



TRANSPORTATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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MEMORANDUM

February 4, 2013

TO: Members of the Commissioners' Court

FROM: Shaun Auckland, Conservation Coordinator
Jon A. White, Environmental Officer

Handwritten signatures of Shaun Auckland and Jon A. White in black ink.

SUBJECT: FY2012 Annual Report for Travis County Waste Management Program

This annual report details the ongoing performance and progress of the Travis County Waste Management Program for FY 2012 (Oct 1, 2011 - Sept 30, 2012) as required under the County's Waste Management Policy.

BACKGROUND:

Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 361.425 establishes county requirements for recycling. Under this law, counties must establish and operate programs to separate and collect recyclable materials generated. Several common classes of materials (e.g. aluminum, steel containers, packaging, cartons, office paper, and cardboard) are specifically targeted for recovery. In addition, Section 361.426 specifies a county government shall give preference to purchasing products made of recycled material and that may be recycled when materials have served their intended use.

To address these requirements, the Travis County Commissioners' Court adopted the Travis County Waste Management Policy on December 17, 1996. The primary goals of the policy are to:

- Reduce material and waste disposal costs;
- Reduce the volume of material sent to landfills;
- Reduce the use of limited natural resources;
- Prevent environmental pollution associated with waste disposal; and
- Promote the purchase and use of recycled materials.

The policy directs County departments to minimize the amount of waste materials they generate through the implementation of waste reduction strategies and procedures and provides implementation guidelines. Unless otherwise directed by law, the means for achieving

the County's goals must meet feasibility criteria related to clearly demonstrable conservation benefits, as well as cost and operational efficiency.

The policy provides guidance for the treatment of several specific County Waste Streams. The program has evolved and expanded in the past eighteen years. This report examines the waste streams by individual media with information regarding select department in the Appendices 1-3.

- A. Paper and Corrugated Cardboard
- B. Metals: scrap metal, aluminum cans, brass, steel, batteries and copper
- C. Automotive: oil, antifreeze and tires
- D. Electronics: computers, monitors and small electronics
- E. Composting: dead animals and pre-consumer food scraps
- F. Wood Material: pallets, mulch and brush/limbs
- G. Textiles: sheets and uniforms
- H. Plastic and Glass
- I. Household hazardous waste
- J. Other

FY 2012 PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

Contents

Purchasing Goals:..... 4

County Waste Streams:..... 5

 A. Paper and Corrugated Cardboard: 5

 B. Metals 6

 C. Automotive..... 6

 D. Electronics 8

 E. Composting..... 8

 F. Wood Material..... 8

 G. Textiles..... 9

 H. Plastic and Glass 9

 I. Household Hazardous Waste Program: 9

 J. Other 11

CONCLUSION 12

Appendices: 13

 1. Appendix..... 13

 Del Valle Correctional Facility 13

 2. Appendix 2 15

 Parks Division 15

 3. Appendix..... 16

 Community Programs 16

Purchasing Goals:

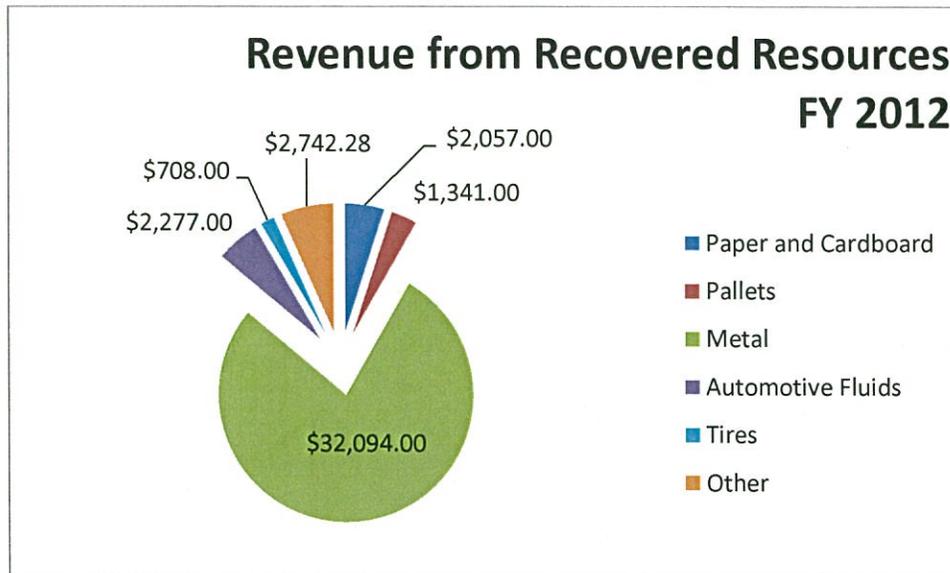
The County's purchasing goal (see Section 111.005 of the Travis County Waste Management Policy) is to expend at least eight percent of its annual consumable commodities budget on materials with recycled content or that provide some other specific conservation benefit. To be considered, these materials must also meet the program feasibility criteria for cost and operational efficiency.

