

Montgomery County Aiming for Zero Waste Plan Baseline Survey Summary Report

November 2018

Survey Report Summary

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Solid Waste Services, is developing a vision for materials management in the County. As part of the Aiming for Zero Waste plan, the County engaged key stakeholders and the public through an online survey to measure the use of County programs and services, and also to gauge interest and ideas on additional options for consideration. The survey, which was made available during the summer of 2018, received 4,672 responses. The survey was completed by residents from Subdistrict A, Subdistrict B, Municipalities, and those who live outside the County but may work in the County (<2%).

This report presents a summary of the results, with a breakdown of the results for Subdistrict A, Subdistrict B, and the Municipalities. A breakdown of the results from all respondents is also provided, which includes Subdistricts A and B, the municipalities and those respondents who live outside the County. It should be noted that respondents were given the opportunity to skip questions, which results in data per response for some questions not being equal to the total number of surveys completed.



98.31% of respondents indicated they live in Montgomery County

- 696 live in municipalities
- 2174 live in Subdistrict A
- 1591 live in Subdistrict B
- 79 live outside Montgomery County



62.70% received trash collection from Montgomery County

- 31.99% did not receive trash collection from Montgomery County
- 5.31% were unsure if they received collection from Montgomery County



83.01% live in a single-family home

- 10.67% live in a townhome
- 0.91% live in a multi-family home of 6 or fewer units
- 5.40% live in a multi-family home with 7 or more units



The majority of respondents in single-family homes indicated they:

- Put out 1-2 large trash bags/containers every week (67.55%)
- Put out their recyclables every week (87.98%)
- Hold their recyclables until the next collection if they run out of room in the recycling container (40.37%)
- Either take bulk trash to Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station (51.05%) or call the County 1-5 times a year to request pick up (51.18%)
- Predominantly visit the drop-off areas at Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station (69.68%)



The majority of respondents in multi-family homes indicated they:

- Put out one large trash bag weekly (52.14%)
- Generate about one grocery bag size of recycling weekly (47.46%)
- Either take bulk trash to Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station (39.15%) or take to a central collection area 1-2 times a year at their building (37.74%)
- Generally do not visit Poolesville and Shady Grove drop-off areas (51.27%) or only go to Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station (47.88%)

Survey Report Summary



The most frequently cited item dropped off at Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station was bulk trash (e.g. furniture) **(71.86%)**.



The top three materials dropped off for recycling, reuse or proper disposal were electronics **(80.63%)**, household hazardous waste **(74.99%)**, and scrap metal **(55.97%)**.



Food scraps were disposed of mainly in the trash **(70.87%)** and partially by in-sink garbage disposal **(55.90%)**.



Respondents were asked about interest in the County offering a food scraps collection program on a scale of 0 (no interest) to 10 (high interest). **(13.81%)** had no interest (0), **(32.11%)** had limited to medium interest (1-5), **(22.22%)** had medium to high interest (6-9) and **(31.67%)** were very interested (10).



In general, when asked how much more a month respondents would be willing to pay for a food scraps program (from \$0 to \$50 per month), the upper limit appeared to be about **\$25 per month**. While the majority of respondents were **not willing to pay any additional fees** the next most popular choice was **\$10 per month**.



The top three recommendations chosen for the County to reduce trash and increase recycling and composting were:

- Education on the importance of waste reduction, reuse and recycling **(72.03%)**
- Implement a program for the collection and recycling of food scraps **(53.21%)**
- Provide trash collection service for all residents County-wide for consistent level of service **(39.03%)**



The top two items respondents felt would encourage more recycling were:

- More information about the types of materials that can be recycled **(64.74%)**
- Recycling options for additional materials (mattresses, textiles, food scraps, etc.) **(62.51%)**



To encourage waste reduction, the following three items were chosen:



- Encourage manufacturers/companies to take responsibility for their products/packaging **(73.45%)**
- Provide recycling options for materials (e.g. mattresses, food scraps, textiles, etc.) **(62.98%)**
- Provide more/better education about waste management **(61.24%)**



When making decisions about managing waste, the large majority of respondents felt the natural environment was the most important to consider as compared to jobs, level of service, and cost **(75.53%)**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SURVEY REPORT

