



**SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT
CONSULTANTS**

**City of Fort Worth Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan
Public Outreach Summary
October 2015**

As part of the update to the City’s Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (CSWMP) process, the City has conducted extensive public outreach for the purpose of garnering opinions and insight regarding the interest of residents of Fort Worth in solid waste and other environmental issues.

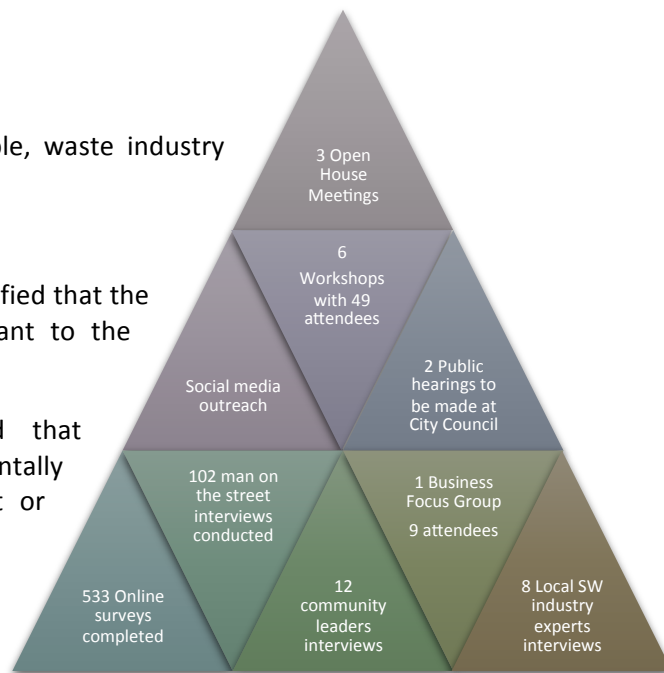
The City has used several different avenues and technologies to reach out to residents:

- News articles, advertisements, and social media;
- Online Survey of residents;
- “Man on the Street interviews;
- Public open house meetings;
- Business Focus Groups;
- Subject specific workshops; and,
- In-Depth Interviews with business people, waste industry experts, and community leaders.

Priorities and Values

In general, the public outreach process identified that the following topics are of interest or important to the residents of Fort Worth that we talked to:

- Nearly all of the residents agreed that “managing waste in the most environmentally responsible manner” is very important or critical to the City’s future.
- Most of the businesses felt that there is a connection between waste management and the City’s economy because it influences quality of life.

