

POLICY BRIEF: Installing City Park Recycling Bins



ISSUE

The City of Salisbury has the opportunity to improve its recycling offerings through installing recycling bins in the City's public parks. By placing recycling bins in the City's public parks, the City of Salisbury may decrease municipal waste management disposal costs, increase recycling opportunities for residents, and encourage community members to participate in environmentally friendly activities.

BACKGROUND

Municipalities across the nation are expanding recycling options for residents beyond curbside or household pickup by installing recycling bins in city public parks. This expansion of recycling opportunities leads to the environmental benefits of reducing the amount of materials placed in landfills while saving energy, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, and lessening air and water pollution. Economic benefits include decreasing tipping costs (the cost of disposing of materials in a landfill), lessening the need to build new landfills, and general growth in the recycling sector which may generate local and state tax revenues.

Though installing recycling bins in city public parks can be expensive, the examples below highlight innovative ways to offset costs for new recycling bin installations through advertisement sales or recycling bin grants.

In 2011, the Public Space Recycling Program in Colorado Springs, Colorado, installed ninety recycling bins in seven of the city's large community parks and sports complexes. This installation was a response to city resident's desire to live in a greener city as expressed through community forums. The recycling bins were provided, installed, and maintained by Greener Corners, a public space recycling and environmental organization, for free. In return, Greener Corners advertisements were placed on the recycling bins. In 2017, Oak Park, Michigan, offset the cost of the installation of twenty recycling bins through a recycling bin grant program sponsored by the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group in collaboration with Keep America Beautiful.

By building upon the recycling initiatives of Colorado Springs and Oak Park, the City of Salisbury may see a decrease in municipal waste management costs and an increase in recycling participation among City residents. This initiative will likely be well received by citizens. When speaking with City residents, many expressed their frustration with not having access to recycling bins in the city's public parks. These residents described the ethical dilemma of deciding whether to dispose of their recyclable items in the trash cans or take the items back to their household recycling bins. The latter is a frustrating response when a simple solution is possible.

PROPOSAL

To seek funds for the purchasing of outdoor recycling bins, government based grants, corporate sponsorships, private funding, and/or the internal distribution of funding from within the City's budget could be utilized. On average, recycling bins for outdoor spaces can range from \$300 to \$1,500 based upon the size and sturdiness of the recycling bins. In terms of sustainability and longevity of the outdoor recycling bins, a steel recycling bin is recommended.

The City of Salisbury is home to thirteen public parks. Placing recycling bins alongside trash cans in the Salisbury City Park, the largest park with the greatest public traffic, would serve as a good preliminary trial. If successful, placing additional bins in each city public park should be a long-term goal for the City.

The City of Salisbury's Department of Field Operations will oversee the collection of recyclables, alongside existing garbage collection, on a regular basis.

Contamination of recycling bins with garbage is always a risk. By purchasing closed top recycling bins of a different color than park trash cans, the chances of contamination will be significantly reduced.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

Placing recycling bins in the City's public parks will provide publicity and awareness of the City's efforts to promote recycling. Utilization of the recycling bins may decrease waste disposal costs for the City of Salisbury. The only substantial cost of this proposal is the purchase of the recycling bins as well as the emptying of these bins on a regular basis by City employees alongside existing garbage cans.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Brockett, M. (2016, October 25). Group donates 22 recycling bins for use in Annapolis parks. Retrieved December 01, 2017, from <http://www.capitalgazette.com/news/environment/ph-ac-cn-recycling-bins-1025-20161025-story.html>

Recycling Bins Now In City Parks. (2011, April 23). Retrieved December 01, 2017, from http://www.kktv.com/home/headlines/Recycling_Bins_To_Be_Placed_In_City_Parks_12_0513859.html

Recycling in Public Spaces. (2017). Retrieved December 01, 2017, from http://www.ci.oak-park.mi.us/departments/public_works/recycling_in_public_spaces.php