

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



PRESS RELEASE

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Portsmouth celebrates Earth Day with reduced carbon emissions and high recovery rate

PORTSMOUTH, NH – As Earth Day approaches, the City of Portsmouth is celebrating several sustainable milestones. Recently, the City has announced the implementations of solar power energy at both Portsmouth High School and the Madbury Water Treatment Plant, as well as the conversion of all of its high pressure sodium (HPS) street lights to LED lights. These projects, along with a successful recycling rate, has resulted in a significant reduction of carbon emissions. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator, the combined efforts of the solar array projects, LED lights and recycling results in a reduction of 13,930 metric tons of carbon emissions annually.

For over a decade, the City’s annual recovery rate – which combines recycling and composting rates versus landfill and waste-to-energy rates – has averaged 55 percent. In 2016, the City was able to recycle over 4,000 tons and compost over 2,000 tons of its collected waste. By successfully diverting over half of its waste material from the landfill for the past decade, the City also surpasses both national and state averages that struggle to stay above 35 percent.

According to Jacob Levenson, Portsmouth’s Solid Waste and Sustainability Coordinator, the passion shown by residents and businesses to preserve resources continues to increase. “Our community is very mindful when sorting their waste, frequently accessing our Recycling Center and attending our Household Hazardous Waste Days throughout the year. Since adding a food waste drop off at the Recycling Center last year, many residents have supported composting efforts.” To continue such efforts,

compost bins will be available for purchase for residents at a discounted price of \$50 beginning next month at the Department of Public Works, and updated public receptacles will continue to be placed throughout the City to improve ease of recycling in public spaces.

In regards to projects, the combined total size of the solar energy arrays at the High School and Madbury Plant is 578 kilowatts DC, producing more than 700,000 kilowatt hours of renewable electricity annually. The array at the Portsmouth High School is located on the roof of the school and will generate about 11% of the school's energy needs, while the array at the Water Treatment Plant is ground mounted and will generate about 25% of the plant's energy needs. The environmental impact of the generation from the two arrays is equivalent to a reduction in 525,000 pounds of coal burned or 55,000 gallons of gasoline consumed each year. By converting 1,610 streetlights to LED equipment, the City will save 494,000 kWh of annual electricity consumption.

"I am very pleased to see these combined efforts lead to such valuable, long-term actions that better preserve our environment," said City Manager John Bohenko. "The work of our staff along with the awareness of our citizens is extremely valuable as we continue to elevate our sustainable programs. Together, we can continue to advocate for similar projects, recycle and save valuable resources."

For more information, please:

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