

# **STROUD TOWNSHIP**

# **COMMERICAL**

# **RECYCLING PROGRAM**

# **REVIEW**

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\*Available upon request.

## **1.0 Background**

Stroud Township (Township) is a mandated community under Act 101, having a population in excess of 10,000 people. The Township is located in Monroe County (County), which is one of the fastest growing counties in Pennsylvania. Over the past decade the Township has experienced a great deal of growth within its residential and commercial sectors. Many new commercial enterprises (businesses and industries), wishing to serve the ever-growing population of both the Township and the County, have selected the Township to locate in.

The Township's commercial sector consists of an ever-growing array of diverse enterprises (e.g.: shopping malls, business/professional offices, super markets, specialty stores, construction supply outlets, restaurants, repair shops and small industries).

Although the Township's commercial sector continues to grow the amount of recyclable material collected from this sector has not increased accordingly, it has in fact decreased.

The amount of commercial recyclables collected during 2002 was approximately ten percent less than 2001.

## **2.0 Introduction**

The decrease in the amount of recyclable material collected from the commercial sector is attributed to a decline in participation by commercial establishments that have previously participated in the recycling program. Lack of participation by recently established commercial entities also contribute to the problem.

The Township does not have a list identifying all of its current commercial establishments. The Township recognizes the need to compile an up-to-date, comprehensive listing identifying its commercial establishments. Identifying both long-term and newly established commercial entities is necessary in order to properly notify/inform all establishments of their obligation to recycle. The list will also enable the Township to accurately track program participation/compliance.

The Township realizes that many new commercial establishments and some of the long-term commercial establishments are not aware of their obligation to recycle. Technical assistance is requested to develop a list identifying the commercial establishments currently located in the Township. Assistance is also requested in the development of a recycling education/outreach program to specifically address the commercial sector.

### **3.0 Data Collection and Review**

Historical and current information regarding the Township's commercial recycling program was collected. Copies of commercial recycling reports (quarterly and annual) and Section 904 Applications (2000 thru 2002) were provided by the Township.

Five private haulers currently provide recycling collection services (for all designated recyclables) to the Township's commercial sector. The three large hauling firms servicing the Township commercial sector provided a list of customers receiving recycling collection services. The two local haulers that also collect commercial recyclables did not provide a list of their commercial customers.

The local haulers consider their customer lists as proprietary. It is noteworthy that all of the haulers do actively participate in the commercial recycling program by providing the Township verified quarterly reports of the amount of recyclables collected from their customers.

The purpose of gathering the above-noted information was to acquire base-line data relative to current program participants and the quantity and types of recyclable materials being collected.

#### **4.0 Identification of Commercial Establishments**

In order to develop a comprehensive list of commercial establishments located within the Township, various government and business and industry directories and databases were researched and reviewed. The most extensive listing of commercial establishments was compiled by the Monroe County Municipal Waste Management Authority (MCMWMA). The MCMWMA listing was based primarily on tax roles.

Based on the data /information collected, and ARI's familiarity with the Township and County a preliminary listing of commercial establishments was compiled. Township tax and boundary maps were used in conjunction with visits to the Township's primary commercial districts to assist in confirming/editing the preliminary list.

As a result of the above-noted efforts an up-dated list/directory of the Township's commercial establishments was prepared for the Township's consideration.

## **5.0 Identification of Participating Establishments**

Based on recycling reports submitted to the Township by commercial establishments and recycling reports and recent customer lists provided by private haulers, a second list of commercial establishments was prepared. This list highlighted those commercial establishments that were identified (based on available information) as participants in the commercial recycling program.

Unfortunately the list identifying commercial establishments participating in the Township's recycling program cannot be considered as accurate. A variety of conditions exists which currently prohibits the preparation of a list that would accurately identify commercial recycling program participants. These conditions include:

- ↗ The unwillingness of local haulers to identify their commercial customers that they collect recyclables from.
- ↗ Many commercial establishments use a county operated drop-off depot (which accepts all of the Township designated recyclable materials) located in the Township's primary commercial district.
- ↗ Some entities, which are commercial enterprises, are computer based or other home businesses that generate little if any commercial recyclables.

Suggestions and recommendations to assist the Township in resolving the conditions described above are presented in subsequent sections.

## **6.0 Education /Outreach**

It should be recognized that it is, at best, challenging from both the functional and political standpoint to develop and operate a commercial recycling program for several hundred diverse commercial entities. It is almost impossible to do so without a comprehensive and sustained outreach/education program.

### **6.1 Overview**

Getting the message to the intended participants (commercial establishments) of their obligation to recycle is critical. Education is paramount to a recycling program's success. The key words for a successful outreach/education campaign are comprehensive and sustained.

**A. Comprehensive** –The Township needs to effectively disseminate information detailing its commercial recycling program requirements to its intended participants. To get the message to the targeted participants, one must first identify them. The list identifying commercial establishments is a good start.

A comprehensive outreach/education campaign needs to be developed and implemented by the Township. Information included in the campaign must be concise, direct and easily understood, addressing all aspects of the recycling program. Explaining “why” the program is required is extremely important. “Why” is important, a recycling education program must detail the requirements for and benefits of participation. The information to be conveyed must be crafted in a manner that generates interest and develops enthusiasm

among the targeted participants. However, not everyone will be enthused by the many local or even global benefits derived from commercial recycling. This is one reason that each commercial establishment should be made aware of the fact that recycling is mandatory, it is the law, and the Township will take enforcement action, if required. Once “why” is established, who, what, where, when and how to of the program must also be clearly and succinctly conveyed.

