

# Responsible Recycling Task Force Report & Recommendations



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*Seattle SWAC Briefing*  
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# Purpose of Presentation

*Provide an Overview of the Responsible Recycling TF &  
a Summary of Goals & Recommendations*

*Discuss and Seek General Support from SWAC*



# Advisory Committees

## King County Advisory Committees – January to June 2019

- KCSWAC and MSWAC (Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee)
- Discuss Action Items at one meeting
- Decide support for Action Items at subsequent meeting

## Seattle SWAC – February and March 2019

- Discuss Policy Recommendations (February mtg)
- Review overall plan for SPU role and implementation of recommendations, and SWAC engagement (March mtg)



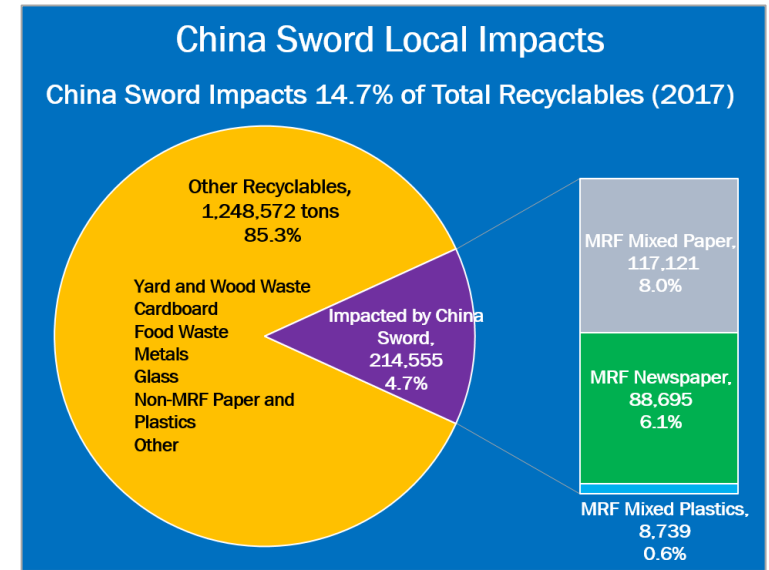
# RRTF Overview

Purpose: Develop a regional response to short- & long-term conditions of our recycling system.

Membership: Representatives from solid waste management companies, cities in King County, KC Solid Waste, City of Seattle, & other stakeholders.

Process: Meetings held over 10 months tackling questions of how our region should move forward in solving immediate problems while also mapping a path for long-term solutions.

Report: *Recommendations to Achieve a Responsible Recycling System*, issued on January 10<sup>th</sup>, and available at - <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/dnrp/solid-waste/about/advisory-committees/recycling-task-force.aspx>



# Responsible Recycling Framework

- Quality vs. Quantity
- Regional Policy Alignment
- Harmonized Messaging
- Domestic Sorting & Processing
- Create Demand for Recycled Feedstock
- Responsible Recycling Requires Additional Investment
- Measure Real Recycling



# RRTF Recommended Goals

Goal 1: Establish Responsible Recycling Policies

Goal 2: Develop Local Recycling Infrastructure

Goal 3: Harmonize Recycling Programs & Messaging



# RRTF Recommended Goals (cont)

Goal 4: Increase Demand for Recycled Materials

Goal 5: Create Clean & Marketable Feedstocks

Goal 6: Improve Upstream Design



# Next Steps – 2019 Work Program Action Items

**(discussed at Feb. SWAC meeting)**

- \*Action Item 1A: Develop a comprehensive, statewide stewardship policy approach that helps achieve a funded, robust, and harmonized curbside recycling system throughout Washington State.
- \*Action Item 1B: Support legislation that promotes the use of innovative technologies and/or processes to help develop and build local recycling infrastructure and market development.
- \*Action Item 1C: Support and refine Plastics Packaging Stewardship legislation in the 2019 legislative session.
- Action Item 1D: Advocate for Responsible Recycling policies by requesting that elected officials adopt a Responsible Recycling System in their jurisdictions.
- Action Item 1E: Develop a feasible model for beverage container stewardship in WA similar to Oregon Beverage Cooperative model.

