

**SWANA RECYCLING  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE STUDY**

**FINAL REPORT**

**EVALUATION OF THE RECYCLING SYSTEM AND  
CONCEPTUAL RECYCLING PLAN**

**BERN TOWNSHIP, BERKS COUNTY**



Source: Bern Township

**GANNETT FLEMING, INC.**



**HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA**

**JUNE 2007**

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**SWANA RECYCLING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE STUDY**  
**- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -**  
**EVALUATION OF THE RECYCLING SYSTEM AND**  
**CONCEPTUAL RECYCLING PLAN**

Bern Township is **mandated to recycle** by the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act (Act 101) to provide curbside recycling services, including curbside leaf waste collection, for all residential households in the Township. Township staff and the Board of Supervisors will need to make a number of decisions pertaining to recycling in order to implement a recycling plan and to make enhancements to the recycling and waste collection system. The Township should view recycling issues and services together with waste collection, not as separate issues. Key findings and recommendations from this study include:

- **70 percent** of the households in the Township have private subscription waste collection service at a cost of **\$350 - \$400** per household per year. **30 percent** of households are under contract collection in the “Garbage Collection District” for waste and recycling service with Lebanon Valley Farms Disposal, Inc. for **\$235 per household per year**.
- Generally, the existing Ordinance (133) meets the minimum Act 101 and PADEP requirements for “mandated” recycling programs. However, the leaf waste collection requirements as specified by Act 101/PADEP guidelines are not fully addressed in the Ordinance and should be revised.

It is noted that if the Township takes the position to only meet the minimum Act 101 requirements for curbside recyclable collection of commingled materials (e.g. monthly collection) and leaf waste (e.g. two leaf collections and two yard waste collections annually), it is believed by this author that the Township’s recycling program will 1) continue to suffer from compliance issues; 2) will have poor participation by residents; 3) will have a poor recycling rate; 4) and may not meet the disposal/recycling needs of many households in the Township. Leaf waste requirements, including supplement leaf waste drop-off site requirements, are included in the PADEP guidance document in **Appendix B**.

- Bern Township is required by Act 101 to ensure curbside recycling services are provided for all households in the Township. Because the existing cost for 70 percent of households is \$350 - \$400, **there is an opportunity to implement an enhanced recycling program throughout the entire Township without increasing the overall cost per household or assessing an increase in the tax base**. For example, the neighboring Township of Muhlenberg has a municipal-wide contract with J.P. Mascaro through 2008 for trash (twice per week) and recycling service (bi-weekly) at a cost of **\$300** per household per year. Bern Township may be able to implement a comprehensive, cost-effective and environmentally responsible waste collection system through a well-designed Request for Proposal (RFP) and municipal bid process that bundles waste collection and recycling services and possibly considers joint-bidding with Muhlenberg or one or more other neighboring municipalities.
- If it is decided in the future the Township will pursue such a municipal bid, it is recommended the Township contact several local hauling companies to discuss the Township’s intent so that the Township can be well-informed as it develops a municipal-wide waste and recycling contract.
- It is recommended the Township implement changes to the program as follows:
  1. Develop a permanent recycling and waste management committee.
  2. Evaluate Township needs and goals and complete a Recycling Plan/waste management plan that expands upon the Conceptual Recycling Plan initiated in this study.

3. Begin implementation of an enhanced recycling and waste management program via a new or revised municipal ordinance.
4. Confirm the feasibility of implementing a municipal-wide contract collection system.
5. Collection of plastic bottles and jugs (HDPE and PETE) should be required for the entire Township.
6. Residents should recycle Christmas trees through a program offered by the Township.
7. At a minimum, the curbside recyclables collection schedule is recommended to be bi-weekly. However, depending on the final waste and recycling program structure chosen, weekly collection of recyclables may be advantageous.
8. If the Township decides to implement a municipal-wide contract, the Township Board of Supervisors and Staff should begin making decisions (as early as possible) to confirm the waste and recycling services that will be offered to residents. A bid specification should be prepared and issued on a schedule that does not legally conflict with any existing waste and recycling contractual commitments.
9. Education of residents as well as commercial, institutional and municipal establishments must occur at a minimum of once every six months.

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Through the partnership with the Solid Waste Authority of North America (SWANA), the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), Bern Township was awarded \$7,500 in technical assistance that was provided by Gannett Fleming, Inc (GF).

