

History of Recycling Programs in Orange County NC

May, 1987:

Program began with hiring first recycling coordinator by Town of Chapel Hill on behalf of the three landfill owners – Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Orange County. Five unstaffed drop-off sites established for glass bottles separated by color, aluminum cans and newspapers. Contract collection of glass with ECOS, a local non-profit, Town of Chapel Hill collected newspapers and aluminum cans.

1988:

Pilot urban curbside programs-- one for newspapers only (one district, Town collects), the other for newspapers, aluminum cans & glass bottles, Waste Management collects on contract ~1,000 homes each. Began collecting cardboard from over 100 businesses.

1989:

Urban curbside universal within all three towns using blue bins contracted w/ BFI. Expanded drop-off site network to many (~19) unstaffed rural waste collection sites. Cardboard collection expanded to 200 businesses.

1990:

Landfill site search process initiated.

1992:

Commercial 'bar glass route' in downtown Chapel Hill contracted to SunShares, a non-profit recycling company based in Durham. Multi-family recycling collection started at selected complexes, contracted to BFI.

1993:

Set up recycling at all six new staffed convenience centers and eliminated unstaffed rural centers. Maintained five unstaffed urban collection drop-off sites. Began rural curbside collection with SunShares as contractor.

1994:

Comprehensive solid waste plan process begun.

1995:

Initiated pilot commercial food-waste-to-hog -food collection with small feeder pig operation. BFI took over rural curbside contract on competitive bid as Sunshares went out of business. Public sector takes over commercial glass recycling program (small route, mostly bars) and public sector takes over drop-off site collections, expands to cardboard and other source-separated materials in separate dumpsters. Separate Solid Waste Department formed as spin-off from Chapel Hill Public Works. Funded by Solid Waste Enterprise Fund, under Town jurisdiction.

1996:

Build permanent HHW center at landfill and develop cooperative relationship for all potential users in Chatham, Durham & Wake through TJ COG. Sites contractor-operated but publicly managed, publicized and financed. Landfill site search ends with no site chosen. Commercial (non-residentially generated) cardboard banned from landfill, penalties enacted for violation. Towns adopt and enforce corollary ordinance banning cardboard in their dumpsters. County cardboard collection from businesses ends,

businesses and apartments provide their own/private/contract collection or use drop-off sites. Close unlined MSW landfill on north side, open lined landfill on south side of Eubanks.

1997:

County and Towns adopt 61% waste reduction goal and plan. Commercial recycling expands gradually and incrementally.

1998:

Rebid urban and rural curbside, both contracts won by Waste Industries. Rural program expands incrementally.

1999:

Commercial food waste collection and composting contract awarded to Brooks Contractor and expanded to over 800 tons/year including stops on campus.

2000:

Solid Waste Operations taken over by Orange County. Landfill Owners Group dissolved. Interlocal Agreement governs solid waste management. Commercial recycling collections and drop-off completely taken over by County due to performance and cost problems with contractors.

2002:

County reaches 45% waste reduction. Adopt Regulated Recyclable Materials Ordinance primarily to reduce construction waste landfilled. County takes over government buildings collection program, lowers program cost and improves service, integrated with increased collections from convenience centers of batteries, etc. Hold first two electronics recycling collection events.

2003:

Convert Hazardous Waste from one Saturday per month to 4 days/week year-round. Permanent electronics collection program established with drop-off site at landfill and then convenience centers. County owned & operated. County takes over multifamily recycling from private contractor due to performance issues and costs of contracting. Commercial, drop-off and multifamily recycling collections by County integrated for greater efficiency and collection flexibility.

2004:

Begin 3-R Fee to finance recycling programs.

2005:

County takes over rural curbside recycling from a private contractor due to performance issues and projected cost savings.

2006:

Mixed paper added to curbside, commercial and multi-family collection, conversion to two-stream, second bin issued to urban & rural programs. Rural curbside recycling reaches 65% of unincorporated residents. Close C&D landfill at northeast area of landfill. Open new C&D area. Began year-round compost bin sales by County at Solid Waste office instead of once-a-year truckload sale by contractor making it easier, cheaper and more convenient for the public. Plus more revenue by charging 28% markup (buy for \$39, sell for \$50) to cover transaction costs and some advertising costs). Expanded Hazardous Waste from 4/days/week to 6/days/week.

2007:

Add fifty new commercial program stops due to increased hauling efficiencies from switch to dual stream. **County reaches 50% waste reduction.** Transfer station site search initiated after Eubanks landfill site rejected.

2008:

County reaches 54% waste reduction. Cardboard added to curbside collections.

2009:

County transfer station site search terminated. 2010 Orange County takes over Orange County School system recycling program at financial savings to schools, new revenue for County from contract and materials sales. Improved collection and performance data. No new staff needed, integrated into existing commercial routes.

2011:

County reaches 56% waste reduction. Orange County takes over Chapel Hill Carrboro City School system recycling program at financial savings to schools, new revenue for County from contract and materials. Improved collection and performance data. No new staff needed, integrated into existing commercial routes.

2012:

County reaches 59% waste reduction rate, best in NC for third straight year, best performance ever. County converts programs to single stream collection.

2013:

Orange County MSW Landfill closed. All MSW waste shipped out to transfer stations and private landfills. County executes 5 year agreement with City of Durham for use of city transfer station. C&D landfill remains operational. Mattress recycling begins at landfill. First Solid Waste and Recycling Center modernized at Walnut Grove Church Road site including paving, compactors, dual loading heights, hazardous waste collection, clothing, plastic bags and food waste recycling.

2014:

County achieves 64% waste reduction, surpassing goal of 61%. County converts urban program to roll carts. Nineteen percent increase in curbside tonnage year-over-year. Solid Waste Advisory Group created to determine future solid waste plans County-wide.

2015:

Rural curbside converts 60% of eligible households to carts. Remainder still bins. 10% increase in recycling tonnage. SWAG revises the varying recycling fee structure to uniform Solid Waste Programs Fee to finance all recycling programs and 35% of convenience center operating costs.