

**City of Peoria, Arizona**  
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The City of Peoria, Arizona, in response to citizen requests and increasing landfill disposal costs developed and implemented the Curbside Recycling Program. This program was developed as an alternative disposal service to divert garbage from the landfill mainstream; through a program that would be cost effective, and safe to the environment.

From its humble agricultural beginnings and an originally incorporated area of just one square mile in 1954, Peoria now extends into two counties encompassing a total of 178 square miles. Peoria is located twenty (20) miles northwest of Phoenix and has a population of 153,592. Panoramic vistas, ecology, and topography of the Sonoran Desert make Peoria a coveted location for master-planned communities. In 2001, staff prepared a program analysis for the implementation of a curbside recycling program. Council made the decision to place a referendum on the ballot; this gave residents the opportunity to decide if they wished to adopt such a program. The referendum included authorization to increase solid waste rates. The referendum failed by a very small margin. Again, in 2005 City Mayor created the Recycling AdHoc Committee, composed of internal staff members. The committee was tasked with exploring the feasibility for a recycling program.

This program was important to the city for the following reasons; Peoria citizenship had expressed a desire for such a program; as a tool to protract service rate increases, and to be an active contributor in the efforts to protect our environment. Staff took in consideration the results of the 2001 election and knew that it was inevitable that the city would encounter an environment that included resistance to change. From 2000 to 2006, Peoria experience a population growth of approximately 39%; it was these new residents that expressed an interest in increasing the city's environmental efforts.

The committee researched and conducted surveys to determine if indeed this was a program that would be accepted by residents. Prior to the implementation of such a program it was essential to have citizen input and buy-in, thus the Recycling AdHoc Committee recommended the creation of a Citizen Advisory Committee. The selection of committee members was made as an appointment by each Council Member and one member each from the Youth Advisory Committee and the Parks and Recreation Committee. Solid Waste staff presented the implementation plan to the committee members. The Committee held six (6) public meetings to gather input from residents, there was a very low participation from residents at the meetings. A scientific telephone survey was conducted by Arizona Opinion of Tucson, Arizona; the results reflected 94.8% of the residents surveyed believed that a recycling program would be good for the environment. After extensive work the Citizen Advisory Committee took the information that they gathered and made a recommendation to Council to approve the implementation of the program.

## **Program Description**

Staff designed a program that would not increase residential rates. Each household would receive one 90-gallon, 60-gallon or 32-gallon recycling barrel and one 5-gallon in-home promotional tote. Residents would also receive informational literature; that explained the changes to their refuse service, and how to prepare their recyclable materials for collection. This would be a co-mingled program; all recyclables would be placed in one barrel, which offered convenience to Peoria residents. Acceptable materials would be; glass, cardboard, paper, plastics #1 & #2, steel/metal.

A vendor was selected for the purchase of the barrels and totes. Taking in consideration our limited personnel resources staff negotiated a price to include assembly and distribution of the barrels, this cost is reflected in table 1.a. The delivery of barrels was completed in six weeks, from September 24<sup>th</sup> to November 9<sup>th</sup>, to 48,000 customers.

To coincide with the delivery of the barrels, one block party was held in each of the six Council districts one week prior to the delivery. The block parties were designed to encourage interaction from the residents, with a goal in mind of promoting program ownership. It was very clear to staff, based on the election results of 2001 that this was a very political issue with Peoria residents.

Staff evaluated the possible risk and obstacles that could result from implementing a program of such magnitude, some of those risks included; acceptance from residents, limited resources and funding, State, and County requirements and regulations.

In 2001 this program had been turned down by Peoria residents. We were risking a political outcry from residents if and when the city decided to implement this program. The city received a number of calls and e-mails from residents that believed that the city was side-stepping their (citizens) previous decision (vote).

There was no allocation for new or temporary personnel during the development or implementation of this program; this presented a risk of overwhelming the current staff, thus increasing the possibility of errors and omissions. The city did not have funding earmarked for this new program. Staff was awarded three grants from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and secured low interest financial loans for the barrels.

County regulations included a clause that required twice a week refuse collection. Staff obtained a collection variance, which made allowance for changing the refuse service to one day trash and one day recyclables.

The program was planned to be launched September 24<sup>th</sup>, with the first day of collection to be on Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## **Program Financial Impact**

Solid Waste staff developed and implemented the recycling program; with the stipulation that it would not increase residential refuse rates. A proposed increase to refuse rates had been one of the defeating factors in 2001. The city received a ten (10) year loan for the financing of the recycling barrels and in-home totes.

The proposed program included the following expenses for the first year of implementation.

