Solid Waste Plan Status Report

Listed below are the Action Items of the 2009 Solid Waste Plan and the work completed through June 2014. Some annual data may only be available through 2013. For detailed information on each Action Item, please visit the actual plan language at www.co.thurston.wa.us/solidwaste/regulations/docs/AppB-Objectives&Actions.pdf

**Action A1.a) Maintain and report waste landfilled per capita data; create a baseline for 2005.**

The 2005 baseline for waste landfilled per capita was set at 1,570 pounds per year. Between 2005 and 2013, waste landfilled per capita dropped by 25.5% from 1,570 to 1,170 pounds per year.

**Action A1.b) Monitor annual system disposal for facility planning purposes and for maintaining system capacity.**

Each year the solid waste disposal system goes through a review through the capital facilities planning (CFP) process. The CFP process identifies those capital projects required to meet the policy goals and objective in the Thurston County Solid Waste Management Plan and the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, comply with federal and state law, and address facility safety, operational, capacity and obsolescence issues. The project assessment objectively ranks projects based on a project's ability to meet level of service, regulatory compliance, health/safety goals and policies, sustainability, technical feasibility and other associated costs. Projects are scheduled over a six-year period relative to their ranking.

**Action A1.c) Continue to collect and monitor curbside, WARC, waste sort, and Washington State Department of Ecology data for disposal/recycling of all commodities to track trends.**

There have been three primary drivers of change during the Solid Waste Plan time period. First is the recession. Second is expanded reuse and recycling opportunities. Third is the waste prevention and recycling education and assistance provided by Solid Waste staff.

**Examples of data being tracked**

**Waste Landfilled:** Between 2008 and 2013, per capita waste landfilled dropped by 19.2% from 1,449 to 1,170 pounds per year. During the same period, total tons landfilled dropped by 14.3% from 177,660 to 152,163 tons per year. Between 2008 and 2013, the total population of Thurston County grew by 6% from 245,300 to 260,100 people.

**Single-Family Curbside:** Between 2008 and 2013, the tons of waste collected (by the City of Olympia and Waste Connections combined) decreased by 1.8%; organics increased 55.5%, and recycling increased 4.7%.
**Commercial and Multifamily:** Between 2008 and 2013, total tons of waste collected (by the City of Olympia and Waste Connections combined) decreased 11.7% and recycling increased 24.8%. We do not have complete data on the amount of organics collected from commercial and multifamily accounts.

**WARC Recycle Center and WARC Sort Line:** Historically, WARC incoming and outgoing tons was only tracked if it related to contract charges. This data was incomplete and unreliable and provided us a misleading picture of what was actually being collected at the WARC. Since 2009, Solid Waste staff has been working with Waste Connections to develop a standardized and consistent methodology to gather accurate data on the quantities and types of materials collected at the WARC Recycle Center and pulled off the WARC Sort Line. In 2014, this new methodology is working well and is providing us with much more complete and reliable data than we were able to collect prior to 2009.

**Data Collection Challenges**
Since 2009, Solid Waste staff has been working to develop a standardized and consistent methodology to gather accurate data on the quantities and types of materials of all types collected in Thurston County. In 2014, some of the key pieces of this methodology including the collection of data on organics collected curbside from businesses were put into place. This combined with more accurate coding of the data collected at the WARC is providing us with a more complete and reliable picture of solid waste trends than we’ve been able to create in the past. We now have a single database that consolidates data from Waste Connections, the City of Olympia, our operations at the WARC, and from other sources like Recovery One and the State of Washington’s E-cycle program. With this new database, we are better able to identify trends, measure the effectiveness of our programs, and plan for the future.

However, even with these improvements, a number of data collection challenges remain. These include unreliable data from the WA State Department of Ecology, a lack of data on the quantities of materials collected by some private recycling companies, and difficulties in determining the relative impact of all the various factors that could influence the data such as our technical assistance and education programs and changes in the economy.

Since 2009, Solid Waste staff worked with Waste Connections and the City of Olympia to develop systems to collect and track more complete and more accurate data on the quantities of trash, recyclables and organics collected from commercial accounts. The latest improvements in these systems were made in 2013, when we began collecting more accurate data on organics collected curbside from commercial accounts. Please see Action C3 for data.

**Action A1.e) Conduct Waste Sort in 2009 and 2013 to Quantify Types of Materials Being Disposed of and to Inform SWMP Implementation and Updates.**
The 2009-10 waste sort was successfully completed and the 2013-14 sort is scheduled to begin in September 2013.

Drafting of the 2014 Solid Waste Management Plan will be delayed approximately six months in order to evaluate and use data from the 2013-2014 sort as part of the planning process.


**Action A2.a) Evaluate rates relative to solid waste, programs, staffing levels, and capital improvements to ensure achievement of the goals of this plan.**

Each year rates are reviewed during the time of budget development through the process of analysis review of a ten-year financial plan. The process incorporates the Capital Facilities Plan projects, cost of living adjustments, inflationary adjustments and assorted other factors.

**Action B1.a) Complete facility needs analysis.**

Each year the solid waste disposal system goes through a review through the capital facilities planning (CFP) process. The CFP process identifies those capital projects required to meet the policy goals and objective in the Thurston County Solid Waste Management Plan and the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, comply with federal and state law, and address facility safety, operational, capacity and obsolescence issues. The project assessment objectively ranks projects based on a projects ability to meet level of service, regulatory compliance, health/safety goals and policies, sustainability, technical feasibility and other associated costs. Projects are scheduled over a six-year period relative to their ranking.

**Action B1.b) Explore feasibility for creation of Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for use of the Centralia Transfer Station or jointly site a new facility to provide additional waste/recycling-handling capacity.**

To be completed by operations staff

**Action B2.a) Separate commercial haulers and self-hauler systems.**

On-site customer traffic drive path improvements were accomplished to lessen the need for a separation of business types. Also, this was influenced by the down-turn of business due to the recession, the Waste and Recovery Center is receiving over 50,000 fewer customers per year since 2009. It was determined that a separation of commercial vehicles and self-hauler vehicle was not necessary at this time.

**Action B2.b) Modify existing public Z-wall to a “resource recovery” concept with voluntary recycling.**

The “resource recovery” at the public tipping z-wall was determined to be not an efficient nor cost effective method of resource recovery. Alternative resource recovery opportunities were put in place such as a goodwill collection site and a Habitat for Humanity reusable material donation site.

**Action B2.c) Create signage and literature for WARC users.**
New signs were put in place for all WARC activities. Brochures were developed and are provided to customers at the tollbooths, field office, HazoHouse and various other sites at the WARC.

**ACTION B2.d) ESTABLISH A TRANSACTION FEE TO COVER ADMINISTRATION COST (SCALE HOUSE AND BILLING).**

The transaction fee or overhead fee was incorporated into the transaction disposal fee.

