

# Carpet Recycling Workgroup Charter

**\*\*DRAFT\*\* August 10, 2009**

## Preface

In the Pacific Northwest there is currently no carpet processing capacity, though there is a growing network for collection of used carpet for recycling, and several local recycling companies are consolidating carpet and shipping it for recycling out of state. From recent discussions with carpet industry and recycling contacts, we have learned about processing technologies, including recent developments which are promising for establishing local facilities to complement current eastern U.S. infrastructure

According to the Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE) 2008 Annual Report, of the 2,821,000 tons of post-consumer carpet discarded in 2008 in the U.S., 122,000 tons or 4.3 percent was recycled. A slightly higher percentage (5.2 percent) of post-consumer carpet was diverted from landfill. It is believed that a very small percentage of the 50,000 tons of waste carpet generated in Seattle and King County is recycled. Carpet that is collected for recycling is sorted, consolidated and shipped primarily to the South Eastern U.S. where it is processed to separate the constituent materials. End-markets for carpet-derived materials have included new fiber for carpet, carpet backing, carpet pads/cushions, textiles, auto parts, wood-plastic composites, flooring and as a fuel substitute for coal in industrial boilers.

A 2008 report prepared by Sound Resource Management for Seattle Public Utilities found that recycling was by far the preferred end-of-life choice for carpet in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. *Environmental Impacts from Carpet Discards Management Methods*; Dr. Jeffrey Morris, 2008.

The work conducted so far has established resilient relationships with many carpet industry parties, leading to good communications and to their viewing the northwest as highly favorable for carpet recovery infrastructure. National work developing specifications for recovered nylons and exploring end markets are also encouraging for local efforts. In addition, local support for policies and practices to improve C&D processing and other solid waste reduction policies, along with the active green building presence, combine to provide a strong foundation for projects like this one on carpet recovery.

## Workgroup Objective

The Carpet Recycling Workgroup will develop a set of tactics, which will constitute the *Northwest Carpet Recycling Strategy*, to bring local processing capacity to the region and support end market development. The Workgroup will prioritize the strategy, identify tactics and resources, and consider how to divide up the effort with the objective of recycling carpet generated in the Pacific Northwest that is currently being disposed of in landfills.

## Workgroup Roles & Responsibilities

Seattle Public Utilities and the King County LinkUp program are co-sponsors of the Carpet recycling Workgroup. Shirli Axelrod and Kris Beatty will lead the Workgroup with support from their respective consultant teams. SPU and LinkUp will coordinate and facilitate Workgroup meetings and activities.

Workgroup members agree to make every effort to attend all advisory group meetings and participate in discussions, whether they be by phone, email or in-person. Workgroup members should feel free to contact Shirli Axelrod and/or Kris Beatty when additional clarity or direction is needed.

## Workgroup Scope

- The work of Workgroup is expected to be completed by the end of 2009 but also may extend into 2010 if needed.
- The Workgroup will comment on key strategy decision points and documents through email and up to four in person meetings.
- The Workgroup will collaborate to create the *Northwest Carpet Recycling Strategy* that charts the path for recycling carpet generated in the Pacific Northwest. Activities may include:
  - Helping identify resources and information that will be useful for the Workgroup.
  - Helping identify possible strategies to achieve the Workgroup goal.
  - Working with the team to investigate possible strategies and prioritize those that will most effectively achieve the goal.
  - Reviewing and commenting on the draft *Northwest Carpet Recycling Strategy*.

## Workgroup Members

<b>Workgroup Sponsors &amp; Consultant Support</b>	
Shirli Axelrod	Seattle Public Utilities
Kris Beatty	King County LinkUp
David Stitzhal	Full Circle (consultant support to SPU)
Julie Colehour	C+C (consultant support to LinkUp)
<b>Workgroup Team Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Joyce Cooper	University of Washington
(?) Karl Englund	Washington State University
(?) Nicole Hoekstra	Western Washington University
Sego Jackson	Snohomish County Solid Waste
(?) Nancy Leigh	Georgia Tech
Lisa Sepanski	King County Solid Waste Division
(?) Cheryl Smith or Tim Stearns	Department of Commerce
Bill Smith	Tacoma Solid Waste