

Aston Township Public Education & Outreach

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SCS ENGINEERS

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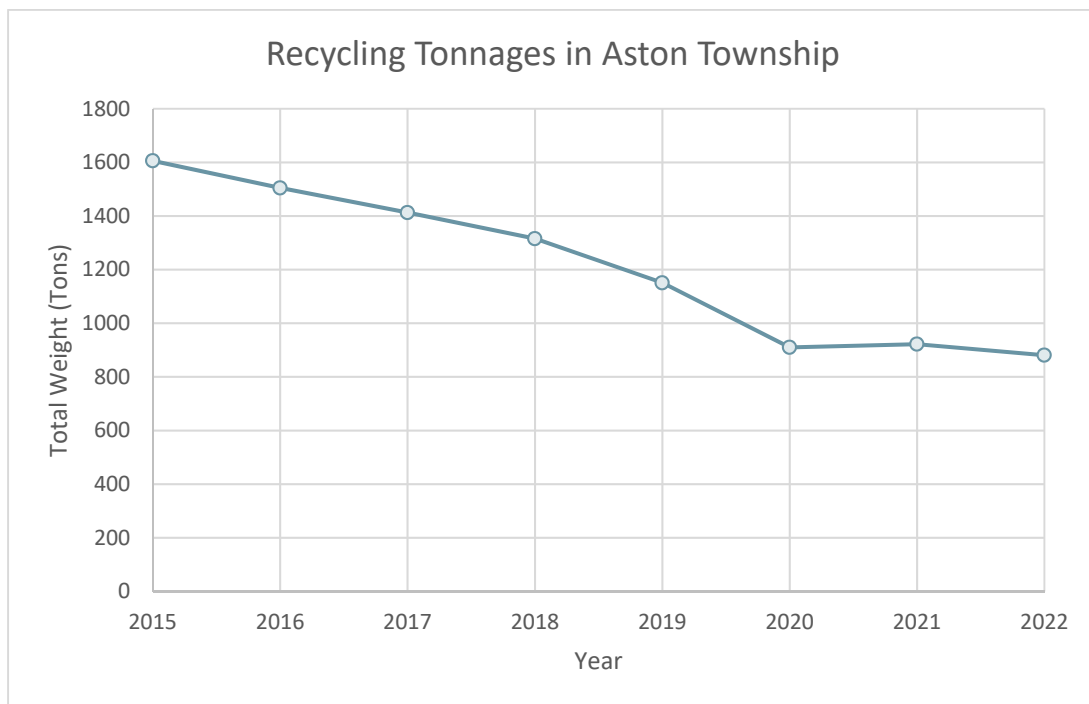
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1 BACKGROUND

Aston Township (Township) is a subdivision of Delaware County, Pennsylvania that spans 5.8 square miles that has a population of about 16,700. According to the census, there are about 6,100 households in the Township, all of which receive weekly recycling collection services from the Township.¹ The Township is a Pennsylvania mandated recycling community under the Pennsylvania Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act of 1988 (Act 101). According to Act 101, municipalities with populations over 10,000 are required to provide curbside recycling programs.

In recent years, the amount of recyclable materials collected has decreased in Aston Township. The chart in **Exhibit 1** highlights this trend. The total weight of recycled materials in 2015 measured a little over 1,600 tons, compared to about 880 tons in 2022. This is about a 50 percent decrease in recycled materials.

Exhibit 1. Quantities of Recyclable Materials Collected



Public education and outreach are critical to the success of any recycling program. Act 101 mandated municipalities must establish a sustained education program for its residents. This requires the Township to inform residents about the recycling requirements every six (6) months. Doubling down on education and outreach can have a positive impact on increasing recycling quantities.

It has been some time since the Township reviewed and updated their public education and outreach materials. The Township requested recycling technical assistance services to develop new educational and outreach materials to promote and encourage recycling within the community.

¹ [Aston township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania - Census Bureau Profile](#)

2 SUMMARY OF WORK

This section summarizes the tasks completed for this project.

Task 1 – Project Kick-Off and Obtain Public Education/Outreach Materials

The SCS Team had a kick-off meeting with Township staff to discuss this project and the content of the final deliverable. During this meeting, the types of educational materials the Township desired to develop as part of this project were identified. Staff at the meeting also discussed past education and outreach efforts and materials that have existed and used to promote recycling in the Township. The discussion also focused on what activities the Township hopes to do to promote recycling. The education and outreach materials developed as part of this project are structured to support the Township's plan and ideas for education and outreach.