**1.1 Scope**

GF worked with Bern Township to develop and complete the following three tasks from the Scope of Work:

- Task #1** GF will work with Bern Township to gather pertinent background information needed to evaluate the existing recycling infrastructure, demographics, and political setting. This task will require review of any existing waste collection requirements and ordinances.
- Task #2** GF will develop recommendations to develop a new recycling program. Because of the dynamics associated with comprehensive recycling programs, this study will attempt to develop a feasible start up plan. GF will not address in detail the many components associated with implementation of the many tasks associated with a complete recycling program. The recommendations provided will consider the recycling requirements for maintaining compliance with Act 101.
- Task #3** GF will prepare and provide the Township with a summary report of findings and recommendations. This task includes a review of the report by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) and response to PADEP comments. Additionally, an electronic file of the final report will be submitted to PADEP of the project conclusions and findings. Both an electronic and hardcopy version of the report will be provided to the Township.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

Bern Township is located in Berks County, Pennsylvania. The Township has approximately **2,400 households** and approximately **7,000** residents. The Township covers a relatively large area of about **20 square miles**. Based on its population density of **350 persons per square mile**, the Township is mandated to recycle by the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act (Act 101). Act 101 requires mandated municipalities to implement a residential curbside collection program. The Township has not fully implemented a comprehensive residential curbside recyclables collection program but wishes to improve its program and become compliant with Act 101 and PADEP policies and guidelines. The Township is seeking guidance from GF to evaluate the existing recycling system and to develop a Conceptual Recycling Plan for the Township.

### 3.0 EXISTING RECYCLABLES AND WASTE COLLECTION SYSTEM

By default, Bern Township faces some difficult challenges with implementing a comprehensive and feasible waste collection and recycling system. One of the most difficult hurdles is the development of a feasible and implementable curbside collection program in a large township (20 sq. mi.) that has some small segregated areas with dense housing, yet the remaining area is rural with intermittent houses and spattered neighborhoods. This demographic setting has, in large part, shaped the existing waste and recycling system.

#### 3.1 Private Subscription Waste Collection System

Over **70 percent** of households in the Township have “private subscription” waste collection, where homeowners independently contract with one of several private waste hauling companies to provide trash collection services and/or recycling. **Table 1** presents a summary of private subscription residential trash and recycling services. The information is based on a phone survey of the haulers conducted in June of 2006. The average cost per household for standard weekly trash and recycling collection ranged from **\$29.00 - \$32.50 per month or \$348 - \$390 per year** (refer to **Table 1**).

One hauler indicated it did not offer recycling service in Bern Township. Recycling in most cases was offered with the trash collection. The haulers surveyed indicated that bulky items are collected at no additional charge. Bulky items are collected weekly or once a month. The haulers offer yard waste collection once a week but it is not known if this is segregated for recycling, except in the case of Allied/BFI who charges a higher fee for this service.

**Table 1: Current Curbside Residential Waste and Recyclables Collection Rates (2006)**

Hauler Name	Weekly Trash Collection (cost/HH/mo.)	Bulky Item Collection	Accept Leaves (Y or N)	Trash Collection (cost/HH/year)	Trash Plus Recycling Total (cost/HH/year)
Waste Management Inc. <sup>(1)</sup>	\$30.75	1 bulk item per week (no additional charge)	Yes	\$369	\$390 - \$405
Allied/BFI Services <sup>(2)</sup>	\$32.50	1 bulk item per week (no additional charge)	Yes	\$390	\$390
	\$29.00	1 bulk item per week (no additional charge)	No	\$348	\$348
J.P. Mascaro & Sons	\$32.50	1 bulk item per month (no additional charge)	Yes	\$390	Recycling not provided

<sup>(1)</sup> WM offers 2 prices for recycling service depending on whether the household was located in the mandatory garbage collection district (\$1.75 per month) or in the “optional?” recycling or private subscription service area (\$3.00 per month). WM’s cost shown does not include a start-up fee of \$35.00, which would only be billed once.

<sup>(2)</sup> Allied offers two different packages; prices and information are labeled where packages differ.

For comparison, **Table 2** provides the information about Muhlenberg Township’s waste collection system and costs. Muhlenberg Township borders Bern Township to the east and has municipal-wide contracted residential curbside trash and recyclables collection service. Collection is provided by J.P. Mascaro & Sons and the annual cost per household is **\$300** per year through 2008. Trash is collected twice per week and recycling service is bi-weekly.

