A Regional Perspective:
Opportunities for Textile
Reuse, Rewear, and Recycling
Why Textiles and Why Now?

• **GROWING INTEREST**
  – national scale
  – focusing on increasing recovery

• **TIMELY**
  – strong markets
  – growing interest and visibility

• **IMPACT**
  – relatively large quantities currently being disposed
  – lower lifecycle impact
  – positive societal impact
  – Mixed economic impacts
Post-Consumer Textiles Value Chain

Generators → Inputs → Collection → Processing → Markets
Consumer Survey

• Between 50 and 65% of respondents reported discarding items that are generally accepted in current diversion markets.

• More than 80% of respondents said they would increase the amount of textiles donated, even when in poor condition, if they knew condition was not an issue.

• When discarding unwanted textiles in good condition:
  • 50-75% took items to a thrift store
  • 12-43% took items to a donation bin/drop box
Residents responded that the following would motivate them to donate more:

- Items acceptable whether in good or poor condition (50.5%)
- Donation bin/drop box closer to home (27.5%)
- Receive information about how to schedule donation pickup (24.8%)
- Ability to place clothing/shoes/linens in standard recycling container (24.6%)
Inputs:
clothing, rags, curtains, linens, shoes, bags, hats, belts, stuffed animals, pillows, fabric scraps, upholstery, and other similar products/materials
Inputs: Disposal and Diversion

• **Disposal** in King County and Seattle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Category</th>
<th>Commercially Collected</th>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Haul</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Non-Residential</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Non-Residential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing and other recyclable textiles</td>
<td>11,703</td>
<td>7,194</td>
<td>3,300</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other mixed textiles</td>
<td>9,091</td>
<td>5,221</td>
<td>2,804</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>17,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20,794</td>
<td>12,415</td>
<td>6,104</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>39,464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• **Disposal** in Washington State – 2.8%, 136,000 tons (‘09)

• **Diversion** in King County and Seattle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total tons diverted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King County and Seattle</td>
<td>14,831</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

• **Diversion** in Washington

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total tons diverted</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington State</td>
<td>47,143</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Collection

- Drop-off
  - Drop boxes
  - Thrift stores
  - Special events
  - Recycling facilities
  - Retail take-back
  - Mail-in options

- Pick-up
  - On-call services
  - Contracted city collection services
Collection: Focus on Curbside

- Residential curbside
  - On normally scheduled routes
  - Value-added service
  - Textiles collected in bags beside recycling bins
San Francisco Zero Textile Waste Initiative

A public, private and non-profit infrastructure to make it easier, convenient and rewarding for residents and businesses to recycle textile related items and help create a new consciousness around sustainable consumption.

www.sfenvironment.org/textiles
www.ico-spirit.com/sf
Processing

- Sorting
- Grading
- Fiber Conversion
End Markets

According to SMART, volumes of reused and recycled textiles are directed to the following end markets:

- 45% second-hand (resale)
- 30% wiping rags
- 20% reprocessed into fibers
- 5% unusable (odor or hazardous material)
Resale

Local/regional

Domestic

International
Reuse/ Repurpose

Generators ➔ Inputs ➔ Collection ➔ Processing ➔ Markets
Recycle (Downcycling)
Recycle (Upcycling)

20% Post-Consumer Recycled Denim
Global Markets: Issues and Trends

- Robust export market (currently)
- Grading has been increasingly outside the U.S.
- Concerns about economic impacts to receiving countries
- Trade restrictions
Partnership Opportunities

• Educate the public about textiles suitable for reuse and recycling.

• Ensure collection options are convenient and readily accessible to the public, and that the public knows about them.

• Support local market development.
Textile Collections Campaign

Crafting a consistent message
“Give all clothes, shoes and linens for reuse and recycling.
Any condition except wet”

Inviting partners
Goodwill, Salvation Army, USAgain, Savers and more

Putting pieces into place for Spring 2015
Websites, collector communications and more
Early Outreach to Seattle Residents

CurbWaste & Conserve


FROM OLD CLOTHES TO NEW PRODUCTS

Do you toss damaged clothes, shoes and household linens into the trash because you think they can’t be donated? We’ve got great news: items that aren’t reusable can be recycled into industrial wiping cloths, carpet padding, insulation and more.

In the past, only “gently used,” resalable items could be accepted by area thrift stores, drop boxes and collection sites. But textile markets have changed. Nearly every large collector in our area sorts materials into several categories—some for resale and some for recycling into new products.

CONVENIENT DROP OFFS OR PICK UPS

So along with reusable clothes, gather up your mismatched socks, ripped t-shirts and faded, old sheets. Take them to a nearby collection site or drop box, or arrange for collection. MORE clothes, shoes and linens are acceptable than ever before—the good, the bad, and the ugly—as long as they’re not wet, moldy or contaminated with hazardous materials.

Learn more about which items are accepted and where to take them at www.seattle.gov/util/lookitup
Web-Based Tools

Clothes & Shoes
You can put clothes, shoes, and household textiles in your garbage can, but reuse and recycling are best.

Goes in garbage:
- Items that are wet, mildewed or heavily-soiled.

Accepted for recycling at charitable and community organizations (not in home recycling):
- Clothing: ripped, torn or missing buttons, snaps or zippers
- Shoes: paired or single
- Socks: matched, mismatched or with holes
- Soft toys
- Backpacks
- Linens such as sheets, blankets, towels and tablecloths
- Curtains and throw rugs

Worn-out, ripped, or mismatched items can be remade into new products such as industrial wiping rags, insulation and carpet padding.
Multi-Family Opportunities

- Connect collectors with property managers & owners
- Provide list of collectors who provide boxes to locate on-site
Identifying Issues

• Collectors’ messaging

• Avoiding customer confusion between curbside and community-based collection

• Navigating imperfect information tools
Other Issues or Opportunities?

Your thoughts?
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