

Recycling Proposal

To Nancy Peterson For Review

TO: Councilors Romero, Cunningham, Uhlich, Scott, Fimbres, and Kozachik
Mayor Rothschild

FROM: Yvonne Merrill, Ph.D., Citizen Advocate: Environment, Education, and Neighborhoods
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PlanTucson Environmental Policy Working Group Member

DATE: 22 February 2012

RE: *Recycling as Economic Stimulus*

Waste is big business. If you believe that competitive enterprise is healthful for the economy, Tucson has it in our waste disposal systems. But neither the City nor the private haulers are making the most of it. I've given you a chart provided by the Tucson Environmental Services Department, an enterprise that receives no money from the city's General Fund, but supports itself and competes with private haulers to dispose of our waste—as much as it can recover. It shows the material value of our discards as commodities in the current market.

We need to keep those valuable materials here to stimulate the economy, not only by recovering and selling them, but by attracting innovative businesses and industries that can convert single-use materials into durable, reusable commodities.

Specifically, these are the policies that I think must be enacted by this council to insure that all of our wasted commodity materials are recovered by someone and returned for their monetary value to the economy and to our necessary waste disposal services:

- **All businesses selling drinks in plastic, glass and aluminum containers must be required to have recycling service and charge a returnable \$.05 container fee, \$.10 for drinks over 12 ounces, and \$.25 for cardboard cartons to pay for it. The customer would not pay the fee when returning empty containers for the next purchase. The businesses would pay for required recycling service *whether they are served by City or private haulers.** [see end]**
- **Any private hauler operating within the City limits must be required to charge for and deliver recycling service to these businesses. If the City can set a competitive price for recycling service, then the revenue would go to the support of City of Tucson Environmental Services.**
- **Retailers should be required to phase out plastic and paper bags in the next three years and charge more for them, by the end of that time only providing reusable bags for which the customer pays. Customers are much less likely to throw away bags for which they have paid substantially and which can be used again anywhere for any kind of merchandise.**
- **All multi-family developments, rental or owned, must provide either group or individual recycling service. Property owners and managers of multi-family housing where the alleys and streets do not**

- accommodate the required enclosure or space for the trucks to maneuver must be required to hire entrepreneurial haulers who can remove recyclables weekly and sell them to the recycling facility.
- All City parks must have recycling service, even if that means creating a 1/2-cent tax for park recycling. Such a tax should not be needed because the Parks Department collects the trash anyway. This way the recyclables can be sent to the new materials recycling facility (MRF) and become a source of revenue for the City.
- Tucson must create incentives for innovative businesses and industries to locate here that have the technical capability to process and re-fabricate recovered materials and hire from our own higher education and training programs.

* *The private haulers do not offer recycling pick-up. Their charges, though competitive with the City's, are just for collection and transportation of all discards combined, and they save money by not paying the City to use our landfill, which supports itself through its tipping fee. Instead they take it to transfer stations or their own landfills, sending all those recoverable materials and their potential revenue out of town. The City gets less than 25% of commercial and multi-housing customers' waste hauling and recycling contracts, yet these customers get more services for their money than those of the private haulers.*

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October 2011 Recycle Commodity Pricing Data
 Source: October 2011 Recycle America Report to City of Tucson