**Table 2: Single-hauler Contract Collection for Muhlenberg Township**

Hauler Name	Trash & Recycling Service (cost/HH/mo.)	Bulky Item Collection	Accept Leaves (Y or N)	Trash & Recycling Service (cost/HH/year)
J.P. Mascaro & Sons	\$25	Not accepted	N <sup>(1)</sup>	<b>\$300</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> Leaves are collected by the Township in the fall and a drop-off site is available for trees and shrubs open April-November

**3.1.1 Recycling Service in the Private Subscription Area**

Residential curbside recycling is handled differently in Bern Township depending on whether or not the household is located in the “**Garbage Collection District**” or in the area that has private subscription service (see **Figure 1**). In the rural areas with private subscription, residents are required to recycle in order to be compliant with Township Ordinance 133 and Act 101. Based on the specifications of Ordinance 133, the recycling program in the private subscription service area should include the following components:

- Collection of the recyclable materials shall be made at least once per month by the Township, its designated agent, or any other solid waste collectors operating in the Township.
- The Recycling Program shall contain a sustained public information and education program. The sustained public information and education program should be targeted to residences as well as commercial, institutional and municipal establishments and must be conducted as a minimum of once every six months.
- Designated recyclable material shall consist of the following materials:
  - **Newsprint**
  - **Bi-metal cans**
  - **Ferrous containers or tin cans**
  - **Aluminum cans**
  - **Clear glass**
  - **Brown glass**
  - **Green glass**
- All persons must separate leaf waste from other municipal waste generated at their house, apartment and other residential establishment for collection unless those persons have otherwise provided for composting of leaf waste.

Although the Township has an ordinance that places recycling requirements on both residents and haulers, there are problems with non-compliance and lack of participation by both haulers and by residents. Bern Township is certainly not alone with respect to recycling non-compliance and joins a long list of Pennsylvania municipalities that struggle with implementing a comprehensive recycling program that meets all Act 101 and PADEP requirements. As stated in

Section 3.0, the difficulty in maintaining and enforcing recycling compliance is magnified in the rural sections of the Township that have private subscription collection service. Non-compliance in the Township is evidenced by the following:

- One of the private haulers that was surveyed indicated they provide trash service to Bern Township households, but do not collect recyclables in Bern Township. It is unknown if any other private haulers do not offer recycling services.
- The Township’s recycling education program and corresponding recycling enforcement appears inadequate to adequately educate residents on proper recycling methods and recycling is not emphasized and encouraged regularly.
- Multiple private haulers have very different services, increasing the difficulty of implementing a consistent program, consistent education, and an Act 101 compliant recycling program.
- A minimum monthly recyclables collection schedule typically results in recyclables that are disposed as waste: Residents forget the collection day or do not wish to store recyclables in their home.
- The Township is not receiving annual recycling reports (as required in Ordinance #133) and has no clear idea if recyclables are being collected from the majority of households or what the annual recycling rate is for the Township.
- Many other Pennsylvania case studies reveal that private subscription waste collection service areas often have significant difficulties with residential and hauler compliance with mandated recycling programs.

**3.2 Garbage Collection District**

Although most residents contract independently with private haulers for waste collection services, there are **675 households** (~ 30 percent) that are under contract with a single waste hauler. Bern Township executed a contract with Lebanon Valley Farms Disposal, Inc. effective **January 1, 2006** for the Garbage Collection District. Because the Township is in the process of evaluating its recycling and waste collection program, the contract was amended on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006 to limit the contract term to one (1) year, with a one year renewal option. GF assisted the Township to develop the addendum/amendment to the refuse and recyclables Request For Proposals (RFP)/contract. The change in the contract terms offers flexibility to the Township for a quicker transition to a new recycling program if such a change becomes feasible.

The trash collection service provided within the **Garbage Collection District** is weekly, every Monday. The Township provides a spring and fall cleanup to residents in the Garbage Collection District typically in April and October of each year. Residents in the Garbage Collection District pay **\$235 per household per year** for trash and recycling service.

**3.2.1 Recycling in the Garbage Collection District**

Residents in the Garbage Collection District are required to **recycle** the following materials:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Newspapers</b> (paper bags/tied in bundles)</li> <li>▪ <b>Clear, brown or green glass containers</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Plastic jugs and bottles (HDPE &amp; PETE)</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Tin or bi-metal cans</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Aluminum cans</b></li> </ul> |
|---|--|

Recyclables are collected every other Monday (bi-weekly), the same day as trash collection. There is no separate recycling fee for residents in the Garbage Collection District.

### 3.3 Drop-off Recycling

The Township does not operate a residential recyclables drop-off program. Drop-off recycling is available to residents at the **Berks County Recycling Center**. The Center is located on Hilltop Road, West of County Road and accepts:

- Glass
- Plastics (HDPE & PETE)
- Aluminum cans
- Flattened cardboard
- Newspapers
- Magazines

The Berks County Center Recycling Guide is provided in Appendix A.

### 4.0 REVIEW OF BERN TOWNSHIP RECYCLING ORDINANCE

This section presents some information taken from Bern Township Ordinance 133 that relates to the fundamental structure of the Township’s recycling program. This section does not provide a complete overview or detailed analysis of the Ordinance. GF does not in any way replace a solicitor’s valued input related to this legal document.

