
Appendix 1 Public Involvement —
Focus Group Summary

Solid Waste Focus Group Summary

Towards Zero Waste: Olympia's Waste Management Plan ■ City of Olympia ■ August 2006

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Executive Summary

In June 2006, the city of Olympia passed a resolution embracing zero waste as a key solid waste policy goal. The action reflects and reinforces the city's long-standing commitment to the policies and practices of sustainability. The city is currently in the process of updating its solid waste management plan. The update, *Towards Zero Waste: Olympia's Waste Management Plan*, will outline strategic elements of a progressive solid waste management program for Olympia over the next six years, aimed at the ultimate achievement of zero waste.

In order to understand waste generation and recycling practices of local businesses, the city partnered with Jones & Stokes to design and moderate three focus groups to gather insight and recommendations from the following industry sectors:

- Restaurants and grocers (food waste)
- Large retailers, state agencies and schools (paper waste)
- Construction, deconstruction, salvage and renovation (construction debris)

The goal was to understand current operational challenges in order to identify waste reduction activities that could be implemented through *Towards Zero Waste: Olympia's Waste Management Plan*. Focus group selection was based on the results of the *2004 Thurston County Waste Composition Study*. The study indicated food waste, paper waste and construction debris as the categories with the greatest potential for increasing waste stream diversion. The focus groups were held the last week of August 2006. Respondents were asked about their reactions to the concept of zero waste; current recycling and waste reduction practices; how the majority of waste is generated; impediments to increased waste reduction; perceptions; and finally, potential solutions.

Key Findings

A complete list of recommendations is included in Chapter 5. Key findings include:

- **Cost is the bottom line:** All participants indicated that their businesses make an effort to reduce waste. In each case, the degree to which they reduce, reuse or recycle is determined by how much it costs, how convenient it is, and how much space it requires. Many pointed out that recycling should cost less than dumpster disposal. *"People want to do the right thing if they're given the opportunity, so the more we can do to minimize cost and maximize proximity and convenience, [the better]."*
- **Businesses need expanded service:** Streamlined systems, expanded service and monetary incentives are needed in order to improve solid waste and recycling practices. All agreed that paper and newspaper recycling for downtown businesses is a necessity. *"It's a matter of convenience. Once it's easy to do, it'll get done."*

- **Packaging creates costly challenge:** Waste reduction must be encouraged at the manufacturing stage in order to decrease packaging, and improve product design and stewardship. *“It doesn’t break down, takes up space and is costly to dispose of, yet for many customers bigger is better. If you reduce [the size of packaging], they automatically think [they are] getting less.”*
- **Lack of public awareness slows progress:** Help change the perception that recycled products are inferior; encourage utilization of sustainable product resource books to inform purchasing decisions; reward employees who problem-solve; and perhaps most importantly, raise expectations about waste reduction. *“A jurisdiction declaring zero waste is a good start. Just by announcing that, you’ve made your public aware.”*

1 Introduction

Purpose and Methodology

The city of Olympia Public Works Department is updating its solid waste management plan, which will guide project development efforts in the city over the next six years. To provide base data for the plan update, the city developed a focus group process to gather information regarding solid waste reduction and recycling practices, impediments to increased waste reduction, and potential solutions. Three focus groups were identified as a way to obtain qualitative information from local business sectors that are typical high food, paper and construction waste generators. City staff, city council, and the Utilities Advisory Committee members collectively selected focus group participants. They sought a mix of regional, local, large and small entities within the restaurant, office and construction industry sectors. The input is expected to help the city identify waste reduction activities that can be implemented through *Towards Zero Waste: Olympia's Waste Management Plan* and supported by the community.

Uses and Benefits of Focus Groups

Focus groups are particularly useful for research and ground-truthing at the outset of a study or plan, where decision makers are interested in exploring responses in more detail and where relatively little is known about current approaches or sentiments. Focus groups provide candid feedback from a group of people quickly and at less cost than large systematic surveys; however the findings are not statistically valid and typically cannot be generalized to a larger population. Using this approach, the city intended to explore possible solutions and innovations, recognizing that the community must be an active and willing partner in achievement of solid waste reduction.