**ACTION B2.e) INCREASE MINIMUM WEIGHT FOR THE TRANSACTION BASIS.**

Solid Waste disposal rates were increased in 2010 and 2012. The minimum fee was increased within those rate increases.

**ACTION B2.f) ACCEPT CREDIT AND DEBIT PAYMENT.**

Credit and debit cards were accepted for all transactions in 2010.

**ACTION B2.g) ROUND UP TRANSACTION CHARGES TO THE NEAREST $1.**

Transaction fees were rounded to the nearest $1.00 with the disposal rate increase in 2010.

**ACTION B3.a) AMEND OPERATION AND DISPOSAL CONTRACTS FOR INCREASED DIVERSION OPPORTUNITIES.**

To be completed by operations staff

**ACTION B4.a) ADD YARD WASTE TO DROP-BOX SITES AND CHARGE ACCORDINGLY.**

Adding yard waste debris to the Rainier and Rochester Drop-Box sites was determined to be not cost effective. The WARC continues to be the primary site for yard debris disposal.

**ACTION B4.b) ADD BULK RECYCLING (APPLIANCES, ELECTRONICS, LARGE METAL, C/D) AT DROP-BOX SITES.**

The addition of bulk recycling at the Rainier and Rochester Drop-Box sites was determined to be not cost effective.

**ACTION C1.a) EXPAND GENERAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH THROUGH MEDIA, PRESENTATIONS, EVENTS, BILLING INSERTS, ETC., FOR RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND MULTIFAMILY SECTORS.**

**Branding**

In 2011, Solid Waste contracted with a design company to create standard template for all printed outreach material. This includes details such as colors, fonts, and treatment of graphics. The result is a very individualized look for all materials produced by Solid Waste. The branding effort ensures consistency among all Solid Waste publications. All of our brochures, flyers, bill inserts, newsletters, banners, ads, etc. are easily recognized as our materials.

**Billing inserts**

Solid Waste creates an informational insert to include in LeMay residential garbage bills for each billing cycle (2 months). Each billing insert has between 1-4 short topics about Solid Waste programs and opportunities. The insert for the November/December billing cycle is a calendar that shows
residents which day their recycling is picked up. The organics yes list and recycling yes list are also provided annually. The inserts have also been branded to reflect the look of other Solid Waste publications.

**Presentations**

General presentations on a variety of topics are offered to multifamily housing, faith based organizations, service groups, businesses, and others. We promote presentations on our website and our marketing materials. In February 2013, a direct mailing went out to 400 nonprofit organizations to encourage them to contact us about presentations. We had one direct response.

Summary of presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of presentations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 thru June</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Faith based**

Efforts have been limited due to staff resources. We provide presentations for faith based organization, at their request. In the spring of 2011 information was mailed out about a free curriculum program for teens developed by Green Faith and Story of Stuff to churches and interfaith groups in the county. In 2011, we started development of web and printed materials for faith based organizations but the project has been placed on hold to staffing resources and other projects.

**Rural outreach**

We have participated in a limited number of community events and have become members of the many of the local chamber of commerce’s. Our goal would be to have a more active presence in rural areas but this effort has been on hold due to staffing resources and other projects.

**Holiday tree recycling**

Holiday tree recycling has been a cooperative countywide effort since 2005. Residents can have their Christmas trees picked up curbside or they can them drop them off at designated sites for free. This service is provided by the haulers, local city government, and Thurston County. The program is promoted through flyers, our website, and news releases.

**Public inquiries**

The community is encouraged to contact us with questions, concerns, and ideas. We receive public inquiries or a variety of topics by phone, emails too staff or the ThurstonSolidWaste email account. We answer the questions or direct inquiries to appropriate contacts. This provides another opportunity for exchange with the public and allows us to be considered their waste prevention and recycling resource.

**www.2good2toss.com**

Thurston County is one of the twelve Washington counties that offer this web-based service. Residents can shop for or list usable items they no longer want, for free or for under $200. Through our outreach efforts, we currently have the second largest member base in the state.
are only surpassed by Pierce County, with a population over 3 times of ours and a membership of 9,593. From 2009-2013 we had 9,601 successful listings with 266 tons diverted from the waste stream. Craigslist offers a similar service, so this can be viewed as a duplicate system. However, we are able to periodically email the members with waste reduction events, new opportunities and information on programs, so it is worth the $2,000 per year cost of the database.

www.WhereDoITakeMy.org
As described in C2.a staff established and populated a database to provide the public with easy access to information on locations throughout the county.

WasteMobile
WasteMobile provides hazardous waste collection for residents that do not live close to the HazoHouse. Prior to 2006, outreach had traditionally been provided by Environmental Health Educators. Solid Waste took over this task with a 32% increase in customers within two years. Starting in 2008, operations and outreach were turned over to the Environmental Health Technical Division staff with excellent results. The focus is now on smaller communities, using direct mail announcements. From 2009-2012, 844 residents have been served and 31 tons of hazardous waste collected. There were no events in 2013.

Radio ads
Staff produced a series of radio ads to promote the www.WhereDoITakeMy.org, www.2good2toss.com, Community Recycle Days, C&D recycling, HazoHouse, ReStore, ReUse Fair, Green Business program, and Second Hand Safari. These ran in 2009 and 2010. Based on web hits and survey results, they were successful, though rather expensive to run. Ads are currently running for the WasteLessFood campaign with very good feedback from the community. Asking residents how they found out about the campaign will be part of the fall 2014 evaluation.

Ads in Publications
Staff produced ads for various print and web publications. The ads promote the www.WhereDoITakeMy.org database, www.2good2toss.com database and the www.WasteLessfood.com campaign. Staff submitted ads in publications including the following:

Business Examiner
Fort Lewis Range
Green Pages
Nisqually Valley News
The Olympian online
The Olympian’s Sourcebook
Rochester Sun News
The Tenino Independent
Thurston County Chamber’s Thurston County Map
Thurston County Fair Program

Press Releases and Articles
Staff regularly drafts pieces on events, new opportunities or current events. These are provided to the county Public Information Officer for submission to county media contacts and placed on the
Staff than sends to a wider range of media and other contacts for distribution. In addition, these items are posted on the news section of www.2good2toss.com for the over 9,000 members and sent via our Constant Contact list of 4,700. We also have a monthly article on www.ThurstonTalk.com.

**Videos**

Thurston County Solid Waste launched a YouTube channel in March of 2011. We acquired equipment and software to produce videos at that time. Our first video was uploaded in July 2011 on the Food to Flowers program. We have created seven videos since 2011 on product stewardship, school waste prevention assistance, building, business waste prevention assistance, and single use plastic bags. We have also uploaded videos filmed as part of the Thurston County Connections series and E-cycle Washington. When we find interesting videos, we add them to our favorite’s page of the YouTube channel.