#### ESSENTIAL ORDINANCE INFORMATION REVIEWED

Under **SECTION III., ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM**, Ordinance 133 states the following:

- *Collection of the recyclable materials shall be made at least **once per month** by the Township, its designated agent, or any other solid waste collectors operating in the Township*
- *The Recycling Program shall also contain a **sustained public information and education program***
- *Designated recyclable material for Garbage Collection District residences and all residences not within said District shall consist of the following materials:*
  - *Newsprint*
  - *Bi-metal cans*
  - *Ferrous containers or tin cans*
  - *Aluminum cans*
  - *Clear glass*
  - *Brown glass*
  - *Green glass*
- ***Leaf waste:** All persons must separate leaf waste from other municipal waste generated at their house, apartment and other residential establishment for collection unless those persons have otherwise provided for composting of leaf waste.*
- ***Reporting:** If recyclable materials are collected by a solid waste collector other than the Township or its authorized agent, said solid waste collector shall submit an annual written report on a form provided by the Township to the Township Manager each year no later than January 15, reporting the tonnage of materials recycled in Bern Township during the previous year.*

Under **SECTION V., MANDATORY COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SOURCE SEPARATION PROGRAM**, Ordinance 133 states the following:

- *Designated recyclable materials for the mandatory commercial and institutional source separation program shall consist of the following materials:*
  - *Newsprint*
  - *Bi-metal cans*
  - *Ferrous containers or tin cans*
  - *Aluminum cans*
  - *Clear glass*
  - *Brown glass*
  - *Green glass*
  - *Cardboard*
  - *High-grade office paper*
  - *Lead acid batteries*
- **Reporting:** *For the purpose of reporting as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, all commercial and institutional establishments must report amounts and types of recyclables to the Township on a form provided by the Township for such purposes, annually, or so often as deemed necessary by the Township. Reports for the preceding year shall be due to the Township by January 15th of each year.*

Under **SECTION XI., PENALTY**, Ordinance 133 states the following:

- *Whomever fails to comply with any provision of this article shall, upon conviction, be fined not less than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) or more than six hundred dollars (\$600.00) and costs of prosecution. Each continuing day of violation of this ordinance shall constitute a separate offense.*

#### **4.1 Ordinance 133 Review Comments**

This section provides general comments pertaining to GF’s review of Bern Township Ordinance 133. These comments consider ways to improve the Township’s recycling program and also reinforce the Ordinance’s ability to insure better compliance with Act 101. In some case these comments are based on GF’s experience with other municipal recycling programs that have implemented successful recycling ordinances and programs.

#### COMMENTS:

- Generally, most aspects of Ordinance 133 meet the minimum Act 101 requirements for mandated recycling programs. However, the Ordinance does not clearly state the curbside leaf waste collection requirements in a manner that meets or exceeds Act 101 requirements for leaf waste. The ordinance should clearly pertain to municipal establishments and should include separation requirements for leaf waste for commercial, institutional and municipal establishments.
- For the Borough to meet minimum Act 101 requirements and PADEP policies and guidelines pertaining to leaf waste (refer to **Appendix B**), the Ordinance must:
  - **Prohibit the burning of recycled materials collected within the Township, including leaf waste**

- **Require curbside collection of leaves and garden residue, shrubbery, tree trimmings, and similar material (i.e. brush)**
  - At a minimum, leaves must be collected seasonally, at least twice per year
  - Garden residue, shrubbery, tree trimmings (or “brush”), and similar material must be collected separately at least twice per year (spring/fall)
  - All leaf waste shall be processed at a facility operating in compliance with applicable PA DEP guidelines and regulations.
- and; **facilitate a leaf waste drop-off location** or other collection alternative approved by PADEP that allows residents to deposit leaf waste for the purposes of composting or mulching at least once per month. If curbside collection of leaf waste is provided at least once per month, the supplemental drop-off site is not required.
- It is suggested that Ordinance 133 should be revised at an appropriate time in the future to be consistent with an enhanced recycling program that accurately reflects the needs of the Township and its residents. These revisions should consistently reflect the Township’s “mandated” responsibilities under Act 101 and be completed with the assistance of a solicitor.

*It is noted that meeting the minimum requirement for leaf waste collection **may not satisfy the residential disposal need for leaves and other yard waste material.** Therefore, it may be favorable for the Township to go beyond the minimum leaf waste collection requirements by adding additional collection days (e.g. in spring and fall) in order to give residents reasonable opportunity to dispose/recycle this material.*

- The existing Ordinance does not appear to be structured in a manner that supports effective enforcement of the recycling program.
- When considering future revisions, it is recommended the Township “rethink” this document so that it becomes a much more effective tool in implementing the recycling program. Consider improving the ordinance’s ability to reinforce ACTUAL enforcement of the recycling program. It appears that the penalties are minor and the process is cumbersome. Therefore, the enforcement of violators lacks “teeth” and implementability due to time, costs, and the burden of dealing with the court systems (not that due process is not part of a better program). Including clearly stated enforcement and penalty procedures that include a reasonably quick enforcement and penalty process is important to managing a municipal waste and recycling program.

