

Best Practice: City of Raleigh Yard Waste Facility

Jurisdiction: City of Raleigh

Brief Description: Establishment of a facility to process city-collected yard waste materials (weekly, seasonal leaf and Christmas trees), as well as materials from others for a tipping fee. Materials are ground in a tub grinder then placed in windrows for seasoning. Wood pallets are also chipped. The products – mulch, compost and wood chips – are on sale. The City also uses much of its product for its own landscaping and gardening programs at City parks and facilities.

Background/Findings/Goal: Weekly curbside collection of yard waste materials and the opening of the processing facility was initiated in 1992 in response to the state's banning of yard waste materials in landfills.

Ordinance/Policy: N/A

Implementation Details: The City already owned the land where the Yard Waste Center was to be built. A work plan was devised as follows:

- Design equipment specifications and bid documents for the heavy equipment used at the site, as well as the automated scales.
- Advertise for and interview applicants for various positions.
- Receive equipment and train employees in the various facets of the operation, keeping in mind an opening date of November 1, 1991.

The facility accepts yard waste materials, pallets, and clean non-treated wood for recycling. All incoming materials are charged the same tipping fee. Non-commercial vehicles pay a fee of \$20.00 per ton, with a minimum charge of \$5.00. Commercial vehicles pay a fee of \$20.00 per ton, with a minimum charge of \$10.00.

The facility equipment (including two tub grinders, windrow machine, rubber tire loader and track loader) is owned by the City. Maintenance costs are high on the tub grinders - however when evaluated, leasing showed no cost savings would be gained.

A year after the facility opened, sales of wood chips, mulch and compost sales to the public began. No marketing plan was used. The facility passes out information flyers at the scales. The product sales fee schedule is:

Product	Price Per Bag/Can	Price Per 2 1/2 Cubic Yard
Wood Chips	\$1.00	\$12.00
Mulch	\$1.00	\$12.00
Compost	\$2.00	\$18.00

Results: Tipping fees and product sales recovered approximately 72% of the programs expenses in fiscal '00-'1 (actual expenses, including depreciation for capital equipment replacement less actual revenues received). Since implemented, the facility has recycled over 193,000 tons of yard waste materials. The recycled products have sold themselves. For fiscal '00-01 the facility sold 487 bags and 2,927 loads of compost; 871 bags and 5,669 loads of mulch; and 125 bags and 819 loads of wood chips. City crews used over 5,900 tons of products for landscaping projects in parks, greenways, and other applications in Fiscal Year 2000-01. The cost of purchasing commercial mulch for City-owned properties has been virtually eliminated.

Next Steps/Future Plans/Collateral Practices: Raleigh plans to continue this operation. A pilot program is in the planning stage to combine a mixture of old leaves and lime-stabilized sewage sludge to produce a soil amendment.

Contact:

Linda Leighton, Recycling Coordinator

Linda.Leighton@ci.raleigh.nc.us

(919) 831-6494