Table 1.a

<b>Expense (1st Year)</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Personnel (equipment, salaries, benefits)	\$ 355,508.00
Recycling Barrels (50,000)	\$ 2,500,000.00
In-Home Totes (50,000)	\$ 250,000.00
Assembly and Distribution of Barrels	\$ 140,000.00
Educational Campaign	\$ 100,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,345,508.00</b>

Staff projected the operational cost of the second and subsequent years to be:

Table 1.b

<b>Expense (2nd and subsequent years)</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Personnel (equipment, salaries, benefits)	\$ 277,988.00
Educational Campaign	\$ 50,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 327,988.00</b>

Another factor that staff took in consideration for the second and subsequent years was the purchase of recycling barrels for new homes. A recommendation was made to incorporate the recycling barrel to the current development impact fees. Staff believed that education would be an on-going investment which would assist in maintaining contamination levels to a minimum, thus \$50,000 was included through the annual budgeting process.

## **Projected Savings**

Stipulations were made by the Project Team that the savings and revenues generated would be invested back into the daily maintenance of the recycling program outlined in table 1.b.

One area of savings was landfill costs; for fiscal year 2007 the Solid Waste Division collected 71,688 tons, 100% of this garbage was disposed of through land filling. For year 2008 staff was on track to collect 73,559 tons of garbage. The budget for garbage disposal was in excess of 1 million dollars per year.

Table 2.a

<b>Savings and Revenues (1st Year)</b>	<b>Savings</b>	<b>Revenue</b>
Landfill Savings	\$ 226,413.00	
Sales of Material (11,034 tons / 15% diversion)		\$ 275,845.00
Savings from elimination of current drop off recycling program	\$ 106,427.00	
ADEQ Education Grant Monies		\$ 60,000.00
ADEQ Implementation Grant Monies		\$ 200,000.00
<b>Total Savings/Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 332,840.00</b>	<b>\$ 535,845.00</b>

Staff projected the savings and revenues for the second and subsequent years to be:

Table 2.b

<b>Savings and Revenues (2nd Year)</b>	<b>Savings</b>	<b>Revenue</b>
Landfill Savings	\$ 349,580.00	
Sales of Material (15,153 tons / 20% diversion)		\$ 378,825.00
<b>Total Savings/Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 349,580.00</b>	<b>\$ 378,825.00</b>

The implementation was completed in November 2007 with minimal errors; however, there were lessons learned that could have made the transition smoother. Some of the lessons learned were:

**Project Coordinator** - As financial resources were scarce staff had no option but to utilize the existing staff. All the planning staff did an exceptional job putting the program together; however there were times that they were overwhelmed with work. We learned that it would have been best if one key person was assigned as the key contact for the implementation.

**Communication** – Again, with limited resources the project staff would ensure that tasks were completed, but lacked in keeping other division staff members informed. This created detachment amongst the division staff.

The Public Works Department, Solid Waste Division was tasked with developing, planning and implementation of the new curbside recycling program. Staff worked around the clock to ensure that the implementation was a smooth transition for Peoria residents. The Project Team consisted of:

Bill Mattingly, Public Works Director

Mr. Mattingly worked with our council members, media and community to prepare the ground for the development and the implementation. Mr. Mattingly was also instrumental in obtaining financing for this program.

Jesse Duarte, Solid Waste Manager

Mr. Duarte worked with our council members, media and community to prepare the ground for the development and the implementation. Mr. Duarte developed the program plan which included expenditures, savings and revenues. He was successful in developing an advantageous Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Phoenix for the sales of the commodities.

Danny Sainz, Solid Waste Supervisor

Mr. Sainz was charged with re-routing the entire City to incorporate the collection of recyclables and coordinated the purchase and delivery of the recycling barrels.

Rebecca Borquez, Solid Waste Supervisor

Ms. Borquez was charged with preparing media communication, advertisements, and presentations. She was also tasked with preparing three grant requests from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

The entire Solid Waste staff was a vital component in the success of this program, from our staff that answered calls and responded to questions; to the Operational Supervisors that ensured that the collection of garbage continued during the transition from garbage to recycling and garbage collection.

The new Curbside Recycling Program has had a positive impact and is of benefit to the Peoria community. It has provided a convenient alternative to remove pollutants from our environment and it has assisted in maintaining refuse service rates at lowest possible cost.

Staff had anticipated a 15% diversion during the first full year of implementation and hoped to achieve a 20% diversion rate the second year, table 3.a reflects that this goal was attained the second month of implementation.

Table 3.a

<b>Month</b>	<b>Diversión</b>
October	6%
November	21%
December	21.5%
January	30%

The City of Peoria, as an organization fully supported the development and implementation of the Curbside Recycling Program and will continue to improve, whenever possible, our contribution to the protection of our environment. We also have a commitment to support and implement programs that will benefit the community.