

**FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH
RECYCLING TASK FORCE**

REPORT TO THE MAYOR

Prepared by

Mike Musick, Chairman
Randy Lewis, Facilitator

December 19, 2008

FNSB Recycling Task Force Report to the Mayor

In nature, recycling is the rule. Each component of a natural cycle becomes the food, or resource, for the next.¹ In an ideal world there would be no waste. After making every effort to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle our resources, we should then turn what is left of this resource stream into energy thereby, not only minimizing the impact on the landfill, but also launching the community in the direction of replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. The process of turning Waste-to-Energy will generate power to supply electricity and hot water for industrial or residential use. Garbage is almost infinite; fossil fuels are not.

The Mission of the Recycling Task Force (RTF) is to make recommendations to the Mayor that the Fairbanks North Star Borough institute a comprehensive and sustainable recycling program.

To this end, the RTF met at least monthly for almost exactly one year at central locations around Fairbanks. In the last few months the RTF met twice a month in the Borough Assembly Chambers. Over the course of the year we heard from over 100 citizens who provided hundreds of suggestions on the best way to revive recycling in the FNSB. It is the intent of this report to synthesize these recommendations into five main categories that were identified by the RTF:

1. Coordinate Stakeholders
2. Recyclable Materials
3. Education and Communication
4. Logistics
5. Business plan

The current world economic situation, whether it is called a recession or a depression, dictates that the economics of shipping garbage to distant locations for recycling will be too costly for the citizens of the Fairbanks North Star Borough to support. The wildly gyrating cost of transportation energy alone makes it difficult to create a long-term plan for exporting recycled resources. Rather, recycling should begin at home and expand out only where profitable or at least at a cost no greater than the current solid waste mil rate.

The cooperation of the public with not-for-profit entities, for-profit businesses, and local governments will be required in order to implement a comprehensive and sustainable recycling program in our community. Wide community support is necessary. The Recycling Task Force has gathered input from the concerned citizens of the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Their many voices are reflected in this report.

At the top of the pages that follow is the recommendation to reconstitute the now defunct Recycling Commission. It will be their task to guide the administration through the implementation of the following recommendations.

¹ The Natural Step for Communities: How Cities and Towns can Change to Sustainable Practices, Sarah James & Torbjorn Lahti, New Society Publishers, 2004 p.38

12/19/08 Final Recommendations from the Recycling Task Force:

The following 13 principles encapsulate the final recommendation to the Mayor from the 2008 Recycling Task Force. In addition to the 13 principles there are 5 categories of recommendations that should be considered as ideas or potential solutions to be studied and developed as needed. Also attached is the Memorandum dated 9/12/06 from Randy Johnson at the FNSB Public Works Department to the previous Recycling Task Force. Its recommendations may be folded into this recommendation either in its original form or with updated revisions.

1. Create a Recycling Commission (RC) to guide the process of developing and improving recycling in the FNSB. Encourage participation on the Commission by stakeholders. Identify stakeholders as all of us.
2. Enlist and encourage political support from the FNSB Assembly. Request budget for marketing/education campaign as soon as possible.
3. A marketing campaign including public education and signs should begin prior to any actual recycling effort. Any public education campaign should deliver objective, neutral, factual information. Education should be ongoing.
4. Explore different business models and develop a business plan to guide the recycling program.
5. Begin the composting initiative now. Recognize that composting can be done either on an industrial scale or by home gardeners and can be done immediately. Develop and provide a biomass-composting site.
6. Develop and solicit revenue-generating opportunities such as corporate sponsorship and advertising.
7. The recycling program should utilize source separation including the use of tamper resistant bins.
8. Promote partnerships with non-profits, volunteers, and businesses to augment recycling programs.
9. It will be incumbent upon the Borough to invest in infrastructure in order to have a viable and sustainable recycling program.
10. Offer privatization of the recycling program based upon avoided costs (including avoided landfill costs).
11. Promote the local use of recycled material (e.g. plastic fence posts or tanks).
12. Identify grant funding for community development to fund specific parts of a recycling program.
13. Explore the pros and cons of stockpiling recyclable materials.