Report Organization

This report includes an Executive Summary and five chapters: 1) Introduction, 2) Food Waste Focus Group, 3) Paper Waste Focus Group, 4) Construction Waste Focus Group, and 5) Recommendations.

2 Food Waste Focus Group

Focus Group Participants

Participants represented a mix of local and regional businesses, small and large restaurants and other community food providers including:

- Anthony's Homeport Restaurant
- Bayview Thriftway Grocery
- Occasions Catering
- Plenty Restaurant & Catering (2)
- Salvation Army
- TOP Food & Drug
- Utility Advisory Committee, City of Olympia (2)

Zero Waste Responses

Participants were asked to respond to the words 'zero waste.' Comments included:

- Surprised to hear that city of Olympia is intending to go for zero waste
- Lofty, difficult goal
- Difficult to involve people in the restaurant business because of high turnover rate
- What does 'zero waste' mean?
- Challenging, but something to aim for
- Two-pronged effort—reducing and reusing
- Reducing amount of waste that goes to the landfill
- Efficient utilization of resources
- Difficult to achieve—creative ideas and innovations needed
- Just exciting to know that people are thinking about it
- First step is reducing packaging
- Difficult to get people in the zero waste mindset

Current Waste Reduction Practices

- All participants indicated that their businesses make an effort to reduce waste. In each case, the degree to which they reduce, reuse or recycle is determined by how much it costs, how convenient it is, and how much space it requires.

- For many small businesses, a single employee coordinates and monitors all the recycling on his or her own time.
- Larger businesses have formal companywide recycling standards. One participant pointed out that different jurisdictions manage and regulate solid waste differently, which makes it difficult to standardize recycling practices among several restaurant or retail locations.
- Many employees reuse scrap paper for notes, find other uses for plastic containers, and make an effort to break down cans in order to save storage space.
- Most food waste goes straight to the compactor or dumpster, though a portion is diverted when possible and economical. For the grocers and caterers, edible leftovers are donated and spoiled or expired food products are given to local farmers and renderers. At some restaurants, fryer oil is picked up and reused by local biodiesel producers.
- Most agreed that less waste is generated on the supply side than from preparing and serving meals. Restaurant owners generally buy only what they'll use and if they do end up with extra, they try to use it rather than throw it away.
- Waste such as food trays, delivery containers, pizza boxes, plastic wrap, paper towels and napkins makes up a small portion of the total waste produced in the food service and grocer industry. The bulk of this waste is thrown in the dumpster. Some businesses bale and re-sell their clean, un-waxed cardboard. Glass, aluminum and plastic are co-mingled in recycle bins.
- Many of the restaurants represented in the focus group are small businesses with few employees, so the owners generally order all food and beverages and office and cleaning supplies.

Challenges and Obstacles

Factors mentioned by the greatest number of participants were:

- **Cost:** Labor costs associated with training, sorting, and managing the recycling process is a constant challenge. Many pointed out that recycling should cost less than dumpster disposal.
- **Service Gap:** All agreed that paper and newspaper recycling for downtown businesses is a necessity. The recycling and waste reduction process must be economical and convenient.
- **Space:** Lack of workspace for sorting materials is a major constraint. Many small businesses do not meet the volume threshold required for regular pickup service, so lack of storage space is another challenge.
- **Employee Initiative:** For many small businesses, a single employee coordinates and monitors all the recycling on his or her own time.

- **High Turnover:** High turnover rate in the restaurant business requires managers to constantly re-train staff on recycling practices. Even on the small business side, where there are fewer employees, turnover is a factor in training employees to recycle and reduce waste.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Some mentioned that business owners might not be aware of the monetary benefits of waste reduction.
- **Health and Safety:** Many participants indicated interest in food composting, but also voiced concerns associated with storage space, cleanliness, odor and rodents.

