



ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION

MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Bruce Walden, Chief Administrative Officer  
**FROM:** Bill Gray, Public Works Director  
Rod Fletcher, Environmental Manager  
**DATE:** October 2, 2001  
**RE:** Report of Commercial Recycling Activities in Urbana

**Action Requested**

No action is requested.

**Discussion**

Council has asked for information concerning commercial recycling activities within the city. Staff has contacted the 3 primary recycling haulers that perform regular collection services for this sector. Information supplied by them is presented in the chart below.

**Collection Information**

	Community Resources, Inc.	Area Disposal Service	Central Waste Services	Totals
No. businesses served	100	14	88	202
Tons collected per yr.	354	384	3110	3848

According to Illinois Department of Revenue (Sales tax receipts – 1999), there are 835 Urbana businesses. [Please note that some businesses may actually be located outside corporate limits, but have an Urbana address. It should also be noted that a single business account can have several businesses sharing recycling service.]

**Materials Collected**

These firms report that corrugated cardboard is, by far, the single biggest commodity collected. [Cardboard is the single largest item in the commercial waste stream, comprising 30% of the total.] Next is a variety of paper fibers, followed with relatively small quantities of #1 and #2 plastic containers. Little, if any, glass or other materials are collected.

**Observations**

Based on this and other information shown below, the following comments can be drawn.

Item	Observations
Commercial sector, total annual waste generated (est.)	11,593 tons
Reported quantity of commodities collected	3848 tons
Diversion Rate <sup>1</sup>	33%

Recycling Rate <sup>2</sup>	73%
Apparent percentage of “businesses” having regular collection service	24%

<sup>1</sup> **Diversion rate** is defined as the total quantity of commodities of a given waste sector being diverted from the landfill, or the total tons collected divided by the total waste generated of the commercial waste sector.

<sup>2</sup> **Recycling rate** is commodity specific, and is defined as the total tons collected of a specific commodity collected divided by the total tons generated of the same specific commodity. In this case, it is an aggregate rate since specific quantities of commodities collected was not available.

- While the private sector recognizes recycling as an integral component of waste management, their recycling efforts are very sensitive to market conditions, operational costs and economic benefits to provide services. Recycling is a market driven industry. This accounts, in large part, for the limited types of materials being collected.
- Commercial recycling is often hindered by available space considerations for locations of additional containers.
- Many “commercial” businesses only provide professional services and as such, do not tend to generate desirable recyclable commodities in sufficient quantities to justify frequent collection.
- The commercial waste stream is unique in many respects as compared with the residential waste stream. For example, the commercial waste stream comprises:
  - Durable bulky goods (appliances, furniture, tires, etc.) = 14% ,
  - Glass containers = 1.8%
  - Misc. items (wood, foodwaste, yard trimmings, other inorganic wastes) = 25%
  - Aluminum = less than 1%

If these items were deducted from the total commercial waste quantities, 6826 tons would remain. Given that 3848 tons are collected, current regularly scheduled commercial recycling efforts would see a diversion rate of 56%.

- Certainly, other commercial recycling efforts exist, provided primarily by small haulers or businesses themselves directly transporting materials to recycling facilities. Items that are banned from landfill disposal such as lead acid batteries, tires, yardwaste, motor oil and white goods – appliances, make up this effort.
- Commercial recycling is available to businesses, and as noted above, there are over 200 private recycling contracts.