

Residential Recycling and Diversion

Issue:

Higher levels of waste diversion (capture more resources) could be achieved with more convenient options for residential waste recycling. Based on the Baseline Assessment/Survey 85 percent of respondent thought curbside collection of recyclables should be offered to every home in Lincoln as part of the basic garbage collection services.

Major Options:

- 1) Maintain Status Quo
- 2) Residential Curbside Recycling to be Provided to All Single Family and Duplex Dwellings City Wide.

Implementation issues/considerations:

- 2) Residential Curbside Recycling to be Provided to All Single Family and Duplex Dwellings City Wide.
 - a. Program type/structure and strategies
 - i. Voluntary or mandatory participation (how aggressive should the diversion effort be?).
 - ii. City managed or integrated with waste collection
 1. Flat fee
 2. Volume based waste collection (pay as you throw)
 - b. Minimum level of service
 - i. Universally available
 - ii. Defined material types
 - iii. Standardization

Other Considerations:

Residential Recycling and Diversion (Excerpts from Technical Paper)

- Residents in Lincoln and Lancaster County (Planning Area) have access to voluntary recycling opportunities but systems, facilities and programs may not always be convenient or may have what some consider extra costs, which serve as disincentives.
- it does not subject vehicles involved in collecting source separate recyclables (as well as yard waste) to licensing requirements under LMC 8.32.
- There are no reporting requirements for haulers, and as such the number of haulers providing curbside recycling is unknown.
- Three private recycling processing centers operate in the City and accept recyclables from residential and business customers and sort and process them to meet market specifications. The capacity to process significantly larger volumes of materials would need to be evaluated if a significant increase of recyclables resulted from an expanded residential recycling program. Additionally, not all existing facilities may benefit from an expanded program.
- Effective residential recycling programs often use combinations of the above options to maximize diversion and address inherent limitations with any one program type. For example, drop-off facilities are commonly utilized in conjunction with community-wide residential curbside collection to provide recycling opportunities to multi-family residents, to provide just-in-time management opportunities (large volume of OCC), and/or to capture certain materials that may not be collected in a curbside program (i.e., glass).
- if major increases in the number of residents using curbside recycling is a goal of the Solid Waste Plan 2040, then some form of market regulation or mandated programs will likely be required;
- Free market - minimum service ordinances can take a variety of forms but, in the simplest sense, might obligate a refuse firm to provide (or offer) a certain minimum level of recycling service to refuse customers as part of a license to operate within the community. Ordinance(s) would typically define such aspects as: materials to be collected, frequency of collection, and possibly maximum charges.
- Curbside residential recycling costs per household decrease through organized collection systems, such as with franchises or contracts, due to inherent efficiencies.
- Standardized collection also makes it easier to implement incentives to recycle (see Recycling Incentives paper). Universally available curbside collection programs have been reported to result in diversion rates of between 10 to 25 percent of the residential waste stream (based on approximately 50 percent participation), with higher rates in more aggressive programs.
- Mandatory (statutorily required) recycling with imposed fines or penalties, as described above, is a social and culturally driven decision. Whereas universal programs look to expand services and provide motivation to voluntarily recycle.
- Drop-off centers also provide one option for multifamily residential dwellings that cannot be effectively served by curbside programs.

- Implementation considerations are of particular relevance for a universal curbside recyclables collection option, based on the Planning Area's current curbside recyclables subscription system and free market refuse collection.
- To significantly increase diversion of residential waste through recycling a combination of City-wide, universal curbside recycling collection along with strategic drop-off centers and continuation of private and non-profit organizations collection sites would likely be necessary. Such a combination of programs would maximize community participation and program effectiveness.
- [Curbside residential recycling] Provides the highest level diversion option for residential recyclables when universally available. Higher levels of diversion can be achieved if use of such programs is mandatory.
- To increase recycling above the status quo, the convenience and mandate of a city-wide, universally-provided curbside collection should result in significantly higher level of residential recyclables diversion.
- If the Solid Waste Plan 2040 incorporates universally available, city-wide curbside recycling the City would also need to evaluate minimum levels of service, how to fund such services, and how to most effectively/efficiently implement such a program.