

Recycling Update

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Presented to the COG Board of Directors
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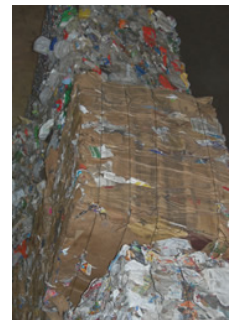
Background

- Most localities expanded their residential curbside recycling programs from simply newspapers to include glass and metal food containers in the early 1990's.
- In the mid-1990s, some local governments began introducing recycling requirements for business and multifamily buildings.
- Jurisdictions expanded the materials accepted at drop off centers to include multiple paper grades, plastics, and other materials.
- Collection of recyclables from business is handled by the private sector; collection from residences is a mixture of public collection, contracted public collection and private sector subscriptions for service with homeowners.



Recycling Status

- In the 2000's localities have added curbside residential collection service for mixed paper grades and plastic bottles.
- Most every jurisdiction now requires business and multifamily properties to recycle and the list of mandatory materials has expanded.
- The regional recycling rate has been fairly consistent the past five years at approximately 30-40%. There is some variation in rates around the region based on the programs and the reporting methodology allowed by states.



Recycling Trends

- Single Stream Recycling: collection of all recyclable material mixed together for later separation at a modern recycling plant. This practice is spreading across the region.
- Focus on business and multifamily building recycling to increase rates.
- Collection events and permanent drop off sites for electronics and other special materials such as compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs).
- Use of food waste composting services by some businesses and special events.
- Climate Change movement recognizes the greenhouse gas benefits of recycling.

Regional Promotion

- COG's Go Recycle Campaign on radio and television with support of Web site (GoRecycle.org) and phone line (1-877-GoRecycle) has run 2002-2008. The Winter 2008 Campaign focused on encouraging recycling at work. COG raises sponsorships for the campaign.
- COG's *Builders' Guide to Reuse & Recycling* in pocket-guide form and online at BuildersRecyclingGuide.com.
- COG developed with our members the *Recycling Works! Regional Recycling Partner* window sticker that is being distributed to businesses by some jurisdictions.



Sources:

- COG Research
- *Waste Management Trends in the Metropolitan Region 2001* (COG Report)
- *Survey of Public Waste Services in the Washington Metropolitan Region 2007* (Northern Virginia Regional Commission Report)