



A Memorandum for District 4  
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## **Low Rate of Residential Recycling and Composting**

As a city, we are failing to effectively manage New York's residential trash. In particular, we are simply not recycling enough household materials. In 2014, the EPA estimated the national recycling average to be 34.6% of residential solid waste.<sup>1</sup> San Francisco manages to keep 80 percent of their household waste materials out of landfills,<sup>2</sup> while New York comes in at a dismal 17 percent.<sup>3</sup> This failure to keep more of our trash out of landfills is a detriment to the environment and our wallets. Trash in landfills creates environmental harmful methane gas and the City pays unnecessary transportation costs, \$315 million dollars in 2015,<sup>4</sup> for shipping solid waste to landfills that can be up to 600 miles away.

As a member of City Council, I will work to greatly expand the rate at which New Yorkers recycle at home. A first important step is to consolidate all of the recycling, reuse, and composting programs into one comprehensive city-wide program. Currently, there are two composting programs and not all sections of the City collect the same types of recyclable materials. It is no wonder that New York's recycling rate is so low

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<sup>1</sup>"Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: Facts and Figures." *EPA*. Environmental Protection Agency, 10 Aug. 2017. Web. 16 Aug. 2017.

<sup>2</sup>"Zero Waste Case Study: San Francisco." *EPA*. Environmental Protection Agency, 12 June 2017.

<sup>2</sup>"Zero Waste Case Study: San Francisco." *EPA*. Environmental Protection Agency, 12 June 2017. Web. 16 Aug. 2017.

<sup>3</sup>Fiscal Year 2017 Report New York City Municipal Refuse and Recycling Statistics. New York City Department of Sanitation, 02 July 2017. Web. [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/docs/about\\_dsny-collections-FYTD.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/docs/about_dsny-collections-FYTD.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Calder, Rich. "It's Getting Expensive to Ship NYC's Garbage to Landfills." *New York Post*. NYP Holdings, Inc., 24 Mar. 2017. Web. <http://nypost.com/2017/03/24/its-getting-expensive-to-ship-nycs-garbage-to-landfills/>

when we use a confusing, incomplete, and irregular system. We can do better, and if we do, we will see economic benefits, in addition to protecting the environment.