



Connecticut Department of  
Energy & Environmental Management  
*Capturing the Value – Transforming Municipal  
Materials Management Summit*

# Tracking Participation: Not Just Recycling Rates



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Director of Public Works  
City of New Britain



- Recycling rates track performance but not *participation...*
- The City of New Britain implemented a Single Stream Recycling Program (SSR) in October 2010
- Our program has been very successful
- An overview of our SSR Program
  - Motivation
  - Program
  - Approach
  - Results

# Context



**Old Program**



**New Program**



## Personally...

- I spend a lot of time outdoors, I recycle and I love the environment

## Professionally...

- As a Public Works Director, I am in a position to positively impact the environment by:
  - Sewer discharges through I&I projects
  - Clean water illicit discharge elimination and other stormwater quality initiatives
  - Solid waste management
- BRRFOC/TROC Representative and Governor Malloy's Modernization Committee Member



# Motivation



## The Real Drivers for New Britain's SSR Program...

- In an economically challenged community with little economic growth, and we needed to come up with new ways to:
  - Save money
  - Keep taxes down
- We wanted to move towards a more sustainable approach to SWM
- Our recycling rates, when compared to other TROC municipalities, were very, very low

# Motivation

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**TUNXIS RECYCLING OPERATING COMMITTEE**  
43 Enterprise Drive  
Bristol, Connecticut 06010  
www.brifoc.org

(860) 585-0419  
(860) 225-9811  
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MEMO TO: TROC Members

Town	Jul - Mar FY 2009	Jul - Mar FY 2010
BERLIN	1,310	1,141
BRISTOL	2,765	2,550
BURLING.	548	534
MERIDEN	1,341	1,366
MORRIS	120	139
N. BRITAIN	2,027	1,661
PLAINVILLE	1,243	764
PLYMOUTH	336	334
PROSPECT	403	388
SOUTH.	1,898	2,297
WARREN	82	69
WASH.	344	343
WOLCOTT	475	460
TOTAL	12,892	12,046

**Bristol's showing us up!**

**Embarrassing =  
MOTIVATING!**

**Southington's making us look bad!**

# Motivation



- Evaluated various program types
  - Pay-as-you-throw
  - Switching existing 95 gallon MSW cart to recycling carts, and purchasing new smaller MSW carts
  - Weekly vs. bi-weekly collection
  - And so on...
- Ultimately decided on a “vanilla” program
  - Weekly MSW curbside collection
  - Bi-weekly recycling collections
  - Continue serving residential properties up to six family



# Program



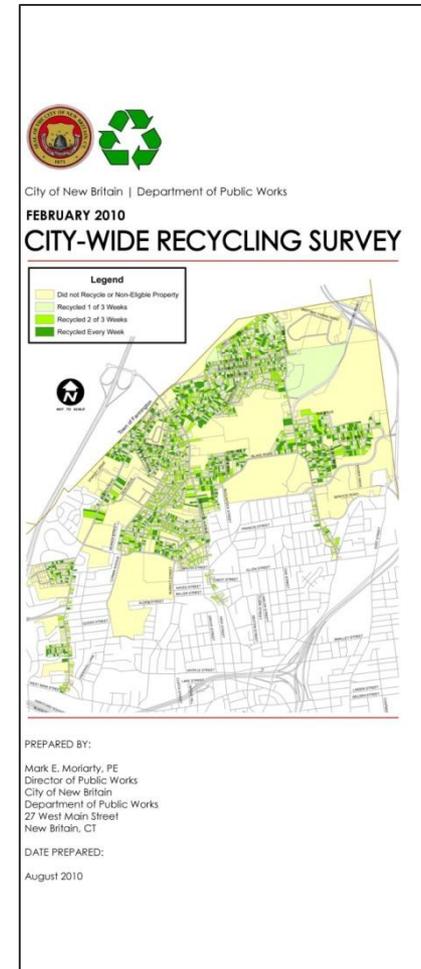
- Despite the vanilla curbside collection program for MSW and recycling, our approach was not cookie cutter
- Our approach had several unique attributes that made it work
  - Benchmarking
  - Public Outreach
  - Enforcement



# Program



- Our goal was to make recycling a habit
  - In order to get where we wanted to go, we needed to understand where we were starting from
- We needed data – beyond just an overall recycling rate – to find out what we were really dealing with
- Conducted **2010 City-Wide Recycling Survey** in February 2010
- Developed a **GIS database** with the study results

