

# Middletown Waste Signage Project



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SWAC Presentation  
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# Why citywide waste signs?

Middletown's zero waste resolution

Confusion about recycling

Contamination issues

# Signage Project Goals

1. Reduce contamination
2. Increase recycling rates
3. Create signage that can be adopted statewide
4. Create and strengthen partnerships between city institutions
5. Build knowledge and skills of student interns
6. Lay groundwork for future food waste diversion

# Background Research

## Challenges finding good research

- Dominated by trade groups or for-profits
- Other schools/municipalities' experience

## Basic principles

- Eye level
- Match colors
- Real examples
- Images
- Dos and don'ts on signs

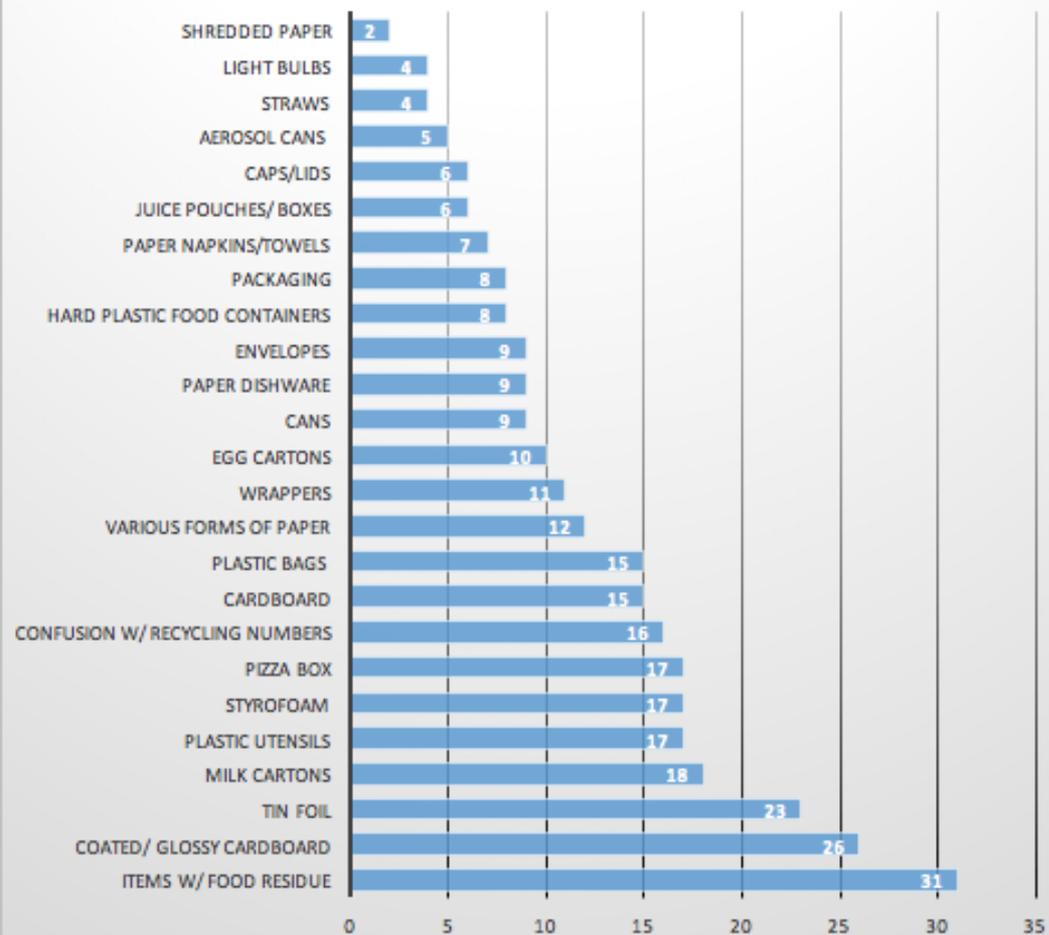
# Surveys and Focus Groups

1300+ survey responses

100+ focus group participants

Informal tabling and surveying

## Items people are confused about whether or not to recycle



Survey Results

# Focus Group Sign Example: Recycle Across America



paper, cardboard  
(flattened)  
and cartons only



metal cans,  
lids and foil  
only



glass  
bottles and jars  
only



plastic  
containers  
only

empty at a minimum, rinsed whenever possible

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## These items do not belong in your recycling bin or cart



