

The Best Way to Reduce Waste and Increase Recycling in Denver:

EXPANDED WASTE SERVICES

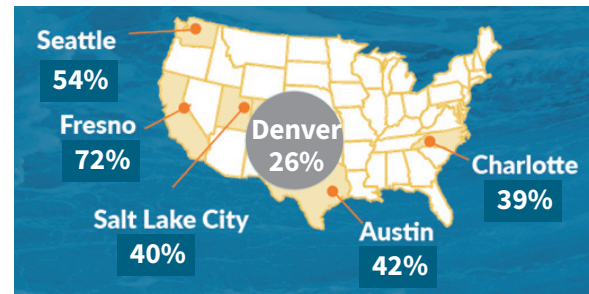
including weekly recycling and compost collection

How can Denver achieve its recycling goals?
The first step is to change the way the city charges for trash service.



DENVER IS FALLING BEHIND ON RECYCLING

When it comes to recycling, Colorado and the City of Denver are sadly some of the most wasteful places in the country. Colorado recycles only 15% of our materials, compared to the national average of 32%. Denver does not fare much better, recycling only 26%. Denver needs to take bold actions now to increase recycling and composting rates, and it starts with changing how the city pays for trash collection.



Denver's recycling rate lags far behind its peer cities, in part because it lacks a PAYT system.

In 2016
Denver residents landfilled
192,000 tons
of materials.



**BUT AT LEAST 75% OF THOSE MATERIALS
COULD HAVE BEEN RECYCLED OR COMPOSTED***

*Denver Recycles estimate.

CRITICAL NEXT STEP: Weekly Recycling and Composting, Charging for Trash

Denver residents have requested for many years weekly recycling and composting collection services. The additional services will capture more recyclables that would have ended up in the landfill due to overflowing recycle carts and help keep organic material out of landfills. Additionally, Denver residents currently all pay the same rate for trash service, regardless of whether a household puts out five bags of trash per week or only one bag per month. Not only is this unfair and inequitable, it also does not create any motivation for residents to recycle or compost. In fact, residents who want to compost actually have to pay a monthly fee, which creates a barrier to participation instead of an incentive.

A better solution is for Denver to implement an Expanded Waste Services system (formerly known as pay-as-you-throw or PAYT). **This new system would charge households for trash service based on the size of their trash cart—the more trash you produce, the more you pay, while weekly recycling and compost is included free of charge.** An Expanded Waste Services model creates a fairer, more equitable pricing system that gives residents a direct financial incentive to recycle and compost more. It's the same way residents are charged for other utilities, such as electricity, gas and water—based on how much they use.

AN EXPANDED WASTE SERVICES SYSTEM IS A PROVEN SOLUTION

More than 9,000 communities across the U.S. use similar models to provide fair, cost-effective trash service and encourage recycling and composting, serving nearly 40% of residents nationwide. Nine Front Range cities have successfully used this model, including Loveland, which leads the state with a 58% recycling rate. And Expanded Waste Services model is a key factor in the successful recycling programs among Denver's peer cities, such as Austin, TX and Salt Lake City, UT, which both recycle nearly twice as much as Denver.

Proposed pricing for an **EXPANDED WASTE SERVICES SYSTEM** (formerly know as Pay-As-You-Throw)

A monthly fee is charged on the TRASH CART SIZE a household chooses. Recycling and compost carts and service are included, free of charge.



35 gallon 2-3 bags \$9/month*	65 gallon 4-5 bags \$13/month	95 gallon 7-8 bags \$21/month
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Customers can mix and match different cart sizes for trash, recycling, and compost.

**this amount is less than the current monthly rate for compost services*

WHY COMPOST?



BIODEGRADABLE MATERIALS CAUSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS WHEN LANDFILLED.

Because there is no oxygen in the landfill once it's covered, biodegradable materials decompose anaerobically. This process creates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas (GHG) that traps 84 times more heat in our atmosphere than carbon dioxide. When you compost organic material instead, we can pull carbon down out of the atmosphere and sequester it in healthy soils. Soils can store 3x more carbon than trees!

BENEFITS OF EXPANDED WASTE SERVICES IN DENVER

Increase Equity & Fairness

This model is more transparent and equitable than charging a flat fee for trash because residents pay only for the level of service they use, just like other utilities. Households that produce less trash and recycle and compost more pay less.

Under the new system, the city will provide income-qualified instant rebates to assist low-income residents. Eligibility will be determined by income and the number of people in the house (Area Medium Income). 30% AMI will receive 100% instant rebate, 50% AMI will receive 75% instant rebate and 60% AMI will receive 50% instant rebate. Renters will also be eligible for the instant rebates.

For every one ton of materials that Denver recycles, we save three tons of carbon pollution. That makes PAYT one of the most cost-effective strategies to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Provide Composting to All Residents

Half of what residents' throw away in Denver is organic materials—i.e. leaves, grass clippings and food scraps—that could have been composted instead of landfilled. Yet only 17% of Denver households have a curbside composting cart because it currently costs an additional \$10/month. **The current pricing system is backwards; residents should be encouraged to compost to reduce waste and climate pollution, not charged more.** Leading U.S. cities provide composting and recycling to residents at no extra charge, and charge more for trash services. By transitioning to an Expanded Waste Services system, Denver can then roll-out citywide weekly composting service at no extra charge to residents.

Stop Using Tax Dollars to Subsidize Wasting

Denver's residential trash and recycling services are paid for through the city's General Fund, which is funded primarily through sales taxes and some property taxes. Denver residents currently do not pay a direct bill for trash and recycling. **Businesses contribute heavily to the General Fund, which means their tax dollars are being used to support a wasteful system that does not provide them with any services or value.** In addition, Denver residents that recycle and do their part to reduce waste are paying just as much in taxes as households that produce large amounts of trash. This creates further inequities, with those producing less trash subsidizing those who produce more trash. By charging residents for trash service, similar to how the city charges residents for water and other utilities, **tax dollars are freed up in the General Fund to be used for other city services that provide greater quality of life in local neighborhoods.**

HELP DENVER REACH ITS RECYCLING AND CLIMATE GOALS!

We need passionate residents and businesses to push the city to make Expanded Waste Services a priority action. Learn more about what you can do at www.ecocycle.org/ZeroWasteDenver or contact Ryan Call, Eco-Cycle Campaigns Coordinator, at ryan@ecocycle.org

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