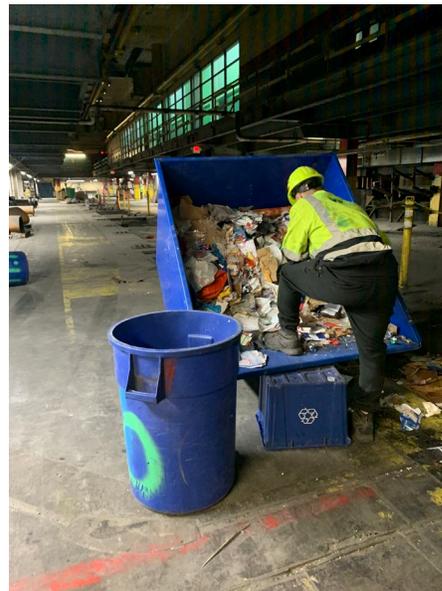




Department of Public Works
1365 Middlesex Street-Lowell, MA. 01851
P: 978-674-4111 F: 978-970-4071
cclancy@lowellma.gov
Christine Clancy, PE
DPW Commissioner

TO: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *ED*
FROM: Christine Clancy, DPW Commissioner
DATE: September 8, 2020
RE: Citywide Curbside Recycling Audit

The City's next recycling audit is scheduled to take place in the first half of October 2020. The most recent biannual audit occurred between 1/10/20 - 1/27/20. In performing the audit, Waste Management retrieved random samples from 11 residential recycling loads, which were hand sorted by Waste Management's audit team at the MRF (recycle facility) to determine the overall contamination rate for the City. Below are pictures from the January Audit.



Picture (Left): WM Employee sorting through recycling during January Audit.; **Picture (Right)** Examples of types of contamination found in recycling audit (plastic bags filled with trash and/or recycling materials).



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The previous audit of the City’s recycle was completed during September 2019 and came in at 38% contamination. This audit resulted in a 24 % contamination rate. Below is the January 2020 audit breakdown:

Route Day - Estimates	Audit Date	Residue lbs	Single Stream lbs	Total Weight	% Contamination
Friday, January 10, 2020	1/13/2020	111.0	209.0	320	34.7%
Monday, January 13, 2020	1/14/2020	82.2	357.8	440	18.7%
Tuesday, January 14, 2020	1/15/2020	29.3	250.7	280	10.5%
Wednesday, January 15, 2020	1/16/2020	57.6	162.4	220	26.2%
Thursday, January 16, 2020	1/17/2020	114.2	225.8	340	33.6%
Friday, January 17, 2020*	1/21/2020	125.3	24.7	200	62.7%
Tuesday, January 21, 2020	1/22/2020	63.3	296.7	360	17.6%
Wednesday, January 22, 2020	1/23/2020	72.0	148.0	220	32.7%
Thursday, January 23, 2020	1/24/2020	27.8	172.2	200	13.9%
Friday, January 24, 2020	1/27/2020	51.1	208.9	260	19.7%
Monday, January 27, 2020	1/28/2020	37.5	382.5	420	8.9%
Totals		821.3	2,438.7	3,260	25.2%
*Adjusted to eliminate 50 LBS associated with refrigerator in 1/17 load		721.30	2,388.70	3,210	24%

The audit resulted in a decrease in contamination but is still over the 10% contamination threshold we need to continue working towards in order to avoid costly penalties.

Below is a list of items that contributed heavily to the contamination rate:

- Plastic Trash Bags with either recycling or trash content.
- Construction Metal
- Plastic Film
- Textiles (clothes and Shoes)