Videos are shared on our website, TCTV channel 3, in e-news, social media, our publications, and other communications. Our two latest videos for our WasteLessFood.com campaign have received a combined 99,384 views in 4 months.

**Waste Less Food**

In 2014 the County launched the Waste Less Food program with a two-prong goal. One, raise awareness about the negative impacts of wasting food in three major areas – Financial, Environmental and Social. Two, encourage behavior change at home (Wasting Less Food) by providing a wide variety of options (tips) to help people learn how to waste less food and change habits.

The campaign began with strong partnerships with the local food Co-ops (who incorporate many waste less food best management practices) and with Freshpaper (a company whose product – an organic filter paper - increases the life of produce naturally). In the 8 months since that campaign began, we’ve used social media as a method of reaching people and engaging them with ideas, tips, recipes and research about wasted food and how to waste less food at home. To date, there are 2,324 people engaged on that site with the majority in our target “family” age group of 25-44 year olds. We launched a seasonal waste less food newsletter called The Clean Plate which currently has about 300 subscribers (there have been 3 editions to date). In addition, there have been 29 community presentations specific to the Waste Less Food program. Through our volunteer program there was a strong presence at Thurston County farmer’s markets – particularly in Yelm where their market has a new location. This success is of particular note, as TCSW has been looking for ways to get stronger involvement in this community.

We partnered with the EPA as part of what was then expected to be a national campaign to reduce food waste. Though we had some reservations about it, we used the EPA template to design a Food Waste Challenge. This challenge asked people to measure their wasted food for one week without making any behavior changes, then to incorporate one or more tips (several pages of options were offered as part of a packet) to see how much they could reduce their wasted food. The challenge results were interesting. Those who participated were able to strongly reduce their wasted food – with a higher than 25% average reduction. In addition, we received multiple comments – through the challenge results survey as well as through social media, which indicated that people felt the information was extremely useful:
Participating in the challenge definitely made me more conscious about my patterns, including buying too much food and not eating it in time before it went bad. I also appreciated the tips of planning out grocery lists and chopping up vegetables for easy prep throughout the week.

As a mother of two young children, the waste less food challenge was awesome. It really helped my family and I to become more aware and conscientious about the amount of food we were wasting. I learned some great tips and tricks for keeping food fresher longer, planning meals and buying only what we need, proportion sizing (especially for our kids who can be picky eaters), and eating up leftovers. By taking the challenge, the amount of food wasted in our household has significantly dropped and we are saving money each month on the amount of groceries we buy.

We did note that, overall, there were a low percentage of people that completed the challenge – fewer than 100. A post-challenge survey indicated that the primary reason for this was that people felt they were too busy for such a lengthy experiment. Many also indicated that they preferred to skip directly to using the tips rather than wait and measure their food waste. In other words, they immediately bought into our message that they ARE wasting food and did not need convincing on that point.

The media campaign itself was extremely well received and included radio ads, billboard, bus and TV ads. Multiple articles went out on the topic, including features in the local South Sound Green Pages and The Olympian. Several radio/TV interviews were conducted, including a 3-part series with the County Commissioners and radio interviews on KAOS and on the “It’s Your Community” radio show.

In 2015, Waste Less food will continue to have a strong social media presence and will revise the challenge into a pledge that requires less time from people to complete, but allows them to make the same effective behavior changes. We’ll also be working towards new partnerships with restaurants, retailers and casinos, raising awareness about how they can waste less food (and the ways in which this could benefit their businesses as well as their communities and the environment). We will continue to strengthen our partnership with the local and branch food banks and to raise awareness and encourage wasting less food in the community among our residential clients.

**Event Outreach**

Solid Waste has conducted outreach at 95 community events from 2009 to current. Booth activities give us a chance to discuss the issues and answer questions from residents, which helps us improve our outreach. Activities included making buttons, playing recycling games, and handing out brochures. During the bag ban project, we provided materials, gave away bags, had residents fill out surveys and take reusable bag pledges. For the WasteLessFood campaign, we’ve given out Challenge packets, gab clips and samples of FreshPaper. Everyone seems to want to share a story about wasted food and it has been helpful to hear feedback on the media campaign.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Outreach events attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Outreach events attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Incomplete data for this year

In 2014, the education team raised awareness about wasted food, recycling, the bag ban and other waste reduction issues at more than twenty events, including several multiple-day events such as the Thurston County Fair, the Pacific Northwest Mushroom Festival, the Lacey Fun Fair and the Nisqually Valley Home and Garden Show. There were many new events (e.g.; Emergency Preparedness, South Sound BBQ, Arts Walk) in order to test out the Waste Less Food messaging at new venues and with different audiences. We expect this event list to narrow somewhat in 2015 as we nail down what the team believes to be the best and most effective places to raise awareness with receptive audiences.

**Connecting Solid Waste Education with Art**

In 2013, Solid Waste developed and carried out a multi-faceted Art and Education Program, The Plastic Whale Project. Over 900 youth and adults directly worked on this project through various presentations, workshops, community work parties, and collaborations with other organizations. This project then reached 30,000 people with its performance at the Procession of the Species Celebration, and over 50,000 people at the Fremont Solstice Parade. The Whale Project was featured in The Olympian, Talkin’ Trash, Trash Talk, and Thurston Talk. It was also featured in three films, which were produced by Thurston County Solid Waste, students at The Evergreen State College, and a student at University of Washington. The Solid Waste Film, The Plastic Whale Project, A Sensational Cetacean had 1,150 views on YouTube in the first month and was aired 25 times on Thurston County Television.

**Summer Camps**

In 2013, Solid Waste is promoting the expansion of our presentation offerings to Summer Camps. Staff developed a new presentation about Paper Making, which covers the history of paper, paper recycling and reduction. The presentation is educational, hands-on, creative, and fun. We are also offering the following presentations: Worm Composting, Closing the Loop, and Intro to Recycling. At this time, we have over 25 presentations scheduled in camps for this summer.

**Youth Outreach**

New outreach materials were developed in 2012 to target Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and 4-H. Boy and Girl Scout fliers were distributed as their respective local headquarters, as well as at LOTT’s WET Science Center, and every school in the Olympia and North Thurston School Districts. Copies of the fliers, along with additional information on specific patches or badges we can help each unit or troop earn, were placed on the Thurston Solid Waste website. From 2012-2014, staff spoke at three Cub Scout troop leader meetings, four Boy Scout unit meetings, and one 4-H Environmental Club meeting.

The Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (RRR) patch program was also created in 2012 and was advertised to local youth groups within the county. Groups could earn patches by completing actions and activities under the Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle categories. The materials developed consisted of an online program guide, appendices, and patches. Articles on the program were featured in Talkin’ Trash, Trash Talk, Thurston Talk, Thurston County Connection, and the Thurston County Employees “Spirit” Newsletter. A press release was also sent to all newspapers and newsletters in our area, as
well as Constant Contacts contacts in our database. Nine youth groups have taken advantage of the program since its inception.

