

A blue recycling bin is positioned on a sidewalk next to a paved street. In the background, there are trees with autumn foliage and a blue car parked on the street. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

# **WHAT'S IN YOUR TRASH: IMPLEMENTING A CURBSIDE AUDIT PROGRAM TO HELP IN FUTURE DECISION MAKING**

**Erik Grabowsky  
Arlington County  
Department of Environmental Services  
Solid Waste Bureau**

**Metropolitan Washington Council of  
Governments  
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- **Population of 211,700**

- **63%** of residents live in apartments or condos served private haulers
- **37%** of residents live in single family homes and are served by the County's residential collection program

- **Waste Generation**

- **70%** of all waste produced is from commercial and multi-family sectors
- Total refuse = **111,456 tons**
- Total recyclables = **90,072 tons**
- **CY 2011 Recycling Rate = 49.7%**

Area of **26 square miles**



\*Data compiled from Arlington, Virginia Profile 2012 and CY2011 Recycling Rate Report

- 20-Year Solid Waste Management Plan
- Adopted in June of 2004 by our Board
- Guide for the future growth of the County's solid waste management system
- Established planning priorities
- Commitment to Waste to Energy
- Established future recycling rate goals
  - 37% by 2014
  - 42% by 2019
  - 47% by 2024

## Beyond 5 Years

**Table 7-3**  
**Voluntary Program Enhancements, Beyond Five Years:**  
**Implementation Timeframe**

Completed/ Addressed		Program Enhancements	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
		Franchising															
		Franchise agreements															
x	1	Expand HHM program															
		Expand existing program and facilities															
		Study collection for "backdoor" residents and CESQGs															
		Implement collection for "backdoor" residents and CESQGs															
x	2	Waste assessment and tracking															
		Waste tracking system															
		Periodic waste assessments (every 5 years)															
x	3	Education/outreach position															
x	4	Community inspector position															



**32,700 households**

## Collection program:

Trash

Recycling

E-waste

Metal

Brush

Seasonal yard waste



# Importance of Waste Audits



**Information &  
Insights**

**Focused  
Education**

**Programmatic  
Decisions**

## The residential waste audit is:

- Collecting materials
- Sorting materials
- Analyzing sort
- Publishing findings
- Use results for decisions

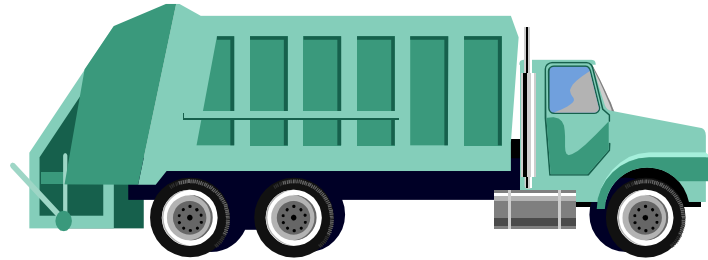


# Resources

- **Collection:**

- 2 hours

- 5 staff (2 drivers & 3 helpers)



