

Commercial Recycling and Diversion

Issue:

Higher levels of waste diversion (capture more resources) could be achieved with more convenient program options for commercial waste recycling. Commercial recycling provides the greatest opportunity for increased diversion rates. Commercial recycling accounts for 9 percent of the total MSW recycled in the Planning Area.

Major Options:

- 1) Maintain Status Quo
- 2) Commercial Recycling to be Provided to Multi-Family Dwellings, Businesses, Industries and Institutions.

Implementation issues/considerations:

- 2) Commercial Recycling to be Provided to Multi-Family Dwellings, Businesses, Industries, and Institutions.
 - a. Program type/structure and strategies
 - i. Multi-Family: service based on number of units; Businesses, Industries, and Institutions based on specific business/industry/institution
 - ii. Voluntary or mandatory participation (how aggressive should the diversion effort be?)
 - iii. Stand alone or integrated with waste collection
 - b. Minimum level of service
 - i. Universally available
 - ii. Defined recyclable material types
 - iii. Standardization

Other Considerations:

Commercial Recycling and Diversion (Excerpts from Technical Paper)

- Businesses, industries, institutions and multi-family residences likely provide the greatest opportunity for diversion of recyclables.
- Opportunities in commercial recycling have the potential to dramatically increase diversion, through increased recycling in the Planning Area.
- Properly planned and implemented, commercial recycling also has the potential to have a lower cost per ton diverted than a residential collection program.
- To significantly increase diversion of waste from businesses, industries, institutions and multi-family residences, through recycling, some form of expanded, City-wide, universally available, recycling program would likely be necessary.
- Commercial recycling is a largely unregulated business. The number of waste haulers providing commercial recycling services and participation levels are not known
- Firms providing source separated recyclables collection services are not required to license their (source separated recyclables) collection vehicles and report any information regarding their service areas, type of services provided, type and quantity of material diverted/recycled, or the number of customers they service. As a result, the number of waste haulers providing commercial recycling services and participation levels are not known.
- if an overall recommendation of the Solid Waste Plan 2040 is to significantly increase the quantities of materials recycled from these “commercial” waste generators, then additional or expanded programs will be necessary. As discussed below, these programs may require some form of market regulation or mandated programs;
- A licensing program for source separated recyclables haulers may also be necessary to effectively implement and enforce such an option.
- The NDEQ study reports that the three main components of Bluff Road Landfill’s commercial waste stream (by weight) are paper fibers (49 percent), plastics (19 percent) and food (16 percent). Based on NDEQ’s table comparing the composition of commercial and residential waste, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of the cardboard comes from commercial sources and represent initial materials that would be targeted in an expanded commercial recycling program.
- Commercial recycling programs will need to adapt to the differences in types of business, business infrastructures, participants, program/services, and available/targeted materials.
- The policy/ordinance changes, enforcement, and other implementation considerations are of particular relevance for a universal available commercial recycling collection (either, refuse hauler required or building owner/operator provided),
- To increase recycling above the status quo, the convenience and mandate of a City-wide, universally-provided recycling collection program (through refuse hauler or building owner/operators) should result in significantly higher level of commercial recyclables diversion.

Solid Waste Plan 2040

- New construction recycling space requirements is a topic receiving significant emphasis in many locations in the US.
- Of the expanded program options available, City-wide (universally available – refuse hauler or building owner/operator provide) programs appear to provide the greatest opportunity to maximize commercial recycling (rates and quantities) and minimize landfill disposal of solid waste. If the Solid Waste Plan 2040 incorporates universally available, City-wide commercial recycling, the City will need to evaluate minimum levels of service, and how to fund, implement and enforce such services.