

Boston

Thomas M. Menino, Mayor

May 10, 2010

Ms. Rosaria Salerno, City Clerk
City Clerk's Office
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Clerk Salerno:

Please accept the 2010 Annual Rreport for the Ordinance Regarding Access to City Recycling Program For Large Residential Buildings.

The Public Works Department Recycling Program was due to submit the annual report on March 31, 2010. This report is being submitted late due to a change in software, caused a delay in accessing data.

Very truly yours,



JOANNE P. MASSARO
Interim Commissioner of Public Works



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT / Boston City Hall / City Hall Square 02201
Joanne P. Massaro, Interim Commissioner of Public Works
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2010
ANNUAL REPORT

For

An Ordinance Regarding Access to City Recycling Programs
For Large Residential Buildings



2010 Annual Report

“An Ordinance Regarding Access to City Recycling Programs For Large Residential Buildings”

March 31, 2010

Introduction

This annual report is being submitted as required by the City of Boston “Ordinance Regarding Access To City Recycling Programs For Large Residential Buildings.”

This ordinance went into effect January 2003. It mandates that owners of large residential buildings, defined as apartment buildings or condominiums with 7 or more units, provide recycling to their residents. It also requires that the annual report evaluate the effectiveness of the City of Boston’s efforts to provide access to recycling in large residential buildings.

Recycling Program Description

The City of Boston Public Works Department Recycling Program has offered recycling services to large residential building owners on a voluntary basis since 1994. The Public Works Department provides free weekly recycling curbside collection to all Boston residents. Public Works currently collects over 30 different items from the curb for recycling. The Large Residential Building Recycling Program works as follows:

1. The Recycling Program (Recycling) receives a telephone call from a resident or building owner asking for recycling service. Or, Recycling is notified by the Sanitation Department that a building is not providing recycling services. Or, Recycling contacts a building owner.
2. Recycling then speaks to the owner or property manager to schedule a site visit to the building. At the site visit, Recycling, the owner or property manager, and the maintenance crew look at the existing trash system and discuss options for implementing a recycling program.
3. The owner must then purchase the recycling receptacles known as wheeled-carts. Residents are allowed to mix all recyclables together in these carts. Receptacles range in size from 32 to 68 gallons. Two 68-gallon wheeled carts will service 10 units.
4. The owner then distributes written notification to residents about their new recycling program, and then arranges with Recycling to begin receiving city recycling services.

The Public Works Department’s contracted recycling haulers collect from large apartment buildings and condominiums, defined as having more than 6 residential units, with the same recycling truck they use to collect from smaller households (single-family, duplexes, triple-deckers through 6-unit residential buildings) located on the same collection route.

What Happened in 2009

Improved Accuracy in Counting of Big Building Units

During 2009, the Boston Assessing Department modified its methodology for counting the number of residential units in big buildings in the City. This update increased the reported number of residential units by a significant margin, approximately 26,000 units. For the most part, however, this increase reflects only an improvement in the accuracy of the data rather than a large leap in the actual number of units. In 2007 the total number of units in large residential buildings was calculated at 105,016 units. In 2009, the total was calculated at 131,172 units.

Recycling relies on Assessing data, including the total number of large residential buildings and total number of units in big buildings, to calculate measures such as access rate. Consequently, the reported percentage of big building units online with recycling services has dropped between 2008 and 2009, even while the actual number of units online has increased.

Comprehensive Recycling Directory and Improved Communication

Recycling composed and printed a comprehensive Trash and Recycling Directory, containing detailed information about Sanitation and Recycling services, including:

- Materials and guidelines for recycling and solid waste disposal
- Services including hazardous waste drop-off and yard waste pickup
- Schedules and frequently asked questions

These directories provided residents with a convenient, one-stop source for information related to correct disposal of solid waste. Recycling expects that the improved availability of this information will lead to improved recycling outcomes and improved efficiency in resident disposal practices.

A directory was mailed to every household in the City, totaling nearly 300,000 individual households, including units in big buildings.

Single Stream Recycling in Large Buildings

2009 witnessed the switch from dual-stream to single-stream recycling by the City's recycling processor, Casella Waste Systems. The Recycling Program notified all big building owners of this change because all recipients of city recycling services, including the big buildings online with recycling, were affected.

Recycling anticipates that the transition to single-stream will significantly improve recycling participation in big buildings. The ability to commingle recycling simplifies the process for apartment dwellers, reduces the complexity of information provided by property managers, and allows big buildings to consolidate their containers.

Enforcement Procedures and Compliance Record

In 2009, 2867 units in 66 buildings went on line for recycling services. 32 owners of large residential buildings received Notices of Violation letters. 21 of the owners were referred to the Inspectional Services Department in order to issue fines. 20 of those owners then provided recycling access.

Most building owners respond to violation letters sent by Recycling and/or tickets issued by the Inspectional Services Department. Even after weeks of fines, however, some do not. Recycling began visiting these buildings and posting notices of the Ordinance near the front entrance to the buildings. Recycling also looked to see if management company information was posted at the buildings. When management information was posted, Recycling sent letters to the management companies informing them of the Ordinance.

2009 Evaluation of Progress

Evaluation Process

The intention of this ordinance is for all Boston residents to have access to the City's recycling services. The ordinance, however, cites as the measure of progress "the recycled tonnage collected from Large Residential buildings." Tons recycled do not provide a measurement for recycling access for two reasons. First, recycled tonnage from only large buildings is not available because the recycling from 1- through 6-unit residential buildings is collected in the same truck as recycling collected from 7+-unit residential buildings. Second, providing access does not necessarily or immediately increase tons recycled. The ordinance mandates access, but it does not mandate participation. Access is a necessary first step, but residents can still choose whether or not they want to recycle.

Recycling has therefore measured its progress in providing recycling access in large residential buildings by counting the number of units receiving city-recycling services. Counting the units in the residential buildings was required by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as the method of measurement to be used by municipalities in order to qualify for state recycling grant funds.

Residential buildings recycling in 2009

Success in providing recycling to residential buildings with 7 or more units is illustrated by the data below.

Year	Units With Access to Recycling Services	% of Total Units with Recycling Access (old Assessing data)	% total Units with Recycling Access (new Assessing data)	% of Buildings Brought Online After Violation Notification
2007	65,191	62%	N/A	N/A
2008	76,414	73%	59%	46%
2009	79,281	N/A	60%	63%