



Answers to Your Consultation Comments/Questions

Comments:

"Services are good, thank you for your work! I really appreciate the unsung heroes of trash collection. They work every day to keep our neighborhood safe and clean. Would be good to occasionally spotlight these hard working, valuable staff, and how they keep our neighborhoods safe and clean, in the City Connection or elsewhere."

"Overall this is an impressive document and I thank you for all the work that went into it. Clearly Manassas City meets and exceeds the legal requirements of state and nation."

Questions:

A number of consultation responses from residents asked the same or similar questions. Therefore, answers to consultation responses and questions have been broken down by category to avoid repetition and provide additional information.

Food recycling/ composting

The City of Manassas is currently working with [Compost Crew](#) and [Prince William Food Rescue](#) on curbside collection of organic materials. A [pilot project](#) in the Wellington Community started on February 8, 2021. If successful, the program will be made available to City residents in July of 2021. These will be an opt in program which will allow residents and businesses to work directly with the organizations involved and provide them with the ability to decide which program options are best suited to their needs.

The City of Manassas does not have the capacity or facility to collect, process and deliver compost. Compost Crew will deliver fresh compost to your door as part of their service.

Please visit our [website](#) for more details.

Recycling all materials – not those just for profit

The City of Manassas does not have the facilities or capacity to store or market recyclable materials. The City works with contractors who collect and dispose of solid waste and recyclable materials. Therefore, the City does not profit from the collection or sale of recyclable materials. Recycling contracts include provisions that identify the destination of recyclable materials to ensure legal, ethical, safe disposal and reuse.

The City is actively working to recycle materials with all available partners in our region. The State of Virginia does not have the same legislation or options for recycling that we see in other states. In many cases, there are a limited number of options for recycling available because there are no facilities in the State of Virginia to collect and process a broader range of recyclable materials.

The one thing that you need to remember is that recycling is also an industry. According to the Institute of Scrap and Recycling Industries, the economic analysis shows that the U.S. scrap recycling industry is a major economic engine powerful enough to create 531,510 jobs and generate \$12.9 billion in tax revenues for governments across the country, all while making the old new again and helping to protect the earth's air, water, and land for future generations. The U.S. scrap recycling industry is particularly important because its operations are so widespread. In fact, the total economic activity generated by scrap recycling in the United States is nearly \$110 billion.

The City should offer a wider range trash and recycling containers



There are currently three sizes of trash and four sizes of recycling containers available to residents. Please visit our [Request/Replace Carts](#) page for more details.

Spills during collections and fully automated trash and recycling trucks

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), trash and recycling collection is the fifth most dangerous occupation in the United States. While the [number of jobs](#) within the solid waste industry is growing, the number of applications for those jobs is not. For the past five years, solid waste haulers within our region have faced a steady decline in applications. This has prompted several innovations in solid waste technology. The new, fully-automated collection trucks compensate for the lack of crew members by allowing one person to drive and operate the vehicle.

In addition, the dangers of [COVID-19 infection among solid waste workers](#) still remains high. On any “normal” day, solid waste workers are exposed to a wide variety of potentially noxious and infectious materials in the trash and recycling that they handle. As essential workers, crews are coming into contact with COVID infected materials during manual collection. The best protection is the use of automated or semi-automated collection vehicles to reduce human contact with other crew members and with the materials that they are collecting.

The City is working with our contractor to make sure that truck operators clean any spills with a view toward ensuring their safety and keeping our streets safe and clean. The requirements to clean spills and set carts back where they belong during collection are incorporated into our contract. We are currently working with our contractor to rectify any issues with collection.

The idea to schedule City sweepers to follow after collections is excellent. We will work with the Street Department to see how we can schedule sweepers to work in coordination with collections made by our contractor.

Why aren't plastic bags included in curbside recycling?

Residents often ask why the City of Manassas does not accept plastic carrier bags in recycling. The machinery used to sort our recycling does not take plastic carrier bags and plastic film. Each day the recycling center must shut down the machinery for two hours to remove plastic bags that wrap around the machinery. The operation cost for that activity is \$130 (dollars) per minute.

Fortunately, many of our local grocery stores and schools work with fantastic local company that takes all of the bags and film— keeping thousands of pounds of waste out of landfills— to create beautiful and environmentally responsible outdoor products. In exchange, participants in their recycling program are eligible for community awards.



Why doesn't the City offer incentives for recycling?