Potential Solutions

The following solutions are listed in order of importance; those having the most overall support from the group are listed first:

- **Consider Cost:** Establish a fair cost structure that rewards recyclers and composters. Recycling and composting should not cost more than throwing waste in the dumpster.
- **Provide Downtown Recycling Service:** All agreed that one key service the city could offer is paper and newspaper recycling services for downtown businesses, or at minimum, they could provide centrally located bins for collective use. One restaurant owner suggested the city install a centralized trash compactor downtown for use by smaller restaurants and businesses.
- **Offer Food Composting:** Initiate a pilot project for food compost pickup or consider a composting station or temporary holding facility downtown.
- **Support Community Networks:** Help promote a consortium or network that businesses could access in order to efficiently obtain, or dispose of, recycled or composted materials. Participants specifically recommended organizing or supporting a collective of biodiesel producers to ensure free, reliable pickup for local restaurants. Grocers suggested broadening the community network of local farmers and renderers who utilize food waste.
- **Educate:** Promote increased public education and awareness about zero waste and inform consumers about environmentally product and service choices.
- **Involve Washington Restaurant Association:** Ask the city to negotiate with WRA for discounted recycling and solid waste pickup rates. Involve the WRA in the creation of some sort of recyclable/compostable product resource collective or pickup/drop-off center.
- **Downsize:** Offer smaller portion sizes at restaurants.
- **Recycling Audits:** Hire a consultant to conduct an audit to understand and assess potential opportunities for waste reduction that consider the entire business operation.

Perceptions

Participants were asked to consider what would encourage employee and employers to do more. In general, respondents make an effort to recycle as much as possible given the tight profit margins and hectic pace of work. All agreed that they would be willing to do more if the process of reduction, reuse and recycling were made easier and more cost-effective.

Incentives

Several suggestions were offered, in order of importance:

- **Convenience:** The waste reduction and recycling process must to be convenient.
- **Free Technical Assistance:** Help identify producers, manufacturers and wholesalers that use recycled, sustainable materials. Offer individualized training for owners and employees and provide suggestions for improving waste reduction.
- **Monetary Reward:** Offer employee incentives and bonuses. Publicly acknowledge businesses that are leaders in the zero waste effort.

Reactions to 'Zero Waste Systems' Video

Participants were asked to respond to a video produced by Colorado non-profit Eco-Cycle. Comments included:

- Demonstrate practical solutions and tangible results. For example, you don't need a big garbage can if you compost your waste.
- Provide examples of local solutions and small, achievable actions each person can take.
- Provide a global view of the problem and show how our local community fits into that larger context.
- Manufacturers should be responsible for product stewardship and the life cycle of their product from design and production to disposal, and hopefully, reuse.
- Manufacturers should be responsible for developing more sustainable materials and reusable, biodegradable products.
- Zero waste may be a worthwhile goal, but we must have governmental and regulatory support to back it up.
- Continue educating ourselves about our local waste stream and landfill facilities.

3 Paper Waste Focus Group

Focus Group Participants

The participants represented a variety of local and regional businesses and agencies, including:

- Best Buy
- Ehrlich's Office Products
- Office Depot
- Olympia School District
- Governor Hotel
- Selden's Furniture
- Target
- Utility Advisory Committee, City of Olympia (1)
- Washington State General Administration (2)
- Washington State Lottery

Zero Waste Responses

Participants were asked to respond to the words 'zero waste.' Replies included:

- Not letting anything go to waste
- Zero waste? Impossible
- I just think 'clean'
- An ideal, a goal to try to achieve
- Great for the future
- Great idea, a necessary idea
- There will always be waste, but we can come close to zero
- From a business standpoint, logistics come to mind
- Laudable goal, but must be followed up with good implementation strategies
- What would we have to do?
- What kind of processes would be involved?
- Involve the entire community
- Make sure it's a regional goal, not just within city of Olympia

Current Waste Reduction Practices

The conversation began with a brief query about what ‘waste’ actually means. Respondents offered both sides of the spectrum; on the one hand it is “what goes to the landfill and is not recycled,” or “the stuff we don’t want to deal with anymore.” On the other, it is what “actually goes into our dumpster that can be retrieved for another life.”