Some municipalities include sizeable fines (e.g. \$600) for residents with a warning letter procedure. The letter (may be notarized) that explains how the ordinance was violated and that subsequent violations will result in the \$600 fine. The process can be designed so it encourages compliance by threat of a substantial penalty, but it does not mean the Township has to issue a large number of fines to residents.

- Municipalities have also successfully incorporated a “citation” process into ordinances as a means to quickly assess a set fee for the violation committed by the hauler and/or residents. By identifying a code enforcer or other similar entity in the ordinance that will issue citations, some Pennsylvania municipalities have created a much faster and easier

method (less court process) to ensure haulers and residents meet their waste and recycling requirements.

- It is suggested that the list of designated recyclables in the Ordinance is consistent with the materials that the Township wishes to include in its recycling program.
- It is suggested the Township revise the Ordinance to better support the educational component of the program. The ordinance may require haulers operating in the Township to distribute clear instructions on waste collection and recycling methods and costs at least twice per year, and additionally if the hauler makes changes to their service. Haulers have direct access to the household every day they provide collection service and it is recommended they play a greater role in the education program in the Township.

## **5.0 CONCEPTUAL BERN TOWNSHIP RECYCLING PLAN**

The following Bern Township Recycling Plan is not intended to be a final recycling plan for the Township. The Township is in the process of evaluating its recycling program and getting a better understanding of its future role pertaining to these important issues. This recycling plan is a guidance tool that should be used by the Township as it makes decisions regarding recycling and waste management. Finalizing a recyclables collection and waste collection program will require Township staff and the Board of Supervisors to make many decisions. At least initially, implementing an enhanced recycling program in Bern Township could be limited to revising/updating the existing recycling and burning Ordinances.

### **5.1 Steps To Bern Township Recycling Plan Program Implementation**

Before actually writing out a recycling plan for the Township, it is important that the Borough understand that it must follow a logical order when developing a new or enhanced municipal recycling program. In the case of Bern Township, some initial steps to an improved recycling program have been initiated through this Recycling Technical Assistance Study. How the program evolves will be contingent upon the decisions made by the Township and Board of Supervisors. Here are some important steps pertaining to developing a new or enhanced recycling program.

#### **CONCEPTUAL RECYCLING PLAN STEPS**

- Step 1 Appoint a Recycling & Waste Management Committee
- Step 2 Evaluate Options (consider a residential trash & recycling survey)
- Step 3 Draft Township Recycling Plan (see Section 5.2)
- Step 4 Schedule Public Meeting to Present Recycling Plan
- Step 5 Draft/Revise Implementation Documents
- Step 6 Contracts Advertised, Awarded and Executed. Ordinances and/or Regulations Adopted

- Step 7 Homeowner and commercial, institutional and municipal establishment Recycling Education (ongoing)
- Step 8 Recycling Containers Distributed (if existing program is enhanced and requires new containers)
- Step 9 Begin Enhanced Recyclables Collection System

Depending on where the Township currently stands, and depending on how quickly key decisions are made on outstanding issues, it may take six months to a year to implement a new Recycling Plan and waste collection system.

## **5.2 Bern Township Conceptual Recycling Plan Content**

This section identifies recommended content of a recycling plan for Bern Township. The Township should verify the specific content of their recycling plan and customize it. The Township should look to the County Recycling Coordinator and other municipalities for assistance as needed to confirm their Recycling Plan. As a start, the Recycling Plan should address the following:

### **CONCEPTUAL RECYCLING PLAN CONTENT**

1. Goals
2. Identify materials to be recycled and acceptable handli (consultation with local materials processors in Berks County including Cougles Recycling and Zwicky and Sons).
3. Desired collection schedule for trash and recycling
4. Methods for preparation, collection and deposition of recyclables
  - Where recyclable containers will be taken
  - Where leaf waste will be taken for recycling (as required)
5. Public education efforts
6. Recycling program funding mechanism
7. Enforcement and compliance
8. Reporting and record keeping procedures / requirements
9. Recycling program implementation schedule

## **RECYCLING EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN**

It is extremely important that the implementation of a change to the recycling and waste collection program in Bern Township be accompanied by an educational campaign and ongoing education. The Township should develop a good relationship with the local media and explain to them the importance and significance of accurately reflecting the information and intended program to the public. The tasks associated with this effort may include:

1. Develop educational materials for beginning of program. Educational materials to be developed must be disseminated at least 30 days prior to the initiation of the recycling program. The Township may apply cost associated with the development and printing of educational materials toward the 10 percent local match required for Act 101, Section 902 recycling grants.