The City is actually doing better with recycling than you might think. Over the past ten years, our cumulative recycling rate for residents and businesses has increased from 45% in 2010 to 56% in 2020. We're definitely heading in the right direction.

We've made a lot of changes in the way we recycle:

- Recycling Right vs. Recycling More

For many years, the big message was "Recycle!" without providing the public with information on what to recycle, where and when. That has led to something called "wishcycling" where people put everything that they think can be recycled into their recycling containers. This has led to high volumes of recycling contamination. In fact, it led to an international crisis in 2017 when China refused to take anymore recycling from the United States because 60% of it was trash. By focusing more clearly on what should go into recycling containers, we can all improve our recycling and reduce the cost of disposal.



Improving Education and Communication

The City of Manassas has worked hard to spread the word about recycling to as many groups of our residents and businesses as possible. We now have more tools at our disposal:

- City website
- City Newsletter
- School Visits
- Keep Manassas Beautiful Schools
- Videos
- Social Media
- Flyers
- Stickers
- Magnets
- Postcards
- Letters
- Drop-off Days
- Webinars
- Reusable Shopping Bags
- Improved City Ordinances
- HOA visits
- Tables at City Events
- Bi-lingual information for our Spanish speaking residents

- Offering More Options

Recycling isn't just the material that goes into your recycling container.

The City offers:

- Yard waste and annual leaf collection that goes to Balls Ford Road for composting.
- Scheduled Household Hazardous Waste, Electronics, and Document Shredding drop-off days at the Manassas Transfer Station.
- Curbside collection of scheduled televisions, computer monitors and white goods.
- We're introducing curbside food recycling and organics collections.
- We're also working with partners to introduce improved glass recycling.

The Solid Waste Management Plan also provides the City with the option to include new opportunities for recycling for the next 20 years.

Why Aren't There More Adopt a Spot Locations in the City?

There are currently hundreds of locations available. Visit our Keep Manassas Beautiful webpage and you will find an [interactive map](#) that helps you find the perfect location for you. We have parks, athletic fields, streets, sites available for adoption. We're also working with the Stormwater team to include streams.

Why do we have to pay to use the landfills in Prince William County?

In 1975, Manassas was incorporated as an independent city, and as per Virginia law, was separated from Prince William County. The City of Manassas is not part of Prince William County, and your taxes are paid to the State of Virginia and to the City of Manassas.

Trash and recycling services are not paid through your taxes. The program is an enterprise fund that residents paid into directly through their utility bills.

When you visit Prince William County landfills, you are entering another jurisdiction and therefore subject to the charges that they levy for trash disposal.

Why can't we drop off paint any time we like?

The City of Manassas has no capacity or facility to collect and hold Household Hazardous Waste materials. The cost of collecting and disposing paint is very high. One of the most pressing issues within Virginia is the need for a [National Paint Stewardship Program](#) and greater [Extended Producer Responsibility](#). Getting these programs in place would allow retailers like Home Depot, Lowe's, and Walmart to collect unused paint in their stores. This is already happening in other states.

The City works with Waste Management to organize scheduled drop-off days for Household Hazardous Waste, electronics and shredding. Waste Management pays for the cost of Household Hazardous Waste collection and disposal through a Special Use Permit that was agreed in 2008. The City pays for the electronics and shredding.

In order to introduce a paint collection program just for City residents to dispose of paint any time they want – we would have to raise the trash and recycling service fee considerably higher to accommodate the collection and transport.

We can't we recycle Styrofoam?

There are two reasons Styrofoam isn't allowed in recycle bins: density and contamination. Polystyrene foam is 95% air so it is not cost-effective to store or ship. It is often contaminated with food or drink, and it is difficult to clean because it is so porous. The Virginia legislature recently passed a bill [HB 1902 Expanded polystyrene food service containers; prohibition, civil penalty](#), that requires certain chain restaurants to stop using such containers by July 1, 2023, and sets the date for compliance by all food vendors as July 1, 2025.

What is the City doing to address litter in our parks and at events?

The City is currently working with Didlake to expand litter and trash collection to include collections along arterial roads within the City, events in Historic Downtown and parks, and an increase in the range and frequency of collections throughout the City including parks and other heavily used areas.

What about dog waste collection?

The collection and enforcement of dog waste is not currently handled by Refuse and Recycling. This area falls under the purview of Parks, Recreation and Culture, the Street Department, and Manassas City Police.