

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recycling is an important part of controlling waste and preserving our environment. This report examines the benefits and costs of implementing a recycling program for the residents and staff at Paces River Apartments.

Fifty Paces River residents were surveyed on their interest in, opinions of, and participation concerning a recycling program. Ninety-two percent of these residents said that they feel they should recycle. However, 76% of these residents don't recycle, mainly due to inconvenience. Seventy-four percent of the residents surveyed felt a recycling program would give Paces River an advantage over other apartment complexes in this area.

Research shows there are many benefits and a great need to recycle. Starting a recycling program at Paces River Apartments would prove beneficial to the complex and to the residents. A recycling program would give Paces River an advantage over other apartment complexes in this area that do not offer recycling to their residents. The city will give Paces River free publicity for starting a recycling program, and residents will no longer have to travel to recycle. Recycling is not only beneficial for the Paces River community, but mostly for the environment. Interviews with local recycling coordinator provide a source of information for such a program.

THE GROWTH OF RECYCLING

This report identifies the need for adding a recycling program at Paces River Apartments. According to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling, many solutions to the growing solid waste problem start at the reduction of garbage in the multi-family buildings and apartment complexes. The amount of trash produced by the average American is a startling 1,000 pounds of garbage. It has been predicted that in our present year, Americans will throw away 222 million tons of garbage (South Carolina 1). This problem of waste will increase rapidly as the population continues to soar. This growth in waste will make recycling an attractive plan to reverse the trend of maximizing out space in the landfills. This report, through investigations of recycling resources and the assistance of Paces River managers and residents, proposes the further investigation and implementation of a recycling program at Paces River.

Investigative Procedures

Fifty residents responded to a seven-question survey where they were asked about their knowledge of and interest in recycling. The sample was chosen to represent residents interested in recycling. An interview with the Rock Hill Clean and Green Coordinator, Dana McKnight provided sources and information on the necessary steps to implement a recycling program at Paces River.

THE NEED FOR RECYCLING

South Carolina

According to the *SC Guide to Multi-Family Recycling*, the average person in SC produces 1,200 pounds of garbage each year. In 1990, SC residents produced 4.5 million tons of waste. We are a major part of the national problem. The statistics show South Carolinians produce 200 pounds more garbage than the average American. The average American produces 1,000 pounds of garbage, three-times the amount of garbage as most countries. Finding landfill space has been a continuous problem in South Carolina in the past, as well as today. Hurricane Hugo shortened the “life” of a Charleston landfill by 17.3 years; 23 more SC counties sustained a tremendous load on their normal landfill capacity. The space is decreasing throughout the state (South Carolina 1).

York County

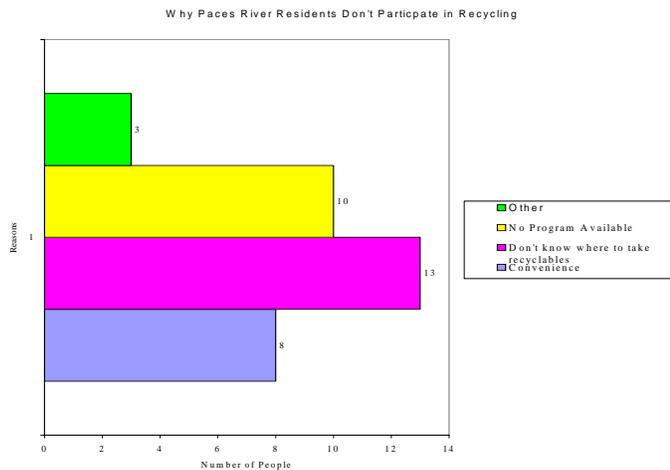
There are over 25 apartment complexes in York County. Currently, only 2 participate in a multi-family recycling program: Eagles Landing Apartments and Galleria Point Apartments. York County residents generate about 3 million pounds of trash per year (York County). Paces River spends \$2200 per phase per month to take the resident’s trash to a landfill. That includes \$125 to haul the trash and doesn’t include the landfill charge.

MULTI-FAMILY RECYCLING

According to the *SC Guide To Multi-Family Recycling*, offering a recycling program at an apartment complex makes it easier for those who want to participate, and encourages more residents to take part in recycling. Recycling lowers the landfill costs by reducing the amount of material the building or complex disposes.

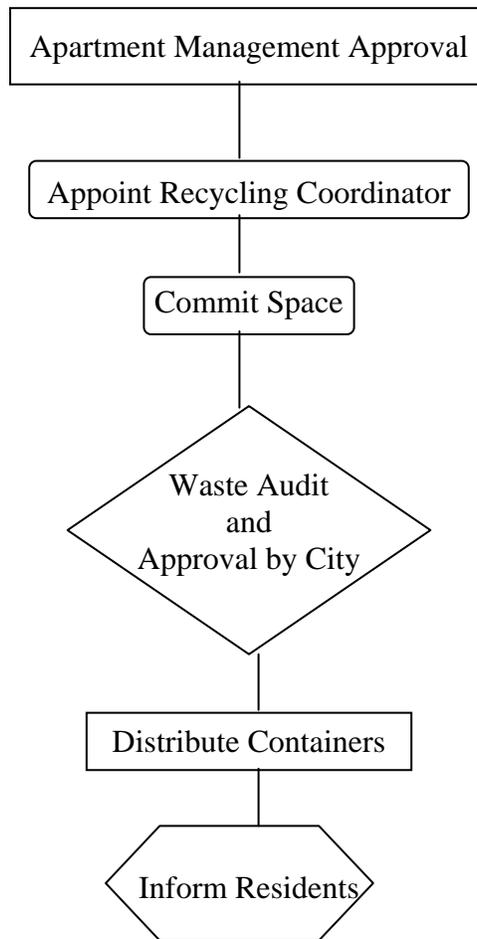
According to Resource Recycling, “Americans have shown their eagerness to take part in recycling efforts if the service is convenient” (Oliver 49).