Bern Township will need to pay for all mailing costs (e.g. cost of envelopes) of educational materials. The Township may be able to use a bulk mailing permit number from the County, if the Township does not have a bulk mailing permit.

2. Final preparation of materials (i.e., printing, stuffing envelopes, affixing labels)
3. Presentations to key groups and others (e.g. public, haulers, elementary school students) prior to the start of any new or enhanced municipal recycling program
4. Ordinance revisions tied to enhanced recycling education responsibilities

## **RECYCLING PLAN & GRANT FUNDING**

As Bern Township considers implementing a new or enhanced recycling program it should consider:

- ✓ The Township may pursue reimbursement of up to 90 percent of eligible recycling costs under Act 101 Section 902 Recycling Grants, however, grants are competitive and not guaranteed.
- ✓ The Township can pursue Act 101, Section 904 Recycling Performance Grants revenues for recycling, which is based on annual recycling tonnage from the residential and commercial sectors. It is recommended 904 grant monies awarded to the Township are applied to improving the sustainability of the recycling program.

## **OTHER RECYCLING PLAN CONSIDERATIONS**

Bern Township's Recycling Plan should consider:

- ✓ Sustainability and future Township growth (residential, commercial & institutional).
- ✓ Consistency and compliance with Act 101 and relevant state, local (e.g. County) and relevant Municipal Waste Regulations.

- ✓ Meeting the recognized and stated recycling goals of the Township.
- ✓ Economic feasibility considering waste and recycling as integrated services for the entire Township.
- ✓ Improving the use of the Bern Township website as a recycling and waste management education/compliance tool. The website should clearly state the residential and commercial requirements established by Act 101 and requirements of the Township ordinance for proper handling of recyclables and waste. Based on the existing content provided on the website, it appears to the reader that only those residents who live within the “Bern Township Garbage Collection District” are affected by recycling requirements.

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many conclusions and recommendations from this study are included in the body of this report. This section summarizes some of the critical findings, conclusions and recommendations from this evaluation.

- **Bern Township is mandated** to recycle by the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act (Act 101) to provide curbside recycling services, including curbside leaf waste collection, for all residential households in the Township.
- **Bern Township staff and Board of Supervisors will need to make a number of decisions pertaining to recycling** in order to implement a recycling plan and make any noticeable enhancements to the recycling and waste collection system. The Township should view recycling issues and services together with waste collection, not as separate issues.
- **70 percent** of the households in the Township have private subscription waste collection service at a cost of **\$350 - \$400** per household per year. **30 percent** of households are under contract collection in the “Garbage Collection District” for waste and recycling service with Lebanon Valley Farms Disposal, Inc. for **\$235 per household per year**.
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It is noted that if the Township takes the position to only meet the minimum Act 101 requirements for curbside recyclable collection of commingled materials (e.g. monthly collection) and leaf waste (e.g. two leaf collections and two yard waste collections annually), it is believed by this author that the Township’s recycling program will 1) continue to suffer from compliance issues; 2) will have poor participation by residents; 3) will have a poor recycling rate; 4) and may not meet the disposal/recycling needs of many households in the Township. The availability of monthly drop-off for leaf waste could be used to supplement the leaf waste program.

- Bern Township is required by Act 101 to ensure curbside recycling services are provided for all households in the Township. Since the existing cost for 70 percent of households is \$350 - \$400, **there is an opportunity to implement an enhanced recycling program throughout the entire Township without increasing the overall cost per household or by assessing an increase in the tax base.** For example, the neighboring Township of