\* Current action items.





# Next Steps – 2019 Work Program Action Items

- Action Item 2A: Conduct pilot projects to encourage the development of a domestic recycling infrastructure.
  - *KC/Seattle to explore and lead potential pilots in consultation/partnership with others.*
  - *Such as mixed plastics and polycoated cartons.*
- \*Action Item 2B: Advocate for the expansion of the Wrap Recycling Action Program (WRAP) to establish an effective statewide program to capture plastic bags/film.
  - *Seattle/KC work with WRAP program to expand/improve program in greater Seattle area.*
  - *Letter to WRAP from SWAC might be helpful.*
- Action Item 2C: Ensure resources to assist with development of markets for paper, plastic, and compost.
  - *KC/Seattle will work with stakeholders to prioritize resources to support this effort.*
  - *Seattle provides funding and support to LinkUp program.*



# Next Steps – 2019 Work Program Action Items

- Action Item 3A: Develop a process and criteria for adding/removing materials in the curbside recycling programs with criteria that is consistent with the responsible recycling framework.
  - *KC is lead with cities. Seattle participates and provides input.*
- \*Action Item 3B: Continue the Communication Consortium to create unified messaging about curbside recycling to King County residents.
  - *Coordinate via Recycle Right Communications Group.*
- \*Action Item 3C: Develop a system to coordinate with the City of Seattle on recycling programs and policies.
  - *Parallel processes with SWACs.*
  - *Extensive staff to staff coordination now and by Division Directors.*
  - *Will consider other needs.*



# Next Steps – 2019 Work Program Action Items

- Action Item 5A: Update City and County Recycling Contracts and Codes to prioritize domestic sorting and processing and require documentation of the chain of custody from sorting facilities to legitimate end markets.
  - *Seattle to include responsible recycling elements in RFPs and contracts for recycling services.*
- \*Action Item 5B: Remove plastic bags/film and shredded paper from the materials that are accepted in recycling programs in King County and the City of Seattle.
  - *Discussed at last meeting. Seattle working through process and with others to do so.*
- \*Action Item 5C: Support “Reuseable Bag” legislation to reduce the number of plastic bags entering the garbage and recycling system.
  - *Discussed at last meeting. Legislation in 2019 Legislative Session.*

\* Current action items.



# Next Steps – 2019 Work Program Action Items

- Action Item 5D: Develop a methodology for documenting the chain of custody to monitor adherence to recognized environmental and human health and safety standards.
  - *KC SWD is lead and Seattle/other cities will contribute to the research efforts.*
- Action Item 5E: Develop a consistent process for evaluating and granting surcharges on recycling rates and waivers to allow for periodic disposal of recyclable materials.
  - *Not relevant to Seattle.*
- Action Item 5F: (2020 work plan)
- \*Action Item 5G: Track the market price and conditions of recyclable materials on a monthly basis.
  - *Seattle does on quarterly basis, and posts. Will ensure others know they have access and Seattle will consider monthly postings.*



# Next Steps – 2019 Work Program Action Items

- Action Item 6A: Engage with the Sustainable Packaging Coalition and their How2Recycle programs to help educate brands and packaging designers on recyclability of packaging, the use of recycled materials in packaging, and designing packaging that is less toxic and more recyclable (e.g., no PVC plastic).
  - *Sustainable Packaging Coalition Conference in Seattle April 2019*
  - *Seattle will continue current involvement and engage with KC SWD and Cities to support SPC's efforts in our region.*



# Next Steps – 2020 Work Program Action Items

- Action Item 1E: Develop a feasible model for beverage container stewardship in WA similar to Oregon Beverage Cooperative model.
- \* Action Item 4A: Establish recycled-content legislation that requires that certain products be made with a certain amount of recycled material.
  - *Included in plastic packaging stewardship legislation HB 1204 and SB 5397*
- Action Item 4B: Establish or update procurement ordinances that require the purchase of products made with post-consumer recycled materials and train staff to implement the ordinances.
- Action Item 4C: Work with the Association of Plastic Recycler's Demand Champions program to encourage King County companies to procure items made with recycled plastics such as pallets, garbage cans, and other "work in process" items.
- Action Item 4D: Explore other procurement opportunities similar to Demand Champions, for buying products with recycled materials such as office paper, cardboard, shipping containers, etc.