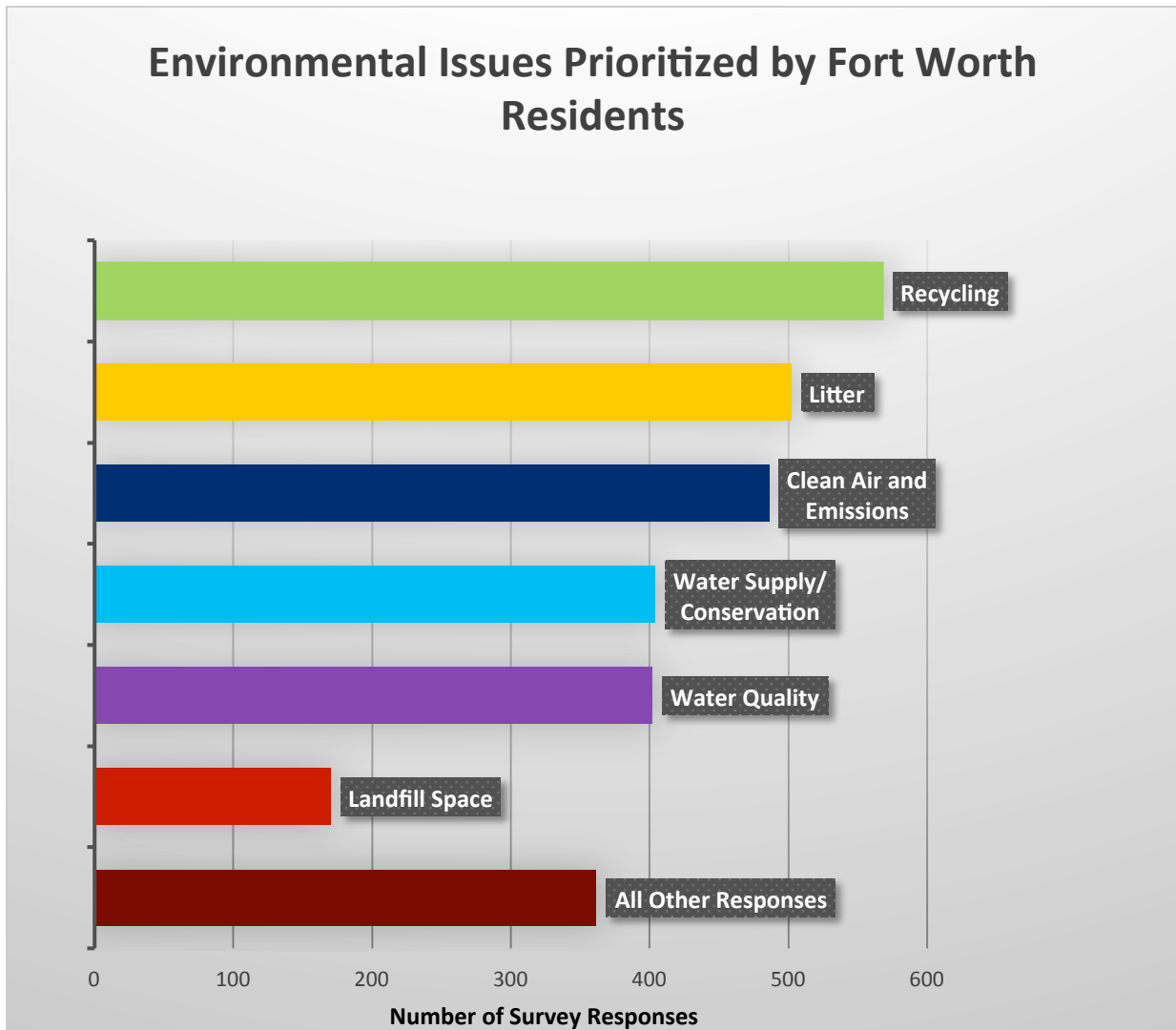


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- By almost 2-to-1, residents prioritized public space recycling bins and increased recycling efforts at businesses as tools to increase recycling overall. Half or less of residents prioritized changes to the curbside program that would encourage waste reduction, and lesser priority was given to food waste separation and further manipulating collection prices to discourage disposal.
- Recycling was the most-frequently prioritized environmental issue by the survey respondents. They also viewed litter, air quality, and water as pressing issues (see figure below). In open workshop discussions, residents expressed concern about recycling being a “value” for Fort Worth, and businesses talked about companies who have adopted “green” as a corporate tenet. Many people stressed the importance of recycling education at all age levels, especially the youth.



- Businesses said recycling was important, but qualified that many businesses are too busy to care or want an economic incentive to recycle.
- When asked what is the hardest thing about recycling at their locations, businesses lamented that “people don’t care,” and cited problems with implementing a system such as not having space for containers and having to rely on individuals to carry recycling to their homes due to lack of service. They also noted that turnover means education is a never-ending process, even for people who are engaged. In a later question, several of the businesses noted that recycling always gets “pushed down” below other priorities and demands on their time.
- Businesses indicated that the potentially-recyclable materials they were most likely to generate were batteries, cardboard, and paper.
- Although food waste collection and composting was prioritized by less than a third of the residents surveyed more than two-thirds indicated that “yes,” they would be interested in participating in such a program. Some of the reasons for responding “no” included fears regarding animals, odors, and costs. Smell and effort were also concerns expressed by business interviewees, although many of them agreed that food waste is a huge part of the commercial waste stream that really needs to be diverted.

Attitudes and Interest

- Residents were provided descriptions about three advanced solid waste management techniques: zero waste, waste-to-energy, and mixed waste processing. Online surveys were exceptionally high in favorability toward the techniques, while the face-to-face interviews were less enthusiastic. Some residents at the workshops also wanted to discuss what they had heard about 1-bin systems from other cities. 1-bin is a collection system whereby recyclables and trash would be separated at a sorting facility rather than at the point of generation. Some thought it was interesting, others thought it would make people “disconnected” from waste.
- Most residents were willing to pay a small additional price per month if an advanced solid waste technique made a “real” difference. The most common acceptable price was \$1 to \$5, and the next most-common acceptable price was less than \$1.
- In interviews, business people were asked about recycling at commercial locations. Their responses indicate that there is a notable lack of knowledge about what is required of businesses, with many respondents saying that they know “not much” or “nothing” about such regulations.
- The businesses were specifically asked about a 1-bin or no-sort system. Some liked the idea, saying it “sounds easy;” however, just as many disparaged the idea, saying that such an effort “sounds expensive,” and did not like the idea of paying even more for such as service than the current source-separation method.
- Most of the businesses and property managers interviewed felt that having a recycling program in place adds prestige to a facility or company, which is positive for the firm. Several



noted that younger people expect to be able to recycle at work and express dismay when they cannot.

- Businesses and property managers said that a cost incentive would definitely help them implement recycling systems, even if such implementation took time and effort. Some residents felt this way, too.