

Responsible Recycling Task Force

Meeting #2 – June 1, 2018



Agenda

- **9:00 - 9:15:** Welcome & Introduction
(Jeff Gaisford)
- **9:15 - 9:30:** Task Force Problem Statements
(Julie Colehour)
- **9:30 - 9:50:** Responsible Recycling Task Force Meeting Schedule *(Julie Colehour)*
- **9:50 - 10:30:** What's in the Bin?
(Lisa Sepanski & Julie Colehour)
- **10:30 - 10:50:** Communications Update
(Kim van Ekstrom)
- **10:50 - 11:00:** Action Items & Wrap Up
(Julie Colehour & Jeff Gaisford)



April 30: Meeting Minutes

- Review and Approve



Responsible Recycling Task Force Problem Statements

Julie Colehour



Task Force Goals

- **Short Term Goal:** To help identify near-, mid- and long-term actions in response to reduction in export markets for mixed recyclable materials due to China National Sword policies.
- **Longer Term Goal:** To help establish commitment across the region to responsible recycling and domestic sorting/processing of curbside recyclables.
- **Outcomes:** Prepare a report with actionable items and recommendations for future action by all; if possible, develop interim tools for communications and other topics that are more immediately available.
- **Role of Task Force:** Not to make decisions, rather to learn about the problem, understand activities that are being implemented elsewhere and opportunities for change. They will provide guidance on next steps that will be brought back to county advisory committees and decision makers.

Problem Statement

Key challenges facing the recycling industry provide an opportunity for King County to improve and create a responsible and effective recycling system for the future. There are two problems the Responsible Recycling Task Force will address:

- **Short-Term:** China's import restrictions (China National Sword) have reduced markets for mixed paper and mixed plastics
- **Long-Term:** Recycling in King County suffers from three major issues:
 1. Contamination
 2. Market Vulnerability
 3. Recycling is not free

Short-term: China's import restrictions

- Immediate closure of significant market
- 138,000 tons of materials must be processed elsewhere
- Alternative export and domestic markets are limited



Long-term: Recycling in King County

1. Contamination:

- 5-10% residuals at local MRFs
- Contamination in bales restricted to 0.5%
- Commingling, packaging and resident confusion increase contamination

2. Market Vulnerability:

- 40% of King County recyclables impacted
- Lack of domestic markets creates export need
- Social and environmental justice concerns
- Limited capacity at local MRFs

3. Recycling is not free:

- Revenue does not offset cost of recycling
- Cost of domestic secondary sorting facilities greater than export
- Haulers/MRFs requesting waivers and surcharges
- Minimized landfill capacity may lead to increased costs



Task Force Meeting Schedule and Content

Julie Colehour



Responsible Recycling Strategies

- A focus on the **Quality vs Quantity** of recyclables
- Using consistent and **Harmonized Messaging** across the region
- Prioritizing **Domestic Processing and Markets** for recyclables (also consider Social Justice and Environmental Impacts of export)
- Creating domestic **Demand for Recycled Feedstock**
- Accept that **Responsible Recycling is Not Free**
- Shift to **Measure Real Recycling**



Date	Topics Covered
April 30	<i>Task Force Goals; Responsible Recycling Framework; Current Conditions; Communications</i>
June 1	Curbside Materials and Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's in the Bin (<i>Quality vs. Quantity</i>) Communications (<i>Harmonized Messaging</i>)
June 18	Contracts, Waivers, Surcharges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waivers and Surcharges (<i>Responsible Recycling is Not Free</i>)
July 18	Fiber & Plastics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiber Processing (<i>Domestic Processing and Markets</i>) Plastic Processing (<i>Domestic Processing and Markets</i>)
August 24	Financing & Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financing Options (<i>Responsible Recycling is Not Free</i>) Recycling Infrastructure Systems (<i>Quality vs Quantity, Domestic Processing and Markets, Responsible Recycling is Not Free</i>)
September	Creating Demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative and Policy Option (<i>Create Demand for Recycled Feedstock</i>) National and Private Sector Efforts/Opportunities (<i>Create Demand for Recycled Feedstock</i>)
October	Final Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and discuss final findings and recommendations Discuss next steps

What's in the Bin?

Lisa Sepanski & Julie Colehour



Commingled Residential Recycling



Problems:

- Contamination
- Pollution in international markets due to domestic contamination
- China ban on low-grade post-consumer plastics and unsorted paper
- .5% contamination limit in imported recyclables

Goals:

- Define an ideal commingled collection program that will ensure the best and highest use of recyclable materials and maximize market value

Criteria for Success:

- Alignment across local WA governments
- Verification of specific end markets prior to inclusion in curbside programs

Commingled Work Group Recommendations

YES!

