

Date: June 15, 2015

To: Bruce Glasscock, City Manager

From: Robert Smouse, Environmental Waste Services Manager

RS

Subject: Residential Recycling Rate Goal and Implementing SimpleRecycling Program

In advance of next Monday's City Council Preliminary Agenda presentation, I am providing insight into the related recommendation of increasing Plano's recycling rate goal from 40% to 50% and implementing a future residential-based "free" recycling collection of textiles and small household items through SimpleRecycling.

Plano's residential single-stream recycling program plateaued in 2008 and has slowly declined over six (6) years, even with targeted program enhancements:

- 10,000 home recycling incentive pilot with Recycle Bank program in 2008-09,
- Recycle Right Plano educational campaign 2012-14, and
- the current Recycle Right All-star recycling incentive program started in late 2013.

Even though the recent recycling program enhancements have not increased our annual recycling tonnage, they have helped maintain the annual tonnage while the solid waste and recycling industry has shown the "evolving ton of recyclable materials" has changed and is 10-15% less due to material composition and lighter weight items. Therefore, in addition to developing Plano's long-term Twenty (20) year Solid Waste Plan in the coming year, staff from Environmental Waste Services and Sustainability & Environmental Education divisions, support:

1. increasing Plano's Recycling Rate Goal to 50%,
2. implementing a SimpleRecycling residential-based program in November, and
3. continuing our Recycle Right Plano educational and incentive programs.

Plano's comprehensive approach towards increasing our waste minimization and recycling efforts continues to lead in our region and in some aspects throughout Texas. I have included results from a recent survey and reference responses I compiled through our evaluation of the SimpleRecycling program, as well as information SimpleRecycling provided. Please let me know if you have any questions prior to the presentation.

EWS Survey Response

During March and April, EWS promoted an online survey for Plano residents to complete and provide insight into various aspects, enhancements and challenges associated with Plano's current residential recycling programs. One specific question was targeted towards implementing a separate residential recycling program (SimpleRecycling-based as an example) that would allow them to dispose (recycling and/or reuse) unwanted clothing and housewares in reusable condition, through a special custom-printed and provided collection bag. Below are the results:

18.41% or 44 responses selected – Yes, this would be a great way to increase recycling of these items.

40.59% or 97 responses selected – Yes, even though I recycle/reuse these items through other donation programs.

40.59% or 97 responses selected – No, I currently donate these items for others to recycle or reuse again.

0.42% or 1 response selected – No, I currently place these items in the trash and this would be one more program I would have to know about.

SimpleRecycling References

Below are eight (8) questions we presented to program coordinators associated with municipalities that already implemented the program. In addition, below each question, are the coordinating responses from:

Lori Welch – Environmental Specialist for Lansing Michigan

Catherine DeShambo – Environmental Services Administrator for East Lansing Michigan

Valerie Wax Carr – Administrative Officer for Norton Ohio

1. Has there been any opposition voiced or received by local non-profit organizations (Goodwill, Salvation Army, SPCA, Good Samaritan, or others) who believe this program will reduce the volume of materials they receive or collect from the residential community? If so, can you provide samples or examples?

No, we were especially concerned about this issue, but had made contact with several organizations first to get their input. We also promote local charities and encourage citizens to continue donating to them. Simple's curbside collection is just another option.

None that we are aware of. We had calls from maybe 5 residents as we began the program who had concerns about this but we have always partnered/linked with our local non-profits, as well, and continue to do so. We encourage our residents to continue using those venues they are comfortable and pleased with. For those seeking a curbside option, this fills that void.

There was little opposition by these groups. However, right from the beginning we emphasized "give to the charitable organizations first". Simply Recycling is a way to get rid of those items not good enough to donate, yet can be diverted from the landfills.

2. After implementing the program has there been any documented or estimated reduction of materials received by/through the local non-profit organizations?

Not to my knowledge. We have had no complaints from these organizations

No, none that we are aware of.

Nothing documented and no complaints.

