

City of Saint Paul - Sustainable "To Go" Food Packaging Initiative

October 10th, 2016

1pm – 4pm

375 Jackson St. Conference Room 2East

Introduction, Overview and Scope of Work Group

- Scope: To-go, Immediate consumption
- Items not addressed: Shopping bags, water bottles, plastic bags (2017 project)
- Interested in whole life-cycle – not just usability or disposability
- Regionally: MPLS and St. Louis Park – already have programs
- STLP more restrictive
- Program must fit the City of Saint Paul

City and Regional Context

Ramsey/Washington County Grant Program – Joel Andersen: Ramsey County BizRecycling

- Reduce waste in businesses, encourage recycling
- Businesses should recycle
 - o Environmental
 - o Cost savings (tax on waste is 17% more)
 - o Green marketing
- 370 businesses currently in program
- Commercial recycling act: 2016 (4 cubic yards of waste must collect at least 3 recyclable materials per week)
- Consumers are willing to pay more (top 3 causes that consumers want)
- Joint powers agreement
 - o Waste = inefficiency
 - o Use market to reduce inefficiencies
- Technical assistance from MN Waste Wise and JL Taitt & Associates
 - o Business to business more effective
 - o Free consultation on waste stream
 - o Develop recycling plan
 - o Grant application
- Grants
 - o Up to \$10,000 for equipment, supplied, employee training and/or containers
 - o 6 months of compostable items
 - o Labels and signage

City of St. Paul – Mayor’s Office – Anne Hunt: City of Saint Paul Mayor’s Office

- 2012-2013
 - o Wilder Research – residential programs
 - o “All in” Program
- 2014 – expand plastics recycling
 - o Single sort recycling
- 2015: Public places and events
 - o Event centers
 - o Bulky items
- 2016: organized trash collection
 - o Converted to new collection bins for recycling
- 2017: organics collection options
 - o Provide options for composting and recycling NOT JUST at home

Davanni's – John Barrett, CFO

- CFO – very involved with MPLS efforts
- Styrofoam was the big issue
 - o Had a hard time finding an appropriate and usable replacement
 - o Cost \$100,000 to switch
 - o 1% overhead cost increase
 - o Hoping that as more businesses switch, competition and prices will help
- Analyzed all current containers (eat-in, take-out, delivery)
 - o Biggest impact from to-go
 - o Learned a lot from Xcel Energy Center
 - o Trash Haulers were very helpful
 - Specific industry and regional information
- Helpful if STP followed MPLS
 - o Fewer changes to business
- Corporately owned
 - o Changes system wide
- Commercial compost
 - o Hauler issues
 - o Worried that materials are ACTUALLY being composted
 - o Container issues
 - Expensive, flimsy bags

Industrial Composting – Eureka

- 4 industrial composting sites in the Metro Area
- Several “transfer” sites to reduce transit costs
- Taking Cedar Grove and BPI certified plastic

DSI – Dan Niziolek

- Regional perspective/approach
- Synergy of working together
- MN State Law: Recycling Requirements
- City of Saint Paul Ordinance Chapter 236: Environmental Preservation: Plastic Packaging (1991)
 - o Build upon for our current updates
 - o Exemptions: 10mils or less, packaging and nursing homes, plastic coating, no commercially acceptable alternative, paper or cellulose-based packaging capable of being decomposed
 - o Advisory committee on environmentally acceptable packaging
 - o Roll-out timelines
- QUESTIONS:
 - o Ability to enforce?
 - Green jobs? Inspectors?
 - o Food Trucks?
 - Minneapolis enforcement?
 - State Regulated
 - o MPLS enforcement
 - Training/Education and grace period
 - Feels like there is not a lot of enforcement
 - Need enforcement to get on board

BRAINSTORMING

1. Issues with current “To Go” food packaging

- Education
 - Items look similar (different types of plastic, etc.)
 - Education & Resources for public and business
 - new immigrant businesses
 - knowing how/what to recycle
- Users
 - End user– ease of use and knowledge of programs
 - Users – will they use it?
 - Will they care?
- End of life: sustainable packaging has multiple end-of-life applications
 - Life Cycle/Definition of Sustainability: Broader than end of life
- Where does it go??
 - address front of store – make sure being recycled
 - community/regional locations
- Application issues
 - needs to be addressed regionally and uniformly
 - Assist businesses that operate regionally (multiple municipalities)
- Cost
 - Current business model: Styrofoam is so cheap
 - Cost of containers
 - Confusion on Certified compostable (clay, wax, etc.) Cost differences
 - Cost of doing business
- Business Impact
 - Lack of sourcing for sustainable to-go packaging
 - No good options for coffee
 - Business basics - container needs to work for specific businesses
 - Variability in types of containers
- Environmental Impacts
 - Non-recyclable/compostable contamination impacts
 - Environmental Toxins (trash burning, breaking down in water/soil)
- Enforcement
- Styrofoam is not environmentally friendly (what does this mean?)
- Black Plastic