Paper: Printer, office paper, newspaper, phone directories, mail, catalogues, magazines and cereal/cracker boxes.

Corrugated cardboard: boxes and packaging made of three different paper layers, the inner layer is corrugated

Plastic bottles and jugs: Clear, colored and natural (PET #1 and HDPE #2 resins)

Metals: Steel and aluminum cans

NO!

Plastic bags and film: Wraps around MRF equipment, requires a system shut down to be cut off. Film from MRFs is dirty and has few markets.



Shredded Paper: Falls through the sorting equipment at the MRF and ends up as litter that has to be cleaned up – both are costly labor issues.



NO!

Food-soiled, greasy paper including pizza boxes: Anything contaminated with food cannot be recycled and contaminates paper bales.



Wet cardboard and paper: Moisture causes paper to mold and when baled, gets compacted into a paper “brick” and cannot be recycled.



NO!

Plastic cups, trays and clamshells:

Contaminated with food, will get flattened in the collection/MRF systems and get mixed in with paper.



Scrap metal, pots and pans and aluminum foil:

Large, heavy metal items damage MRF equipment. Foil is usually contaminated with food and melts at lower temperatures than cans, so burns up in furnaces.



Use Caution: Talk to your hauler, MRF and end-users

Paper cartons, frozen food containers,
aseptic containers: They are coated with outer layer of plastic to protect the fiber from breaking down in wet conditions and contaminate paper bales. Aseptic containers also have a metal layer. These materials need to be sorted separately and sent to mills that are equipped to separate the polycoat, metals and fiber.



Use Caution: Talk to your hauler, MRF and end-users

Glass: If glass is not collected in your commingled bin already keep it separate. Degrades MRF machinery and contaminates paper. Without access to a secondary processor, potential end-uses for glass collected in commingled systems are dramatically reduced from an environmental and economic standpoint.



Use Caution: Talk to your hauler, MRF and end-users

Mixed Plastics (#3 - #7 resins): Baled mixed plastics must be sorted into bales by resin types to have value and viable end markets. Requires equipment to sort between the various resin types.



Use Caution: Talk to your hauler, MRF and end-users

Non-bottle bulky rigid plastics:

Containers, such as five-gallon buckets, flower pots, tubs and lawn furniture, currently have questionable markets. Since they are often heavy and large, bulky plastics are too big for the conveyor belts and require sorting by hand.



<i>NO!</i> (short-term)	<i>YES!</i> (short-term)	<i>Caution</i> (medium-term)
Plastic bags and film	Paper	Paper cartons, frozen food containers, aseptic containers
Scrap metal, pots and pans and aluminum foil	Corrugated cardboard	Glass
Plastic cups, trays and clamshells	Plastic bottles and jugs	Mixed Plastics (#3 - #7 resins)
Wet cardboard and paper	Metals	Non-bottle bulky rigid plastics
Food-soiled, greasy paper including pizza boxes		
Shredded paper		



Responsible Recycling Communications Consortium

Kim van Ekstrom



Purpose of the Consortium

- Support the policy efforts of the Responsible Recycling Task Force and the coordinated, regional response to recent changes in international recycling markets.
- Reiterate that recycling is still the right thing to do and should not be stopped.
- Develop a “Recycle Right Campaign” that reinforces the principles of “Clean, dry, and empty,” and other key messages of recycling right.
- Provide consistent messaging in the form of a tool kit that can be used across multiple channels and by partners and stakeholders.

Tool Kit Elements

- Key messages and FAQs about recent changes to international recycling markets and recycling best practices
- Pre-written social media posts, newsletter-length stories, and op-eds reinforcing recycling best practices such as “clean, empty, dry,” recycling right, and reducing contamination
- Messaging translated into different languages to reach as many communities as possible
- A guide to recycling



Other Communications Tools/Strategies

- Consistent website updates
- Working with local news outlets
- Joint ad buys



Next Steps

- Assign tasks to Consortium Members
- Collaborate with private industry (haulers)
- Identify resources available

Consortium Members

- **Gerty Coville**, Project Manager, King County Solid Waste Division
- **Becca Fong**, Solid Waste Communications and Outreach, Seattle Public Utilities
- **Matt Manguso**, Communication Specialist, King County Solid Waste Division
- **Michael May**, Public Information Officer, Bellevue Utilities
- **Stephanie Schwenger**, Solid Waste Program Administrator, Bellevue Utilities
- **Lisa Sepanski**, Project Manager, King County Solid Waste Division