

APPENDIX C

Recycling and Disposal Station Survey Report

Solid Waste Transfer Station Survey

March 2003

As part of the Solid Waste Facilities Master Plan process, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) prepared and performed a survey of transfer station customers. The purpose of the survey was to receive input from customers on how they use the current facilities, what aspects they feel are important to improve, and what level of cost increases they felt were reasonable for these improvements. The survey was carried out at the North and South Recycling & Disposal Stations on March 28 and 29, 2003. Input was received from 231 customers. The questions and responses are attached to the back of this report and are summarized for the north and south stations separately.

It is recognized that this survey was limited both in time and sample size and the responses may not accurately represent all customers. However, the survey was conducted at minimal cost to the City and provides useful information to the planners developing options to improve the existing transfer stations. Information from this survey will be supplemented with input from other customer outreach programs, such as public meetings, workshops, and written comments received by SPU.

The first question asked customers why they came to the transfer station. Although customers have a variety of reasons for using the transfer stations, the majority of respondents indicated that they had more waste than would fit in their garbage can or dumpster and that they wanted to get rid of it now. Many others felt they had no other viable way of getting rid of their waste other than taking it to the transfer station. These survey responses correlate well with other input received from customers indicating that the transfer stations are needed.

The second question in the survey asked customers how long is too long to wait in a line at the transfer station. The majority of respondents felt that 15 minutes or less was not too long to wait, while about a quarter of the respondents felt that 30 minutes was not too long to wait. The responses to this question could be skewed because individuals not willing to wait in a long line would not be there to be surveyed. Also, it depends on who the customer is. For example, some customers indicated that they were at work and being paid, so they didn't mind the wait. However, their employer would probably have the opposite opinion. These survey responses does not correlate well with other input SPU received regarding wait time. Long lines at the stations was a major topic of discussion at the public meetings held in February and SPU customer service staff frequently receive complaints about long lines at the stations.

The third question asked if they would be willing to pay more to reduce the wait time. About 64 percent of respondents answered no, while 36 percent answered yes.

The fourth question asked those that answered yes to the previous question how much would be too much to pay in order to reduce the wait time. The majority answered that \$5

or more per car load was too much additional to pay. A few indicated they would be willing to pay higher than \$5 per load. This question probably depends on who is paying the fee. An employer may find it less expensive to pay a higher disposal fee than to pay their employee to wait in line.

The fifth question asked customers if they would be willing to pay more if the transfer stations had improved recycling facilities and more options for recycling. The response was more or less split in half. At the North station, 52 percent answered yes and at the South station 42 percent answered yes.

The sixth question asked those that answered yes to the previous question how much more would be too much to pay for improved recycling facilities. The majority answered that \$5 or more per car load was too much additional to pay.

The seventh question asked customers if they would be willing to pre-sort their waste into different waste types, such as lumber, metal, gypsum wall board, re-use items, etc., if their fee were reduced. At the North station, 83 percent responded yes, and 91 percent responded yes at the South station.

The eighth questions asked if they were visiting the station for personal or business use. At the North station, 66 percent answered they were there for personal use, and 80 percent at the South station were there for personal use. It is known that the response to this question depends on the time of day and whether it is a week day or weekend day. Comments from regular business customers indicated that they knew when the stations are usually busiest and they typically schedule their trips to avoid the crowds.

The ninth question asked what zip code they were coming from. The majority of customers were from the area near the transfer stations and only a few crossed from north or south to get to the more distant transfer station.

In addition to the 9 questions asked, many customers volunteered additional comments. These comments are also attached with the data at the back of this report.

Recycling and Disposal Station Customer Survey Summary (South station)

Triangle Associates, Inc. successfully surveyed 139 customers at the South Transfer Station on Friday and Saturday, March 28-29, 2003...