SINGLE FAMILY

Survey Questions	Responses	Subdistrict A	Subdistrict B	Municipality	*All Respondents
How many trash bags/containers of trash do you typically put out at the curb per week?	 1-2 large trash bags/containers	69.70% 1415 Responses	65.46% 978 Responses	64.89% 377 Responses	67.55% 2794 Responses
	 1-2 small grocery-type size bags	18.57% 377 Responses	21.02% 314 Responses	20.31% 118 Responses	19.66% 813 Responses
	 3+ large trash bags/containers	11.72% 238 Responses	13.52% 202 Responses	14.80% 86 Responses	12.79% 529 Responses
How often do you put out recyclable materials at the curb?	 I put them out every week	88.83% 1805 Responses	86.87% 1323 Responses	88.34% 523 Responses	87.98% 3676 Responses
	 I put them out every other week	6.99% 142 Responses	8.67% 132 Responses	8.61% 51 Responses	7.87% 329 Responses
	 I put them out only when the recycling container(s) are full	3.54% 72 Responses	3.41% 52 Responses	2.20% 13 Responses	3.30% 138 Responses
	 I put them out once a month	0.64% 13 Responses	1.05% 16 Responses	0.84% 5 Responses	0.84% 35 Responses
What do you do with your recyclable materials if you run out of space in your recycling container(s)?	 I hold the materials until the next recycling collection	43.15% 854 Responses	39.32% 591 Responses	33.33% 194 Responses	40.37% 1653 Responses
	 I place materials in a cardboard box or other container and set out for recycling collection	29.56% 585 Responses	34.93% 525 Responses	37.11% 216 Responses	32.60% 1335 Responses
	 I place materials in a plastic/paper bag and set out for recycling collection	13.54% 268 Responses	12.44% 187 Responses	13.06% 76 Responses	13.06% 535 Responses
	 I place materials into the other wheeled cart/recycling bin that has room	9.55% 189 Responses	8.72% 131 Responses	12.03% 70 Responses	9.52% 390 Responses
	 I throw materials in the trash	2.32% 46 Responses	2.99% 45 Responses	2.23% 13 Responses	2.64% 108 Responses
	 I bundle paper materials with twine and set out for recycling collection	1.87% 37 Responses	1.60% 24 Responses	2.23% 13 Responses	1.81% 74 Responses

*All respondents includes the <2% of respondents who do not live in the County, but may work in the County.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SURVEY REPORT

Survey Questions	Responses	Subdistrict A	Subdistrict B	Municipality	*All Respondents
SINGLE FAMILY How do you manage bulk trash (e.g. furniture)?	 I call the County 1-5 times a year for pick up	70.80% 1353 Responses	28.77% 416 Responses	41.45% 228 Responses	51.18% 2015 Responses
	 I take bulk trash to the Montgomery County Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station or Poolesville myself	39.46% 754 Responses	64.87% 938 Responses	55.64% 306 Responses	51.05% 2010 Responses
	 I call the County more than five times a year for pick up	0.26% 5 Responses	0.28% 4 Responses	1.09% 6 Responses	0.38% 15 Responses
	 I take/arrange for collection of bulk trash to/by a third-party drop-off/collector	11.46% 219 Responses	23.17% 335 Responses	20.73% 114 Responses	17.09% 673 Responses
	 I call the County for pick up/ drop-off/collection	0% 0 Responses	0% 0 Responses	0% 0 Responses	0% 0 Responses
MULTI-FAMILY How much trash do you generate?	 1 large trash bag weekly	44.35% 51 Responses	59.52% 25 Responses	60.53% 46 Responses	52.14% 122 Responses
	 1 grocery bag size weekly	33.04% 38 Responses	16.67% 7 Responses	28.95% 22 Responses	29.06% 68 Responses
	 More than one trash bag weekly	13.91% 16 Responses	11.90% 5 Responses	6.58% 5 Responses	11.11% 26 Responses
	 1 large trash bag every other day	8.70% 10 Responses	11.90% 5 Responses	3.95% 3 Responses	7.69% 18 Responses
MULTI-FAMILY How much recycling do you generate?	 1 grocery bag weekly	41.88% 49 Responses	45.24% 19 Responses	57.89% 44 Responses	47.46% 112 Responses
	 1 grocery bag every other day	42.74% 50 Responses	38.10% 16 Responses	35.53% 27 Responses	39.83% 94 Responses
	 1 grocery bag a day	14.53% 17 Responses	9.52% 4 Responses	6.58% 5 Responses	11.02% 26 Responses
	 I don't recycle	0.85% 1 Response	7.14% 3 Responses	0% 0 Responses	1.69% 4 Responses