Recommendations for category #1: Stakeholders

1. Reinstitute the Recycling Commission.
2. FNSB's policies will support RTF recommendations.
3. Recycled material should be utilized to make a usable product.
4. FNSB will send existing businesses Memoranda of Agreement requesting a commitment to participate. A questionnaire will also be included to gather information on what businesses can reuse or recycle from the waste stream and/or what they can provide to the recycling effort. The bigger the entity the more specific should be the requests for participation.
5. FNSB and RTF will suggest businesses that could utilize the waste stream.
6. FNSB will cooperate and coordinate with the Military on:
 - A. Contributions for Waste-to-Energy
 - B. Contribution to recycling efforts
 - C. Determining the availability of Eielson AFB pelletizer for use or sale.
7. FNSB will cooperate and coordinate with the City of Fairbanks to enact policies that will support curbside recycling and give tax relief for reduction of material put in the landfill.
8. Encourage commercial participation by facilitating tax credits or profits for recycling/reduction of the Waste Stream.
9. Coordinate with State of Alaska to identify:
 - A. Tax credits
 - B. Possible funding through grants.
10. Coordinate with Federal government to identify:
 - A. Tax credits
 - B. Possible funding through grants.
11. Facilitate backhauling of recyclable material from Bush communities through tax credits or other means.
12. Promote opportunities for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to participate in Waste to Energy by utilizing heat and/or power.
13. Facilitate research to identify efficient options for recycling, transportation, etc.
14. Publicize efforts to the general public to promote participation by:
 - A. Information kiosks at transfer sites
 - B. Local advertising

Recommendations for category #2: Recyclable Materials

1. Borough retains the controlling authority.
2. Start with items that are immediately profitable or that can be easily marketed.
3. Base efforts on economic feasibility. Develop and utilize a critical process for economic analysis.
4. Retrieve the work product from previous sessions.
5. Create and maintain a database of contributors, users, and technology as they are developed so that future innovations may be incorporated as they become available.
6. Develop and utilize a critical process for operations analysis.
7. Develop a review process for all aspects of the recycling effort.

8. Develop links with departments at UAF for analysis of and assistance in:
 - o Economics
 - o Engineering
 - o Hazardous materials
 - o Public Relations
 - o Marketing
9. Categorize the materials in a table such as the following:

Material	Handling difficulty	Volume	Weight	Market value?	Local value?	Hazard?	
Glass	Med	Med	Med	None	?	None	
Tires	High	High	High	None	?	Low	
Electronic	Low	High	Med	Med/Low	None	High	
Plastic	Sort/Med	High	Low	Low	?	?	
Aluminum	Low	Low	Low	High	?	None	
Compost	Sanitation	High	High	Med	Med	Low	
Construction Material	High/Sort	High	Med	None/Low	Low	Depends on material	
Paper	High/Keep dry	High	High	Low	?	Low	

10. Material separation:
 - o Geneva trailers or some other form of source separation
 - o Separate bins at the transfer sites
 - o Bins on construction sites for waste material
 - o Sorting at primary source, landfill, or recycling centers
11. Establish a materials bank or location for future mining.
12. Encourage site-produced products such as extruded plastic gutters or insulation from shredded paper whether at transfer sites or at the land fill.
13. Explore the prospect of privatizing the whole effort based upon the 85% plan. The Borough would pay a contractor 85% of the cost to separate, transport, and recycle the waste stream and to be entitled to any derived profits.

Recommendations for Category #3: Education

1. Who?
 - A. Identify targets: General public/citizenry, K-12 (public and private schools), UAF, Consumers, Businesses, Vocational practitioners, construction, and military. Include public re-education efforts.
2. How?
 - A. Public re-education campaign should deliver objective, neutral, factual information without moralizing and should cater to different audiences.

Information on improved public health, environmental, and financial savings is compelling enough without moralizing.

- B. Create a local recycling Logo.
 - C. Advertise in the paper possibly by including a special edition on Green Living to include a resident's guide to recycling, energy efficiency, and an educational survey. Demonstrate savings by reducing waste stream, packaging, and transportation by buying local.
 - D. Advertise in phone books and through public service announcements
 - E. Establish a recycling website linked to other community websites such as FNSB, FNSBSD, City of Fairbanks, State of AK, Greenstar, or NAEC.
 - F. Hold a Trash/Recycling Fair. Dissect or analyze trash to illustrate how much is compostable, evaluate packaging, etc.
 - G. Hold contests for businesses to produce ideas to reduce the waste stream and for businesses or individuals to demonstrate items manufactured from the waste stream. (May be associated with the Trash/Recycling Fair.)
 - H. Remind residents that Fairbanks used to produce most locally consumed food.
 - I. Encourage Noel Wien Library (and maybe UAF) to identify literature and establish a "Recycling Reading Corner."
 - J. Assess and contribute to curriculum at FNSBSD.
 - K. Utilize information kiosks and signs at the transfer sites.
 - L. Establish a Portal or clearinghouse for information.
 - M. Create a feedback loop by using suggestion boxes or surveys at the Portal
3. What?
- A. Promote the value of materials and redirected savings by their being withheld from the waste stream.
 - B. Update information on how and where to recycle.
 - C. Disassociate recycling from garbage and landfill.
 - D. Dissect, analyze, and identify all the costs, including real, short term, long term, and hidden, with the packaging, transportation and disposal of goods including their byproducts and environmental hazards in a global market.
 - E. Establish convenient or mobile drop off points at a few centralized locations. Consider the possible purchase of a mobile recycling unit or Geneva trailer with its own logo and schedule similar to the Bookmobile.
 - F. Encourage corporate support by utilizing scheduled drop off bins in various box store parking lots.
 - G. The mobile unit could be leased or operated by nonprofits.
 - H. Promote composting and sustainable agriculture. Develop agreements with sustainable agriculture regarding compostable material.
 - I. Encourage small scale manufacturing from resources in the waste stream (e.g. plastic fence posts)
 - J. Borough may support waste reduction by providing or leasing equipment to contractors to produce items from the waste stream (e.g. plastic fence posts or paper pelletizer).
 - K. Institute a plastic bag ban or requirement to use biodegradable bags.

