

City of Providence
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 487

EFFECTIVE November 13, 2017

WHEREAS, Under Rhode Island General Law § 23-18.8-2(3), the State of Rhode Island has a goal to recycle no less than thirty-five percent (35%) of the solid waste generated; and

WHEREAS, Providence's recycling rate between the months of November 2016 and January 2017 were well below the State's goal of thirty-five percent, coming in at just under nine percent (9%); and

WHEREAS, Of the approximately fourteen thousand tons (14,000) of solid waste collected for recycling during that four-month period, only one thousand two-hundred twenty-three tons (1,223) were actually recycled; and

WHEREAS, Monday recycling rates, when the East Side has trash collected, averaged approximately thirty-six percent (36%) during this time period, which is over the state goal of thirty-five percent (35%); and

WHEREAS, However, recycling rates in other areas of Providence were significantly lower, with Tuesday collection rates at approximately nine percent (9%), Wednesday and Friday collection rates at less than one percent (1%), and Thursday collection rates at approximately four percent (4%); and

WHEREAS, According to a WPRI article, the City's Director of Sustainability stated that recycling rates are low not due to lack of participation but due to "contamination that spoils the entire truckload"; and

WHEREAS, According to the Office of Sustainability, the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) considers an entire load contaminated when ten percent (10%) or more of any recycling load contains non-recycle material, thus being sent to the Johnston landfill; and

WHEREAS, A recycling education and enforcement pilot was conducted in Ward 10 to improve recycling rates by providing residents educational materials in Portuguese, Spanish and English; and

WHEREAS, The Director of Sustainability stated that the education efforts led to a recycling rate of twenty-five percent (25%) in Washington Park, a significant increase; and

WHEREAS, In the March meeting of the City Council Public Works Committee, the Director of Sustainability stated that if the City eliminated contamination and cleaned up recycling in fiscal year 2015, the city would have saved just over seven hundred thousand dollars (\$700,000.00); and

WHEREAS, These savings could help create room for additional environmental inspectors for the City's neighborhoods to ensure proper recycling continues in Providence; and

WHEREAS, However, in addition to an increasing Spanish-speaking population in Providence, there has been a substantial increase in the Asian population since 1970; and

WHEREAS, The Special Commission on Diversity & Equity's final report from September 2016 found that since 1970, the Asian population in Providence increased thirteen fold; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, the Economic Development Cluster Strategy report from November 2015 indicated that approximately eight percent (8%) of the Providence population moved to the city from another state or abroad less than one year ago; and

WHEREAS, With new residents coming to Providence annually as well as the increase of languages spoken by our community, it is imperative to have consistent recycling education efforts that are accessible to all Providence residents at various points throughout the year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Providence instructs the Director of Public Works, the Director of Sustainability, and Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation to increase consistently occurring recycling education efforts in languages reflective of the community to improve recycling rates for the City of Providence.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution will be sent to the Director of Public Works, the Director of Sustainability, and the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation.

IN CITY COUNCIL

NOV 02 2017

READ AND PASSED

Sabrina Mats

ACTING PRES.
Lori L. Hagen

CLERK

Effective without the Mayor's Signature

Lori L. Hagen

Lori L. Hagen
City Clerk