Large, National Retailers

It is not profitable for each store to recycle individually, so the large retailers use cardboard baling machines to consolidate recyclables such as cardboard and plastic. They also contract with private services to dispose of commingled glass, plastic and aluminum. The larger stores have developed highly standardized, companywide recycling and recovery processes. Current practices include:

- Leveraging the business’s public image as an environmentally conscious company
- Employee training and incentive programs
- Making use of existing corporate programs such as toner and ink cartridge recycling
- Reuse of wood pallets, Styrofoam and plastic totes for store-to-store shipping instead of cardboard
- Direct deposit, paperless reports and correspondence and shortened paper receipts
- Recycled content shopping bags
- Free customer electronics and cell phone battery drop-off
- In-store packing material disposal

Small, Local Retailers

Smaller businesses have recycling systems in place, though the lack of available recycling services and storage space for sorting and storage of recyclables limit them. Current practices include:

- Paper, plastic and aluminum is either thrown in the dumpster or taken home by an employee for disposal in residential recycle bins.
- There is a local resident who visits downtown businesses weekly and picks up unwanted cardboard. One local retailer gives used or slightly damaged furniture away, saving on disposal costs.
- Some businesses drop unwanted metals at Ziegler’s Welding Shop for no charge. The metal is presumably recycled after that.

Olympia School District

- Each of the 22 sites in the district has separate garbage and recycling containers. At minimum, every site has cardboard and mixed-paper recycling.

- Only a few sites have commingled recycling, though that accounts for a small portion of the total waste generated at each school.
- Majority of waste is generated in the cafeteria and classrooms in the form of food and paper waste.
- There is a fair amount of electronics waste from citizen donations. “In some ways they’re just unloading a problem onto us.” Surplus items are used whenever possible then recycled through a local electronics recovery program.

State Agencies

- Executive Order 05-01, Establishing Sustainability and Efficiency Goals for State Operators provides funding that directly supports waste reduction and recycling. This gives state agencies an advantage. Not only do they have staff resources for managing the process; they have a network of internal processes that make waste reduction and recovery easy.
- If there is no salvageable value, the item is recycled in commingled bins or routed directly to a recovery program.
- Employees can leverage existing contracts (specifically established for state agencies) for proper disposal of oil, paint and other hazardous materials.
- Procurement is a well-defined process. Reuse of notebooks and other office supplies is standardized, and efforts are made to purchase recyclable and energy efficient products and reduce the number of toxic items like cleaning products.

Hotel Industry

The hotel industry has distinct constraints that make it particularly difficult to reduce solid waste. Though there is support from management at the local hotel represented at the focus group, relatively little recycling occurs aside from cardboard, glass, plastic and aluminum generated by daily operations, deliveries and the in-house restaurant. Currently there are no recycle bins in hallways or individual guestrooms.

Major Waste Generators

Front-end waste is a recurring and costly problem for everyone:

- All agreed that packaging is the biggest waste generator. Often the materials cannot be recycled or broken down, and therefore require storage space until they can be disposed of. In some cases it’s possible to request that suppliers reduce packaging, though retailers said they have no control over the shipping process, especially when products arrive from overseas.
- One retailer pointed out that sufficient packaging is important, because “if the product becomes damaged then you have another waste issue on your hands.”

- “We talk about the vendor bringing waste to us, but we just pass it right on to the consumer. We go through a pallet of plastic shopping bags a week.”
- Manufacturers of print and ink cartridges have developed recycling and recovery processes that are efficient and essentially free. Nearly everyone participates.

Challenges and Obstacles

Factors mentioned by the greatest number of participants were:

- **Service Gap:** All agreed that the lack of recycling service downtown is a major impediment to reducing waste. Respondents also mentioned a lack of coordination between the city’s solid waste service and LaMay’s recycling service. Some wondered if a partnership between those entities could enable more efficient pickup, service discounts or incentives other for increased recycling.
- **Space:** Many noted the lack of space for sorting and storage of recyclables.
- **Leadership:** “There has to be someone that is leading the charge. If it’s not important to the head guy, then it’s probably not going to be important to anybody else.”
- **Convenience:** When employee turnover is high, and the motivation to recycle is low, only the most convenient tasks seem to get done.
- **Perception:** Packaging contributes to the perception of quality in some cases. Many customers perceive larger packages mean better products and are not willing to pay for items that appear to be damaged. Some manufacturers have reduced the size of their boxes, yet customers think the product is in some way inferior.
- **Confidentiality:** Shredding of confidential records and receipts requires an extra costly and time-consuming step in the recycling process.
- **Electronics Recovery:** One participant wondered whether toxic electronic waste is simply being shifted around the world.
- **Regulatory Requirements:** Respondents questioned whether some state and federal standards that require regular upgrades, such as metals products, are wasting more than necessary.