Recommendations for Category #4 Logistics

1. Collections:
 - A. Facilitate source separation to allow for an expanding recycling program.
 - B. Provide tamper resistant collection bins.
 - C. Improve transfer sites:
 - Expand and/or redesign existing transfer sites to provide for the physical separation of the reuse platform, recycling bins, and trash bins.
 - Utilize better signs and education kiosks to inform the public of recycling efforts.
 - Perform low cost ongoing analysis to determine public interest using suggestion boxes, comment telephone number, or surveys.
 - Promote reuse.
 - D. Place bins in parking lots of big box stores, perhaps on a rotating schedule.
 - E. Schedule Geneva trailer pickup days in outlying communities.
 - F. Provide collection pods at transfer sites on a rotating schedule.
 - G. Make appointments for dumping specific items.
 - H. Explore the option of using different collection systems for different materials.
 - I. Provide a site for community composting. The Borough could purchase a chipper to lease to residents.
2. Purchase a bailer: must be sized to accommodate long-term use.
3. Labor:
 - A. Collections may be made by public employee or contract, whichever is most economical
 - B. Less material going into the landfill will reduce labor costs that may be applied to recycling.
 - C. Other options for labor include:
 - One paid employee to coordinate volunteer labor
 - Partnering with FRA to provide employment for developmentally delayed
 - Community service opportunities
4. Transportation
 - A. Fairbanks is a hub community for villages
 - Back hauling by businesses
 - Establish coalition with big box stores
 - Thermokool may backhaul newspapers
 - Alaska Railroad may backhaul (may require legislative support for funding)
5. Location for a recycling center:
 - A. Habitat for Humanity Restore
 - B. Landfill
 - C. Empty lot across from DOT
 - D. Big box store parking lots
 - E. Mobile Geneva trailers
6. General:
 - A. Commitment from the Borough is necessary to do the whole job rather than by piecemeal.
 - B. Consider taxing residents to provide for recycling.

Recommendations for Category #5 Business/Financial Plan

1. Invest in PR/public education
 - A. Place signs at transfer stations
 - B. Create Website linkage/Portal
 - C. Utilize PSAs
 - D. Produce a newspaper section on “Green Living”
 - E. Organize a Green Living Fair
 - F. “Alaska Regrown” or “Made from Alaska Trash” should become logos
2. Sell advertising or naming rights at collection sites/transfer sites (e.g.: “Buy a Unit” or “Wrap, Adopt & Sponsor” or “Adopt a Transfer Site” to keep it clean)
3. Transfer Sites may offer an opportunity for source separation at low expense as it may eliminate the costs for pickup or commingling
 - A. Space for collections at Transfer Sites may be leased to end users for collections
 - B. Advertising at Transfer Sites may be sold
4. Market recyclable materials
 - A. Take advantage of current opportunities (newspaper)
 - B. Transportation: seek reduced rates for backhauling
 - C. Project Borough wide volume of various materials
5. Grants: Set up private/nonprofit corps to operate recycling
 - A. Foundation
 - B. Operating
 - C. Public

Land for collections and composting sites.
Funding through savings from reduced land fill use
6. Government legislation: Borough, State or Federal
 - A. Encourage businesses to use less packaging
 - B. Pass a bottle bill
 - C. Tax plastic bags
 - D. Offer incentives to other entities such as UAF, City, and Ft. Wainwright etc. for source separation by reduced tipping fees that may then offer incentives to individuals.
 - E. Offer grants for start up (e.g.: recycled plastic into plastic tanks)
7. Initiate a voucher system from avoided landfill costs to be distributed by licensed users such as K&K or Total Reclaim.
8. Set up recycling center(s) near businesses. Offer opportunities to “buy a bin.” Offer incentives to place recycling bins in their parking lot.
9. Research and establish “best practices.”
10. Hire a business person and/or UAF economics person on commission.
11. The Borough Recycling Commission encourages forming a State Wide Commission.
12. Offer users the opportunity to donate financially to the recycling effort similar to GVEA’s “SNAP Program”. May be called Centralized Recycling Action Plan or CRAP.