



## A Regional Perspective:

Opportunities for Textile  
Reuse, Rewear, and Recycling



Seattle  
Public  
Utilities





# Why Textiles and Why Now?

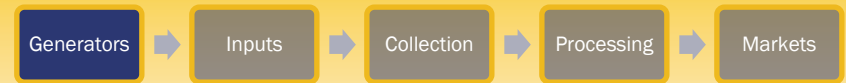
- **GROWING INTEREST**
  - national scale
  - focusing on increasing recovery
- **TIMELY**
  - strong markets
  - growing interest and visibility
- **IMPACT**
  - relatively large quantities currently being disposed
  - lower lifecycle impact
  - positive societal impact
  - Mixed economic impacts



# Post-Consumer Textiles Value Chain



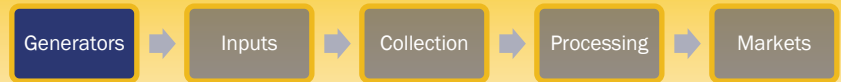
# Consumer Survey



- 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**

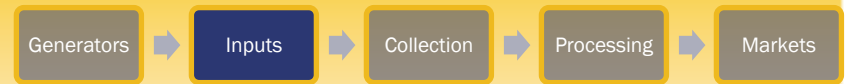


# Consumer Survey (cont.)



- 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%)

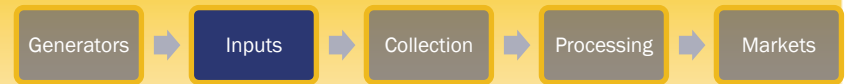
# Inputs:



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

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

- Disposal in Washington State – 2.8%, 136,000 tons ('09)

- Diversion in King County and Seattle

	Total tons diverted
King County and Seattle	14,831

- Diversion in Washington

	Total tons diverted
Washington State	47,143



# 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



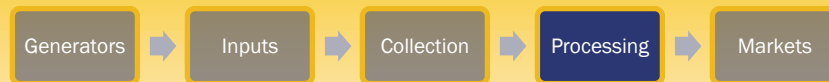
# San Francisco Zero Textile Waste Initiative



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.



# Processing

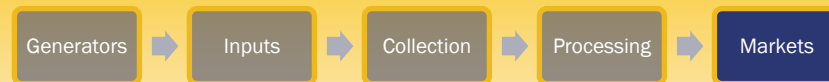


- Sorting
- Grading
- Fiber Conversion





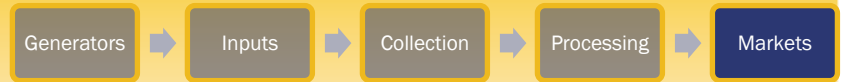
# End Markets



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



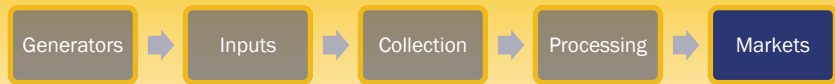
Local/regional

Domestic

International

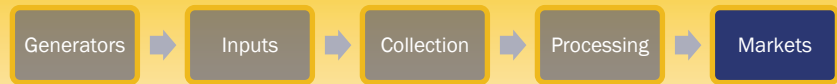


# Reuse/ Repurpose





# Recycle (Downcycling)





# Recycle (Upcycling)



20% Post-Consumer Recycled Denim

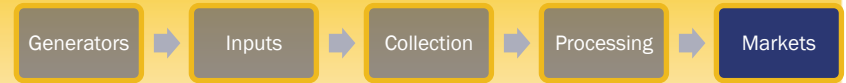


**King County**  
Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks  
Solid Waste Division

**Seattle**  
**Public**  
**Utilities**

**King County Linkup**

# 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



## Clothes, Shoes & Linens Wanted: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

### 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](http://www.seattle.gov/util/lookitup)

# Web-Based Tools

Please Select... ▾

Look up your item.  
[A-Z Index](#)



### 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.

**Reuse**  
 donate  
 reuse

**Curb**  
  
garbage can

**Drop-off**  
  
garbage transfer station

# 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?*

**Liz Fikejs**  
Program Manager  
Customer Service Branch  
(206) 615-0516  
[liz.fikejs@seattle.gov](mailto:liz.fikejs@seattle.gov)