Potential Solutions

The following solutions were identified, with those having the most overall support from the group listed first:

- **Provide Downtown Recycling Service:** All agreed that one key service the city could offer is paper and newspaper recycling services for downtown businesses.
- **Coordinate Garbage and Recycling Services:** Consider a partnership between the city and LaMay in order to create rate incentives for recycling.
- **Reduce Packaging:** Initiate and support efforts to reduce manufacturer packaging.

- **Educate:** Help change the perception that recycled products are inferior; encourage utilization of sustainable product resource books to inform purchasing decisions; reward employees who problem-solve; and perhaps most importantly, raise expectations about waste reduction.
- **Support Community Networks:** Recover recyclables and find businesses that can reuse the materials.

Perceptions

Changing public perception and raising awareness were common themes throughout the focus group. Businesses must balance customer service (i.e., bigger is better, new is better) with their own profitability and waste reduction goals. Many businesses deliberately focus on waste reduction and recycling in order to promote environmentally conscious business practices and set themselves apart from competitors.

Incentives

Two main themes were discussed:

- **Convenience:** If the waste reduction and recycling process is efficient and easy to use and the proper tools are in place, more people will participate.
- **Cost:** Some respondents said they might be willing to pay a higher price if the pickup and recycling process was more convenient.

Reactions to 'Zero Waste Systems' Video

Participants were asked to respond to a video produced by Colorado non-profit Eco-Cycle. Comments included:

- We make decisions about everything we buy, everything we do, and for the environment we're making the wrong choice.
- Some feel powerless because they have no control over how much packaging is used to ship products. "We're just in charge of managing what's left."
- It goes back to education and making people realize that at some point recycling and reducing waste will not be an optional thing.
- It shouldn't be a choice, whether to save the environment or not.
- Look down the road at how far we've come in the last generation, and where we're headed. If we don't reduce waste now it's going to be too late.
- It takes a lot of information and positive information to drive change, and once you understand the need to reduce waste it becomes a pretty simple decision.
- Even though you have 25 employees, you can affect change.
- We lack awareness about the many options that you have to reduce and reuse.

- The city can really become involved by making recycling convenient for people and educating them.

4 Construction Waste Focus Group

Focus Group Participants

Participants represented a wide range of local and regional businesses, including new construction, renovation, demolition, salvage and recovery:

- Artisan's Group
- Brand X Construction
- Northwest Olympia Neighborhood Association
- Olympia Master Builders
- Olympia Salvage
- ORCA Construction
- Smith Design Studio
- Recovery 1, Inc.
- RK Construction
- Thurston County Solid Waste (2)
- Utility Advisory Committee, City of Olympia (1)

Zero Waste Responses

Participants were asked to respond to the words 'zero waste.' Replies included:

- It is possible.
- It is not possible.
- I believe it is possible; you just need somewhere to put it, and somewhere to recycle it. There's no alternative right now.
- Cost and separation necessary to provide another use for the materials
- Challenge of dealing with lawyers, board members and shareholders of the companies that manufacturer the products. They have a bottom line.
- It's a great concept. I think it's something we should strive for, but I don't think that with the current technology it's possible to attain right now.
- It's cost prohibitive.
- I don't think zero waste is beyond our reach.

Current Waste Reduction Practices

Responses reflect the many perspectives within the construction industry, from new construction to resource recovery. All participants indicated that their businesses make an effort to reduce waste, though the degree to which they reduce, reuse or recycle is determined by how much it costs, how convenient it is, and how much space it requires.

New Construction and Renovation

- **Job-Site Source Separation:** Separation happens onsite, but it's very minimal. Cardboard is the only material that is recycled consistently. Smaller construction companies generate about two 60-pound trash bags per week, after sorting for cardboard and wire scraps.
- **Self-Hauling:** For convenience and economy, most companies self-haul cardboard, recyclables, salvageable materials, and some construction debris.