Figure 1



Seventy-six percent of the Paces River residents surveyed said they do not recycle; Figure 1 explains the reasons why. Recycling is about convenience. People will recycle if it is made available to them in a convenient way. Ninety-eight percent of the residents surveyed said they knew they *should* recycle. However, recyclables have to be taken somewhere away from their residence and therefore, many are turned off to recycling. The closest place for residents to recycle is at the Celanese location across from the Rock Hill Airport, approximately a ten-minute drive. The residents would be more willing to participate in recycling if they had a recycling center available at Paces River.

Figure 2
STEPS TO START A RECYCLING PROGRAM



As the flowchart in Figure 2 illustrates, the first step to a recycling program is approval from the apartment complex management. Secondly, a recycling coordinator needs to be appointed and space needs to be committed. The recycling coordinator should schedule a pickup time each week. The city's property management would conduct a waste audit. To pass the waste audit, property management ensures that recyclables are being sorted properly into their right containers and that the recycling truck has access to the containers. Because the recycling truck is a commercial truck with tippers, it is important that the truck has easy access to the containers.

A combined effort between the recycling coordinator and the city will determine what to collect and how to inform residents what to do. A memo announcing the new recycling program, is a great way to inform all the residents. There will be a training meeting to advise the residents on how to properly recycle. I am willing to be in charge of this meeting. As a reward for the complex, McKnight has promised that the city will provide

free publicity in the form of a press release to bring attention to the responsibility the apartment is taking on the environment.

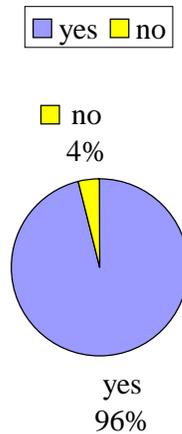
A recycling program is virtually hassle-free. The city provides the recycling containers free of charge and also picks up the recyclables each week for free. There is an effort to consolidate the recycling products into one container. This would make recycling even easier. If City Council approves, this could be implemented as early as February. By consolidating all the recyclables, residents wouldn't have to worry about sorting their materials and the city would not have to audit to make sure the materials are being put in the right containers.

Residents' Responses

Ninety-six percent of the residents surveyed said they would participate in a recycling program if it were offered at Paces River. Ninety-eight percent said that they feel they *should* recycle, but only 76% of the residents currently recycle. Fifty-two percent of the residents lived in a house before living in Paces River. Sixty-six percent of the residents participated in recycling before living in Paces River. Ninety-two percent of the residents thought that recycling was important or very important.

Figure 3

Percent of Residents Willing to Participate in a Recycling Program



As shown in Figure 3, an overwhelming majority of Paces River residents said they would participate in an on-site recycling program. This proves that people don't recycle unless it is convenient. If a majority of the residents participated in recycling, this would save Paces River money. Recycling bulky materials such as milk cartons, newspapers, magazines, and cans reduces trash in the dumpsters and results in decreased dumpster fees.

McKnight suggests that Paces River start first by recycling newspapers, mixed papers, and plastics. Mixed papers include magazines, brochures, and other consumer paper other than newspaper. Plastic cartons like milk containers, soda bottles, and plastic bags can all be recycled, too. The instructional meeting held for the residents explains how to properly step on bulky materials and how to sort the recyclables. Aluminum cans are also available to recycle; however, Dana suggests that residents recycle those on their own so that they can make extra money in doing so.

CONCLUSION

The beautiful trees and clean landscaping are the reasons I moved to Paces River. It is evident that you take pride in the environment of your residents. My survey proves that many residents are as environmentally conscious as you.

Recycling is a need, not only nationally, but also locally. Paces River can make an impact on the city and possibly influence other apartment complexes to start a recycling program. A recycling program would be beneficial to the environment and satisfy many residents. Offering a recycling program would increase Paces River's competitiveness over other apartment complexes.

The results of the survey show that residents will participate if recycling is made convenient for them. The step-by-step procedure and the low maintenance should be a good guide to starting a recycling program.

Appendix: Recycling Survey Results
(Total of 50 residents surveyed)



1. **How important is recycling to you?**
 very important 42%
 important 50%
 not important 8%

2. **Do you think you should recycle?**
 yes 98%
 no 2%

3. **Where did you live before Paces River?**
 House 52%
 Condo 6%
 Apartment 30%
 Dorm 12%
 Other → Please Specify: _____

4. **Did you participate in a recycling program before living in Paces River?**
 yes 66%
 no 34%

5. **Do you recycle?**
 yes → Where do you take your recyclables? _____ 24%
 no → Why not? _____ 76%

6. **Would you participate in a recycling program if it were offered at Paces River?**
 yes 96%
 no 4%

7. **Do you think a recycling program would give Paces River an advantage over other apartment complexes in this area?**
 yes 74%
 no 26%

WORKS CITED

Johnson, Denise. Personal Interview. 3 Nov. 2000.

McKnight, Dana. Personal Interview. 11 Oct. 2000.

McKnight, Dana. Telephone Interview. 6 Nov. 2000.

Oliver, Gail L. "Who's doing multi-family/high-rise recycling?" Resource Recycling
Jan. 1998: 48-50.

South Carolina. S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control Office of Solid
Waste Reduction and Recycling. A Guide To Multi-Family Recycling.
Columbia, South Carolina, 1993.

York County. York County Public Information Office. How Many People Practice
Their 3 R's?. York County, 1998.