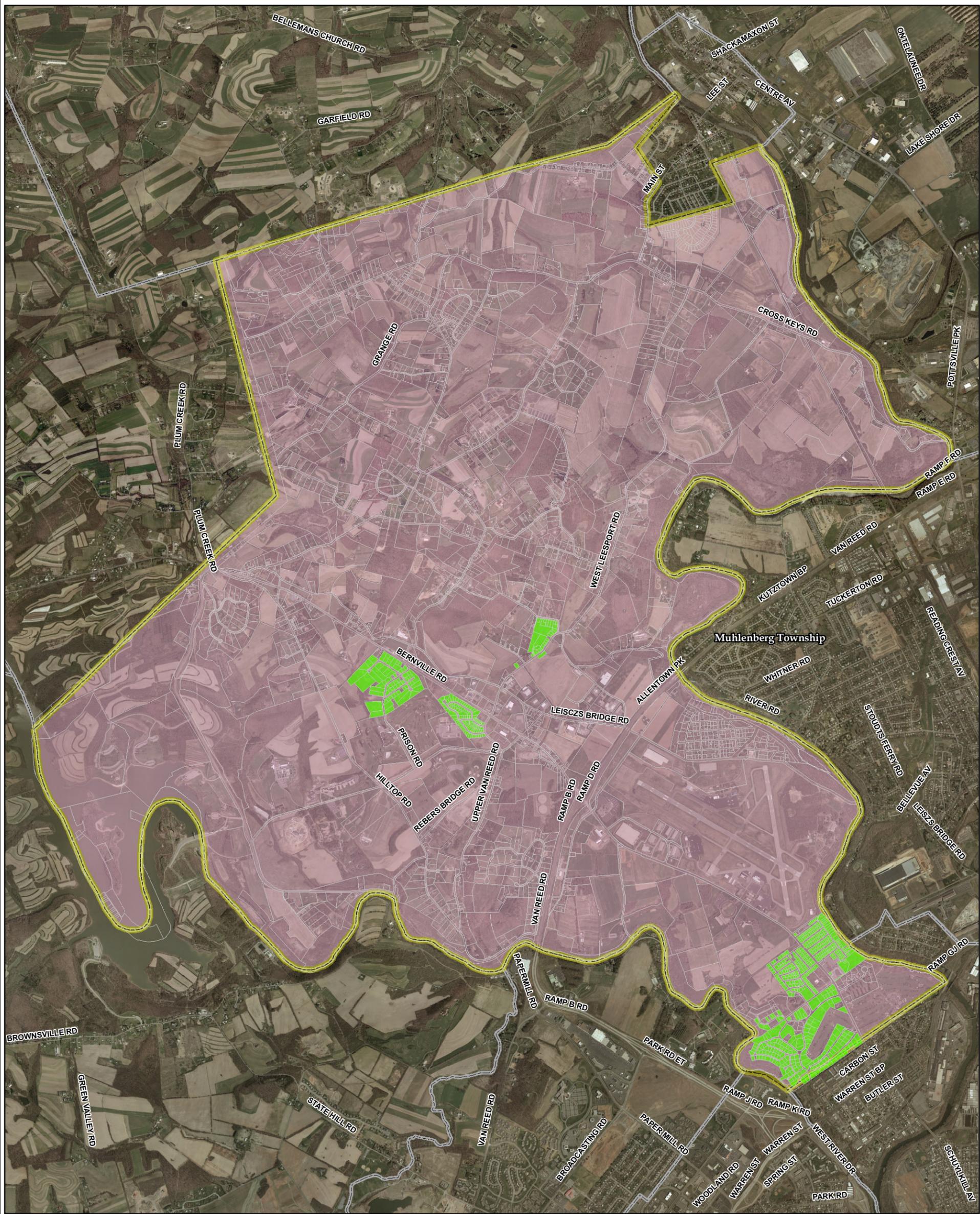
Muhlenberg has a municipal-wide contract with J.P. Mascaro through 2008 for trash (twice per week) and recycling service (bi-weekly) at a cost of **\$300** per household per year. Bern Township may be able to implement a comprehensive, cost effective and environmentally responsible waste collection system through a well-designed Request for Proposal (RFP) and municipal bid process that bundles<sup>1</sup> waste collection and recycling services and possibly considers joint-bidding with Muhlenberg or one or more other neighboring municipalities.

- If it is decided in the future the Township will pursue a municipal-wide bid, it is recommended the Township contact several local hauling companies beforehand to discuss the Township's intent so that the Township can be well-informed as it develops a municipal-wide waste and recycling contract.
- It is recommended the Township implement changes to the program as follows:
  1. Develop a permanent recycling and waste management committee.
  2. Evaluate Township needs and goals and complete a very brief Recycling Plan/waste management plan that expands upon the Conceptual Recycling Plan initiated in this study. This plan should state the waste diversion goals of the Township.
  3. Begin implementation of an enhanced recycling and waste management program via a new or revised municipal ordinance. In addition to a revision of the recycling ordinance, the Township's burning ordinance should be revised to eliminate the burning of recyclables and leaf waste.
  4. Confirm the Township's desire and commitment to implement a municipal-wide contract collection system, which appears feasible in GF's preliminary analysis.
  5. Plastic bottles and jugs (HDPE and PETE) collection should be required across the entire Township.
  6. Residents should recycle Christmas trees through a program offered by the Township.
  7. At a minimum, the curbside recyclables collection schedule is recommended to be bi-weekly, and depending on the final waste and recycling program structure chosen, weekly collection of recyclables may be advantageous.
  8. If the Township confirms it wishes to implement a municipal-wide contract, the Township Board of Supervisors and Staff should begin making decisions (as early as possible) to confirm the waste and recycling services that will be offered to residents. A bid specification should be prepared and issued on a schedule that does not legally conflict with any existing waste and recycling contractual commitments.
  9. Education of residents as well as commercial, institutional and municipal establishments must occur at a minimum of once every six months.