Task 2 – Understand Issues/Concerns from Township's Contracted Material Processor – In developing public education and outreach material, it is important that the messages communicated to the public align with the requirements for the company that receives and processes the Township's recyclable materials. To facilitate that connection, SCS staff conducted a phone interview with the Township's Public Works Director. This individual directly communicates with staff at Republic Services, the Township's processor, on issues or concerns related to the materials collected in the Township.

Task 3 – Develop Public Education and Outreach Materials

For this task, the SCS Team designed and developed three (3) unique and specific public education and outreach materials for the Township to use to educate the community on recycling. We consulted with Township staff to decide which materials were created as part of this task. The SCS Team incorporated Township design elements in the educational materials to provide consistency to Township publications. Note that the printing and distribution of the new education materials were not part of this project, and the Township will be completing those activities separately.

Task 4 – Final Report

This report represents the final task of this technical assistant project and summarizes our findings and recommendations.

3 RESULTS/FINDINGS

CURRENT PROGRAM

Aston Township provides weekly curbside collection of trash and recyclable materials to about 6,100 households. Recyclable materials are collected using municipal equipment and staff and materials are collected single stream. Recyclable materials must be placed in a designated recycling container or in paper bags. Plastic bags of recyclable materials will not be collected. Recyclable materials are transported to Blue Mountain Recycling in Philadelphia, which is about 20 miles from the Township. Accepted recyclable materials are listed below. This information can also be found on the County website ([Single Stream Recycling Collection | Official Aston Township Website](#)).

Acceptable Recyclable Materials:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| • Clear Glass | • Green Glass | • Brown Glass |
| • Aluminum Cans | • Bi-Metal Cans | • Cardboard Boxes |
| • Plastic #1, #2, #4, #5, #7 | • Newspaper* | • Cardboard Containers |

**Residents are required to place newspapers alongside the Recycling Can – NOT IN IT!*

In addition to the collection of trash and recyclable materials, the Township provides the following additional waste diversion services to residents:

- **Appliances and Scrap Metal** – The Township collects appliances and scrap metal monthly from residences on the same collection day as trash and recycling.
- **Branches and Shrubs** – Branches and other woody materials are collected weekly curbside from residents on the same day as trash and recyclable materials from April to November. This material must be bundled to facilitate safe collection by Township staff.
- **Leaves** – Leaves are collected curbside from residences weekly for approximately six weeks starting the end of October/first of November through the middle of December. Leaves must be containerized in biodegradable bags or rigid containers. Plastic bags of leaves are not collected.
- **Household Hazardous Waste** – The Township partners with Delaware County to provide household hazardous waste collection events to facilitate the safe and sustainable management of these materials.

EXISTING MATERIAL QUALITY

In developing public education and outreach material, it is important that the messages communicated to the public align with the requirements for the company that receives and processes the Township's recyclable materials. To facilitate that connection, SCS staff conducted a phone interview with the Township's Public Works Director. The Public Works Director directly communicates with staff at the material recovery facility where Aston Township's recyclable materials are processed. The Public Works Director regularly receives updates and reports from the processor on the quantities of materials managed.

Township collection staff carefully screen recyclable materials curbside for contamination or improper preparation. Generally, Township staff report that the material placed curbside is clean and consists of only the materials that are acceptable in the program. There are instances where residents place trash or other unacceptable items in their recycling bins. When this occurs Township staff do not collect the material and instead communicate with the resident on what the problem is and how it can be corrected.

This rigorous recycling quality control program has resulted in no issues with the processor accepting the Township's recyclable materials. Township staff report that the processor has never rejected materials from the Township. Despite the clean quality recyclable materials collected as part of the Township's recycling program, additional education materials are needed to reinforce recycling requirements and provide more convenient communication to residents.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Best Practices for Educational Materials

The following best practices for educational materials were developed based on the SCS teams' experience providing technical assistance to recycling outreach programs.

- **Consistent** – The different educational materials created should use similar language and information to facilitate consistency throughout the program. This also aids in eliminating confusion about what can and cannot be recycled, effectively decreasing recycling contamination. It is also recommended to be consistent with the colors used to symbolize trash and recycling.
- **Direct** – Educational materials should be direct with their language and only provide relevant information. For example, it would be confusing if a sticker on a recycling cart contained information about drop-off sites. It is important to avoid industry jargon and acronyms on educational materials.
- **Visual Appeal** – Communities should use aesthetically appealing graphics to aid language in educational materials. Visuals should be clear and simple. Using real-life photos of recyclable materials instead of symbols could reduce confusion about what can be recycled. Use simple colors that add to the message the educational material is trying to convey.
- **Concise** – Educational materials should be concise and not include unnecessary information. Clutter can confuse residents and prevent them from making the right choice when it comes to recycling.