Travis County's purchasing policy is constrained to evaluate cost savings but not environmental benefits. Development of a tracking methodology to verify compliance with the goal has not been developed by the Travis County Purchasing Office. Therefore, we cannot accurately verify whether this goal is being met. Nevertheless, as described below, the County is very active in pursuing opportunities to purchase recycled products including:

- Re-manufactured toner cartridges
- Re-refined oil
- Re-refined antifreeze
- Packaging from computers/electronics
- Electronics (computers, monitors, keyboards, cellular phones, etc.,)
- Office supplies with recycled content binders, pens, folders, and paper etc.

County Waste Streams:

Travis County's waste streams are very diverse. This report reviews the main categories of recyclable materials.



Recycled revenue contributions of \$41,219.28 directed Travis County General Funds.

A. Paper and Corrugated Cardboard:

Travis County purchased 256 tons of paper in FY 2012 and additionally received paper from sources other than paper purchased (such as documents and mail received). Travis County recycled 283 tons of paper in FY 2012¹. Recycling paper avoids disposal costs and estimated 210,443 cubic yards of landfill space saved². As availability of recycling services expands to all Travis County owned facilities and employee participation grows we should see an increase in volume.



1. Air Quality Project Manager, Adele Noel, emptying her office recycling container into a green cart.



2. Recyclable media collected at the Executive Office Building during the move to 700 Lavaca St.

¹ The total of paper recycled includes confidential documents picked up by Iron Mountain for shredding, as well as office paper picked up by our current vendors (Acco, and Abibow.)

² This estimate is only examining office paper and corrugated cardboard. Information provided by Allied Waste Services of Austin and San Antonio Recycling Consultant Matt Meyers.

B. Metals

This program has been very successful throughout the County and especially at the satellite offices and the correctional facility. Vendor roll-offs are placed at the satellite offices for easy access. In FY 2012, a total of 258,940 pounds of metal were recycled for revenue of \$32,094.



1. A photo of the inside of a roll-off filled with tinsplate steel cans collected for recycling by the kitchen staff at the Del Valle Jail.



2. A photo of the inside of a roll-off filled with scrap metals recycled at the Eastside service center.

In office settings Travis County recycles aluminum cans by placing them in the single stream recycle carts. By placing aluminum cans in the single stream recycle carts it is hard to measure the amount generated/recycled and does not generate revenue.

In the Parks Division Reimer's Ranch and Hamilton Pool Park began a plastic and aluminum recycle program with supervisory support. The park staff is very active in the recycle program. They collect the recyclables from both parks then store them for separation at a later date. Every year the staff takes time in the slow season to separate the aluminum cans and plastic bottles. Once the recyclables are separated the staff then takes the material to Ecology action and a metal recycling facility.

The combination of the Parks Division and license plate recycling creates the aluminum revenue to a total of \$1,738 which is included in the metals revenue total.

C. Automotive

Oil & Antifreeze

Travis County recycled 4578 gallons of used oil and 770 gallons of antifreeze in FY 2012 generating \$2,277.45 in revenue and avoiding disposal costs. We also purchase and use re-refined oil and antifreeze in all County vehicles.