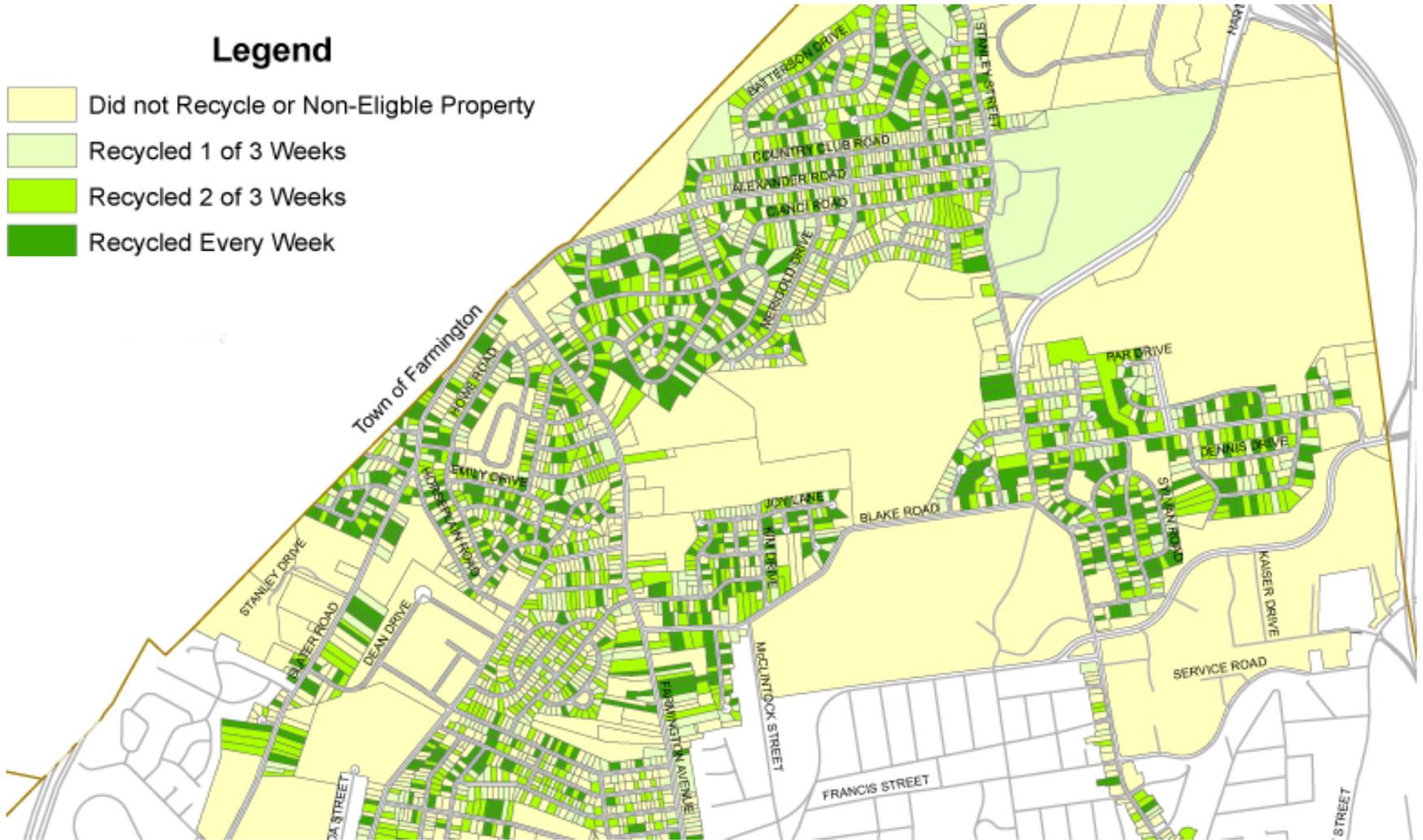


# Benchmarking



## Legend

- Did not Recycle or Non-Eligible Property
- Recycled 1 of 3 Weeks
- Recycled 2 of 3 Weeks
- Recycled Every Week



