

Zero Waste Workshop - January 31, 2020 Summary

What are key elements for making Zero Waste successful in our community?

- Culture change and education
- Education - very necessary!
 - Shocking education, education showing results (city straw study, for example)
 - Different education for young, old, business owners, etc.
 - What education is the city doing? City and County partner with local groups to have a consistent education message
 - Identify ways to break down stereotypes to get message out
- Harnessing the community values
- Focusing on what we can do with the fewest resources: compost, reuse
- Coordinate policies between city and county so same messaging is used and consistent.
- Contracts that support zero waste with local governments
- Education of the public and in our school systems
- Incentivize more zero waste over time while building infrastructure

What are the barriers to achieving zero waste?

- Convenience
- Consistency across all systems
- Initial cost
- Political will
- Education
- Disconnect to nature
- Local outlet for materials
- Zero waste responsibility falls on the individual.
- Psychological aspect -- peer pressure to consume; “keep up with the Jones”

Discuss and provide recommendations and ideas for the following:

Improving outreach and education to the community:

- Education on how to recycle
- Make recycling information standard
- Brand ambassadors
- Movie add
- Example of effective educational strategy and results: energy efficiency is standard now and prices have gone down and awareness up because of codes and then it became the norm
- Barriers of convenience
- Breaking down stereotypes - zero waste should be more of an expectation, like the campaign to stop smoking
- Provide information on the external costs of manufacturing

Improving recycling at all levels of zero waste (e.g. local governments, business, individual)?

- Make it easy and cheap - group comments

- Educate that it isn't actually cheap to recycle but there are benefits to recycling. We should make it fairly easy but keep source separation - dual stream
- Create a mandate for composting waste
- Pay-as-you-throw - widen the cost between the largest and smallest trash can to incentivize citizens to reduce waste. Provide options for low income residents who may not be able to carry the burden of this extra cost.

Prevent Food waste:

- Need policy that requires outlet for food
- School lunches - educating at a young age
- Starting with food waste
- Composting - expand residential and business options
- Food donation program - connect fresh food with people in need

Expanding research and infrastructure to meet zero waste goals

- University run focus groups to gather data on our community

Identify three ways that government and grassroots organizations can work together to reduce waste in the community

- Build trust between grassroots and city - collaboration, through regular meetings
- Develop and maintain relationships between government and grassroots organizations
- Develop and brainstorm to develop business plans
- Work with university to conduct surveys and gather data