

# Recycling in Narragansett, RI



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## RI Recycling Mandate/Background

As of July 1, 2012, per Rhode Island General Law Chapter 23-18.9, every city and town in Rhode Island is required to recycling a minimum of thirty-five percent (35%) of its solid waste and to divert a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of its solid waste from reaching the Central Landfill.



The table below shows Narragansett's *historical* recycling rate, as calculated by Rhode Island Resource Recovery (RIRRC) and published in their annual Municipal Waste Management Data, from 2009-2012. As shown below, the MRF recycling rate is RIRRC's simplest measure of recycling, which divides the total tons of common recyclables (materials placed in recycling bins) sent to RIRRC's Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) by the total of these tons plus the tons of trash delivered to RIRRC for landfilling. The mandatory recycling rate is similar to the MRF rate, but also includes other materials on the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's (RI DEM) Mandatory Recyclables, such as leaf and yard debris as well as clothing and scrap metals diverted from the Central Landfill. The overall diversion rate expands even further to include additional special waste items diverted from the landfill including tires, mattresses, clean wood, books, motor oil & filters, etc. As is evidenced, Narragansett's rates for this period were basically stagnant and certainly below the mandated rates that took effect in 2012.

### Historical Data

	Town of Narragansett		
Calendar Year	MRF Rate	Mandatory Recycling Rate	Overall Diversion Rate
2009	14.1%	N/A	21.5%
2010	16.0%	21.3%	23.2%
2011	16.9%	22.8%	42.3%*
2012	16.5%	23.4%	43.8%*
<b>Mandated Rates as of 7/1/12</b>		<b>35.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>

\* Construction, demolition and storm debris large contributing factors

**MRF RATE** = Tons Bin Recyclables / (Numerator + MSW Tons)

**MANDATORY RATE** = Tons Bin Recyclables + L&YW + Clothing + Metals / (Numerator + MSW Tons)

**DIVERSION RATE** = Tons of All Materials Kept Out of Landfill / (Numerator + MSW Tons)

In August of 2012, a part-time Recycling Coordinator was hired to implement a recycling program supported by the creation of the Solid Waste & Recycling Ordinance. Prior to that time, information on solid waste collection in the Town of Narragansett was limited. Through the analysis of data from the Rose Hill Regional Transfer Station (RHRTS), meetings with local haulers, and information gathered through the new commercial hauler licensing process, a profile of recycling in Narragansett began to appear.

It was determined that approximately seventy percent (70%) of Narragansett residents contracted with a hauler for trash collection, with only a couple of haulers offering recycling collection for an additional fee. The remaining thirty percent (30%) of residents self-hauled their trash, and possibly recycling, to RHRTS. In addition, it became apparent that materials, such as scrap metal being diverted to local vendors by various municipal departments, as well as clothing and household items being collected from town residents, was not being identified and captured into the town's recycling and diversion rate calculations.

## Solid Waste and Recycling Ordinance

Chapter 62, Solid Waste and Recycling Ordinance went into effect on January 1, 2013. The goals of ordinance were to:

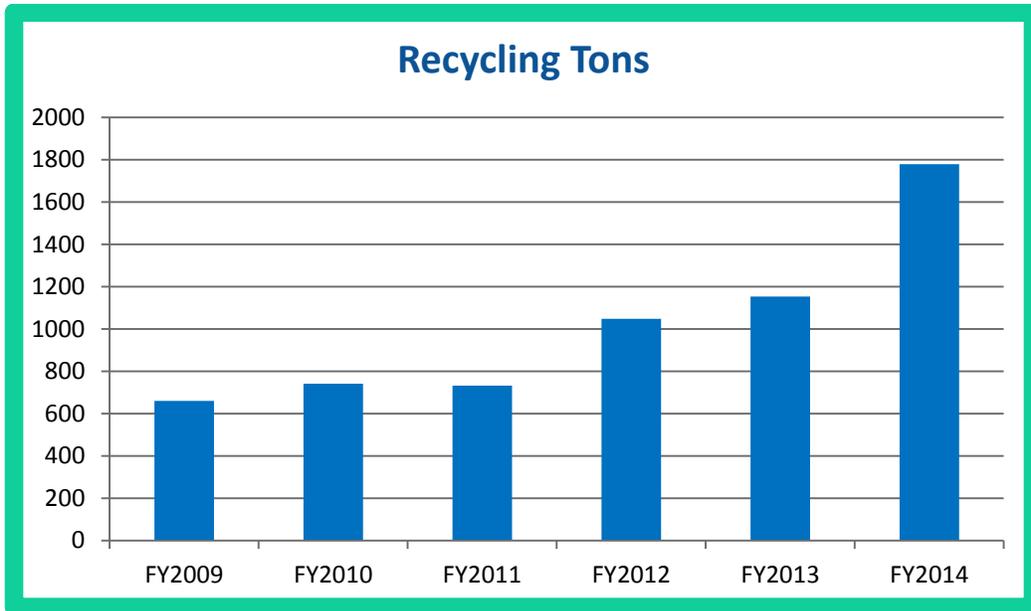
- Meet or exceed the municipal recycling rate of 35% and solid waste diversion rate of 50% as set by RIGL 23-18.9-1.
- Mandate recycling by ALL Narragansett residents including those in single family dwellings & all types of multi-units.
- Ensure all residential haulers provide recycling as part of one integrated subscription service.
- Identify and capture all materials diverted from going to the landfill by the Town, such as scrap metal, motor oil, residential clothing collections, etc.