2. Challenges with increasing sustainability of “To Go” food packaging

(What does it take to MOVE FORWARD)

- Food safety – reusable containers
- Implementation
 - Festivals/food truck, who collects??
 - time-frame
 - Uniform application
 - Inspections
 - Inspector training and assignment
 - Employee training/time
 - Resources for development/adoption of system
- Sustainability of program – keep it going
 - Emerging products

- Certification for poly-coated paper vs. bio-based
 - Continue evolving
 - Education with sales vendors
 - Not just cheapest products
 - Commercial front of house vs residential roadside
 - Different solutions
 - Different infrastructures
- Suitability of alternatives
 - Fit needs of businesses (current business model)
 - Practical needs
- Sustainability considerations
 - Not just CO2
 - Human health and environmental
 - Cheaper high-quality alternatives
- Consistency with city/county departments execution
 - Resources to support education and enforcement
- Small business owners – success of program
 - Implementation vs longevity
- Reducing confusion for consumers on sorting
 - Education for schools/children
- Limitations/opportunities: flexible packaging recycling
 - Take away need for exemptions
- COST
 - Cost on both sides (city and business)
 - Franchise vs corporate owned
 - Purchasing/pricing with sourcing differences
 - Non-standard packaging fees/time
- Access to Commercial composting
 - Ramsey VS Hennepin
 - Lack of transfer stations
- Volume of food service packaging – tiny when compared to Cardboard, etc.
 - Hard to make cost effective to build infrastructure
- Few businesses taking advantage of incentives
 - WasteWise
 - Tax
- Consumer preferences change business models

3. Opportunities for increasing sustainability of “To Go” food packaging in the City of Saint Paul

- Schools
- Education at events
- Save money!
- To-go/flexible packaging/poly-paper/etc: National Issue (lots of stakeholders)
- Communication to the public
- MORE Bulk buying program for compostable products for small businesses to reduce cost
 - Education on existing programs
 - State Contracts
- Education alongside new recycling roll-out (City’s Responsibility)
- Commercial Organic Pickup – just need one that works
 - Ensure route density

- Consistent with other municipalities with regulations
- Sticks vs Carrots – INCENTIVES
- Positive public image for City of Saint Paul/County/State
- Business recycling
- New markets for recycled material
 - Incentives?
- Continued Education – everyone is impacted
 - Businesses
 - Consumers
 - Homeowners
 - Schools
- Regional optimization
 - Remove patchwork of ordinances
- Lay the ground-work
 - Take advantage of Research/studies – what are other cities doing that work? Challenges? (lots of people have been working on this for a long time)
 - Strengthen “story” for community engagement
 - Provide evidence to support efforts and mitigate cost
- Partnerships/coalitions are important and impactful
 - Cooperative buying
- RESIDENTIAL system – existing parameters
 - 70% of packaging leaves the store and goes home
 - Help businesses understand what they put out that goes to curbside
 - Different businesses = different cost structures
- Recognition program
 - Promote businesses
 - Competition
 - Share successes/best practices
 - Create a market/consumer preference
 - Willing to pay more
 - Create customer base/loyalty
 - Customer base
- Finished compost result of program
 - Use new product “luxury compost”
 - Close the loop
 - New market
 - SHOW tangible results (water bottle/etc.)
 - Reuse – material reuse opportunities/markets
- Awareness
 - Business organizations – larger scale
 - Leaver the program
- Small business groups (ESABA)
 - Trusted source
 - Density/organization – hauler incentive
- Food waste volume

Research Assignments

- 1 pager
- 3-5 minute presentation
- supporting documentation for group

Areas identified that need further research

Bulk Buying

- Eureka (Kate)

Small business

- Mary GM – listening sessions
- WasteWise – success stories/challenges
- ESABA
- BizRecycling (Joel)

Packaging

- Rhea: Summary of food service packaging institute studies

Partnerships

- American Chemistry Council

Economically viable alternatives

- MN Restaurant Association – comparison of costs

Regional Comparisons

- DSI (MPLS, SLP, regional)

Education – what is happening now, what needs to happen in the future?

- Consumer Education – Ann Hunt
- Business Education –
- Who is doing what? (State, County, Haulers, etc.)
 - o Kris
 - o Eureka (Kate)
 - o National (Gretchen)
 - o MN Compost Council (end of life/new products)
 - o MN Recycling Association
 - o Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board
 - What can you recycle?
 - o MPCA

Marketing and Incentives/ recognition program

- What's working?

Longevity of group and efforts (Advisory Board)

- o DSI

NEXT MEETING: 45 days (Before Thanksgiving)