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By:

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Starting March 8, you can bring Styrofoam to City of East Lansing's new polystyrene recycling station at the East Lansing Department of Public Works recycling drop-off site.

The new recycling station came about, in part, thanks to a recent Recycling Infrastructure Grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and Dart Container.

According to East Lansing Environmental Services Administrator Cathy DeShambo, the plan to recycle Styrofoam was a no-brainer, and just a matter of time.

?The entire process from applying for the grant, receiving the grant, and completing this first task has taken about a year in total.? DeShambo said. ?The Department of Environmental Quality Recycling Infrastructure grant that we have received actually covers several tasks that we are undertaking through 2018. This Styrofoam recycling station was a task we wanted to tackle early

on, because we knew there was considerable resident interest in recycling Styrofoam.?

The grant contracts with the MDEQ became official in August and the City was able to proceed with designing a container, creating signage, having the container manufactured, and working with Dart Container on the hauling and processing of the polystyrene.

DeShambo was quick to point out the recycling of Styrofoam has been one of the biggest requests by East Lansing residents.

?I can say that we have heard from our residents who say that they have been traveling all the way to Mason to recycle their polystyrene,? she said. ?Kudos to all the residents who have been making this trek for years. We are really happy that we can make their recycling of Styrofoam far more accessible and convenient with this drop off station. We expect this station to be a very popular addition to our Department of Public Works Drop Off Recycling site. We are grateful for the DEQ funding and our partnership with Dart Container in making this station a reality.?

There are other recycling priorities in the future DeShambo said the City is working on, which is an attempt to increase waste reduction.

?Expect to see additional public space recycling in Downtown and Parks and Recreation areas of the City by this summer,? DeShambo said. Additionally, we have been working on ways to create more access to on site recycling for multi-family housing.?

DeShambo is hoping the new Styrofoam recycling station will cut down on what she refers to as ?curbside contamination.?

?Materials placed in a recycling cart that are not accepted in the recycling stream cause contamination, and can render an otherwise clean load of recyclables unacceptable to a material processing facility,? she said. ?Styrofoam cannot be accepted in our curbside carts because our material processor, like many processors, do not accept Styrofoam. Contamination, or the presence of unacceptable materials, increases costs, risks the loss of good recyclables, wastes time and can cause safety issues for workers sorting recyclables. Plastic bags and Styrofoam are two of the biggest and most frequent contaminants we see in our curbside carts.?

?Now that our residents will be able to drop off their polystyrene to our drop off site, we hope to see this material disappear entirely from curbside carts.? DeShambo said.

With the new Styrofoam recycling station, there are some do?s and don?ts.

Do:

- Wash, rinse and dry containers of all food and drink remnants
- Remove all labels and stickers
- Remove all straws and lids

Don?t:

- Include insulation material

- Include foam peanuts or starch-based packing peanuts (these can be taken to UPS Stores)
- Include trash, labels, stickers or plastic Film

The East Lansing Department of Public Works recycling drop-off site is located at 1800 E. State Road.

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