

Date: October 5, 2009
To: City of Lawrence City Commissioners
From: Daniel Poull, Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB)
RE: SAB Waste Reduction and Recycling Recommendations

This memo seeks to inform the City's pending audit of the Solid Waste Division and the Commission's pending review of the Solid Waste Division's most recent report, *Evaluation of Waste Diversion Strategies for Lawrence 2009 Update*.¹ A draft of staff's most recent report was reviewed by SAB in July and August of this year.

As part of ongoing and pending policy analysis and discussions related to waste management in Lawrence, the SAB wishes to reiterate and highlight the following recommendations:

- 1. We support the establishment of a quantitative waste reduction and recycling goal accompanied by an appropriate benchmark.**² For instance, the City would establish an annual goal for reducing the tons of garbage disposed. We believe that the goal should be established for a specified time period (i.e. 5 years) and that objectives be developed to meet the goal.
- 2. We support implementation of unit-based pricing (pay as you throw, or PAYT3) for solid waste collection, for all residential users in Lawrence, including multi-family housing with 4 units or less.** Implementing PAYT has successfully created a direct economic incentive to generate less waste and increase recycling in numerous municipalities, including University towns like ours. A volume-based rate structure creates a clear connection between the level of services provided and the cost for those services.⁴ This type of rate structure would incentivize recycling and help create equity, ensuring that all residents to pay an appropriate share of the City's overall collection and disposal costs.
- 3. We support the creation of a Citywide residential curbside recycling program which will provide uniform access to curbside recycling program for all residents**⁵.

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<http://www.ci.lawrence.ks.us/recycling/pdf/EVALUATION%20OF%20WASTE%20DIVERSION%20STRATEGIES%20FOR%20LAWRENCE%20-%202009.pdf>

² Such as a measurement of the pounds generated per person/day.

³ <http://www.epa.gov/waste/conserve/tools/payt/index.htm>

⁴ Under the City's current rate structure and policy of unlimited refuse collection, there is little relation between how much a resident pays for solid waste collection service and how much service a resident receives. In a report provided to the City of Tulsa, R. W. Beck asserts that when residents are allowed to place unlimited quantities of material at the curb for collection, with no financial implications, residents rarely attempt to limit their disposal needs. In order to provide residents with a financial incentive to minimize the overall quantity of material set-out, many cities have implemented a volume based fee structure.
<http://www.tulsaworld.com/webextra/content/items/trashstudy.pdf>

⁵ In regard to the recently proposed subscription 'pilot' curbside program, it should be noted that R. W. Beck has found that subscription type curbside programs are substantially less effective than recycling services that are incorporated into the standard residential solid waste collection services thus such an effort may not provide accurate or representative data.

4. **We encourage consideration of public-private partnerships for the provision of curbside recycling services within the City.** As reported by the Institute for Local Self Reliance, on a per-ton basis, sorting and processing recyclables alone sustains 10 times more jobs than landfilling or incineration.⁶ We see strong synergies between recycling and local economic development, and we encourage the City to collaborate with other communities, and small and local businesses.
5. So long as the City continues to rely exclusively on the private sector for provision of residential curbside recycling services, **we recommend the licensure of both private curbside recycling haulers and privately owned recycling facilities operating within the City limits.** In addition, to further increase the visibility and credibility of current private curbside services, we suggest that the City consider providing private haulers with uniform collection containers for recyclables collected at the curb.
6. Yard waste represents the vast majority of our City's 35% recycling rate. **We applaud the City's yard waste recycling efforts, and strongly support its continuation.**
7. **We recommend that the City pursue targeted waste reduction activities** in collaboration with those entities/sources known to generate large volumes of waste within our community (i.e. industrial and institutional waste generators, including colleges and universities; wastes from apartment move-outs, and wastes generated during construction and demolition activities).⁷
8. **We encourage the City Auditor to examine current commercial solid waste collection rates and to review commercial services provided by the City.** Collection efficiencies and possible sources of additional revenue may exist within certain cost-centers (e.g.: roll off and commercial recycling services).
9. In light of the recent sale of the Hamm's landfill,⁸ and other solid waste planning developments in the Kansas City Metropolitan area that may significantly impact regional landfill capacity,⁹ **we strongly suggest that the City of Lawrence engage in more proactive and comprehensive solid waste planning.** Such planning should include regional and long range capacity projections and some effort toward full cost accounting.¹⁰ Further, we recommend that a resident of Lawrence be appointed by the Mayor and the City Commission, from a list of not less than three people chosen by the Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB), to participate in the City/County solid waste planning committee.

The Commission's consideration of SAB's recommendations is greatly appreciated. We look forward to working with the Commission and City staff to improve services, reduce waste disposal and increase waste diversion.

⁶ <http://www.ilsr.org/recycling/recyclingmeansbusiness.html>

⁷ <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/partnerships/wastewise/wrr/prevent.htm>

⁸ <http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2009/aug/28/hamm-inc-sells-investors-eyes-growth/>

⁹ http://jced.jocogov.org/solid_waste/SWPlanImplementationUpdateCoWv.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.epa.gov/osw/conservation/tools/fca/epadocs.htm#fcahandbook>