To date, Narragansett remains the only municipality in Rhode Island to include ALL residents under a municipal solid waste and recycling ordinance. Typically cities and towns only include multi-unit dwellings up to a maximum number of units, most commonly four (4) units, under their ordinance leaving larger complexes to remain classified as commercial properties outside of the jurisdiction of the local ordinance. All commercial properties, including multi-unit housing complexes, are required to recycle per Rhode Island General Law Chapter 23-18.8-2. However, due to limited enforcement by RI DEM, the reality is that residents in most multi-unit complexes throughout the state do not recycle. The Town of Narragansett included all residents, regardless of type/size of multi-unit dwellings, in the ordinance to equalize all residents and ensure compliance by all residents as well as the commercial haulers servicing the residents. **By the end of 2014, eighty percent (80%) of multi-unit complexes had recycling programs in place, up from twenty percent (20%) in 2012.**

In 2013, thirteen (13) commercial hauler licenses were issued, two (2) of which were non-profits who collect residential recyclable items such as clothing and household items (Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ocean State and Planet Aid). Identification and licensing of these non-profit 'haulers' helped the Town capture one hundred twenty-five (125) tons of clothing and household items into the calculation of the Town's mandated recycling rate. By 2014, the total number of haulers increased to sixteen (16) with six (6) of them collecting one hundred sixty-seven (167) tons of clothing, books and household items.

## Recycling on the Rise

Since the introduction of the solid waste and recycling ordinance and oversight by the Recycling Coordinator, Narragansett’s recycling tonnage volume has continued to increase steadily, as evidenced in the chart below.



As a result, the recycling and diversion rates of the Town have also increased, as shown below:

Town of Narragansett			
Calendar Year	MRF Rate	Mandatory Recycling Rate	Overall Diversion Rate
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2011	16.9%	22.8%	42.3%*
2012	16.5%	23.4%	43.8%*
<b>2013</b>	<b>26.8%</b>	<b>36.9%</b>	<b>38.5%</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>39.3%</b>	<b>40.4%</b>
<b>Mandated Rates as of 7/1/12</b>		<b>35.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>

\*Construction, demolition and storm debris large contributing factors

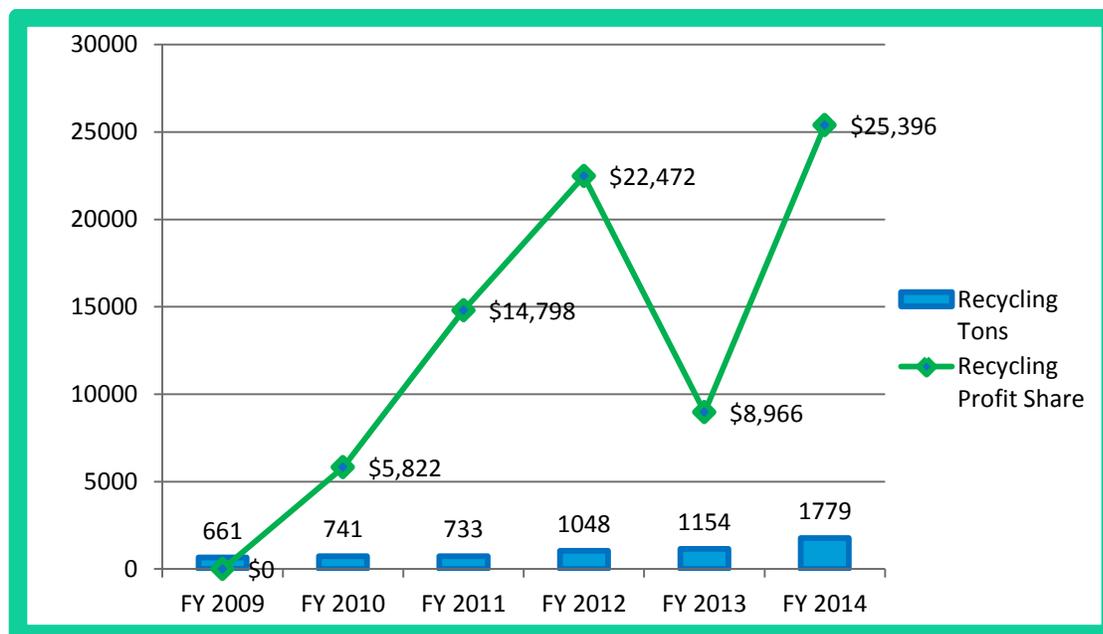
\*\* New ordinance in effect January 1, 2013

## Recycling Program Funding

Narragansett's recycling program is not funded by Narragansett's municipal budget but instead is self-funded through annual profit-sharing funds received from RIRRC as well as the licensing fees generated by the solid waste and recycling ordinance.