Resource Recovery

- **Deconstruction and Salvage:** Efforts are made to recover and salvage as much material as possible, while removing items containing asbestos or lead paint. Dimensional lumber, cabinetry, floors, doors, windows and high-grade finished materials are all salvaged whenever possible.
- **Recovery:** The process includes nearly all materials from floor to roof, such as wood, nails, bolts, hanger plates. Hazardous materials still present a challenge; recovery services cannot accept drywall and items with asbestos, lead paint or mercury.

Major Waste Generators

- Construction debris and unsalvageable items are the biggest waste generators, and a portion of that waste stream includes hazardous materials.
- For remodels, nearly all the waste comes from demolition. Other waste includes cardboard, Styrofoam and plastic, though it's a minimal.
- Waste generation varies from phase to phase of construction. The framing stage generates woodcuttings and lumber scraps, but the final stage of installing cabinets, plumbing, electrical and other fixtures can produce volumes of unwanted packaging.

Challenges and Obstacles

Factors are listed in the order of importance given by the group:

- **Service Gap:** Despite recycling and recovery efforts, most of the construction debris ends up at the transfer station due to lack of local alternatives. For many, it is not cost effective to haul materials to several different sites for recycling.

- **Cost:** Everyone agrees that cost is the bottom line. Some feel that a drop-off/recovery center would be useful, yet they wonder if their customers would pay for the cost of separating and recycling materials. “Quite frankly, it’s just easier to throw it away.”
- **Space:** For some, the challenge is finding space to separate materials on small construction sites.
- **Hazardous Materials:** Disposal of hazardous and toxic materials remains a challenge for everyone. From a recovery standpoint, the main concerns are asbestos, mercury thermostats and switches, fluorescent tubes, and lead paint.
- **Finding Second Use:** Some contractors invite people on-site to take salvageable scraps and woodcuttings, but this has also resulted in attracting thieves.
- **Lack of Awareness:** General contractors and subcontractors are often unaware of waste management, recovery and salvaging options and opportunities.

Potential Solutions

The following solutions were identified, with those having the most overall support from the group listed first:

- **Provide Local Recovery Facility:** There was universal agreement that some kind of local recovery or recycling facility is needed in Olympia that could take materials like wood, nails, sheetrock and paint. From there, it could be consolidated and delivered to recovery services in Tacoma. Some suggested a facility on public property adjacent to or near the Thurston County transfer station that is managed by a private recovery service, or perhaps a partnership with the city or county.
- **Support Job-Site Source Separation:** Provide large containers for on-site separation, similar to a commercial scale version of the recycling bins currently used. The materials would then be self-hauled, but time would be saved in sorting and separating. Another suggestion involved an on-site drop box with regular pickup and reduced tipping fees.
- **Focus on the Front End:** Incorporate elements of the waste management plan into the permitting process, or develop new city codes for planning and the design review process, such as the use of green building materials and sustainable site planning.
- **Consider Impact Fees:** One participant suggested that waste management should become part of the impact fees, along with roads, sewer and other infrastructure.
- **Educate:** There are opportunities to educate contractors and building about sustainable building materials, recovery and salvage, such as the Olympia Master Builders green building education courses or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®). There may also be opportunities for the city and businesses to educate employees and the public about consumer choice and the variety of sustainable products and services currently available.

Incentives

The following themes emerged:

- **Job-Site Source Separation:** Pursue legislation and grant funding to support new facilities.
- **Cost:** Provide credit against tipping fees in exchange for higher volumes of recycled or recovered materials.
- **Tax Deductions:** Many of the salvage services are non-profit organizations that offer tax-deductible receipts for the value of the donated material.

