



## Berkeley Climate Action Plan: Tracking our Progress Waste Reduction & Recycling – Residential



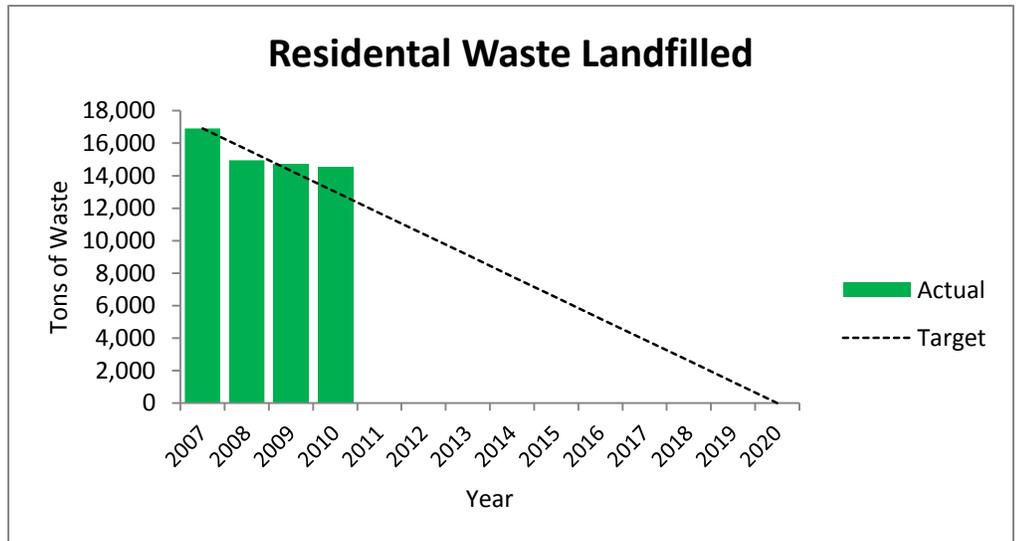
**Goal:** Increase residential recycling, composting, and source reduction

**Performance metric:** Amount of residential waste landfilled, recycled, and composted

**Target:** Meet Berkeley's Zero Waste goal by eliminating all materials sent to landfills by the year 2020.

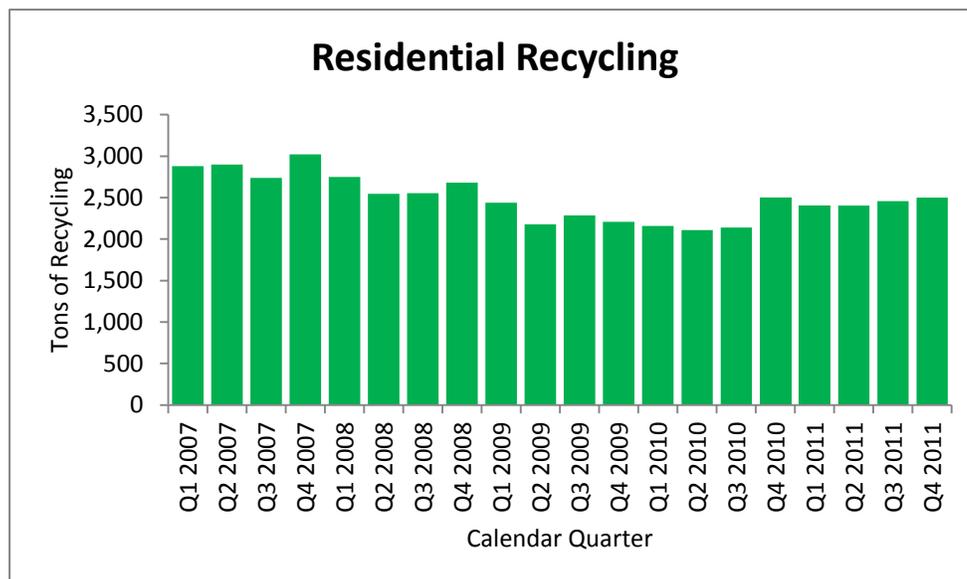
Eliminating landfill material requires source reduction and waste diversion from all users, residential and commercial. The City supports solid waste diversion from its residents by providing voluntary curbside recycling and compostable material collection. Recent recycling and compost program expansions and education efforts aim to increase participation for both single-family and multifamily residents.

**Status:** The quantity of waste generated in Berkeley single-family homes and small multifamily buildings (4 units or less) that is sent to landfills has dropped each year between 2007 and 2010 (latest data available), although not at the rate currently targeted to meet the City's Zero Waste goal. Total Berkeley residential waste sent to landfills in 2007 was 16,910 tons and in 2010 this figure dropped 14% to 14,523 tons. The reduction in landfilled material can be attributed to reduced consumption, in conjunction with the national recession beginning in fall 2008, and increased reuse and waste diversion into recycling and composting programs.