# Immediate Next Steps

- Continue to Coordinate with OIR to support relevant bills (e.g., Bags, Plastic Packaging Stewardship, Recycling Development Center)
- Continue Collaboration with KCSWD and KC Cities.
- Continue Communications Consortium, developing an implementation plan and ensuring consistent messaging.
- Remove Plastic Bags/Wrap/Film from curbside; Move materials to WRAP drop-off.
- Participate in a Responsible Recycling Committee made up of members of the RRTF to track the progress toward implementing the approved recommendations.



# **The Following Slides are Overview Slides for Reference**





# Problem Statements

- *Short Term Problem:*

*China's import restrictions have reduced markets for mixed paper and mixed plastics.*

- *Long-term Problem:*

*Recycling in King County suffers from three major issues –*

- 1. Contamination*
- 2. Market Vulnerability*
- 3. Recycling is Not Free*



# RRTF Goals

The Task Force members agreed to the following goals:

- **Short-term Goal:** To help identify near-, mid-, and long-term actions in response to reduction in export markets for mixed recyclable materials due to China's National Sword policies.
- **Long-term Goal:** To help establish commitment across the region to responsible recycling and domestic sorting/processing of curbside recyclables.



# Goal 1: Establish Responsible Recycling Policies

System level changes are needed to solve this problem.

**Recommendation:** Our region should support, create, and advocate for policies that establish a statewide system of responsible recycling.

*A comprehensive statewide stewardship policy approach was prioritized as the most important action for achieving responsible recycling success long-term.*



## **Goal 2: Develop Local Recycling Infrastructure**

Domestic infrastructure is lacking and is a necessary part of the solution.

**Recommendation:** Our region should support the development of our local recycling infrastructure to build resiliency, create local jobs, minimize greenhouse gases from transportation and production, and increase the ability to document and measure real recycling.

***Local recycling infrastructure is a win-win-win for the region by building recycling system resiliency, creating local jobs, and minimizing greenhouse gas emissions.***



# Goal 3: Harmonize Recycling Programs & Messaging

Consumer confusion drives contamination.

**Recommendation:** All regional curbside programs should use consistent messaging about what is accepted and not accepted in the curbside recycling container.

*Harmonized messaging helps ensure customers know how to Recycling Right.*



# Goal 4: Increase Demand for Recycled Materials

The materials we collect for recycling must have end markets.

**Recommendation:** Our region should create demand for products made with recycled commodities.

*Our region should create demand for recycled-content products through legislation, procurement ordinances, and working with local companies to buy recycled.*



# Goal 5: Create Clean & Marketable Feedstocks

We cannot allow recycled materials generated in our region to contribute to environmental pollution or endanger human health and safety at home or elsewhere, including other countries.

**Recommendation:** Local governments and their service providers should require that the collecting, sorting, and processing of recyclable materials does not contribute to environmental pollution or endanger human health and safety and that materials are clean and suitable for remanufacture before being exported.

***We need to develop policies that ensure materials are clean and suitable for reprocessing before being exported.***

# Goal 6: Improve Upstream Design

Changes in package design are creating many of the challenges with contamination in our recycling system.

**Recommendation:** Local government should partner with national organizations to get local companies to commit to using recycled materials in new products and develop product messaging and package design that supports a system of responsible recycling.

***Local government should partner locally and nationally to encourage design-for-recycling and use of recycled materials in products and packaging.***