3. After implementing the program have there been issues with scavengers taking the SimpleRecycling material or rummaging through it to take valued items and leave non-valuable items? Or creating a mess? If so, how much (# of times) has it occurred or been reported?

We have not received any complaints about this

We have had one report only, of a car taking a bag.

No issues.

4. What has been the top two or three customer service related issues that you have been involved with related/regarding the SimpleRecycling program?

At first our residents called to find out how to get more Simple Recycling bags/tags or if they were missed, but we get very few calls about this service. We transfer any calls related to this directly to Simple Recycling.

Only the occasional missed bag to which Simple Recycling has responded to immediately and professionally. We have had residents call us to say how much they love the program.

As the routes got started our sanitation provider had a learning curve to remember to leave the green bags. After about two weeks we had no issues. Our sanitation provider worked with Simple Recycling to help educate their drivers.

5. Have you been pleased with SimpleRecycling's complaint response and overall customer service level?

Yes, there haven't been too many complaints, but when I have been contacted about a resident being missed, I have contacted Simple Recycling and they respond quickly, usually the same day

Yes, definitely.

Very much so. Always responsive. Provided more bags to us to have a city hall for example.

6. If your residential collections (trash & recycling) and SimpleRecycling collection point are in alleys (Plano has 78% of collection points in alleys), have you experienced an increase in issues with both vehicles meeting up in an alley and creating the situation where one will have to back-up to allow the other to pass? If so, how have the SimpleRecycling employees responded?

No, we pick up only from residential curbside areas, so this hasn't been an issue for us

We do have some alley collection points but, to date, this has not been an issue.

We have no alley pickup. Everything is curbside. The Simple Recycling trucks follow the sanitation trucks routes but behind them. We have had no issues.

7. Are you pleased with timely reporting and payments from SimpleRecycling?

Yes

Yes, definitely

Yes

8. Knowing what you know after implementing the program if you could do it over again would you implement SimpleRecycling program again? If not, why?

Yes, this has been a well-received program, it's popular with residents and with public officials who support the extra level of services available to residents. Not everyone is willing/able to donate clothing/textiles to charitable organizations, so this is a very convenient way of reusing/recycling materials, rather than throwing them away. A recent waste audit revealed that residents throw away a good percentage of usable clothing and textiles, so a convenient service like this can really help divert more materials from the landfill.

Yes, absolutely. We have had a very good experience so far and very positive feedback from residents. They have been great to work with.

Yes, would still implement. We do virtually nothing and receive payments.



**FREE CURBSIDE
CLOTHING & HOME GOODS
RECYCLING PROGRAM**

FREE

**TURN
KEY**

**SIMPLE
& EASY**

**SAVE \$
MAKE \$**

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Who is Simple Recycling?

We have over 50 years of experience in clothing & household discard collection

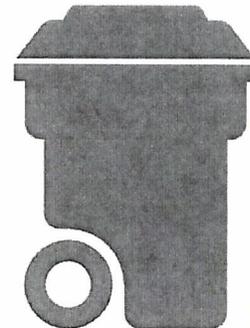
Our sister company manages clothing & household discard donation programs in partnership with non-profit organizations¹



**85% OF TEXTILES
ARE NOT RECYCLED
OR DONATED**

Environmental Impact Facts

Clothing, Appliances, Durables, & Furniture account for 15% of local waste stream



**EPA ESTIMATES
70 LBS./PERSON OF CLOTHING
ARE THROWN AWAY EACH YEAR**

(YOUR CITY'S POPULATION X 70LBS = MILLIONS OF LBS./YEAR)

Source
1. <http://www.wearonaterecycle.org>

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THE FACTS ABOUT TEXTILE WASTE

The U.S. generates and averages of **25 BILLION POUNDS** of textiles* per year.¹

* Textiles include clothing, footwear, accessories, towels, bedding, drapery, etc.

That's about **82 POUNDS** per U.S. resident.

Of That 82 pounds...