The following quote from a TCEQ used oil brochure sums up the value of this program:

Only one gallon of used oil is needed to produce 2.5 quarts of lubricating oil, whereas 42 gallons of crude oil would be needed for the same 2.5 quarts of oil. Refining used oil takes 70% less energy than refining crude oil."

Used Oil Filters

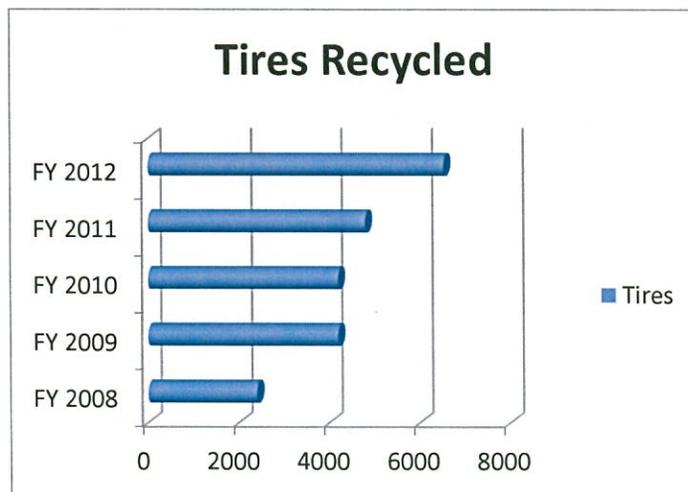
A registered transport company must properly dispose of the oil filters collected by fleet services. Travis County recycled 25 barrels of spent oil filters in FY 2012. The normal cost of \$50 per barrel was reduced to zero as part of the contract for purchasing re-refined oil.



2. Tires waiting to be picked up for recycling, on average Travis County collects on average 1,200 tires a trailer load.

Tires

Liberty Tire removes our fleet tires and those we collect that are illegally disposed along county right-of-way and charges \$1.20 dollars per tire. In 2012 we spent \$7,846.66 removing approximately 6,525 tires. These tires are taken to registered tire recycling centers.



Lead-Acid Batteries

There were 547 vehicle batteries recycled in FY 2012, preventing lead and acid waste in these batteries from adversely affecting the county's groundwater, surface water, and the public's health.

D. Electronics

Cell Phones

The Travis County surplus warehouse collects all phones that are not picked up by inmates once released. These phones are then internally transferred to the Sheriff's Office Victim Services Unit for use in supporting their program. This year there were 164 phones transferred to their program.

Computers and Monitors

There is an agreement with Dell to take-back all Dell manufactured equipment for recycling or reuse. Travis County receives a portion of the revenue from the electronics Dell recycles, although the amount is not available at this time. This year Dell took back 2,931 items.

E. Composting

Pre-consumer Food Scraps

The Del Valle Correctional Facility composting program on average composts 38 lbs. of food scraps a week. The compost created supports the on-site, three and half acre organic garden. The food grown is harvested and used to feed the inmates.

F. Wood Material

Pallets

The Del Valle Correctional Facility collects pallets unneeded pallets from all Sherriff's Offices facilities. We have a vendor who picks them up once there is an adequate number collected. The pallets are then graded for payment on the material's ability to be sold, repaired or mulched. This past fiscal year there were 2,242 pallets collected for revenue of \$1,341.50.

Woody Debris

In Travis County, the Parks Division & Facilities Grounds Division maintain lawns, trees, shrubs, and other plants in their day to day activities. The Facility Grounds Division collects the material by truckload and delivers it to the contracted landfill to be utilized in the landfill's compost program. The Parks Division arborist cut dead trees and then chips them into mulch. The mulch is utilized on-site for trees. Currently we are working with the two divisions in developing a system to quantify the amount of woody debris diverted from the landfill.