- **Sorting/Clean-up:**

- 4 hours

- 3 staff



- **Data Recording/Analysis/Publishing:**

- 6 hours

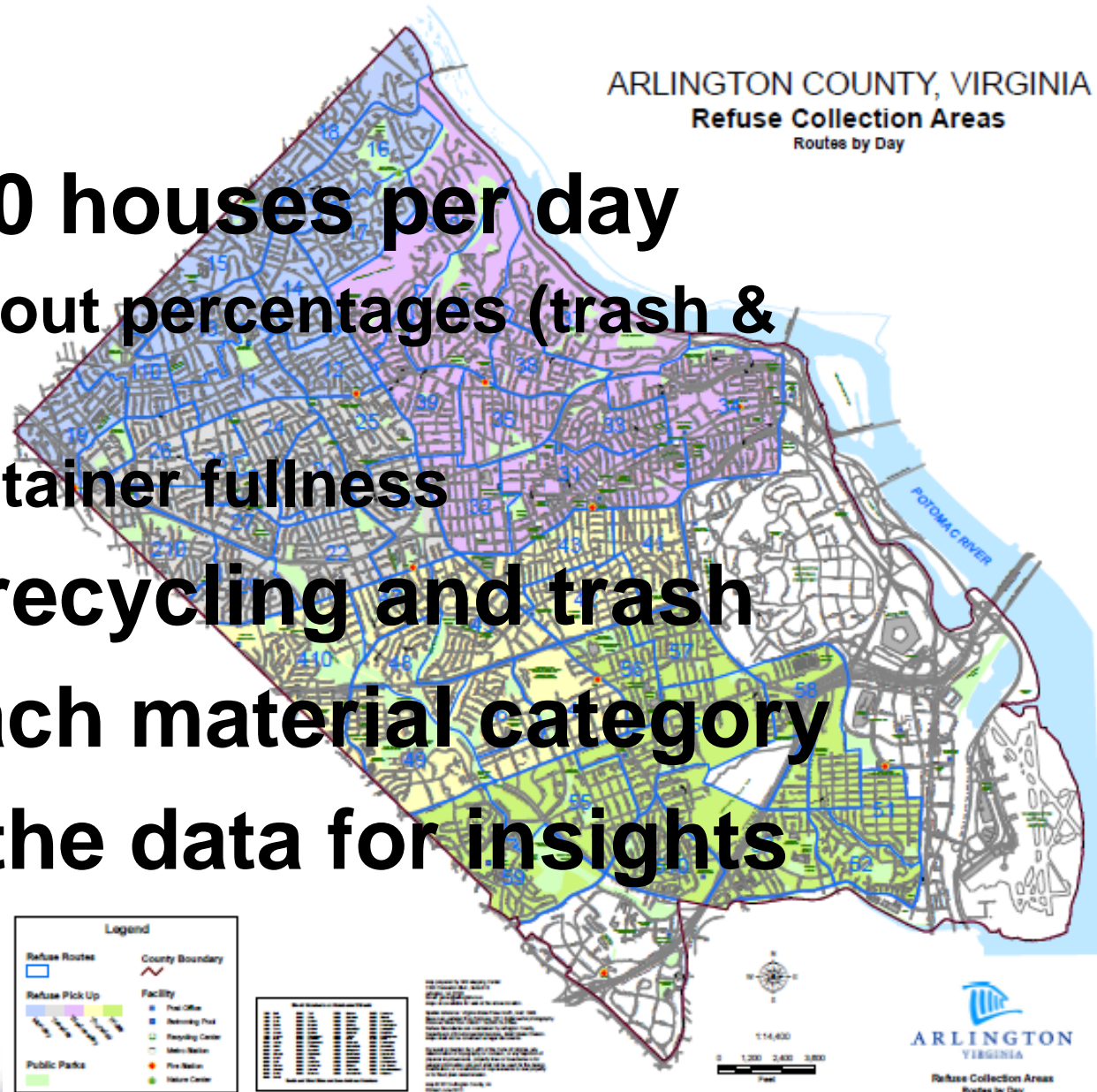
- 1 staff





# How it Works

1. **Collect: 20 houses per day**
  - a) Track set out percentages (trash & recycling)
  - b) Track container fullness
2. **Sort: the recycling and trash**
3. **Weigh: each material category**
4. **Analyze: the data for insights**



