Commingled Recycling Report, Seattle Bag Ban Update and Ordinance Work
Multi-year process lead by Ecology
Many stakeholders: jurisdictions, sw/recycling collectors, MRFs, processors, Zero Waste Washington
Report in draft form, final by end of year.
Looks at issues in “system” and recommendations on addressing them
  • Commodity related issues
  • Commingled Recycling SYSTEM issues
Next step is forming Implementation Work Groups
Plastics Bags and Film

Issue: Plastic bags and film become entangled in sorting equipment at MRFs and negatively impact the sorting of other commodities

- Promote taking bags to retailer programs, build on national efforts such as Wrap Recycling Action Program (WRAP).

- Discussions with WRAP beginning. WA is in their 2017 budget.
System Issue: Plastics

Issue: The mix of plastic resins and containers is becoming more complex.

• Explore the potential for siting a Plastic Recovery Facility in the NW Region to improve the ability to collect and process existing curbside plastics and additional plastics.

  ➢ (Now in discussions with QRS involving Ecology, Commerce, OR DEQ, Office of Economic Development and touring local MRFs)
Update Report presented to Council July 2016

- Now 15 jurisdictions in WA with Bag Bans

- Around country, model similar to Seattle is preferred
  - Ban plastic carryout
  - Charge for large paper bags
  - Encourage reuse
Compliance and Results

Compliance Snapshot- Visited 25 businesses from 4 retail sectors:

- Ranked compliant, partially compliant, not compliant.
- Almost full compliance from large grocers, large drug stores, and apparel stores
- Compliance much lower in small to medium-sized, independently-owned grocery and convenience stores.

Fewer bags landfilled: decrease of 50% between 2010 and 2014 (262 tons to 136 tons)
Retailer Feedback

- **IF** a bag ban, they prefer Seattle model.
- $.05 paper bag charge very important to retailers. They want sunset date removed from code.
- Reusable bags considered the norm in Seattle.
- Concerned that people are not cleaning their reusable bags.
- On-going education and outreach is key to bag ban’s continued success.
Emerging Issues and Next Steps

• Proposed revision to bag ordinance
  • Remove sunset date
  • Address contamination issues: restrict green tinting to compostable bags only

• Begin to publicize importance of cleaning bags.
  ➢ (there has now been some media coverage)

• Developing renewed outreach strategy for small and independent grocery and convenience stores.
Additional Emerging Issues and Next Steps

• Loose plastic bags are problem at MRFs
  • Continue to message that bags must be bagged in larger bag.
  • Get more bags collected at retailer drop-site and separate from curbside system.
• Work with industry and retailers to bring WRAP Recycling Action Program to Seattle and WA State.
  ➢ (Discussions with WRAP program, now added WA State to 2017 budget, NWPSC Packaging Committee and Commingled Recycling Workgroup to discuss next steps)
• Engage industry regarding flexible packaging.
  ➢ (Engaged with national packaging industry workgroups on flexible packaging)
Proposed revisions addressed 3 existing ordinances:

- Expanded polystyrene foam
- Food service ware and packaging
- Bag ban

- Splitting apart and going forward with bag ban revisions now.
- Followed by foam
- Then service ware, allowing for more stakeholder work
Bag ordinance revisions

- Removes Dec. 31 2016 sunset date for required fee on paper bags.
- Establishes compostable definition.
- Requires compostable bags to be labeled and tinted green or brown.
- Non-compostable bags that are distributed may not be tinted green or brown.
- Disallows labeling bags degradable, biodegradable, etc.
• Proposed revision regarding bags has been sent to Council.

• Anticipate action before the end of the year but after Council works on budget.

• SWAC may want to speak to Council on the subject through a letter or preparing for anticipate Council hearing and testifying (or both)