G. Textiles

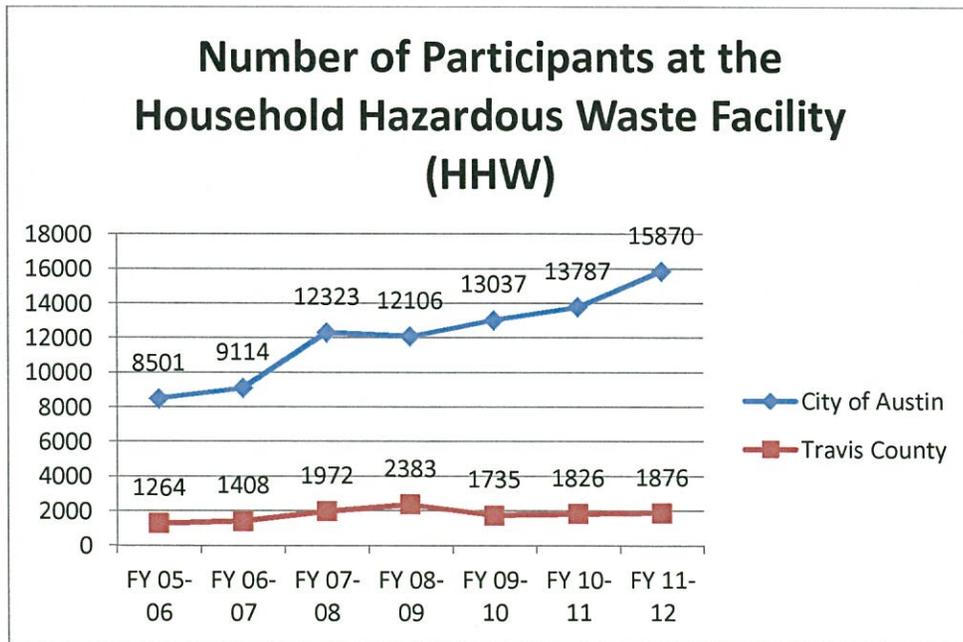
Several of the departments in Travis County utilize textiles in their day to day services. The purchasing office surplus warehouse receives most textiles such as expired uniforms. The warehouse is currently working with the manufacturer to “take-back” the expired uniforms. The jail’s warehouse manager currently finds many different ways to re-use the material onsite such as cutting large towels into smaller pieces for wash cloths. In the future we will continue to work on ways to quantify their diversion methods.

H. Plastic and Glass

Currently Travis County facilities that receive the recycling service can recycle #1 and #2 plastics. In 2013, formation of Green Teams will facilitate greater promotion of plastics recycling by county staff. Issues to be addressed include contamination control as well as a lack of sinks in all buildings for washing off containers.

I. Household Hazardous Waste Program:

Travis County continues to maintain an inter-local agreement with the City of Austin under which County constituents can use the City’s hazardous waste collection facility and the County pays for a full time employee and a percentage of the disposal costs.



In FY 2012, 1,876 constituents used the facility ensuring proper disposal of their hazardous waste instead of disposal into household trash, into the sanitary sewer, or illegal dumping. The cost of the program for FY 2012 is not yet available; however the cost in FY 2011 was \$104,957 used by 1,826 constituents.

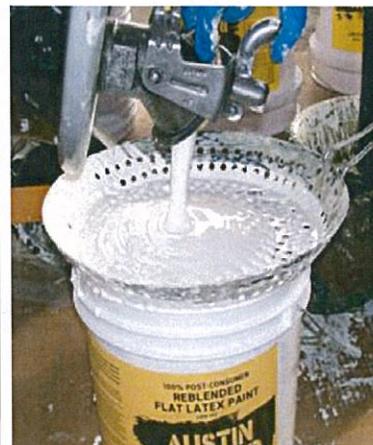


4. An employee is examining a customer's items at the City of Austin Household Hazardous Waste Facility.



3. An employee is sorting batteries for proper disposal and recycling.

The facility has been mandated by City of Austin Resource Recovery Director to increase diversion as much as possible. In FY 2012 the facility increased diversion from 29% to 32%. One of the diversion initiatives is the increase in the re-use of good latex paint through Austin ReBlend. The facility inspects and evaluates the latex paint that is dropped off for disposal. If the paint is deemed good for reuse, it is reblended and then given out to the public for free.