no plastic bags,  
bags of bags, or  
recycling inside  
of bags



no more than a  
trace of food or  
beverage  
residue



no fiber that isn't  
paper, cardboard  
or cartons  
(e.g. textiles or wood)



no paper  
shreds, napkins,  
tissues, or paper  
towels



no metal that  
isn't a can,  
lid, or foil  
(e.g. pans)



no glass that isn't  
a bottle or jar  
(e.g. drinking  
glasses)



no plastic that  
isn't a container  
(e.g. hangers)



no foam  
containers



no containers  
from  
flammable  
materials

# Focus Group Sign Example: UMass Amherst



# Focus Group Sign Example: Wesleyan

## TRASH



Usdan or Pi cups



Plates, bowls, and cutlery



Wrappers



K-Cups



Plastic bags and air cushions



Styrofoam



Tissues, napkins, and paper towels



## RECYCLE



Paper



Cardboard Boxes



Plastic Containers #1-5, Solo Cups



Drink and Soup Cartons



Metal Cans, Containers, and Foil



Glass Bottles and Jars



Pizza Boxes



# Focus Group Themes

- Want **visually appealing** signs
  - Photographs
  - Not much text
  - **Big**
  - At **eye level**
  - **Location-specific** materials
- Recycling signs: want **blue** and **recycling symbol**
- **Trash sign** preferred to list of “don’t recycle” on recycling sign
- **Stickers** preferred to posters

# Pilot Signage

## RECYCLE



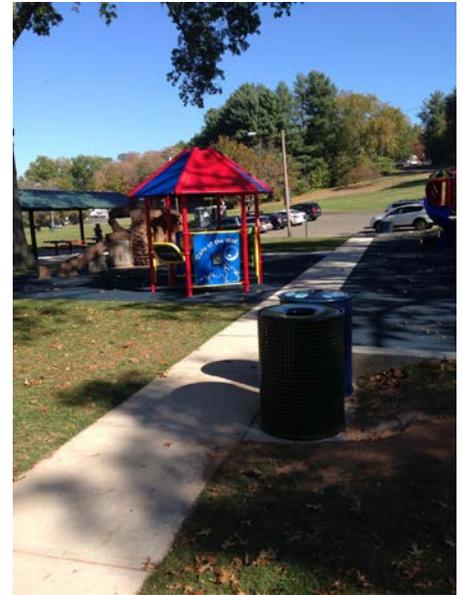
## TRASH



# Piloting and More Feedback

Where we piloted

Informal tabling and feedback gathering



# Public

# Residential

# Cafeteria

# RECYCLE

# RECYCLE

# RECYCLE



**METAL**  
Food & Drink Cans, Foil & Pie Plates, & Food Aerosol Cans

**PLASTIC CONTAINERS**  
Bottles, Cups, & Containers

**NOT SURE? PUT IN TRASH**

**EMPTY OR WIPE OUT LEAVE LIDS ON**

**CARTONS**  
Milk, Juice, & Soup

**PAPER**  
Office Paper, Newspaper, Magazines, Cardboard, & Clean or Greasy Pizza Boxes

**GLASS**  
Bottles & Jars

Don't see what you're looking for?  
Go to [RecycleCT.com](http://RecycleCT.com)