# Collection





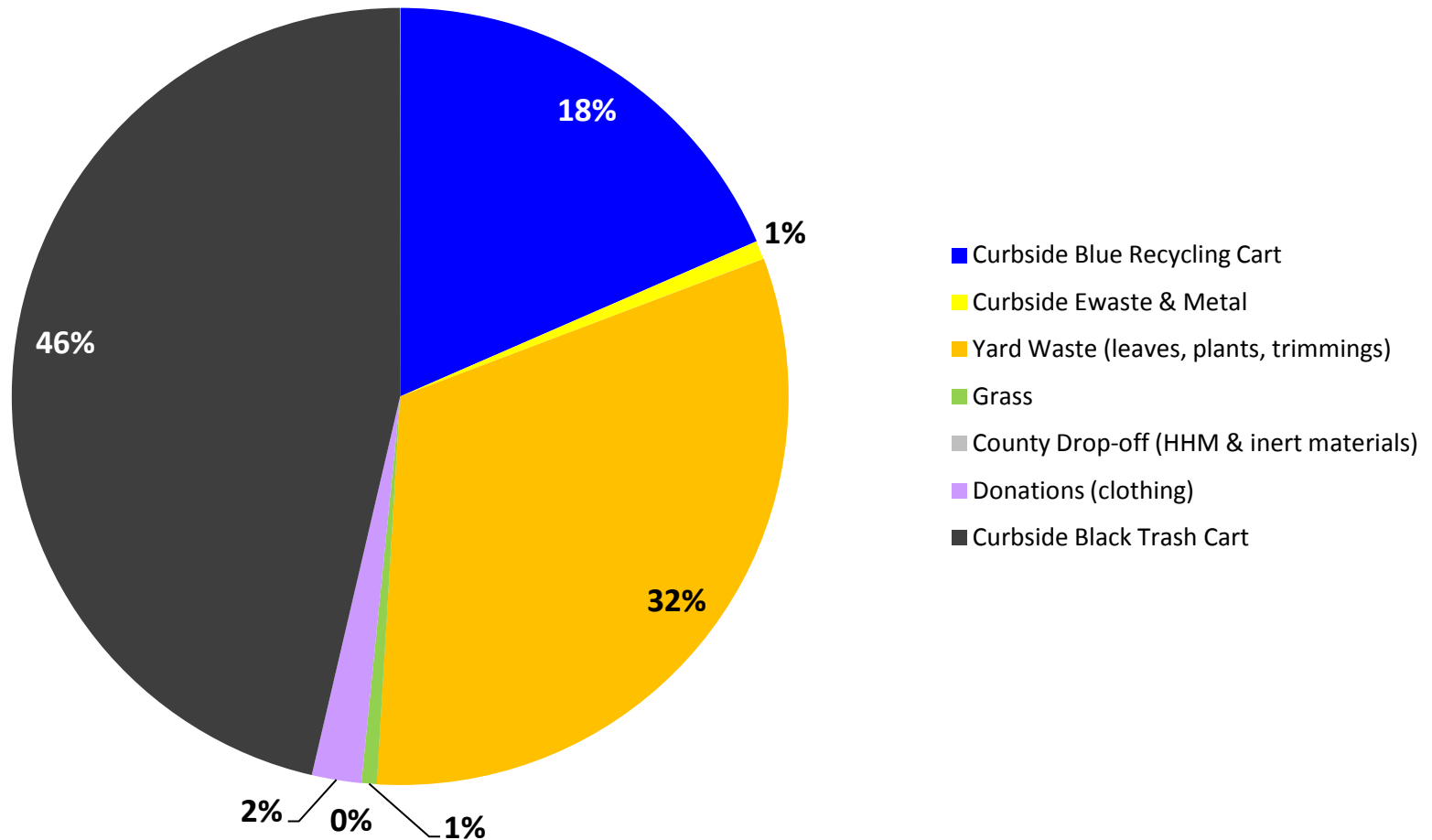
# Sorting



# Weighing & Recording



## October 2012 Refuse Cart Audit



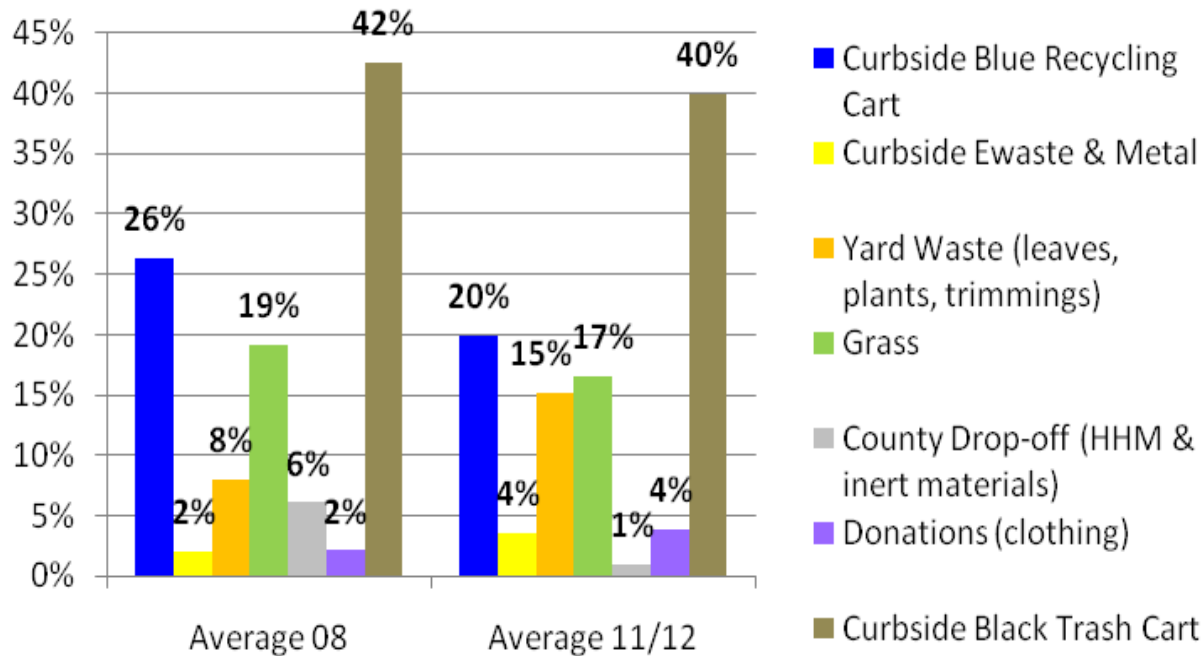
# Insights



# Waste Audit Results

## YEARLY AVERAGE OF THE WASTE AUDIT RESULTS FROM 2008 COMPARED TO 2011/2012\*

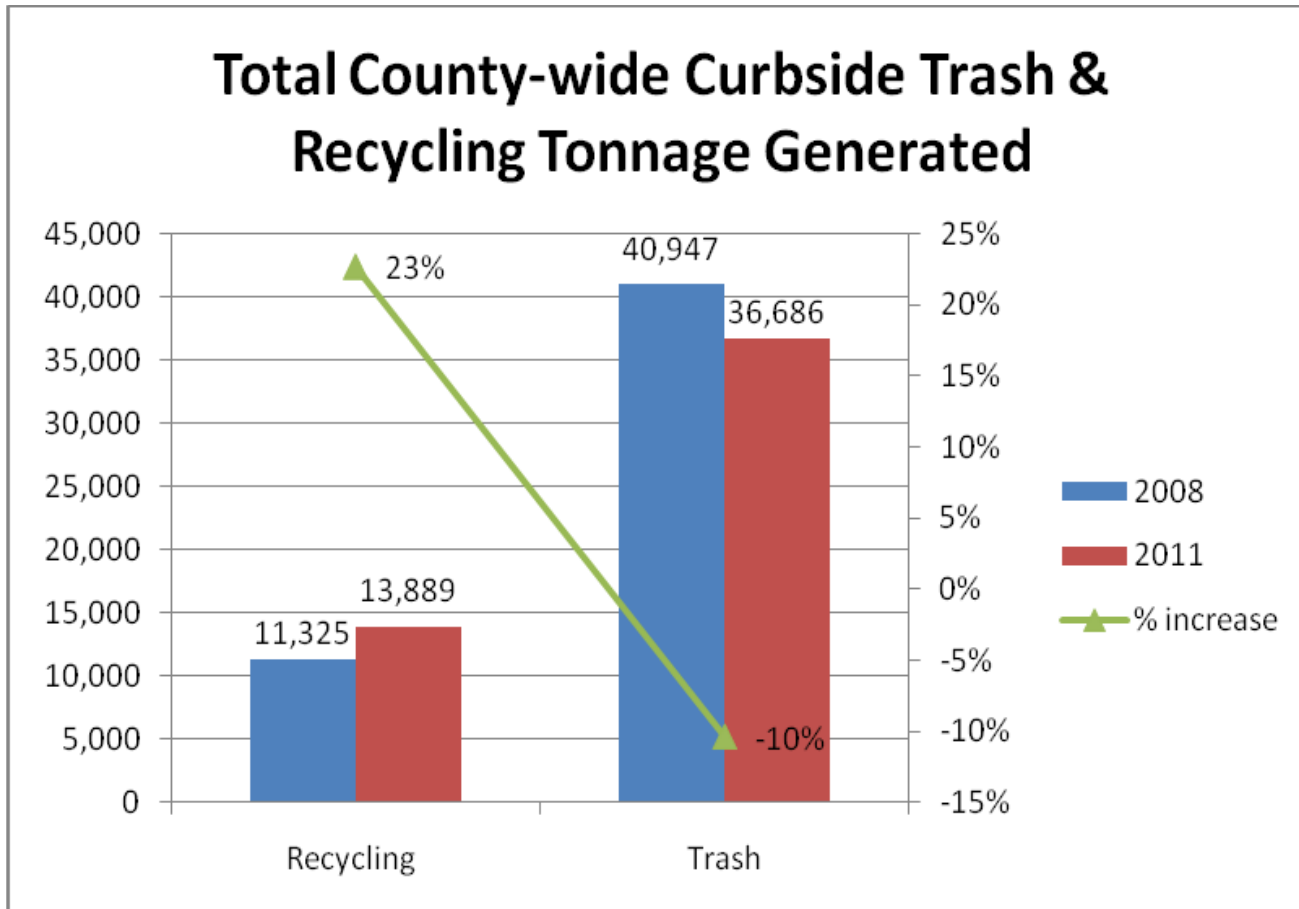
### Average between 2008 & 2011/2012



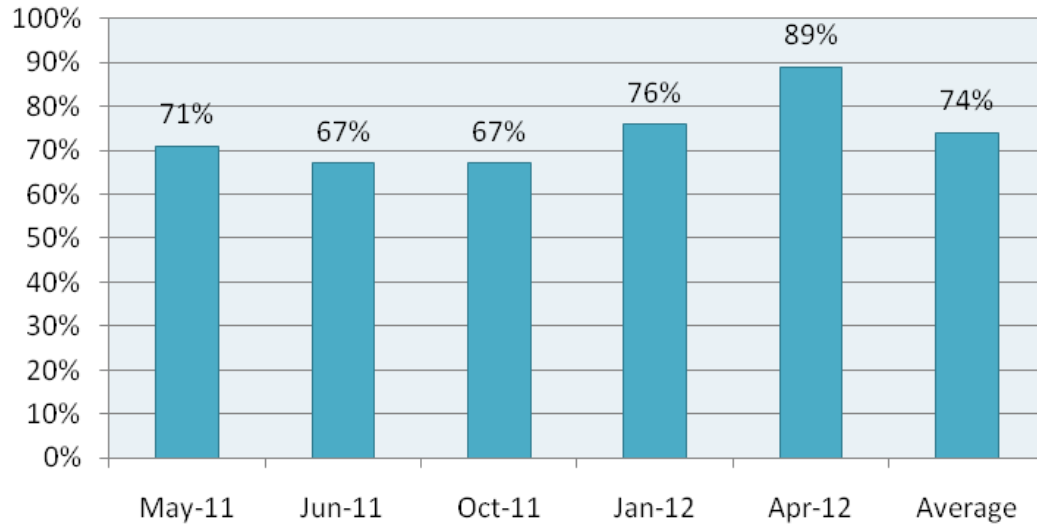
- Education program:
  - Blue cart
  - E-waste
- New program:
  - Yard waste and grass

\*Note that 2011 was not a full year of data so the most recent data was used to combine 2011 and 2012.

## TOTAL COUNTY-WIDE CURBSIDE TRASH & RECYCLING TONNAGE GENERATED



## Recycling Set-out Rate



- Education program:
  - Benefits of recycling
  - Target education pilot on waste audited homes
- Need residents to put out the recycling cart to increase recycling

- Published 4 page Guide to Services in County's Citizen Newsletter with focus on recycling.

