

**BOWIE**  
**RECYCLING TASK FORCE**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

9/24/07

**MEMBERS**

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## OVERVIEW

The City currently has a wide array of successful and exciting recycling programs. They are efficient and well run by hardworking City employees.

These recycling programs suffer from, in our opinion, sparse promotion and marketing.

As long-time residents move out and new residents move into the City, the individual household participation rate seems to be lowering; coupled with a stagnating overall percentage of materials recycled.

New developments built in the City and new annexations of existing households are seldom addressed *directly* by the City in regards to participating in the City's recycling programs. This challenge needs to be addressed.

Bowie's total tonnage of successfully recycled materials as a percentage of the total amount of refuse generated by City residents is approximately 2% less than the national average. Most would agree that Bowie can do better.

The Bowie Recycling Task Force thus recommends an aggressive promotion and marketing approach to the City's recycling programs to include, but not limited by, the Recycling Task Force recommendations contained herein.

Recycling programs are not successful merely by individual household participation, but rather in conjunction with the attention and leadership the City could and should provide.

Please read the following recommendations carefully. They are not listed in any specific order of preference, but rather provide a general overview of recycling program enhancements possible through your direct participation and promotion.

**Any and all comments and questions may be addressed to the Recycling Task Force at your convenience.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to serve on Bowie's Recycling Task Force.**

**Bowie Recycling Task Force Members:**

**Joan Ramsay, Doris Kobe, Margaret Gregory, Gregg Bents,  
Mike Bottega**

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# **RECYCLING TASK FORCE'S RECYCLING RECOMMENDATIONS**

9/24/07

## **Recycling - Updated Website Page**

**This is the Recycling Task Force's primary recommendation. The "Recycling" website page should be listed on the front left column of the City's home page. It should not be under the "Green Page" heading; it should have its own listing.**

**Putting "Recycling" on the City's home page gives the program credibility and increases the chance of citizen education and participation.**

**The "Recycling Page" should also have a "tag" for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) as well as "Recycling Fun Facts."**

**See examples of Recycling Fun Facts in Attachment A.**

## **"Recycling Minute" at City Council Meetings**

**At the beginning of every Council Meeting for the next 12 months, the first minute of each session should be a public appeal to all citizens to participate in the City's recycling program. This "Recycling Minute" will give a face to the recycling program and raise participation in same.**

## **“State of the City” Recycling Report**

**The Mayor’s “State of the City” address should include a few lines and statistics regarding the recycling progress and programs in the city as well as a call for citizens who are not currently recycling to start. Naming recycling as a dedicated commitment from our elected officials gives the program a face and helps increase individual household participation.**

**Staff should provide the Council with a quarterly update about the recycling progress and whether or not previously stated goals are on track to be met. This information should be updated regularly.**

## **Annual City Recycling Goals**

**City leadership should set certain attainable goals, to increase recycling participation by household, and for the city and share them with the citizens. The Recycling Task Force recommends an annual household participation increase goal of 2%.**

**City Council should ask for a quarterly report from Public Works to make sure the city is hitting its target rate.**

**Addressing recycling as a serious component of the City’s agenda to improve the quality of life in Bowie helps foster growth and participation rates.**

## **City Staff Recycling “Best Practices”**

**All City employees should be encouraged to participate in a “best practices” in regard to recycling in all City owned and operated buildings. From plastic soda bottles to newspapers to cardboard, etc., all recyclables should be recycled into the City’s recycling programs where ever practically feasible. The City’s Public Information office should highlight this fact under the guise of “Leadership by Example.”**

## **City Message Board Campaigns**

**Another tool for increased recycling participation would be the aggressive use of the City's Message Boards. A measured effort to remind people to recycle and to ask non-recyclers to start would be a successful utilization of this medium.**

**Suggested messages for the City Message Boards are.....**

- (1) Make a difference. Start recycling.**
- (2) Please Recycle. It's easy, fun and free!**
- (3) Call 301-809-2344 to start recycling!**
- (4) Bowie needs YOU to start recycling!**
- (5) cityofbowie.org**
- (6) Save the world! Start recycling!**
- (7) Recycling makes you happy!**
- (8) Recycle! Recycle! Recycle!**
- (9) Are you recycling with the city? Call 301-809-2344**
- (10a) Are you doing it? (teaser ad question - Part I)**  
**(Answer to be posted 11/4/07)**
- (10b) Are you doing it? = Recycling (teaser ad answer - Part II)**

