# Recycling

**Urban Community Characteristics:**

* 80% of the population live in urban or sub-urban areas.
* Urban land takes up 30% of land area.
* Struggle with finding a place for everyone as more people more to urban areas.

**Recycling in Urban Communities:**

* Usually require little work from the resident other than paying a fee.
* Funded by local government.
* Most materials can usually be recycled including scrap metal and hazardous waste.
* Processing is more intensive.
* Cities can make money off selling recyclables to private manufacturers.
* Main methods of recycling include:
	+ Dual Stream/Curb-Sorted
		- Mixed paper is sorted separately from metal, plastic, and glass.
	+ Single Stream MRF-sorted (Material Recovery Facility)
		- All paper, cardboard, metal, plastic, and other recyclables are collected in the same bin.
		- Allows for greater collection efficiency and eliminates the burden on residents to sort recyclables.
		- Greater efficiency reduces GHG emissions from collection trucks.
		- Typically yields more recyclables collected.

 **Rural Community Characteristics:**

* 20% of population lives in rural areas.
* Rural land takes up 70% of total land area.
* Rural inhabitants struggle with maintaining population and economic opportunities as more people move to urban areas.
* Often overwhelmed or pushed out by urban sprawl.

**Recycling in Rural Communities:**

* Typically feature centrally located collection centers for residents to bring recyclables to.
* Requires more input from the resident and may require driving some distance to get there.
* May not take as many types of recyclables as cities, meaning many items don’t get recycled at all.
* Operated by local government or private groups.
* Sends collected materials to a regional, state, or private processing facility.

**What can be recycled?**

* **Cardboard and paperboard**
	+ One of the most recycled materials (up to 77%).
	+ Can’t be waxed, greasy, or wet (so no OJ containers or pizza boxes).
	+ Can also be reused for storage, fire starters, and garden bed liners.
	+ Usually picked up curbside or at centralized collection centers.
* **E-waste**
	+ This includes old cellphones, mp3 players, TVs, etc.
	+ Usually dropped off at designated collection facility.
		- Verify this facility has acceptable e-waste recycling practices.
	+ “For every million cell phones recycled, 772lbs of silver, 75lbs of gold, and 22lbs of palladium were recovered.” (EPA.gov)
* **Glass**
	+ 100% recyclable, meaning it can be recycled over and over again indefinitely.
	+ In 2013, only about 34% of glass was recycled.
	+ Usually picked up curbside or at centralized collection centers.
* **Hazardous Waste**
	+ Includes cleaning chemicals, paints, automotive fluids, batteries containing heavy metals, and CFL bulbs.
	+ When these items get thrown away instead of recycled, they can leach harmful contaminants into the environment.
	+ Typically can be brought to a specialized HW facility or sometimes an auto-shop.
		- Check with Earth911.com for your local center.
* **Metals**
	+ Includes food and drink cans, scrap metal, and aluminum foil.
	+ Aluminum is 100% recyclable, meaning it can be recycled over and over.
	+ Uses a fraction of the energy to make new cans out of recycled materials as opposed to new materials.
	+ Aluminum cans are typically accepted by local recycling program.
		- Scrap metal may require drop off at a specialized facility.
* **Paper**
	+ Cannot be recycled indefinitely as the fibers eventually wear out.
	+ Recycled paper can make over 5,000 other products.
	+ Usually picked up curbside or at centralized collection centers.
* **Plastics**
	+ 1-7 plastics can be recycled…
		- This includes items like PB jars, milk jugs, shampoo bottles, Tupperware, medicine bottles, flower pots, window cleaner, etc.
	+ …BUT aren’t always
		- Check with local authority to see which numbers are collected in your area.
	+ Usually picked up curbside or at centralized collection centers.

# Questions for HS and Up:

* Which of these is a benefit of Single-Stream recycling?
	+ Typically leads to more materials being recycled.
	+ You get to spend time sorting your recycled goods.
	+ Efficient collection reduces GHG emissions of collection trucks.
	+ **A and C.**
* Which of these materials cannot be recycled indefinitely?
	+ Glass.
	+ Aluminum.
	+ **Paper.**
	+ B and C.
* What is the most recycled product today?
	+ Glass.
	+ Paper.
	+ **Cardboard.**
	+ Aluminum cans.