

**Ann Arbor City Council Regular Session: October 7, 2013
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1	11:36 AM		Sabra Briere	Matthew Naud			
2							

Alexa, Jennifer

From: Naud, Matthew
Sent: Monday, October 07, 2013 11:36 PM
To: Briere, Sabra
Subject: Portland Creates Buzz by Cutting Garbage Pickups - WSJ.com

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304458604577490532687633866.html>

From the Wall Street journal. Please share..

In the first quarter of 2012, Portland collected just under 13,000 tons of residential garbage, down from 23,000 tons during the year-earlier period. Counted in garbage truckloads, that's 1,800 fewer per quarter, or 25 fewer truckloads daily.

Volume to the landfill is down 44%. "It's just a remarkable decrease," says Bruce Walker, solid waste manager for Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. Compost collection is nearly three times what the city expected, he adds.

Matthew Naud

Sent from my iPad

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U.S. News

Portland Puts New Twist on Trash Pickup

City Creates Buzz as It Cuts Collection To Every 2 Weeks, Stresses Composting

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By JOEL MILLMAN

Updated June 27, 2012 12:51 p.m. ET

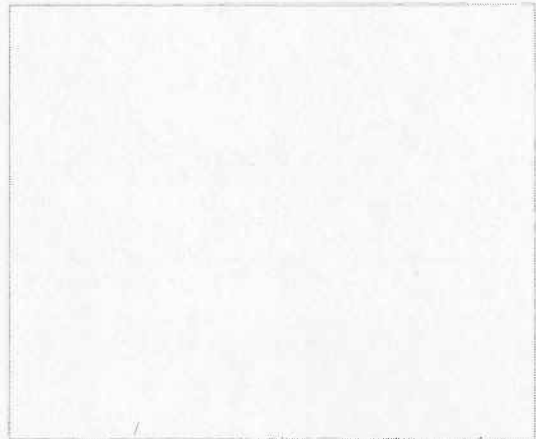


WSJ's Joel Millman checks in on Mean Street to discuss Portland, Oregon, which abolished weekly garbage pickup and now has the attention of other U.S. cities that want to copy its "green" waste pickup efforts. Photo: Leah Nash for The Wall Street Journal.

PORTLAND, Ore.—The largest city in the state that four decades ago pioneered five-cent deposits on beverage containers is advocating a new approach to garbage collection that has some U.S. communities taking notice. In a first for any large American municipality, Portland last fall abolished weekly trash pickups, switching to once every two weeks. At the same time, it increased collection of "green" waste—lawn cuttings and other backyard debris mixed in with compostable food scraps—to once a week.

Portland Policy Encourages Composting

By picking up unsorted trash less often, Portland wants to divert waste from landfills and churn this leafy city's considerable volume of vegetation into compost.



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Compost deposited at a transfer station in Portland, Ore. Leah Nash for The Wall Street Journal

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 Portland is expected to save money over time, city managers say, because the cost of disposing "green" trash can be as much as \$40-per-ton cheaper than processing landfill trash. With their trash collection reduced to every other week, Portland households have had to hone their recycling skills or pay more for bigger garbage cans, which are provided by the network of private haulers who pick up the trash for the city of 583,000. That's because Portland has long operated under what the industry terms a "pay as you throw" plan, charging consumers by volume of waste placed at curbside. "In the beginning it was like a shock," recalls Mike Perkins of Heiberg Garbage & Recycling. The 17-year trash-truck veteran says when weekly pickups ended, nearly half the customers on his route doubled the size of their roll carts—which raised their monthly fee to \$60 from \$35.

Hauling It Away

After the city of Portland, Ore., reduced its garbage pickups earlier this year, collection of composting waste soared.

