



June 11, 2014

To: Richard C Rossi,  
City Manager

From: Owen O' Riordan  
Commissioner of Public Works

**Awaiting Report 14-50                      Report on Compost Pilot Program**

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/ourservices/recyclingandtrash/faqrecyclingandrubbish/compostingquestions/compostpilot.aspx>

The program began on April 7<sup>th</sup> 2014 in north Cambridge and has been ongoing for the past 11 weeks. The Recycling division at the Department of Public Works completed a survey of participants after the 9<sup>th</sup> week and the following is a summary of the information gathered as a result of such together with additional data that we have also collected.

- Average Household (HH) is generating 6.7 lbs/wk of foods scraps.
- Total collected to date, almost 30,000 lbs, (after week 9) averaging 3,270 lbs/wk (1.7 tons).
- 555 participating HHs in 363 buildings (760 HHs).
- Average set out rate: 87% of all green bins.
- The majority of bins have a clean stream of food scraps and Rocky Hill farm (composting contractor) is pleased with the lack of contamination in the loads.
- 65% response rate to the survey (366 responses out of a possible 555 participating HH)
- 94% of HHs pleased with the pilot! 6% have some questions or issues. Only 4 HHs have dropped out, not wanting to participate further.
- 940 people in the participating HHs that responded, 24% are 13 years or younger.
- From the pre-pilot trash run, the average HH had 18.75 lbs/wk of trash. Composting reduces that ~33% to 12.1 lbs/wk. 64% of HHs now produce one bag of trash or less per week. 78% noticed they have less trash, 50% say their trash weighs less and 45% say that their trash smells better.

While the broad sentiment is one of excitement and satisfaction, some people report issues with compostable bags being too small, difficult to tie when full or that the bags leak. Many participants wonder about where to get bags if they run out. (Some local retailers sell the compost bags). Public Works expects to conduct an additional five surveys during the pilot so as to continue to monitor progress and will post the results once such have been tabulated.