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY SURVEY REPORT

Survey Questions	Responses	Subdistrict A	Subdistrict B	Municipality	*All Respondents
What items do you drop off for trash at the curb or at the Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station?	 Bulk trash (e.g. furniture)	69.19% 730 Responses	73.85% 788 Responses	72.93% 291 Responses	71.86% 1821 Responses
	Household trash	33.46% 353 Responses	39.55% 422 Responses	33.83% 135 Responses	36.07% 914 Responses
	Renovation material	37.50% 394 Responses	32.52% 347 Responses	34.34% 137 Responses	34.77% 881 Responses
	Rugs and carpets	16.68% 176 Responses	19.21% 205 Responses	15.54% 62 Responses	17.72% 449 Responses
	Mattresses and box springs	8.15% 86 Responses	12.46% 133 Responses	8.52% 34 Responses	9.98% 253 Responses
	Shingles and roofing materials	3.51% 37 Responses	3.37% 36 Responses	2.76% 11 Responses	3.31% 84 Responses
What other materials for recycling, reuse or proper disposal do you drop off at the Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station or Poolesville Beauty Spot?	 Electronics	81.57% 987 Responses	81.03% 948 Responses	77.30% 344 Responses	80.63% 2289 Responses
	Household Hazardous Waste	76.69% 928 Responses	73.93% 865 Responses	73.93% 329 Responses	74.99% 2129 Responses
	Scrap Metal	54.88% 664 Responses	57.52% 673 Responses	55.51% 247 Responses	55.97% 1589 Responses
How do you currently dispose of food scraps?	 I place them in the trash	70.08% 1410 Responses	72.78% 1059 Responses	68.97% 429 Responses	70.87% 2917 Responses
	I use the in-sink garbage disposal	53.33% 1073 Responses	61.51% 895 Responses	51.29% 319 Responses	55.90% 2301 Responses
	I put them in a backyard compost bin	25.20% 507 Responses	23.02% 335 Responses	22.03% 137 Responses	23.91% 984 Responses
	I use them in the garden/backyard	7.21% 145 Responses	10.03% 146 Responses	6.75% 42 Responses	8.09% 333 Responses
	I pay a private company to collect for composting	5.02% 101 Responses	0.69% 10 Responses	5.63% 35 Responses	3.55% 146 Responses
	I take them to a local business for composting (e.g. Farmer's Organic Market, local store)	0.70% 14 Responses	0.62% 9 Responses	1.61% 10 Responses	0.80% 33 Responses

*All respondents includes the <2% of respondents who do not live in the County, but may work in the County.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SURVEY REPORT

Survey Questions

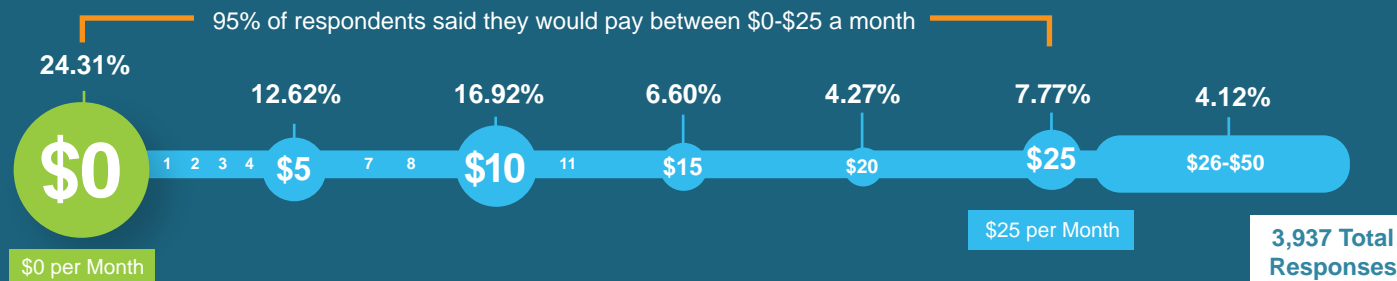
All Respondents

What is your interest in the County offering a program to collect food scraps from County residents and turn them into compost or other beneficial use?



In addition to what you already pay for solid waste management, how much more would you be willing to pay (per month) to have a food scraps program (this includes containers, collection and processing), and to support other waste reduction/diversion programs?

(\$0-\$50 per month extra)



Survey Questions

Responses

Subdistrict A

Subdistrict B

Municipality

*All Respondents

Education on the importance of waste reduction, reuse and recycling

73.28%
1382 Responses

70.70%
963 Responses

72.02%
417 Responses

72.03%
2774 Responses

Implement a program for the collection and recycling of food scraps

57.00%
1075 Responses

46.55%
634 Responses

57.69%
334 Responses

53.21%
2049 Responses

Provide trash collection service for all residents County-wide for consistent level of service

36.32%
685 Responses

42.29%
576 Responses

39.72%
230 Responses

39.03%
1503 Responses

Use a standard size trash container

22.11%
417 Responses

16.89%
230 Responses

17.27%
100 Responses

19.55%
753 Responses

Pay a fee for the size of trash container used

17.23%
325 Responses

14.17%
193 Responses

21.24%
123 Responses

16.77%
646 Responses

Limit the number of trash containers collected every week

13.20%
249 Responses

9.84%
134 Responses

15.37%
89 Responses

12.44%
479 Responses

Reduce the amount of bulk trash allowed per pickup

7.16%
135 Responses

4.41%
60 Responses






















6.56%
38 Responses

6.08%
234 Responses

What efforts would you recommend the County consider to reduce trash and increase recycling and composting?