1. Why did you come to the transfer station today? *Please tell me yes or no for each of the following reasons. (check all that apply)*

Question #1	# of Responses
<input type="checkbox"/> You have more than will fit in your can or dumpster and you want to get rid of it now	52
<input type="checkbox"/> You don't want to pay the City for a special bulky item pick-up	17
<input type="checkbox"/> Because you always haul your own waste	23
<input type="checkbox"/> Because you have materials to dispose of that are not accepted in the regular trash	26
<input type="checkbox"/> It is the only viable option for the waste you have	20
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	85

2. How long is too long to wait in line at the transfer station?

Question #2	Question #2 Other	# of Responses
5 minutes		5
10 minutes		25
15 minutes		32
30 minutes		23
Other	20 minutes	23
Other	25 minutes	2
Other	40 minutes	1
Other	45 minutes	3
Other	1 hour	5
Other	2 hours	2
Other	No preference	6
Other	Ok now	5

Question #2	Question #2 Other	# of Responses
Other	No bigger	3
Other	Come on weekday only	1
Other	Unknown	3

3. Would you be willing to pay more to reduce your wait time? (*No- skip to Q5*)

Question #3	# of Responses
Yes	49
No	90

4. How much more would be too much?

Cars/SUVs	Cars/SUVs (Other Options)	Trucks/Commercial Vehicles	Trucks/Commercial Vehicles (Other Options)	# of Responses
\$3/car load				7
\$5/car load				20
\$10/car load				2
Other	\$15			1
Other	\$2/car load			2
Other	\$5/ton			1
Other	\$6/car load			1
Other	\$8/car load			1
Other	Unknown			7
		\$10/ton		2
		Other	\$5/ton	3
		Other	No preference	1
		Other	Unknown	1

5. Would you be willing to pay more for disposing your garbage if the transfer stations had improved recycling facilities and more options for recycling? (*No - skip to Q7*)

Question #5	# of Responses
Yes	59
No	80

6. How much more would be too much?

Cars/SUVs	Cars/SUVs (Other options)	Trucks/Commercial Vehicles	Trucks/Commercial Vehicles (Other options)	# of Responses
\$3/car load				17
\$5/car load				19
\$10/car load				5
Other	\$1			1
Other	\$2/car load			2
Other	Unknown			8
		\$10/ton		4
		Other	\$5/ton	2
		Other	No preference	1

7. Would you pre-sort your waste into different waste types (lumber, metal, gypsum wall board, re-use items, other recyclables, etc.) if your fee was reduced?

Question #7	# of Responses Customer Survey
Yes	126
No	13

8. Are you here for personal or business use?

Question #8	Status	# of Responses
Business	Employee	6
Business	Owner	1
Business	Unknown	20
Personal		112

9. What is your zip code?

Zip Code	# of Responses
98002	1
98011	1
98042	1
98102	1
98103	1
98104	2
98106	12
98108	9
98112	2
98115	2
98116	12
98117	1
98118	14
98119	1
98122	2
98126	11
98133	1
98134	2
98136	8
98144	5
98146	22
98148	1
98155	1
98166	5
98168	13
98178	3
98188	1
98198	1
99146	1
Unknown	2

Recycling & Disposal Station Customer Survey Summary (North Station)

Triangle Associates, Inc. successfully surveyed 92 customers at the North Transfer Station on Friday and Saturday, March 28-29, 2003...

1. Why did you come to the transfer station today? *Please tell me yes or no for each of the following reasons. (check all that apply)*

Question #1	# of Responses
<input type="checkbox"/> You have more than will fit in your can or dumpster and you want to get rid of it now	59
<input type="checkbox"/> You don't want to pay the City for a special bulky item pick-up	15
<input type="checkbox"/> Because you always haul your own waste	12
<input type="checkbox"/> Because you have materials to dispose of that are not accepted in the regular trash	13
<input type="checkbox"/> It is the only viable option for the waste you have	32
<input type="checkbox"/> Other_____	50

2. How long is too long to wait in line at the transfer station?

Question #2	Question #2 Other	# of Responses
5 minutes		10
10 minutes		14
15 minutes		20
30 minutes		24
Other	20 minutes	10
Other	20 minutes in/ 10 minutes out	1
Other	45 minutes	4
Other	1 hour	4
Other	No preference	3
Other	No preference, get paid to wait	2