	Garbage	Recycling	Composting
Q1 2010	27,722 tons	32,603	5,718
Q1 2011	15,957	32,119	4,442
Q1 2012	18,902	13,516	14,677

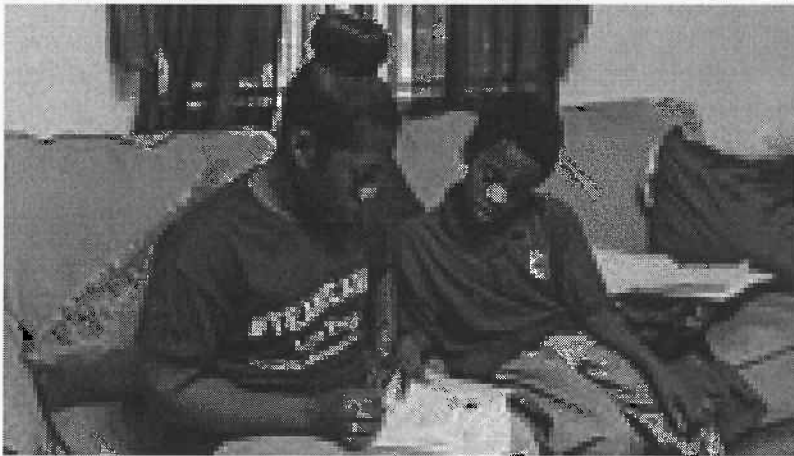
Source: Zack Shields and Recycling, City of Portland. The Wall Street Journal

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So are cardboard egg cartons. Last month Portland was still deploying canvassers, helping with the transition. "There's got to be a way keep the bucket cleaner," Larry Carlson, a 67-year-old retiree, told canvasser Renée Johnson. Ms. Johnson offered him a "bio bag" liner. "This neighborhood already has a raccoon problem," Zack Shields, 23, said when Ms. Johnson came by. Some skeptics also were aware Portland had suspended a 1991 composting program after learning it would cost more than \$3 million to contain the smell at one site. Twenty years later, Portland's newest effort still has some challenges. "People in the field find that any change generates some push-back," says Jerry Powell, a Portlander who publishes the trade journal Resource Recycling. "For some 70-year-old who has put out his trash the same way for 50 years, it's startling." Write to Joel Millman at joel.millman@wsj.com

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In the first quarter of 2012, Portland collected just under 13,000 tons of residential garbage, down from 27,000 tons during the year-earlier period. Counted in garbage truckloads, that's 1,800 fewer per quarter, or 25 fewer truckloads daily.

Volume to the landfill is down 44%. "It's just a remarkable decrease," says Bruce Walker, solid waste manager for Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. Compost collection is nearly three times what the city expected, he adds. Those are the kind of numbers that excite municipal waste watchers. Delegations from places like San Antonio; Santa Fe, N.M.; and California's Marin County have come by to pick through garbage data to study Portland's success.

San Antonio, which is testing a program similar to Portland's, sent observers here in May. "What Portland is doing with organics is an area that we're very interested in," says Nick Galus, a senior project manager with that city's solid-waste team. Bob Gedert, Austin, Texas's director of resource recovery, hopes to make a visit by summer's end. "We'd love to do trash every other week, like Portland does," says Mr. Gedert. He explains copying Portland would take some doing, because Texas law mandates weekly pick ups for public-health reasons.

As residents' recycling has improved, however, many of those jumbo carts have rolled back to Heiberg's warehouse. Now every week, residents put out a large container that contains their yard waste mixed with food scraps they collect during the week in a smaller, city-issued pail many store under the kitchen sink, or on a porch.

Eventually, the mixture of rotting food and garden waste arrives at two Portland collection centers. From the transit centers, the green waste goes to a composting yard, run by San Francisco-based Recology, in the suburbs. There it bakes under tarps as what site manager Jon Thomas calls "a happy biological community of microbes" turns Portland's organic waste into a spongy, black loam for local growers.

Diverting kitchen waste to the covered pails proved to be a tricky transition. At first, residents were wary, mainly of odor. Portland opened a phone line to offer advice and fielded nearly 8,000 calls in its first four months. Filers—in Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese—admonished households to "include the Food" with yard waste. Nuances emerged: Pizza boxes are compostable (acids in grease and tomato-sauce residue break down cellulose).

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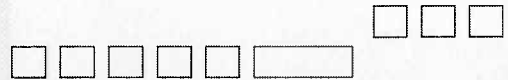




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