*All respondents includes the <2% of respondents who do not live in the County, but may work in the County.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SURVEY REPORT

Survey Questions	Subdistrict A	Subdistrict B	Municipality	*All Respondents
What would encourage people to recycle more?	 <p>Recycling options for additional materials 64.30% 1248 Responses</p>	 <p>More information about the types of materials that can be recycled 65.30% 924 Responses</p>	 <p>More information about the types of materials that can be recycled 66.01% 400 Responses</p>	 <p>More information about the types of materials that can be recycled 64.74% 2582 Responses</p>
	 <p>More information about the types of materials that can be recycled 63.99% 1242 Responses</p>	 <p>Recycling options for additional materials 59.93% 848 Responses</p>	 <p>Recycling options for additional materials 63.70% 386 Responses</p>	 <p>Recycling options for additional materials 62.51% 2493 Responses</p>
	 <p>Mix all recyclable materials in one recycling bin 46.32% 899 Responses</p>	 <p>Permanent drop-off service for shredding confidential papers 49.82% 705 Responses</p>	 <p>Mix all recyclable materials in one recycling bin 51.98% 315 Responses</p>	 <p>Mix all recyclable materials in one recycling bin 47.57% 1897 Responses</p>
Do you have any overall recommendations to encourage waste reduction in Montgomery County?	 <p>Encourage manufacturers/companies to take responsibility for their products/packaging 73.55% 1418 Responses</p>	 <p>Encourage manufacturers/companies to take responsibility for their products/packaging 72.65% 991 Responses</p>	 <p>Encourage manufacturers/companies to take responsibility for their products/packaging 75.42% 445 Responses</p>	 <p>Encourage manufacturers/companies to take responsibility for their products/packaging 73.45% 2869 Responses</p>
	 <p>Provide recycling options for materials 63.74% 1229 Responses</p>	 <p>Provide more/better education about waste management 61.88% 844 Responses</p>	 <p>Provide recycling options for materials 65.42% 386 Responses</p>	 <p>Provide recycling options for materials 62.98% 2460 Responses</p>
	 <p>Provide more/better education about waste management 60.01% 1157 Responses</p>	 <p>Provide recycling options for materials 61.22% 835 Responses</p>	 <p>Provide more/better education about waste management 64.07% 378 Responses</p>	 <p>Provide more/better education about waste management 61.24% 2392 Responses</p>
What is important to you when it comes to making decisions about managing waste to 2040 and beyond?	 <p>Natural Environment 76.29% 1390 Responses</p>	 <p>Natural Environment 72.84% 952 Responses</p>	 <p>Natural Environment 79.46% 441 Responses</p>	 <p>Natural Environment 75.53% 2800 Responses</p>

*All respondents includes the <2% of respondents who do not live in the County, but may work in the County.

Survey Question	Common Words	All Respondents
<p>Do you have any suggestions on additional ways to reduce, reuse and recycle and recover waste?</p> <p>(The following responses were directly taken from the open response section of the survey)</p>	<p>RECYCLING Mentioned: 507 Times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Clearer information about exactly which types of packaging can be recycled and which can't.” “Find ways to recycle mattresses and textiles, and any other materials that are commonly discarded as trash.”
	<p>PLASTIC Mentioned: 346 Times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Plastic grocery bags and styrofoam - you can't recycle them so they end up in trash. Provide some place to get rid of them or we just put them in the trash!” “Find ways to recycle more types of plastic or, again, work to reduce plastic packaging and straws.”
	<p>TRASH Mentioned: 333 Times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I really like the idea of paying per bag of trash.” “Provide trash service for all county residents.”
	<p>WASTE Mentioned: 306 Times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Priority is waste reduction - that leaves less to reuse, recycle and recover.” “Make information online about Montgomery County waste and recycling management easy to find.”
	<p>MORE EDUCATION/ INFORMATION Mentioned: 246 Times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Start with educating the children in schools - they can teach their families.” “More information/education about the BENEFITS of reducing, reusing and recycling.”
	<p>FOOD Mentioned: 210 Times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Implement food waste recycling programs for businesses.” “Residential incentives to reduce trash volume along with introducing food scrap curbside collection would have a huge impact.”
	<p>PLASTIC BAGS Mentioned: 106 Times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Include pick-up of plastic bags with other recyclable items.” “Stop taxing and ban plastic bags.”
	<p>PACKAGING Mentioned: 105 Times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Help make more available food and other items without packaging.” “A lot of my recycling is Amazon packaging. I wish there was a convenient place to drop it off for reuse.”