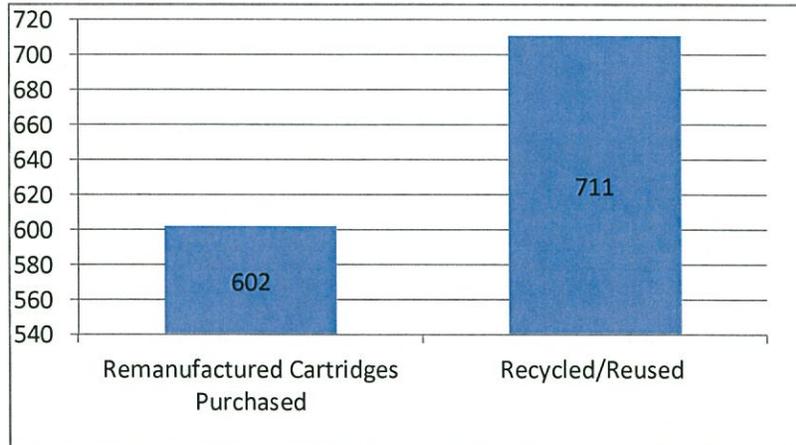


5. The above photographs are a demonstration of the current reblend process. The facility collects good latex paint in 55 gallon drums, then mixes the paint for an average of 45 minutes, and pours it into 2 gallon or 5 gallon buckets.

J. Other

Toner Cartridges

Travis County purchases remanufactured cartridges when compatible with the printing/copying equipment. The Xerox printers are managed by a separate vendor for maintenance and toner supplies. The vendor provides a service to reuse and recycle used cartridges from departments/divisions when requested.



6. The vendor for remanufactured cartridges provides a used toner recycling program.

Spills/Illegally Dumped Products

Transportation and Natural Resource’s Road and Bridge Maintenance Division department notifies a contracted vendor to respond to all spills and dumped chemicals in the “right of way”. In fiscal year of 2012 there were fourteen illegal dumpsites in County ROW serviced with a total cost of \$3,700.06.

Operational Chemicals (paint, film, and herbicides)

A contract is in place to remove hazardous and special wastes from County “rights of ways” (ROW) and from county facilities. Also this year the Facilities Maintenance Division has started a program to properly dispose of fluorescent light bulbs, ballasts, and batteries. The vendor recycles the items for their precious metals and chemicals. The non-recyclable products are properly disposed. This program initiative represents progress in diverting mercury-containing waste from going to a landfill. In 2013, TNR will have information to report regarding how much was diverted and properly disposed.



7. Fluorescent light bulbs and batteries at the maintenance warehouse that are collected for proper disposal.

CONCLUSION

The County's operations are complex and diverse, requiring the purchase, use and disposal of a wide array of products and materials. This requires an extensive, collaborative effort involving various County departments, and the efforts of individual County employees. These individuals help us to develop management practices that are much more efficient and reduce adverse environmental impacts associated with County operations. A variety of methods are being used to avoid unnecessary waste disposal costs while at the same time ensuring that hazardous materials (oil, antifreeze, etc.) are not unnecessarily disposed of or released to the environment.

The waste management program is an essential tool for managing these materials in ways that satisfy the policy directives of the Commissioners Court. The FY 2012 performance and progress results reported demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the waste management policy. Collectively, recycling programs generated revenues of \$41,219.28 in FY 2012. These efforts produce public and environmental benefits that far exceed the monetary value of recycling revenues and avoided disposal costs.

In the past ten years, Travis County's population has grown along with the cities within it. There are strong initiatives focused on conservation and resource management being implemented in the county seat, Austin. Waste management is now only one piece of a holistic outlook on examining how a government can save resources and be fiscally responsible. Travis County is a jewel that has great potential for growth in green initiatives. There is opportunity for improvement through recycling participation, energy conservation initiatives and other conservation practices.