Each year, when corporate finances allow, RIRRC shares recycling profits with each of the Rhode Island's thirty-nine (39) cities and towns based on the recycling tonnage delivered to RIRRC from each town. The profits shared are based on total volume of recycling commodities received and the open market demand for them. Therefore, although recycling tonnages from Narragansett may be steadily increasing, market fluctuations and other factors may result in decreased profit sharing funds on a year to year basis. In fact, due to an unprecedented drop in the recycling commodities market in FY2009, no profit sharing funds were shared with the municipalities that year. This is reflected in the table below.

### Narragansett Recycling Profit Share & Recycling Tonnage



**It is important to note that yearly recycling profits received from RIRRC are not guaranteed and, when received, are restricted funds which must be reinvested into the Town's recycling program.** Recycling program costs include employment of the Recycling Coordinator, educational fliers, advertisement placements, purchasing recycling carts for municipal use, recycling events, etc.

In order to maximize Narragansett's recycling profit funds in the future, the Town must stay focused on education of its residents and haulers to reduce solid waste and increase recycling efforts. As outlined in RI's Comprehensive Solid Waste Plan, updated in 2014, at current

disposal rates, the Central Landfill is expected to reach capacity and close in 2038. In addition, and of even more immediate significance, is the fact that RIRRC's cash flow is negative and unsustainable beyond 2017. This is mainly due to the fact that the current \$32/ton municipal tipping fee, the cost per ton charged to bring municipal solid waste to RIRRC, has not increased in twenty-two (22) years and is now below the cost of landfilling, which is \$43/ton. Therefore, the municipal tipping fee will significantly increase, possibly going as high as \$70/ton, in July 2017 when the current municipal contracts renew. This will certainly have a significant impact on the operational costs of commercial haulers which will surely be passed on to municipalities and residents. Therefore, the Town of Narragansett needs to continue to focus efforts to reduce solid waste and increase recycling tonnage in order to minimize the effects of the pending solid waste disposal increases. It is also interesting to note that the commercial solid waste tipping fees will increase by \$5/ton in April 2015 and RIRRC will begin to institute a commercial recycling tip fee of \$10/ton in 2015 as well. The introduction of a commercial recycling tip fee, which is currently zero, may impact commercial recycling volumes. Commercial recycling currently accounts for approximately 15% of the total recycling volume at RIRRC. Declines in commercial volumes, if not offset by increases in municipal recycling volumes, could negatively affect recycling profits and municipal recycling profit sharing funds.

Narragansett's recycling program is also financially supported by the hauler licensing fees which currently generate approximately \$5,000 per year. When compared to other municipalities, including nearby South Kingstown, our licensing fee schedule is quite reasonable and business friendly. Licensing fees for residential haulers are stepped incrementally based on the quantity of accounts serviced rather than applying a higher flat licensing fee to all. An additional accommodation is made to limit fees for smaller haulers who service less than six commercial accounts along with their residential accounts to avoid the larger fee associated with a straight commercial account license.

One additional source of potential revenue is the tipping fee rebate offered by RIRRC based on the MRF recycling rate of each city and town. Due to increased recycling tonnage, Narragansett earned a tip fee rebate in FY2014 for the first time. It is expected that continued recycling success will allow Narragansett to realize this revenue in the future. However, the current contract expires on June 30, 2017 and it is uncertain if this potential rebate will exist in the next contract with RIRRC.

At the end of fiscal year 2014, the balance of the recycling fund from which all recycling department expenses are paid was \$21,752.

## Program Highlights/Accomplishments

The Narragansett Recycling Program has made much progress and experienced many successes over the past two years. Below are some of the highlights:

- Achieved 36.9% mandatory recycling rate, exceeding mandated rate of 35%
- Active recycling programs in 80% of multi-units complexes
- Recycling bins at Town Beach and in all parks
- Recycling in all municipal departments/buildings
- Recycling bins for sale to residents
- Eco-Depot event expanded to include paper shredding and GoodWill donations – 17.6% increase in collection from 19.9 tons in 2013 to 23.4 tons in 2014
- Average recycling rate of haulers increased from 17.6% in 2013 to 23.1% in 2014
- Collection data now reflects more ‘reasonable reality’ of recycling and diversion rates for the Town

## 2015 and Beyond

Program improvement is an ongoing process. Narragansett’s short term goals include the following:

- Improve and expand resident education.
- Expand school recycling programs.
- Provide educational outreach to rental population and multi-units through realtors and property managers.
- Achieve 95% compliance by multi-unit complexes by end of 2016
- Expand Eco-Depot event further to include scrap metal collection along with household hazardous waste, electronic waste, shredded paper, clothing and household items.
- Include a recycling event at new Gansett Days celebration to include collection of clothing, household items, scrap metal, shredded paper and electronic waste.
- Create event recycling policy, incorporate into permitting process and institute at all events in Narragansett.
- Initiate business outreach and education.

The key to increased recycling is continued education of, and communication with, the local residents, businesses and commercial haulers. By working together, the Town of Narragansett can achieve compliance with all mandated recycling and diversion rates and do its part to extend the life of the Central Landfill.