## TRASH & RECYCLING GUIDE TO SERVICES



### What You Need to Know About Trash & Recycling

This trash and recycling guide has all the information you will need to use Arlington's trash and recycling services through the year. It includes a quick reference list with helpful phone numbers and drop-off locations and a seasonal calendar of special services, including yard waste and leaf collection.

Arlington County is serious about customer service and our natural resources. Over the years, we have upgraded our recycling program to a no-sort, single stream initiative with larger wheeled carts to make recycling even easier. Additionally, the Solid Waste team has expanded its offerings beyond traditional curbside pick-up to include many other convenient services to help you safely dispose of trash and reduce, reuse and recycle.

- Reliable, weekly curbside recycling and trash collection
- Scrap metal, electronics and yard waste pick-up

- Two convenient recycling drop-off centers
- A monthly, secure paper shredding service
- A safe, convenient hazardous materials drop-off facility
- Biannual recycling events for electronics and hazmat items
- Street sweeping to protect our rivers and streams
- Free wood and leaf mulch for resident pick-up
- Leaf Season and Spring Yard Waste

Thanks to your commitment and active participation in these programs, Arlington's recycling rate is 48 percent among single family homes and 30 percent in multifamily and commercial buildings. Our rates are among the highest in the region, but we know you can recycle even more. We hope this guide will provide all the information you need to continue to recycle.

### Leaf Collection

Arlington County collects about 50,000 cubic yard of leaves every year. Long before the first leaf falls, staff analyzes historic data, tree types and density, weather forecasts, state forestry forecasts, and resident feedback to develop the leaf collection schedule. This helps better allocate collection resources and serve neighborhoods when fallen leaves are heaviest. Arlington picks up leaves by vacuum and in biodegradable bags. The bag collection program provides convenient weekly service and adds additional flexibility for residents who need their leaves removed during times we are not scheduled to vacuum leaves.

#### Leaf Collection Requirements

- Place leaves out for vacuum collection BEFORE the published collection date ONLY.
- Do NOT park on leaf piles. It is a fire hazard.
- Do NOT put leaves under low hanging wires or near parked cars.

Learn more at [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us); search "leaf collection" or watch your trash cart for an informational cart hanger. ■



#### Leaf Collection Snapshot

##### Bag Collection – Begins Oct. 31

- Collected weekly the day after trash day
- Bags available at multiple locations in the County. Check online or on your leaf season cart hanger for locations and times.
- Always use paper biodegradable bags. NO PLASTIC

##### Vacuum Collection – Begins Nov. 14

- Two passes for each civic association
- Neighborhood signs posted 3-7 days before each pass
- Sign up for Arlington Leaf Schedule at [www.arlingtonva.us/subscribe](http://www.arlingtonva.us/subscribe) to find out where the trucks are heading.

### Mulch – How to Use It, How to Get It

Autumn is a great time of year for yard work. Mulch protects plants by:

- Helping the soil retain moisture
- Suppressing weeds that steal plant nutrients
- Insulating root growth from the extreme temperatures



#### Tips for Gardening with Mulch

- Rake one to three inches of wood or leaf mulch evenly around your plantings
- Keep the mulch six inches from the base of trees and bushes
- Do NOT place wood mulch up against the foundation of your house

**Mulch Delivery:** Call 703-228-6570 to request mulch delivery service for a fee, or go to [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us); search "mulch delivery."

**Free Mulch Pick-up:** Mulch is available for free at the 26th Street leaf storage site across from Marymount University and at the Solid Waste Bureau at 4300 29th Street South. And did you know our mulch is certified by the U.S. Composting Council? ■

### Christmas Tree Collection



Every January, Arlington collects approximately 10,000 Christmas trees and turns them into mulch for use around the County.