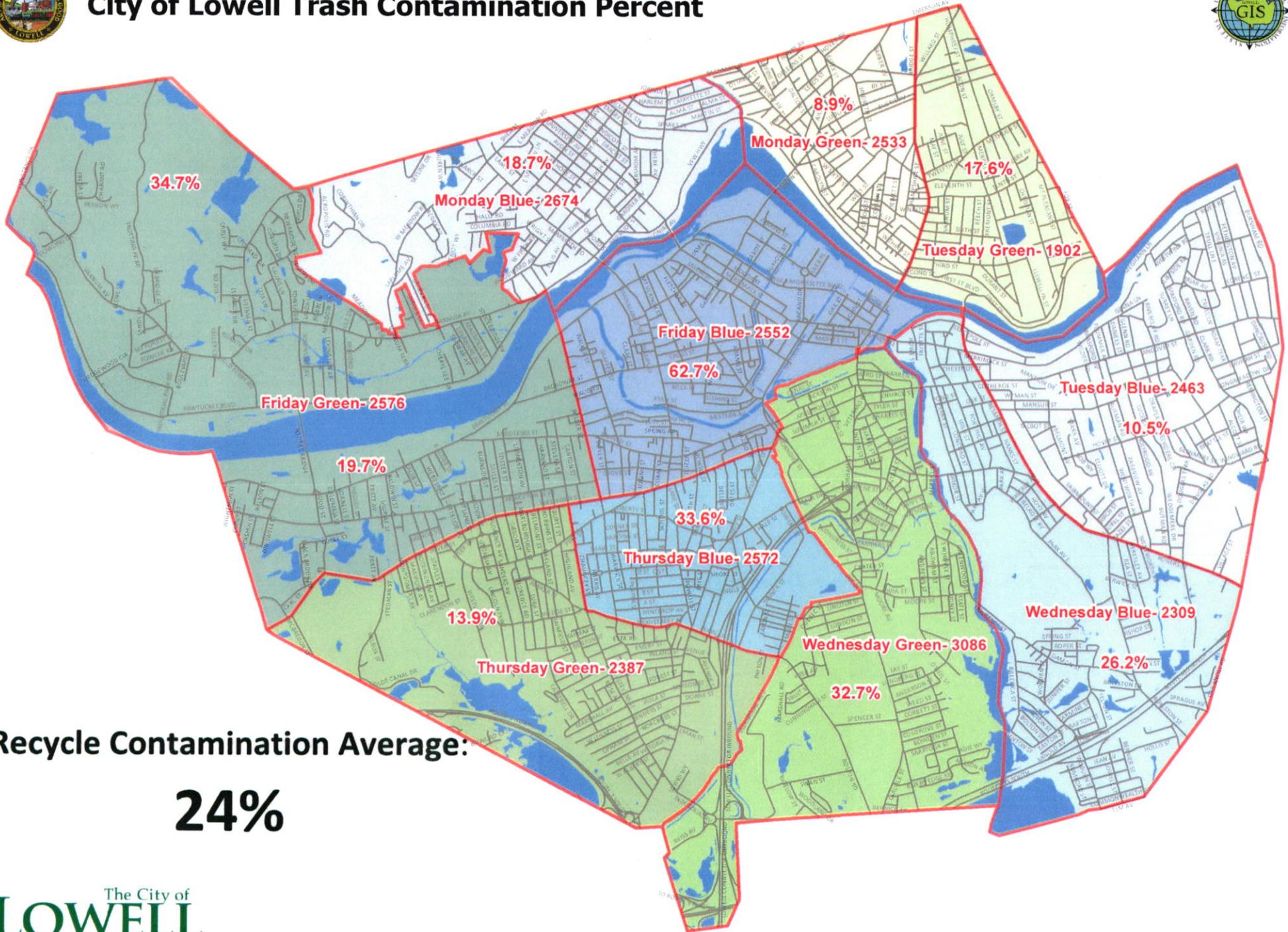
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- Wood
- Styrofoam
- Dirt
- Other Construction Debris

The Solid waste and Recycle department will continue to put our efforts into education and enforcement to reduce the overall impact on the recycle contamination. DPW has also increase efforts with site inspections and sending out warnings and tickets on violations. It is critical that residents follow appropriate recycling etiquette. Below are some reminders for proper recycling etiquette. Additional information can be found on our website at <http://lowellma.gov/195/Solid-Waste-Recycling>. It is critical that residents adhere to following these guidelines. Increased contamination will result in the need to increase the current solid waste and recycling fees.



City of Lowell Trash Contamination Percent



Recycle Contamination Average:

24%



RECYCLE OFTEN. RECYCLE RIGHT.

KEEP THE DIRTY DOZEN OUT OF YOUR RECYCLING CART.

You have heard the saying, "one bad apple can spoil the bunch." The same goes for recycling. We need your help to keep the dirty dozen out of the recycling cart.

Food	Plastic Bags	Food-Soiled Paper	Snack Bags & Wrappers	Cords/Wires	Garden Hose	Clothing	Diapers	Broken Cups & Dishes	Electronics & Batteries	Household Hazardous Waste	Needles

Go to RecycleOftenRecycleRight.com to learn more.



RECYCLING RULES

1. RECYCLE ALL BOTTLES, CANS AND PAPER
2. KEEP ITEMS CLEAN AND DRY
3. NO PLASTIC BAGS

Always recycle:



Plastic Bottles & Containers

Plastic bottles, jars, jugs and tubs



Food & Beverage Cans

Tin, aluminum, steel food and beverage cans



Paper

Cardboard, paper, newspaper, paperboard, magazines



Flattened Cardboard & Paperboard

Flatten all boxes (do not bundle/tie up)