

City of Horseshoe Bay Launches New Single-Stream Recycling System

The City of Horseshoe Bay is pleased to introduce single-stream recycling to our residents. As many of our citizens may know, recycling is important for our environment because it allows us to reuse materials, which helps reduce the amount of refuse going to landfills. Many products that end up as waste can release harmful chemicals and gases into the air. Recycling also reduces our need to acquire more raw materials from cherished ecosystems such as rainforests.

The City of Horseshoe Bay Reclamation Center, located at 314 RM 2831, utilized dual-stream recycling at its facility for many years. Dual-stream recycling required participants to separate their materials at home or their place of business before bringing them to the center. While the dual-stream system was somewhat effective, a newer system of recycling called single-stream recycling has become the new norm.

Single-stream recycling has several benefits and has taken the recycling community by storm. The process was introduced in the late 1990s in California and has since spread across the United States. The previous system required end-users to separate food and beverage containers into one bin and paper products into another bin. Collection trucks had multiple compartments to separate each type of recyclable material as well.

With the single-stream recycling system, users place all recyclable materials into a single bin. These bins are then collected by a truck with a single compartment and delivered to a materials recovery facility. At the materials recovery facility, workers sort the recyclable materials mechanically and by hand.

The impetus for adopting the single-stream system was twofold: a belief that the added convenience of not sorting recyclables would entice more residents to participate in the recycling program, and the desire to save money by reducing collection costs. We hope Horseshoe Bay residents take advantage of the added convenience of single-stream recycling.

What This Means for Residents

Under the new single-stream system, Horseshoe Bay residents can now combine mixed paper items (newspaper, junk mail, cereal boxes, cardboard) and containers (aluminum and steel cans, glass jars and bottles, plastic bottles) into a single bin or bag **without** sorting them first. Please note, residents must still break down cardboard boxes prior to bringing them to the recycling center and styrofoam cannot be recycled.

When residents arrive at the center, they will see a new set-up. Residents should follow the arrows to the right, where they will see three lanes marked by orange cones. The first two leftmost lanes may be used to drop off recycling materials (the third, rightmost lane is for residents needing to drop off brush). Residents will see several blue “hoppers” in the center drop-off circle. The eight hoppers can **all** be used for single-stream recycling material.

Residents may use ANY BLUE HOPPER to drop off their recycling material, and dump all of their items into one bin. There is also one small green and yellow bin for plastic bags only in the center of the blue hoppers. We hope residents find the new set-up convenient and easy to use!



Residents are still allowed to drop off household trash at the center as well. The green dumpster near the center's office building is where trash may be placed. This bin is in the same location as it was prior to the recent set-up changes.

What Happens to Your Recycling Once It Leaves Horseshoe Bay?

After leaving the local center, the materials are transported to Balcones Recycling in Austin, which is the materials recovery facility. Balcones Recycling uses a combination of machinery, technology, and manual sorting to separate recyclables by commodity type (for example, cardboard, paper, plastic, and aluminum). Once the material is properly separated, it is prepared for shipment, then sent off to secondary processors or manufacturers, who use it to make new products.

Typically, each material type either returns to its original form or becomes a new version of that commodity. Cardboard becomes a new cardboard box, and paper becomes a new form of paper such as tissue. Glass is used to make new bottles, fiberglass, or even material for construction. Aluminum can be used to make more aluminum cans, but also bike parts, gutters, and more! Plastics will become different products based on their resin type. Some examples include new bottles and containers, buckets, park benches, car parts, even fabrics and apparel!

Do the Items You Bring to the Recycling Center Actually Get Recycled?

If the items you're placing in the bins are included in our local recycling program, then yes! Horseshoe Bay publishes the list of accepted items on our website at the following link: www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/715/know-before-you-go. The items listed are ones that we know can be sorted and sold to companies that use them to make new products.

For more information about the Reclamation Center, including hours of operation, please visit www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/494/Recycle-Center. As a reminder, only Horseshoe Bay City Utility customers may use the recycling center. Be sure to like the City of Horseshoe Bay on Facebook (www.facebook.com/horseshoebaygov) and Instagram (www.instagram.com/horseshoebaygov).