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## PART 2





## Chapter 6

# Plan Direction and Methodology

Close-up.



CHRIS JORDAN

**Running the Numbers**  
An American Self-Portrait

*Cans Seurat, 2007*  
60"x92"

**Part 2** of the Waste Management Plan has been developed based on the background information in **Part 1 (Chapters 1-5)**. **Chapter 6** gives the overall policy context for the Plan and the analytical approach used to develop the Plan. **Chapter 7** and **Chapter 8** describe the strategies and actions developed in response to the goals of waste reduction and increased diversion of recyclables and compostables. **Chapter 9** describes the strategies and actions for improving operational effectiveness. Staffing requirements and financial implications of the Plan are presented in **Chapter 10**. Planned actions are summarized in **Appendix 5**.

## POLICY CONTEXT FOR THE PLAN

This Plan was developed within a context of the City's vision of a sustainable future, the missions of the Public Works Department and Waste ReSources, and the long-term goals for waste management.

### Olympia's Sustainable Community Vision

When adopted, *Toward Zero Waste: Olympia's Waste ReSources Plan* will be one of several functional plans that implement the vision and policies established in Olympia's 1994 *Comprehensive Plan* as amended. Aspects of the *Comprehensive Plan* vision most relevant to waste management are: becoming a sustainable community, accommodating projected growth in compact urban development, keeping the infrastructure cost-effective, involving citizens in community decision-making, and regional coordination. These are reflected in the following excerpts from the *Comprehensive Plan* vision (pp. 11-13).

**"Growth and change in Olympia and its Growth Area will be accommodated in a sustainable manner. . . . Decades of commitment to the philosophy of sustainability will pay off by maintaining Olympia's healthy environment, healthy economic base, and healthy social and cultural systems. . . . moving toward a pattern of living that can be sustained indefinitely.**

**"Our future city will be compact . . . . The compact development pattern will make it easy and cost-effective to provide a high level of urban utilities and other services. . . . All development will incorporate appropriate measures to minimize environmental impacts. . . .**

**"Continual efforts to repair environmental damage from earlier development will also show great benefit. Improved stormwater management, improved sewage treatment, less-polluting vehicles, reduced garbage**

output per person, an ethic of resource conservation, and other advances will pay off. In spite of our increased population, Olympia’s air and water will be cleaner than they are today. . . .

“Olympia will be an increasingly united community which solves problems through full communication and community decision-making. . . . We will work closely with our neighbors – Tumwater, Lacey, and others – in implementing solutions to common problems. . . .”

## Public Works Mission and Vision

Waste ReSources operates within the overall mission and vision of the Public Works Department.

**Strategic Mission Statement: Why we exist.** We ensure with others the Earth’s present and future by envisioning, creating, and maintaining the infrastructures that are vital to Olympia.

**Operational Mission Statement: What we do.** We plan, build, operate, and support utility and transportation systems and sustain natural systems that people need for a safe and comfortable life

**Vision:** Balance and Harmony between people and nature.

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### Mission:

*To lead and inspire our community toward a waste-free future.*

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### Strategic Role:

*We create opportunities to eliminate waste.*

## Waste ReSources Mission and Strategic Role

The Zero Waste Resolution adopted in June 2006 establishes a vision for the City and new direction for Waste ReSources. It adds specificity to Olympia’s Sustainable Community vision, and aligns with the Public Works vision of “Balance and Harmony between People and Nature.”

With “Zero Waste” as the vision, the mission at Waste ReSources is: “To lead and inspire our community toward a waste-free future.” The strategic role is: “We create opportunities to eliminate waste.”

The Utility has begun moving in this direction by providing waste reduction and garbage and recycling collection services to residents, businesses, and the general public, so the community is assured a clean and healthy environment that preserves natural resources.

## Strategic Issues

Why is waste a problem? Globally, waste is a huge problem resulting from a growing population, the spread of consumer values and consumption, and a system of resource extraction, manufacturing and distribution that encourages depletion and doesn’t factor environmental and social costs into the price of the product.

The result of all this is depletion of natural resources, air and water pollution, and rising greenhouse gas emissions – all of which is environmentally unsustainable and costly to society as a whole (see [Chapter 1](#)).

Olympia residents and businesses contribute to this global problem. Even here, a growing population and increasing quantities of waste are creating environmental problems and pressuring an already strained regional waste management system (see [Chapter 2](#) and [Chapter 4](#)).

The movement towards Zero Waste is a response to the environmental, economic and operational issues created by increasing waste:

- Zero Waste strategies consider the whole life cycle of a product and ways to reduce waste in “upstream” production and distribution processes as well as in “downstream” consumer choices and waste management practices.
- Zero Waste strategies support operational efficiency by reducing the overall amount of waste to be handled, and by facilitating shared public and private responsibility for “end of life” waste management.

The contemporary Zero Waste paradigm anticipates a future in which “waste” is viewed as an inefficient use of resources, less waste is generated and discarded, and discarded material is composted or recycled.

## WASTE RESOURCES GOALS

The following Waste ReSources goals guided the development of this Plan:

1. **Reduce the overall waste generated in Olympia (garbage and recyclables).** The quantity of products and materials used and ultimately discarded by Olympia residents and businesses is steadily decreasing over time.
2. **Increase the quantity of recyclable and compostable materials diverted from the landfill.** The percentage of discarded products and materials that are reused, recycled or composted by Olympia residents and businesses is steadily increasing over time.
3. **Manage Olympia’s waste system responsibly.** Discarded materials are collected, processed and disposed of reliably, with minimal impact on environmental and public health and worker safety.

