

The Green City Project, The River City Recycles

A growing number of cities in the United States have begun initiatives and passed laws mandating recycling by citizens and businesses. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), recycling programs offer a host of benefits, from reducing the need for landfills and incineration, preventing pollution caused by the manufacturing of products from virgin materials, decreasing greenhouse gases emissions that contribute to global climate change, saving energy, and conserving our natural resources and environment.

The National Recycling Coalition has also found a number of economic benefits to citywide recycling programs. Most notably, well-run recycling programs save money and cost less to operate than waste collection, landfilling, and incineration. For example, two years after calling recycling a \$40 million drain on the city, New York City leaders realized that a redesigned, efficient recycling system could actually save the city \$20 million and they have now signed a 20-year recycling contract. Recycling also creates 1.1 million U.S. jobs yearly, \$236 billion in gross annual sales and \$37 billion in annual payrolls. In addition, public sector investment in local recycling programs pays great dividends by creating private sector jobs. For every job collecting recyclables, there are 26 jobs in processing the materials and manufacturing them into new products, and recycling also creates four jobs for every one job in waste management and disposable industries.

The proposed project seeks to capitalize on the knowledge and experience of other cities and recycling programs by bringing a well-designed and efficient recycling program to the City of Richmond that can benefit both our environment and our economy, thereby benefiting area businesses and all citizens' quality of life. Through the full support of various entities, including public organizations, private corporations, local business, and nonprofit environmental agencies, the program will incorporate the expertise of different industries to create the most feasible and efficient recycling program, tailored to the needs of the community and answers to a Dual Bottom Line: environmental stewardship and cost-effectiveness. The program must be audited and reviewed so that similar programs can be developed, and will strive to promote the cause of recycling by refining the method by which the public and private sector interact. The program will first be pilot-tested in the Shockoe Slip area of Richmond, and after evaluative research and redesign (if necessary), it will then be implemented throughout the City of Richmond.

Program Overview

Objectives:

1. To encourage Richmond area businesses to recycle by providing the following:
 - a. Sticker/decals for entryway or Internet home page recognizing membership
 - b. Provide assistance in obtaining and managing recycling receptacles
 - c. Provide members and public an electronic/printed directory of green businesses (via mail, e-mail, and the Web)
 - d. Provide members with networking and marketing opportunities
 - i. via the "Board of Directors" (e.g. through an annual gala)
 - ii. by featuring "elite" members (e.g. members who commit for 2 or more years to the program) via web, print, and television media outlets
 - iii. by organizing industry driven events, such as a *Green City Restaurant Week*, a *Green City's St. Patrick's Day Pub Crawl*, a biannual member breakfast w/ speakers panel, etc.
 - iv. by awarding members within specific industries for commitment to the program
2. To build, implement, research, and audit a program that benefits the citizens of The City of Richmond and which utilizes successful public and private partnerships
 - a. Conduct quarterly audits of the program in conjunction with an oversight committee that includes Board members
 - b. Partner with local public institutions to ensure data is collected, handled, and analyzed properly
 - c. Ensure transparency and that the public has full access to the workings of the program
3. Provide a useful, inspiring, and convenient service to all of our clients by remembering what we are doing is beneficial and FUN!

Participating Organizations

Public/Nonprofit Organizations:

Venture Richmond
City of Richmond
The Chamber of Commerce
The Better Business Bureau
The Retail Merchants Association
Environmental watchdog organization (to be determined)

Private Corporations:

For profit waste collection firms (i.e. Waste Management, Allied Waste, BFI)

Program Timeline

Phase I

Implement pilot program in Shockoe Slip in association with the neighborhood association, businesses, and citizenry

1. Create pilot steering committee:
 - Mr. Ted Ukrop
 - Mr. Mark Merhige
 - Mr. Andy Thornton
 - Ms. Lucy Meade
 - Ms. Helen Reed
 - Ms. Jane Millici
 - Representative from waste management company
 - Representative from environmental watchdog organization
2. Hire support staff
 - Ms. Lucy Meade (Director)
 - Mr. Yogi Singh (Community Outreach Coordinator)
3. Create budget for pilot program
 - a. See attached*
4. Delineate program objectives, measurables, and deliverables (in conjunction with steering committee, City of Richmond, private waste management company, and independent environmental agency)
5. Implement pilot program for a period of six months
 - Potential Participants: *The Tobacco Company, Sam Miller's, The Martin Agency, Cary Street Partners, Commonwealth Architecture, Shockoe Properties, Sine, Segway of Richmond, Richbrau, Peking, First Market Bank, La Diff*
6. Evaluate program effectiveness through an independent researcher (preferably university-affiliated), specifically for
 - a. The Dual Bottom Line:
 - i. Cost effectiveness
 - ii. Environmental benefits
 - b. Public perception
 - c. Area business satisfaction

Phase II

Implement program city-wide