## **New Home Owners – Recycling**

**When a home in Bowie is purchased, the amount of materials that are simply “thrown out” versus recycling is significant. This is the critical time to engage the new homeowner in the City's recycling program.**

**To address this challenge, the City should institute a proactive recycling mailer outreach program whereby the new home buyer is mailed a recycling reminder. This could also be included in the Welcome Packets that new homeowner's are provided.**

**This recycling reminder would 1) reiterate current City recycling programs available to that household, including that address's pickup schedule and “how to start recycling”; 2) direct said household to the city's website outlining the city's recycling programs; and 3) address the availability of the Brown Station landfill to drop off unused hazardous household chemicals.**

## City Newsletter – Public Service Notice

**The Bowie Recycling Task Force recommends that the City adopt a new environmental policy regarding its newsletter mailed to residents.**

**Add a small “public service notice” on the front and back pages of every newsletter issued to residents. Said notice is.....**

***Reuse. Recycle. Renew.***

**This simple “public service notice” would help increase public awareness about recycling while being good public relations for the City.**

## “Bio-Diesel” City Run Fleet

**The Recycling Task Force recommends that the city convert at least one piece of City owned diesel equipment to bio-diesel by the end of 2007.**

**Public Works can then test the effectiveness and success of this bio-diesel, converted unit for a period of one year. If successful, the City Council (along with the City Manager) should then produce a multi-year schedule whereby the *entire* City owned diesel fleet is converted to bio-diesel.**

## **Bulk Mail Reduction-Elimination System**

City employees using “best practices” to recycle all the recyclables that they generate at their job is important. However, not having recyclables generated in the first place *is even more important!*

Hence the Recycling Task Force recommends that the City employ a “Bulk Mail Reduction-Elimination System.”

The individual bulk mail pieces sent to both individual employees and City departments numbers in the thousands every year. A “Bulk Mail Reduction-Elimination System” would lessen and eliminate a great deal of this discarded bulk mail from ever arriving at City Hall in the first place.

Here is how it works. Unsolicited and unwanted bulk mail arrives daily at each City employee’s desk. Each employee then puts a “sticky note” on each unwanted piece of mail and sends it back to the mail room. The employees in the mailroom then in turn send a “Please-Stop-Sending Notification Statement” to the source of origin.

Phone calls can also be made (instead of mailings) to persistent bulk mailers who fail to heed the City’s request.

Within a few months, the amount of unwanted bulk mail will be *drastically reduced.* And so will the need to recycle these unwanted pieces of mail.

## **Clothes Recycling**

**While there are many organizations that voluntarily collect unwanted clothes from individual households, the bulk amount of unwanted clothes are discarded and landfilled. This represents a large amount of tipping fees incurred by the City as these items are thrown out.**

**Hence, the City should consider implementing a proactive “clothes recovery” program. The City could have and advertise a central City drop-off point for unwanted clothes to be collected and reused by a non-profit organization.**

**This program could implemented immediately. For more information, see Attachment “B”.**

### **Used Oil , Used Antifreeze and Used Oil Filter Drop-Off Site**

**The City's used oil, used antifreeze and used oil collection site is the second largest collection point under the MES program; generating and facilitating the collection of approximately 17,000 gallons of used oil and antifreeze annually as well as thousands of used oil filters.**

**This site is designed for do-it-yourself (DIY) or individual generators (citizens) changing their own oil and antifreeze. This site is not intended for commercial generators.**

**Because a significant number of all oil changes are done by DIY's, this site is very important in an environmental effort for DIY's not to illegally dump used oil, and used antifreeze.**

**This environmental site and program is one of the best kept secrets in the City. It needs to be actively and continually promoted. Currently The only promotion of this site seems to be on the City's website and the occasional mentioning in the City's newsletter(s).**

### **Mulching and Electric Lawnmower Rebate Program**

**The City currently has a \$25 rebate for City residents who purchase a new mulching lawnmower and provide the City with the receipt of purchase.**

**We recommend that the City a) double the rebate amount to \$50 b) promote this program heavily every March, April and May and c) include a \$50 rebate as well for new electric lawnmowers.**

