

WRAP in Eau Claire The City and the County



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CITY OF EAU CLAIRE**

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EAU CLAIRE COUNTY RECYCLING PROGRAM**

Eau Claire's History



- 2009 - Sustainability Chapter, Comprehensive Plan outlines policy to reduce paper & plastic bags
- 2013 - Council forms Sustainable Bag Committee
- 2014 Feb. - Council adopts SBC's report
- Now – Advisory Commission on Sustainability (ACS) charged with next steps

Sustainable Bag Committee



- Met for six months; 14 meetings
- Diverse working group; chamber, retailers, environmentalists, hauler, citizens, etc.
- Charge was to seek ways to reduce, reuse, recycle disposable plastic and paper bags
- Toured Twin City MRF collecting curbside film
- Nov. 2013 Report offered recommendations

Recommendations & Goals



APPLICABILITY

- Only point-of-sale plastic & paper disposable bags distributed in City of Eau Claire
- To all retailers, including restaurants
- Same recommended to County staff/Board for incorporated & unincorporated places

GOAL

- 80% reduction within 5 years
- 80% recycling goal of plastic film in same time

Four-Phased Approach



1. Pre-Development – 1 yr. (now)
 - ✦ Devise educational campaign, work on other research tasks
2. Educational – 2 yrs.
 - ✦ Marketing & partnership campaigns to BYORB
 - ✦ Benchmark 45%
3. Incentive – 1 yr.
 - ✦ Mandatory \$0.05 credit back per reusable bag
 - ✦ Benchmark 65%
4. Requirement – 1 yr.
 - ✦ Mandatory Approx. \$0.10 fee for every POS bag
 - ✦ Benchmark 80%

Educational Phase



Developing “The Plan”...

- Education/marketing campaign BIG push
 - “Bring Your Own Reusable Bag” message
- Clerk asks customer if disposable bag is needed
- Retailers provide reusable bags/drop-off sites
- Encourage voluntary receipt credit
- Research best:
 - Reusable bag, data collection method, funding, film collection/recycling approach...
- Partnerships, partnerships!!

Why use Reusable Bags?

Reusable bags are great for carrying more product and promoting them is an environmentally responsible thing to do.



Reusable bags offer:

Revenue Opportunities – Reusable bags can create a new source of revenue for your store. Reusable bags can substantially cut down on your store costs by replacing hundreds of thousands of single use plastic bags.

Environmental Awareness – Reusable bags will improve your store's image by demonstrating your dedication to being environmentally conscious. The movement to go 'Green' is not only a sound ecological decision for your store but a great economic one as well.

Brand Recognition – All bags can be customized with your store logo – and because they're reusable, they act as free mobile billboards anytime consumers carry them outside the store walls.

Draft Brochure - UWEC students

Recycling Plastic Film



SBC recommended moving towards mandatory recycling of plastic bags/film for both residential and commercial sectors over the five-year period

- Possible options to get there:
 - Increase awareness & drop-off sites @ commercial venues
 - Increase industrial Points of Collection
 - Amend City/County ordinances; and by subsequent means such as City hauler licensing, or a Recycling Responsible Unit (County) hauler agreement mandate, or voluntarily as hauler contracts get renewed with the County or with Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs)

Tracking Progress



- SBC believed an objective estimate could be by surveying annually a cross-section of volunteer retailers on their bag purchases
- Struggled with how to track recycled film
 - Collect outflow data of recycled paper and plastic bags (from retailers and haulers)
- Any brilliant other ideas?

Lessons Learned



- SBC's report/Council resolution on City website:
 - <http://eauclairewi.gov/government/boards-commissions-committees/sustainable-bag-committee>
- Working respectfully produced a good outcome
- How much is going on already!
- MRF & market limitations, dirty curbside film
- Tracking estimate/benchmarks are challenging
- Dual layers of government add complexities

County's Role

- Provide technical assistance and guidance
- Increase awareness of plastic film and bag recycling
- Coordinate drop-off locations for industrial and business sectors
- Mandatory recycling?