**Master Recycler Composter Volunteers**

In 2009, 15 people attended Master Recycler (MR) volunteer training to become community volunteers. Training topics included business waste, electronics, litter pickup, schools, landfills, recycling markets, waste audits, and household hazardous waste. Participants toured the Waste and Recovery Center. In 2010, 15 people attended a similar MR training.

The Master Recycler volunteer program merged with the Master Composter volunteers in 2011 and training was not held during the transition. Current Master Composters and current Master Recyclers were crossed trained on composting and recycling topics. Fifteen volunteers completed the 2012 Master Recycler Composter training.

2014 is the third year for our newly combined Master Recycler/Master Composter (Now, Master Recycler Composters - MRCs) program. This year our twenty-five to thirty MRC volunteers gave 33 presentations (14 on yard waste, 12 on worm composting and 7 on yard waste and worms together). In addition, they staffed 35 events, including spearheading the Waste Less Food presence at Farmer’s Markets. Their overall volunteer hour tally is still being tabulated, but in the neighborhood of 500 hours for the year.

For 2015, while we will, of course, be working to recruit new volunteers to the program, our primary goal is to keep these already trained and dedicated volunteers highly engaged in bringing our messages forward into the community. Because of their strong involvement and their ongoing training, these volunteers can be leveraged to a greater extent in our target communities with bigger and better projects that spotlight their program as well as TC Solid Waste messages. In particular, their presence at the farmer’s markets with the waste less food message will continue to be a push and may be expanded into partnering grocery stores. Additionally, the development of a mini-conference on reduce, reuse, recycle issues is particularly exciting and could become open to the public as a community education event in consequent years. These “Core” volunteers will be taking on more presentations as well as a number of exciting new projects that will increase visibility in the community in 2015.

**MR/MRC Volunteer hours:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>500*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*approximate estimate – hours still being entered and tallied as of 12/1/14

**Plastic bag use**

At the request of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee in 2011, staff began exploring ways to reduce the use of plastic bags in Thurston County. A comprehensive report was drafted and extensive community outreach and survey work was completed. The report is at [www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org/plastics](http://www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org/plastics). Based on the results from the 1.5-year project and
recommendations by the majority of the jurisdictions, staff worked with a stakeholders group to draft language for a plastic bag ban ordinance. Tumwater, Lacey, Olympia, and the county adopted bag bans that became effective July 1, 2014. Extensive residential and business outreach were conducted to prepare the county for the ban implementation. An online follow-up survey and report will be completed January 2015.

**Talking Trash**
Solid Waste publishes a newsletter twice each year. The four page, 2-color publication was expanded to eight pages and full color in 2007. After the branding process in 2011, Talkin’ Trash was graphically formatted to match other Solid Waste publications. Each edition has stories about Solid Waste programs and services as well as general recycling information. Thurston County Public Health, the City of Olympia, and LeMay also have the opportunity to submit articles. The newsletter is mailed to every residence in Thurston County (currently 111,165) and as of 2014 is also mailed to all businesses.

**Social media**
The Thurston Solid Waste Facebook page launched November 2010 but was not actively managed until 2013. Posts are resources, information, articles, events, and promotions. Currently, we have 840 followers. Followers like, comment, and share Facebook content.

In March 2014, we launched the Waste Less Food – Thurston Solid Waste page to focus specifically on reduction of wasted food. This page has been well promoted and has a current following of 2,147. Topics include kitchen tips, waste statistics and global food waste related issues

**Mission statement**
A mission statement was created to reflect our focus on waste prevention, as opposed to just recycling education. The statement is posted on our solid waste homepage and is provided below.

*Our mission is to promote waste prevention and sustainable resource use in Thurston County through education, technical assistance, and community building. We see a future in which everyone in Thurston County makes informed and responsible choices about what we produce and consume, so that every day our community creates less waste.*

**Multifamily outreach**
In 2009, Solid Waste reallocated unspent grant funds and hired a temporary staff person for a three-month multifamily outreach project. A “Recycle Where You Live” brochure was created that educated tenants on the proper use of recycling containers in their complex and provided information on local reuse and recycling opportunities. A resident address database was compiled and approximately 10,000 multifamily units in Thurston County received the brochure. This was a critical element since multifamily residents do not receive the billing inserts that single-family curbside customers get with their bills every other month. We planned on resending the tenant brochure out annually, but to date, this has not been done.

Staff also produced management packets to assist owners/operators with proper recycling. This included signs, lease language, and “Recycle Where You Live” brochures to give to incoming tenants. Site visits were performed to give management the information and answer any on-site questions. Since 2009, staff has only been assisting owner/operators upon request due to staffing resources.
The Washington Department of Ecology funded a statewide property manager’s survey and results may be helpful in devising a county outreach plan. The challenge with this target audience is developing an effective program to reach tenants, with limited staff resources. To have a positive effect new research points to one-on-one contacts with tenants, which takes many hours of time in the evenings when tenants are more likely to be home. To date, our Master Recyclers have not been interested in this type of volunteer activity.

**ACTION C1.b) INCREASE NUMBER OF SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Presentations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previously the staff person handling school presentations also managed several other programs so presentations were limited. Starting with the 2011-12 school year, this became a full-time effort and we were able to promote more aggressively. New outreach materials and methods were utilized with great results. Since 2010-11, there has been a 216% increase in the number of presentations given to Thurston County teachers and their classrooms.

Beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, end-of-the-year online surveys were provided to teachers to give feedback on lessons and suggest any improvements. During the summer of 2012, pre and post-evaluations were designed for each lesson. These helped gauge the increase in knowledge and action steps of a student after being a part of the presentation.

In 2011, staff developed a new lesson, “The Great Debate”, for elementary school students focusing on the issues surrounding plastic bags. In 2012, classroom presentation outreach was expanded to middle schools with the plastic bag lesson and two new lessons: Marketing to Teens, and Bottled Water Taste Test.

In 2011, we developed Trash Talk, a solid waste newsletter for 4th and 5th grade students. Currently, 69% of 4th and 5th grade Thurston teachers have opted-in to receive the newsletter for their students.
In 2011, staff worked with a magician/entertainer to provide eight “The Magic of Recycling” assemblies to Thurston elementary schools. Six different elementary schools received the assemblies reaching almost 3000 students. All of the respondents of a post-survey indicated they would recommend this magic show assembly for other schools.

Staff continued working on the statewide team for Washington Green Schools. In 2011, the organization became a non-profit and our statewide involvement became less necessary. Since 2011, we have also held two trainings within Thurston County to train approximately 65 teachers how to navigate through Washington Green Schools.

Through the implementation of The Plastic Whale Project, Solid Waste gave 40 extra presentations to K-12th grade students about the effects of plastic on our environment. Solid Waste also gave 15 new presentations to YMCA After Care Programs at schools. All participants were encouraged to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle plastic bags and were given their own reusable bag to help them reduce their use.