**The savings to the City would come in the form of a) little or no cut grass clippings needed to be recycled on recycling day (mulching mower) and b) improved air quality with little or no emissions (electric mower).**

**While electric lawnmowers do use electric energy, gas lawnmowers (especially older models) produce more harmful emissions than a standard car engine, thrust said emissions on the operator and contribute to noise pollution.**

## **Recycling Internship**

**The City would do well to consider a full time recycling position. Said position could oversee all recycling matters within the City, while working to promote current and new recycling programs.**

**Many cities in Maryland do employ just such a position.**

**If, however, budget considerations do preclude this from happening in the near future, we recommend that the city implement a Recycling Internship position.**

**At no cost to the City, such an internship can bring a fresh pair of eyes to all existing recycling programs as well as keep the City Manager current on other successful recycling programs being implemented in Maryland and beyond.**

**It would also benefit the intern by providing direct experience in the environmental field; and help that intern to build his or her resume. The intern can even be a city resident going to a local college.**

**“Recycling Gift Certificate Program” to Increase Recycling Participation Per Household (RGCP)**

**This is an incentive program designed to increase individual household participation in the City’s recycling programs. The City Council immediately authorizes \$500 per month (for a 12-month period) designated for the RGCP.**

**Each month, 10 household addresses will be picked at random. If any of the said randomly selected households are seen to have participated by placing recyclables to the curb that month, they will be automatically mailed a “Gift Certificate” for \$50.00.**

**Public Works can coordinate the random selection of 10 addresses each month as well as the monitoring of those households’ recycling participation.**

**The RGCP would be promoted in the local newspapers and the City’s newsletter, website and message boards.**

**The return on investment would be the immediate diversion of recyclables redirected through waste stream avoidance (costing \$45 per ton). That is, for every new ton of recyclables recycled and not landfilled, the City would realize a monetary savings rate as follows.**

**One ton of refuse *not* landfilled = \$52 per ton savings. Each ton of recyclable material recycled = \$10 per ton *paid* to the City. Or \$52 (refuse disposal cost) avoidance per ton + \$10 (recycling income paid) per ton = *\$62 per ton net gain to the City.***

**This incentive based program can be executed quickly to increase household recycling participation while promoting recycling and community spirit.**

## **ATTACHMENT “A”**

### **RECYCLING FUN FACTS**

#### **GENERAL**

**The EPA estimates that 75% of what Americans throw in the trash could actually be recycled. Currently only 25% is. And Bowie’s recycling rate is lower than this national average.**

**The national recycling rate of 25% saves the equivalent of more than five billion gallons of gasoline, reducing dependence on foreign oil by 114 million barrels.**

**Recycling 35% of our trash nationally reduces global warming emissions equivalent to taking 36 million cars off the road.**

**In 2005, the U.S. generated some 387.8 million tons of municipal solid waste.**

**Maryland generates approximately a little more than seven million tons of municipal solid waste annually.**

**In 1988, there were 7,924 landfills nationally. In 2005, there were 1,654.**

**One gallon of used motor oil can contaminate over one million gallons of water.**

**Each year the U.S. companies manufacture over 500,000,000 car and light truck oil filters. Each year over 350,000,000 of those filters go into landfills. These numbers DO NOT include heavy trucking, aviation, railroad, maritime or industrial oil filters.**

## **METALS**

**Nationally, nearly 65% of all aluminum is currently being recycled.**

**The 36 billion aluminum cans landfilled last year had a scrap value of more than \$600 million.**

**Americans use 100 million tin and steel cans every day.**

**Recycling aluminum cans is a closed-loop system. Every can is infinitely recyclable.**

**Americans throw away enough aluminum every three months to rebuild our entire commercial air fleet.**

**Every minute of every day, an average of 123,097 aluminum cans are recycled.**

**Last year, enough aluminum cans were recycled to fill the Empire State building 24 times.**

**Last year, Americans recycled enough aluminum cans to stretch to the moon and back twice.**

**Making new aluminum cans from recycled cans takes 95% less energy.**

**Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to burn a 100 watt bulb for almost four hours and a television set for three hours.**

**Aluminum can go from the recycling bin to the retail shelf in as little as 60 days.**

**Recycling 40 aluminum cans conserves the same energy as one gallon of gasoline.**

**For every ton of steel recycled, 2,500 pounds of iron ore, 1,400 pounds of coal and 120 pounds of limestone are conserved.**