- **Accessible** – A good practice in creating educational materials is to use more visuals rather than words. English may not be every resident's first language, so using graphics can make recycling more accessible to that demographic. Giving residents materials that they can hang up on their fridge (like a recycling magnet) will make that information more accessible. It is also a good practice to include a link or QR code to the community's website if a resident would like more information.

Existing Recycling Education

As part of this section, SCS looked at the Township's past recycling education efforts. **Exhibit 2** shows a zero-sort recycling guide that can be found on the Township website. **Exhibit 3** shows the first page of the household hazardous waste collection event flyer for 2022.

Exhibit 2. Zero-sort Recycling Guide



Exhibit 3. Household Hazardous Waste Flyer

2022

TICKET MUST BE PRESENT TO ACCESS EVENT
 Registration required for all events, Register at:
delcohhw.eventbrite.com

Delaware County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Events



THIS IS DANGEROUS AND THE
 GOVERNMENT WILL ONLY HELP
 MAKE YOUR HOME LIVES
 DANGEROUS! DON'T DO IT!
 DON'T DO IT!

Think Globally, Act Locally! If improperly discarded, household products containing toxic chemicals can be a threat to people, pets and the environment. Never dispose of hazardous materials in the trash as they may harm your sanitation workers or result in a collection vehicle fire. It is also unsafe to pour HHW down a sink or storm drain as it will end up polluting our drinking water.

This Program is offered as a community service to the residents of Delaware County and is **not open to businesses, institutions or industry.**

~ Sponsored by ~

County of Delaware

Delaware County Solid Waste Authority

Covanta Delaware Valley, L.P.

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

On the Event dates listed below,

ONLY Household Hazardous Waste will be accepted

Electronics Waste & Latex Paint will NOT be accepted

	<p>• Sat., April 23rd</p> <p>• Sat., June 11th</p> <p>• Sat., Sept 10th</p> <p>• Sat., Oct., 15th</p>	<p>Emergency Services Training Center 1600 Calcon Hook Rd., Sharon Hill (Dority Twp.) 19079</p> <p>Rose Tree Park 1671 N. Providence Rd., Media PA 19063</p> <p>Emergency Services Training Center 1600 Calcon Hook Rd., Sharon Hill (Dority Twp.) 19079</p> <p>Upper Chichester Township Municipal Bdg 8500 Furey Road., Upper Chichester, PA 19061</p>
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ALL EVENTS WILL BE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY—REGISTRATION REQUIRED

↓↓↓↓ Acceptable HHW ↓↓↓↓	↓↓↓↓ Unacceptable ↓↓↓↓
<p>Flammables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil-based Paint • Oil-based Sealers • Paint Thinner • Gasoline • Kerosene • Gas / Oil Mixture • Heating/Motor Oil <p>Batteries (Non-Alkaline)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Acid • Rechargeable • Lithium • Button Batteries 	<p>Ni-Cad Batteries</p> <p>Toxics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool Chemicals • Rust / Paint Remover • Antifreeze <p>Herbicides</p> <p>Pesticides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawn Chemicals <p>Caustics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaners / Solvents

For additional information, contact:
 Delaware County Solid Waste Authority 610-892-9627
 Driving Directions can be found by visiting:
www.delcopa.gov

We cannot / will not accept any Electronic Item or Latex Paint

**** 5 GALLON DRUMS LIMITED TO HOUSEHOLD USE ONLY**

Electronics
 We cannot accept Electronics

Smoke Detectors
 (Please dispose with household trash)

Latex Paint
 Remove lid and allow to dry or mix with absorbent material until no longer a liquid. Discard lids separately and place with your curbside trash.

Asbestos

Explosives

Gas or Propane Cylinders

PCB's

No 50 Gallon Drums

Pressurized CFC's

Tires

Medical Waste

Alkaline Batteries -
 (Please dispose with household trash)

Printed on Recycled Paper

The zero-waste recycling guide shown in **Exhibit 2** is informative and provides detail about what can be recycled. This design is effective as a reference on the Township's website but may contain too much information to be an educational material that gets handed out to residents. The colors on the guide are faded and the entire guide looks like it has been condensed. Additionally, the statement at the bottom, "aim for maximized recycling," is unclear. This may suggest residents place as much material in their recycling bin as possible. We recommend focusing the message on only placing acceptable materials in the recycling bin to focus on material quality and contamination reduction.

