

Paris Trilib'

Type

Shared surface container on curb

Best Practice Strategies

- 3.05 Shared surface containers in the public realm or on agency property
- 3.08 Design streetscapes that allow curbside access to containers

Summary

Paris is a low-rise city with one of the highest population densities in Europe. Most buildings are six stories or fewer. Residents are accustomed to bringing their waste and recyclables down to street-level receptacles inside their building. Each morning or night, building staff roll bins from courtyards and entryways to the curb for collection by semi-automated trucks.³³ Paris collects three streams curbside—refuse, recyclables and glass— and may add a fourth: organics (an organics collection pilot was started in two districts in 2017). Meanwhile, many buildings do not have room to store enough wheeled bins to manage the volume they generate. Citywide, 30% of buildings have no receptacles for glass, and 15% still provide only refuse bins.³⁴

While hosting the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2016, Paris set out to expand access to recycling collection by introducing a new kind of street furniture.³⁵ In the spirit of the city's wildly popular bike sharing program, Vélib', the new recycling kiosks are called Trilib' (from *trier*, "to sort"). The kiosks have foot pedal-operated openings



Above:
Trilib' recycling station
in a parking space

Left:
Trilib' waste streams
are collected by several
different entities
including the nonprofit
Carton Plein who collects
salvaged boxes by cargo
bike and sells them for
reuse.

on the sidewalk side and a street-facing door from which sanitation crews remove a wheeled container. Trilib' kiosks include four to six modules providing access to up to five streams: metal and plastic packaging, paper and small cardboard, glass, textiles and large cardboard, each color-coded with its own type of opening. The number and type of containers varies depending on waste generation characteristics in the immediate area.

Trilib' is designed to address a number of issues beyond a lack of storage space within buildings and low recycling rates. These other objectives include giving recycling new legitimacy as an activity deserving of a prominent location in public space and normalizing drop-off down the street as a complementary practice in a city used to door-to-door pickup. The repurposing of parking spots for new kiosks also reinforces the city's commitment to shifting space away from cars.³⁶

In 2017, as part of a pilot program, 40 Trilib' stations were installed in four urban contexts: superblocks of apartment towers, town houses, major public spaces and the historic city center. Preliminary results are encouraging. The volume of material collected via Trilib' has increased from 50 tons the first month to almost 80 by the sixth. The city envisions installing 1,000 stations by 2020 and is contemplating adding additional containers for other types of material.³⁷

Challenges³⁸

- Capacity: The project team is looking at ways to redesign the kiosks to increase capacity and reduce collection frequency, particularly for bulky materials like cardboard.
- Bulky cardboard: Initially, a large opening was provided for bulky cardboard, but this led to problems with overflowing and contamination. Kiosks were modified with a slot opening similar to a large mailbox's, which seems to be working.
- Noise: The first glass containers were too noisy. The problem was solved by adding sound insulation.

Applicability to NYC

Specially designed surface containers could be installed in public plazas or parking spaces to expand access to recycling in NYC neighborhoods where there is not adequate space for waste storage. Reconceiving bins as public amenities akin to bike-sharing equipment, as Paris has done, could be helpful in siting drop-off stations for a range of materials.