## **GLASS**

**Glass makes up about 7% of America's municipal solid waste.**

**The glass recycling process is a closed-loop system; creating no additional waste or by-products.**

**Recycling glass saves raw material. For every ton of glass recycled, over one ton of raw materials is saved, including 1,300 pounds of sand, 410 pounds of soda ash, 380 pounds of limestone and 160 pounds of feldspar.**

**Glass containers can go from the recycling bin to the store shelf in as little as 30 days.**

**In 2005, just over 25% of all glass containers were recycled. States with bottle deposit laws have 35% - 40% less litter by volume.**

## **PAPER**

**Paper products make up the largest part (approximately 40%) of our total trash landfilled.**

**Americans throw out about 85% of the office paper we use.**

**Making recycled paper instead of new paper uses 64% less energy and uses 54% less water.**

**One ton of 100% virgin (non-recycled) newsprint uses 12 trees.**

**One tree makes 16.67 reams of copy paper or 8,333.3 sheets.**

**One ream of copy paper (500 sheets) uses 6% of a tree.**

**One ton of coated, higher-end virgin magazine paper uses a little more than 15 trees.**

**Americans throw away 44 million newspapers every day. That is the same as dumping 500,000 trees into the landfill each week.**

**One person uses two pine trees worth of paper annually. Every Sunday 500,000 trees could be saved if everyone recycled their newspapers.**

**Each year more than 900 million trees are cut down to provide raw materials for American paper and pulp mills.**

**One tree can filter up to 60 pounds of pollutants from the air each year.**

**Recycling a four-foot stack of newspapers saves the equivalent of one 40 foot fir tree.**

**Recycling one ton of newspaper saves enough energy to power a television for 31 hours.**

**Each ton of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, three cubic yards of landfill space, 4,000 kilowatts of energy and 7,000 gallons of water.**

**Every year, Americans use more than 67 million tons of paper or 580 pounds per person.**

**Americans throw away enough office and writing paper annually to build a wall 12 feet high stretching from Los Angeles to New York.**

**Every day, American businesses generate enough paper to circle the earth 20 times.**

## **CARDBOARD**

**Recycling one ton of cardboard saves over nine cubic yards of landfill space.**

**Recycling corrugated cardboard cuts the emission of sulfur dioxide in half.**

**Recycling corrugated cardboard uses about 25% less energy than making cardboard from virgin pulp.**

## **PLASTICS**

**Plastics make up about 8% of America's municipal solid waste.**

**The U.S. post consumer plastics industry employs over 52,000 workers.**

**Over 1.3 billion pounds of post consumer plastics are recycled annually in the U.S.**

**A partial list of the products recycled plastics are made into include decking, carpets, insulation, clothing and textiles, laundry bottles, plastic bags, plastic toys, automobile bumpers, motor oil bottles, plumbing pipes, marine pilings, flower pots and bakery trays.**

**In 1988 we used 2 billion pounds of HDPE just to make bottles for household products. That is about the weight of 90,000 Honda Civics.**

**In 2005, about 9% of plastic containers were recycled.**

## ATTACHMENT “B”

[www.planetaid.org](http://www.planetaid.org)

### **Clothes Collection**

**The objective of Planet Aid's Clothes Collection is to establish an efficient reuse system for second hand clothing. It is a locally based activity benefiting Planet Aid's development aid objectives, while also contributing to local and national goals for increased recycling.**

**This is how it works:**

**We place our clothes collection boxes in your neighborhood. You drop off your unwanted clothes, shoes, and small toys in a box.**

**Note: We can not accept appliances, furniture, or household goods. Please do not leave items outside our boxes.**

**The clothing is regularly collected by one of our drivers and brought to our warehouse. The clothing is then packaged for re-sale before being shipped out by truck. Much of the clothing is either re-sold in U.S. and Canadian thrift shops or exported in bulk overseas to developing countries. Some of the clothing is donated to projects and organizations that we support.**

**The proceeds from the sale of the clothing are used for community development projects in Africa and Asia.**

**This is all made possible by our yellow collection boxes. We routinely empty the boxes and assure that they are kept as neat as possible. When necessary, we switch boxes in need of repair.**