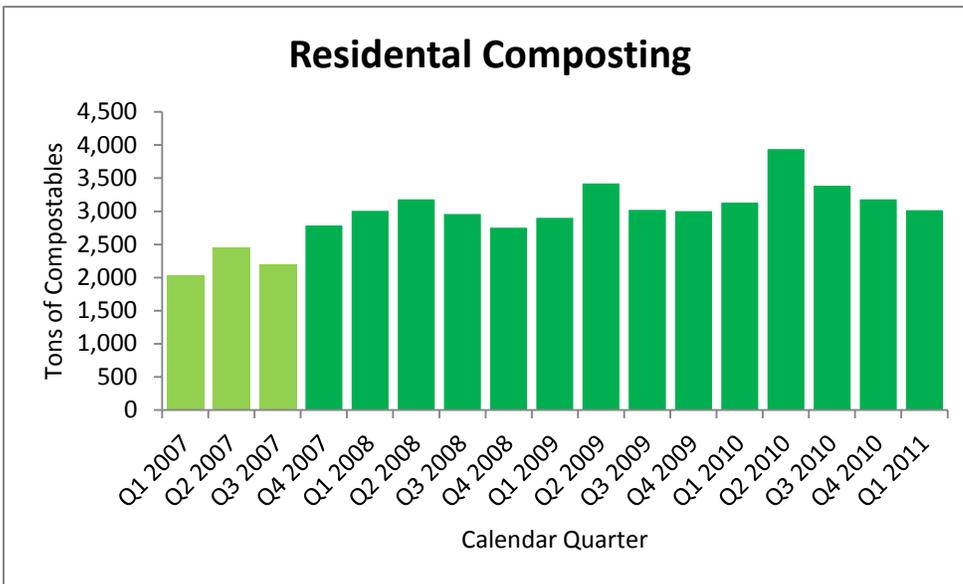
The residential recycling trends in Berkeley since 2007 show declines in the annual quantity of recyclable materials collected (data includes amount of recyclables collected from buildings with 9 dwelling units or less).

The amount of residential recyclables collected decreased from 11,536 tons in the first quarter of 2007 to 9,762 tons in 2011. These data include recyclables collected through the curbside recycling program, which is administered by the Ecology Center through a contract with the City, and a portion of the recyclables taken by residents to the Community Conservation Center's buyback and drop-off programs.



cardboard, and brown bags. In the fall of 2010, the City and the Ecology Center initiated a new residential recycling cart program in place of the previous blue bin collection system. Following this change, Berkeley's

residential curbside recycling increased by 20% in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010 as compared to the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2009 and reversed a downward trend that had been in place for over a year (see residential recycling graph above).



According to a 2008 waste characterization study conducted by StopWaste.org, organic material and yard waste is approximately 48% of the single-family residential waste stream in Berkeley. To divert this material from the landfill, the City offers curbside pick-up of compostable materials. In the fall of 2007 the City's collection of yard waste (plant materials) was expanded to also include all food scraps, food-soiled papers, and compostable plastics. On an annual basis the residential composting program (for buildings of 1-4 units) has increased its collections by nearly

40% between 2007 (8,446 tons) and 2010 (13,642 tons). On a quarterly basis, the expanded service in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2007 led to an increased collection of almost 600 tons of compostable material compared to the previous quarter. A spring 2010 survey by StopWaste.org found that most Berkeley households participate in the curbside composting program and that 47% of participants include food scraps.

#### Why is this metric important?

Achieving zero waste is an essential component of reducing global warming emissions. Monitoring and reporting this metric helps the community to gauge the efficacy of services designed to reduce waste disposal and to track annual progress toward our Zero Waste goal.

#### Resources and assistance for community members:

City of Berkeley's Solid Waste Management Division ([www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=4034](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=4034)) Provides information on the refuse and recycling services offered by the City.

The Ecology Center ([www.ecologycenter.org/recycling](http://www.ecologycenter.org/recycling)) provides detail on the curbside recycling program.

CalRecycle ([www.calrecycle.ca.gov](http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov)) The State's Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery provides a variety of data on waste disposal and recycling within California and information on waste reduction.

#### Data sources and technical notes:

The amount of residential waste landfilled is calculated by weighing and recording the rear loader City of Berkeley refuse truck loads as they arrive at the Berkeley Transfer Station. These trucks collect refuse from 1-4 unit residential buildings, but may also collect small amounts of commercial waste, depending on the neighborhood and truck route. The residential compostable material is also collected by the City of Berkeley (in separate trucks) and includes material primarily from 1-4 unit residential buildings with some additional material from commercial properties on the same truck routes.

The residential recycling values are estimates based on two factors: the weights of the Ecology Center truck collections from residential buildings of 9 units or less and 50% of the weight of recycling drop-offs at the Community Conservation Center's buyback and drop-off programs. The 50% of the Community Conservation Center is a proxy for the amount that is likely to be attributable to Berkeley residential sources (including materials that may have been poached from the curbside recycling carts).

All data was tallied and reported by the City's Solid Waste Management Division.

**Tracking our progress:** Review Climate Action Plan performance metrics at [www.cityofberkeley.info/climate](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/climate)