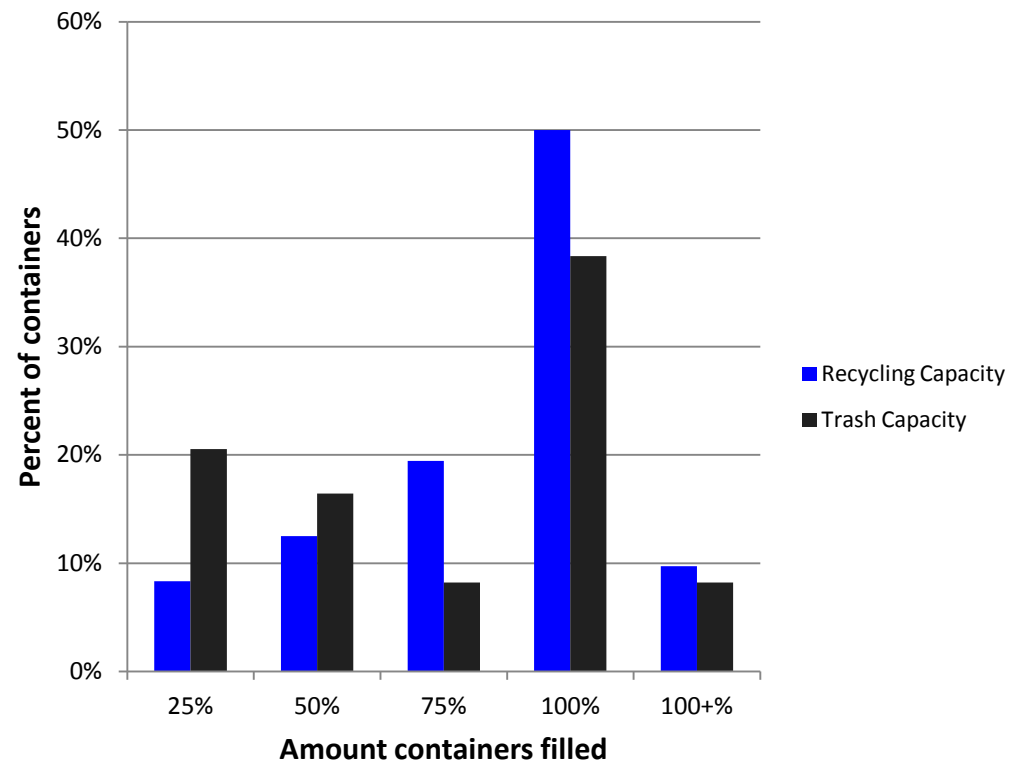
Residents can place trees at the curb on their scheduled trash day for pick-up. If you don't have curbside service, bring your tree on the first Saturday of the month to the Solid Waste Bureau at the Trades Center, 4300 29th Street South, or schedule a drop-off appointment by calling 703-228-6570.

Christmas Trees will be collected on residents' regular trash day, Jan. 3-16 2012. Before you bring your tree to the curb or the Trades Center, remember:

- Remove the tree stand and decorations
- Do NOT put the tree in a disposable bag
- Place your tree curbside before 7 a.m. on your collection day ■

