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### Recycling and Local Waste Management

05 Jul 2022 10:40 AM | [Peter Falcone](#) (Administrator)

At the June Environment and Parks Committee meeting, Erica Carter from Fairfax County’s Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, spoke on the County’s Waste and Recycling Management Program. Some highlights from the presentation are described below.

Fairfax County provides curbside trash and recycling services for about 10% of the residents and businesses in the county, but most of the trash and recyclable items in Great Falls are collected by private companies from homes or at the Great Falls Parkout on Saturdays. *For more information on the Great Falls Parkout, [click here](#).* These companies transfer recyclable item to materials recovery facilities for sorting and sale to end buyers. Items that cannot be recycled are typically sent to either a trash incinerator in Fairfax County or a landfill in Southern Virginia.

To deal with household waste, the best options are to (1) reduce the items coming into your home, (2) reuse, or (3) donate when possible. For items that [can be recycled](#), there are a variety of local options.

Information on recycling and local resources:

#### Packaging

- #1 and #2 plastics (indicated by the number in the middle of the chasing arrow), aluminum and metal cans, paper, and cardboard are always recyclable curbside, and there is a market for the recycled product. Check with your recycling provider for the full list of items they accept. Items should be loose, clean, and dry. **Do not put them in plastic bags before placing them in your recycling bin or in the recycling truck at the Great Falls Parkout.**
- Glass should be taken to the big purple bin behind the Great Falls Library. The glass collected will be ground and reused to create new products.
- Soft plastics (often called plastic film), such as plastic grocery bags, film wrap, sandwich bags, deflated bubble wrap, and other flexible plastic packing materials, **should not be placed in your curbside recycling bin or the Great Falls Parkout recycling truck** because these items interfere with the machinery at the materials recovery facilities. They can be dropped off in the box at the front of Safeway and other local grocery stores. If the packaging says “store drop-off” then they are referring to this process.
- Eyeglasses can be recycled at the library in the Lion’s Club box.

#### Food Scraps

- Most food scraps, paper, and cardboard can be composted at home.
- Fairfax County also offers industrial composting which can handle additional food scraps not suitable for backyard composting, like meat, bones, and dairy. The County has begun piloting compost pickup at local farmer’s markets, with the closest being the Herndon farmer’s market. The I-66 transfer station is another option for compost and cooking oil drop-off.
- There are some private companies offering curbside compost pickup in Northern Virginia.

#### Other Household Waste

- Yard waste can be left curbside for those who have curbside residential service (do not place in plastic bags) or left on your property to return nutrients to the soil. **Yard waste is not accepted at the Great Falls Parkout.**
- Electronics can be recycled at certain stores, like Best Buy and Verizon, or brought to the Fairfax County I-66 transfer station.
- Hazardous waste, like paints, pesticides, certain household cleaners, batteries, etc., must be brought to the I-66 transfer station. You can find the full list of materials they accept [here](#).
- Mom’s Organic Market in Herndon accepts a variety of materials, including cell phones and tablets, batteries, food scraps, eyeglasses, shoes, oyster shells, and natural cork.