Like with the recycling guide, the Household Hazardous Waste flyer (**Exhibit 3**) contains a lot of pertinent information that is helpful for someone visiting the Township's website and wanted detailed information. It would not be suitable as a handout or mailer as it is trying to convey too much information in one document. It is also recommended that educational materials on the Township website be kept current. Displaying a flyer promoting 2022 event dates with a hyperlink to an old registration on Eventbrite is confusing and leaves residents unsure with what to do with their household hazardous waste.

New Educational Materials

The Township requested additional public outreach materials that could inform its residents about what can and cannot be recycled. After discussing options with Township staff, SCS decided that the best course of action was to create a curbside container sticker, a refrigerator magnet, and an informational flyer.

Curbside Container Sticker

The sticker is designed to be placed on residents' curbside recycling containers, shown in **Exhibit 4**. The purpose of the container sticker is to provide a final reminder of what can and cannot be placed in the recycling bin. The sticker designed with this project is provided in **Appendix A**.

Exhibit 4. Recycling Container in Aston Township



For the sticker, SCS staff highlighted the information contained in the zero-sort recycling guide in a more concise, visually appealing way. The goal was to convey the following details:

- Acceptable materials include #1, #2, #4, #5, and #7 plastic containers, paper, glass, and metal cans.
- Newspaper must be placed beside the recycling bin.
- Prohibited materials include expanded polystyrene, hazardous waste, food and yard waste, and electronic wastes.
- Additional information can be found on the Aston Township website.

The sticker uses color and symbols (checks and exes) to emphasize what is allowed and not allowed in the recycling bin. SCS recommends a sticker size of 5.5" x 8.5". This size is small enough that the words will not warp when wrapped around a cylindrical container, but large enough for people to clearly read the information.

Refrigerator Magnet

SCS staff also created a refrigerator magnet for the Township to distribute to residents. As mentioned earlier, accessibility is an important factor to keep in mind when creating educational materials. Distributing materials like magnets incentivizes residents to put them in places that have frequent foot traffic. People oftentimes have their garbage and recycling bins in the kitchen, so having the recycling educational material accessible makes it easier to make the right recycling decision. The magnet can be found in **Appendix B**.

The magnet provides greater detail about what is allowed and not allowed in recycling containers. Information emphasized includes:

- Clear, green, and brown glass can be recycled.

- Bi-metal and aluminum cans are allowed in recycling.
- Scrap metal, needles and syringes, and plastic bags are not permitted to be recycled.
- Paint, pesticides, oil, and cleaners cannot be recycled (all considered hazardous waste).
- Paper-to-go containers are not allowed in recycling.


This additional information makes the magnet have more words than the sticker, but the format prevents it from looking too cluttered. Both the magnet and the sticker use the same color scheme, using blue to show what can be recycled and red to show what cannot be recycled. This is important to maintain consistency and prevent confusion. SCS recommends a magnet size of 5" x 7".

Recycle Right Flyer

The final educational resources developed for the Township was a flyer that emphasizes the importance of proper preparation of materials before recycling them. This flyer does not contain as much information as the magnet or the sticker but has one clear message. It also directs residents to visit the Township website if they would like additional information on recycling. The flyer could be printed and handed to residents or posted around the Township. The flyer can be found in **Appendix C**.

4 CONCLUSION

The distribution of these educational materials will aid in the Township's goal to increase recycling and maintain little to no levels of contamination. The materials will also fulfill the Act 101 requirement of operating a sustained recycling education program.



Appendix A

Curbside Container Sticker



RECYCLE RIGHT



Plastic #1, #2, #4, #5, & #7



PAPER*



GLASS



METAL CANS



FOAM PRODUCTS



HAZARDOUS WASTE



FOOD & YARD WASTE



ELECTRONIC WASTE


*Place newspapers alongside the recycling can

For more information, please visit the Aston Township website at <https://astontownship.net> or scan the QR code to the right.



Aston Township
Delaware County, Pennsylvania





Appendix B

Refrigerator Magnet



RECYCLING DOs AND DON'Ts



DO RECYCLE:

- Clear, Green, and Brown Glass

- Aluminum Cans



- Bi-Metal Cans

- Cardboard Boxes



- Plastic #1, #2, #4, #5, & #7

- Newspaper*

- Cardboard Containers



DON'T RECYCLE:

- Scrap Metal

- Needles or Syringes



- Paint, Pesticides, Oil, & Cleansers

- Plastic Bags



- Foam Products or other paper-to-go containers



- Yard Waste and Food Waste

- Electronic Waste (batteries, cell phones, computers, etc.)

*Please place the newspapers along side the Recycling Can - NOT IN IT!!



Appendix C

Recycle Right Flyer



Recycle
right.



For more information, please visit the Aston Township website or scan the QR code

