

LEGISLATIVE #

080481

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE # 7.2

GOAL # 7: ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Protect and sustain our natural environment and address future energy needs
#080481



Legistar

INITIATIVE 7.2: REVIEW THE STATUS OF COMMERCIAL RECYCLING ORDINANCES

Champion: Steve Joplin, Solid Waste Manager

Committee: Recreation, Cultural Affairs & Public Works Committee

Stakeholders: Solid Waste, business stakeholders, environmental stakeholders

Desired Outcome: Increase commercial recycling and reorganize ordinance for effectiveness and enforceability.

Background: This Strategic Initiative was first introduced by the City Commission in December, 2007 at a Strategic Planning Retreat. The Initiative was later adopted and added to the Strategic Plan on February 25, 2008.

Progress to Date:

In FY 2009, Solid Waste Division Inspectors met with business owners to provide education on recycling requirements. A peer-city review of other community's commercial recycling ordinances was conducted during the fiscal year to uncover strategies that would put "teeth" into the City of Gainesville ordinance. The Solid Waste Division also coordinated with Alachua County to revise franchising commercial contracts and work towards City and County contracts that are compatible and consistent.

In FY 2010, commercial recycling increased significantly with regard to both tonnage of recycling collected, and percentage of businesses contracting for recycling service from local haulers. The Solid Waste Division continued to take a very proactive approach to encourage compliance by systematically inspecting local businesses and providing educational outreach on commercial recycling requirements. In the past these functions were primarily carried out by one inspector, but for FY 09 & FY 10 the division has assigned 3 or 4 staff to perform this work each year in order concentrate more effort on commercial recycling. Staff also evaluated information and techniques used by peer cities and other communities in the enforcement of their commercial recycling ordinances, and prepared suggestions to be presented to the Recreation, Cultural Affairs & Public Works Committee at their November 8, 2010 meeting. At the direction of the Public Works Committee an agenda item has been sent to the City Commission requesting that they direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance providing for a warning of non-compliance to be followed by surcharges starting at \$100 for a first offense to be applied to the GRU bill of a non-compliant commercial customer.

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In FY 2011, the City Commission passed an ordinance enabling civil citations to be issued to commercial generators for failing to separate designated recyclable materials except for de minimus amounts from solid waste loads; with fines ranging from \$125 for a first offense to \$500 by the third offense. In order to begin enforcing the new ordinance Solid Waste staff received training in issuing civil citations, and redesigned and printed violation warning notices to be issued prior to civil citations. Staff also spent time researching and discussing future changes to the commercial recycling ordinance that may be needed in order to meet the state goal of recycling 75% of our waste by the year 2020. Two areas staff is particularly concerned about are the current de minimus component of the city ordinance, and the significant problems associated with trying to capture accurate figures for all the recycling that is being done within the city limits. The Solid Waste Division also began purchasing and deploying public recycling containers at some of the busier RTS bus stops in order to evaluate ways to get the best results from this segment of the recycling stream; with the intent to eventually provide a recycling container next to every public trash can in the near future. Although end of the year figures were not available as this was being written, based on figures from the first three quarters of FY 2011, it appears that we will finish the year with at least a 20% increase in reported tons of commercial recycling.

In FY 2012 Solid Waste Division staff did a lot of research and had numerous discussions with the legal department regarding the idea of reducing the de minimus amount in the city's commercial recycling ordinance. Initially there was concern that state statutes might prohibit the city from establishing a lower de minimus level, but as of this time the legality question seems to have been put to rest; so staff is discussing what level of de minimus to recommend that the city adopt. Staff is also in the process of updating the city's designated recyclables list to include recoverable items that have recently become more marketable in our area. Solid Waste Division also expects to put a lot of its focus into developing policies and ordinances to capture more of the recoverable materials that make up the Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste stream over the next two years. According to the county, commercial recycling rates in Alachua County as a whole are currently ahead of the incremental goals listed below. City SWD staff expects that commercial recycling within the city limits is probably even higher, but that cannot be proven until there are effective methods to accurately record all the commercial recycling taking place within the city.

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Action Plan for FYs 2013 – 2014

Action Steps	Estimated Completion Date:
1. Present enforcement recommendations to Public Works Committee	Completed, 2010
2. Work with Legal to add penalties and/or surcharges to ordinance	Completed, 2011
3. Send proposed ordinance to Commission for approval	Completed, 2011
4. Work with City/County staff and other stakeholders to chart a viable roadmap for achieving 75% recycling goal by 2020, and determine what initial changes should be made to the commercial recycling ordinance to begin the process.	On-going
5. Develop a strategy to capture accurate figures of all commercial recycling in the city limits	September 2013

Critical Success Measures

- Increase commercial recycling tonnage by 5%-6% each year to reach the State Goal by 2020
- Achieve a solid waste diversion rate of 40% by December 31, 2012
- Achieve a solid waste diversion rate of 50% by December 31, 2014
- Achieve a solid waste diversion rate of 60% by December 31, 2016
- Achieve a solid waste diversion rate of 70% by December 31, 2018
- Achieve a solid waste diversion rate of 75% by December 31, 2020