilled or incinerated. The City moved from two trash days per week to one trash and one recycling. Citywide mechanical street sweeping increased the number of lane miles swept and the tonnage collected and reduced the amount of street trash from going into the Harbor. Municipal trash cans were distributed to all city households, and requests for rat extermination have gone down by nearly 34 percent. Deconstruction, which takes buildings apart rather than demolishing them was piloted for city contracts in 2014. The nonprofit Humanim launched a social enterprise, Details, which is diverting salvageable materials from landfills and creating jobs for people who have faced barriers to employment. Second Chance, another social enterprise employs 165 Baltimoreans in deconstruction and resale of recovered building materials.

## STRATEGIES

### 1. Double Baltimore's residential recycling rate to 50% by 2022

Baltimore's current residential recycling rate is between 20 – 28%. Currently, Baltimore recycles 25,000 tons of residential waste per year, which represents only 19% of Baltimore's waste. Solid waste disposal costs the city \$52 per ton. Recycling disposal costs \$18 per ton—a savings of \$34 per ton. If Baltimore can double its recycling rate it would save \$850,000 per year in waste disposal costs.

**Action 1** – Provide free 25-gallon recycling bins to all Baltimore residents.

**Action 2** – Install 1,500 strategically placed corner cans across the City within the next two years.

**Action 3** – Launch an education and behavior change anti-litter and a pro-recycling campaign.

### 2. Expand Baltimore's Waste to Wealth Initiative

The vision behind the City's Waste To Wealth strategy is to build Baltimore's economy and transform its communities by managing the waste stream to create jobs and green products. The new model should mimic nature's closed loop system and instead generate value and wealth from our "waste" systems

(producers), the City and partners (processors) will replenish neighborhoods (consumers). Municipal waste streams, wood products and salvaged demolition materials will feed resident-led efforts, create jobs, combat blight, and revitalize our neighborhoods.

**Action 1** – Complete a composting plan for Baltimore City

**Action 2** – Establish Community Centers as market places for recycled urban waste products.

**Action 3** – Expand the use of deconstruction for all City-led demolition projects.

3. **Pursue legislative and policy changes to reduce the waste stream** Source reduction is a crucial first step in the Reduce-Reuse-Recycle paradigm. Plastic bags and polystyrene containers make up as much as half of the litter polluting local streets and waterways.

**Action 1** – Enact legislation to ban or impose a fee for plastic bags

**Action 2** – Support statewide legislation to ban polystyrene food service products and loose fill packaging

**Action 3** – Develop a plan to introduce and implement a Save As You Throw (SAYT) program for Baltimore. SAYT billing systems charge households directly based on how much garbage is placed on the curb. Source-separated recyclable materials can be collected at no charge to the residents. Over 7,000 cities and towns in the US are successfully using a SAYT system.

## **METRICS FOR SUCCESS**

Strategy 1: Achieve a 50% residential recycling rate by 2022

Strategy 2: Create 500 jobs through a Waste To Wealth initiative by 2022

Strategy 3: Reduce by 50% the amount of polystyrene containers and plastic bags in Baltimore's waste stream by 2022