

**Public Works and Utilities Division  
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**June 15, 2007**

**Mission Statement:**

- To provide an excellent multi-faceted collection, disposal and recycling service to the citizens of Spokane at the least possible cost consistent with modern solid waste management practices.
- To remain organizationally efficient while recognizing the complexities of growth and change.
- To address environmental issues forthrightly and protect our precious natural resources as identified by the general public, regulatory agencies and our elected officials

**Key Customers:**

The citizens and businesses of Spokane

**Definition of Product/Services:**

1. Provide convenient, dependable and courteous weekly collection of garbage and recyclables to over 65,500 residences.
2. Collect garbage from over 2,800 businesses at least once per week and meet their emergency needs.
3. Offer weekly yard waste collection on same day as garbage collection.
4. Provide multi-weekly collection of recyclables to businesses.
5. Operate the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System Disposal Facilities with convenient, clean and safe access for disposal of solid waste.
6. Maintain the Southside and Northside Landfills in an environmentally safe manner that meets all regulatory and contractual requirements.
7. Support the City's special events and Neighborhood Council cleanup programs.
8. Fund the City's Code Enforcement department.

**Strategic Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT):**

**Strengths:**

1. Customer service is the highest priority of the department
2. Experienced employees are motivated and hardworking, adding value to our service.
3. Positive public perception of the department
4. The ability to design services that are efficient and meet the needs of the customer as well as grow with future customer demands.

5. The department invests in and maintains equipment to do the job efficiently and effectively, remaining flexible to meet the needs of the customer.
6. Deliver valuable, convenient recycling and yard waste service which remove tons of recyclable products from the waste stream each day, conserving resources and reducing the cost of disposal for the customer.
7. Continue to reduce environmental contamination, protect citizens and the environment, and ensure compliance with regulatory agencies.
8. Operate three disposal facilities that provide one stop service for garbage, recycling, yard waste and household hazardous waste needs 360 days per year.

Weaknesses:

1. Inefficiencies and/or inequities in some routes.
2. Safe and efficient collection hindered in many collection areas: narrow streets, high densities, on-street parking, hills, alleys, cul-de-sacs, and high traffic.
3. Lack of or failure to use an effective enforcement tool for compliance with solid waste policies.
4. Covering cost of all neighborhood cleanups and some special events adds to the rates charged for garbage collection.
5. Lack of formal solid waste safety program to reduce employee injuries and accidents.
6. Current organization of office staff is not conducive to effective customer service.
7. Valley Transfer Station running far above design capacity with continued growth in area.
8. Rail by-pass of garbage not adequate at all times.
9. Remote location of disposal sites prevents adequate facility maintenance/support.
10. Turn-over of entry level positions negatively impact department efficiencies.
11. Aging landfill infrastructure and environmental engineering controls.
12. Not utilizing the educational assets of the Regional Solid Waste Department to our best advantage

Opportunities:

1. Reroute collection areas and evaluate changing commercial shifts to increase efficiency and productivity.
2. Fully implement the use of GPS routing/tracking on all trucks and research the benefits of other technology geared at solid waste programs to increase efficiencies and productivity.
3. Evaluate each semi-automated collection stop for conversion to automated collection through alley closures and cart relocation to increase efficiency while maintaining safety.
4. Reorganize office staff to improve customer service.
5. Hire Solid Waste health and safety officer.

6. Research purchase of specialized equipment for problem collection areas.
7. Institute enticements for compliance and/or penalties for non-compliance with solid waste policies.
8. Utilize Regional Solid Waste System educational assets better.
9. Run a pilot program to determine if automation of the yard waste program is feasible.
10. Continue building a positive relationship with citizens, organizations, and other city departments.
11. Develop plan to transition closed landfills to a higher use.

**Threats:**

1. Privatization of Solid Waste utility.
2. Illegal hauling of refuse within the City of Spokane.
3. Loss of key personnel.
4. Contamination in recycling containers reduces value of material and threatens relationship with processors.
5. Civil service constraints, union demands, military absences and administration of current FMLA policies continue to hamstring the department.
6. Increased cost of interdepartmental services and un-recovered costs negatively impacting solid waste rates.
7. Increasing regulatory compliance requirements.

**Key Success Factors (KSF):**

1. Deliver service that citizens value
2. Utilize best equipment and technology available
3. Hire and retain excellent employees
4. Retain ability to respond effectively to customer needs

**Goals and Strategies:**

**GOAL #1 Continue to provide excellent customer service** (Mayor's Priority for Customer Service) (Solid Waste Mgmt. Section 3, pg. 17-13, 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation, Bucket #2) (SWOT -

**Strategy**

The administrative staff has been reorganized by reclassifying the former Accountant I position to an Office Manager and assigning the customer service responsibilities and supervision of clerical staff to that position. (The position will be opened and filled by 8/07)

**GOAL #2 Maximize automated garbage collection route size** (Mayor's Priority for Financial Stability) (Solid Waste Mgmt. Sections 2(1) pg. 17-2 and 2(3) pg. 17-10, Buckets #2 and #3).

**Strategy**

Automate as many semi-automated routes as practical then re-route all garbage collection to increase the average number of stops per day. This will

be enhanced by implementing the use of GPS tracking software to streamline routing, compare production and identify fuel inefficiencies, and by investigating the use of specialized equipment for problem collection areas. This goal will be achieved while maintaining operational safety and a high level of service. This activity is paired with our increasing route sizes and will necessitate changing some collection locations from alley to curbside, targeting north of the Spokane River. The annual cost reduction potential is \$110,136 and reflects a decrease of one route (one Collector I, one Collector II and one rear-load truck in operation). (By 7/1/07)

Route sizes will be increased from the current average 647 stops per day. This activity will necessitate changing some collection locations from alley to curbside, targeting south of the Spokane River. The annual cost reduction potential is \$110,136 per year and reflects a decrease of one route (one Collector I, one Collector II and one rear-load truck in operation). (By 12/31/07)

**GOAL #3 Increase safety of all solid waste functions and decrease accident and injury rate by instituting formal solid waste safety program.** (Mayor's Priority for Financial Stability) (*Tied to Goal #2*)

**Strategy**

Reclassification of Waste Auditor position to Safety Specialist to implement and manage the solid waste safety program and to initiate a Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) is in process of receiving approval of Civil Service and Union. This position is extremely important to identify safety issues while the department is initiating greater operational efficiencies. (By 8/2007)

**GOAL #4 Increase recycling and yard waste route efficiency** (Mayor's Priority for Financial Stability) (*Solid Waste Mgmt. Section 2(2), pg 17-4, Bucket #4*).

**Strategy**

Reroute residential recycling and Clean Green collection with the rerouting of garbage collection (goal #2). (Northside by 7/1/07, Southside by 12/31/07)  
Pilot collection of yard waste with automated truck and, if successful, move all semi-automated yard waste collection to automated. (Through summer/fall of 2007)

Research more efficient collection of residential recycling material, including identification of automated collection vehicles for yard waste and recycling material, working with Regional Solid Waste System to initiate county-wide program. (In progress)