3. Would you be willing to pay more to reduce your wait time? *(No- skip to Q5)*

Question #3	# of Responses
Yes	34
No	58

4. How much more would be too much?

Cars/SUVs	Cars/SUVs (Other Options)	Trucks/Commercial Vehicles	Trucks/Commercial Vehicles (Other Options)	# of Responses
\$3/car load				1
\$5/car load				6
\$10/car load				8
Other	\$2/car load			1
Other	\$20			1
Other	10% increase			1
Other	Unknown			2
		\$10/ton		6
		\$15/ton		1
		Other	\$5/ton	1
		Other	\$17.50/ton	1
		Other	5%	1
		Other	10% increase	2
		Other	Unknown	2

5. Would you be willing to pay more for disposing your garbage if the transfer stations had improved recycling facilities and more options for recycling? *(No - skip to Q7)*

Question #5	# of Responses
Yes	48
No	44

6. How much more would be too much?

Cars/SUVs	Cars/SUVs (Other options)	Trucks/Commercial Vehicles	Trucks/Commercial Vehicles (Other options)	# of Responses
				3
				8
				6
Other	\$20			1
Other	20% increase			1
Other	Better curb-side; increase bill			1
Other	Would be willing to pay more only thru taxes			1
Other	Realistic			1
Other	Unknown			5
		\$10/ton		4
		\$20/ton		4
		Other	\$5/ton	2
		Other	\$60 per pickup(?)	1
		Other	10% - 20% increase	1
		Other	10% increase	2
		Other	20%	1
		Other	20+	1
		Other	Anything	1
		Other	Unknown	3
		Other	Unknown - unclear of cost breakdown	1

7. Would you pre-sort your waste into different waste types (lumber, metal, gypsum wall board, re-use items, other recyclables, etc.) if your fee was reduced?

Question #7	# of Responses Customer Survey
Yes	76
No	16

8. Are you here for personal or business use?

Question #8	Status	# of Responses
Business	Employee	8
Business	Owner	10
Business	Unknown	11
Personal		61
Unknown		2

9. What is your zip code?

Zip Code	# of Responses
98034	1
98040	1
98056	1
98102	4
98103	17
98104	1
98105	7
98107	6
98109	3
98110	2
98112	3
98115	11
98117	8
98118	1
98119	2
98122	2
98125	2
98126	1
98133	1
98136	1
98199	7
98275	1
Unknown	9

10. Additional Comments

Customers (clients) are charged the dump price, only time is a factor for labor costs.

Interested in improved recycling facilities if it saves money.

Q1- didn't know the details of City special pick-up

Q1- it's too expensive to pay the city for a bulky item pick-up Q7- Willing to sort recyclables if it's within reason.

Q1- no info, no cost estimates for special city pick-up. Q3- Would rather juggle schedule to avoid busy times than pay more to reduce wait time. Q5- Happy w/current facilities.

Q2- time is money

Q3- He doesn't think that paying more would reduce the wait time Q5- He would like to see more construction debris convenience for recycling (however does not want to pay for it).

Q3- not here much

Q3- Pay LESS - creates disincentive to take extra trash to transfer station - sanitary problem

Q3- sends the bill to the client

Q3- thinks prices are already too high

Q3- would rather go somewhere else than pay more.

Q4- Used items - extend hours

Q5- Depends on what is reused and recycled - too expensive

Q5- don't use the recycling facilities

Q5- don't use the recycling facilities

Q5- flammables

Q5- He would like to see scrap metal added to the recycling facility, mentioned that it's too expensive to drive to lots of different places to recycle/dispose of all of his waste. Would also like to be able to recycle tv's and computers here.

Q5- look into a different place

Q5- polystyrene recycling

Q5- Styrofoam, if everyone has to sort

Q5- Think the recycling facility that's here now is adequate.