Appendices:

1. Appendix

Del Valle Correctional Facility

The Del Valle Correctional facility has many different conservation and recycling initiatives: garden, composting and recycling program. The staff at the facility is encouraged to be innovative in diverting waste from the landfill and being fiscally responsible. These practices are passed on to the inmates in the facility as new skill sets such as gardening.



9. Bell peppers growing in the Del Valle Garden.



8. Peppers collected from the garden ready to be utilized for meals.

At the facility there is a three acre organic garden which is managed by a coordinator and inmate workers. The garden uses no pesticides and the only fertilizer is compost generated on-site. The coordinator teaches the inmate workers how to plant and harvest. There is a strong diversity in seeds and seedlings that are chosen for planting. This introduces the staff and inmate workers to a variety of vegetables and greens. In 2012 the garden produced is 8,342 lbs. of vegetables. These vegetables are integrated in the meals or frozen for future use.



11. The garden consists of three acres with rotating crops.



10. Pre-consumer food scraps, shredded paper, and brushy waste are utilized for the compost.

The garden is able to be completely organic with no known pest issues by the application of compost created onsite. In 2009 the facility started a composting program (CAPCOG grant) recycling approximately 38 pounds of pre-consumer food waste per week from the prison kitchen and additional spoiled food and the waste from the vegetable garden. Quarterly there are composting classes provided to male and female prison inmates.

The Del Valle recycling program has been in effect since 1991 when they began by collecting loose cardboard by the trailer load. In 2002 they began bailing the cardboard which increased the revenue price. The total collected by the Sherriff's department was 119,640 lbs. of cardboard.



13. Pallets collected for recycling.



12. Cardboard bailed by inmate workers.

This is the only currently facility that Travis County recycles pallets. The Del Valle correctional facility has space to store the pallets until enough have been collected (100) for pick-up by the vendor. In 2012 fiscal year, 2,242 pallets were collected for revenue of \$1,341.50.

2. Appendix

Parks Division

The Parks Division with support from management has been collecting, sorting, and transporting aluminum cans and plastic for several years at Reimers Ranch and Hamilton Pool.

This year was the first year for the F1 event to work cooperatively with the parks division to provide recycling for the bike shuttle site located at Richard Moya. The recycling program provided twenty-five portable recycling collection containers at the park with an overall collection of seven bags.



14. The clear-stream recycling containers provided at Richard Moya Park for F1.



15. There were over 1,160 participants that biked from Austin for the shuttle to the F1 event.

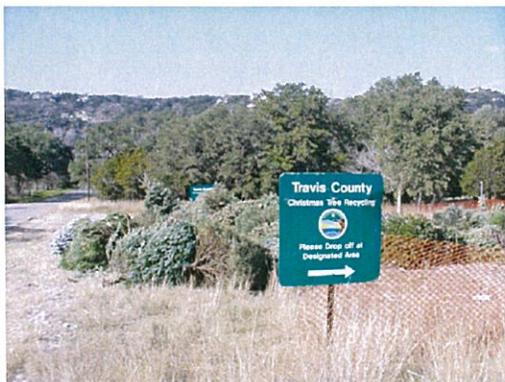
3. Appendix

Community Programs

In FY2012 Travis County supported two community programs promoting conservation, the Lake Travis Underwater/Shoreline Clean-up and Christmas Tree Recycling. The Lake Travis Underwater/Shoreline Clean-up is a cooperative effort between Travis County, Keep Austin Beautiful and Colorado River Foundation. This year there were more than 900 volunteers collecting material at twenty clean-up sites. There was a total of 3.61 tons of trash collected with 2.39 tons recycled.



The Travis County Christmas Tree recycling program continued in FY2012 to provide the county residents a way to properly dispose of their tree. The City of Austin also provides a site at Zilker Park open to everyone with no residency requirement. The City of Austin partners with the county in providing the county drop-off locations on their website. The county provides two sites Del Valle Softball Field and 620FM low water crossing. Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR) utilizes the trees as mulch. This past year, there was 331 Christmas Trees collected.



RECYCLE YOUR
Christmas Tree
INTO A LOCAL
RESOURCE