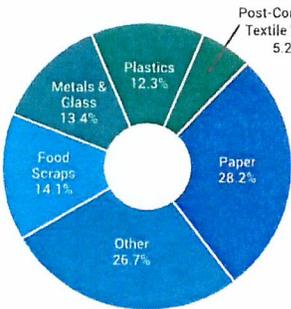
15%

gets donated or recycled through do... (12 lbs. per person.)

is recovered

85%

goes to our landfills.² (70 lbs. per person)



USEPA Municipal Solid Waste Generation

That **85%** adds up to about **21 BILLION POUNDS** of post-consumer textile waste (PCTW) PER YEAR

More than **5.2%** of all municipal solid waste generated in the U.S.³

AND THIS AMOUNT IS GROWING

Between 1999 and 2009 the volume of PCTW generated grew by 40% while the diversion rate only increased by 2%⁴



This Model has been Tested & Proven

Excerpt from USA Today, April 23, 2013 -

"Clothes recycling is going curbside in more U.S. towns as global prices rise for the used apparel, shoes and linens that Americans often toss in the trash.

Since September, more than a dozen local governments -- in Arizona, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Washington State -- have begun curbside pickup of textiles, often in special bags next to bins containing paper and cans."²



Source:
2. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/04/26/recycling-clothes-expands-curbside/2092351/>

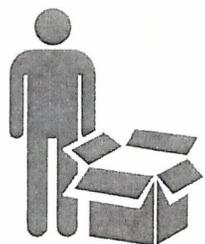
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THE LIFE CYCLE OF SECONDHAND CLOTHING



WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR RECYCLED USED CLOTHING?

Once a resident determines that their clothing, shoes, handbags, or household textiles have reached the end of their useful life, materials are collected by Simple Recycling and collected clothing is sorted and graded for condition



45%

Reused and Repurposed
Majority exported as secondhand clothing.



10-20%

Top quality materials are sold to local thrift stores where they create access to low cost clothing and jobs for local residents.



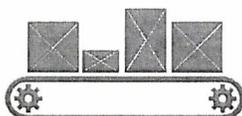
30%

Recycled and Converted
Reclaimed wiping rags are used in various ways as industrial and residential absorbents.



80%

The vast majority of clothing collected is not resaleable in the U.S. so it is further sorted for international export or broken down for raw materials.



20%

Recycled into Fiber
Post-consumer fiber is used to make home insulation, carpet padding, and raw material for the automotive industry.



Only **5%** ends up as waste.

Thrift industry employs nearly 100,000 workers in the U.S. with over \$1 billion wages paid. In addition, private sector recyclers create an additional 15,000 to 20,000 jobs nationally.¹

WE MAKE IT SIMPLE TO DRAMATICALLY REDUCE TEXTILE WASTE.

Source:
1. "Textile Recycling in the U.S." Report submitted to SMART by Dr. Jana Hawley PhD, Univ. of Missouri 2009

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donate recycle don't throw away®



Textile Recycling Fact Sheet

You and your students are probably used to recycling aluminum, paper, glass, and other items. But did you know that clothing and other textiles can be recycled too? Here are some textile recycling facts to share with your class:

The basics

- The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the average person throws away **70 pounds** of clothing per year. That adds up to **3.8 billion pounds of unnecessary waste added to our landfills**.
- Clothing and household textiles currently make up **5.2% of the waste in landfills**.
- A textile is any item made from cloth or an artificial fabric like vinyl. Textiles are used for clothing, linens, bedding, upholstery, curtains, carpets, and other items. **Any textile item, even if it's worn, torn, or stained, can be recycled.** You can even recycle a single shoe! Items simply need to be clean and dry.
- Recycling clothing and textiles **decreases the use of natural resources**, such as water used in growing crops and petroleum used in creating new clothing and textiles. It also decreases the need for chemicals used in manufacturing new textiles and the pollution caused by the manufacturing process.

How are recycled textiles used?