For non-school youth activities, see Action C1a under Summer Camps and Connecting Solid Waste Education with Art, and Youth Outreach.

Awards received:

- Environmental Education Association of Washington (EEAW) for Outstanding Non-formal Environmental Educator of the Year in 2009.
- EEAW Organizational Excellence for work on the Washington Green Schools program in 2010.
- Washington State Recycling Association for work on the Washington Green Schools program in 2011.

**ACTION C1.c) INCREASE ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOLS WITH DEVELOPMENT, STARTUP, AND MAINTENANCE OF WASTE-DIVERSION PROGRAMS.**

Since 2008, Solid Waste has been providing direct support to schools to develop, implement, and sustain programs to divert waste through the Food to Flowers (F2F) program.

The F2F program collaborates with public and private K-12 schools in Thurston County to reduce waste, to foster environmental stewardship, and to help school districts save money. Services provided include program planning; staff and student training; technical assistance; and data collection, analysis, and reporting. More than 65% of what a typical school throws away each day is food and food-soiled paper. For this reason, the program’s primary focus has been on school cafeteria and kitchen waste. The below highlights demonstrate the impact.

- Twenty eight schools or 38% of the 74 K-12 public schools have implemented comprehensive recycling and organics collection programs. Four private schools have also set up similar programs. Collectively, across all these schools, more than 13,200 students participate in an F2F program.

- Twelve schools have been provided with milk dispensers and two schools are using juice dispensers. Together these schools have permanently eliminated more than 500,000 milk cartons and 4,500 non-recyclable juice cups from the waste stream each year.
A Spork kit is a plastic Spork, a plastic straw, and a napkin packaged together inside of a plastic bag. As of the end of the 2013-14 school year, 30 schools had stopped using the kits, eliminating more than 2.75 million of these kits from the waste year each year.

A lot of the waste generated in school cafeterias comes from home. The F2F program collaborates with schools to encourage families to pack a waste-free lunch by using durable utensils, reusable drink and food containers, and cloth napkins.

Sixty-five percent of a typical school’s waste is uneaten food. The F2F program partners with schools to try out different strategies to reduce food waste. These include coaching students to take only what they can eat from the salad bar and encouraging schools to schedule recess before lunch.

In 2013, the F2F program helped forge partnerships between local school districts and the Thurston County Food Bank to collect prepared, but unserved food to distribute to the community. By the end of the 2013-14 school year, 24 schools were participating in this new program. There are plans to expand this program during the 2014-15 school year.

The F2F program collaborates with schools to help them design and implement recycling and organics collection programs. This includes assisting schools to set up kitchen organics and recycling collection stations and sort-lines in their cafeterias monitored by student volunteers. As of the end of the 2013-14 school year, the 32 schools participating in the program were keeping more than 160 tons of organics and recyclables out of the landfill each year and had achieved an average lunchroom recycling rate of 89%.

The average savings in total garbage and recycling collection costs at F2F schools is 15 to 20%. In the 2012-13 school year, the six F2F schools in the Tumwater School District reduced their collection costs by 22% or $12,000 a year.

F2F publishes an e-newsletter called Food to Flowers News to promote the program and to educate parents, students, and school staff on ways to prevent waste at school. The newsletter is sent out two or three times a year to a diverse group of more than 350 people interested in school waste reduction. F2F produces educational videos and writes regular features for Talkin’ Trash, and for Trash Talk, the newsletter for 4th and 5th graders. The program has also been featured in The Olympian and in The Chronicle, which serves the Rochester and Tenino communities.

The F2F program works closely with the Washington Green Schools (WAGs) program to help schools in Thurston County become certified as a green school. F2F staff participate in WAGs trainings and assist schools in gathering the data they need to become certified. Building on the success of its F2F program, Tumwater HS certified as a green school in 2012.
There are many challenges and considerable staff time is required to maintain the programs. Programs can easily falter and fail once the motivated students and staff who led the effort to get the program started are no longer involved. The work duties of custodial and food service staff are heavily impacted by an F2F program. Most school districts do not share the savings realized through a school’s participation in the F2F program with the school. Changes in what is accepted for recycling and composting can make it difficult to sustain school waste reduction programs. When the types of materials accepted for composting or recycling change, the entire school community needs to be re-educated, new signs and stickers need to be produced, and recycling and garbage collection services may need to be adjusted.

In 2012, the long-term viability of the F2F program was threatened when Waste Connections severely restricted the types of food soiled papers and other materials they would accept for composting. Without these materials in the mix, some schools would not be able to afford to continue to participate in F2F. Solid Waste staff negotiated an exemption from these new restrictions for schools while they worked to find new outlets for these materials. Until this issue was finally resolved, efforts to expand the program to new schools were put on hold during the 2013-14 school year. Instead we turned our focus to assisting schools to implement new waste prevention strategies like the Food Rescue program and the use of milk dispensers. We will continue our focus on supporting schools to implement these kinds of powerful waste prevention strategies in the future. And, with the adoption of an expanded list of acceptable organics, we are working to add new schools to the programs as well.

**ACTION C2.a) PROMOTE PRIVATE REUSE AND RECYCLING LOCATIONS AND DEVELOP PRIVATE- SECTOR / GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS FOR SITES AND PROGRAMS.**

**DART - Styrofoam Recycling:**
Unused “blue bins” were provided for the entrance of the DART facility in Tumwater. The public can bring Styrofoam block and clean food service items there for recycling. Staff also worked with Waste Connections to add a roll-off at the WARC Recycle Center. Signs were provided for both sites. Promotion and collection bags are provided on an ongoing basis.

**EcoBuilding Guild – Green Building:**
- Gold level sponsor of the South Sound Green Tour for 5 years. The tour provides on-site demonstration of green building and clean energy technology, as well as workshops and displays.
- Funding eight quarterly symposiums on green building related issues held by the Guild.
- Funded the construction of a Code Innovation database that highlights permitted new technologies. The database is free to all users including builders, code officials, permit centers, homeowners, and research organizations. The Code Innovations Database, a partnership with the Northwest EcoBuilding Guild, is up and running with 12 published case studies of successfully permitted green building projects, and many more on the way. The City of Olympia Public Works Department joined the partnership earlier this year, and a region wide effort is now underway to expand the program’s impact and build a broad funding partnership to sustain the database into the future.

**Habitat for Humanity ReStore – Reuse of Building Materials:**
The 2009-10 grant implemented a large-scale radio and trade publication ad campaign. See details under E2.A.
The 2013-15 grant helped establish a Habitat drop off site at the WARC. The location is staffed by Habitat employees and outreach provided by Solid Waste staff. See E2.a.

**FoodBank – Food Donations:**
Funded a repack kitchen and refrigerated van to increase collection and opportunities to use prepared food donations. Promoted program to businesses. In 2013, more than 13 tons of food were collected, repackaged, and distributed to the community as part of this program. As of June 2014, six restaurants and 18 schools were participating in the program.