- **50%** of **recycling** carts are full
- **38%** of **trash** carts are full

October 2012  
Capacity of Containers Collected

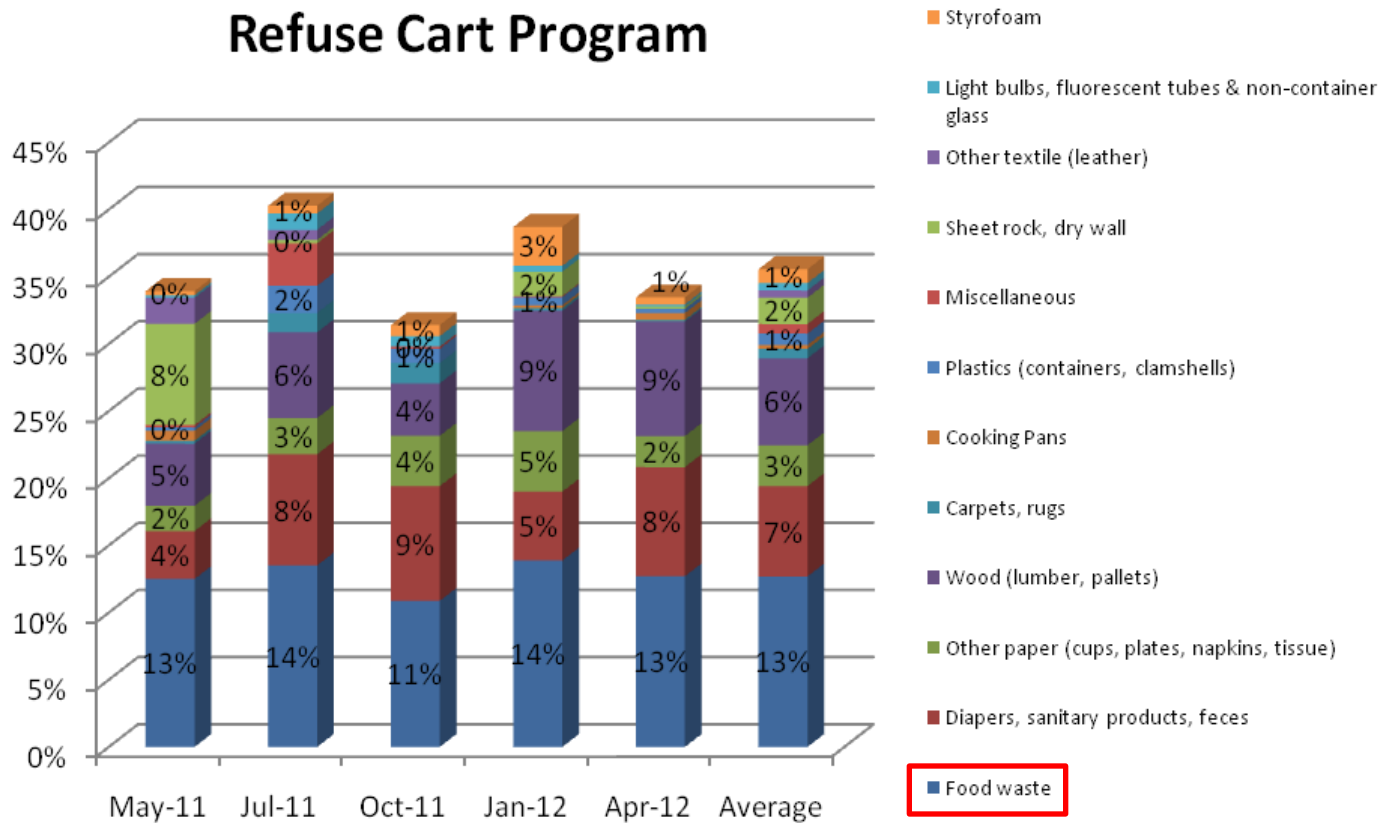








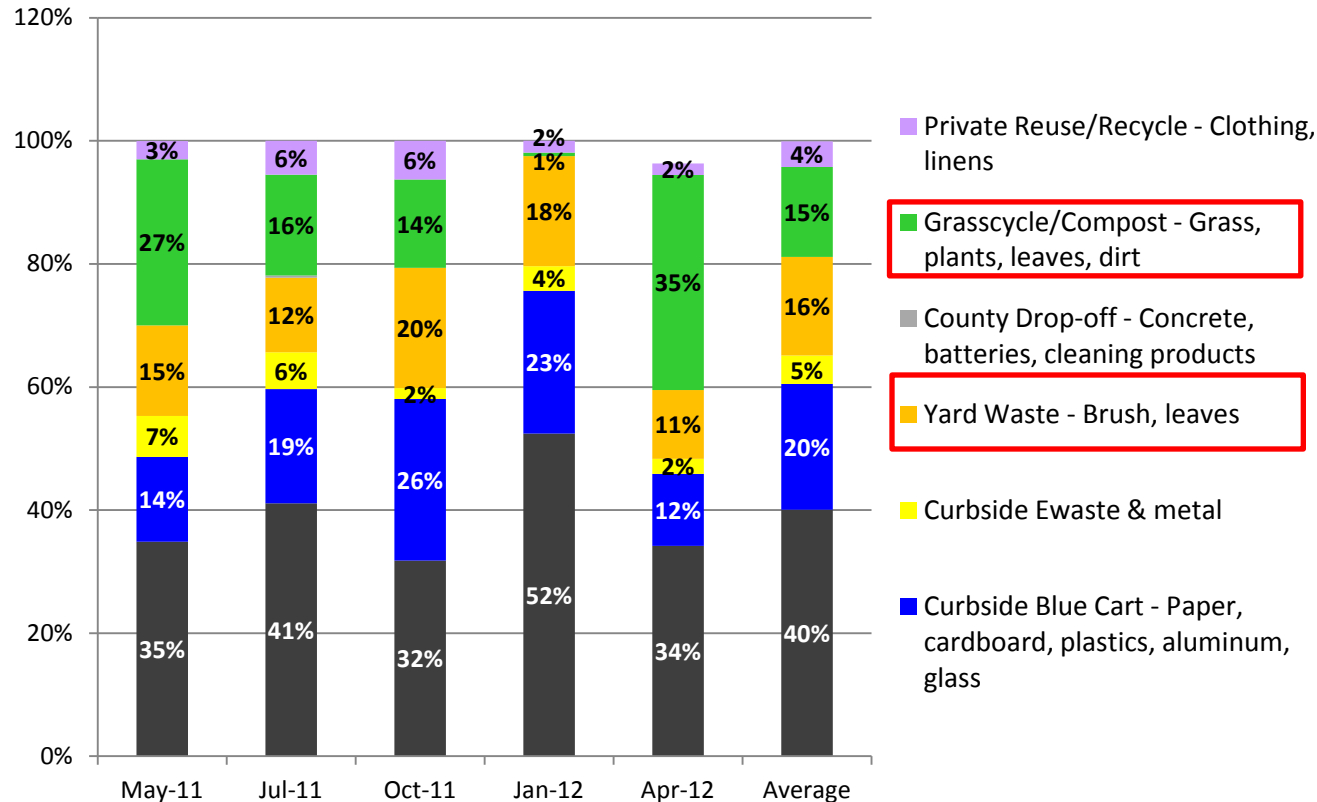
## Waste Audit Analysis for the Refuse Cart Program



- **13%** of the trash is food waste
- New program:
  - Year-round organics collection