- Resold at charities' secondhand clothing stores
- Sent to developing countries
- Turned into wiping cloths, which are used in a variety of industries and businesses (everything from manufacturers to repair shops, construction industries, stores, and maintenance and custodial departments)
- Processed back into fibers and turned into paper, yarn, insulation, carpet padding, and other items

Where can clothing and textiles be recycled?

If your town doesn't accept textiles with other recyclables, donate your items to a local recycling center or charity. **Nearly 100% of donated items are recycled.** The recycling center or charity will determine which items are usable as clothing, which can be sold and turned into wiping rags, and which can be sold and processed back into fibers to make new products. Charities and recyclers generate revenue for their programs, and textiles get a second (or third or fourth) life. To locate a donation center near you, visit www.smartasn.org.

donate recycle don't throw away®



More Textile Recycling Facts

What are specific textiles recycled into?

Here are a few examples:

- Stuffed toys and pillows become car seat stuffing and automobile insulation.
- T-shirts, sheets, towels, and clothing become wiping cloths.
- Denim becomes home insulation.
- Shoe soles become paving material.
- Sweaters and coats become carpet padding.
- Curtains and drapes become stuffing for pillows, sleeping bags, and animal beds.
- Wool sweaters and materials become baseball and softball filling.
- Velvet materials become jewelry box lining.
- Leftover fabric scraps become paper money.

Additional resources

- *Something From Nothing* by Phoebe Gilman (Scholastic, 1992); geared for students from preschool to grade 3, this adaptation of a Yiddish folktale follows a piece of fabric as it goes from a baby blanket to a jacket to a vest to a tie, and so on.
- *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy* by Pietra Rivoli (John Wiley, 2005); good source of background information about what happens to used clothing.
- *Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia* by Karen Tranberg Hansen (University of Chicago Press, 2000); good source of information about the used clothing industry in Africa.



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Textiles

Fleece, flannel, corduroy, cotton, nylon, denim, wool, and linen. What can you do with these fibers when you're finished wearing them, sleeping on them, or draping them over your windows? One way to benefit both your community and the environment is to donate used textiles to charitable organizations. Most recovered household textiles end up at these organizations, who sell or donate the majority of these products. The remainder go to either a textile recovery facility or the landfill.

Just the Facts

- An estimated 13.1 million tons of textiles were generated in 2011, or 5.2 percent of total municipal solid waste (MSW) generation.
- An estimated 13.9 percent of textiles in clothing and footwear and 17.6 percent of items such as sheets and pillowcases was recovered for export or reprocessing in 2011.
- The recovery rate for all textiles was 15.3 percent in 2011, 2.0 million tons.

Collecting Textiles

Textiles typically are not sorted at the point of collection, but keeping them clean and free from moisture is important. Once clothes get wet, stained, or mildewed, they cannot be sold for reuse. To prevent contamination, many charities offer enclosed drop-off boxes for clothing or other fabrics. Communities with curbside collection for textiles should educate donors on how to properly bag clothing.

Recycling Textiles

Textile recovery facilities separate overly worn or stained clothing into a variety of categories. Based on data from the Council for Textile Recycling, it was estimated that 1.3 million tons of textiles in clothing were recovered for recycling in 2009. Some recovered textiles become wiping and polishing cloths. Cotton can be made into rags or form a component for new high-quality paper. Knitted or woven woolens and similar materials are "pulled" into a fibrous state for reuse by the textile industry in low-grade applications, such as car insulation or seat stuffing. Other types of fabric can be reprocessed into fibers for upholstery, insulation, and even building materials. Buttons and zippers are stripped off for reuse. Very little is left over at the end of the recycling process. The remaining natural materials, such as various grades of cotton, can be [composted](#).

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More Textiles Information

The [Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles \(SMART\) Association](#) [EXIT Disclaimer] is working to increase the amount of textile waste that can be recovered while developing new uses, products and markets for products derived from preconsumer and postconsumer textile waste.

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service has created a [fact sheet on household textile and apparel recycling \(PDF\)](#) (4 pp, 1.6MB, [about PDF](#)) [EXIT Disclaimer].