**Recovery One – C/D recycling:**
Large-scale promotion of their services to the building community through trade publications, and presentations. Completed cost evaluation studies with interested builders to compare Recovery One tip and transport expenses with WARC landfilling. Worked with Waste Connections and other local haulers to encourage them to promote and provide construction-site bin service with a destination of Recovery One rather than landfilling. See Action E1.a.

**Less Toxic Garden and Composting:**
Fully fund the WSU program coordinator position for the Master Composter/Master Recycler program and .5 FTE of an AmeriCorps staff person. The Solid Waste Master Recycler program with combined with the WSU program to further assist with materials costs.

**Washington E-Cycle Program – Electronics Recycling:**
Per the state requirement, Thurston County should have the minimum requirement of one electronics collection location. Thurston has eight. We regularly promote other non-program sites that offer other electronic recycling, or even more important, reuse opportunities.

**NewWood – Composite Lumber Manufacturer Using Wood and Plastic Film:**
This facility opened in Grays Harbor and needed sufficient stock to for their products. Staff worked with them to identify possible large-scale sources. In addition, we provided quite a bit of publicity and contacts to help create demand or their product. Unfortunately, the company has closed.

**Thurston County Schools – Waste Prevention and Recycling Infrastructure:**
As described in Action C1.c, equipment, supplies, and assistance have been provided to enable schools to realize significant cost savings and waste reduction.

**Where Do I Take My – Promote Waste Reuse and Recycling Opportunities:**
The database at [www.WhereDoITakeMy.org](http://www.WhereDoITakeMy.org) was established to provide the public with easy access to information on locations throughout the county. Web hits to date are listed below.

2010: 4,632 hits  
2011: 18,071 hits  
2012: 17,323 hits  
2013: 18,946 hits

**Event Recycling Container Loaner Program**
Solid Waste loans portable containers for trash, recycling and organics that residents and organizations can borrow for their events. When staff moved out to the Tilley Road location, it meant residents had to travel further to pick them up and return them. We entered a cooperative
agreement with Celebrations, a party rental store, located in Lacey. The containers are still free of charge and the community can order containers online and pick them up at the store, which is also open on weekends. The County pays Celebrations a small fee to handle the rental arrangements. The effort has increased exposure for both operations. Residents going to the store for other items find out about the containers and residents picking up containers see other great things they can rent. In 2012, our loans doubled to 506 containers through the new system.

**ACTION C3.a) FORM AND FACILITATE A BUSINESS RECYCLING FOCUS GROUP.**

Solid Waste is a founding partner of the Thurston Green Business Program. This program assists and recognizes local businesses for taking steps toward sustainability. Solid Waste, LeMay Inc., and the City of Olympia all serve as partners for the Waste Reduction & Recycling category of the program.

In 2012, the program changed to allow designees to apply for specific categories. Previously, applicants had to fulfill requirements in each of the five categories to receive designation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of designees recognized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACTION C3.b) WORK WITH HAULER TO PROVIDE MATERIAL COMMINGLING IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE RESIDENTIAL MIX WHERE APPLICABLE (WHERE THERE IS NOT A LARGE AMOUNT OF PAPER) FOR PROGRAM CONSISTENCY, COST EFFECTIVENESS, AND SPACE SAVINGS.**

Conversations began in 2009 with Waste Connections to explore the feasibility of having commercial accounts mirror residential commingled collection. They were not interested in pursuing at that time. Historically, the City of Olympia only provided recycling to residential accounts and Waste Connections serviced commercial accounts within city limits. In 2010, the City of Olympia began a pilot to offer recycling in the same manner as collection of residential recycling. In the third quarter of 2011, Waste Connections began promoting commingled service, such as residents have, for commercial accounts.

There is still confusion related to glass. Waste Connections residential customers must place glass in a separate bin to reduce shard contamination of other materials while Olympia residential customers place glass in their commingled bin. Olympia commercial commingled customers place glass in the same bin as other recyclables. For a period of time, Waste Connections was allowing some commercial commingle accounts to mix glass in. This did not match the Waste Connections
residential recycling. County asked them to reevaluate and glass is no longer allowed in commercial commingled. Some of the Waste Connections commercial customers sign up for separate glass service, some place glass in the trash and others report taking it home and placing in their residential bin if it is small amounts. Unless Olympia changes the way glass is handled there will not be countywide consistency. Both haulers still encourage substantial generators of high value commodities (office paper and cardboard) to source separate to preserve a higher value for the materials.

** ACTION C3.c) IMPLEMENT A BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

Solid Waste provides technical assistance for recycling and waste prevention to any business in Thurston County. Our assistance generally includes:

- **Waste sort audits** – Solid Waste staff conduct an audit of a day’s worth of trash at the business. Staff then compiles data collected during the sort into a final report. The report also includes recommendations for improving recycling/waste prevention.

- **Facility walk-thrus** – Solid Waste staff walk through the business’s facility, and give recommendations for improving recycling/waste prevention.

- **Employee presentations** – Solid Waste staff will hold a 30-45 minute presentation for a business’s employees. Presentation topics include general recycling how-to, environmentally preferable purchasing, and waste prevention.

- **Help with setting up recycling** - Solid Waste staff help businesses plan out a new or expanded recycling system. Staff give guidance on labeling bins, bin location, etc.

- **Recycling signs** – Solid Waste staff previously created signs that showed employees what could go into indoor recycle and compost bins. Because LeMay Inc. began providing signs for customers, Solid Waste discontinued creating signs to avoid duplication of effort. Because our high graphic standards, LeMay recently requested we assist them in revising their signage.

- **Environmental purchasing advice** - Solid Waste staff can provide guidance and advice for purchasing environmentally preferable office supplies.

Since 2009, staff has conducted 11 waste sort audits, 17 on-site assessments, and 19 recycling presentations for employees.

Staff performed two or more waste sort audits at the following public agencies over the course of two or more years. The data we collected indicates that these agencies have been successful keeping recyclables out of the trash, but do not indicate that overall trash tonnage decreases.

City of Lacey: 211% decrease in recyclables thrown in the trash
WA Department of Commerce: 43% decrease in recyclables thrown in the trash
Education Service District 113: 64% decrease in recyclables thrown in the trash

**Business recycling rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tons</th>
<th>Tons</th>
<th>Recycling rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Challenges

For the business assistance program to make a real impact, there needs to be a compelling reason for businesses to improve their waste reduction practices. “It’s the right thing to do” only motivates a small percentage of the business community. Most of our requests for assistance have come from public entities, not the private sector. Without a law requiring recycling, not many businesses are motivated to take steps toward sustainability. Because we are not a hauler, Solid Waste cannot give information on cost savings through changing service levels.

