
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Serving the National Capital Region



Recycling Committee Meeting

May 27, 2010

What is Really Recyclable?

A MRF's Perspective

- Everything is recoverable
- Most things are recyclable
- **BUT ... at what cost?**

Factors impacting costs

➤ Commodity mix

➤ System design **90/10 rule**

➤ Volume

➤ Processing speed **Speed ↓ Costs ↑**



Traditional Materials

Paper

Newspaper

Cardboard

Magazines

Computer paper

Containers

Aluminum cans

Tin cans

Glass bottles & jars

#1 PET bottles (water and soda)

#2 HDPE bottles/containers (milk and detergent)

- Commonly recycled in large quantities
- Well developed end markets
- Revenue potential **EXCEEDS** costs

Next Generation Materials

#3 – 7 plastic containers

Plastic bags/film

Gable-top packaging (milk & juice cartons)

Aseptic packaging

Rigid plastics

Plastic Toys *NO METAL/ NO WOOD/ NO WIRES/ NO BATTERIES*

Plastic buckets *NO METAL HANDLES*

Plastic milk/soda crates

Plastic laundry baskets

Plastic lawn furniture

Plastic landscape items such as edging

Plastic totes- any size *NO METAL*

Plastic drums- any size *FOOD GRADE ONLY*

Plastic pet carriers *NO METAL*

Plastic pallets

Plastic coolers

Plastic shelving

Plastic closet organizers

Plastic dish drainers

Plastic flower pots *NO SOIL*

Plastic traffic signs

Empty garbage cans- any size *NO METAL*

Plastic waste baskets

5 gallon water bottles



Next Generation Materials

#3 – 7 plastic containers

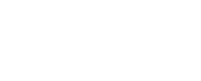
Plastic bags/film

Gable-top packaging (milk & juice cartons)

Aseptic packaging

Rigid plastics

- Recycled in limited quantities
- Low quality (contamination)
- Not easily recovered
- Specialized processing





Next Generation Materials

#3 – 7 plastic containers

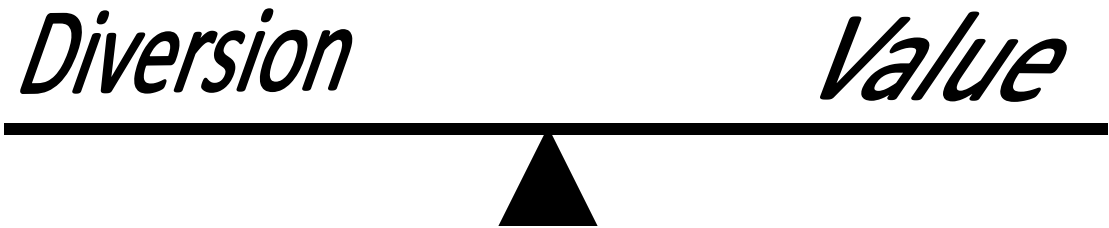
Plastic bags/film

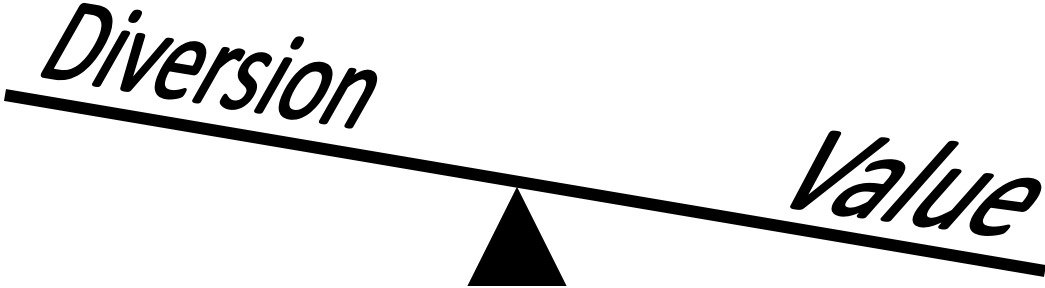
Gable-top packaging (milk & juice cartons)