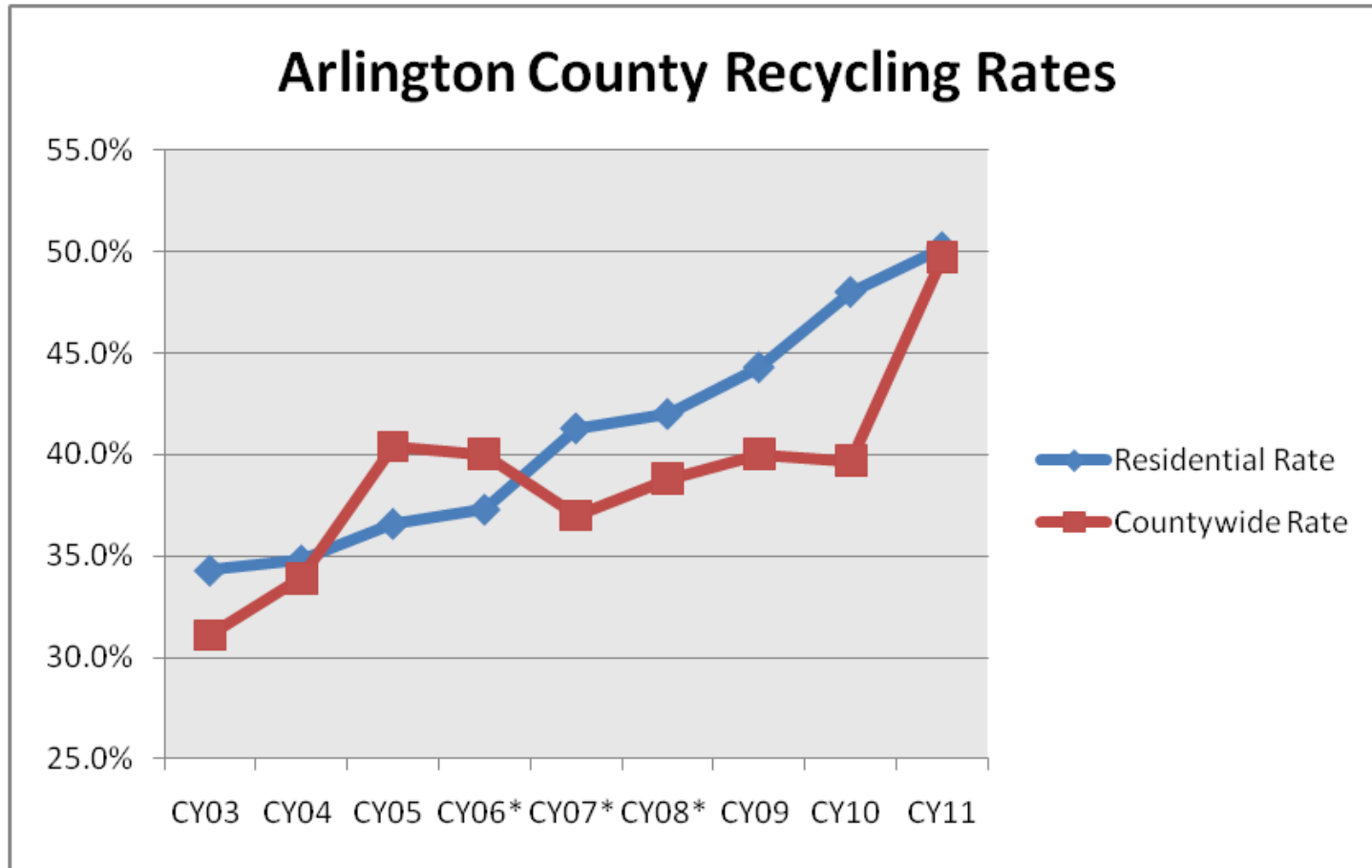
- Evaluate economic feasibility to expand detention center food waste program to other county facilities.
- Monitor marketplace for additional processing facilities to come into region.

## 2011 & 2012 Waste Audit Results The Breakdown of the Trash Stream



- **21% of the trash is yard waste & grass**
- **New program:**
  - Year-round yard waste collection

- Analyze the refuse collection market to obtain a better understanding of the developing yard waste infrastructure in the area.
- Develop comprehensive Request For Proposal (RFP) that addresses refuse collection and yard waste management.
- Obtain community feedback about new program.
- Implement program enhancements and possible increased costs with budget cycle.
- Recommend code changes banning grass from waste stream.



Upward trend for:

- Residential recycling rate
- County-wide recycling rate

## Mixed Results

<i>Property Type</i>	<i>Recycling Rate</i>	<i>Recycling Rate Potential</i>
<b>Multi-Family Apartment</b>	5.3%	42.9%
<b>Multi-Family Condominium</b>	31.2%	50.7%
<b>Commercial without food service</b>	8.6%	40.7%
<b>Commercial with food service</b>	45.9%	58.23%



# Action Items



## **1 Improve Convenience:**

- Co-locate all trash and recycling containers for staff and tenants



## **2 Improve Education:**

- Use audit information to provide better education to properties on inspection visits
- Provide properties with insights into the economic benefits of recycling more and throwing away less



## **3 Conduct Another Audit in One Year**

- Measure the progress and use as examples for other properties

## Waste audit benefits:

- Identify waste trends
- Understand the seasonality of waste
- Provide insights into new programs
- Improve use of existing programs
- Focus education
- Right size carts

## Next steps:

- Waste audits in county facilities and schools
- Continue quarterly waste audits in residential program

# Thank You

**Erik Grabowsky**  
**Arlington County Solid Waste Bureau**  
**703.228.7953**

[egrabowsky@arlingtonva.us](mailto:egrabowsky@arlingtonva.us)