There is a difference in the abilities of big vs. small businesses to implement waste reduction activities. Larger organizations often have a harder time implementing changes due to more complicated chains of authority and conflicting interests. They also have more staff to coordinate and train. Smaller organizations generally have a hard time making an expansion in recycling cost-effective. They also have a harder time absorbing high up-front costs when making changes in purchasing.

Obtaining accurate information about tonnage is difficult. Service levels can be somewhat helpful, but only measures capacity – not the amount actually discarded – and this information must be provided by the business. Presentations are a good way to give employees information on recycling and waste reduction, but follow up surveys or questionnaires provide mostly qualitative information. Waste sort audits provide information that is more accurate but are time consuming; only a small handful of organizations request a baseline audit.

Staff includes recommendations for improving environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP) in reports for all businesses receiving waste sort audits and site assessments. Changes in purchasing are not as easy to implement and they do not demonstrate results as quickly as changes to the recycling system. While some smaller purchasing recommendations are easier to implement, many require a high up-front cost that takes a while for many organizations to get approval and put into operation.

The most common request for help with purchasing focused on compostable products. Initially, the list of products accepted by the composting facility was very straightforward and easily understood. However, in 2011, Waste Connections began changing and limiting the types of materials they would accept at their composting facility. This left many businesses confused about what they could put in their organics collection bins. Many commercial contacts were upset that products they had purchased were no longer allowed in the compost. To address this challenge, Solid Waste negotiated contracts in 2014 with other composting facilities that would accept the materials that Waste Connections told us they did not want at their facility. After these contracts were signed, Thurston County, the City of Olympia, and Waste Connections worked together to adopt and promote the same list of acceptable items. Today, no matter where someone lives or works, or who picks up their organics in Thurston County, the items they can put in your bin are the same.

**ACTION C3.d) CONSIDER MANDATORY COMMERCIAL RECYCLING IF THE RECYCLING GOAL OF A 15% INCREASE IS NOT MET.**
To date, business recycling has increased 21%. See C3.c

**ACTION C4.a) WORK WITH PRIVATE HAULERS AND CITY OF OLYMPIA TO ACHIEVE CONSISTENCY FOR RECYCLABLES COLLECTION AMONG ALL JURISDICTIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL ACCOUNTS TO EXTENT PRACTICAL.**

In 2009-10, the Washington Department of Ecology implemented a WA Commingled Recycling Improvements Project to regionally address reducing contamination in commingled recycling systems. There were over 40 stakeholders in the Southwest Region workgroup: local governments, material recovery facilities, haulers, and end-users. They met monthly for over a year to explore the issues and achieve the following goals:

1. Obtain the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions on programs
2. Provide data and context to elected officials
3. Provide consistency in public education messages (including dangerous items like sharps)
4. Reduce problems in sorting at material recovery facilities (MRFs)
5. Create feedback loops, both positive and negative, for the system as a whole
6. Identify possible funding mechanisms for increased public education.


Thurston County and Olympia were the first jurisdiction to incorporate the recommendations that can be found at [https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/publications/1107026.pdf](https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/publications/1107026.pdf). Except for glass, the residential programs for both areas are the same. Olympia is still examining the feasibility of removing glass from the commingled mix, as is the recommendation.

**ACTION C5.a) EVALUATE AND IMPLEMENT, AS NEEDED, ADDITIONAL RECYCLING DROP-OFFS FOR E-WASTE, WITH CONSIDERATION OF PRODUCTS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRODUCER TAKE-BACK PROGRAMS.**

Currently, the WA E-Cycle program accepts televisions, computers, computer monitors, portable or laptop computers including "tablet computers", and e-readers (also called e-book readers). Based on the state law, the program must have one location in Thurston County. We are fortunate enough to have seven. Staff regularly encourages potential locations in the south end of the county, where there is no collection site, to become collection sites.

Solid Waste staff regularly promotes the E-Cycle program. In 2013, 971 tons were collected in Thurston County. Since program inception in 2009, collection of E-Cycle materials increased 29% from 754 tons per year. Thurston County makes up 3.7% of the state population but we collect 4.3% of the materials.

There are other locations, such as Office Depot and Best Buy that accept non-program electronics for free or a small fee. These are promoted in outreach materials and listed on [www.WhereDoITakeMy.org](http://www.WhereDoITakeMy.org)

**ACTION C6.a) PROMOTE PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP POLICIES.**
Thurston County Solid Waste was an active member on the Northwest Product Stewardship Council (NWPSC) through 2013 and spent significant staff resources moving the product stewardship agenda forward at both the county and state level:

- 2010 Mercury Lighting Bill: provided letter of support and testified at legislative hearings
- 2011 and 2012 Secure Medicine Return Bill: gathered approximately 120 supporting organizations from across the state, met with legislatures and testified at legislative hearings.
- 2013 Paint Stewardship Bill: Led lobbying effort, provided eleven presentations to Solid Waste Advisory Committees across the state resulting in eight counties in support, organized expert testimonies for legislative hearings, and testified.
- 2014 Paint Stewardship Bill: Testified at Senate

The NWPSC has historically focused efforts on policy and legislative work. The type of outreach done by Thurston staff was new and very successful. The feedback has been important for the group in recognizing the need to better involve stakeholders, non-profits, and local governments in order to get bills passed. Based on this, the 2013 annual retreat focusing on restructuring the organization and a full time staff person was hired by the organization to continue the type of outreach we had demonstrated. Due to staff resource levels, Solid Waste staff is no longer an active member of the NWPSC, but is called upon to testify as needed.

**Action C6.b) Collaborate with building departments to encourage and promote green building standards and the use of C/D recycling plans.**

Staff was slated to work on this task through the 2009-10 Department of Ecology Coordinated Prevention Grant. The County Planning Department also had a grant and the funds were combined to hold a series of stakeholders meetings. Participants were developers, architects, engineers, affordable housing developers and green building advocates. The intent was to find and eliminate barriers within existing count codes to energy efficiency and green building. Agendas and meeting summaries can be found at [http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/climate/climate_stakeholders.htm](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/climate/climate_stakeholders.htm)

From these discussions:

- The Permitting Department coordinated the drafting of a cottage housing and an electric vehicle ordinance. Both were adopted by the Thurston County Board of Commissioners.

**Action C6.c) Consider mandatory C/D recycling deposits if the recycling goal of a 15% increase is not met.**

See E1.A. Recycling has increased 29%. This is likely a result of a significant solid waste tip fee increase at the Waste and Recovery Center, combined with effective outreach on the cost-effective recycling opportunities at Recovery One. Outreach was primarily done on the 2009-2010 grant. Reduced staffing prevented maintaining that level of promotion and it would be advisable to find resources to enable continuation of these efforts.

