

Kenneth E. Pickard Municipal Innovation Award

September 14, 2007

Municipality: Holden, MA

Project Title: Zero-Sort® Recycling Comes to Holden

Name of Official Completing Form: Jacquelyn Kelly, Assistant Town Manager

Date of Program Inception: July 2, 2007

On Monday, July 2, 2007 Holden's fee-supported residential curbside trash and recycling collection program entered a new era when the town implemented an innovative program called Zero-Sort® recycling. Zero-Sort recycling allows co-mingling of all recyclable items — glass, metal, plastic, newsprint, cardboard, etc. — in one wheeled cart for bi-weekly pick-up. Other household trash is placed in a second wheeled bin for weekly pick-up. This makes recycling easier, cleaner and more convenient for the customer. As a result, Zero-Sort allows people to recycle more material, and has been quite a success in the first few months since Holden's program started. It also makes it convenient and efficient for our customers to contribute towards a greener and more sustainable environment. Our initial goal was to increase our recycling rate to 30% of the total tons of collected material. Before Zero-Sort, our rates averaged about 13%. Based on tonnage reports for the first two months of the program, we have met and exceeded our preliminary target recycling goal. In July, our recycling rate was 35%; in August, we are pleased to report, our recycling rate went up again to 37%. Obviously, the Zero-Sort recycling program has significantly increased our recycling activity, diverted tons of solid waste from the disposal system and saved the town the relevant costs for disposal.

The problem of solid waste collection and disposal is common to every community as are the related and escalating costs to our taxpayers. Holden's innovative and the Zero-Sort program makes recycling work for the customer and the town. It is the first of its kind using two wheeled totes in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. **The feedback from our customers has been positive and the response to our new recycling initiative has been overwhelming as exhibited by our recycling rates of 35% and 37% in the first two months. Much of the success of the program is due to the strong partnership we developed with our private hauler, a company that shares our goals for recycling.** Zero-Sort recycling is transportable to other communities that wish to control solid waste disposal costs and support a cleaner environment.