Relative Share of Aggregate Discards by Material Category: 2005 vs. 2013 vs. 2017

	2005	2013	2017
Residential Curbside recyclables	**35.5%**	**28.8%**	**33.6%**
Clean paper, cardboard	22.8%	18.3%	17.1%
Metal, glass, plastic, cartons	12.7%	10.5%	16.5%
Organics suitable for composting	**28.0%**	**31.5%**	**34.4%**
Food scraps	17.7%	18.0%	20.7%
Food-soiled paper	6.1%	7.5%	8.1%
Yard waste	4.2%	6.1%	5.5%
Other divertable materials	**8.5%**	**9.8%**	**9.0%**
E-waste	0.6%	0.9%	0.3%
Harmful household products	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%
Plastic shopping bags	2.7%	2.3%	1.9%
Textiles	4.8%	6.2%	6.3%
Other	**24.1%**	**26.0%**	**23.0%**
Construction & demolition debris	5.2%	5.1%	4.5%
Other materials	18.9%	21.0%	18.5%
Non-bottle rigid plastics	**3.9%**	**3.9%**	*

* Non-bottle rigid plastics were categorized as Refuse in 2005 and 2013, and categorized as MGP recycling in 2017.

Note: Totals may not sum exactly due to rounding.

Recycling Achievement

The nature of what New Yorkers, and Americans, discard is changing. Our recycling achievements are affected by the composition of the products produced, consumed and discarded—both recyclable and non-recyclable—and the level of participation in recycling. Many products that used to be made from recyclable materials are now made from multi-layered flexible packaging not accepted for recycling by DSNY. We read less printed matter, which may account for the decline in recyclable Paper. At the same time, online shopping and home delivery grows, which means we generate more recyclable corrugated cardboard.

Multiple metrics help us understand the City's recycling achievements in residential collections. The weight of Paper and MGP collected in recycling trucks identifies absolute quantities recycled. The "capture rate" is the percentage of all Paper and MGP that is properly separated for recycling as opposed to discarded as Refuse. Capture rates identify the latent potential to recycle more. Finally, contamination rates measure unwanted materials in curbside recycling. Today's recycling facilities are designed to recognize and sort recyclables from contamination using mechanical and manual methods. They do so with accuracy and efficiency. However, sorting and disposing of contaminants adds to the cost of recycling, and any contamination diminishes the quality of recovered recyclables.