**Action C7.a) Serve as an example by implementing Thurston County’s Sustainability Policy.**
Solid Waste staff drafted the Thurston County Sustainability Policy, which was approved by the Board in 2007. A .5 FTE staff person was hired within Solid Waste to implement the plan, with the initial focus on waste reduction and office supply purchasing. The 2008 and 2009 Progress Reports, detailing the progress made are at http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/solidwaste/sustainability/sustainability-home.htm.

In 2009, Thurston County received an Environmental Protection Agency WasteWise award for their efforts. In December 2009, the SW staff person left the County and the .5 FTE position was reallocated to Central Services as full time. They have a full time Sustainability Coordinator in place. Since 2009, there have not been any subsequent Progress Reports completed, the website has not been updated, signs are not current, and there is no waste reduction outreach to county staff. The position continues to be funded through Solid Waste.

**ACTION C7.b) PROVIDE WEB-BASED RESOURCES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL JURISDICTIONS AND BUSINESSES TO USE AS A TEMPLATE.**

Please refer to C7.A. The SW staff managing the sustainability program developed comprehensive web-resources for in-house use in 2008. The materials and format were being tested and refined for launch on the external website. Our efforts, though not up-to-date, are located at http://spider.co.thurston.wa.us/recycling/index.htm

**ACTION C8.a) EVALUATE MANDATORY RESIDENTIAL CURBSIDE TRASH AND RECYCLING COLLECTION IF THE NUMBER OF SELF-HAULERS DOES NOT DECREASE BY 5%**.

This task was related to B2.E to reduce the number or cars entering the WARC. Traffic was often backed up onto the street on the weekends, causing delays and safety issues. By raising the minimum tip fee, the goal was to encourage customers to bring larger loads, less often. Between 2008 and 2012, the number of vehicles was reduced by 19%.

**ACTION D1.a) ESTABLISH USE OF WARC AS FOOD-WASTE TRANSFER SITE.**

Solid Waste signed a new Compost Operations contract with Waste Connections (WC) in 2014 to operate the organics collection site at the WARC. As part of this contract, WC grinds and blends the different organic feedstocks to prepare the material to be shipped to various composting and other markets. Currently about 60% of the organics delivered to the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center at Hawks Prairie in Lacey are hauled to Silver Springs Organics near Rainier to be composted into high quality products. About 35% of the material is burned in industrial furnaces or is directly land-applied as mulch on area farms. The remaining 5% is trucked to composting facilities in Eastern WA and in Snohomish County. These facilities are designed to safely compost the organics from restaurants, schools, and other places that generate a lot of food-soiled paper and food waste.

**ACTION D1.b) ADD FOOD WASTE TO CURBSIDE YARD DEBRIS COLLECTION FOR RESIDENTS.**

Food waste was added to yard debris in May 2008. Thurston County Solid Waste funded all the initial outreach materials for the LeMay residents, including new bin labels. Waste reduction staff continued to promote the program and the list of acceptable items through September 2012 when Waste Connections began changing and limiting the types of organic they would accept. In 2014, with the signing of a new Compost Operations contract and with the adoption of a new expanded acceptable materials list by Thurston County, Waste Connections, and the City of Olympia, staff
became promoting the program again. This included developing a new web page for organics collection and the production of new fliers and posters.

**ACTION D1.c) IMPLEMENT FOOD-WASTE COLLECTION PROGRAM AT SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES; ASSIST WITH SETUP AND TRAINING.**

For Schools, see C1.c.

For Businesses, see C3.c

**ACTION E1.a) EVALUATE POTENTIAL LOCATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR A REGIONAL C/D RECOVERY FACILITY.**

The 2009 Solid Waste Plan was drafted as the economy began slowing, without knowledge of how severe the coming recession would be. This significantly reducing construction industry activities and the quantity of C/D produced. Staff met with Recovery One, the C/D recycling facility in Pierce County soon after the Plan was drafted. The facility accepts single stream and mixed loads of C/D from haulers and the construction industry from throughout the region. Two scenarios were explored: one where the materials were separated at the WARC, the other to transport to Recovery One and separate there. However, due to the reduced tons, it was decided that it would not be financially beneficial to arrange for a regional C/D recovery facility until there was an upswing in construction.

As an alternative plan, waste reduction staff launched a large-scale outreach campaign to let the construction industry know about Recovery One’s services. Tip fees at Recovery One for both mixed C/D and source separated are significantly lower than trash disposal at the WARC. Even with transportation costs, builders and remodelers could save money. In addition, those that were seeking third party accreditation for green building could claim the waste recycling credits.

Promotion to the industry was multi-faceted and included self-haul and using hauling services. Staff worked with local haulers to ensure they were well informed and could promote the benefits of using Recovery One. While there are always economic and regional factors that affect trends, it appears the education and outreach efforts have been effective. The total Recovery One tons from other jurisdictions decreased 19.5% between 2008 and 2013, while total tons from Thurston County increased by 10.3%. Due to staff resources, we have not actively promoted the Recovery One option to the industry since 2010.

**ACTION E1.b) ESTABLISH C/D RATES AT THE WARC TO ENCOURAGE MIXED AND SOURCE-SEPARATED C/D RECYCLING.**

The initial goal was to establish a lower rate for C/D materials. Based on the WARC Manager’s 2009 calculations, the cost to collect and process C/D materials for recycling would be higher than the cost to landfill. Therefore, a C/D recycling program would need to be subsidized and it is a significant amount of the waste stream. Recycling programs should be self-funding in order to be sustainable long-term, especially in a questionable economy. Since Recovery One provides a cost-effective option, staff promoted that facility. See E1.a for results of the outreach.

**ACTION E1.c) INCREASE C/D RECOVERY REIMBURSEMENT TO FACILITY OPERATOR.**

*SOLID WASTE OPERATIONS TO COMPLETE*
ACTION E2.a) PROMOTE AVAILABLE REUSE OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES TO THE BUILDING COMMUNITY.

Targeted outreach was performed using 2009-2010 grant funds to provide information on three key reuse opportunities:

- Habitat for Humanity ReStore: Promoted donating to and buying used materials from the facility. ReStore stated both sales and donations increased dramatically from promotion, though they did not provide survey responses or data as requested.
- WhereDoItakeMy.org: Promoted database as a resource to find over 160 reuse and recycling locations. Site use increased 42% during grant period.
- 2good2toss.com: Promoted materials exchange website. Added approximately 1,000 site users during grant period. Total membership was at 7,613, the second highest county in the state.

Reuse infrastructure was developed using 2013-15 grant funds. The county contracted with Habitat for Humanity to provide a staffed donation station at the Waste and Recovery Center. This service creates a “one-stop drop” for WARC customers. Those bringing trash to the site can stop at the donation site first. This provides a tax deduction and reduced trash fees.

Solid Waste has not maintained the same outreach focus on the building industry as was done during the grant, due to staffing resources. There is great potential and C/D is a very large percentage of the waste stream. It would be beneficial to find the resource to continue the efforts.