# Benchmarking



## Recycling Percentages – by property type

Type of Property	Total Number of Properties	Total Number of Properties Recycling	Percentage of Properties Recycling
Single Family	8,961	6,400	67%
Two Family	2,721	1,701	64%
Three Family	1,583	840	50%
Four to Six Family	410	151	41%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,400</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>61%</b>

## Benchmarking



Public outreach had two primary components:

1. Information Overload
2. Targeted Mailings

- **Information Overload**
  - Can't get away from seeing SSR educational materials
  - If people didn't get it – it wouldn't be because we didn't try
- **Targeted Mailings**
  - Based on City Wide Recycling Study
  - Sent to all residents and property owners
  - One letter for if you did recycle
  - One letter for if you didn't recycle
  - Included recycling magnet

# Public Outreach





## Targeted Mailings

### If you recycled...

- EDUCATE
- Involved 61% of properties

### If you didn't recycle...

- MOTIVATE
- Involved 39% of properties

- **Speaking to Every Resident**
  - Key to the program's success
  - People largely ignore mass mailings, even though we did do some of this as part of the program
- **Letters based on:**
  - Did you recycle?
  - Did you NOT recycle?

# Public Outreach



# Web-based real-time cart tracking software

ContainerMTR Office Page 1 of 2

**ContainerMTR Office**

Map Plot

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**CONCEPT2 SOLUTION**

<http://nb.otocmtr.com/cmtrofficenbet/Map.aspx> 6/23/2011

ContainerMTR Office Page 1 of 3

**ContainerMTR Office**

Pickup Data

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Reads By Date

Truck: (all)

Activity Type: (all)

Begin Date: Jun 23 2011 Time: 12 : 00 AM

End Date: Jun 23 2011 Time: 11 : 59 PM

Reads By Address

Building Number:  (optional)

Apartment Number:  (optional)

Street:

Date Range: Jun 23 2011 - Jun 23 2011

Reads By Account

Account ID:

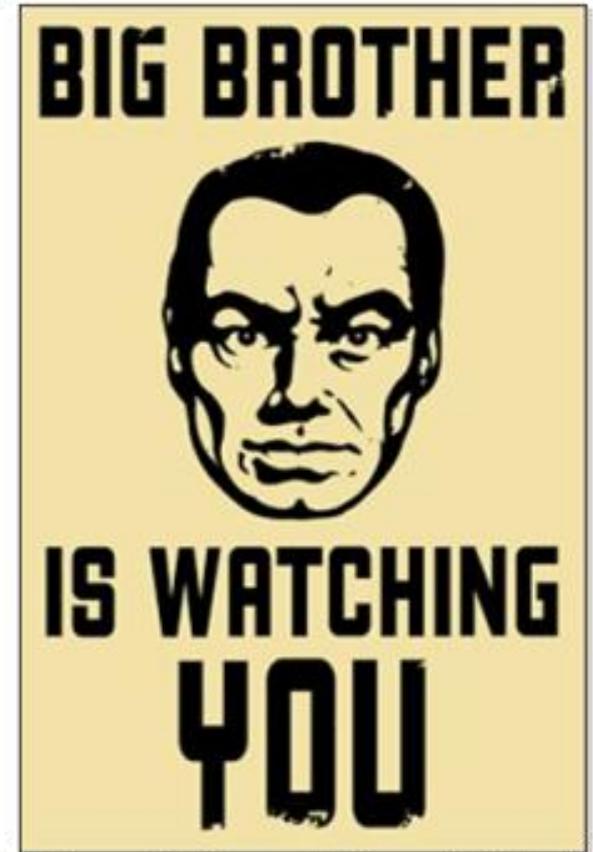
<http://nb.otocmtr.com/cmtrofficenbet/Pickup.aspx> 6/23/2011

# Enforcement



## 5 Simple Steps to Enforcement

1. Identify Properties
2. Field Verify
3. Issue Written Warning
4. Issue First Violation (\$25)
5. Issue Second Violation (\$100)



# Enforcement

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# What we've accomplished

## Results

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NOVEMBER

2009:

**179.77 tons**

recycled

**VS.**

NOVEMBER

2010:

**334.13 tons**

recycled

**An increase of  
154.36 tons and 85.9%!**

# Results

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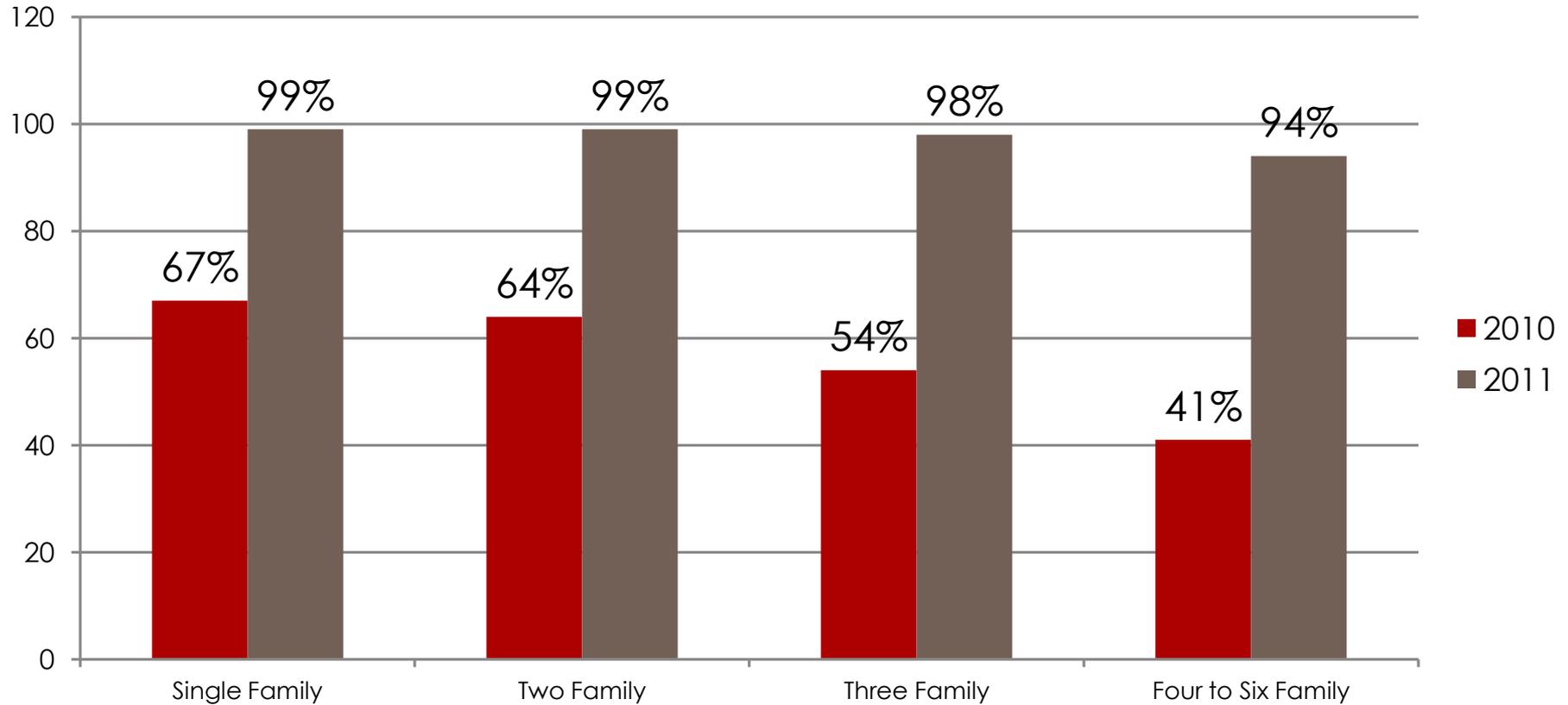
## And subsequent months followed the same trend...

Month	2010 tons	2011 tons	% Increase
December 2010	201.15	<b>377.58</b>	<b>87.7%</b>
January 2011	159.26	<b>291.53</b>	<b>83.0%</b>
February 2011	162.06	<b>287.73</b>	<b>77.5%</b>
March 2011	190.56	<b>407.23</b>	<b>113.7%</b>
April 2011	189.02	<b>356.59</b>	<b>88.7%</b>
May 2011	190.94	<b>372.65</b>	<b>95.2%</b>