**METAL**  
Food & Drink Cans, Foil & Pie Plates, & Food Aerosol Cans

**PLASTIC CONTAINERS**  
Bottles, Cups, & Containers

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# Public

# Residential

# Cafeteria

## TRASH

**WRAPPERS**  
Candy & Food

**SOME PAPER**  
Napkins, Tissues, Towels,  
& Shipping Packages

**PLASTIC BAGS**  
Shopping & Zip Lock

**FOOD PACKAGING & STYROFOAM®**  
Spoons, Forks, Knives, Straws, Black Plastic, Bottle Caps,  
Takeout Containers, Plates, Trays, & Cups

**NOT SURE?  
PUT IN  
TRASH**

**RECYCLE  
CLEAN  
BAGS AT  
GROCERY  
STORE**

## TRASH

**WRAPPERS**  
Candy & Food

**SOME PAPER**  
Napkins, Tissues, Shredded Paper,  
Towels, & Shipping Packages

**PLASTIC**  
Shopping Bags, Zip Lock Bags,  
Plastic Wrap, Packaging, & Pill Bottles

**FOOD PACKAGING & STYROFOAM®**  
Spoons, Forks, Knives, Straws, Black Plastic, Bottle Caps,  
Egg Cartons, Takeout Containers, Plates, Trays, & Cups

**NOT SURE?  
PUT IN  
TRASH**

**RECYCLE  
CLEAN  
BAGS AT  
GROCERY  
STORE**

## TRASH

**STYROFOAM®**  
Takeout Containers, Plates,  
Trays, & Cups

**SOME PAPER**  
Napkins, Tissues, Towels,  
& Shipping Packages

**WRAPPERS**  
Juice Pouches, Candy, & Food

**PLASTIC**  
Shopping Bag, Zip Lock Bag, Straws,  
Plastic Wrap, Forks, Knives, & Spoons

**NOT SURE?  
PUT IN  
TRASH**

**THROW  
AWAY  
ANYTHING  
WITH FOOD  
IN IT**

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# Bin Signs



# Wesleyan Dining

## RECYCLE

**CARTONS**  
Milk, Juice, & Soup

**METAL**  
Food & Drink Cans, Foil & Pie Plates, & Food Aerosol Cans

**GLASS**  
Bottles & Jars

**PLASTIC CONTAINERS**  
Bottles, Cups, & Containers

**PAPER**  
Office Paper, Newspaper, Magazines, Cardboard, & Clean or Greasy Pizza Boxes

EMPTY OR WIPE OUT  
LEAVE LIDS ON

NOT SURE?  
PUT IN TRASH

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## TRASH

**WRAPPERS**  
Candy & Food

**NAPKINS**  
Wet and Torn

**PLASTIC**  
Shopping Bags, Zip Lock Bags, Bottle Caps, & Back Plastic

**STYROFOAM®**  
All types of Styrofoam®

**NON P/US DAN**  
Plates, Coffee Cups, Cutlery, & Soup Containers

NOT SURE?  
PUT IN TRASH

RECYCLE CLEAN BAGS AT GROCERY STORE

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## COMPOST

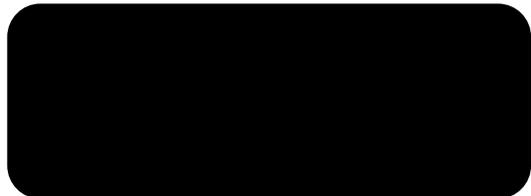
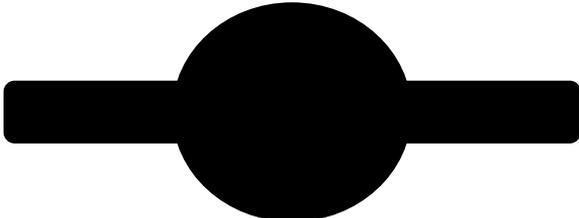
**TEA BAGS**

**BROWN NAPKINS**

**FOOD SCRAPS**  
Including Meat & Dairy

**P/US DAN ITEMS**  
Cups, Lids, Cup Sleeves, Soup Bowls, Cutlery, Clamshell Containers, & Straws

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# Full Implementation



# Questions?



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