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**Notice: The New Haven Transfer Station will be closed Thursday, November 23, in observance of Thanksgiving. The administrative offices of NHSWRA at 14 Trumbull St. will also be closed that day.**

## Feature **“Going to the Mattresses” with Dan McGowan**

*With over 1.5 million mattresses and box springs diverted from landfills and burn plants in CT, (200,000 last year alone) the Mattress Recycling Council is going strong!*



Dan McGowan is a native of Branford. Having grown up in rural surroundings and playing in the woods as a kid, Dan developed a passion for environmental stewardship. He studied biology at Trinity College in Hartford, minoring in Environment and Human Values, with a focus on plant ecology. Upon graduation he went into wetlands rehabilitation, focusing on invasive species. He was a member of the Wetland Commission in Branford, and worked for the town's wetlands department. He then took advantage of an opportunity to become the manager of the municipal solid waste department. It was there that his passion for the environment took a turn toward sustainable materials management. Always an avid recycler, he was amazed at what a large community and infrastructure had been developed in that field. “I think at the end of the day most people just put their recyclables at curbside and it disappears and that's the last they think about it.” He continues, saying they don't really realize what a vast network is involved in getting items to viable markets.

Dan joined the Connecticut Product Stewardship Council and the Connecticut Recycler's Coalition (CRC) and began to look at recycling “holistically” as he says. He implemented some EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) programs in addition to the E-waste program which was already in place, including a mercury thermostat take-back program, and a mattress recycling container. When it came to mattresses he was pleasantly surprised to find that they were collecting a full dumpster each week. Shortly thereafter, an opportunity opened up with the Mattress Recycling Council (MRC), where he's been for the past five years.

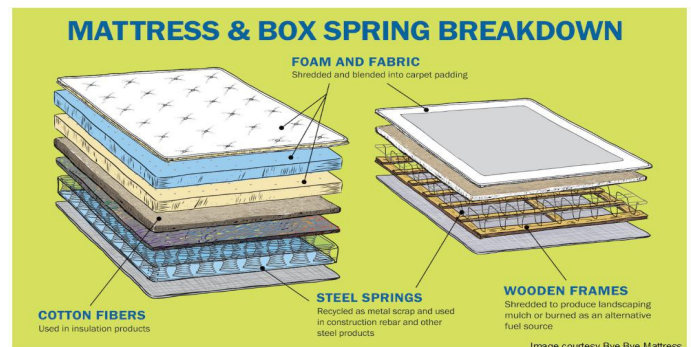
### MRC

The MRC started in Connecticut in May of 2015. Previously, mattress and box spring recycling was localized, if at all, and not very efficient. Legislation had been passed in the State establishing a stewardship program which made producers responsible for end-of-life of these items, and a fee was

then built into the retail price of each mattress and box spring sold. The infrastructure involved in collection, transportation and recycling of mattresses in the State is funded by the revenue generated from retail sales. The capture rate is extremely high: Today, after only 8 years of operation, 155 (out of 169) municipalities as well as many hotels, schools and institutions in CT have provisions for mattress and box spring drop-off or collection for recycling through MRC, under the trademark “Bye-Bye Mattress.” Mattress containers can be seen at certain retail locations as well – that’s where your old mattress ends up if you have a new one delivered. In addition to Connecticut, MRC has programs in Rhode Island and California, and will soon be operating in Oregon. As of now, these are the only states that have such programs.

### The Process

Once these items are collected from drop-sites, and arrive at the mattress recycler, they are broken down into the following components: Foam, cotton, steel, wood, etc. and baled into “commodity blocks” for the marketplace, where they become elements for other products. Foam typically goes to carpeting installation and padding, and filters. The MRC has a research department that looks into recycling these components in other areas and using processes such as chemical breakdown where materials might get more or longer life-cycles. Rest assured that the MRC maximizes recycled material: Currently they recycle 74% of all material received.



### The Benefits

As with most recycling, the benefits are significant: Each year, 200,000 mattresses are pulled out of the waste stream in CT - that's 3,500 tons of material not going to burn plants and producing more CO<sub>2</sub>, 3,500 tons not stretching the capacity of landfills, 3,500 tons that are sustaining the workers involved with transporting, marketing and recovering materials, and so on. And since the cost of this recycling is directly sustained by a small fee paid ONLY by those who are actually buying these items, it is a non-factor for municipal budgets.

**You can bring your mattresses and box springs to the New Haven Transfer Station Monday through Saturday from 9a.m. - 12p.m.** We will then inspect your items to ensure they are indeed recyclable. You can do your part prior to drop-off by not leaving a mattress outside in “weather,” on the ground, or in damp basements for too long, and by not bringing bug-infested mattresses to the Transfer Station. Keep in mind also that these items are largely deconstructed by hand, and that compromised units can adversely affect the health and safety of workers at the recovery facility.

It is a testament to the efficient operations of MRC and administrators such as Dan McGowan that mattress and box spring recycling in Connecticut has become such a robust process in such a short amount of time!



## Feature Reuse - More than Reusing

*Sometimes referred to as “upcycling” or “closed loop recycling” reuse falls squarely in the “sustainability” category of materials, and is something we should consider before resorting to recycling, since it is a more efficient way to divert waste.*

In closing my own loop by re-using whatever I've purchased, I often forget that this is only part of the reuse equation. Donating what I don't reuse, rather than have it sitting idle and adding to the clutter, is the second part of the equation. The third part is supporting reuse by frequenting and purchasing from outlets for reused or re-purposed items.