# Results



## Property-Based Increase Data: 2010 vs. 2011



# Results

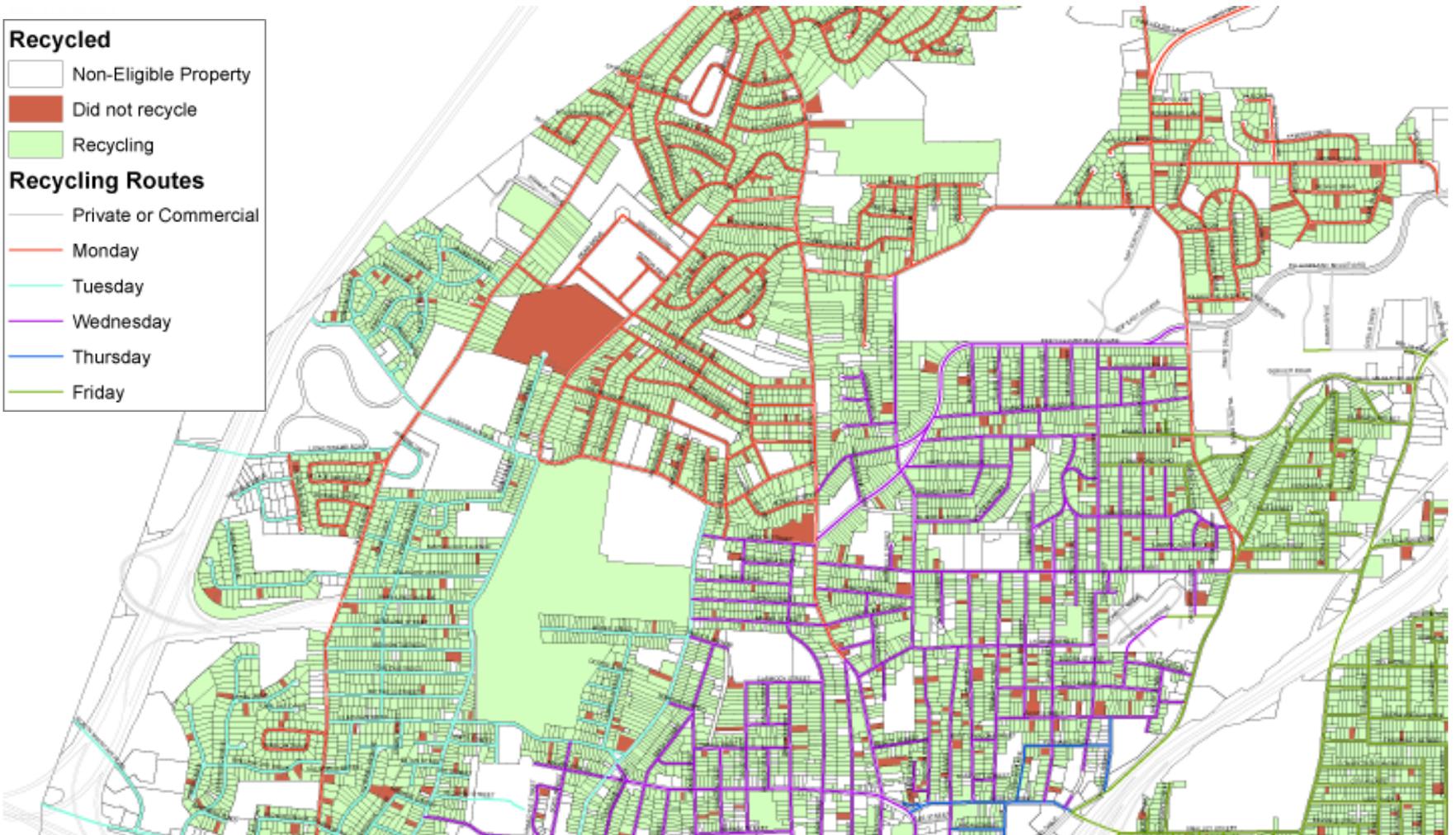


## Recycled

- Non-Eligible Property
- Did not recycle
- Recycling

## Recycling Routes

- Private or Commercial
- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday



# Results



- Effective benchmarking, targeted public outreach and the ease of SSR gave us an initial per property participation rate of **95%**.
- On-going enforcement efforts increased this rate by a total of **3.5%**.
- We will continue to evolve and monitor the process with a goal of 100% participation!

**Overall  
increase:  
61% to  
98.5%**



# Results



- Performance rates and participation rates are not the same
- High participation rates can be achieved in any community
- Start with an accurate benchmark
- Tailor public outreach and enforcement efforts to your specific audience
- Keep it simple



# Summary



# Questions

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