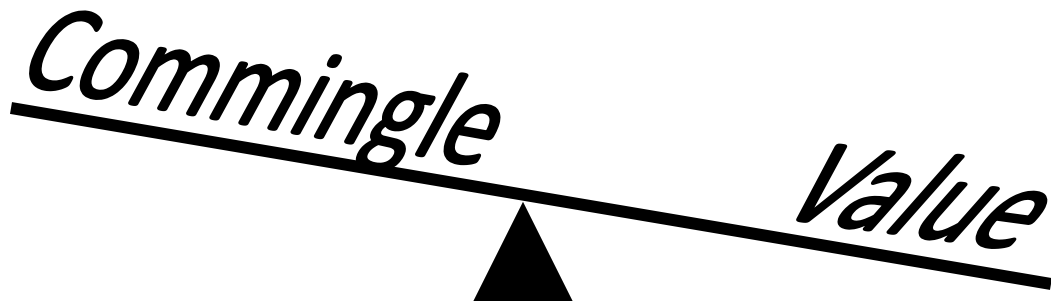
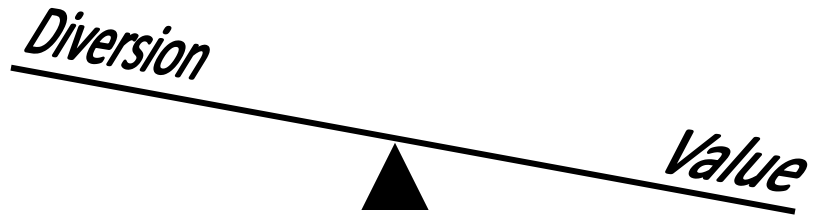
Aseptic packaging

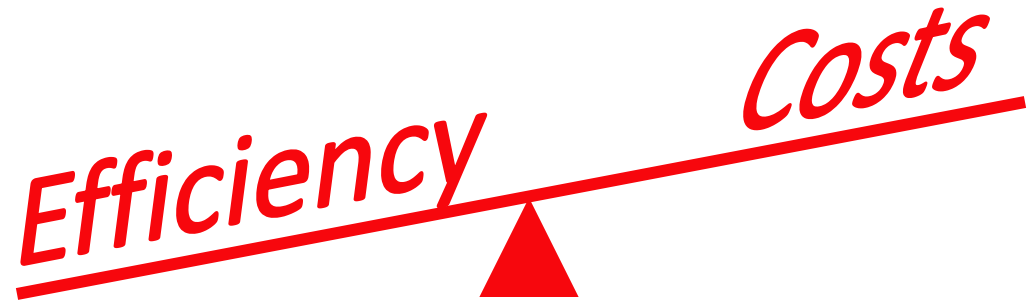
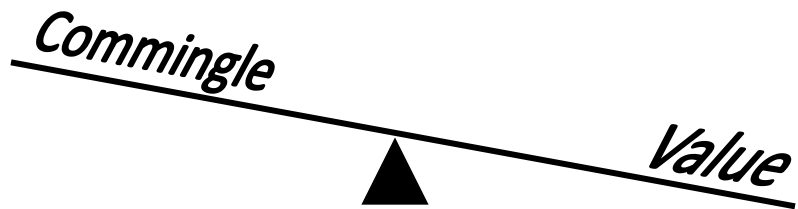
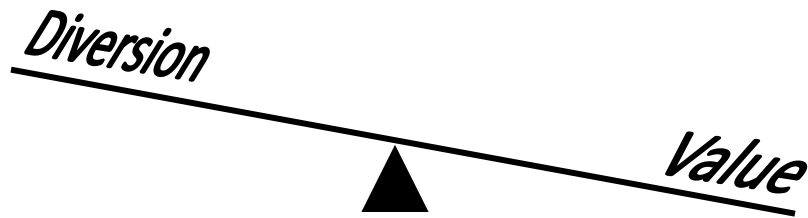
Rigid plastics

- Storage & transportation challenges
- Marginal end markets – low value
- Costs **EQUAL** or **EXCEED** revenue potential









Conclusion

Most things are recyclable, but...

- will it increase the cost of processing all material?
- does it impacts the value of the material?
- will it be recycled in a resource friendly manner?
- will it go to it's best and highest use?

Questions?