Listed below are just a few of these outlets:

### **Creative Reuse:**

Eco Works –  
89 State Street, North Haven  
[\(203\) 498-0710](tel:(203)498-0710)  
[ecoworksct@gmail.com](mailto:ecoworksct@gmail.com)  
<https://www.ecoworksct.org/>

Creative reuse retail outlet and workshops for those that want to participate as a maker.

### **Building Materials:**

New England Reuse -  
400 Sackett Point Rd, North Haven  
[\(203\) 230-2647](tel:(203)230-2647)  
<https://www.nereuse.us/>

Save valuable materials from landfills through site-salvage. They promote ReUse Solutions and green construction practices, and also utilize local craftsmen/craftswomen to re-purpose material.

Reclamation Lumber  
424 Grand Ave, New Haven  
(203) 752-1204  
[Sales@ReclamationLumber.com](mailto:Sales@ReclamationLumber.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/ReclamationLumber/>

“Mining the 'industrial forest' since 1995”

New Haven County ReStore (Habitat for Humanity)  
286 South Colony Rd, Wallingford, CT 06492  
(203) 774-7560  
<https://habitatgnh.org/restore/>

**Clothing:**

Vintanthro  
895 Whalley Ave, New Haven, CT 06515  
Phone: [\(484\) 816-8243](tel:(484)816-8243)  
<https://www.vintanthromodern.com/>

Vintage clothing and accessories store in Westville. Large selection!

EBM Vintage  
839 Chapel St, New Haven, CT 06510  
Phone: [\(203\) 772-1728](tel:(203)772-1728)

Goodwill  
2369 Dixwell Avenue, Hamden  
Call [\(203\) 230-2910](tel:(203)230-2910)  
<https://goodwill-hamden-gwsne.business.site/>

Durable goods and clothing

**Paint:**

<https://www.paintcare.org/drop-off-sites/>

Note: though not technically reuse outlets, these are listed as a resource here for your convenience. Outlets typically accept 5 gallons or less at a time. Call ahead

PPG paints  
(203) 562-5173  
390 East St, New Haven

Grand Paint & Carpet Center

451 Grand Ave, New Haven  
(203) 562-5601

Sherwin-Williams

454 Whalley Ave, New Haven  
(203) 562-5173

<http://www.sherwin-williams.com>

Goody's Hardware

540 Main St, East Haven  
(203) 469-5335

**Online resources:**

Craigslist

Facebook Marketplace

Ebay

Etsy

## Calendar of Events:

America Recycles Day – November 15

<https://www.nationaldaycalendar.com/national-day/america-recycles-day-november-15>

This year's theme: Reuse and Repurposing (see our article above)

National Recycling Week – November 13-19

<https://www.wastesorted.wa.gov.au/events/national-recycling-week>

## City of New Haven meeting schedule:

<https://newhaven-ct.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

## New Haven Parks and Public Works info:

### **A Message from Parks and Public Works Resident Services:**

The Parks & Public Works office located at 34 Middletown Ave will be closed, on Thursday, November 23, 2023. Please note that all trash and recycling pick-up will be delayed one day following the holiday that week. (Thursday pick up will be Friday and Friday pick up will be Saturday.)

**NOVEMBER** will be the final month to place yard waste outside on your normal trash & recycling day as we will suspend yard waste pick-up during the winter. Yard waste **MUST** be in brown bags and cannot weigh more than 50 lbs. **GRASS CLIPPINGS, ROCKS, AND DIRT** should not be placed in yard waste bags. Branches cannot be longer than 4 ft long and **MUST** be bound. **REMEMBER, IT IS A VIOLATION OF THE ORDINANCE TO RAKE OR BLOW LEAVES INTO THE STREET. EXTRA LEAVES WILL SLOW CREWS DOWN AND LARGE PILES CAN DAMAGE THE STREET SWEEPERS. CREWS WILL AVOID THESE PILES AND REPORT THEM TO THE PUBLIC SPACE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION.**

New Haven residents with a valid CT state driver's license, or ID can stop by our office at 34 Middletown Ave Monday-Friday 7 am - 4 pm to pick up free vouchers to be used at the Transfer Station. The Transfer Station is open for residents Monday – Saturday from 9 am – 12 pm. Vouchers cover yard waste (such as branches, brush, and leaves) and residential waste such as electronics, bulky waste, and furniture - (think: garage, attic, storage room) that are not otherwise recyclable at the transfer station.

**VOUCHERS DO NOT COVER DEMOLITION AND/OR CONSTRUCTION, STUMPS, OR BRANCHES LARGER THAN 6 INCHES AROUND AND WILL RESULT IN A FEE FOR THE RESIDENT. AS NOTED PREVIOUSLY GRASS CLIPPINGS, MULCH, AND DIRT ARE NOT ACCEPTED AT THE TRANSFER STATION!**

Did you know that See Click Fix also sends alerts? If you haven't reported a concern via the app, you can still sign up to receive alerts. You can create multiple points of interest and register to receive notifications for that area so you can get street sweeping notices where you live and where you work. We also send out notices to remind you that trash will be delayed for the holiday. Please visit <https://seeclickfix.com/new-haven> to sign up!

**Links:**

New Haven Public Works-

<https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/>

Public Works paving schedule-

<https://www.newhavenct.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/15028/637903861608081376>

See Click Fix-

<https://seeclickfix.com/new-haven>

**NHSWRA contact info and link:**



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Fax: 203.691.5990

[www.nhswra.com](http://www.nhswra.com)

[info@nhswra.com](mailto:info@nhswra.com)

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