*The emphasis will be on reduced overall waste and increased recycling of materials that show up in significant quantities in Olympia's garbage.*

## STRATEGIES FOR 2008 - 2013

Six strategies were developed in response to the waste reduction and recycling challenges and opportunities described in **Part 1**. These will be the focus of Waste ReSources activities over the next six years. The emphasis will be on reduced overall waste and increased recycling of materials that show up in significant quantities in Olympia's garbage – recyclable paper, food waste, and construction and demolition (C&D) debris – as well as other potential recyclables such as electronic waste, batteries, plastics, and packaging other than cardboard. As part of these strategies, the City will continue its internal efforts to increase waste reduction and recycling by all departments.

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### Goal 1

**Reduce the overall waste generated in Olympia (garbage and recyclables).**

**Strategy 1.1** Encourage waste reduction.

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### Goal 2

**Increase the quantity of recyclable and compostable materials diverted from the landfill.**

**Strategy 2.1** Optimize recycling of residential waste by diverting additional curbside recyclables from the garbage.

**Strategy 2.2** Increase recycling of commercial waste by diverting additional curbside recyclables from the garbage.

**Strategy 2.3** Increase diversion of organics, including yard debris, food debris and compostable paper, to composting.

**Strategy 2.4** Improve recycling of construction and demolition (C&D) debris.

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### Goal 3

**Manage Olympia's waste system responsibly.**

**Strategy 3.1** Ensure that recyclable materials collected at curbside or drop-off sites are actually recycled, and that operations are effective.

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## APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE PLAN

Based on the challenges described in **Part 1 (Chapters 1-5)**, Olympia Waste ReSources staff and consultants identified a number of possible strategies, and a wide range of potential options for action. Analysis of these potential options resulted in the strategies and actions included in this Plan. Following are the steps used to develop the Plan:



*The Utility Advisory Committee guided development of the Plan.*

**Initial decision.** The process began in early 2006 with a decision to develop a new waste management plan for Olympia. Since the City operates much of its own collection service and has a long-standing commitment to waste reduction and recycling, Public Works leadership decided a plan tailored to Olympia was needed to give

specific guidance to management of the City's system. The previous plan, adopted in 1991, focused primarily on operational efficiency rather than strategic direction.

**City Council direction.** City Council members began expressing a desire for Olympia to aim for "Zero Waste." With the support of the Utility Advisory Committee, Council passed a resolution to that effect in June 2006 (see [Appendix 2](#)). With this clear guidance, staff began developing the strategic issue – the reasons why a "Zero Waste" approach is important (see [Chapter 1](#)).

**Background research.** The next major task was to take a broad view of Olympia's waste stream and the regional waste management system in Thurston County, and identify specific challenges and opportunities (see [Chapters 2-5](#)). Analysis of the waste disposed at the County's Waste and Recovery Center (WARC) found large quantities of recyclable and compostable materials, particularly:

- Materials currently collected at curbside (e.g. paper, glass and cans).
- Food debris that is potentially compostable.
- Construction and demolition (C&D) debris.
- Other potentially recyclable materials.

The Plan began to take shape around a focus on diverting as much of this material as possible from the waste stream. Staff collected ideas for dozens of possible steps the City could take to reduce the total amount of material discarded and to recycle or compost increasing quantities of this waste (see [Appendix 4](#)).

**Public involvement.** To learn more about the possible challenges and opportunities for diverting this material, the City convened several focus groups, participated in the City's Open House, and met with neighborhood groups (see [Introduction](#) and [Appendix 1](#)).

**Guiding principles.** In identifying strategies, considering options, sorting through potential actions and selecting options for implementation, the Utility was guided by these principles:

- Address the Zero Waste vision.
- Work within the context of the State and Thurston County waste management plans.
- Emphasize education and incentives over regulation.
- Lead by example through City projects, programs and internal operations.
- Design for customer convenience.
- Encourage competition (for commercial recycling services).
- Achieve measurable results.
- Build relationships with business and community groups, other local governments and State agencies.
- Participate in regional Zero Waste planning efforts to stay at the forefront of waste management innovation; otherwise keep it local.

**Analysis.** For each of the strategies, several options were identified and assessed based on these three criteria:

- Reduction potential – quantity and toxicity. How effective the option would be in reducing quantity and/or toxicity.
- Feasibility or practicality. How “doable” is the option in terms of legality, available technology and ease of implementation?
- Customer acceptance. Would customers find this option useful and valuable? Would they be likely to change behavior to implement it?

Due to the variability of possibilities at this conceptual stage, another important criteria – cost – could not be assessed.

The recommended options were selected based on a review by the Utility Advisory Committee and the City Council’s Land Use and Environment Committee and published in August 2007 in a Draft Plan for public review. Following a public hearing October 23, City Council decided to add a recycling requirement for multi-family and multi-use buildings (see Strategy 2.1). Planned actions resulting from this review are presented in **Chapters 7-9** and summarized in **Appendix 5**.

**Financial analysis.** After the recommended options were determined, a financial analysis identified the costs and revenue implications. Following the public hearing, the analysis was updated and is presented in **Chapter 10**.