

UTILITIES CHAPTER – SOLID WASTE ELEMENT

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Managing Waste ReSources – Garbage, Recycle, Organics Towards Zero Waste

Olympia’s Waste ReSources Utility provides municipally operated solid waste collection, disposal, and diversion services, including education and outreach. The Utility is responsible for ensuring that all of the City’s waste is properly managed.

Waste materials are generated as part of our daily life and activities through purchase, use, and discard of goods and food scraps. These discards are collected, disposed and managed to protect public and environmental health, and preservation of natural resources through recycling and composting.

Consumption of goods helps support a national economy based on extracting resources, manufacturing and distributing products; a system that encourages excessive waste and does not take into account the full environmental and social costs of this activity. The result is increasing depletion of natural resources, increasing greenhouse gas emissions, and deteriorating air and water pollution - all of which are environmentally unsustainable and costly to society.

Olympians can help solve these problems through a variety of regional and local actions that seek to reduce the amount of waste generated, and increase the amount recycled, composted, and recovered for reuse.

In June 2006, the Olympia City Council adopted a Zero Waste Resolution, which gave rise to a new strategic and operational six-year plan - Olympia’s Waste ReSources Plan . The Plan provides a road map for the utility’s collection and waste prevention programs. The Plan is regularly updated.

~~Waste is an expanding global problem caused by a growing population and increasing consumption. Our national economy is based on extracting resources, manufacturing and distributing products; a system that encourages excessive waste and does not take into account the full environmental and social costs of this activity. The result is increasing depletion of natural resources, increasing greenhouse gas emissions, and deteriorating air and water pollution - all of which are environmentally unsustainable and costly to society.~~

The amount of waste collected per person each day in Olympia coupled with an increasing population, puts pressure on our already strained regional waste management system. Olympians can help solve these problems through a variety of regional and local actions that seek to reduce the amount of waste generated, and increase the amount recycled and recovered for reuse.



Compost at home to reduce waste.



Olympia's Waste ReSources Utility is responsible for ensuring that all of the City's waste is properly managed, and is directly responsible for providing collection services for residential and commercial garbage, residential recyclables and residential organics.

In June 2006, the Olympia City Council adopted a Zero Waste Resolution, which established a vision for the City and a new direction for the Waste ReSources Utility. This resolution gave rise to a new strategic and operational six year plan [Olympia's Waste ReSources Plan](#), which focuses on a Zero Waste approach. In fact, [Olympia's Waste ReSources Plan](#) anticipates a future in which "waste" is viewed as an inefficient use of resources. The Plan is regularly updated.

In the next 20 years, the utility will face the following challenges and opportunities:

- **Reduce sources of waste.** The whole life cycle of a product must be considered as we find ways to reduce waste in both "upstream" production and

distribution processes and "downstream" consumer choices and waste management practices.

- **Respond to an ever-evolving waste stream.** Continue adapting to changes in packaging, markets, materials, and product recyclability, and compostability.
- **Optimize the current collection system.** Continue to increase the portion of waste that is recycled or composted, while maintaining material quality, and efficient operations.
- Adapting to greater population density. Continue to provide efficient and effective collection services to a greater number of higher density single-family, multi-family and mixed-use type properties.
- ~~Maximize commercial recycling.~~ Continue to evaluate the potential for City-provided commercial recycling services.

Goals and Policies

GU12 Solid waste is managed as a resource to provide environmental, economic, and social benefits.

PU12.1 Reduce waste and encourage recycling through the City's purchasing, recycling and disposal policies.

PU12.2 Follow the solid waste management hierarchy established in federal and state legislation, which sets waste reduction as the highest priority management option, followed by reuse, recycling/composting, and responsible disposal.

PU12.3 Expand, when practical and feasible, the City's recycling, composting and waste reduction programs to maximize the diversion of material from disposal into remanufacture and reuse.

PU12.4 Support the goals and policies of the Thurston County Solid Waste Management Plan.

PU12.5 Support state legislation that is designed to improve/increase recycling and composting, and reduce natural resource consumption.

PU12.6 Maintain and update the Waste ReSources Management Plan, Engineering Design and Development Standards, and Olympia Municipal Code to ensure sanitary conditions are realized, solid waste collection operations are safe and efficient, and waste prevention and diversion are optimized.

GU13 Solid waste is managed in a responsible and cost-effective manner.

PU13.1 Encourage and promote waste reduction and recycling, including exploring new methods.

PU13.2 Manage waste as locally as possible to reduce transfer and disposal costs.

~~**PU13.3** Explore new methods of reducing, reusing, recycling and disposing of solid wastes.~~

~~**PU13.4** Use technology to create and maintain efficient and effective routing and collection programs.~~

~~**PU13.5** Develop specific targets for waste reduction in Olympia in utility master plans.~~

GU14 Environmental impacts caused by solid waste management are minimal.

PU14.1 Handle and dispose of solid waste in ways that minimize land, air and water pollution and protect public health.

~~**PU14.2** Continue to work toward reducing the utility's carbon footprint as technology becomes available and is financially viable.~~

PU14.23 Work cooperatively with Thurston County to ensure that the operations of the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center (WARC) are in compliance with state and federal regulations, and are responsibly managed.