Q5- too confusing

Q5- Very important to have more recycling facilities, it would be great if there was more opportunity to recycle wood products

Q5- Very important to improve recycling facilities

Q5- Would be willing to pay more for improved recycling if it is reasonable.

Q5- Would like to be able to recycle hazardous waste

Q5- Would like to recycle computer monitors

Q5- Would like to see the recycling facilities at a different location...it is too crowded here already.

Q7- Would pre-sort waste if reasonable

She is definitely interested in improved recycling facilities...likes that recycling is free. Using free pass/coupon.

Time is the biggest issue...the cost of labor for his employees is more important than the price paid per ton. Would pre-sort waste (if quick), but it's hard to divide in a truck bed.

Recycling and Disposal Station Customer Survey Summary

North End Responses for “*Other Reasons*” to come to the transfer station:

Question #8	Question #1: Other Reasons	# of Responses
Personal	Closest option, too much stuff for special pick-up	1
Personal	Construction	1
Business	Construction	6
Personal	Construction - wood waste	1
Business	Construction - working at a site near here	1
Unknown	Construction (haul every two weeks)	1
Business	Contractor	1
Business	Contractor/closest option	1
Personal	Disposing of an old couch	1
Personal	Emergency	1
Personal	Fireplace unit - not sure if allowed	1
Personal	Green Waste	3
Personal	Have a free coupon	7
Personal	Here in present	1
Personal	It is 1/3 CHEAPER to use the transfer station here than the one that is near him on Bainbridge Island	1
Personal	Large scale household clean-up	1
Personal	Lots of garbage	1
Personal	Mixed materials	1
Personal	Monitor	1
Personal	Most convenient option	2
Business	Most convenient/easiest way to dispose of items	1
Unknown	Moving	1
Personal	Moving	1
Personal	Neighborhood clean-up project	1
Personal	Offered to dispose of carpet for a friend	1
Business	Office demo & remodel	1

Question #8	Question #1: Other Reasons	# of Responses
Personal	Remodel - different Co. is another option	1
Business	Remodeling (contractor)	1
Personal	Remodeling project	3
Personal	Remodeling project - dumping decking lumber	1
Personal	Spring cleaning	2
Personal	Yard waste	1

South End Responses for “*Other Reasons*” to come to the transfer station:

Question #8	Question #1 Other	# of Responses
Personal	Appliance/cardboard	1
Personal	Bulky items	2
Personal	Carpet	1
Personal	Cement	1
Personal	Cleaning out	1
Business	Clean-up	1
Business	Construction	2
Personal	Construction	3
Business	Contractor	1
Personal	Convenient	1
Personal	Dump	1
Personal	Engine oil, scrap metal, HHW	1
Personal	Extra garbage	1
Business	Extra waste	1
Personal	Garbage	9
Business	Garbage	2
Personal	Garbage - once per month	1
Personal	Garbage & range	1
Personal	Garbage (extra)	1
Business	Green Waste	2
Personal	Green Waste - large load	2
Business	Green/garbage/HHW	1
Personal	Have a free coupon	1

Question #8	Question #1 Other	# of Responses
Personal	HHW	6
Business	HHW	1
Personal	HHW/radios	1
Personal	Home renovation	1
Personal	Lots of extra trash - once per month	1
Personal	Moving	2
Personal	Old furniture	1
Personal	Project	1
Business	Recyclables	1
Business	Recycling	3
Personal	Recycling	4
Personal	Recycling metal	1
Personal	Remodel	5
Personal	Rental house - clean-out garbage	1
Business	Seattle Goodwill	1
Personal	Someone dumped an engine in yard	1
Personal	Spring cleaning	1
Personal	Spring cleaning, and HHW	1
Business	Waste	1
Business	Waste - large amount	1
Personal	Wood	1
Personal	Wood waste	2
Personal	Yard and sorted waste	1
Personal	Yard waste	4
Personal	Yard waste - large load	3
Business	Yard waste - large load; garbage - mixed	1