Reactions to 'Zero Waste Systems' Video

Participants were asked to respond to a video produced by Colorado non-profit Eco-Cycle. Comments included:

- The video makes it sound to me like, 'oh it's all going to be taken care of for me, I don't have to worry about it.'
- There were some great ideas at the end of the video, but it's at such a high level that people can look at it and say 'oh, this is too easy; this is a real easy thing to do.' It doesn't require a real sense of commitment.
- The overall message is good, but it oversimplifies a very complex issue.
- It doesn't quite address the importance of consumer choice. Everybody pays because it's bad for the environment, but it's not saying you are choosing that result by what you're buying.
- There is probably more product stewardship in Europe than in the United States.
- Get the public involved and make them understand that they have a choice about everything they do everyday.
- The manufacturer take-back is pretty interesting especially if they become responsible for the materials they use for manufacture. Then they're going to figure out a way to design them so they can take them apart when they come back in. Because if they don't, then it's going to cost them more, so that's a good incentive.
- The narrator is not the best talking head; he seemed condescending at times.

5 Recommendations

The purpose of the focus groups was to uncover impediments to increased solid waste reduction and recycling, identify how most waste is generated, and explore perceptions, incentives and potential solutions. The discussions were held in the spirit of open-ended brainstorming, with the understanding that any new services or programs would require the collective involvement of the city, businesses, local and regional partners and the community at large. Five main categories of recommendation emerged during the focus group sessions. Based on those themes, Jones & Stokes provided specific suggestions for further consideration and study by city staff.

Fill the Service Gap

- Research the cost and feasibility of providing municipal recycling services for downtown businesses. At minimum, this could involve centrally located bins for collective use.
- Evaluate cost and benefit of centralized trash compactor downtown for use by smaller restaurants and businesses.
- Assess the feasibility of a community food-composting program that offers composting tubs and frequent pickup service.
- Consider initiating a pilot project for restaurant food compost pickup or a shared composting station for downtown restaurants.
- For construction sites, evaluate the cost and feasibility of providing large containers for job-site source separation, similar to the commercial-scale recycling bins currently used. The materials would then be self-hauled, but time would be saved in sorting and separating.
- Research the possibility of offering pickup service for the construction site recyclable and recovered materials containers. Coordinate with Thurston County to consider reduced tipping fees for those who utilize the pre-sort containers on-site.
- Pursue Washington State Department of Ecology's solid waste grant programs to support new facilities and services. Pursue legislation and other state and federal financial assistance.

Create Monetary Incentives

- Establish a fair cost structure that rewards recyclers and composters. Compare current recycling and dumpster/landfill disposal fees and determine if discounts, credits or other financial incentives could be offered to those willing to increase recycling, composting and recovery practices.

- Some businesses may be willing to pay a higher price if the pickup and recycling process was more convenient. Determine a fee that would be cost-effective for the city and supported by the ratepayers.
- Publicize and promote tax-deductions offered by salvage companies for the value of the reusable items and construction materials.

Foster Local Partnerships

- Support local networks that offer resources to efficiently obtain or dispose of recyclable and compostable materials.
- Organize a collective of biodiesel producers to ensure free, reliable pickup for local restaurants.
- Coordinate with LaMay and key local jurisdictions such as Thurston County in order to improve and streamline waste management services and create rate incentives for increased recycling.
- Seek composting partnerships with local grocers, Olympia Food Co-op, Farmers' Market, Garden Raised Bounty (GRuB) and Thurston County Master Gardeners.
- Evaluate the feasibility of partnering with Washington Restaurant Association (WRA) for discounted recycling and pickup rates. Involve WRA in the creation of a recyclable/compostable product resource collective or pickup/drop-off center.

Zero in on the Front End

- Help legislate for improved product design and stewardship. Reduce front-end packaging and waste by pressuring manufacturers and vendors to decrease packaging.
- Research the feasibility of incorporating the element of waste management into the city permitting process and impact fees along with roads and other infrastructure.
- Develop new city codes for planning and the design review process, such as the use of green building materials and sustainable site planning.

Raise the Bar

- Partner with local and state agencies, businesses, and schools to raise awareness about sustainability, local and regional solid waste issues, and the city's zero waste efforts.
- Promote local success stories and offer practical approaches to waste reduction.
- Educate contractors and architects about sustainable building, deconstruction, recovery and salvage through programs such as the Olympia Master Builders green building courses and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®).
- Educate consumers and help change the perception that recycled products are inferior and that bigger means higher quality.