**B. Sustained** – The Township needs to increase its efforts to continually inform and educate its commercial sector regarding mandatory recycling. The benefits and requirements for recycling must be repeated/reinforced on a regular basis: at a minimum every 6 months (as required by Act 101), to maintain interest and enthusiasm. The fact that participation is required by all commercial entities and that there are penalties for non-compliance, will get the attention of even the most reluctant. This message will also need to be reinforced on a regular basis.

### **6.3 Program Outline**

A comprehensive and sustained education/outreach campaign will help insure recycling program participation initially and over the long run. The following are suggested components for developing an education /outreach program that are intended to gain the interest and increase enthusiasm and participation by commercial establishments.

- Place an eye-catching ad in a paper of general circulation providing details of the recycling program, its merits and requirements (at a minimum of twice per year). Requirements for reporting the types and amounts of recyclables should also be noted in the ad.

- ↪ Prepare and distribute news releases and public service announcements to the local media. Provide program details, importance of the program e.g.: waste stream reduction, saving on disposal fees, saving/reuse of valuable resource, reduction of dependence on disposal facilities and, of course, it is the law.
- ↪ Develop a slogan e.g.: “Business Recycling Today for a Better Tomorrow” or “Its Good Business To Recycle”. Slogans help with program identity and purpose.
- ↪ Develop a logo representing the commercial recycling program that will be readily identifiable. Provide decals of the logo to participating businesses only. The decal will act as a constant reminder. Display of the logo will show their commitment to recycling and add peer pressure to non-participants.
- ↪ Prepare an instructional brochure, one that is eye catching and to the point: (i.e.: who, what, where, when, why and how to). The brochure could be distributed by volunteers or sent with a Township newsletter, utility or tax bills to save on mailing costs.

The following is a list of items suggested to be included in a brochure:

- Detailed requirements of the program.
  - Recycling is positive for the community, business, the economy, the environment and it is the law.
  - Why each commercial enterprise regardless of size is important to the success of the recycling program.
  - List of designated materials to be recycled.
  - Guidelines for establishing a commercial recycling program.
  - Sources of available information to assist in developing a recycling program, specific to the needs of particular types of commercial establishments (offices, restaurants, retail stores, etc:).
- ↪ Develop incentive programs for participation, that is: rewarding commercial entities that participate. Profile in the Township’s newsletter or in press releases. Present a certificate or plaque to long term participants or exemplary recycling programs at a public meeting or public function.
  - ↪ Conduct a workshop for the commercial sector and private collectors of recyclables. The workshop can review program roles and requirements. Present information to assist in development of recycling programs for various types of business (see Attachment A). Request DEP assist the Township in developing the workshop and to provide promotional and educational materials.
  - ↪ Work with the County Recycling Coordinator to educate the commercial sector.

- ↗ Send reminders to commercial entities who are not participating in the recycling program. Note that compliance is mandatory in a friendly, but firm manner. A second letter, if required, should be force-full and perhaps include a notice of violation. The township should consider offering violators a specified period of time to comply with the Township's recycling requirements, prior to taking enforcement action.
- ↗ Take enforcement action when required. Realizing that violators will be prosecuted provides motivation to (the most reluctant) comply with the recycling program requirements.
- ↗ Negative publicity is not a desirable way to educate but it is effective. Consider publicizing the names of entities that are non-compliant with recycling requirements.
- ↗ To help increase the commercial sectors awareness of their recycling obligations the Township can solicit help. local business associations, chamber of commerce, the Rotary, Kiwanis Club or other similar organizations can assist in recycling education efforts and/or recognition programs. These groups know your business and are oriented to public service.

Copies of examples of education/information materials e.g.: brochures, how to manuals (for various types of commercial establishments) and media information is contained in Appendix A. The examples contained in Appendix A are from various municipalities and have worked successfully. Also included in Appendix A are commercial recycling fact sheets and promotional material produced by the DEP.

Web sites for DEP ([www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us)) and the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania ([www.proprecycles.org](http://www.proprecycles.org)) provide a wealth of information regarding commercial sector recycling.

## 7.0 Recommendations

### **It is recommended that the Township:**

- ↪ Institute a comprehensive education/outreach campaign specifically targeting the commercial sector.
- ↪ Prepare and submit an Act 101 Section 902 Grant Application to assist in covering the cost for the development and execution of an education /outreach campaign.
- ↪ Consider sponsoring a recycling workshop or seminar for the commercial sector, to include private haulers that collect commercial recyclables.
- ↪ Advertise the Township's intent to enforce its recycling ordinance (emphasize commercial sector participation). Enforcement is now a requirement under Act 101.
- ↪ Distribute an education packet detailing the Township's mandatory recycling program to each new commercial establishment. The opportune time to do this is when they are seeking the Township's required occupancy permit. Include a copy of the commercial recycling requirements, a quarterly recycling report form and a survey form requesting a description of the type of commercial enterprise and the variety of recyclables it will generate. The survey form should be user friendly and require only a few minutes to complete. A certification that they will participate in the Township's recycling program can be included as part of the survey form. The survey should be submitted prior to or at the time of issuance of the occupancy permit.

- ↗ Each new commercial establishment is added to the Township's commercial sector recycling list.
- ↗ Request that local haulers provide a list of their commercial customers. Offer to respect the list as proprietary and maintain the information as confidential information. Consider allowing the private haulers to distribute a recycling decal to their participating commercial recycling customers, as an incentive.

**APPENDIX A**  
**EDUCATION/OUTREACH**

(EXAMPLES OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST)