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<sup>1</sup> **Bundled services:** Combining a group of related services in order to achieve a comprehensive service package. Bundling services can potentially make the service package more attractive to bidders and may result in a better cost for the contracted services. For example, bidding curbside recycling services may not be attractive to contractors unless waste collection services are also included.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Bern Township Map**



**FIGURE 1**

**BERN TOWNSHIP, BERKS COUNTY**



**LEGEND**

- Bern Township Boundary
- Garbage Collection Districts
- Private Subscription Collection



**APPENDIX A**  
**Berks County Recycling Center – Recycling Guide**

# Berks County Recycling Center – Recycling Guide

Berks County Recycling Center  
Hilltop Road  
Bern Township PA 19605

<b>MATERIALS</b>	<b>WHAT IS BEING COLLECTED</b>	<b>WHAT IS <u>NOT</u> BEING COLLECTED</b>	<b>PREPARATION STEPS</b>
<b>GLASS</b>	Clear, green and brown bottles & jars (e.g. soda bottles, beer bottles/food containers)	Windows and plate glass, light bulbs, crystal, Pyrex and ceramics or any type of tempered glass or table tops	Remove caps and place in regular garbage. Rinse/wash food/beverage containers. Labels may remain. Do not break glass
<b>ALUMINUM CANS</b>	Aluminum food and beverage cans only	Foil, TV dinner trays, frozen entrée pans, aluminum lawn furniture, pie tins	Rinse cans, they may be flattened or left intact. Labels can be left on
<b>BI-METAL CANS</b>	Any food containers such as vegetables, fruit, soup and juice	Aerosol, oil cans, paint cans, pans, and scrap metals	Rinse cans they may be flattened or left intact. Labels can be left on
<b>PLASTICS #1 PET or PETE #2 HDPE</b>	Soft drink bottles, milk, water, juice, laundry, dish detergents, bleaches, and fabric softeners	Motor oil, antifreeze, cottage cheese, margarine, yogurt, plastic cups and toys	Lids or caps should be removed and placed in regular garbage. Containers should be rinsed and cleaned
<b>NEWSPAPER</b>	Newspapers, comics, merchandiser, glossy advertising inserts	Wet newspapers	Stack in brown paper bags, or tie with string or twine
<b>MAGAZINES CATALOGS PHONE BOOKS</b>	Magazines, catalogs, and phone books	Any type of ring binders	Bundle securely with string or twine.
<b>MIXED OFFICE PAPER</b>	Lined and unlined papers, writing, colored bond, typing, computer, envelopes and folders	Any carbon papers or vinyl or plastic covers	Place in a separate paper bag
<b>CORRUGATED CARDBOARD</b>	Clean, dry, corrugated cardboard, shipping boxes	Oily or wet cardboard and egg boxes	Flatten boxes and bundle securely with twine

**APPENDIX B**  
**PADEP Leaf Waste Guidance (June 2007)**

## PENNSYLVANIA'S ACT 101 LEAF WASTE COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

Act 101, Section 1501(c)(1)(ii) and (iii), requires persons in mandated municipalities to separate leaf waste from other municipal waste generated at residential, commercial, municipal and institutional establishments. "Leaf waste" is defined in the Act and its regulations as "Leaves, garden residues, shrubbery and tree trimmings, and similar material, but not including grass clippings." Source separated leaf waste, as with other recyclable material, is to be collected at least once per month as set forth in Act 101 Section 1501(c)(2) and (3) and processed at Pa. DEP-approved composting facilities.

Act 101 mandated municipalities with programs that collect leaves only in the fall are not in compliance with the Act. Mandated municipalities desiring to establish leaf waste collection programs in compliance with Act 101 must, as a minimum:

1. Require by ordinance that leaf waste consisting of leaves, garden residues, shrubbery and tree trimmings, and other similar material are targeted for collection from residences and commercial, municipal and institutional establishments; and
2. Establish a scheduled day, at least once per month, when leaf waste is collected from residences; or
3. Establish a scheduled day, not less than twice per year and preferably in the spring and fall, when leaf waste is collected from residences, and facilitate a drop-off location or other collection alternative approved by Pa. DEP that allows persons in the municipality to deposit leaf waste for the purposes of composting or mulching at least once per month. The leaf waste drop-off location may be located in a neighboring municipality or at a private sector establishment provided that an agreement is in place to utilize that location and the municipality keeps residents and commercial, municipal and institutional establishments informed of the option at least once every six months.
4. Ensure that commercial, institutional and municipal establishments generating leaf waste have collection service.
5. Municipalities are encouraged to manage source separated Christmas trees as leaf waste for processing at Pa. DEP-approved composting facilities.